



The
Sunnah
and its role in
Islamic Legislation

السنة ومكانتها في التشريع الإسلامي

Dr. Mustafa as-Sibâ'ee

الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC PUBLISHING HOUSE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*Bismi Allahi Alrrahmani Alrraheemi
In the name of Allah, the most
Beneficent, the most Merciful*

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Translated by

Faisal ibn Muhammad Shafeeq

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Arabic honorific symbols used in this book

(سُبْحٰنُهٗ) : *Subhânahu wa Ta'âla* — “The Exalted.”

(سَلَامٌ) : *Şalla-Allâhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* — “Blessings and peace
be upon him.”

(سَلَامٌ) : *'Alayhis-Salâm* — “May peace be upon him.”

(رَضِيَ) : *Rađia-Allâhu 'Anhu* — “May Allah be pleased with him.”

(رَضِيَ) : *Rađia-Allâhu 'Anha* — “May Allah be pleased with her.”

Transliteration Chart

أ	a
آ. آى	â
ب	b
ت	t
ة	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	<u>dh</u>
ع	‘

غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
هـ - ه - هـ	h
و	w
و (as a long vowel)	oo
ي	y
ي (as a long vowel)	ee
ء	' (Omitted in initial position)

Diphthongs:

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
أو ، و	Long o, as in <i>dough</i>	au, aw, ow
أي ، ي	Long a, as in <i>say</i>	ay, ai, ei

ـَ	Fathah	a
ـِ	Kasrah	i
ـُ	Dammah	u
ـّ	Shaddah	Double letter
ـْ	Sukoon	Absence of vowel



Translator's Foreword

All praise is for Allah (ﷻ), the Exalted; may He send His peace and blessings on Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions.

During the last fifty years, *The Sunnah and Its Role in Islamic Legislation* has been received with acclaim from scholars, from students of knowledge, and from the general population of Muslims. It has reached out to such a wide audience not just because its message is universal, but because the author, Dr. Muṣṭafā as-Sibā'ee, has catered to every level of reader: the scholar appreciates the well-organized, detailed, comprehensive, and academic approach taken by the author in writing this book; the student of knowledge finds the proofs and arguments he needs to increase his level of understanding; and the truth-seeking Muslim is pleased to find that the difficult subject-matter of this book is presented in readable and transparent language.

Before reading this work, one might hesitate, questioning whether some of the information found in it is outdated; after all, some of it deals with the Orientalists and Muslim deviants of the 1940's and 50's. It is true that some sections of this work discuss them and their ideas, yet that discussion turns out to be very timely when we consider that Orientalists today and some Muslim deviants who follow them proffer the same arguments that were proffered by

their predecessors over half a century ago. Moreover, one appreciates from those chapters the efforts undertaken by Shaykh As-Sibâ'ee and some of his colleagues in preserving the authentic teachings of Islam in a historically significant University that was just beginning to wane in those years. And that is important because when one sees some of the more negative aspects of Azhar today, one appreciates its honored past, which can be restored by the will of Allah (ﷻ) when true Islamic, scholarly endeavor is once again encouraged and sought after.

The rest of the book, one will find, is timeless. Today, more than ever, people are ignorant of the role of the Sunnah in Islamic legislation. Throughout the world, many Muslims are ignorant about the Sunnah — about its legislative force in our lives. For instance, one often hears the word *fard* (obligatory) being synonymously used with the Qur'an, and 'recommended' with the Sunnah. Among Muslims, there are many other misconceptions about the Sunnah, which like the Qur'an, is in fact a binding source of Islamic legislation.

In an era when organizing and classifying the knowledge of our pious predecessors into clear and cohesive books is the job of the Muslim author, Dr. Muṣṭafâ as-Sibâ'ee presents perhaps the most significant work of this century on the Sunnah, significant because of its comprehensiveness and because of its attention to organized details. The author covers all aspects of the Sunnah — he outlines the historical development of the Sunnah, from the time it was mainly transmitted through oral narrations to the time it was officially recorded in books; he details the scholarly achievements of hadith scholars who eradicated fabrications and in the process preserved the authentic Sunnah; he mentions the many sciences of Hadith that resulted from the efforts of the scholars; he discusses the views of all groups, both from the past and the present, who attack the Sunnah

and its narrators; and then he presents irrefutable arguments to disprove their claims. Dr. As-Sibâ'ee ends the book with a useful appendix wherein he discusses the four Imams, not concentrating on their biographies, but rather on their approach to deriving rulings of jurisprudence from the Sunnah. The methodology of each Imam is broken down, making it easy for the student to see why they differed in some matters of Jurisprudence. I pray to Allah (ﷻ) to reward the author well for this invaluable work, to have mercy on him, and to make this work achieve at least the same level of acceptance in English as it did in Arabic.

Translator's methodology

When IIPH first commissioned me to translate this work, I stipulated that it had to be an abridged translation. In the original Arabic, it is more than 500 pages long. I felt that a book of that size might, and usually does, discourage the English-speaking reader from getting from one cover to the next. That is not to put down the reader of English; a 500-page PhD thesis is probably formidable to most readers of other languages as well.

So even before embarking on the task of translating this work, I had a preconceived idea that I had to reduce it in size — by pruning, getting rid of repetition, removing some of the digressions that the author was sometimes prone to, by mentioning only a few of the many examples resorted to in proving a point, all the while realizing that I had to retain the gist of the author's message.

When I actually got started, I found that the task of abridging was more difficult than I had first thought; I fell in love with the book, appreciating it from the vantage point of a reader and student of knowledge. Even the digressions about Azhar scholars arrested my attention; I realized that those digressions were in fact very germane

to the subject matter of the book. When the author repeated himself, I felt that the repetition was intended to stress a point or to highlight the importance of an argument or to summarize key ideas — all of which are valid reasons for being repetitive.

Therefore I found the task of pruning to be very difficult indeed. In the end, this book is an abridgement of sorts simply because, technically speaking, I gave the gist of what the author said and not a word-for-word translation. That being said, the translated version treads a fine line between being an unabridged translation and an abridged translation. Anything I left out — and that is very little — was so that I could make the translation as simple as possible for the reader. When many examples from the Sunnah or history are given to prove a point, I mentioned those that are easily understood and do not need further elaboration. When the author mentioned concepts that only Arabic-speaking people are familiar with, I introduced those concepts with a brief definition or clarification, so that the reader can keep up with the ideas of the book. And sometimes, when I felt that a summary could better be understood than an entire paragraph of literal translation, I summarized. The main portion of summarizing did not occur in the first draft; only when I was editing the work did I do most of the summarizing, and even that, only when I felt that it was in the best interest of the reader. But for the most part, the book is very similar to its Arabic counterpart. Whenever I felt that the author would not have approved of an expurgation — and authors rarely do, but I'm sure that Islamic authors do when they know that their readers are of another language and would appreciate reading material that is written in a style that is appealing in their language — I kept the text as it is in Arabic.

That is how I went about translating Shaykh Muṣṭafâ as-Sibâ'ee's work. If I was correct in places, then that is from Allah (ﷻ); and if I erred on occasions, then that is from me and from the

Devil, and I ask that the reader supplicate for me. I pray that Allah (ﷻ) accepts and blesses this humble effort. May Allah have mercy on the author, who strove with his pen to defend the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). O Allah, send prayers and salutations on Muhammad, his family, and his Companions.

Faisal ibn Muhammad Shafeeq

Dedication

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

I dedicate this work to one,

Who was compassionate to me when I was a child,

Who advised me and trained me throughout my formative years,

Who helped me acquire knowledge and supported me while I was a student of knowledge,

Who encouraged me to call others to righteousness, making it easier for me to bear hardships in the way of Allah,

Who was patient during hard times, thus inspiring me to do the same while I was subjected to harsh treatment or while I was in chains during my sojourn in prison,

Who showed me a merciful heart, lightening the intensity of the pain I experienced through many illnesses...

To one,

Whose only longing was for me to be a link in the chain of scholars from our family, a chain that spanned hundreds of years of dedication to knowledge. I ask my Lord to count me as one of his good deeds on the Day of Judgment.

To,

My father, the eminent Shaykh, Ḥusnee as-Sibâ'ee.

I dedicate my first scholarly work to him, acknowledging his favor and good guidance, hoping from Allah (ﷻ) to bless me with his company, to increase his reward, and to accept the supplication of a dutiful son to his noble father, in accordance with Allah's command:

﴿... وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٢٤)

﴿... And say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small.'﴾ (Qur'an 17: 24)

Mustafa

Introduction To The Second Edition

All praise is for Allah; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth; indeed, He (ﷻ) is upon all things capable. And may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon the teacher of mankind, Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullâh, who was given the Qur’an and that which is similar to it. Allah (ﷻ) has clarified that obedience to His Messenger (ﷺ) is the same as obedience to Him. The Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is an explanation of the Qur’an and represents the second source of legislation in Islam. So whoever accepts from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has accepted from Allah.

On the intellectual front in their battle against the truth, the enemies of Islam generally aim to raise doubts about the Sunnah of our Prophet (ﷺ); therefore, we must realize how supremely important it is for us to be well acquainted with the Sunnah and its role in Islamic legislation. This book goes a long way to filling the void that has previously existed in this branch of knowledge; its author, Dr. Mustafâ as-Sibâ‘ee (may Allah have mercy on him), called it *The Sunnah and Its Role in Islamic Legislation*.

With Allah’s blessings, this second edition has been completed — and all praise is for Allah (ﷻ). The author here presents the findings of a detailed study on many issues revolving around the Sunnah, and one will find that the contents of this book,

when considered as a whole, do justice to the title. Throughout the book, Dr. as-Sibâ'ee disproves the lies and doubts that are raised about the Sunnah, refuting the enemies of the Sunnah by shedding light on how detailed and meticulous the scholars of hadith were in judging the authenticity of both the text of narrations and the chains of narrators.

One might find that certain topics are discussed only briefly, but that is because they are not closely linked to the core subject matter of this work; the author discussed them only inasmuch as they had a relation to the main theme of the book.

Dr. As-Sibâ'ee presents, in a clear and concise manner, the different stages that the Sunnah went through during the earlier centuries of Islam, and he points out the factors that led to false claims and fabrications regarding the Sunnah in the past and present. He then clarifies how the Sunnah was purified from fabrications and lies through the contributions of the scholars.

With cogent arguments he refutes the claims of opponents of the Sunnah, from the past and the present. Throughout this work, he not only takes the stance of a caller to Islam and a *Mujâhid*, but also of an erudite and cultivated scholar. He presents an idea and then always supports it with clear evidence.

It must be pointed out that Dr. Muşţafâ wrote this book in difficult circumstances, as is attested to by his brothers who were living with him at the time in Cairo. Lacking the reference books he needed, Dr. Muşţafâ was forced to go from place to place in order to find the material he needed; moreover, circumstances were such at the time that it was very difficult for him to meet with his teachers to consult with them on the detailed issues of his research. At first, the book was not printed for distribution, but was limited to a close circle of students and scholars when the author handed it in as his Ph.D. thesis at Al-Azhar University.

One of the posts he assumed during his academic career was that of professor in the faculties of Law and Sharia. Around the time when the first edition of this book was finally printed, Allah willed for Dr. Muṣṭafâ to become afflicted with a chronic illness; he remained content and pleased with Allah (ﷻ), knowing that even an affliction is a blessing when one is sincere and patient.

The book received a warm welcome from the reading public, especially from those who appreciated the significance of the work. Although he became extremely weak because of his sickness, Dr. Mustafâ began to polish his work and add important comments, and he continued to do so until he died — may Allah forgive him. And although the core subject matter of the book remained his continual preoccupation, the reader will find here in the second edition two appendixes. He intended to add a third, but he died before he was able to complete it.

In these times when many co-conspirators plot against Islam, mainly through attacks leveled against the Sunnah, *The Sunnah and Its Role in Islamic Legislation* deserves any encomium it receives, for it goes beyond mere rhetoric in refuting those who attack the Sunnah: it exposes their lies with convincing, logical, and conclusive arguments.

May Allah have mercy on Professor As-Sibâ'ee and reward him for his many efforts in *da'wah*¹, perhaps the greatest of which is this book. After a long period of waiting for researches, students, and readers alike, Al-Maktab al-Islami has printed this second edition, and we hope that it is added to the scale of Dr. As-Sibâ'ee's deeds.

﴿... وَعَاخِرُ دَعْوَانَهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (سورة يونس: ١٠)

¹ *da'wah*: calling people to accept and embrace Islam.

﴿... And the close of their request will be: All praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of all that exists.﴾ *(Qur'an 10: 10)*

Dr. Muhammad Adeeb Şâleh

Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise is for Allah, Who has legislated rulings for His slaves in a Clear Book and has commissioned the seal of Prophets and Messengers, Muhammad (ﷺ — Blessings and peace be upon him), to clarify its detailed rulings. May the peace and salutations of Allah be upon him, his family, his Companions — who conveyed the revelation and were trustees of the truth, calling to the path of Allah upon guidance — and all those who follow him until the Day of Judgment.

We are living in an age of turmoil and strife, when peace and justice are almost absent throughout the globe. The systems and laws invented by human beings have yet to prove that they can solve human society's problems — wars, societal ills, and mental malaise.

As Muslims, we believe that the world has no choice — if happiness and peace are to be achieved — except to return to Allah's pure and pristine teachings, which are free of distortion and change. The message of Islam is the culmination of those teachings, for it provides a system of laws that are suitable for every epoch and that fulfill the needs of man in all places and times.

The Sharia of Islam — with its primary sources along with derived rulings of its scholars and Imams — is vast in its scope of

teachings and laws, supplying a ruling for every occurrence and a solution for every problem. It erects the scales of justice among individuals, societies, and governments. The individuals that make up the Muslim Nation lean toward peace when others do the same; but they defend the honor of their faith and the true meaning of freedom when others lean toward transgression against Islam.

The sources of Islamic legislation are preserved; they are known and trusted by Muslims. For the most part, the Qur'an — the first source of Islamic legislation — consists of general and universal principles in rulings and legislations. On the other hand, the Sunnah explains those principles, branching off from universal principles into specific issues, a reality that is known to all who have a sufficient background in the Sunnah. An inevitable result, then, is that the scholars of Islam must rely — and have relied — on the Sunnah for gaining knowledge of Islamic rulings.

In the past, the Sunnah faced attacks from certain sects who ascribed themselves to Islam; today it faces attacks from Orientalists, missionaries (of other faiths), and others whose sole purpose is to destroy the solid foundation of Islamic legislation; unfortunately, some writers from our Nation have been deceived into following them in their views. However much they plot and plan, their attacks cannot have a palpable effect when counteracted by irrefutable proofs and dignified scholarly research.

In 1358 AH/1939 CE, I met with many people from the Muslim world who were influenced by the ideas of the Orientalists, and I attempted to persuade them of the truth and to remove any doubts about Islam they had in their minds. And that is what led me to embarking on a study of the Sunnah and its role in Islamic legislation. In presenting the findings of that study, I clarified the stages the Sunnah went through in history as well as the efforts of the scholars to preserve it and purify it from fabrications. Much of this

work addresses the claims of those who have attacked the Sunnah from the past and present, in the end showing the purity and light of the Sunnah. I concluded the work with short biographies of some of the Scholars of Islam, particularly those who played a role in preserving the Sunnah or in deriving Islamic legislations from it. I have divided this book into three sections and ended it with an appendix:

Section One: The Meaning of the Sunnah and how it was Transmitted and Recorded

Chapter One: The Definition of the Sunnah and the Stance of the Companions vis-à-vis the Sunnah

Chapter Two: Fabrications — How they Originated? When? And Why?

Chapter Three: The Efforts of the Scholars to Purify and Authenticate the Sunnah

Chapter Four: The Fruits of their Efforts

Section Two: Opponents of the Sunnah

Chapter One: The Sunnah vis-à-vis the Shi'ah and Khawârij

Chapter Two: The Sunnah vis-à-vis the Mu'tazilah and the *Mutakallimeen*

Chapter Three: The Sunnah vis-à-vis those from the Early Centuries who Rejected its Legislative Status

Chapter Four: The Sunnah vis-à-vis Contemporary Personalities who Reject it

Chapter Five: The Sunnah vis-à-vis those who Reject *Ahâd* Narrations

Chapter Six: The Sunnah vis-à-vis the Orientalists

Chapter Seven: The Sunnah vis-à-vis Certain Contemporary
Writers

Section Three: The Sunnah's Ranking in Islamic
Legislation

Chapter One: The Ranking of the Sunnah in Relation to the Qur'an

Chapter Two: How does the Qur'an Encompass the Sunnah?

Chapter Three: The Sunnah Abrogating the Qur'an and the Qur'an
Abrogating the Sunnah

Appendix: Biographies of Some of the Great *Mujtahideen* and
Hadith Scholars of Islam:

1. Imam Abu Ḥaneefah
2. Imam Mâlik
3. Imam Ash-Shâfi'ee
4. Imam Aḥmad
5. Bukhari
6. Muslim
7. An-Nasâ'i
8. Abu Dâwood
9. Tirmidhi
10. Ibn Mâjah

I ask Allah (ﷻ) to protect me from falling into error, to bless me with guidance, to open for me the treasures of His mercy, and to make us from those who listen to what is said and then follow the best of it. And all praise is for Allah, Lord of all that exists.

Dr. Muṣṭafa as-Sibâ'ee

Preface

All praise is for Allah, Lord of all that exists. O Allah, send prayers and salutations upon Muhammad, his family, his Companions, and all those who have carried in the past, who carry now, and who will carry until the Day of Judgment, the banner of the Sunnah. The book before you is my Ph.D. thesis, which I submitted to the faculty of Sharia at Azhar University in the year 1949; based on it, I achieved my doctorate in Fiqh, Uşool, and the History of Islamic Legislation. Since that time until only recently, I have desisted from publishing the work. I refrained from doing so for a number of reasons, the most important of which were the difficult circumstances I found myself in when I wrote this book. Not to go into details about those circumstances, I wish only to stress here that I was forced to summarize many of the important topics that are discussed in this work. I always wanted to expand on them and thus add to the benefit of my research, and one way I intended to do that was to add other topics that are related to the subject matter of the book. However, due to extenuating circumstances, I never found the time to realize that ambition.

Some of the chapters of this book have already appeared, in short form, in some Islamic magazines in Cairo, Damascus, as well as elsewhere. Many readers wrote to me, asking me to publish those chapters; however, I delayed, waiting for a time when I would be free to realize my hopes of adding to the work and of refining areas that called for refinement. But then *Ađwâ 'Alas-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*, by Muhammad Abu Rayyah, was published.

Because it consists of an unmitigated attack on the Sunnah and on its narrators, my friends and colleagues insisted that this work be published, and they were right in saying that a work of this nature is needed to counteract the effects of Abu Rayyah's book and to expose the falsehood he attempts to disseminate. So now I am giving this work to the printers, leaving its contents unchanged, except for that which I added in the discussion on Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). I do hope that — when my health gives me an opportunity — I will be able to put into action the hopes I had in improving this work, *inshâ' Allah*.

Points to consider about Abu Rayyah's book

Any Muslim with even a rudimentary knowledge of Islam knows the role of the Prophet's Sunnah in Islamic legislation and the influence it had on Islamic jurisprudence, from the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Companions until the era of the *Mujtahid* Imams, and finally until the formation and development of the famous schools of jurisprudence. The Sunnah plays a major role in making Islamic jurisprudence a treasury of laws, which, among the systems of laws in the world, are unparalleled in their superlative qualities. Whoever is acquainted with the Book² and the Sunnah, knows that the Sunnah has had the greater role in widening the scope of legislation in Islam and in making it a timeless set of laws — suitable for every age, epoch, and region. And every Muslim scholar recognizes this distinction.

Throughout history, the enemies of Islam have attacked the Sunnah and have attempted to raise doubts about its validity as a proof in Islam. Furthermore, they have always attempted to raise

² Whenever "the Book" with the capital B is used, the intended meaning is the Qur'an.

doubts about the truthfulness of the narrators and compilers of the Sunnah, focusing their attacks on the Companions and Tâbi'oon. Whenever an opportunity presented itself, different groups, who had in common their hatred of Islam, joined ranks to further their common objectives. That sort of alliance exists even this day: the Orientalists and others who have similar objectives work in cooperation.

Theirs (that is, the enemies of Islam) is a sequence and chain of efforts, which has not broken off for over fourteen centuries. And they will continue to promote their aims as long as Islam and the truth have enemies. Those enemies act with blind fanaticism, for they are committed to the goal of destroying everything that is attached to the Qur'an and the Sunnah as well as to the goal of maligning every bearer of the Prophet's flag.

Yet we do not doubt that today's battle will end in the same manner as yesterday's battles ended — with the defeat of Islam's enemies, with an exposition of their hidden and wicked schemes. Islam will remain like an impenetrable fortress simply because the battle in question is one between Islam and its enemies, between the truth and desire, between knowledge and ignorance, between nobility and malice, and between light and darkness. One of the *Sunan*³ of Allah in this life is this — truth, knowledge, nobility, and light always come out in the end as victors.

﴿بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ...﴾

(سورة الأنبياء: ١٨)

﴿Nay, We fling [send down] the truth [this Qur'an] against the falsehood [disbelief], so it destroys it, and behold, it [falsehood] is vanished...﴾

(Qur'an 21: 18)

³ Plural of Sunnah.

It is most unfortunate to see that many Muslims have unwittingly fallen into the trap set for them by the enemies of Islam — mainly the Orientalists and some Western historians. It is not that we doubt the sincerity of those Muslims; rather, we simply say that they have been deceived by the guise of scholarly research, which the enemies of Islam use as a front for their nefarious activities. In the end, such Muslims form the same conclusions and ideas that the Orientalists promote. Those ideas lead them to raising doubts about Islam, about the Sunnah, and about the narrators who conveyed the Sunnah. Thus the enemies of Islam and some Muslims stand on the same platform, working side by side with the same agenda.

It is clear that some Muslims have become ensnared in their traps for one of four reasons:

1. They are ignorant of the realities of our Islamic heritage as well as of its pure sources and pristine teachings.
2. They have been deceived by the “scholarly research” that the enemies of Islam claim for themselves.
3. They desire fame, wanting to give the appearance of free and libertarian thought, after having freed themselves from the shackles of blind following which they attribute to Islam.
4. They are driven by deviation and desire and find no way to express their feelings except by hiding behind the shield of Orientalists and misguided Western authors who write about Islam.

Based on at least one of the reasons just mentioned, Abu Rayyah wrote *Aḍwâ ‘Al as-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*. As I was perusing his book, I noticed that whenever his opinion was different from that of the majority of Muslim scholars, the books and sources he cited and relied upon did not go beyond the following sources:

1. The opinions of Mu‘tazili Imams, which he cited from their books.

2. The opinions held by extreme elements among the Shi'ah, opinions that they proclaimed in their books.
3. The opinions held by the Orientalists, which they disseminated in their books and publications.
4. Stories that are mentioned in books of literature, books that do not contain historically authentic narrations.
5. Deeply embedded desires in the heart of Abu Rayyah, which he seems to have been nurturing for a number of years.

And whenever he does quote from reliable sources, he does one of the following:

— What he is quoting from a source is not what the author of that reference intended, and so, Abu Rayyah gives knew meaning — his own meaning — to the words of the author.

— He quotes facts that are accepted by Muslims scholars; however, their understanding of those facts is completely different from his understanding, and so he mentions them to make the readers think that those scholars and he are in agreement as regards his overall conclusions.

— He often quotes only a selected section of a text, neglecting to mention the rest of that text, wherein the author expresses his full view.

— He sometimes quotes authors who themselves are quoting the Mu'tazilah, but then he ascribes that quote to the authors instead of to the Mu'tazilah. For example, he quoted Ibn Qutaybah as making a certain statement, but were one to refer to Ibn Qutaybah's book, one would find that that statement was not his, but instead was a statement that he was quoting from someone else.

— He often uses the names of reliable scholars to support his claims,

when in reality those scholars never said anything to promote, corroborate, or give any credence whatsoever to his claims.

But now let us move on to mention the reference books⁴ that Abu Rayyah relies heavily upon, those reference books that represent the source and inspiration of his work.

﴿... وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِيُؤْخِرَ إِلَىٰ أُولِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ...﴾

(سورة الأنعام: ١٢١)

﴿... And certainly, the devils do inspire their friends [some humans] to dispute with you...﴾ (Qur'an 6: 121)

1. *Al-'Arab Qabl al-Islâm*, by Jurjee Zaydân
2. *Al-Ḥaḍârah al-Islâmiyah*, by Kramer
3. *Al-Maseehiyah fil-Islâm*, by Qays Ibrâheem Lucas
4. *As-Siyâdah al-'Arabiyyah*, by van Fluton
5. *Dâ'iratul-Ma'ârif al-Islâmiyah*, by a group of Orientalist writers
6. *Ḥaḍâratul-Islâm fee Dârus-Salâm*, by Ibrâheem al-Yâzîjee
7. *History of the Arabs*, by Philip K. Hitty
8. *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, by Ignaz Goldziher
9. *Târeekh ash-Shu'ooḃ al-Islâmiyah*, by Karl Brockleman
10. *Târeekh at-Tamaddun al-Islâmi*, by Jurjee Zaydân
11. *Wijhatul-Islâm*, by a group of Orientalists

⁴ The original names of these writers and titles of their books were transliterated by the author into Arabic, and some spellings and titles in English or other European languages could not be verified. (Editor)

At the end of the book, Abu Rayyah proudly says that he used the most cogent of proofs to establish his findings and that he used reliable sources that are above all doubt and suspicion, when in reality doubt mingles in the heart of any Muslim who reads them. In the following sections, we will discuss the five major sources from which he derived his ideas.

He described the Mu‘tazilee scholars that he often quoted from as possessing wonderfully lucid minds. One finds — as we did in a chapter of this book — that the Mu‘tazilah are of two groups: one group among them reject the Sunnah in its entirety, while the other group stipulates such impossible conditions for accepting a narration from the Sunnah that they, for all effective purposes, reject the Sunnah as well. We mention in a chapter of this book that the leaders of their movement — especially those who vilified the Companions — were very weak in their religion. We know that one of them, Thumâmah Ibn Ashras, said about those who hasten to the prayer that, ‘they are all donkeys’. They were a nationalistic group who hated Arabs. Thumâmah once said, “Look at what this Arab [he was referring to Muhammad (ﷺ)] did with the people.” If that is what he said about the Prophet (ﷺ), then what can we expect from him regarding the Companions? And what can we expect his view on the Sunnah to be?

The Mu‘tazilah, as a group, are enamored by Greek philosophy and logic as well as by Indian philosophy and Persian literature. Most of them would interpret the Qur’an in such a way as to harmonize between it and Greek philosophy. They outright rejected hadiths that did not agree with polytheistic, Greek ideology. They considered Greek philosophers to be the prophets of the mind, prophets who were infallible in their ideas and judgments. It was between those Mu‘tazilee scholars and the majority of the Muslim scholars that a clash of ideas and ideology took place. Abu Rayyah

described those Mu‘tazilee leaders as being scholars and men of high intellect, whereas he disparages the Imams and jurists of Islam, scholars such as Málík, Shâfi‘ee, Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn al-Musayyib, and others. It is also clear from Abu Rayyah’s writings that he highly praised those leaders and rulers who tortured and incarcerated Muslim Imams and jurists. Though most of his ideas are taken from the likes of those leaders, he often resorts to duplicity, ascribing his views to accepted Muslims scholars, when in reality those scholars never dealt with his views except to refute them.

Before we talk about Abu Rayyah’s reliance on Shi‘ah sources, I feel that it is important to preface our discussion with a brief historical overview. We feel as much pain as we do sadness when we read about the dispute that occurred between ‘Ali (ﷺ) and Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ) over the caliphate as well as about the ripple effects of that dispute, which continue to affect us until this very day. I do not doubt in the least that the Jews as well as many foreigners, whose lands were conquered by the Muslims, played a great role in igniting the fires of those tribulations and then in broadening the scope of differences among Muslims, resorting for the most part to duplicity, to evil plotting, and to fabricating lies against the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Throughout history, the majority of Muslims — I am referring here to the people of the Sunnah — have been most just and noble when it came to speaking about the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); after all, it was those Companions whom Allah (ﷻ) praised in His Book, when He (ﷻ) mentioned their worthy migration and their support for the Prophet (ﷺ). That the Companions changed to an evil state after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), as is claimed by the Shi‘ah, is not conceivable, nor is it consistent with the honor and superiority of Allah’s Religion. Were you to read what they write as well as what they say in their gatherings about the Companions, you would think that the Shi‘ah represent a group of base criminals, who

have neither religion nor conscience to prevent them from falling into ignominy. Despite what the Shi'ah say, history establishes that the Companions were more righteous in their lives and loftier in their virtues than any other generation known to humankind. Furthermore, we know that Islam did not spread to the different regions of the world except at their hands and through their efforts and through their sacrifices in the way of Allah (ﷻ) and in the way of the truth that they believed in.

As regards our differences in the past, which were a result of disputes over the caliphate, we have to understand that for a very long time now, since we have become shackled in the chains of colonialism, we no longer have a caliphate to fight over. This requires from us that we cooperate with one another, that we narrow the gap between us, that we unite the Muslims upon the truth, and, in order to mend our past differences, that we look with a critical eye at those fabricated hadiths that were used to vilify the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

In response to the demands of the masses, scholars of the Sunnah have taken practical steps to narrowing that gap; they have taken it upon themselves to study Shi'ah jurisprudence, comparing it with their own accepted schools. This kind of comparative study has been introduced into the curriculum of some universities as well as into the books of many Muslim writers.

However, most scholars of the Shi'ah have not taken any practical steps until now to do the same. The most they have done is to give the appearance of tolerance in conferences and gatherings; in reality, though, many of them persist in cursing the Companions and in speaking about them in an evil manner. They persist in believing the lies and fabrications that are related in the books of their predecessors. You will find that, while one of their scholars ostensibly shows support for narrowing the gap between the people

of the Sunnah and the Shi‘ah, he at the same time writes a book that is full of accusations and lies against the Companions.

In 1953, I visited ‘Abdul-Husain Sharaf ad-Deen, in Tyre. With him were seated some Shi‘ah scholars. We began to talk about prevailing conditions in Muslim lands, and we agreed that the Shi‘ah and the people of the Sunnah should cooperate with one another in the hope of alleviating the plight of many Muslims. During that gathering, ‘Abdul-Husain showed a great deal of enthusiastic approval for the propositions we were putting forward. In the end, it was agreed that a conference should be held between scholars of the Sunnah and scholars of the Shi‘ah for the very purpose of bringing about a practical cooperation between both groups. However, after only a short period of time, I was shocked to see that ‘Abdul-Husain had just authored a book, which he filled with curses against Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ).

I was truly amazed at the disparity between ‘Abdul-Husain’s claims and between his actions, actions that did not in the least point to a sincere desire to establishing some form of cooperation between both groups and to erasing bitter memories from the past. I witnessed a similar attitude from many other Shi‘ah scholars. Although they profess to desire harmony between both groups, Shi‘ah scholars continue to portray the Companions in an evil light, because the goal of narrowing the gap between the people of the Sunnah and the Shi‘ah, to them, is nothing more than bringing the people of the Sunnah closer to the beliefs of the Shi‘ah.

While Shi‘ah scholars will launch an unmitigated attack against any author from the people of the Sunnah who writes a detailed history of hadith compilation, saying that the author is creating barriers between Shi‘ah and Sunni, they see nothing wrong in books, such as the one written by ‘Abdul-Husain, in which one of the most trusted narrators of hadith is being vilified and depicted as a

liar. They do not perceive that such books are in fact the main barriers that prevent us from reaching an understanding.

Shi'ah scholars do not limit themselves to attacking Abu Hurayrah (ؓ); rather, there are books printed in Iraq and Iran, in which the Mother of the Believers, 'Ā'ishah (ؓ), is portrayed as being evil, and in which many other Companions are treated in a similar manner, which no person who has a conscience can bear to read. Abu Rayyah's book is a clear example of what we are discussing here, for in it, this stance of the Shi'ah is represented.

I, among other scholars who count themselves among the people of the Sunnah, have written about the history of Hadith compilation, yet I have not done injustice to any person who is honored by the Shi'ah, in the sense that we love 'Ali (ؓ) and revere him for his ranking in Islam, for his knowledge, and for his virtues; similarly, we love and revere the Prophet's family. But now we are waiting for the Shi'ah to do the same justice to other Companions, so that we can meet upon common ground.

In some sections of this work, I briefly discuss those Orientalists who formed Abu Rayyah's ideas; however, I wrote those chapters before I visited many European universities in 1956, when I had a chance to meet with them in person and to discuss with them their views. Through the experience of meeting them in person, I am now surer than ever that they represent a grave danger to our Islamic heritage, and that is because their hearts are filled with hate and rancor against Islam, Arabs, and Muslims.

When I landed in Europe, the first scholar I met with was Professor James Anderson, Dean of one of the law faculties that specialized in affairs of the Muslim world, at the University of London. He had graduated with a degree in theology from the University of Cambridge, and during World War II, he had been a

soldier in the British army, stationed in Egypt. From my long discussion with the professor, I learned much of the deeply embedded prejudice he had in his heart against Islam. But here, I mention a simple example only, which he related to me himself. He had a student removed from the University for one reason only, and that was because his thesis was entitled, *The Rights of Women in Islam*. In that paper, the student had established that Islam gives a Muslim woman all of her rights. I asked the professor why he had dismissed the student, pointing out to him that Western schools claim to promote freedom of thought. He said, "The student said: Islam gives such and such rights to women and Islam has given women such and such status... and is he the official spokesman for Islam? Is he Abu Ḥaneefah or Shâfi'ee who has the right to do that?" This was the kind of inane reasoning I witnessed from many other professors that I met with.

At the University of Edinburgh, the Orientalist who was the Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies was a Christian priest. And the Dean of Arabic studies in Glasgow was also a priest who had been a missionary in Palestine for almost twenty years. In Oxford, the Dean of Islamic Studies was a Jew who previously worked for the British Secret Service in Libya during the Second World War. When I met with him, I asked him what reference books he used for his curriculum, and he told me that he used the books of the Orientalists, for the main part books written by Ignaz Goldziher, D.S. Margoliouth, and Josef Schacht. As for Cambridge, the Dean of Arabic and Islamic studies was an Orientalist who specialized in the Arabic language only. His name was Ariri.⁵ At one point in our conversation he admitted, "We — the Orientalists — make many errors in our research about Islam. And we must not delve into this

⁵ The original name of this person was transliterated by the author into Arabic, and its spelling in English could not be verified. (Editor)

field, for you — the Muslim Arabs — are more able than us to carry out that research.”

And in Manchester, England, I met with Professor J. Robson, whose views for the most part are in agreement with Orientalists that are known for their fulminations against Islam. I tried to convince him that Orientalist studies in the past were biased and as a result, were prone to faulty logic and erroneous conclusions. I pointed out the many errors in the claims of Goldziher, claims that were inconsistent with historical facts. He politely assented, saying that he did hope to improve on the works of his predecessors.

In the University of Leyden, in Holland, I met with the Jewish Orientalist, Josef Schacht, who in those days, was the flag-bearer of Goldziher's message, a message that is wrought with distortions, misrepresentations, and twisting of facts, behind which he aimed at bringing down the foundation of Islamic legislation. I pointed out to Schacht the many errors of Goldziher's books, first beginning with his misrepresentation of Imam Az-Zuhri. Together we looked through reference books, and Schacht said, “You are right, Goldziher did make a mistake here.” I said, “Is it simply a mistake?” He flared up in anger and said, “Why do you accuse him?” I presented proof after proof, showing that Goldziher was wrong in many issues. As I was talking, Schacht noticeably became more and more enraged, and he refused to change his opinions in the least. It is interesting to note that Schacht wrote a book about the history of Islamic legislation; it is filled with distortions and lies, proving that he followed the same methodology as his teacher, Goldziher.

During my voyage, I was able to meet with many other professors from Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, and France. From my discussions and meetings with all of those professors, the following points became clear to me:

1. Among Orientalists, you will rarely find one who is not a priest, a colonialist, or a Jew.
2. Orientalists in non-colonialist countries, such as the Scandinavian countries, are less extreme in their views when compared with Orientalists in colonial countries.
3. In non-colonialist countries, contemporary Orientalists are willing to forsake the views of Goldziher as soon as the truth regarding his evil objectives become clear to them.
4. In a general sense, Orientalism is being spread through the church. In colonialist nations, the church and the foreign ministry work side-by-side, lending one another full cooperation.
5. Colonial countries such as Britain and France see Orientalist activities as being a tool they can use to attack Islam and to malign the reputation of Muslims.

The two most influential Orientalists in France today, Leon Bercher and Louis Massignon, work in the French foreign ministry as experts on Arab and Muslim affairs. And as we have seen, Orientalism is well accepted in British universities, such as the Universities of Oxford, London, Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. The Deans of Islamic Studies in those universities are not Muslims, but rather they are Jews, British colonialists, or missionaries. They are bent on keeping the books of Goldziher, Margoliouth, and Schacht the primary reference books of their faculties. If an Arab or a Muslim wishes to complete his thesis for his Ph.D., those in authority in the University will never permit him to do justice to Islam in his paper, nor will they allow him to speak against their ideals — that is how they apply the freedom of speech they so fervidly promote in their speeches.

Dr. Mohammed Ameen, a graduate of Azhar University, told me that he was appalled by how the Orientalists, especially Schacht,

distorted the teachings of Islam, and so he decided to make the topic of his thesis a criticism of Schacht's book. He told Professor Anderson what he wanted to do, hoping that, as the supervisor of the faculty, he would approve of the topic, but of course, he refused. When Muhammad lost hope at the University of London, he went to Cambridge and proposed the same topic for his Ph.D. thesis. However, he was plainly told that if he wanted to pass, it was better for him not to write negatively about Schacht, because the University would never allow that to happen. He then changed his topic to *The Standard of Hadith Criticism among the Scholars of Hadith*. Finally, they approved his topic, and he was able to gain his degree.

This, in short, is what I found through my own investigations about the Orientalists. I found that the books and opinions of Goldziher play a most important role in influencing and guiding Orientalists of today, and so I dedicated an entire chapter of this book to refuting his lies and distortions.

It is unfortunate to see that students of the Muslim world are to a great extent forced to enter English-language universities, and students of Islamic studies, not knowing the Arabic language, are limited to English-language sources. The same Orientalists we have just spoken of have written most of the books about Islam that are available in English and other European languages, and so Muslim students in Islamic universities unwittingly accept what they say as being the truth, especially since those authors claim to be taking from Muslim sources.

It is therefore crucial for our Arabic universities to plan and to establish some branches of our universities abroad and also to put together a curriculum in English, so that students can not only achieve their Ph.D. degrees while they study through the English medium, but can also learn the correct teachings of Islam. I think that that will serve to encourage many Muslim students to study in our

countries as opposed to universities from the West, and in that way they will have protected themselves from the propaganda and lies spread by the Orientalists and colonialists.

Muslim students are not alone in this regard, for a number of Muslim writers have also been deceived by the Orientalists in general, and by the Jewish Orientalist, Goldziher, in particular. Ahmad Ameen is one of them, and I have dedicated a chapter of this book to discussing his views. ‘Ali Hasan ‘Abdul-Qâdir is another example. When I was a student, studying in the second year of my degree program, ‘Abdul-Qâdir was assigned to teach us a class on the History of Islamic Legislation. He had just recently completed his studies in Germany, where he received his Ph.D. degree from the Faculty of Philosophy. He began his first lecture with approximately the following words: ‘I will teach you the history of Islamic Legislation, but upon a scholarly way that knows no precedent in Azhar University. I acknowledge before you that I have studied in Azhar for approximately fourteen years, without gaining a true understanding of Islam. I only understood Islam when I studied it in Germany.’

We were amazed at his words and we said among ourselves, “Let us hear what our teacher says, for perhaps he does have something worthwhile to teach us about Islam, even though he says that it is something new to Azhar.” He began his lesson with the history of the Prophet (ﷺ), and he was dictating from a huge volume he had before him, which we later found out to be *Muslim Studies*, by Goldziher. Our professor would quote Goldziher’s words and then comment on them as if they were established scholarly facts. We often protested, but he refused to go against Goldziher’s view in any matter whatsoever. Soon he came upon the section wherein Goldziher accused Imam Az-Zuhri, the Imam of the Sunnah, of having fabricated hadiths for the Banu Umayyah rulers. We debated

the issue with him, and just from general knowledge I had gained, I pointed out Imam Az-Zuhri's status as a trusted scholar of hadith, who, among the scholars, was above suspicion. However, Abdul-Qâdir did not budge in his view; he remained intransigent in the face of all argument and reasoning. I went to the library and sifted through any book I could get my hands upon in which Imam Az-Zuhri was discussed. My research about the Imam continued for three months; every night after I left the faculty, I would continue that research until the late hours of the night. After I had gleaned a good amount of authentic information, I said to the Professor, "It has become clear to me that Goldziher has distorted many facts that pertain to Az-Zuhri." Without even considering the proofs I had before me, he simply answered, "That is not possible, for the Orientalists — especially Goldziher — are a group of just scholars, who would never distort texts or facts!"

At this point, I decided to deliver a lecture on the topic. Upon reserving an auditorium, I sent invitation cards to the scholars and students of Azhar, among whom was 'Abdul-Qâdir, for his presence I especially desired. He graced us with his presence and I noticed that he carefully listened to the entire lecture, which revolved on the writings of Goldziher, but more specifically, on what he wrote about Imam Az-Zuhri. In my final words, I said, "This is my opinion regarding the topic and this is the opinion of our scholars about Imam Az-Zuhri. If our teacher, Dr. 'Abdul-Qâdir, disagrees with anything I have said, then I hope that he is willing to discuss the issue now." He stood up and proclaimed in a loud voice, "I admit that I had not known who Az-Zuhri was until now, and I object to nothing that you have said."

The above-mentioned incident between 'Abdul-Qâdir and me was the reason why I wrote this book. I think that Dr. 'Abdul-Qâdir did change his opinion in the end, realizing that the Orientalists were not honorable and trustworthy in their research.

Abu Rayyah is the third author from the Muslim nation who I found to be influenced by Goldziher. I sincerely hope that he reads this book with the desire to seek out the truth, and perhaps, *inshâ' Allâh*,⁶ he will retract many of the views that he expounded in *Aḍwâ' 'Al as-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*.

Some final words about the Orientalists

Since the end of the crusades, or if you will, since the time when the crusaders met with military and political failures, the West has continually sought to exact revenge against Islam and its adherents through other means. The first strategy they resorted to was to study Islam and then to present its teachings in a negative light. And no sooner did Muslim countries begin to suffer economically, politically, militarily, and intellectually than did the West decide to control Muslim lands through the use of power. They seized control of country after country, and as soon as the West gained control over most Muslim lands, they began to study Islam more vigorously in order to justify their colonial ambitions. In the last century they were able to study and research Islamic civilization from many perspectives — for example, from religious, historical, and societal perspectives. However, they did not arrive at the truth in their research, mainly for two reasons:

First, many political and military leaders in Europe were driven by religious fanaticism. When the Allies entered Jerusalem in World War I, Lord Allenby said his famous words, “Now the crusades have truly come to an end.” As for religious fanaticism, its effects are still felt in much that is written by Western writers about Islam. When we find that a Western writer has done justice to Islam in his research, we

⁶ Allah willing.

will more often than not find that he is one who has forsaken not only Christianity, but all forms of religion as well. The most prominent example in this regard is the book *The Civilization of the Arabs* by Gustave Le Bon, for it is perhaps the most unbiased book authored by a Western writer who wrote about Islam and its civilization.

Gustave Le Bon⁷ is a philosopher who rejects all religions. For that reason and because he is fair to Islam, Western scholasticism ignores his research, considering it to be of no value. Without a doubt, he is perhaps one of the more eminent scholars of history and sociology in the 19th century, yet for the reasons mentioned above, Western scholars disparage him.

Second, material as well as intellectual prosperity achieved by the West in the 18th and 19th centuries has had the effect of instilling a great deal of pride and haughtiness in the hearts of their scholars, writers, and historians. They go as far as to claim that, with the exception of the Egyptians, they represent the root of all civilizations. They claim that the Western mind is one that is precise and is able to think logically. As for other peoples, especially Muslims, their minds are simple and slow. They base their judgments on what they witnessed from the weak populace that they colonized, weak in their ignorance and in their backwardness.

When we came into close contact with Western civilization at the beginning of this century, with the exception of scholars of the Sharia, Muslim intellectuals could not compete with Western scholars in presenting their heritage in the form of organized and lucid scholarly research, for ancient books of our civilization are disorganized when compared to the ordered scholarly work of

⁷ Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931) was a French social scientist and philosopher. Originally trained as a physician, Le Bon's primary contribution was in sociology, where he developed major theories on crowd behavior. (Editor)

Western writers. As for our heritage, it was the Orientalists who dedicated their lives to studying our culture, our treasury of books, and our civilization. It is not an exaggeration to say that one of them would spend 20 years in writing a book on a very specific topic related to our history, and during that research, he would refer to any reference book he could get his hands on from the works of our early scholars.

Because of their continual efforts and because of their total dedication to colonial and religious ambitions, they were able to organize their research about our civilization in such a way as amazed our own intellectuals, especially when our intellectuals compared the order and methodology of their books with the disorder and lack of methodology in ours. They hastened to accept and take from Orientalist books, being deceived into thinking that their knowledge was vast, and moreover, being deceived into thinking that they only spoke the truth. They felt that Orientalists followed a precise set of principles in their scholarly research, from which they never deviated. And this is how some Muslims came to trust the research and studies carried out by Orientalists.

Those intellectuals who readily accepted the views of Orientalists did not refer to the same Islamic reference sources that the Orientalists referred to, either because,

- They found it difficult to get their hands on those sources
- They desired a quick road to scholarly achievement
- Or their desires led them to want to bring forth ideas that are contrary to what is accepted in religious or scholarly circles in Muslim lands, i.e., they desired notoriety.

For a period of time, a feeling of weakness and insignificance overwhelmed many among us; some of us lost trust in ourselves due to our being in awe of Western researchers. But as soon as we were able to shed off the shackles of political subjugation, we began to feel

that it was necessary to achieve intellectual independence as well, and we began to feel the true value of our heritage and civilization. We even began to feel ashamed for our previous attitudes and for the way in which we depended totally on Orientalists to learn about our own heritage, beliefs, and legislations. This new consciousness permeated the ranks of religious scholars as well as scholars from other fields. We discerned that the Orientalists had an agenda that consisted of religious as well as colonial objectives. Though we have not achieved as much as we had hoped to achieve in terms of that independence, we continue to work and strive, by the will of Allah (ﷻ).

The day will come, *inshâ' Allâh*, when the tables will be turned and we will study Western heritage, producing criticism of their religion, their sciences, and their civilization. At that time, our children and grandchildren will use the same principles of criticism that Western scholars themselves invented, in order to study Western civilization, and in order to show the decadence and disintegration of Western society.

If we were to use Western standards of scholarly research in criticizing historical and sacred books of Western civilization, we would certainly prove them to be of questionable worth and authenticity. If we were to use the same principles in criticizing their civilization and culture as they use in criticizing our history, I am sure that we would arrive at results that would be highly unfavorable to them. I often wish that our scholars had the time and resources to study Western civilization in the same detail and depth that Western scholars study our civilization. Perhaps that would make Western scholars feel ashamed of the distortions and lies they resort to when they attack Islam and Muslims.

At any rate, I feel that we must no longer depend on Orientalists to learn our religion and our past, for the reference books

they rely on are none other than the books of our predecessors, even though we have hitherto been ignorant of them. If there remains any Muslim who is still under the spell of Orientalist research, then let him read this book and others like it that expose the plots and lies of the Orientalists.

But if we are to be severe with those who distort the truth, then we must be just and fair with those who are just and fair, for knowledge is not held as a monopoly by a single nation. Islam is Allah's religion for all of humankind; it is therefore not possible that only one nation or group of people understands it to the exclusion of others. Anyone can, by the will of Allah, understand it, provided that one adorns himself with the qualities of the true scholars — justice, integrity, and a sincere desire to learn and then to disseminate the truth. Let us read what Gustave Le Bon wrote⁸ in *The Civilization of the Arabs*:

“The reader may then ask, why do present-day scholars deny (and attempt to hide) the contribution of the Arabs even though those scholars give, at least in appearance, more importance to freedom of thought and expression than to any religious principle? I asked myself this question as well, and the only answer I can find is that our freedom of thought is limited to outward appearance only, and that we are not truly free to think as we wish to think upon certain issues. Anyone of us is composed of two personalities: the first is formed through study and intellectual pursuits, while the second is formed by biased and intransigent thinking that has its source in the works of our fathers and grandfathers... The truth is that the followers of

⁸ Due to the fact that Le Bon, like the other European scholars mentioned by the author, wrote not in Arabic but in a European language, the words in this ‘quote’, and the others like it in this book, are not his own, but the translator’s rendition of the words of the Arab scholar who had originally rendered the meaning of the French-language text into Arabic. (Editor)

Muhammad have remained bitter enemies of Europe for a number of centuries. When they have not instilled terror into us with their weapons... they have humiliated us with the superiority of their civilization. And it is only yesterday that we have freed ourselves from their penetration. Through inheritance from our forebears, we have accumulated a great deal of myths about Islam and Muslims, to the extent that the animosity we feel toward them has become a deep-rooted instinctive feeling, such as is the deep-rooted malice that the Jews have for the Christians, which is hidden sometimes, but which always runs deep. Compounded with our inherited myths (against Islam) are the myths that tell us that Greek and Latin alone are the sources of knowledge and manners from the past. From these factors, it is easy to understand our general disregard for the great contribution of the Arabs in the civilization of Europe..."

Moving on to Muslims who are disciples of the Orientalists, we must give consideration — only because he thrust himself upon us — to Abu Rayyah and his writings. When one thinks of Abu Rayyah, the question arises, what sources did he depend on to arrive at his conclusions, which, for the most part, are contrary to the views of most Muslims? In *Hikâyat*, Abu Rayyah relies on books of literature to establish historical facts. Whereas he rejects all that is related by the Imams of Hadith and fiqh, he readily accepts from books that were not written for the purpose of relating the biographies of important historical figures, but rather were written to provide anecdotes and stories for people to amuse themselves in their gatherings. Although that was the purpose of those books, Abu Rayyah uses what is written in them as proofs to establish a dangerous claim, one that attacks the very foundations of Islamic legislation. We must ask ourselves, is this a dignified and honest and scholarly approach to any academic research? Or is Abu Rayyah simply following the methodology of his predecessor, Goldziher,

who rejected all that was in *al-Muwattâ'*, by Mâlik, while he accepted all that he found in *Ḥayât al-Ḥayawân*, by Ad-Dumairee?

It is a known and accepted fact among our scholars that knowledge of hadith is not taken from books of jurisprudence, from books of *tafseer*⁹, or from books of literature, simply because every branch of knowledge has sources and reference books that are particular to it. Also agreed upon by scholars is that knowledge of history may only be taken from authentic, trusted sources. So when one establishes occurrences from sources that are not trustworthy, his research is of no scholarly value, and moreover he has no place among the honored scholars.

Then what can we say about Abu Rayyah, who has delved into a most dangerous topic in an attempt to destroy the reputation of a man who, for fourteen centuries, from the time of the Companions until our present time, has had an honored and high status in the hearts of millions, some among whom are revered scholars. And in that research, Abu Rayyah relies on *Thimâr al-Quloob*, by Ath-Tha'âlibee; *Maqâmât Badee' az-Zamân*, by Al-Himdhânee; and *al-Hilyah*, by Abu Na'eem. This last book was written for Muslims of an ascetic bent, and it contains many narrations that are not authentic. The author never claimed that his book should be used as a reference in history. Anyone who has read it and has followed up on its chains knows that it contains both authentic and unauthentic narrations.

We can summarize the conclusions of Abu Rayyah's research as follows:

1. He maintains that the Sunnah was not officially recorded during the life of the Prophet (ﷺ). He says that the reason why it was not recorded during that period was because the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade that

⁹ Exegesis or explanation of the meaning of the Qur'an.

from happening. And in this regard, his conclusions are in accordance with those of the majority of scholars.

2. Abu Rayyah said that, because the Sunnah was not recorded during the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), differences resulted among various Muslims factions, and furthermore, fabricated hadith narrations were allowed to spread. Hence according to Abu Rayyah, the Prophet (ﷺ) was the cause of much wrongdoing, and had he been endowed with the foresight of Abu Rayyah, that wrongdoing would have been prevented! I do not know — is Abu Rayyah pleased with the implications of his conclusions? I do not think that any Muslim who believes in Allah and the Last Day can reach such a level of haughtiness. The only excuse we can find for him is that he was not able to work out all of the implications of his conclusions.

3. He does not regard the authentic Sunnah as being a legislative authority that Muslims must follow. The religion, according to him, is the Qur'an, supplemented by Sunnah acts, but not Sunnah sayings. Oral narrations, according to him, are not to be applied; rather, one may take from them what one pleases and abandon what one pleases. Not only is this claim contrary to the clear verses of Allah's Book, it is also an invitation to chaos in beliefs and in legislation, which no man who is honorable in himself or in his religion would call to.

4. He judges the scholars of Islam to be unfit for the task of scrutinizing the Sunnah and distinguishing between the authentic and fabricated; he instead considers men of literature and philosophy from the Mu'tazilah to be worthy judges in that regard.

5. Abu Rayyah claims that, over a span of thirteen centuries, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) has deceived the Companions, the *tâbi'oon*,¹⁰ the jurists of Islam, and the Imams of hadith. Over and over again, he

¹⁰ Those who knew or met any of the Companions and transmitted hadiths from them.

claims that they were blind to his lies and deceptions. It is unfortunate, in his view, that the Muslims have been blessed by his superior intellect only after thirteen centuries of waiting.

6. His next claim is as follows: Because fabrications crept into compilations of the Sunnah, because some narrations are related by meaning only, and because some narrators made mistakes in their narrations, the Sunnah in its entirety is open to doubt. Abu Rayyah was not the first to make this claim; it was his forebears, or rather his colonial masters, who have always attempted to establish it. But then Abu Rayyah had the temerity to claim that he authored his book in order to defend the Sunnah and that his intention all along was to please Allah (ﷻ). This was the first time I had heard that one supports a view or an idea by raising doubts about it or that one serves Islam by cooperating with its enemies. Indeed, we belong to Allah, and to Him is our return.

7. He raised doubts about every authentic narration that contains information that is also found in the books of the Jews and Christians. He maintains that if a hadith confirms what is in the Torah and the Bible, we can be sure that a Jew or a Christian fabricated the hadith. He then says that if a hadith informs us about something from the Torah or Bible, yet we do not now find those words in the Torah or Bible, then we can also be sure that those hadiths are fabrications! This is not the talk of a scholar; more than anything, it seems like the contradictory prattle of a man totally bereft of knowledge. As regards the Torah, the Bible, and all other books of previous Prophets, Allah (ﷻ) clarified the following two principles:

First, that Allah (ﷻ) revealed those books to the Prophets and that the principal teachings of those books are one and the same.

Second, the followers of those Prophets later on distorted and changed those revealed Books.

﴿... يَحْفُوتُ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ...﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١٣)

﴿... They change the words from their [right] places...﴾ (Qur'an 5: 13)

The way of the believing scholar, therefore, is to compare an authentically narrated hadith to Allah's Book. If the former is in harmony with the latter, then his heart is at peace with that hadith and he believes it to be true. But if its implications are contrary to Allah's Book — and there does not exist a single authentic hadith of this description — then one may reject that narration, no matter how much he trusts the narrators.

It is this principle that our scholars followed from the time of the Companions until later generations - they would take from the people of the book so long as their narrations did not contradict Allah's Book, the authentic Sunnah, or the universal principles of Islam. If a narration from the People of the Book did contradict any of those three, then scholars would reject that narration. Abu Rayyah invents a new methodology: any hadith that speaks about the Torah or the Bible is a lie, fabricated by the Jews or Christians. Based on this understanding, he rejected Abu Hurayrah's narrations from Ka'b, in which it is affirmed that the Torah mentions the name of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). In this and similar narrations, he accused the Jews who accepted Islam of inventing lies.

If Abu Rayyah is the eminent scholar that he considers himself to be, how did he arrive at that conclusion, when it is clear that verses of the Qur'an establish the same facts that are established in the said narration?

﴿الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي

التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ...﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٥٧)

﴿Those who follow the Messenger, the prophet who can neither read

nor write [i.e. Muhammad] whom they find written with them in the Torah, and Gospel...»
(Qur'an 7: 157)

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدٌ...﴾ (سورة الصف: ٦)

«And [remember] when 'Eesa [Jesus], son of Maryam [Mary], said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, confirming the Torah which came before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.'...»
(Qur'an 61: 6)

﴿مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرْتَلِمُ وَرُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَرَّةٍ أَخْرَجَ سَطْرَهُ فَتَارَزَهُ فَنَسَّغَلَطَ فَمَا اسْتَوَى عَلَى سَوْفِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزَّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ...﴾ (سورة الفتح: ٢٩)

«Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful to each other. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate [in prayer], seeking Bounty from Allah and [His] Good Pleasure. The mark of them [of their Faith] is on their faces [foreheads] from the traces of prostration [during prayers]. This is their description in the Torah. But their description in the Gospel is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the disbelievers with them...»
(Qur'an 48: 29)

These verses from Allah's Book clearly show that the name of the Messenger (ﷺ) is explicitly mentioned both in the Torah and in the Bible; furthermore, he (ﷺ) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) are described in those sources. Where is the

contradiction in these verses? And why is it so strange that one who accepted Islam from the People of the Book should know that the name of the Prophet (ﷺ) is mentioned in the Torah or the Bible? It is true that the information we receive from some narrations is not found today in the Torah or the Bible, but does that indicate that those narrations are fabricated? The obvious and plain answer is no; the reason that the Bible or the Torah do not contain some of the information found in authentic hadith narrations is given to us by Allah (ﷻ), when He (ﷻ) told us that the Christians and the Jews distorted the books that were revealed to their Prophets (ﷺ). Abu Rayyah can either acknowledge that the Bible and Torah still remain authentic and unadulterated revealed sources, in which case he will disbelieve in every single authentic narration from the Prophet (ﷺ) that gives us some information about them; or he can acknowledge that the Bible and the Torah have been changed and distorted, in which case he should acknowledge and accept authentic hadiths, even if the information imparted to us in those hadiths is not found today in the Bible and the Torah. But the reasoning he presents is self-contradictory. He says:

— that if a narration is in accordance with the Torah and the Bible, we know that the narration is fabricated by a Jew or a Christian.
— and that if a narration imparts knowledge about those two sources, but is not found today in them, we again know that the narration is a fabrication.

8. After having criticized our pious predecessors for their dereliction in scrutinizing hadith narrations, Abu Rayyah mentioned a principle through which we can avoid making the same mistakes: to compare a hadith to the mind; if it is in harmony with the mind, Abu Rayyah accepts it, and if not, then he rejects it. The idea of testing the validity of a hadith by comparing it to what one's mind accepts is an old one, which the Mu'tazilah applied; they would reject every hadith that the 'clear mind' rejected.

Today, it is the Orientalists who are proponents of that idea; Ahmad Ameen follows them in that view, for he mentioned a number of authentic hadiths that, in his opinion, are not accepted by the mind. We dedicated a chapter of this book to discussing some of the hadiths that Ameen rejected. After mentioning the principle of testing a hadith by comparing it to what the mind accepts, Abu Rayyah said, "Had scholars from the early generations applied this principle, they would have purified the Sunnah from much extraneous matter that clung to it."

Although this principle is accepted by Abu Rayyah and others of his ilk, it is one that has no value in the Sharia, for it results in nothing other than chaos in the sphere of discerning between authentic and weak narrations. What is the 'clear mind' that Abu Rayyah is referring to? If by the 'clear mind' he is referring to what the mind accepts as being an indisputable truth, then that is something that the scholars of hadith have already established. They say that from the signs of a hadith being fabricated is, 'that its text is contrary to indisputable facts or sure knowledge from Religion, history, medicine, and so on'. Based on this principle, scholars of hadith have ruled thousands of narrations to be fabricated.

But if he is referring to what the mind finds strange, then amazement or astonishment in the mind is a relative matter which has to do with one's environment, one's level of education, and other factors which cannot be quantified by any measurement. Something might be strange to one person, yet normal and ordinary to another. In some rural areas, where people lived far away from cities, they were amazed when they heard about cars. They were not able to visualize a moving vehicle that was not propelled by horses. But in the West or in cities, cars were already common, everyday machines. A Bedouin in the desert would be astonished when he heard about the radio and considered it to be one of the lies of city folk; when the

Bedouin heard the radio for the first time, he thought that it was the devil that was speaking to him, just as a very young child thinks that a man is actually inside the radio, speaking to him.

There is surely nothing in Islam that the mind rejects as being impossible. As in all previously revealed religions, there are matters that the mind finds strange, not being able to visualize or fully comprehend them — for example, Paradise and Hell. When a Muslim hears something that the mind rejects as being impossible, he also rejects that thing; yet he takes his time in ascertaining the facts about a matter that he finds to be strange. In Islam, certainty of knowledge is established by one of three ways:

1. Truthful information which the receiver hears from someone whose truthfulness he is sure about, such as information we receive from Allah (ﷻ) in His Book and information we receive from the Prophets.
2. Experience or experimentation or something we clearly witness through our senses, after first making sure that the experiment is valid and correctly applied.
3. The judgment of the mind in a matter wherein there is no authentic information and no valid experience that is attested to by the senses.

These three sources of knowledge are mentioned in this verse:

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ

(سورة الإسراء: ٣٦)

مَسْئُولًا ﴿٣٦﴾

﴿And do not follow [do not say, nor do, nor witness] that of which you have no knowledge. Verily! the hearing, and the sight, and the heart, about each of those you will be questioned [by Allah].﴾

(Qur'an 17: 36)

It is one of the miracles of the Qur'an that they are mentioned in order:

1. Hearing or truthful information.
2. Sight or that which we experience or witness.
3. The heart, or seeking judgment in the mind.

Based on what we know from this verse, any information that is not established from the said three sources is not considered to be knowledge; rather, it is near certainty (which falls short of sure knowledge), or thinking something to be true (which is definitely not knowledge), or imagining something to be true.

The foundations of Islamic beliefs must be established through knowledge, through 'absolute certainty of knowledge which corresponds to reality, and which is established by proof'. Examples of this are faith in Allah and His perfect attributes, in the Books, in the Prophets, in the Angels, in Paradise, and in Hell. But as for matters that pertain to jurisprudence — legislations that are applied through practice — then near certainty is sufficient. Many rulings in Islam cannot practically be established if we stipulate absolute, sure knowledge. The scholars of Islam are in agreement regarding this principle.

Among the wealth of hadiths that our scholars have authenticated, there is nothing that the mind rejects as being impossible. Authentic hadith narrations may pertain to matters of belief; we know that such matters must be in harmony with the Qur'an, and we are absolutely sure that there is nothing in the Qur'an that the mind rejects as being impossible. Hadith narrations may also pertain to jurisprudence — in terms of worship, dealings, and manners; and there is not a single authentic hadith from this category that the mind rejects as being impossible. Finally, narrations may be about past nations or about the unseen world — such as matters pertaining to the hereafter. There is nothing in this regard that the sound mind can outright reject as being impossible, though there might be matters which the mind cannot comprehend, finding them to be strange.

If a narration is related through *mutawâtir*¹¹ and authentic chains, it imparts absolute, sure knowledge. If it is related through *ahâd*¹² chains, it imparts almost sure knowledge, in which case the Muslim accepts it as well. From what we have said until now, we see that many people do not distinguish between what the mind rejects as being impossible and between what the mind finds to be strange — they equate the two matters, disbelieving in both. Whereas the former stems from the impossibility of a matter, the latter stems from an inability of the mind to visualize it or comprehend it. And there is a great difference between what is impossible and what is not comprehended.

Throughout history, there are many examples of matters that were obscure to one generation but then later became clear and understood to another generation. On the other hand, many matters were considered to be accepted truths, whereas later they were established to be false notions. What was impossible yesterday today becomes a reality. We do not have a short supply of examples in this regard, for we live in a period wherein humans have discovered much in the field of technology. If anyone from the Middle Ages had said that men would walk on the moon, people would have considered him to be a madman.

Whenever Abu Rayyah and others of his ilk — those who call for the mind to be a judge over hadith — have ruled a hadith to be a

¹¹ A category of hadith describing narrations that are related by one or two narrators who in turn related it from one or two narrators until the chain ends at the Prophet, or a narration that is related by a group of narrators who constitute a number that is still fewer than the minimum requirement for the *mutawâtir* narration.

¹² A category of hadith describing narrations that are related by a group of upright and trustworthy narrators who also related from a group of upright and trustworthy narrators, and so on, until the narration ends at the Prophet.

lie, the hadith has to do either with information about past nations or with matters that pertain to the unseen. Let us consider this example: Muslim reported from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, «Indeed in Paradise there is a tree, under whose shade a rider travels for 100 years.»¹³ This is an example of a hadith related by Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that Abu Rayyah rejects. We ask Abu Rayyah, how are the implications of this hadith impossible? Is it because in it is the mention of a tree in Paradise, under whose shade a rider travels for 100 years? Is not Paradise one of the matters of the unseen? Other than from what we know from Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), does Abu Rayyah have any additional information about what is in Paradise? At the present time, we know that the universe is so enormous that the mind cannot even visualize its enormity; astronomers describe to us the vastness of the universe and the relatively miniscule size of Earth. What is truly strange is that Abu Rayyah believes what astronomers tell him about the vastness of the universe, and then disbelieves in the Messenger (ﷺ) — who was supported by revelation and who received his knowledge from Allah (ﷻ), the Creator of the universe. And what are those hundred years when compared to the thousands of light years that astronomers talk about? The problem with Abu Rayyah and others like him is that their main wish is to deify their minds.

In short, to make one's mind a judge over revelation is nothing other than a sign pointing to the foolishness of one's mind, an organ that, for the most part, leads its possessor to disbelief. It is better for the mind to think in those spheres that it is able to think in. If a person is not able to grasp the secret of his own life and if he is not able to comprehend an atom's worth of knowledge in the vast desert of our universe, then how is he able to judge revelation, whose source is the Creator of the entire universe?

¹³ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 11, p. 30, hadith no. 3013.

Let us suppose for a moment that making the mind a judge over hadiths is a correct concept. We ask — which mind are they referring to? Is it the minds of the philosophers? They differ greatly among themselves; every new philosopher that comes contradicts the one who came before him. Is it the minds of men of literature and art? This is not their field, for they are concerned with aesthetic beauty, with what is rare, what is witty, what is funny, or what is stimulating to the senses. Is it the minds of doctors, engineers, or mathematicians? What do they have to do with this matter? Is it the minds of hadith scholars? They do not impress you; instead, you accuse them of being simple and dull-witted. Is it the minds of jurists? They are divided into many schools of thought, and at any rate, their minds, in your opinion, are the same as that of hadith scholars. Is it the minds of atheists? They consider your belief in the existence of Allah to be an indication of your ignorance and foolishness. Is it the minds of those who believe in the existence of Allah? These too are divided into many groups: some believe that Allah is reincarnated in the shape of a man; others believe that Allah and His creation are one and the same entity; others believe that Allah is made up of three parts; and others believe that a cow, a mouse, and a monkey should all be worshipped. If you say that we should make the mind of the believer in one God and in the religion of Islam a judge, then we ask you, the mind of which school of thought or sect pleases you? Is it the mind of one who is from the people of the Sunnah? Or is it the mind of one who ascribes himself to the Shi'ah, the Mu'tazilah, or the Khawârij? Abu Rayyah will say, "I choose the minds of the Mu'tazilah because they possess clear minds."

We will then mention to Abu Rayyah an example of a hadith that the Mu'tazilah reject. In *Ta'weel Mukhtalif al-Hadeeth*, Ibn Qutaybah related that the Mu'tazilah rejected the following hadith based on their principle of charging the mind with the duty of being a judge over hadith narrations: «When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

died, his armor was being held as security by a Jew for an amount of barley.»¹⁴ They say that the mind rejects this narration. We ask Abu Rayyah, what was it in the minds of the Mu‘tazilah that made them reject this hadith? The following is another example of a debate that took place between the mind of Ibn Qutaybah, the hadith scholar, and the mind of a Mu‘tazilee. Ibn Qutaybah said:

“They (the Mu‘tazilah) say that the following hadith is false from its beginning to its end.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said: «If one of you wakes up from his sleep, then he should not dip his hand in the basin until he washes it three times, for one of you does not know where his hand spent the night.»¹⁵ They said, “This hadith would have been plausible were it not for the saying, *for one of you does not know where his hand spent the night*. Every one of us knows that his hand spends the night in the same place that his body spends the night and that his leg, ear, and nose spend the night. The worst that could have happened is that he touched his private part during sleep. If a man would touch his private part while he is awake, that does not nullify his purity, so how is it different when he touches it while he is unconscious of what he is doing? Allah (ﷻ) does not hold people accountable for that which they do not know. While one is sleeping, one may unknowingly utter words of disbelief, and one is not held accountable for that, neither in rulings pertaining to the world nor in rulings pertaining to the hereafter.’ ”

Ibn Qutaybah responded,

“The person who made this argument had knowledge regarding one matter but was ignorant in many matters. Did he not know that many scholars of jurisprudence hold that it is compulsory to make ablutions if one touches his private part, regardless of whether that happens

¹⁴ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 10, p. 57, hadith no. 2700.

¹⁵ Reported by Muslim, vol. 2, p. 116, hadith no. 416.

when he is sleeping or when he is awake? They base their ruling on this hadith: «Whoever touches his private part, then let him make ablution.»¹⁶ And at any rate, that is not our view; we maintain that the ablution meant for touching one's private part is washing one's hand, and that is because the private parts are orifices through which impurities exit... one might touch his front or rear private part while he is sleeping, and if that happens, his hand may have made contact with certain impurities. This ruling is specifically for one who is sleeping because he is not conscious of the fact that he has touched his private part, whereas one who is awake is aware of that happening and he hastens to wash his hands before he dips them into a basin or before he eats or before he shakes hands with others. Add to this the fact that general principles of hygiene make the mind of the doctor in agreement with the mind of the hadith scholar in this issue, and not the mind of the Mu'tazilee.

In short, the Imams of hadith and Muslim jurists have not forsaken the use of their minds when authenticating hadith narrations, but rather they have limited the scope of how they use their minds based on principles of the Sharia. Finally, here are, in summary, my views on Abu Rayyah:

— Although I do not wish to judge the intentions of Abu Rayyah — or any other person for that matter — it is hard to believe his claim that he wrote his book to defend the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ).

— He constantly mentions the pains he went to in going about his research. Yet at the same time he rejects the painstaking efforts of all scholars of the Sunnah, from the time of the Companions until today. He did not stop to consider that those scholars would travel thousands of kilometers by foot in order to seek out knowledge; they

¹⁶ Reported by Ad-Dâraqutni, vol. 2, p. 92, hadith no. 538; hadith status: *ṣaḥeḥ* (authentic).

would travel for many years and they would stay awake during nights, with a single lamp that provided them with enough light to read and gain knowledge. Despite those efforts, they did not dwell in their writings on the great service they were rendering to the Muslim Nation.

— He lacks all qualities of humbleness, for from the beginning of his book until its end he continually praises his own work. Meanwhile, we know that the most prominent characteristics of the Muslim scholar is his humbleness, and one of the most despicable of qualities for a scholar to be adorned with is haughtiness.

— When he refutes someone, he uses the harshest and most obscene language possible. Was it from the new principles he established that a scholar should lack manners and should be vile in his speech? What I do know is that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «Modesty is part of Faith...»¹⁷ If he does not believe this narration because it was related by Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), then let him consider this narration, which is related by Zayd ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Rukânah (رضي الله عنه): «Indeed every religion has its manners, and the manner of Islam is modesty.»¹⁸

I ask Allah (ﷻ) to guide us to the truth and to make us firm upon it, and I ask Him to keep us away from falling into error and to grant us wisdom and uprightness in our affairs.

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¹⁷ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 40, hadith no. 23.

¹⁸ Reported by Ibn Mâjah, nol. 1. p. 159, hadith status: *jayyid* (good), said by Shaykh Albâni in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Jâmi'*.

SECTION ONE

**The Meaning of the Sunnah
and how it was
Transmitted and Recorded**

This Section Consists of Four Chapters

1. The Definition of the Sunnah and the Stance of the Companions vis-à-vis the Sunnah
2. Fabrications — How they Originated? When? And Why?
3. The Efforts of the Scholars to Purify and Authenticate the Sunnah
4. The Fruits of their Efforts

CHAPTER ONE

The Definition of “Sunnah”

According to its original meaning in the Arabic language, *Sunnah* means a way, regardless of whether the intended way is praiseworthy or detestable. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, «Whoever sets a precedent for a good Sunnah, then he has its reward and the reward of all who apply it until the Day of Resurrection. And whoever sets a precedent for an evil Sunnah, then upon him is its sin and the sin of all who apply it until the Day of Resurrection.»¹

The meaning of ‘Sunnah’ as an Islamic term depends on who is defining it — that is, it depends on the branch of Islamic knowledge that one specializes in:

1. The definition of ‘Sunnah’ according to the scholar of hadith: All that has been related from the Prophet (ﷺ) — from his speech, actions, approvals, physical or moral attributes, or biography, regardless of whether any of above is from the period before the first revelation or after it. And as such, ‘Sunnah’ is a synonym of *Hadith*.
2. According to the scholar of *uṣool al-fiqh*²: All that has been related from the Prophet (ﷺ) in terms of his speech, action, or approval.

¹ Related by Muslim in a hadith narrated by Jareer ibn ‘Abdullâh al-Bajalee.

² Principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

To this scholar, Sunnah might also mean that which an Islamic proof indicates, regardless of whether that proof is the Noble Qur'an, the Prophet's Sunnah, or the *ijtihâd*³ of a Companion. For example, to him, what 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) did in terms of making people stick to one recitation is Sunnah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, «You must follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs after me.» The opposite of Sunnah in this sense is *bid'ah*⁴.

3. According to the scholar of *fiqh*:⁵ That which is established from the Prophet (ﷺ), but is not obligatory. To a *faqeeh*⁶, 'Sunnah' sometimes simply means the opposite of *bid'ah*, which is why scholars say, 'The Sunnah divorce', and 'The Bid'ah divorce'.

The Prophet's speech is a part of the first and second definition. His speech, then, includes all that he spoke on different occasions when what he said had to do with Islamic legislations, such as his saying, «Deeds are based on intentions», or his saying, «The choice (to rescind) remains with the buyer and seller as long as they do not part from one another».⁷

The Prophet's actions include all that the Companions related from the Prophet's deeds in affairs of worship and otherwise. For example, the way in which he prayed, fasted, or performed Hajj, or for instance, his ruling based on one witness and an oath.

The Prophet's approval refers to any occasion on which he approved of an action that issued from his Companions. He might

³ To use one's knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to derive rulings on matters not specifically mentioned in either source of Islamic law.

⁴ Innovation.

⁵ Jurisprudence.

⁶ Scholar of jurisprudence.

⁷ Related by Bukhari and Muslim from 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

have demonstrated his approval by silence, by some signal of satisfaction, or by openly praising and supporting an action.

An example of the Prophet's silent approval occurred during the battle of Banu Quraydhah, when he said to an expedition, «Let none of you pray except in Banu Quraydhah.»⁸ Some of the Companions applied the prohibition in the literal sense, so they ended up delaying the 'aṣr⁹ prayer until after *maghrib*¹⁰. Others had another understanding of the Prophet's words: simply that they should hurry and try to reach Banu Quraydhah before the time of *maghrib*, and so they ended up performing the 'aṣr Prayer on time. When the Prophet (ﷺ) heard what the two groups had done, he implicitly approved of both groups by censuring neither.

An example of his spoken approval involves the companion Khâlid ibn al-Waleed (رضي الله عنه). He was eating the meat of a lizard that had been presented to the Prophet (ﷺ), who abstained from eating it. Some of Companions asked, «'Is eating it *ḥarâm*,¹¹ O Messenger of Allah?» He (ﷺ) said, 'No, but it is not common in the land of my people, and I find myself to be repulsed by it.'¹²

The reason why their definitions differ is because the scholar of each Islamic science has a specific and unique goal toward which his studies progress.

The scholar of hadith researches the life of the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and peace be upon him) as an Imam, a guide, for

⁸ Related by Bukhari and Muslim from Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

⁹ Mid-afternoon.

¹⁰ Sunset.

¹¹ Forbidden.

¹² Related by Bukhari and Muslim from Ibn 'Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with him).

Allah (ﷻ) informed us that he (ﷻ) is our example and model. Therefore he relates all that has to do with the Prophet's biography, with his manners, with his sayings, with his attributes, and with his actions — regardless of whether any of the above actually establishes an Islamic ruling.

The scholar of *uṣool* (principles of fiqh) sees the Messenger of Allah (ﷻ) as a legislator, who laid down the rules of legislation for *mujtahideen*¹³ who were to come after him. This scholar concentrates on the Prophet's sayings, actions, and approvals when they either establish or confirm an Islamic ruling.

The scholar of fiqh studies the life of the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and peace be upon him), knowing that all of his actions point to an Islamic ruling. He studies Islamic rulings in relation to human actions — whether a specific action is forbidden, permissible, compulsory, and so on.

For the purposes of our study here, we mean by 'Sunnah' is that which the *uṣool* scholars asserted, because their definition revolves around the Sunnah as a proof and refers to the status of the Sunnah in Islamic legislation — with the knowledge that historically speaking, 'Sunnah' generally carries the meaning of the more comprehensive of the definitions, the definition asserted by the hadith scholar.

¹³ Scholars who use their knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to derive rulings on matters not specifically mentioned in either source of Islamic law; i.e., they practice *ijtihād*.

It was obligatory to follow the Prophet (ﷺ) during his lifetime, and after his death as well

First, during the Prophet's life

During the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), His Companions would receive religious rulings from the Qur'an, which they would learn from the Prophet (ﷺ). However, many verses imparted general commands, without laying out the details for how those commands should be followed; meanwhile, other verses imparted commands without mentioning restrictions or limitations for the application of those commands. For example, the Qur'an orders us to pray, yet it does not mention the details of prayer — the number of its units, its timings, and how it is performed. The Qur'an orders us to pay *zakât*¹⁴, yet it does not limit its applicability to those who have the minimum amount of wealth for *zakât* to be mandatory. Likewise, there are many other commands that we cannot apply unless we know various details related to those commands. Therefore, during the Prophet's lifetime, the Companions had to go directly to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in order to gain a detailed and clear understanding of many rulings.

Similarly, the Companions faced many situations regarding which the Qur'an made no specific mention; the rulings that applied to those situations, then, had to be clarified by the Prophet (ﷺ), for he (ﷺ) was a Messenger from his Lord, and among the creation, he best knew the goals, principles, and limits of Allah's Sharia.

In the Qur'an, Allah informed us of the Prophet's responsibility regarding the Qur'an — to clarify its meanings and verses.

¹⁴ Obligatory charity: An 'alms tax' on wealth payable by Muslims and to be distributed to other Muslims who qualify as recipients.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

(سورة التحل: ٤٤)



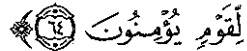
﴿... And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the reminder and the advice [the Qur'an], that you may explain clearly to people what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought.﴾

(Qur'an 16: 44)

The Prophet's duty was also to make clear the truth whenever people differed regarding it:

﴿وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِي اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً﴾

(سورة التحل: ٦٤)



﴿And We have not sent down the Book [the Qur'an] to you [O Muhammad], except that you may explain clearly unto them those things in which they differ, and [as] a guidance and a mercy for a folk who believe.﴾

(Qur'an 16: 64)

When people differ, they must accept the Prophet's ruling:

﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّى يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾

(سورة النساء: ٦٥)



﴿But no by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you [O Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept [them] with full submission.﴾

(Qur'an 4: 65)

The Prophet (ﷺ) was given the Qur'an and the *Hikmah* in order to teach the people the rulings of their Religion:

﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
 آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي
 ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٤)

«Indeed Allah conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger [Muhammad] from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses [the Qur'an], and purifying them [from sins by their following him], and instructing them [in] the Book [the Qur'an] and the Hikmah [the wisdom and the Sunnah of the Prophet], while before that they had been in manifest error.» (*Qur'an 3: 164*)

The vast majority of scholars from the early and later generations of Islam hold that the Hikmah referred to in the previous verse must be something other than the Qur'an. The Hikmah is that which Allah (ﷻ) informed the Prophet (ﷺ) about in terms of the details of the Religion and rulings of the Sharia, which the scholars call 'the Sunnah'. Imam Ash-Shâfi'ee said,

“Allah (ﷻ) mentioned the Book, which is the Qur'an; He (ﷻ) also mentioned the Hikmah, and I have heard certain scholars — whom I trust — say that the Hikmah is the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)... it is therefore not right — and Allah (ﷻ) knows best — to say that the Hikmah is anything other than the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”

By means of a conjunction, Allah (ﷻ) coupled the Qur'an with the Hikmah, meaning that they necessarily refer to two different things. Furthermore, from the verse, we see that it is compulsory to follow the Hikmah just as it is compulsory to follow the Qur'an, and we already know that Allah (ﷻ) made it binding on us to follow only the Qur'an and the Sunnah. That it is obligatory to follow the Prophet (ﷺ) is mentioned clearly in this verse:

﴿... يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾
 ﴿١٥٧﴾ ... (سورة الأعراف: ١٥٧)

﴿... He commands them [to practice] *al-Ma'roof* [all that Islam has ordained]; and forbids them from *al-Munkar* [all that Islam has forbidden]; he allows for them as lawful all that is good and prohibits as unlawful for them all that is evil, he releases them from their heavy burdens [of Allah's covenant], and from the fetters that were upon them...﴾ (Qur'an 7: 156)

﴿He commands them [to practice] *al-Ma'roof*﴾: Because the wording used here is general, it embraces both commands from the Qur'an and commands from other revelation — that is, the Sunnah. Al-Miqdâm ibn Ma'adykarib (رضي الله عنه) related that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, «Indeed, I have been given the Book and, with it, that which is similar to it.»¹⁵

That Muslims must follow the Prophet (ﷺ) in what he commanded and prohibited is indicated by this verse:

﴿... وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا﴾
 ﴿٧﴾ ... (سورة الحشر: ٧)

﴿... And whatsoever the Messenger [Muhammad] gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it]...﴾ (Qur'an 59: 7)

In many verses of the Qur'an, obedience to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is coupled with obedience to Allah, such as in this verse:

﴿وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾
 (سورة آل عمران: ١٣٢)

¹⁵ Abu Dâwood, vol. 5, Pp. 10-12, hadith no. 3988; the chain is authentic.

﴿And obey Allah and the Messenger [Muhammad] that you may obtain mercy.﴾
 (Qur'an 3: 132)

In this verse, Allah (ﷻ) exhorts us to answer the Prophet (ﷺ) when he calls us:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ ...﴾
 (سورة الأنفال: ٢٤)

﴿O you who believe! Answer Allah [by obeying Him] and [His] Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life...﴾
 (Qur'an 8: 24)

To obey the Prophet (ﷺ) is to obey Allah (ﷻ):

﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ ...﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٠)

﴿He who obeys the Messenger [Muhammad] has indeed obeyed Allah...﴾
 (Qur'an 4: 80)

Allah (ﷻ) also said:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ...﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٣١)

﴿Say [O Muhammad to mankind]: 'If you [really] love Allah then follow me [i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah], Allah will love you and forgive you of your sins.'...﴾
 (Qur'an 3: 31)

Allah (ﷻ) warned us against opposing the Prophet's commands:

﴿... فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة الثور: ٦٣)

«... And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment [his Sunnah beware, lest afflictions, and so on befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.】
(Qur'an 24: 63)

Moreover, He (ﷺ) indicated that going against the Prophet's commands was disbelief:

﴿قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنِ اللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ (٣٢)

(سورة آل عمران: ٣٢)

«Say [O Muhammad]: 'Obey Allah and the Messenger [Muhammad].' But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers.】
(Qur'an 3: 32)

Allah (ﷻ) categorically forbade Muslims from going against the Prophet's commands and rulings:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلًّا مُّبِينًا﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٣٦)

«It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter, that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error.】
(Qur'an 33: 36)

One of the signs of hypocrisy is to refuse seeking judgment from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when there is a disagreement regarding an issue:

﴿وَيَقُولُونَ ءَأَمْرًا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (٤٧) وَإِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ (٤٨) وَإِن يَكُنْ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَأْتُوا إِلَيْهِ مُدْعِينَ (٤٩) أَلَيْسَ لِقُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ أَمْ أَرَبَابًا أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَحِيفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولَهُ بَلْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (٥٠) إِنَّمَا كَانَ

قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا
 وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾
 (سورة الشورى: ٤٧-٥١)

«They [hypocrites] say: ‘We have believed in Allah and in the Messenger [Muhammad], and we obey’, then a party of them turn away thereafter, such are not believers. And when they are called to Allah [that is, His Words, the Qur’an] and His Messenger, to judge between them, lo! a party of them refuse [to come] and turn away... The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allah [His Words, the Qur’an] and His Messenger to judge between them, is that they say, ‘We hear and we obey’. And such are the prosperous ones [who will live forever in Paradise].» (Qur’an 24: 47-51)

If the Companions were with the Prophet (ﷺ) and they wanted to leave to go somewhere, it was considered to be one of the necessary aspects of *eamân*¹⁶ that they should first seek his permission:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِذَا كَانُوا مَعَهُ عَلَىٰ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَمَّا يَذْهَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَسْتَأْذِنُوهُ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ فَإِذَا أَسْتَأْذِنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأَذِنَ لِمَن شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾
 (سورة الشورى: ٦٢)

«The true believers are only those, who believe in [the Oneness of] Allah and His Messenger [Muhammad], and when they are with him on some common matter, they do not leave until they have asked his permission. Verily! Those who ask your permission, those are they who [really] believe in Allah and His Messenger. So if they ask your permission for some affairs of theirs, give permission to whom you

¹⁶ Faith: belief in all the six pillars of the creed of Islam.

will of them, and ask Allah for their forgiveness. Truly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.» (Qur'an 24: 62)

And with regard to this verse, Ibn al-Qayyim said:

“If Allah (ﷻ) made it a necessary element of faith for the Companions to seek permission to go somewhere when they were with the Prophet (ﷺ), then it is even more obvious that it is a necessary element of faith for them not to adopt a view in Religion without first seeking his permission...”

It was necessary, then, for the companions to refer their questions, doubts, or disagreements to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They would adhere to all of his commands, prohibitions, and decisions; and they would follow him in his deeds, acts of worship, and dealings — unless they knew that a given action of his was specific to him, and not meant for legislation. In obedience to the Prophet's command, «Pray as you have seen me pray,»¹⁷ they took from him the rulings and pillars of the prayer, along with the way it is performed. Likewise, they learned their Hajj rites from the Prophet (ﷺ), for he said to them, «Learn from me your Hajj rites.»¹⁸

If some of his Companions did not follow his command, the Prophet (ﷺ) would become angry. On one occasion, a man sent his wife to ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) whether it is permissible to kiss one's wife while one is fasting. Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) informed the woman that the Prophet (ﷺ) would kiss (his wives) even while he was fasting. The woman returned to her husband, informing him of what she had learnt. The man said, “I am not like the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): Allah makes permissible for His Messenger whatever He pleases.” When news of what the man said reached the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he became angry and said, «I fear Allah the most from

¹⁷ Bukhari from Mâlik ibn Huwayrith.

¹⁸ Muslim, from Jâbir.

among you and I am the most knowledgeable of you regarding His limits.»¹⁹ And during the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah, the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered his Companions to shave their heads and exit the state of being pilgrims. They did not follow his command, as doing so in this instance was difficult for them. The Prophet (ﷺ) became angry and made his command clear by being the first to follow it, and then the Companions followed him.

So closely did the Companions follow and imitate the Prophet (ﷺ), they would do what he did and abstain from what he abstained from, without even asking for the wisdom or reason behind his actions. Bukhari related the following narration from Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنهما): «The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) began wearing a gold ring, and so the Companions also began to wear gold rings. No sooner did the Prophet (ﷺ) then remove his ring, saying, ‘Indeed, I shall never wear it (again),’ than the Companions removed their rings as well.»²⁰ In *ash-Shifā’*, Al-Qâḍee ‘Iyâd related that Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudree (رضي الله عنه) said, «As the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was praying with his Companions, he removed his shoes and moved them to his left. When the people saw that, they took off their shoes. When the prayer was over, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘What caused you to remove your shoes?’ They said, ‘We saw you remove your shoes.’ He (ﷺ) said, ‘(The reason why I removed my shoes) is that Jibreel²¹ informed me that there was some filth on them.»²²

Such were the Companions with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): without exception, all of them recognized that the Prophet’s speech,

¹⁹ Muslim, from ‘Umar ibn Abi Salamah; and related by Ash-Shâfi‘ee in *ar-Risâlah*, p. 404, in a *mursal* narration from ‘Aṭâ’.

²⁰ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 28, p. 36, hadith no. 6754.

²¹ The angel Gabriel.

²² Abu Dâwood, vol. 2, p. 353, hadith no. 555; hadith *ṣaḥeeḥ* (authentic) in accordance with the condition stipulated by Bukhari.

action, and approval — both tacit and explicit — represented Islamic rulings; furthermore, not one of them gave license to himself to go against the Qur'an. The Companions would always simply obey the Prophet (ﷺ), not even discussing with him his commands, except in the following circumstances:

1. When the Prophet (ﷺ) gave his opinion in a worldly matter. For example, during the battle of Badr, the Prophet (ﷺ) decided that Muslims should camp in one location, while Ḥabbâb ibn al-Mundhir (رضي الله عنه) thought that another location was better, and so he expressed his view to the Prophet (ﷺ).
2. When the Prophet (ﷺ) expressed his opinion in a Religious matter before that view was approved or not by Allah (ﷻ). For example, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) expressed his view regarding what should be done with the prisoners of Badr.
3. When the Companions found a ruling to be new and strange to them. In such instances, they would discuss the ruling with the Prophet (ﷺ), not to contradict him, but simply to learn the wisdom behind his ruling.
4. When the Companions thought that an action of the Prophet (ﷺ) was specific to him. In such instances, they would not force themselves to follow him.
5. When the Prophet (ﷺ) would tell them to do something, and they felt from the context of his words that he was not commanding them, but simply telling them that a certain act was permissible.

Otherwise, they would unconditionally follow and obey the Prophet (ﷺ).

Second, It was and is a must to follow and obey the Prophet (ﷺ) after his death

Just as it was compulsory upon the Companions to follow the Prophet (ﷺ) during his life, so too was it compulsory upon them and

upon all Muslims who came after to follow him after he died. The revealed texts which indicate that following the Prophet (ﷺ) is compulsory are general — that is, not limited to the duration of his life, nor is the application of those texts limited to the Companions. Because the Prophet's rulings are infallible in that he received revelation from Allah (ﷻ), it follows that following him is compulsory both during and after his lifetime. And because both the Companions and those Muslims who came after them are followers of Muhammad (ﷺ), it is compulsory upon both groups to obey him.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) guided his Companions to following him even when they were far away from him. When he (ﷺ) sent Mu'adh ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه) to Yemen, he asked, «When a matter arises before you, how will you judge?» Mu'adh said, «I will judge according to Allah's Book.» He (ﷺ) said, «And if it (the judgment) is not in Allah's Book?» He said, «Then according to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).» The Prophet (ﷺ) said, «And if it is not found in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?» He said, «(After scrutinizing the issue) I will apply my opinion, and I will not linger or be negligent.» The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) thumped him on his chest and said, «All praise is for Allah, who has guided the messenger of the Messenger of Allah to that which pleases the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).»²³

In many hadiths — so many that it reaches the level of one form of *tawâtur*²⁴ — the Prophet (ﷺ) exhorted Muslims to follow and apply his Sunnah even after he (ﷺ) died. In one narration, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, «I have left with you two matters: you will not go astray as long as you adhere to them — Allah's Book and

²³ Related by Aḥmad; At-Tirmidhi; Ad-Dâriamee; Al-Bayhaqee, in *al-Madkhal*; Ibn Sa'd, in *at-Tabaqât*; and Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in, *Jâmi' al-Bayân al-'Ilm wa-Fadhlihi* and Abu Dâwood, vol. 9, p. 489, hadith no. 3119.

²⁴ See the definition for *mutawâtir* in Chapter Three.

my Sunnah.»²⁵ In another hadith, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) related that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, «“All of my Nation enters Paradise except he who refuses.” The Companions asked, “O Messenger of Allah, and who refuses?” He (ﷺ) said, “Whoever obeys me enters Paradise, and whoever disobeys me has indeed refused.”»²⁶ Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) related that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said during his farewell sermon, «Indeed, Satan has lost hope of being worshipped in your land, but he is pleased to be obeyed in other matters, as in those deeds that you belittle, so beware! I have indeed left with you that, which if you adhere to it, you will never go astray: Allah’s Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ).»²⁷

Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr related that ‘Irbâḍ ibn Sâriyah (رضي الله عنه) said, «The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) led us in prayer in the early morning. He then delivered to us an eloquent and profound sermon, one that caused eyes to shed tears and hearts to quake. A man said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! It is as if this is a farewell sermon! So advise us.’ He (ﷺ) said, ‘You are to listen and obey (those in authority), even if he (i.e., the one in authority) is an Ethiopian slave. Whoever of you lives after me will see much conflict; then upon you is my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs after me: bite on it (i.e. my Sunnah) with your molars. And beware and stay away from innovated matters, for every innovation is misguidance.’»²⁸

And that is why the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) strove so hard to convey the Sunnah, for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) entrusted them with it,

²⁵ *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, 2/24. Related by Al-Hâkim and Ibn ‘Abdul Barr from Ḥudhayr ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amru ibn ‘Awf, from his father, from his grandfather; also related by Al-Bayhaqi from Abu Hurayrah.

²⁶ Bukhari, vol. 22, p. 248, hadith no. 6737 and Al-Ḥâkim.

²⁷ Abu ‘Abdullâh al-Ḥâkim.

²⁸ *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, 2/182; also related by At-Tirmidhi, Abu Dâwood, Aḥmad, and Ibn Mâjah. Al-Ḥâfidh Abu Na‘eem said, “It is a *jayyid* (good) hadith, one of the authentic hadiths of the people of Syria.”

making it their duty to convey it to ensuing generations. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) encouraged his Companions to convey knowledge to others when he (ﷺ) said, «May Allah have mercy on the one who hears my speech and then conveys it as he heard it...»²⁹

How the Companions would receive the Sunnah from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) lived among his Companions as one of them, so that there was no barrier between him and them: he (ﷺ) would mix with them in the mosque, the marketplace, his home, as well as on journeys. The Companions would attentively observe his every word and deed, for since the time Allah (ﷻ) had guided them and saved them from misguidance, the Prophet (ﷺ) was for them the center of their religious and worldly life. They were so eager to learn from the Prophet (ﷺ) that they would accompany him in shifts. Bukhari related that ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) said, “A neighbor of mine from the Anṣār ... and me would take turns being with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): he would spend a day with him and then I would spend a day with him. When it was my turn to spend the day with the Prophet (ﷺ), I would return to him with the news of the day. When it was his turn to spend the day with the Prophet (ﷺ), he would do the same.” This goes to show how eager and keen the Companions were to avoid missing any of his teachings. Tribes that were far away from Madinah would send representatives, so that they could learn Islam from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and then return to their people as teachers and guides.

²⁹ *Jâmi’ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm* (1/39). Also related by Ibn Ḥibbân, in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*; Abu Dawood; Tirmidhi, who declared it to be *ḥasan* (acceptable); Nisâ’i; Ibn Mâjah; and Al-Bayhaqi. All of the above who narrated it, narrate it differently from the others, with slight differences in word order or additions.

In fact, some Companions would travel far distances in order to ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about a ruling. Bukhari related from 'Uqbah ibn al-Ḥârith that a woman informed him that she had suckled both him and his wife (when they were infants). He was in Makkah, and he immediately began his journey to Madinah, until he finally reached the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and asked him about Allah's ruling regarding a man who marries a woman, not knowing that she was his foster sister because of breastfeeding, but then is informed of the fact from the woman who nursed them. The Prophet (ﷺ) informed him of what he had to do³⁰, and in obedience to the Prophet's ruling, he immediately divorced his wife and married another woman.

In affairs that involved a man and his wife, the Companions would often seek recourse by asking the Prophet's wives, for the Mothers of the Believers were best aware of the Prophet's family life. In an example that we have already related, a Companion sent his wife to ask whether a man may kiss his wife while he is fasting. Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) informed the woman that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would kiss even while he was fasting.

At times, a woman might have asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about a matter that was specific to women; if it were difficult to explain the ruling to the woman who asked, the Prophet (ﷺ) would order one of his wives to explain it. For instance, a woman asked the Prophet (ﷺ) how she should purify herself from menstruation. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) answered her and then further elaborated on his answer, but she did not understand his explanation, and so he (ﷺ) asked 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) to explain to her what he meant, which was that she should take a piece of clean cotton and wipe it over the blood stains.³¹

³⁰ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 156, hadith no. 5326.

³¹ Related by Bukhari, Muslim, and An-Nisâ'i, from 'Â'ishah.

Yet the Companions were not at one level regarding knowledge of the Prophet's Sunnah. Some of them lived with him, while others were inhabitants of the desert; some were businessmen, others had a different occupation; some were dedicated to worship and could not find work; some lived in Madinah; others lived in far-off lands. Moreover, except in rare instances — and on Fridays as well as the two 'Eids — the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not have a general gathering wherein he taught all of his Companions.

Why was the entire Sunnah not recorded during the life of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and was some of the Sunnah written down during his lifetime?

Biographers of the Prophet (ﷺ), scholars of the Sunnah, and the masses of the Muslims — all agree that the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions went to great lengths in order to preserve the Qur'an. Hence they memorized it and wrote it down on branches, rocks, and any other clean material they could find. By the time that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, the Qur'an was preserved in its order, and all that remained was to gather it in one book.

Despite it being an important source of legislation, the Sunnah was not recorded during the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) in the official manner that the Qur'an was recorded, a fact that is agreed upon. The reason behind that, perhaps, lies in the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) lived for twenty-three years with the Companions, and it was a great task indeed to write all of his sayings, deeds, and transactions on the materials that were available for writing. Many of the Companions would have had to free themselves completely from all other duties, so that they could have dedicated themselves to recording the Sunnah. And it is well known that those who could write during the

Prophet's life were few — one could have counted them on one's fingers. Since the Qur'an was the primary source for Islamic legislation and the timeless miracle of the Messenger of Allah (Blessings and peace be upon him), it made sense for the scribes of the time to dedicate themselves to recording the Qur'an, so that they could leave it as a complete and correctly inscribed Book for ensuing generations.

There is another matter to consider regarding this issue: because they were illiterate, the Arabs had always depended greatly on their ability to memorize. And so they were able to memorize the Qur'an. Had the Sunnah been recorded during the Prophet's life as the Qur'an was recorded — and remember that the Sunnah comprised twenty-three years worth of sayings, deeds, and legislations — the Companions would have had to occupy themselves with memorizing the Sunnah as they memorized the Qur'an, and that would have indeed been difficult for them. Not to mention the fear of mistakenly mixing up some of the concise and poignant words of the Prophet (ﷺ) with the Qur'an; this constituted a danger for Allah's Book, a danger that would open the door for suspicion and doubt, which the enemies of Islam would have assuredly taken advantage of. Scholars mentioned in detail these and many other reasons why the Sunnah was not recorded during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ). With the preceding points in mind, one can perhaps better understand the Prophet's saying, «Do not write down what I say, and whoever writes from me other than the Qur'an, then let him erase it.»³²

Nevertheless, that the Sunnah was not officially recorded during the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) does not mean that parts of it were not recorded; actually, certain authentic narrations indicate that some

³² Muslim, vo. 14, p. 291, hadith no. 5326, related by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri.

of the Sunnah was recorded during the Prophet's lifetime. During the year of the Makkah conquest, the Prophet (ﷺ) gave a speech in which he outlined the inviolability of Makkah — that fighting within its precincts is forbidden, that its trees are not to be uprooted, and so on. When he finished his speech, a man from Yemen said, "Write down for me (these rules), O Messenger of Allah." Then the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded, "Write for Abu Shah."³³

It is also established that the Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him) would write to the kings of his time and the leaders in the Arabian Peninsula, in those letters inviting them to Islam. And when he would send military or other expeditions, he would give them letters of instruction, ordering them not to read them until they had traveled a certain distance.

It is even established that some of the Companions had scrolls in which they would record what they heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), such as the scrolls of 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amru ibn al-Âṣ (رضي الله عنه), which he called *aṣ-Ṣâdiqah*. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) once said, "No one was more knowledgeable regarding the Messenger of Allah's Sunnah than me, except for 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amru, for he would write while I would not."³⁴ When some of the Companions learned of 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amru ibn al-Âṣ's scrolls, they reproached him, warning him that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would become angry because of his actions. And so he went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who said, «Write from me, for by the One Who has my soul in His hand, nothing other than the truth has ever come out of my mouth.»³⁵

³³ Bukhari, Ad-Dârimee, At-Tirmidhi, and Aḥmad.

³⁴ Related by Aḥmad and Al-Bayhaqi in *al-Madkhal*.

³⁵ Related by Ibn 'Abdul-Barr, in *Jâmi' al-Bayân al-'Ilm*, 1/76, from Ibn 'Amru.

'Ali (ﷺ) had a scroll in which was written certain rulings regarding blood money, and the Prophet (ﷺ) wrote to the governors in different regions, explaining to them the Zakât amounts for camels and sheep.³⁶

Scholars differed in the way they sought harmony between the seemingly conflicting narrations - those that forbade the recording of the Sunnah and those that permitted it. Most scholars hold that the prohibition was abrogated, and replaced by the new ruling — permissibility. Others hold that the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade only those who could not be trusted, perhaps because they might inadvertently confuse the Qur'an with the Sunnah; meanwhile, he (ﷺ) permitted those who were more knowledgeable and trustworthy. I believe that there is no real contradiction between the prohibition and the license to record the Sunnah; the prohibition was limited to the official recording of the Sunnah, while the license to record it was either for special circumstances or individual compilations by specific Companions. This view is supported by the hadith that forbids the recording of the Sunnah, for the wording used by the Prophet (ﷺ) was general and he was addressing the Companions as a group. That 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amru (ﷺ) recorded some of the Sunnah, that he continued to do so until the Prophet (ﷺ) died, and that the Prophet (ﷺ) approved his action — all clearly show that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) permitted writing down the Sunnah as long as it was not recorded in the same official and comprehensive manner as the Qur'an was recorded. In Bukhari, Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) relates that when the Prophet's ailment became severe, he (ﷺ) said, «Bring me a book; I will write down for you a book — after which you will not go astray.»³⁷ However, 'Umar (ﷺ) prevented that from happening because the Prophet's sickness and pain increased. Nevertheless, this

³⁶ Op. cit.

³⁷ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 1, Pp. 32-33, hadith no. 920.

narration shows that the last of the two commands was a license to record the Sunnah.

The Companions' attitude regarding the Sunnah after the Prophet's death

We have already mentioned the following hadith that is related by Zayd ibn Thâbit (رضي الله عنه): «May Allah make shine the one who hears my speech, memorizes it, stores it, and then conveys it just as he heard it...»³⁸ And in another hadith: «Indeed, let the one present from you convey (the message and my teachings) to the one who is absent.»³⁹ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) exhorted the Companions not only to convey the Sunnah, but also to be sure of what they related from him. He (ﷺ) said, «Enough of a lie it is for one to relate all that he hears.»⁴⁰ And the Companions were dutiful in conveying the Prophet's trust to the Muslims. They dispersed throughout the lands, and the tâbi'oon (the succeeding generation) endured many hardships, traveling from far-off lands in order to meet certain Companions and learn from them. All of this played a role in the dissemination of hadith to the masses of the Muslims.

The Companions differed among themselves, in that some of them related many hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ), while some related only a few; from the latter group were the likes of Az-Zubayr, Zayd ibn Arqam, and 'Umrân ibn Huṣain. It is related from 'Abdullâh ibn Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) that he once said to his father, Zubayr, "Indeed, I do not hear you relate hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as so and so relate from him." He (رضي الله عنه) said, "As for me, I never parted from him,

³⁸ Abu Dâwood and At-Tirmidhi.

³⁹ Related by Ibn 'Abdul-Barr in *Jâmi' al-Bayân al-'Ilm*, from Abu Bakrah, 1/41.

⁴⁰ Related by Muslim, from Abu Hurayrah.

but I heard him say, «Whoever lies about me, then let him take his seat in the Fire.»⁴¹

Ibn Mâjah related in his *Sunan* that it was said to Zayd ibn Arqam, "Relate (hadith) to us." He said, "We have grown old and forgotten." It is a serious matter indeed to relate from the Prophet (ﷺ), a matter that the Companions were careful not to err in. For example, after Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) would relate a hadith from the Prophet (ﷺ), he would say, "Or (if this is not the exact wording) this is approximately what he (ﷺ) said." This category of Companions feared making mistakes inadvertently, and it appears that their memories were not so strong as to help them in relating hadiths word for word. Being careful in Allah's Religion, they thought it better not to try to relate a great deal.

Add to that 'Umar's wish not to have hadiths related so much that people would become preoccupied with hadith and forget the Qur'an. The Qur'an had been recently revealed, and Muslims were in need of memorizing it, conveying it to others, and studying it. Ash-Sha'bee related that when Qurdhah ibn Ka'b and a group were going to Iraq, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) accompanied them for a little while ... He (رضي الله عنه) said, "You are going to a village, whose inhabitants make sounds with the Qur'an like the droning of bees (meaning they recite it often), so do not hold them back with hadiths, hence making them preoccupied. Recite the Qur'an well, be sparing in your narrations from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and go, as I am your partner." When Qurdhah reached them, they said, "Relate to us." He answered, "Umar ibn al-Khaţţâb (رضي الله عنه) forbade us."⁴²

There were other Companions, however, who would relate much from the hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ). Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was

⁴¹ Bukhari, in his *Şaheeh*, in the Chapter of Knowledge.

⁴² *Jâmi' al-Bayân al-'Ilm*, 2/120.

like a container or storeroom of hadith, and he filled the hearts and gatherings of Muslims with the sayings of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه), one of the younger Companions, would seek out hadiths from the older Companions, and in doing so, he exposed himself to a great deal of hardship and fatigue. Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said, “A hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) would reach us from one of the Prophet’s Companions, and had I wished, I would have called for him until he came to me and related to me the hadith he had; however, I myself would go to him and sleep at his door until he would come out to me and relate to me the Prophet’s hadith.”⁴³

Thus he toiled until he absorbed all that was related to him by different Companions, and then he himself began to relate a great deal of hadiths to others. In later years, when fabrications of hadiths began to surface, it appears that he related less hadiths than he used to.

Although some Companions related a great deal of hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), they related relatively little during the period of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), for their overall plan consisted of two strategies: first, to force Muslims to be positively sure when relating hadiths, and second to make Muslims spend the greater part of their energies in preserving and studying the Qur’an. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was once asked, “Did you relate hadith during the period of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) as you do now?” He (رضي الله عنه) said, “Had I related hadiths during the period of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) as I relate to you now, he would have struck me...”⁴⁴

Here, we must discuss two issues surrounding the attitude of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), and of others, regarding the narration of hadiths: First: Did ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) imprison anyone from the Companions for relating a great many hadiths?

⁴³ Related by Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr from Ibn Shihâb.

⁴⁴ *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, (2/120).

Second: Did the Companions stipulate conditions for a narration from a Companion to be accepted?

Did 'Umar (ؓ) imprison any of the Companions for relating a great deal of hadiths?

In an account that has spread to many people 'Umar (ؓ) is claimed to have imprisoned three eminent Companions for relating a large number of hadiths; they are Ibn Mas'ood (ؓ), Abu ad-Dardâ' (ؓ), and Abu Dharr (ؓ). I tried to locate this narration in reliable books of knowledge, but was not able to find it. Many details point to this narration being fabricated. Ibn Mas'ood (ؓ) was one of the most eminent of Companions and one of the earliest to accept Islam; moreover, 'Umar (ؓ) held him in high regard. He (ؓ) sent Ibn Mas'ood (ؓ) to Iraq to teach them their Religion, and so greatly did he feel losing him that he said, "Indeed, I have preferred you over myself with 'Abdullâh (Ibn Mas'ood)." He sent Ibn Mas'ood to teach the people of Iraq Islam and its rulings, and as is well known, rulings of Islam are derived from the Qur'an but in greater quantity from the Sunnah. So how is it possible that 'Umar (ؓ) imprisoned Ibn Mas'ood for relating narrations when he himself sent him to Iraq for that purpose? As for Abu Dharr and Abu ad-Dardâ', they are not known for relating a great deal of hadiths. Just as Ibn Mas'ood was the teacher of Iraq, Abu ad-Dardâ' was the teacher of Syria and Palestine, so it is likewise strange for 'Umar to have imprisoned Abu ad-Dardâ'.

And no matter how many hadiths are established from Abu Dharr (ؓ), they do not amount to even a portion of what Abu Hurayrah (ؓ) related, so why would 'Umar (ؓ) imprison the former and not the latter? All of this clearly points to the claim being fabricated.

If it is said that Abu Hurayrah (ؓ) did not relate many hadiths during the caliphate of 'Umar (ؓ) because he feared him,

we ask, why did Abu Dharr (ﷺ) not fear him as Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) did?

In reality, ‘Umar (ﷺ) did not stand in the way or prevent those Companions who related many hadiths from narrating, among whom were the likes of Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ), Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ), ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ), Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh (ﷺ), and Ibn Mas‘ood (ﷺ). In fact, it is related that when Abu Hurayrah became known for relating many hadiths, ‘Umar (ﷺ) said to him, “Were you with us when the Prophet (ﷺ) was in such and such place?” He said, “Yes, I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say, «Whoever lies about me on purpose, then let him take his seat in the Fire.»” ‘Umar (ﷺ) said, “Now that you mention that, go and relate hadiths.” How does it make any sense for him to leave Abu Hurayrah alone when he was categorically the most prolific of the Companions in relating hadiths, while he imprisoned the other three, who related far fewer than Abu Hurayrah did?

For a long time I doubted the narration in which ‘Umar (ﷺ) purportedly imprisoned the above-mentioned three Companions (ﷺ), and for a long time I criticized the narration from many different angles, until finally I read *al-Ihkâm*, by Ibn Ḥazm. In it, Ibn Ḥazm first mentions the narration and then refutes it, saying it is disconnected, for Ibrâheem ibn ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn ‘Awf, the one who narrated it from ‘Umar (ﷺ), never actually heard ‘Umar. And Al-Bayhaqî agreed with Ibn Ḥazm in this assessment, though Ya‘qoob ibn Shaybah, Aṭ-Ṭabaree, and others confirm that he did hear ‘Umar (ﷺ) speak. It is more likely, however, that he never heard ‘Umar speak, for he died either in the year 99 H or 95 H at the age of 75; that means that he was born in the year 20 H, which was at the end of ‘Umar’s caliphate. It is highly implausible, then, that he heard ‘Umar (ﷺ) at such a young age; therefore, the narration is invalid and unacceptable as a proof. Furthermore, Ibn Ḥazm stated that the narration is a clear fabrication, for in it the Companions are accused of wrongdoing, which in itself is a grave matter. For did

'Umar (ﷺ) in fact prevent people from conveying the Sunnah? Did he really force them to conceal hadiths? 'Umar (ﷺ) was far above those actions, for Allah (ﷻ) protected him from them. It is a claim, then, that no Muslim would make in the first place.

Did the Companions stipulate conditions for a narration from a Companion to be accepted?

In *Tadhkirat ul-Huffâdh*, when he was relating the biography of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (ﷺ), Al-Hâfidh adh-Dhahabee said, "He was the first to take precautionary steps when accepting the validity of narrations." He then related from Ibn Shihâb from Qubaysah that a grandmother of someone who died came to Abu Bakr (ﷺ), seeking her share of the inheritance. Abu Bakr said, "I find nothing for you in Allah's Book, nor do I know that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mentioned something for you." He then asked the people; in response, Mugheerah (ﷺ) stood up and said, "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would give her (i.e. the grandmother of the deceased) one-sixth." Abu Bakr said, "Do you have anyone with you (who will attest to the veracity of what you say)?" Muhammad ibn Maslamah (ﷺ) bore witness to the same, and Abu Bakr gave the woman her share."

Jareeri relates from Naḍrah from Abu Sa'eed (ﷺ) that Abu Moosa (ﷺ) gave greetings of peace to 'Umar (ﷺ) from behind his door; he repeated his greetings three times, and when he heard no words of permission to enter, he returned to where he came from. 'Umar had him called back and said, "Why did you go away?" He (ﷺ) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, «If one of you gives greetings of peace (in asking permission to enter another's home) and is not answered, then let him return (from whence he came).»" 'Umar (ﷺ) said, "You will indeed come to me with proof (witnesses) or you shall see what I will do with you!" Abu Sa'eed (ﷺ) continued to relate, "Abu Moosa (ﷺ) returned to us white-

faced. We were seated when he came, and we said, 'What is the matter with you?' He informed us and said, 'Then has any of you heard of it (i.e., the narration)?' We said, 'Yes.'" The group that was seated sent a man to accompany Abu Moosa (ﷺ), and he informed 'Umar (ﷺ) that he too had heard the hadith.⁴⁵

Adh-Dhahabee also related, with a chain that goes back to Asmâ' ibn al-Hakam, that Asmâ' heard 'Ali (ﷺ) say, "When I heard a saying (directly) from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Allah (ﷻ) would make me benefit from it to the degree that He (ﷻ) wished for me. But if someone else related to me his sayings, I would make him swear by Allah, and if he did, I would believe him. Abu Bakr (ﷺ) related to me — and he spoke the truth — saying, 'I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: «Whenever any slave sins but then performs ablution, prays two units, and asks forgiveness from Allah (ﷻ), Allah forgives him.»"»⁴⁶

There are researchers who understand from the previous narrations that Abu Bakr (ﷺ) and 'Umar (ﷺ) accepted the validity of a narration only if two or more narrators related it and that 'Ali (ﷺ) stipulated from a narrator that he first swear by Allah (ﷻ). Many books on the history of Islamic legislation relate this understanding, and among many students and teachers, that understanding goes unquestioned. Even in our faculty of Sharia, here in Azhar, many of our eminent teachers advocated that understanding when they put together notes for the course, the History of Islamic Legislation. When they mentioned the conditions stipulated by the Imams for accepting the validity of a hadith, they stated that Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) stipulated the aforesaid conditions.

⁴⁵ The hadith is narrated in both Bukhari and Muslim, from Abu Sa'eed.

⁴⁶ *Tadhkirat ul-Huffâdh*, 1/2 and 6 and 7 and 10. These narrations are also related by Al-Hâkim in *al-Madkhal Ila Uṣool al-Hadeeth*.

Yet in reality, to deduce such stipulations from those narrations is an error that is refuted by other narrations, narrations that show 'Umar (ﷺ) to have accepted the validity of narrations that were related by one narrator only and that show 'Ali (ﷺ) to have accepted narrations from certain Companions without first asking them to make an oath. Likewise, the same is related from Abu Bakr (ﷺ). Here are some of those narrations:

1. 'Abdullâh ibn 'Âmir ibn Rabee'ah (ﷺ) related that when 'Umar (ﷺ) was on his way to Shâm (Syria and Palestine) and when he reached a place called Sargh, he heard that a plague had occurred in Shâm (Syria and Palestine). 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf (ﷺ) informed him that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «If you hear of a plague in a land that you are in, do not depart, fleeing from it.»⁴⁷ 'Umar (ﷺ) then returned from Sarg. Ibn Shihâb said, "Sâlim ibn 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar informed us that 'Umar only returned with the people because of the hadith of 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf (ﷺ)."

2. It is related that 'Umar (ﷺ) mentioned the Majoos (the adherents of a known Religion), saying, "I do not know what I should do regarding their affair." 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf (ﷺ) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, «Deal with them in the same way that the People of the Book are dealt with.»"⁴⁸

3. Al-Bayhaqi related the following narration from Hishâm ibn Yaḥyâ al-Makhzoomi. A man from Thaqeef went to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) and asked him regarding a woman who began to menstruate while she was visiting the House (i.e. the Ka'bah). The man asked 'Umar to rule in a specific issue regarding that woman, and when 'Umar answered him, the man said, "Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) issued a ruling in a situation like the one of

⁴⁷ Bukhari, vol. 7, p. 168, hadith no. 920 and Muslim from Ibn Shihâb.

⁴⁸ *Ar-Risâlah*, by Ash-Shâfi'ee.

this woman differently from what you ruled.” ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) stood ... and said, “Why do you ask me to issue a ruling about a matter for which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) issued a ruling.”⁴⁹

4. ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) applied Sa‘d ibn Abee Waqqâs’s narration regarding wiping over one’s socks.⁵⁰

5. ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) was about to stone an insane woman, but when he was informed that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, «The pen is raised for three...» he ordered that she not be stoned.

These and other narrations are widespread and authentic, for it is the trustworthy Imams who relate them. The narrations prove without a doubt that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) accepted the validity of a hadith even when only a single companion related it, and he would accept such narrations without doubting or lingering. The above-mentioned narrations and their like are more numerous than those narrations in which ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) demanded a second narrator, and they are just as authentic. Therefore, the narration of Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه) requires from us a harmonizing interpretation. Perhaps ‘Umar wanted to make sure of Abu Moosa’s narration because it was about an issue that people frequently face — seeking permission to enter another person’s home — and so it should have been an issue that he already heard the ruling about. And so here is simply an example of how ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) was careful to preserve the authenticity of the Sunnah; here was also a lesson for the lesser Companions and *Tâbi’oon*: that if ‘Umar was reluctant to accept a narration from an eminent Companion such as Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه), then they and ensuing generations should be even more careful when receiving narrations from others. These all constitute the correct way of understanding the action of ‘Umar, who himself said to Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه), “Indeed, I did not accuse you, but it

⁴⁹ *Miftâhul-Jannah*, by As-Suyooti, p. 31.

⁵⁰ *Fath al-Mulhim*.

is the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).” In another narration, Ubay (رضي الله عنه) actually reproached ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) for how he dealt with Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه), and ‘Umar answered him, “Indeed, I wanted to make sure.” In *ar-Risâlah*, Ash-Shâfi‘ee expressed the same view, saying, “As for the narration of Abu Moosa, it was mere precaution, for Abu Moosa was trustworthy and honest in ‘Umar’s view — *inshâ’ Allâh*.” Then Ash-Shâfi‘ee goes on to relate that Mâlik ibn Anas (رضي الله عنه) related that ‘Umar said to Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه), “Indeed, I did not accuse you; rather, I feared that people would begin to fabricate lies about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”⁵¹

As for Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), it is related that only when the grandmother asked for her share of inheritance did he ask for a second narrator; yet even that narration does not justify the claim that his approach to hadiths was to accept a narration only when two people had narrated it. On many other occasions he (رضي الله عنه) judged according to the Sunnah without requesting another narrator. For example, in *al-Mahşool*, Ar-Râzee related that Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) issued a judgment in a case between two people, but when Bilâl (رضي الله عنه) informed him that the Prophet (ﷺ) ruled differently, he reversed his judgment. If this narration is true, it goes to support our view in this matter. Ibn al-Qayyim outlined for us Abu Bakr’s methodology in issuing judgments:

“If an issue were presented before Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), he would look in Allah’s Book, and if he found that which he could judge by, he would judge by it. If he did not find (the ruling) in Allah’s Book, he would look in the Sunnah of Allah’s Messenger, and if he found that which he could judge by, he would judge by it. If he still found no solution,

⁵¹ *Ar-Risâlah*, by Shâfi‘ee (p. 434). Ibn Hāzm had a different view: that ‘Umar saw fit to find a second narration in the beginning, but when ‘Ubay reproached him, he retracted his view, and from then on, accepted the hadith related from one Companion. Refer to *al-Ihkâm*, 2/140.

he would ask the people: 'Do you know whether the Prophet (ﷺ) ruled in this issue?' Perhaps someone from the group would stand up and say, 'He ruled with such and such ruling.' And if he still found no Sunnah from the Prophet (ﷺ), he would gather the leaders among the people and seek counsel with them. If they agreed upon a ruling, he would judge by that ruling."

In regards to the only narration we have in which Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) asked for a second narrator — whether the grandmother inherited — there is a strong possibility that it was simply a case of precaution and of verification, for to give a share of inheritance required a clear proof; nothing was mentioned about it in the Qur'an, and since most inheritance legislations are mentioned in the Qur'an, there was a need for precaution and deliberation — so demanding a second narrator was unusual for Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه). In *al-Mustafâ*, Al-Ghazâli relates many possibilities; among them are the following:

— Perhaps he wanted to see whether the ruling was permanent or abrogated.

— Maybe he wanted to see if anyone else had heard the same hadith, making the ruling even more binding.

— Maybe he wanted to see if anyone heard a hadith that indicated otherwise.

— Or perhaps he wanted to discourage people from taking lightly the matter of narrating hadiths.

As for 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), the author of *al-Mahşool* related that he accepted the narration of Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad (رضي الله عنه) about the issue of pre-seminal fluid without making him take an oath. Even in the narration we mentioned earlier, it appears that he did not ask Abu Bakr to take an oath; therefore it was not an overriding rule with him.

In short, what is correct and authentic is that Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) would apply narrations

that were narrated by one Companion only. That certain situations called for extra precautions does not mean that it was a general rule for them to demand a second narrator or demand from the narrator that he take an oath.

The Companions' journeys to various lands in order to seek out hadiths

By the end of Abu Bakr and 'Umar's caliphate, much of the Sunnah was still in the hearts of the Companions and not spread throughout the various lands, for with the exception of individual cases wherein there was a need, 'Umar (ﷺ) forbade most of the Companions from leaving Madinah. Even in Madinah itself, 'Umar's policy was to have the Companions concentrate on preserving and memorizing the Qur'an, while he wanted them to relate hadiths to a lesser extent, so as to prevent errors from occurring in hadith narrations. During the caliphate of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), 'Uthmân permitted the Companions to spread throughout the lands; people began to need the Companions more and more to help them to understand their Religion. The younger Companions were especially sought after, since the older ones decreased in number day by day. The younger Companions strove to glean as many hadiths as they could from the older ones, and some even used to travel to other Companions in order to learn a single hadith.

Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh (ﷺ) said, "A hadith reached me from one of the Prophet's Companions that I did not myself hear from him, so I purchased a mount ... and traveled on it for one month until I reached Syria, where I met 'Abdullâh ibn Unays al-Anṣârî (ﷺ); I went to him and said, "It has reached me from you that you heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) (a hadith) about the wronging of others, a hadith that I have not heard, and so I feared that both you and I should

die before I heard it.” ‘Abdullâh ibn Unays (رضي الله عنه) then related:

«I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, ‘The people will be gathered uncircumcised and *buhman*.’ So we asked, ‘What is *buhman*?’ He (ﷺ) said, ‘They will have nothing with them. Then a call will be made to them, which both those afar and near can hear, ‘I am Ad-Dayyân. It is not befitting that anyone from the people of the Hellfire should enter the Hellfire while one of the people of Paradise had a wrong done to him until I punish the wrongdoer for him. And it is not befitting for anyone from the people of Paradise to enter Paradise while one of the people of the Hellfire demands justice from him for a wrong he did to him until I punish him (the wrongdoer) for him, even if it is only for a slap with one’s hand.’ We asked, ‘How (will they repay for their wrongdoings)? For we will indeed go to Allah, naked, uncircumcised, and with nothing.’ He (ﷺ) said, ‘With good and bad deeds (will people be recompensed).’»⁵²

In another narration, Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî (رضي الله عنه) traveled to learn a hadith. When he reached his destination, Maslamah ibn Mukhallid al-Anṣârî — the leader of the region — welcomed Abu Ayyoob, hugged him, and said, “What brings you here, O Abu Ayyoob?” He (رضي الله عنه) said, “A hadith you heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about covering the faults of a believer.” He (رضي الله عنه) said, “Yes, I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, «Whoever covers the fault of a believer in this world over his suffering, Allah covers him (his faults) on the Day of Judgment.»⁵³ Upon hearing the hadith, Abu Ayyoob (رضي الله عنه) headed for his mount, climbed it, and began his return journey to Madinah.

⁵² Related by Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*; also, related by Aḥmad, Ṭabarâni, Bayhaqî, and the preceding wording is his.

⁵³ Bayhaqî and Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr from ‘Aḩâ’ ibn Abee Rabâh from Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî.

Narrations of hadiths began to spread, and people concentrated their efforts much more than before on studying under the Prophet's Companions in order to learn the Prophet's Sunnah. The *Tâbi'oon* searched out for Companions, seeking to learn from them before death would hinder them. If a Companion visited any city, it was enough of an occasion for all of its inhabitants to gather about him the minute he arrived.

A number of Companions became known for relating a great deal of hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) — because of their companionship from the earlier days of Islam, such as in the case of Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه); because of their long service to the Prophet (ﷺ), such as in the case of Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه); because of their comprehensive knowledge of his personal family life, such as in the case of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها); because of their concentrated efforts in learning his hadith, such as in the case of 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amru, and Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them), despite the young age of the first two and the late acceptance of Islam of the third. Without hesitating or doubting, people would learn hadiths from the Companions, and the Companions would accept them from one another, and none would accuse another of lying. Until the infamous trial of the Discord occurred, the presence of liars and fabricators was not known. But when that trial came, the religious as well as the political life of Muslims began to change.

CHAPTER TWO

Fabricated Hadiths

When did fabrications first appear?

The year 40 H was the defining year for the Sunnah — in which the purity of the Sunnah from lies and fabrication was distinguished from the use of the Sunnah to serve political or sectarian aims. This was at a time when the discord between ‘Ali (ﷺ) and Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ) took the shape of war, wherein blood was spilt and lives were lost, at a time when Muslims were divided into different groups: The majority were with ‘Ali (ﷺ) in his disagreement with Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ) while the Khawârij harbored malice against both ‘Ali (ﷺ) and Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ) after having previously been strong supporters of ‘Ali (ﷺ). After ‘Ali’s death, a group from the Prophet’s family demanded their right to the caliphate. Because of political circumstances, Muslims divided into groups. Each group tried to give credence to their position with proofs from the Qur’an and the Sunnah, and obviously, those two sources did not support every group in all of their claims. Some groups began to interpret the Qur’an falsely and to give implausible meanings to the Sunnah. Some went so far as to lie about the Prophet (ﷺ), inventing hadiths that would support their cause; it was difficult

for them to do the same with the Qur'an, for a great number of Muslims had already memorized it, recited it, and related it. From this point on, hadith fabrications began to spread.

The first topic about which fabricators began to invent their lies was regarding the virtues of individuals; they invented many hadiths that discussed the superiority of their Imams and of the leaders of their sects. It is said that the first to do that were the *Shi'ah*¹. Ibn Abi al-Ḥadeed said in *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balâghah*, "Know that lies in the hadiths of virtues first started with the *Shi'ah*..."²

In which generation did fabrications begin to thrive?

The Prophet's Companions sacrificed their wealth and their very souls; for Islam, they left their homeland and relatives; the love and fear of Allah (ﷻ) was intermingled in their blood and flesh. It is quite impossible, then, to imagine that this blessed generation would fabricate lies against the Prophet (ﷺ), no matter how tempting the situation might have been. Well known among them was the saying of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), «Indeed lying about me is not like lying about anyone else. And whoever lies about me on purpose, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire.»³ As we know from their biographies, the Companions were most eager to preserve the Sharia, to convey it to others as they received it from the Prophet (ﷺ), and they went through many hardships to fulfill that purpose and mission.

¹ Lit. sect or party, as in 'Party of Allah' and 'Party of Satan', mentioned in the Qur'an.

² *Sharḥ Nahjul-Balâghah*, 2/134.

³ A famous hadith, which some scholars claim to be *mutawâtir* because seventy Companions related it. Others claimed that even more Companions related it; at any rate, all of the books of the Sunnah have related it.

In fact, they would contend with leaders, rulers, or any man whom they deemed to have strayed from Allah's Religion, and in doing so the Companions feared no blame or oppression or even death.

On one occasion, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was delivering a sermon, when a woman stood up in the gathering, which was packed with Companions, and said, "Wait, O 'Umar! Allah gives to us, and you deprive us! Did not Allah (ﷻ) say,

﴿... وَءَاتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا ...﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٠)

﴿... And you have given one of them a great amount [of gold] as *Mahr* [marriage gift], do not take back the least bit of it...﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 20)"

And 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) responded, "The woman is correct and the man has erred."⁴

When Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), the Caliph, resolved upon fighting the apostates and those who refused to pay the Zakât, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) demurred, arguing that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «I have been ordered to fight the people until they say: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah.' And if they say it, then they have protected from me their blood and wealth, except if there is a prior right to it, and their accountability is with Allah (ﷻ).»⁵ Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) answered, "Did not the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, 'except if there is a prior right'? And from its rights is the zakât." 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was the first to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) as Caliph because he recognized his superiority, yet his love and veneration for Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) did not

⁴ The said sermon of 'Umar is related by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* and by the compilers of the *Sunan* (plural of Sunnah) by way of Muhammad ibn Seereen from Abu al-'Ajfâ as-Salamee. The narration of the woman refuting his words is related by Abu Ya'fâ al-Moosalee in his *Musnad*, yet in it there is a weak narrator. It has other chains as well, but they too are disconnected.

⁵ Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah.

prevent him from contending with him regarding a matter in which he felt he was right — in a matter about which he disagreed with Abu Bakr (ﷺ).

In a similar incident, ‘Ali (ﷺ) argued against ‘Umar’s decision to stone a pregnant woman who had committed adultery, saying, “If Allah has made a way against her, He (ﷻ) has not made a way for you against what is in her belly (or womb).” ‘Umar (ﷺ) reversed his decision, saying, “If it were not for ‘Ali, ‘Umar would have been destroyed.”

When Marwân was governor of Madinah, Abu Sa‘eed (ﷺ) reproached him for making the *Khutbah* (sermon) before the ‘Eid prayer, explaining to him that doing so was against the Sunnah, for the Prophet (ﷺ) had acted differently.

In *Tadhkirat ul-Ḥuffâdh*, Dhahabee relates a bold account of Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ), who during the sermon of Al-Ḥajjâj, the well-known tyrant, said, “O enemy of Allah, you have deemed lawful the matters which Allah (ﷻ) has sanctified, you have ruined Allah’s house, and have killed the *Awliyâ’* (those among His close slaves; the true believers) of Allah.” He related that Al-Ḥajjâj said, “Indeed, Ibn az-Zubayr has altered Allah’s words.” Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) said, “You have lied, for neither Ibn az-Zubayr nor you is able to alter Allah’s words.”...

History books are replete with these and similar narrations, which clearly shows that the Companions were bold when it came to defending what they believed to be true, which makes it impossible for them to have lied about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), for only the coward lies. They conveyed the truth to all; indeed, they spoke out when they felt that one among them made an error in judgment, in judgments that were reached after much thought and reflection. Then how could they have remained silent when someone actually lied about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?

Listen to what Anas (رضي الله عنه) had to say about the Companions. He (رضي الله عنه) related a hadith and a man said to him, "Did you hear this from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?" He said, "Yes, or someone related it to me who does not lie; by Allah, we would not lie, and we would not even know what a lie is."⁶

Without a doubt, then, fabrications did not occur during the period of the Prophet's Companions (رضي الله عنهم); they were all trustworthy and none lied to another. Any difference of opinion that arose among them stemmed from different judgments, with each one of them seeking the truth.

Fabrications began during the period of the *Tâbi'oon*, obviously more so during the period of the younger *Tâbi'oon* than the period of the older ones, a period in which Allah (ﷻ) was feared more and Islam was followed more closely than in the ensuing period. The Companions and the older, eminent *Tâbi'oon* — known for their knowledge, piety, Religion, and trustworthiness — were able to thwart the plots of the liars and fabricators.

The causes that led to fabrication and the settings in which it thrived

We have already mentioned that political differences at the end of 'Uthmân's caliphate and during 'Ali's caliphate were primary factors that led to the rise and spread of fabrications; also, we have already mentioned that the Shi'ah were the first to invent lies about the Prophet (ﷺ), which makes Iraq the place where fabrications originated. The Imams of Hadith point that out; for example, Az-Zuhri used to say, "A hadith would go forth from us the span of a hand and would return to us from Iraq the span of an arm." Mâlik

⁶ *Miftâh ul-Jannah*, by As-Suyootee: p. 25.

referred to Iraq as the house of minting, for hadiths would be minted there and then spread among the people just as coins are minted and then are spread for usage in dealings. Granted, political differences were the original cause for the occurrence of fabrications, yet there were other causes and motives that led not only to more and more fabrications, but to their spread as well. In the following sections, we briefly outline the most important causes that led to the fabrication of hadiths.

First, Political differences

Many political factions sunk into the mud that was lying upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); the Râfiḍah (Shi‘ah) were the most active of these groups in inventing lies about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). When Mâlik was asked about the Râfiḍah, he said, “Do not speak to them, nor relate from them, for indeed they lie.”⁷ Shareek ibn ‘Abdullâh al-Qâḍee, known to have leanings toward exaggerating regarding the Prophet’s family, though he was just, said, “Take from all whom you meet, except for the Râfiḍah, for they fabricate hadiths and then take it to be their Religion.”⁸ Ḥammâd ibn Salamah said, “One of the Shaykhs of the Râfiḍah said, ‘When we used to gather and find something to be good, we would make it a hadith.’”⁹ And Ash-Shâfi‘ee said, “Among the people who follow their own desires, I have not seen a group bear witness to more lies than the Râfiḍah.”¹⁰

The people of the Sunnah relate many examples of hadiths that the Râfiḍah fabricated. The following are all such examples:

⁷ *Minhâj us-Sunnah*, 1/13.

⁸ *Minhâj us-Sunnah*.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ikhtisâr Uloom al-Ḥadeeth*, by Ibn Katheer, p. 109.

— They relate that all of the Companions bore witness to the following: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) took ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) by the hand, and said, “This is who I appoint, my brother, and the Caliph after me, so listen to him and obey.” The people of the Sunnah proclaim that this is without a doubt a fabrication invented by the Râfiḍah (in ensuing sections, we will explain how it is a lie).

— “Whoever wishes to see Adam, in his knowledge; Noah, in his piety; Ibrâheem, in his forbearance; Moosa, in his dignity; and ‘Eesa, in his worship — then let him look at ‘Ali.”

— “I am the balance of knowledge, ‘Ali is its two scales, Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥusain are its strings, and Fâṭimah is its link. And the Imams from us are its pillars. In it is weighed the deeds of those who love us and those who hate us.”

— “The love of ‘Ali is a good deed and with it one is not harmed by a sin; hating him is sin and with it one is not benefited by a good deed.”

Just as they invented lies in order to praise the family of the Prophet (ﷺ), they invented lies to belittle the Companions, especially Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه). For example, in one of their narrations, ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) supposedly tied a rope around ‘Ali’s neck, so that he could be led like a mount, and Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها) was behind them screaming. Ibn Abul-Ḥadeed mentioned that the people of Hadith do not relate this and other similar narrations, but that only the Shi‘ah relate them.¹¹ They also fabricated hadiths against Mu‘âwiyah (رضي الله عنه); for example, “If you see Mu‘âwiyah on my pulpit, then kill him.”

Thus the Râfiḍah went to extremes, inventing hadiths that corresponded to their desires. A good number of narrations they fabricated, for in *al-Irshâd*, Al-Khaleeli said, “The Râfiḍah made up

¹¹ *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balâghah*, 1/135; this is with the knowledge that Ibn Abul-Ḥadeed was himself Shi‘ah and a Mu‘tazilee.

approximately 300,000 hadiths in which ‘Ali and the Prophet’s family were praised.” Perhaps this is an exaggeration, yet the fact remains that they invented a great number of hadiths. Any Muslim must stand bewildered at the temerity shown by those who lied about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), were it not known that most of those who were Shi‘ah were Persians, and their sole intention was to undo Islam. Others from that group accepted Islam, but were not able to cast off the remnants of their previous religion, and so they entered Islam with a polytheistic mentality; they did not care whether they lied about the bearer of the Message, so long as they could give fuel to the love that dwelt in the innermost part of their hearts; this is the way of children and the ignorant regarding that which they love or hate.

Unfortunately, these were rivaled by some of the people of the Sunnah, the ignorant ones among them. They refuted lies with lies, though their lies were considerably fewer. For example, the narration, “Upon the leaves of all the trees in Paradise is written: None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, ‘Umar al-Fârooq, and ‘Uthmân Dhun-Noorayn.”

Likewise, the staunch supporters of Mu‘âwiyah equaled the Râfiḍah. Some of them made up narrations, such as this one: “The trustworthy ones are three: I, Jibreel, and Mu‘âwiyah.” Or, for example, “You are from me, O Mu‘âwiyah, and I am from you.” And in yet another narration, “It is only Mu‘âwiyah who I will not see in Paradise, and then he will come to me after a long time, and I will say, ‘From where, O Mu‘âwiyah?’ He will say, ‘From my Lord, where he was speaking to me in private and I was speaking to him in private.’” According to this narration, the Prophet (ﷺ) then says to him, “This is in return for your honor having been attacked in the world.”

So too did some of the supporters of the Banu ‘Abbâs fabricate narrations, narrations showing ‘Abbâs (ﷺ) to be the Caliph after the Prophet (ﷺ). For example, “ ‘Abbâs is my appointed one and my inheritor.” This group had no qualms about inventing great lies such as the following: they related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to ‘Abbâs (ﷺ), “In the year 135, it (i.e. the caliphate) belongs to you and your children, As-Safâh, Al-Manşoor, and Al-Mahdee.”

Would the Khawârij fabricate lies against the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?

The people of knowledge mention that the Khawârij — those who left the camp of ‘Ali (ﷺ) after he agreed to accept the ruling of certain Companions in his dispute with Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ) — were of the various sects the least guilty of fabricating lies about the Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him). They lied so infrequently because it was a part of their beliefs that a perpetrator of a great sin was a disbeliever (this view is most widely accepted among them). According to what Al-Ka‘bee related,¹² they held that anyone who sinned, regardless of whether the sin was a major or minor one, was a disbeliever. Therefore they did not regard lying and wickedness as being lawful; in their worship and austerity — despite their false beliefs — they were indeed pious. Yet that did not prevent some of their leaders from fabricating lies about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It is related from one of their Shaykhs, “Indeed these hadiths are Religion, so look at those from whom you take your Religion. And if we desired a matter, we would turn it into a hadith.”¹³ ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn Mahdee said that the Khawârij and the Zanâdiqah¹⁴

¹² *Al-Farq Baiyn al-Firâq* (p. 45).

¹³ As-Suyootee in *al-Laâli’ al-Masnoo’ah*, (2/486); here, he is relating from Ibn al-Jawzee from the introduction of his book *al-Mawḍoo‘ât*.

¹⁴ See discussion below.

fabricated this hadith: “If a hadith comes to you from me, then look at it in light of Allah’s Book. If it is in agreement with Allah’s Book, then I have said it.”

That is what writers from the past and present say, yet I have not found a single hadith fabricated by a Khârijee (member of the Khawârij) — though I have searched long in the compilations of fabrications. Nor have I found a Khârijee who is listed among the liars and fabricators. As for the Khârijee Shaykh mentioned above, I do not know who he is, and because Hammâd ibn Salamah explicitly said elsewhere that he related it from a Râfiḍee Shaykh, it is very possible that the attribution to a Khârijee here is a mistake, especially when we consider that we have not found a single hadith from them that is fabricated.

As for ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn Mahdee’s narration — “If a hadith comes to you...” — he said that the Zanâdiqah and the Khawârij fabricated it. First, we do not know whether that saying can be correctly ascribed to ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn Mahdee, for it is a saying that is not backed by proof: he did not even mention who the fabricator was, or when the fabrication originated. What raises further doubts is that he ascribed this fabrication to the Zanâdiqah and the Khawârij — which group was it? It is highly unlikely that both groups got together and fabricated it. Other than Ibn Mahdee’s narration, other narrations only mention the Zanâdiqah. Zakariyah as-Sâjee related from Yahyâ ibn Mu‘een that he said, “This hadith has been fabricated by the Zanâdiqah.” Al-Fatannee also relates the same from Al-Khaṭṭābee: “The Zanâdiqah fabricated it.”¹⁵ Not in any of these texts are the Khawârij mentioned. And as we shall see later on, some scholars did not even rule this hadith to be fabricated; they merely ruled that it was weak.

¹⁵ *Tadhkiratul-Mawdoo‘ât*, p. 28.

The more I researched, the more I became sure that the imputation of fabrication to the Khawârij is not supported by valid proofs, and is hence a rejected claim. The Khawârij claimed that a perpetrator of a great sin — or a small one, according to some — is a disbeliever, and lying is a great sin. Imagine how much greater the sin of lying becomes when it is against the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They were a brave group and they worshipped a great deal, and they did not resort to hidden lies as the Shi‘ah did. Had they lied about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), they would have also deemed it lawful to lie about those who were lesser in status, such as the leaders and rulers of their time. Yet all historical data clearly indicates that they would face rulers and leaders with a great deal of truth and openness.

What is important is for us to find a clear and palpable proof that shows them to have fabricated hadiths, yet these proofs I could not find, and still cannot find. Abu Dâwood said, “Among the people who follow their own desires, the most authentic hadiths come from the Khawârij.” And Ibn Taymiyah said, “Among the people who follow their own desires, there are none more truthful and upright than the Khawârij.” He also said, “They do not lie on purpose; rather, they are known for truthfulness. It is even said that their hadiths are among the most authentic of hadiths.”

Second, the Zanâdiqah

Zandaqah is a term that represents hate for Islam as a Religion and a Nation. A *Zindeeq* is one who holds *Zandaqah* views, and the plural of *Zindeeq* is *Zanâdiqah*. Islam swept away thrones and leadership roles that were based upon misguiding people in their beliefs, putting down their honor, and using them for base profit. Rulers would use the people to fight wars, not for any particular belief, but simply so that those rulers could expand their realms. But

with the advent of Islam, people began to notice that under the shade of Islam there was honor for the individual, nobility in belief, freedom for the mind, and eradication of superstition, charlatanism, and foolish beliefs. And so people entered Islam in throngs. With the political as well as military strength of Islam, power was taken away from tyrannical leaders and chiefs, who had no hope of regaining any of their fleeting glory. Such people and others of their ilk found no means of exacting revenge on Islam except by trying to distort its beliefs and noble qualities or to divide the ranks of its followers. The strongest method they felt to be at their disposal was to fabricate hadiths. And so under many disguises — sometimes as a Shi‘ee, sometimes as a Sufi, other times as a philosopher or wise man — such people tried to disseminate fabricated hadiths. All such efforts were meant to insert defects into the formidable, forbidding, and towering structure that Muhammad (ﷺ) had built, which Allah (ﷻ) has promised will remain until the end of time, erect and safe. Those who try to bring down that structure necessarily fail and end up miserable as a result.

There are many examples of fabricated hadiths that issued from this category of people; from them are the following:

— “Our Lord descends on the night of ‘Arafah upon a camel..., shakes hands with the riders, and embraces the walkers.”

— “Allah created the Angels from the hair of His arms and chest.”

— “Indeed, Allah felt pain in His two eyes and the Angels visited Him.”

— “Looking at a beautiful face is worship.”

— “Eggplant is a cure for every disease.”

In this manner, the Zanâdiqah introduced thousands of fabricated hadiths in beliefs, manners, medicine, the halal, and the

harâm. In the presence of Al-Mahdee, one Zindeeq admitted to having fabricated one hundred hadiths. When ‘Abdul-Kareem ibn Abee al-‘Aujâ was being led to his execution, he admitted to having fabricated 4000 hadiths, in which he would make harâm that which is halal and make halal that which is harâm. When some of the Caliphs from Banu ‘Abbâs felt the danger that the Zanâdiqah represented to the structure of political life in Muslim lands, they began to kill them and divide their ranks. Al-Mahdee is most memorable among the Caliphs for stamping out the Zanâdiqah movement; he would go after their leaders, poets, and scholars. The most famous of the Zanâdiqah are ‘Abdul-Kareem ibn Abee al-‘Aujâ, who was killed by Muhammad ibn Sulaymân ibn ‘Ali, the leader of Basra; Bayân ibn Sam‘ân al-Mahdee, who was killed by Khâlid ibn ‘Abdullâh al-Qaşree; and Muhammad ibn Sa‘eed al-Maşloob, who was killed by Abu Ja‘far al-Mansoor.

Third, Partisanship or fanaticism for one’s race, tribe, language, country, or Imam

Certain nationalists invented the hadith, “Indeed, if Allah is angry, he sends down revelation in the Arabic language, but if He is pleased, He sends down revelation in Persian (Farsi).” Those who were ignorant among the Arabs vied with them, making up the hadith, “Indeed, if Allah is angry, He sends down revelation in Farsi, and if He is pleased, He sends down revelation in Arabic.” Fanatical followers of Abu Haneefah made up the hadith, “There will come a man in my Nation who is called Abu Haneefah an-Nu‘mân: he is the lamp of my Nation.” Fanatical opponents of Ash-Shâfi‘ee invented the hadith, “There shall come a man in my Nation who is called Muhammad ibn Idrees: he is more harmful to my Nation than *Iblees* (the Devil).” The same can be said for fabricated hadiths that speak

about the virtues of certain countries, tribes, or even eras. The scholars clarified that such narrations are fabricated, for they were able to distinguish them from authentic hadiths.

Fourth, Stories and sermons

At a certain point, storytellers were responsible for admonishing and sermonizing, yet most of them did not fear Allah (ﷻ); what was important to them was only to make people cry in gatherings or to impress people with their sayings. And so they would fabricate false tales and then ascribe them to the Prophet (ﷺ). Ibn al-Qutaybah explained that the commoners would sit in the gatherings of storytellers expecting wonderful words or words that would make them cry. In response to that demand, storytellers would invent lies, for instance, about Paradise and Hell, in order to make people weep.

An example of this kind of fabrication is this narration: “Whoever says, None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, Allah creates from every word a bird, whose beak is made from gold and whose feather is made from corals.” The impudence and temerity of those storytellers is bewildering. On one occasion, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyâ ibn Mu‘een prayed in the Ar-Rassâfah Mosque. A storyteller stood among the people gathered in the Mosque and said, “Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyâ ibn Mu‘een related to me from ‘Abdur-Razzâq from Qatâdah from Anas, that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said...” And he related the previous narration. He continued to relate twenty or so pages worth of narrations, while Aḥmad stared in amazement at Yaḥyâ and Yaḥyâ stared in amazement at Aḥmad. Each asked the other, “Did you relate this?” And each of them answered, “By Allah, until this hour, I had not heard this.” When the storyteller was finished, Yaḥyâ asked, “And

who related this to you?” He said, “Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyâ ibn Mu‘een.” Yaḥyâ said, “I am Yaḥyâ and this is Aḥmad, and we have never heard of this to be among the sayings of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)...” The storyteller said, “I used to always hear that Yaḥyâ ibn Mu‘een was an imbecile, but that fact has not dawned upon me until now.” Yaḥyâ asked, “And how is that?” He said, “Is there not any Yaḥyâ ibn Mu‘een and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in the world other than you two? I have indeed written from seventeen Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbals and Yaḥyâ ibn Mu‘eens.”¹⁶

Unfortunately, however, those storytellers were well received by the public. One such storyteller became so impudent as to claim that the Prophet (ﷺ) sits with Allah (ﷻ) upon His Throne. Muhammad ibn Jareer at-Ṭabaree heard about that, became very angry, and refuted and reproached the man. He wrote on his door, “How perfect is Allah! Who has no partner with Him on His throne.” The commoners of Baghdad believed the storyteller and in response to what Muhammad ibn Jareer did, they stoned his house.

Fifth, Differences in fiqh

Some ignorant followers of the fiqh schools tried to strengthen their schools by fabricating hadiths. For example,

- “Whoever raises his hands in prayer, then he has no prayer.”
- “To rinse one’s mouth and to inhale water in one’s nose three times each is compulsory upon the one who is in a state of major impurity.”
- “Jibreel led me in prayer by the Ka‘bah, and he read out loud, ‘In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.’”

¹⁶ *Tahdheer al-Khawâs min Akâdheeb al-Quṣṣâs*, by As-Suyootee.

Sixth, Ignorance of the religion, yet with a desire to do good

Many pious people and people who were steadfast in their worship fall under this category. By fabricating hadiths regarding the virtues of doing good deeds, these people thought that they were getting closer to Allah (ﷻ) and that they were serving Islam. In those narrations, they would encourage people to perform acts of worship and obedience. When the scholars reminded them of the Prophet's saying, «Whoever lies about me on purpose, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire,» they would answer, “We are lying for him, not about him.” This was all because of ignorance regarding the Religion and the overcoming of desires and heedlessness. From this category of fabrications are many narrations that enumerate the virtues of different chapters of the Qur'an. Nooḥ ibn Abee Maryam admitted to having fabricated these narrations. He excused himself by arguing that the people were turning away from the Qur'an, while occupying themselves in the fiqh of Abu Haneefah and the battles related by Ibn Is-hâq. Ghulâm Khaleel was another fabricator from this category; he was an ascetic who remained aloof from the world and its pleasures, and he dedicated his life to worship and piety. The common people loved him, so much so that the marketplaces of Baghdad closed in mourning on the day he died. Despite all of that, Satan made the fabrication of hadiths appear comely to him — hadiths that discussed the virtues of certain invocations. He said, “We fabricated those narrations to soften by them the hearts of the commoners.”

Seventh, Currying favor with kings and leaders

An example of this kind of fabrication occurred when Ghiyâth ibn Ibrâheem entered upon Mahdee, who was playing with a pigeon.

Seeing that, Ghiyâth related the famous hadith, “There is no competition except in the arrowhead (i.e., archery), the hoof (i.e. horse racing)...” and he added “or the wing (of a bird),” trying to please Al-Mahdee, who in response bestowed upon him 10,000 Dirhams. After Ghiyâth turned his back, leaving, Al-Mahdee said, “I bear witness that your back is that of a liar about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).” He then ordered for the bird to be slaughtered.

Scholars mention other causes that led to the fabrication of hadiths, among which are the following:

- The desire to present a unique hadith in terms of either its text or chain.
- The desire to promote a certain Islamic ruling.
- The desire to exact revenge upon an enemy or a specific group.
- The desire to promote certain kinds of food, perfume, or clothing.

Yet the seven categories we discussed in detail are the most widespread and important factors that led to the fabrication of hadiths.

At the end of this discussion, I must mention a point that has often occurred to me, but that has strengthened in intensity as I wrote this chapter. The leniency shown by the rulers had most rueful results; had rulers taken a stronger stance against fabricators by doing away with their leaders — as is the ruling of Allah (ﷻ) in this situation — fabrications might not have spread to the extent that they actually did. We find that a ruler such as Al-Mahdee admitted that Ghiyâth ibn Ibraheem was a fabricator seeking to curry favor with him, yet he rewarded him not with death or any other punishment, but with 10,000 Dirhams. Strange enough, instead of punishing the wicked liar, he slaughtered the pigeon, giving the wicked liar money so that he could enjoy himself with the wealth of the Muslims. On

another occasion, Muqâtil ibn Sulaymân al-Balkhee said to Al-Mahdee, "If you wish, I will fabricate for you hadiths regarding 'Abbâs and his sons." Al-Mahdee said, "I am in no need of them." But he did not punish Muqâtil. It is related that when Ar-Rasheed perceived that Abu al-Bakhtaree lied about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), claiming that, "The Prophet (ﷺ) used to fly on a pigeon," Ar-Rasheed merely said, "Go away from me; had you not been from the Quraysh I would have removed you from your post." The said liar was actually a judge for Ar-Rasheed. Allah (ﷻ) will hold those leaders accountable if the narrations about them are true. Yes, they did show great resolve in putting down the Zandaqah movement, killing its leaders, but that was mainly because the Zanâdiqah were rebelling against them, for why else did they not do the same to the liars and fabricators who lied about the Prophet (ﷺ) in order to please their whims?

Storytellers filled the mosques with their lies while the leaders and rulers had knowledge thereof. Fabricators thrived without anyone to prevent them or thwart their activities. And had not Allah (ﷻ) brought about scholars and Imams who defended the Sharia in each generation and who stripped the Sunnah of all false narrations that became mixed with it, the calamity would have been complete. The zeal of our pious predecessors, those who fought against fabricators and their fabrications, helped to a great extent to preserve the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from lies and liars until the Day of Judgment.

CHAPTER THREE

The Efforts of the Scholars to Purify and Authenticate the Sunnah

The Scholars' War on Fabricators and Fabrications

*A*n anyone who studies the stance taken by the scholars — from the time of the Companions until the recording of the Sunnah became complete — in how they fought to quell the plots of the fabricators and in how they toiled and labored to purify the Sunnah from false narrations, can only conclude that they could hardly have done more to preserve the authentic Sunnah. The methods they used to criticize and scrutinize hadith narrations were most excellent and most scholarly, and thus they were able to discern between the authentic and the weak. We can even positively say that our scholars — may Allah have mercy on them — were the first ones out of all the nations to lay down precise scholarly rules for discerning between authentic and unauthentic historical narrations. Here are some of the steps they took to save the Sunnah from the plots of liars, steps that show us how they were able to cleanse the Sunnah, removing any mud that tried to attach itself to it.

First, the chain of the narration

After the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, the Companions took from one another without doubting in the other person's honesty, and we have seen ample examples of this in previous chapters. Nor did the Tâbi'oon hesitate to accept any hadith that they had heard related from a Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). This sort of trust in society continued until the Discord¹ came to pass, and the miserable Jew, 'Abdullâh ibn Saba, proclaimed his evil claim, one based on extreme Shi'ah ideas, that 'Ali (عليه السلام) had qualities of godhood or of a deity. Generation after generation, schemes against the Sunnah began to grow and spread. At that early stage during the time of the Discord, scholars from the Companions and the Tâbi'oon began to scrutinize narrations, accepting only those narrations that contained known chains and narrators, narrators who were known for their trustworthiness and uprightness. In the introduction of *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, Imam Muslim related that Ibn Seereen said, "They would not ask for the chain (of narrators), but when the Discord occurred, they said, 'Name to us your men.' They would see who was from the people of the Sunnah and take their hadith, and they would see who was from the people of innovation and not take their hadith." Such scrutiny and investigation into the chains of narrations began in the period of the younger Companions, those who lived on until after the Discord occurred. Also in his introduction, Muslim related from Mujâhid that Basheer al-'Adwee went to Ibn 'Abbâs (عليه السلام) and began to relate hadiths, saying, "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said such and such..." Ibn 'Abbâs (عليه السلام) neither listened to his hadith nor looked at

¹ The 'Discord' refers to the period in Islamic history immediately after the assassination of 'Uthmân, the third of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, in which the Muslim Nation was split into factions and became plagued by internecine fighting.

him, and Basheer said, "O Ibn 'Abbâs, why do I see you not listening to my hadith: I am relating to you from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), yet you do not listen!" Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) answered, "Whenever we used to hear a man say, 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,' the attention of our eyes and ears would hasten to him but when people started to ... we began to take from people only that which we know." The Tâbi'oon followed suit and began to demand from narrators the chains of narrations, and they tried to take as much as they could directly from the Companions. Abu al-Âliyah said, "We used to hear narrations, the source of which were the Companions, and we would not be satisfied until we rode to them and heard from them ourselves." Ibn al-Mubâarak said, "The chain (of narrators) is part of the Religion. Were it not for the *isnâd* (the chain), anyone who wished could say whatever he wanted."

Second, Verifying the authenticity of Hadiths

Scholars would verify the authenticity of narrations by consulting with Companions, Tâbi'oon, and Imams of the Science of Hadith. Allah (ﷻ) prolonged the lives of many eminent and knowledgeable Companions who acted as reference books for the people. When fabrications first came into being, the people sought judgment with the Companions, asking them about narrations they heard. To this end, many Tâbi'oon and even Companions traveled to different lands, seeking out authentic hadiths, which were related by trustworthy Companions. We have already mentioned the journey of Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) to Syria and Palestine, and of Abu Ayyoob (رضي الله عنه) to Egypt in order to hear a single hadith. Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib once said, "I used to travel for nights and days, searching out a single hadith."² On another occasion, Ash-Sha'bee related a

² *Jâmi' al-Bayân al-'Ilm*, 1/94.

hadith from the Prophet (ﷺ), and when he finished, he said to the man to whom he spoke, “You have taken it for nothing; a man used travel for something less than this to Madinah.”³ And Bishr ibn ‘Abdullâh al-Haḍramee said, “I used to travel from one city to another, seeking out a single hadith that I wanted to hear.”

Third, Criticism of narrators

By investigating the veracity of narrators, scholars contributed much to discerning the authentic narration from the fabricated one, or the strong narration from the weak one. They labored long and hard, studying the lives and biographies of narrators, including what was apparent regarding them and what was hidden. And in taking upon themselves this monumental task, they did not fear the blame of anyone, nor did they hesitate to proclaim openly any defect found in narrators. It was said to Yaḥyâ ibn Sa‘eed al-Qaṭṭân, “Do you not fear that these whose narrations you have abandoned will be your opponents before Allah on the Day of Judgment?” He said, “For these to be my opponents is more beloved to me than for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to be my opponent, saying to me, ‘Why did you not expel lies from my Hadith?’”

Scholars laid down rules that explained in detail the criteria for accepting the narrations of a narrator and for rejecting them. The following four groups constitute the most important categories of narrators whose narrations are not accepted:

1. The liars, who lied upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The scholars agree that narrations of hadith are not accepted from one who lied even once about the Prophet (ﷺ); they also agree that it is one of the greatest sins to lie about the Prophet (ﷺ). Yet they disagree about

³ *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, 1/92.

whether the fabricator is a disbeliever. A group of scholars hold that fabricators are disbelievers. Other scholars say that the fabricator must be executed, though they disagree among themselves whether his repentance is accepted. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Abu Bakr al-Humaydee, the Shaykh of Bukhari, say that the repentance of a fabricator is never accepted; An-Nawawee, on the other hand, positively asserts that his repentance is accepted and that his narrations, like his testimonies, are from that time (i.e. the time of his repentance) onward accepted, and that his situation is similar to that of a disbeliever who accepts Islam. Abu al-Mudhaffir as-Sam‘āni ruled that if someone lied regarding even one narration, all of his previous narrations must also be rejected.

2. The liars, those who lie in their general talk, even if they never lied about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Scholars agree that if someone is known to have lied even once, then his narrations are not accepted. Imam Mālik enumerated four categories of people whose narrations are rejected:

“The man who is known for his foolishness, even if he narrates most among the people; the man who lies in the narrations of people, even if I do not accuse him of having lied about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); the man of desires (one who puts his desires before or on equal footing with Allah’s Sharia), who invites others to his desires and prejudices; and the senile man, who does not know what it is he related, though he might have virtues in terms of his worship.

But if one repents for his lies and then becomes known for truthfulness and uprightness, then the majority of scholars hold that both his repentance and narrations are accepted. Abu Bakr as-Ṣairafee dissented, saying, ‘When we reject the narration of anyone for a lie that he was exposed with, we never return to accepting his narrations, not even after an outward repentance.’”

3. The people of innovation and desire. Scholars agree that a narration is not accepted from an innovator who sinks into disbelief because of his innovation; the same ruling applies to the one who deems lying as being lawful, though he does not go into disbelief because of his innovation. But what about the innovator who does not regard lying as being lawful: are his narrations accepted? Or do we distinguish between the one who invites others to his innovations and the one who does not invite others to them? Al-Ḥāfidh ibn Katheer said, "In this there is a dispute as of old and new, yet the majority hold that we make a distinction between the one who invites others and the one who does not (that is, we do not accept the narration of one who invites others to his innovation, while we do accept the narration of one who does not invite others to his innovation)." Shāfi'ee and Ibn Ḥibbân relate that there is a consensus that it is not permissible to rule by a narration that is related by an innovator. Ibn Ḥibbân said, "I know of no disagreement among them (the Imams) regarding this." It appears, however, that Ibn Ḥibbân's claim is ill-founded, for Bukhari related from 'Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân, the Khârijee who often praised 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Muljam and who was one of the most famous propagators of the views of the Khawârij. Also, Shāfi'ee said,

"I accept the testimony of the people who follow their desires, except for those who favored Ibn al-Khaṭṭâb of the Râfiḍah, for they permit false testimonies when doing so is in their favor."⁴

In *al-Farq Bayn al-Firâq*, 'Abdul-Qâdir al-Baghdâdi relates that Shāfi'ee modified his view in the end, excluding the Mu'tazilah as he previously did the supporters of Ibn al-Khaṭṭâb. It appears to me that scholars would reject the narration of an innovator when his narration promoted his particular innovation, or if the narrator was from a

⁴ *Ikhtisâr 'Uloom al-Ḥadeeth*, p. 107.

group who deemed lies — even about the Prophet (ﷺ) — as being lawful when those lies served to promote their desires and prejudices, and that is why scholars rejected the narrations of the Râfiḍah, while they accepted the narrations of certain Shi‘ah who were known for truthfulness and trustworthiness. They would also accept narrations of an innovator if he or his group forbade lying; ‘Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân is one such narrator.

4. The Zanâdiqah, the wicked ones, and the heedless ones who had no understanding of what it was that they were relating. Included in this category are all those who do not fulfill the requirements of precision in memory and conveyance, as well as those who are lacking in the qualities of uprightness and understanding. Al-Ḥâfiḍh ibn Kathêr said,

“The accepted narrator is the trustworthy one, who is precise in what he relates. He is a sane Muslim who is of age, and who is free from defects in the form of wicked deeds and of those deeds that detract from one’s honor (as outlined by scholars). He must be vigilant and not heedless. He must have memorized if he relates from his memory, and he must have understanding if he relates by meaning. And if he is faulty or defective in any of the previous conditions, his narration is rejected.”

Scholars hesitate to accept the narrations of the following categories:

- 4.1. Those about whom it is disputed — were they upright and trustworthy or did they have in them some defect that affects the authenticity of their narrations?
- 4.2. Those who erred frequently in their narrations, often contradicting the narrations of the trustworthy Imams.
- 4.3. Those who forgot often.
- 4.4. Those who became confused about different narrations during the later stages of their lives.

4.5. Those whose memories were weak.

4.6. Those who were not discerning — they took from anyone, regardless of whether that person was trustworthy or weak.

Fourth, Establishing general principles to categorize different hadiths and to distinguish between its categories

There are three categories of hadith: *ṣaḥeeḥ* (authentic), *ḥasan* (acceptable), and *ḍa'eef* (weak).

First, the *Ṣaḥeeḥ* hadith

Definition of the *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadith [and in general, the *ṣaḥeeḥ* narration, even if it is not from the Prophet (ﷺ)]:

It is a narration whose chain is connected, related by upright and precise narrators, from the beginning of the chain until it reaches the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) or its end, whether that end is a Companion or anyone else; it must not be *shâdh*,⁵ and it must not contain a hidden defect that takes away from its authenticity.

Second, the *Ḥasan* narration

Scholars have differed as to the correct definition of the *ḥasan* hadith. Shaykh Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâh said that because it falls between the authentic and the weak narration in the view of the researcher but not in itself, it is difficult to express its limits; it is difficult also because the matter is relative. Then Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâh chose to describe the *ḥasan* hadith as follows:

⁵ i.e., when a trustworthy narrator contradicts the narration of one who is more trustworthy.

“The ḥasan hadith is of two kinds: First, the hadith whose chain includes a man whose qualities are not established, though he is not heedless, not one who erred frequently, and not one who has been accused of lying; and the text of the hadith is related elsewhere in exactly the same wording or almost the same wording. Second, a hadith that contains a narrator who is famous for being honest and trustworthy, but he does not reach the level of *ṣaḥeeḥ* narrators in his memorization and perfection. And if such a narrator is the only one who relates a narration, that narration is not *munkar*,⁶ and the text should not be *shâdh*⁷ nor should it be marred by a hidden defect.”⁸

The first and second century Hadith scholars did not name a category of hadith using the term ḥasan; that occurred afterwards, during the period of Aḥmad and Bukhari, after which it became an accepted term.

Third, *Ḍa‘eef* (Weak)

Its Definition: It is a narration in which the qualities, or requisites, of the *ṣaḥeeḥ* or ḥasan narration are not found. There are many kinds of *Ḍa‘eef* narrations, and each is named according to the cause of weakness, whether it stems from the chain of the narration or the text itself. Here are some of the categories of weak hadiths:

1. *Mursal*: It is a narration that a Tâbi‘ee ascribes to the Prophet (ﷺ) without mentioning the Companion that he took it from. The *fuqahâ’* (fiqh scholars) disagree as to whether the *mursal* hadith is a valid proof. The Hadith scholars, however, agree among themselves that it is not a valid proof. In the introduction to his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, Imam Muslim said, “In our basic view and the view of the scholars of narrations, the

⁶ See definition given in this section. (Editor)

⁷ See definition given in this section. (Editor)

⁸ *Ikhtisâr ‘Uloom al-Ḥadeeth*, p. 28.

mursal hadith is not a valid proof.” Al-Ḥâfidh ibn aṣ-Ṣalâh said, “As to our mention of the invalidity of the mursal hadith and our ruling of it being weak, the group of hadith retainers and critics of narrations agree with our view, a view they expressed in their various works.” They rejected the mursal narration because of their caution when it came to protecting hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ). For if an upright tâbi‘ee left out the mention of the Companion, all Companions are upright at any rate — and so the obvious question is, what takes away from the authenticity of such a narration? It was merely the caution and precision for which the scholars of this Nation are so famous.

2. Munqati‘: It is a narration in which one narrator — who is not a Companion — is missing, or if an obscure narrator is mentioned.

3. Mu‘ddal: A narration whose chain is missing two narrators or more; for example, a narration that a third generation Muslim (the generation after the tâbi‘oon) narrates directly from the Prophet (ﷺ) without mentioning the tâbi‘ee and the Companion in the link.

4. Shâdh: Shâfi‘ee defined this to mean a narration related by a reliable narrator, but which contradicts that which other people related. Some of the guardians of Hadith give it a different definition (a narration that has one chain only, which is related either by a trustworthy or non-reliable narrator) but that of Shâfi‘ee is better, for there are many hadiths that are related only by a single trustworthy narrator. Muslim said, “Az-Zuhri has 90 letters that he alone narrated.”

5. Munkar: That which is related by only one narrator, who is neither upright nor precise; such a narration is rejected.

6. Al-Mudtarib: For the different narrations of the same hadith to differ, either in the text or the chain, without the possibility of preferring one narration to the others, simply because they are all equal in their authenticity and in the fact that they are related by

trustworthy narrators. This kind of narration is weak, except if the difference is, for instance, in the name of a narrator, the name of his father, or the place he is from, and if the narrator is trustworthy; in these instances, the hadith is ruled to be authentic.

The signs that a narration is fabricated

Just as the scholars established rules for distinguishing among the *ṣaheeh*, *ḥasan*, and *ḍa'eef* narrations, so too did they establish rules for detecting fabricated narrations; in fact, they mention in detail the signs through which a fabricated narration can be detected. Previously we discussed the different categories of fabricators and their motives for fabricating. Here we mention the signs that point to a narration as having been fabricated, and we divide those signs into two categories: signs in the chain and signs in the text.

The signs of fabrication in the chain

They are many, the most important of which are the following:

1. A clear indication: that the narrator is a known liar and that his narration is not related by anyone else who is trustworthy. Scholars have put much time and effort into learning the identities and histories of fabricators, following up on the liars among them so that none escaped their scrutiny.
2. That the narrator himself admitted to having fabricated hadiths. For example, Abu 'Iṣmah Nooḥ ibn Abee Maryam admitted to having fabricated hadiths about the virtues of different chapters of the Qur'an. Another example is 'Abdul-Kareem ibn Abee 'Aujâ, who admitted to having fabricated 4000 hadiths, in which he would make harâm that which in fact is halal and vice versa.

3. That a narrator relates from a Shaykh and it is not established that the former ever met the latter, or it is established that the former was born after the death of the latter, or that the former never traveled to the land in which he claimed to have heard a hadith from the latter. For example, Ma'moon ibn Aḥmad al-Harawee claimed to have heard a hadith from Hishām ibn ‘Ammār. Al-Ḥāfiḍh ibn Ḥibbān asked Ma'moon, “When did you enter Syria and Palestine?” He said, “In the year 250 H.” Ibn Ḥibbān said, “Indeed, the Hishām that you relate from died in the year 245 H.” Similarly, ‘Abdullāh ibn Is-ḥāq al-Kirmānee claimed to be relating from Muhammad ibn Ya‘qoob. It was said to the former, “Muhammad died nine years before you were even born.” In another narration, Muhammad ibn Ḥātim al-Kushee related from ‘Abd ibn Humayd. Al-Ḥākim Abu ‘Abdullāh said, “This Shaykh heard from ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd thirteen years after he died.” Chronology is depended upon to a great extent in these kinds of narrations — this refers for the most part to dates of births, deaths, and journeys. Sufyān ath-Thawree said, “When some narrators began to lie, we used dates against them.”

4. One can at times conclude that a narration is fabricated when the situation and motives of a narrator are studied and exposed. Al-Ḥākim related that Saif ibn ‘Umar at-Tameemi said, “We were with Sa’d ibn Ṭareef, when his son came from his instructor, crying. Sa’d asked, ‘What is the matter with you?’ He said, ‘The teacher hit me.’ Sa’d said, ‘I shall humble them today.’ ‘Ikrimah related to me from Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) a hadith that ends at the Prophet (ﷺ): ‘The teachers of your children are the most evil among you, the least merciful to the orphan, and the harshest with the poor and weak.’”

The signs of fabrication in the actual text of a narration

There are many signs that point to fabrication in a narration, but the most important of them in the text of a narration are the following:

1. Stilted or awkward speech: The scholar who is familiar with the intricate details of the Arabic language knows when a given word or phrase is stiff or stilted and concludes that it is impossible to have emanated from one who is eloquent and well-spoken — how then could such words have emanated from the most eloquent person to have ever spoken Arabic, Muhammad (ﷺ)? Al-Ḥâfidh ibn Ḥajr pointed out that this sign is valid when the exact words of the Prophet (ﷺ) are being quoted. Ibn Daqeeq al-‘Eed said, “Scholars often rule a narration to be fabricated based on this principle — based on the wording of the narration. Because of their extensive research in Hadith literature, they have developed strong mental and spiritual faculties, through which they are able to differentiate between what the Prophet (ﷺ) might have uttered and what the Prophet (ﷺ) could not have uttered.” And Al-Bilqeeni said, “If one serves under a master for a number of years, he knows what he loves and what he hates, so if a third party were to claim that the master hated something, while the servant knew for a fact that he loved that thing, he would, immediately upon hearing the claim, reject it as a lie.”

2. An unacceptable meaning — this can occur in many ways, for example:

2.a. The hadith is contrary to incontrovertible facts, facts that people inherently accept, without the possibility of interpreting the hadith. For example, that Noah’s ark circumambulated the Kaaba seven times and then prayed two units at the station of Ibrâheem.

2.b. The hadith goes against general principles in wisdom and

manners; for instance, “The Turks are unjust and the Arabs as well.”

2.c. The narration invites to lust or wrongdoing; for example, “To look at a beautiful face makes one’s eyes shine.”

2.d. The hadith is contrary to that which one plainly sees or feels; for example, “After the year 100 H, no child is born that Allah (ﷻ) is in need of.”

2.e. The hadith is contrary to medical principles that are agreed upon, such as, “Eggplant is a cure for every sickness.”

2.f. The hadith is contrary to what we know of Allah’s perfection and completeness; for example, “Indeed, Allah created the horse, made it run, and it sweated, and from it, He created Himself.”

2. g. The hadith is contrary to undeniable historical fact or to Allah’s Sunnah (i.e. the general principles by which Allah (ﷻ) makes things happen) in the creation and in man. For example, in one narration an Indian man is described to have lived for 600 years and to have lived through the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).

2.h. The hadith consists of the absurd or silly, matters that the wise ones are protected from; for example, “White chickens are beloved to me and beloved to my beloved, Jibreel.”

Likewise is the case for all that the sane and wise person instinctively rejects. Ibn al-Jawzee said,

“How beautiful is the saying of the one who said: ‘As for any hadith you see that is contrary to sound minds, that is contrary to the basic principles (of the Sharia), and that is contrary to what has been (authentically) related — then know that it is fabricated.’”

3. A meaning that is contrary to a clear verse of the Qur’an and cannot be interpreted; for example, “With the exception of seven sons, no child of fornication enters Paradise.” The implications of this narration are plainly contrary to the following verse:

﴿... And no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another...﴾
(Qur'an 6: 164)

The narration is fabricated and is taken from the Torah; we know this because the ruling it imparts corresponds exactly to that of the Torah. The same can be said of a narration that is contrary in meaning to a well-known, clear *mutawâtir*⁹ Sunnah; for example, "If you narrate from me a hadith that corresponds to the truth, then take it, regardless of whether I actually said it or not." It goes against the meaning of a *mutawâtir* hadith: "Whoever lies about me on purpose, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire." This category also embraces those narrations that go against universal principles that are derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah; for instance, "Whoever has a son and then names him Muhammad, he will also be his son in Paradise." Or, "I make it binding upon myself that I should not make anyone enter the Fire whose name is Muhammad or Ahmad." Both of the previous narrations contradict a known and established principle from the Qur'an and Sunnah: that being saved occurs because of good deeds, not because of names or titles. Also, if a narration is contrary in meaning to *ijmâ'* (consensus), we know that it is fabricated; for instance, "Whoever makes up for obligatory prayers on the last Friday of Ramadan, then that will compensate for every prayer he missed during his life, up until seventy years." This is contrary to the consensus of the scholars, which dictates that the missed prayer cannot be replaced by any other form of worship.

4. A narration that is at variance with known historical facts regarding the period of the Prophet (ﷺ); for example, that the Prophet (ﷺ) levied the *jizyah*¹⁰ upon the people of Khaybar and

⁹ A category of hadith describing narrations that are related by a group of upright and trustworthy narrators who also related from a group of upright and trustworthy narrators, and so on, until the narration ends at the Prophet (bpuh).

¹⁰ A tax that is paid by non-Muslims (people of the Book) who live in Muslim lands by agreement.

lifted from them all hardship and forced labor by the witness of Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh and the written testimony of Mu'âwiyah ibn Abee Sufyân. Meanwhile, it is authentically established that the jizyah was neither known nor legislated during the year of Khaybar; rather, its ruling was revealed only after the year of Tabook, and Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh (ﷺ) died before that during the battle of Khandaq, while Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) accepted Islam during the period of the Makkah conquest. Therefore, authentically established historical facts refute the above-mentioned narration, showing it to be a fabrication.

5. The hadith corresponds to the sect or school of thought of the narrator, who is fanatical in his adherence to that sect or school of thought. For example if a Râfidee narrates a hadith about the virtues of the Prophet's family or if a *Murji'*¹¹ narrates a hadith about *irjâ'*,¹² one can be sure that the narration is fabricated. For example, Ḥabbah ibn Juwayn said, "I heard 'Ali (ﷺ) say, 'Along with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I worshipped Allah for five or seven years before anyone else from this Nation worshipped Him.'" Ibn Ḥibbân said, "Ḥabbah was extreme in his Shi'ah beliefs, and he was very weak in his narrations of hadith."

6. The hadith narration should have had many narrators relating it due to the fact that the command it contains is very important or because many witnesses purportedly heard it. But the reality is that only one narrator related it. From this category the people of the Sunnah include the hadith of Ghadeer Khum, ruling it to be a fabrication. In that narration, it is claimed that in front of all of the Companions — who purportedly bore witness to what was happening — the Prophet (ﷺ) took the hand of 'Ali (ﷺ) and said, "This is my appointed one, my brother, and the Caliph after me, so listen to him and obey." Scholars say that the narrator clearly

¹¹ A member of the deviant Murji'ah sect.

¹² A false belief that is the core tenet of the Murji'ah sect.

mentioned that the hadith took place in front of all of the Companions, which insinuates that all of the Companions hid what they knew from the Prophet's words when they decided that Abu Bakr (ﷺ) was most worthy of becoming Caliph, a claim that is as base as it is impossible. That the Râfiḍah were the only ones among the masses of the Muslims to have related this narration is proof enough of it being a lie. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said, "In this category is the narration that favors the caliphate of 'Ali (ﷺ), for we know it to be a lie for many reasons. Never mind that it is not mutawâtir, it is not even related by anyone with an authentic chain, nor is it reported to have been related in a clandestine manner, despite the fact that the people took mutual counsel on the Day of Saqeefah [when they agreed that Abu Bakr (ﷺ) should be the Caliph] and when 'Umar (ﷺ) died, when he appointed six to take counsel and choose the next Caliph. Then, even when 'Uthmân (ﷺ) died, the people differed regarding 'Ali (ﷺ), so it is obvious that if the narration is as the Râfiḍah claim it to be, many people should have related it on all of the aforesaid occasions..."¹³

Regarding the fabricated narration in question, Ibn Ḥazm said, "We have never found a chain for this claimed narration except one that contains an extremely weak narrator, who relates from someone unknown, who relates from another unknown, who uses the title Abu al-Ḥamrâ' — and we do not know who in Creation he is." Ibn Abee al-Ḥadeed clarified that there are many similar narrations and that whoever reflects and does justice to historical facts must conclude, without a doubt, that they are false and fabricated, for nothing even remotely close to the authentic is related to us in that regard, and what occurred after the Prophet's death clearly shows that none of the Companions had any knowledge of that alleged command.

7. The hadith suggests a tremendously exaggerated reward or

¹³ *Minhâj us-Sunnah*, (4/118).

punishment for a small deed. Storytellers were best known for this kind of narration, for they used them to soften the hearts of their listeners and excite wonder among them. The following is an example of this category: “Whoever prays such and such number of units for the *Duhâ*’ prayer receives the reward of seventy Prophets.” Or, for example, “Whoever says: None has the right to be worshipped but Allah, Allah creates for him a bird that has 70,000 tongues, and each tongue speaks 70,000 languages, and all of them (i.e, the tongues) are asking forgiveness for him.”

These are the most important principles that the scholars laid down in criticizing hadith and in distinguishing the authentic from the fabricated. From what is mentioned above, we see that they did not limit their efforts or even most of their efforts to criticizing the chain rather than the text, a claim that — as we shall discuss later on — is upheld by some of the Orientalists and their supporters. Indeed, scholars scrutinized equally the chain and the text of narrations; as you have just seen, they mentioned four signs of fabrication for the chain and seven for the text. And they did not stop there: they made allowance for the refined judgment of the expert, whose virtuosity in the field of hadith criticism — or whose intuition, if you will — often played a subtle yet important role when it came to scrutinizing the authenticity of narrations. At times, because of their expertise in the Arabic language and because of their long study of the Prophet’s sayings and life, they would reject a hadith immediately upon hearing it. They would say, for example, “There is darkness upon this hadith,” or, “Its text is dark,” or, “The heart denies it,” or, “The soul does not find peace in it.” Ar-Rabee’ ibn Khuthaym said, “Among hadiths, there is the hadith that has the illumination of the day, by which you know it. And among hadiths, there is the hadith that has the darkness of the night, by which you know it.” And Ibn al-Jawzee said, “The skin of the student of knowledge quivers upon hearing the munkar hadith, and most of the time, his heart has an aversion to it.”

CHAPTER FOUR

The Fruits of those Labors

By the efforts of the Scholars, which we have related to you in brief, the matter of the Sharia remained upright, for it was established upon the foundation of the Sunnah, the second of its legislative sources. The Muslims felt at ease with the hadith of their Prophet (ﷺ), from whom was swept away all quotations that he never actually articulated. The *ṣaḥeeḥ*, the *ḥasan*, and the *ḍa‘eef* were distinguished from one another, and Allah (ﷻ) protected His Sharia from the tampering of the wrongdoers, the schemes of the schemers, and the plots of the *Zanâdiqah* and all other enemies. The Muslims reaped the fruits of their vigilance and of their efforts; and the most prominent of those fruits are as follows:

First, the recording of the Sunnah

Until this point, we already know that, unlike the Qur’an, the Sunnah was not officially recorded during the period of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Sunnah was preserved in the breasts of the Prophet’s Companions, who verbally conveyed it to the *Tâbi‘oon*. Also, we have already established that parts of the Sunnah, but not the entire Sunnah, were recorded during the Prophet’s lifetime, and when the era of the Companions came to an end, only a

small percentage of the Sunnah had actually been written down. So up until that time, the Sunnah was disseminated for the main part by word of mouth. Yes, ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) did contemplate recording the Sunnah, but he decided not to in the end. In *al-Madkhal*, Bayhaqi relates from ‘Urwah ibn Zubayr that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattâb (رضي الله عنه) wished to record the Sunnah. He consulted the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and they advised him to write it down. ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) continued to seek guidance from Allah (ﷻ) for an entire month ... after which he said, “Verily, I wanted to write down the Sunan, but I indeed remembered a people who came before you: they wrote books and applied themselves eagerly to those books while they left Allah’s Book (which had been revealed to their Messenger (ﷺ)); and I — by Allah — indeed will never cover Allah’s Book with anything else.”¹

The reason given by ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) corresponds exactly with the situation the Muslims were in, for the Qur’an was freshly revealed and entire nations were entering the fold of Islam; therefore they needed to concentrate their efforts on preserving, studying, and reciting the Qur’an, so that the source and foundation of their belief could remain safe from all distortion. This situation remained unchanged until the time of the Discord, when people began to spread lies about hadiths. The Tâbi‘oon and those who came after them rose to the occasion, contributing tremendous efforts to identifying and then eradicating fabrications, efforts that we have previously discussed. From the earliest fruits of those efforts was the recording of the Sunnah — hence preserving it from distortion and from becoming lost.

Almost all narrations indicate that ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez was the first Tâbi‘ee who voiced the idea of compiling as well as

¹ *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, 1/76.

recording the Sunnah. He commissioned Abu Bakr ibn Ḥazm — a governor and judge over Madinah — to execute that idea, saying to him, “Look for the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and record them, for indeed, I fear the eradication of the Sunnah and the departure of the scholars.” He requested him to write down whatever hadiths were known by ‘Umrah ibn ‘Abdur-Raḥmân al-Anṣâriyah (98 H) and Al-Qâsim ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr (106 H). It appears that he did not give this monumental task to Ibn Ḥazm alone; rather, he sent the same request to all of the greater scholars of the time and all of the governors of different regions. Abu Na‘eem related in *Târeekh Asbahân* that ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez wrote to the inhabitants of all regions: “Seek out the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and gather it.”² And as such, ‘Umar carried out the wish of his grandfather, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه), who had that wish for a while and then decided otherwise for the reasons outlined earlier. It appears that Abu Bakr ibn Ḥazm wrote something from the Sunnah for ‘Umar, yet the first to compile every Sunnah and narration that was in Madinah was Imam Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihâb az-Zuhree (124 H), who was one of the most eminent scholars of the Sunnah during his era. In fact, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez ordered his companions to go to Az-Zuhri, identifying him as the most knowledgeable person in the Sunnah alive at that time. Muslim mentioned that Zuhri related ninety hadiths that no one else had related. Many Imams during his age openly said that had it not been for Zuhri, much of the Sunnah would have been lost despite the presence of other great scholars, such as Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣṣree and others like him during that age. It also seems that Az-Zuhri’s recording of the Sunnah was not like the recording that was achieved at the hands of Bukhari, Muslim, and Aḥmad as well as other

² In *Taqyeed al-‘Ilm*, Al-Khaṭṭeab’s narration says that he wrote that letter to the inhabitants of Madeenah.

compilers of the Hadith. Rather, his collection consisted of an unorganized compilation of all the hadiths he heard from the Companions; also, it is not sure that his collection consisted purely of the Sunnah, for it might also have contained sayings of the Companions and rulings of the Tâbi'oon. That should not surprise us, though, because every new matter begins in such a way, until others come later on to perfect it. Az-Zuhri used to disseminate written parts of his collection to his students, so that they could relate them from him. And as such, Az-Zuhri became the first to lay the foundation, or rather, to place the first brick to the foundation, of recording the Sunnah in separate books. Prior to Az-Zuhri's breakthrough, many of the Tâbi'oon scholars hated to have knowledge and narrations written down, and for different reasons; even Az-Zuhri, in his early days as a renowned scholar, disliked the writing down of knowledge, and he forbade others from doing so, but that was before 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez encouraged and exhorted him with sound reasoning to record the Sunnah.

After the period of Az-Zuhri, many scholars dedicated themselves to recording the Sunnah. Here are lists of cities and regions with the scholars who were the first to record the Sunnah in each of those respected areas:

In Makkah:

— Ibn Jurayj (150 H)

— Ibn Is-hâq (151 H)

In Madinah:

— Sa'eed ibn Abi 'Aroobah (156 H)

— Ar-Rabee' ibn Sabeeh (160 H)

— Imam Mâlik (179 H)

In Basra:

— Ḥammâd ibn Salamah (167 H)

In Kufa:

— Sufyân ath-Thawree (161 H)

In Syria and Palestine:

— Abu ‘Amru al-‘Awzâ‘ee (157 H)

In Wâsiṭ:

— Hasheem (173 H)

In Khorasan:

— ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubârak (181 H)

In Yemen:

— Ma‘mar (154 H)

In Ar-Ray:

— Jareer ibn ‘Abdul-Ḥameed (188 H)

Others to record in that era were Sufyân ibn ‘Uyainah (198 H), Al-Laith ibn Sa‘d (175 H), and Shu‘bah ibn al-Ḥajâj (160 H). Since they all lived in the same era, it is not known who was the first of them to record the Sunnah. In recording the Sunnah, they gathered the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mixed with the sayings of the Companions and the rulings of the Tâbi‘oon, and, they did not organize chapters according to the subject matter. Al-Ḥâfidh ibn Ḥajr said, “...As for gathering hadiths along with other similar hadiths in one chapter, Sha‘bee was the first to achieve that, for it is related from him that he said, ‘This chapter on divorce is huge.’”³

Then came the third century, which was the most prosperous period for the Sunnah, one blessed with many Imams of Hadith as well as their compilations. Compilations at the beginning of this century were written according to the way of *masâneed*,⁴ the

³ *Tawjeeh un-Nadhr*, p. 8.

⁴ sing.; *musnad*: a compilation (made by his student) of the hadiths related by an Imam.

gathering of all that is related from a specific Companion in one chapter, with multifarious subject matter. Among the first to author a book in this manner were ‘Abdullâh ibn Moosa al-‘Abasee al-Koofee, Musaddad al-Başree, Asad ibn Moosa, and Na‘eem ibn Hammâd Khuzâ’ee. They were followed in suit by the great retainers of hadith, such as Imam Aĥmad, who authored his famous *Musnad*. The same was achieved by Is-hâq ibn Râhawai, ‘Uthmân ibn Abee Shaybah, and others. The way they compiled was to mention the hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ) in their compilations without mentioning the sayings of the Companions or the rulings of the Tâbi‘oon; however, they would mix the authentic with the unauthentic, a method that entailed much hardship upon the student of Hadith, for only the Imams and scholars of Hadith were able to distinguish the authentic narrations from other ones. So if one was not able to ascertain the authenticity of a hadith, he was forced to ask the Imams of hadith, and if he was not able to do that, the ruling of the hadith would remain unknown to him.

This state of affairs was what prompted the Imam of Hadith scholars and the shield of the Sunnah during his era, Muhammad ibn Ismâ‘eel Bukhari (256 H), to tread a new path in compiling hadiths, and that was to limit himself to authentic (*ṣaḥeeĥ*) hadiths, without mentioning anything else. Hence he compiled his famous *al-Jâmi‘ aṣ-Ṣaḥeeĥ* (otherwise known as *Ṣaḥeeĥ al-Bukhari*). Following him in his way of compiling was his contemporary and student, Imam Muslim ibn Al-Ĥajjâj al-Qushairee (261 H), who authored his famous *Ṣaḥeeĥ*. They paved the way for the student of knowledge, enabling him to reach the authentic without having to research or ask. Many scholars emulated them, and many books were compiled after them, the most important of which are as follows:

— *Sunan Abee Dâwood* (275 H)

— *An-Nasâ’i* (303 H)

- *Jâmi' at-Tirmidhi* (279 H)
- *Sunan Ibn Mâjah* (273 H)

These Imams gathered in their books the compilations of all previous Imams, for, as is the wont of hadith scholars, they related from those who preceded them. At the beginning of the fourth century, the compilers did not contribute anything new except for criticism and corrections or small additions to the earlier works. The task of scholars from this century was to sift through all that had been gleaned by those who preceded them. They depended heavily on the criticism of scholars from the earlier centuries. Another contribution they made was to gather in single books all of the different chains of narration for a single hadith. The most famous Imam in this era was Imam Sulaymân ibn Aḥmad aṭ-Ṭabarâni (360 H), who authored his three compendiums:

1. *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer*, in which he mentioned hadiths, gathering all that each Companion related, one Companion at a time. He organized the names of the Companions alphabetically. And this compilation of his consists of 20505 hadiths.
2. *Al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ* and
3. *Al-Mu'jam al-Asghar*. In these two compilations, he mentioned separately hadiths related by each Shaykh, and here too he organized his Shaykhs alphabetically.

Examples of other Imams and compilers during this era are Ad-Dâraqutnee (380 H), who authored his famous *Sunan*; Ibn Ḥibbân al-Bustee (354 H); Ibn Khuzaymah (311 H); and Aṭ-Ṭahâwee (321 H).

And after the completion of this century, the recording, gathering, and analyzing — in terms of authenticity — of the Sunnah was completed. Additional contributions from scholars of ensuing

generations were limited to some additions to the authentic books. For example, Abu ‘Abdullâh al-Ḥâkim an-Nisâbooree (405 H) added hadiths that Bukhari and Muslim did not mention in their compilations, but that he felt to be authentic and in compliance with the conditions of both scholars. Some scholars — Adh-Dhahabee most noteworthy of them — approved of one category of his additions, while disagreeing with him about the other category.

Second, the Science of *Muṣṭalahul-Hadeeth*

Another fruit of the scholars’ long labor to eradicate fabrications was the recording of rules and principles that govern the science of hadith; furthermore, hadiths were organized according to the categories we already discussed. The combination of the aforesaid rules and principles, through which scholars were able to distinguish the authentic from the weak, made up a new science that came to be known as *Muṣṭalahul-Hadeeth*.⁵ The principles that made up this science, and which are used to ascertain the authenticity of historical narrations — are the most accurate and trustworthy known in history; indeed, our scholars are the first to have laid down those principles. In the early centuries of Islam, scholars of other fields followed the way of hadith scholars when authenticating historical reports, fields such as history, fiqh, tafseer, language, literature, and so on. In the early centuries, therefore, historical reports or narrations were accompanied by chains of narrators, each narrator being listed until the chain finally reached the one who was being quoted, and this was the case in all subjects. Even books written by scholars were passed down to their students, who passed them down to their students, and so on with each ensuing generation. We do not doubt, for example, that *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*, which is widespread among the

⁵ Hadith criticism.

masses of the Muslims, was authored by Imam Bukhari because he related it with a connected chain, generation after generation. This feature is absent in the works of scholars from other nations — even absent from their holy books.

A contemporary Christian author, Asad Rustum, a former history professor at the American University in Beirut, wrote a book about historical narrations. In his book, he depended on the principles of Hadith criticism, admitting that they consist of the best methods to authenticate historical reports and narrations.

He writes in chapter 6,

“The achievements of the scholars of hadith in this regard, over hundreds of years, are indeed worthy of wonder and respect. Here are some of the exact phrases we relate to you from their books to show you their scholarly precision and to acknowledge their contribution and favor to history.”

He then begins to relate texts from Imam Mâlik, Imam Muslim — the author of *aş-Şaḥeeḥ*, Al-Ghazâli, Al-Qâḍee ‘Iyâḍ, and Abu ‘Amru ibn aş-Şalâḥ.

The science of *Muṣṭalahul-Hadeeth* does the following:

- It categorizes hadiths into the *ṣaḥeeḥ*, the *ḥasan*, and the *ḍa‘eef*, and then classifies each of these three categories into sub-categories.
- It clarifies the requisites of the narrator and the text.
- It details different kinds of defects in a narration.
- It mentions factors that cause a narration to be rejected.
- It mentions those extraneous matters that can help to strengthen a narration.
- It clarifies how a student of Hadith should listen to the hadith, how he should carry with him narrations, and how he should be precise.
- It discusses the manners of the Hadith scholar and the student of Hadith.

There are other issues as well that are studied in Hadith criticism, issues that were discussed in more and more detail as this science developed through its stages.

The first to author some of its topics was 'Ali ibn al-Madeeni, the Shaykh of Bukhari; during that era, Bukhari, Muslim, and Tirmidhi — in scattered pieces and works — also wrote on the subject. But the first to author a detailed study of Hadith criticism in one book was Abu Muhammad ar-Ramaharmizee (360 H), in his book, *Al-Muḥaddith al-Fâṣil Bayn ar-Râwee was-Sâmi*'; however, he did not cover comprehensively all of the topics of this science. Then came Al-Ḥâkim Abu 'Abdullâh an-Naisâbooree (405 H), who wrote *Ma'rifah 'Uloom ul-Hadeeth*; however, it was a book that was neither polished nor organized. Next came Abu Na'eem al-Aṣfahâni (430 H), who did a sort of reproduction of Al-Ḥâkim's book. After them came Al-Khaṭeeb Abu Bakr al-Baghdâdi (463 H), who wrote about the rules of narrating; he named his work *al-Kifâyah*; he wrote another book about the manners of narration, which he called *al-Jâmi' li-Adâb ash-Shaykh was-Sâmi*'. In fact, he wrote a separate work for each of the different branches of knowledge that are related to hadith. Qâḍee 'Iyâḍ (455 H) wrote a book called *al-Ilmâ'*, taking most of his material from the books of Al-Khaṭeeb.

It was in the year 643 H that Ash-Shaykh al-Ḥâfidh Taqee-ud-Deen Abu 'Amru 'Uthmân ibn aṣ-Ṣalâḥ ash-Shahrzoori wrote his famous book, *Muqaddimah Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâḥ*, which he dictated to his students in the Ashrafiyah School of Damascus. Though it is not firmly cohesive, it is comprehensive, covering all that is otherwise scattered in the books of earlier scholars — and that is why scholars took eagerly to it, devoting themselves to explaining it either in verse or prose form — such as the 1000 verse explanation of Al-'Irâqee; the prose explanation of As-Sakhawee; *At-Taḡreeb*, by An-Nawawi; and its explanation *at-Tadreeb*, by As-Suyooṭee. Imam Al-Ḥâfidh

ibn Katheer ad-Dimashqee (774 H) summarized it in his book *Ikhtisâr 'Uloom ul-Hadeeth*.⁶ Thereafter many books were written on Hadith criticism, the most popular of which are the following:

- *Alfiyah*, by Al-Hâfidh al-'Irâqee (806 H)
- *Nukhbatul-Fikr fee Mustalahul-Âthâr*, by Ibn Hajr
- *Tawjeeh un-Nadhr*, by Shaykh Tâhir al-Jazâi'ree
- *Qawâ'id at-Taḥdeedh*, by Al-Qâsimee ad-Dimashqee

Third, the Science of commending or refuting narrators

Scholarly efforts and contributions also led to the science of narrator criticism, in which was studied the overall qualities of narrators — their trustworthiness, uprightness, memory, and so on. This noble science also has no parallel in the history of other nations. Muslim scholars were eager to learn as much as they could about narrators, not on personal grounds, but to be able to distinguish between the authentic and the otherwise. They would themselves interview contemporary narrators and learn from others about narrators from the past. They neither hesitated nor felt ashamed for criticizing any given narrator, for driving away from the Sharia that which did not belong to it took precedence over all else. It was said to Bukhari, "Some people harbor malice against you because of the history you relate; they say that it consists of backbiting other people." He said, "We have only related such matters in the form of a narration, and not as matters that stem from our own selves."

⁶ There is an excellent print of this book, with comments by Shaykh Aḥmad Muḥammad Shâkir. The book along with the commentary is called *al-Bâḥith al-Hadeeth*.

Narrators were graded from as early as during the era of the younger Companions; the following are examples of Companions known to have graded narrators:

- Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) (68 H)
- ‘Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit (رضي الله عنه) (34 H)
- Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) (93 H)

The following are from the Tâbi‘oon and are known to have graded narrators:

- Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayyib (93 H)
- Ash-Sha‘bee (104 H)
- Ibn Seereen (110 H)
- Al-‘Âmash (148 H)

Then came the next set of Scholars who paid special attention to the grading of narrators:

- Shu‘bah (160 H), who was especially careful, for he only related from very trusted narrators
- Imam Mâlik (179 H)
- Ma‘mar (154 H), one of the most famous of second century scholars in this field
- Hishâm ad-Distawâ‘ee (154 H)
- Al-Awzâ‘ee (157 H)
- Ath-Thawree (161 H)
- Ḥammâd ibn Salamah (167 H)
- Al-Laith ibn Sa‘d (175 H)

After these came the next set of scholars who did the same, among whom are the following:

- ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubârak (181 H)
- Al-Fazâree (185 H)
- Ibn ‘Uyainah (198 H)

- Wakee' ibn al-Jarâh (197 H)
- Yaḥyâ ibn Sa'eed al-Qaṭṭân (198 H), one of the most famous from this group
- 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Mahdee (198 H); both he and Yaḥyâ ibn Sa'eed al-Qaṭṭân were considered as trusted proofs among the masses: whoever they graded to be trustworthy, others would accept as being trustworthy; but if they criticized a narrator — with criticism that affected the validity of his narration — that narrator's narrations would be rejected. Moreover, if scholars differed regarding the grading of a narrator, they would refer the matter to these two and accept their judgment.⁷

Here are those from the next generation who are considered to be Imams in this field:

- Yazeed ibn Hâroon (206 H)
- Abu Dâwood aṭ-Ṭiyâlisee (204 H)
- 'Abdur-Razzâq ibn Hammâm (211 H)
- Abu 'Âṣim an-Nabeel aḍ-Ḍaḥḥâk ibn Makhlad (212 H)

The next era saw the emergence of books written on the criticism of narrators. Among the first to have written in this era were,

- Yaḥyâ ibn Mu'een (233 H)
- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (241 H)
- Muhammad ibn Sa'd (230 H), who was a transcriber for Al-Wâqidee; he is also the author of *aṭ-Ṭabaqât*
- 'Ali ibn al-Madeeni (234 H)

Followed by:

- Bukhari
- Muslim

⁷ *Tawjeeh un-Nadhr*, p. 114.

- Abu Zur‘â
- Abu Ḥâtim ar-Râziyân
- Abu Dâwood as-Sijistânee

Generation after generation until the ninth century (in the Hijri calendar), scholars continued to write and research about narrators, so that one specialized in the field of hadith could find in their books the history of any narrator that is mentioned in compilations of hadith.

Books written about narrators differ in the way they are authored — some mention only trusted narrators, such as occurred in *ath-Thiqât*, by Ibn Ḥibbân al-Bustee; *ath-Thiqât*, in four volumes by Ibn Qutloobghah (881 H); and *ath-Thiqât*, by Khaleel ibn Shaheen (873 H).

Other books mention weak narrators only; examples of scholars who wrote this kind of book are Bukhari, Nisâ‘i, Ibn Ḥibbân, Ad-Dâraqutnee, Al-‘Uqaylee, Ibn al-Jawzee, and Ibn ‘Adee, whose book is called *al-Kâmil fiḍ-Ḍu‘afâ’*, which transcends all other books in this category. Ibn ‘Adee mentioned all narrators who were criticized in the very least, even if the narrator was one of the men of the two *Ṣaḥeeḥ* collections — *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari* and *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*. He also mentioned the Imams of the schools because some contemporary rivals spoke about them. Adh-Dhahabee authored his book, *Meezân al-‘Aitidâl* based on Ibn ‘Iddee’s book.

There are many books that mention both trusted and weak narrators. The three *Târeekhs* by Bukhari are best known in this category — *al-Kabeer*, which is organized alphabetically; as well as *al-Awsat* and *aṣ-Ṣagheer*, which are organized chronologically. Other books similarly embracing both trusted and weak narrators are *al-Jarḥ wat-Ta‘deel*, by Ibn Ḥibbân; *al-Jarḥ wat-Ta‘deel*, by Ibn Abee Ḥâtim ar-Râzee; *at-Tabaqât al-Kubra*, by Ibn Sa‘d. But the best book written in this fashion is *at-Takmeel fee Ma‘rifat uth-*

Thiqât waḍ-Ḍu‘afâ’ wal-Majâheel, by Ibn Katheer, who combined in it information provided in *Tahdheeb*, by Al-Mizzee and *al-Meezân*, by Adh-Dhahabee, with Ibn Katheer’s own additions and comments.

Scholars of this science did not all share the exact same standards for criticizing narrators: some were severe, others lenient, and a third group was moderate. Ibn Mu‘een, Yahyâ ibn Sa‘eed al-Qaṭṭân, Ibn Hibbân⁸, and Abu Ḥâtim ar-Râzee — these are some of the sterner judges of narrators. Tirmidhi, Al-Ḥâkim, Ibn Mahdee are all known for being lenient when appraising narrators. Among the moderates in this regard are Aḥmad, Bukhari, and Muslim. Therefore, regarding the same narrator, some scholars might rule him to be trustworthy while others rule him to be weak, a difference that results from different standards set by each Imam for his appraisal. In fact, it is possible that two opinions about a narrator might be related from a single Imam, who at first ruled that he was trustworthy and then learned something that caused him to rule otherwise, and vice versa.

Another reason why judgments may differ is the age-old disagreements between the people of Hadith and the ‘people of opinion.’ These differences led some Hadith scholars to rule certain scholars of fiqh to be weak, for no other reason than Islamic rulings that were not in harmony with the leanings of Hadith scholars. The most prominent example of this is the case of the eminent scholar Imam Abu Ḥaneefah: certain scholars of narrator criticism denounced him, despite his piety, righteousness, and noble status; we find a clear instance of this when we read what Abu Bakr al-Khaṭeab related in *Târeekh Baghdad* while discussing his biography. Such judgments about him resulted mainly because of the refined and precise nature of his deductions, many of which were not understood

⁸ Some include him among the lenient critics of hadiths, an opinion that has more weight to it.

by some Hadith scholars. Some commoners who followed Hadith scholars were so fanatic in their leanings that they accused Abu Ḥaneefah of matters that he was positively innocent of.

Because of such partisanship and other similar motives, scholars of this science eventually stipulated that a negative criticism of any narrator must be accompanied by an explanation that justifies the claim. Al-Ḥâfidh ibn Katheer said, "... As opposed to a negative judgment (about a narrator), for it must be accompanied by justification." This is because people differ regarding the reasons for which they rule someone to be weak or untrustworthy; one scholar may have a set of standards for ruling in this regard while another may have other standards, which is why a negative judgment must be accompanied by justification.⁹

There are a number of instances of negative judgments based on no apparent reason, or a reason, but one that is not even relevant to the qualities that are looked for in a narrator — uprightness, trustworthiness, and precision, both in memory and in conveying narrations. One absurd instance of this is when someone was asked about the hadiths of Şâleḥ al-Muree. He said, "And what can one do with (the narrations of) Şâleḥ: they mentioned him one day in front of Ḥammâd ibn Salamah and he blew his nose!"¹⁰ In reality, such were the acts of the ignorant ones or novices in this science. As for the Imams who were specialized in this science, they would not make such wrongful judgments and ludicrous criticisms.

⁹ *Ikhtisâr 'Uloom al-Ḥadeeth*, p. 101.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Fourth, Branches of knowledge within the science of Hadith

Ascertaining the validity of a chain, authenticating narrations, understanding rulings imparted by hadiths - to achieve these aims, one must, within the science of hadith, study many issues or, if you will, branches of knowledge. In *Ma'rifah 'Uloom ul-Hadeeth*, Abu 'Abdullâh al-Ḥâkim estimated that there are fifty-two such branches of knowledge. In *at-Taqreeb*, An-Nawawi went so far as to say that there are sixty-five. The following is a discussion of the most important of these branches of knowledge, which I mention mainly to clarify the wonderful precision of the scholars in their efforts to criticize and authenticate all narrations and to preserve those that were authentic or at least acceptable.

1. Knowledge pertaining to the narrator —

— his veracity, his skill in narration, his precision, the correctness of his beliefs, his travels, his age, and all other factors that might affect our evaluation of him, by which we rule him to be trustworthy, weak, or otherwise.

Al-Ḥâkim said,

“In our times, the student of Hadith needs to learn all that is pertinent to the case of a narrator. First, does he believe in *Tawḥeed*¹¹ and in the application of the Sharia? Does he make it compulsory upon himself to obey the prophets and Messengers regarding that which was revealed to them and that which they legislated as law? Then the student must consider his personal situation — is he a man of desire, inviting others to become the same? For we do not write from the one

¹¹ The Oneness of Allah — that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners. (Translator)

who invites others to his innovation ... a ruling that is based upon the consensus of the Imams among Muslims. Then the age of the narrator must be ascertained, for the student must establish that, historically speaking, the narrator and his *shaykh*¹² actually did meet. We have met narrators who mention an age, indicating the impossibility of them having met their shaykhs (meaning that the shaykh had died before the narrator was even born). Then the student must reflect on the background of the narrator — is he a student of old, who relates directly from teachers (going all the way back to the source of the narration) or is he a new student? For in our times, a group has gained prominence that buys books and then relate from them. Others now write what they read in ancient scrolls, and then relate from them. Whoever is not specialized in this knowledge and hears from them (will believe them to be experts in this science)..."

2. Knowledge of the chains of narrations

Al-Ḥâkim said,

“This is a vast science because the Imams differ regarding the validity of narrations that do not have complete chains. A complete chain in a hadith is for a narrator to relate from his shaykh, evincing that he heard it from him, and that shaykh related from his shaykh until the chain reaches a known Companion — without any narrator being left out — and then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

3. Knowledge of those narrations that are *mawqoof*¹³ (sayings of the Companions)

An example of this is what Al-Ḥâkim related from Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah, who said, “The Companions of the Messenger of Allah

¹² In this context: teacher, mentor. (Editor)

¹³ Literally: restricted. (Editor)

(ﷺ) used to knock on his door with their nails.” Al-Ḥâkim said, “One who is not an expert in this science may, because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is mentioned, imagine this hadith to have a chain that goes back to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); however, it is not connected back to him (ﷺ). Instead, it goes back only to a Companion who was relating a practice of his fellow Companions. None of them connects this chain back to the Prophet (ﷺ).”

4. Knowledge of how the Companions ranked among themselves

Al-Ḥâkim classified them into twelve groups: the first group consists of those who accepted Islam in Makkah, the last consists of children who saw the Prophet (ﷺ) on the day of the Makkah Conquest or during his farewell pilgrimage — these too are considered to be Companions.

5. Knowledge of *mursal* narrations (regarding which there is disagreement — whether or not they are valid proofs)

Gaining an in-depth knowledge of *mursal* narrations has been achieved only by those who are extremely well grounded in Hadith science.

6. Knowledge of disconnected narrations

This subject does not include *mursal* narrations — even though a *mursal* narration is disconnected at least in a sense — because they constitute a topic in itself. Al-Ḥâkim noted that there are three kinds of disconnected chains.

6.a. The chain contains two unknown persons, who are neither known nor named.

6.b. There is an unnamed person in the chain, who is nevertheless

known from another chain.

6.c. There is a narrator in the chain who did not hear from the narrator that he is relating from (before it reaches the Tâbi‘ee, in which case it becomes mursal).

7. Knowledge of when a narrator clearly indicates that he received a narration directly from his Shaykh

When a narrator says that he received a hadith from his shaykh, there are different ways in which he can express that he directly received the narration from him, leaving no room for doubt. This can occur with a specific word; for example, each narrator in the chain says, “He told (related to) me,” or, “I heard him say,” or, “I bore witness to such and such that he said.”...

8. Knowledge of “from” narrations

This occurs when a narrator does not clearly state that he heard a narration directly from his shaykh; rather in the chain, it simply says from such and such person from such and such person. As long as the narrators are known to be innocent of any of the kinds of deception in relating narrations, the hadith is connected, a ruling that is agreed upon by the Imams of Hadith. Al-Ḥâkim mentioned an example: a hadith from Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh. He then said,

“This hadith is related by those from Egypt, then those from Madinah and Makkah, and *tadlees* (any form of deception, whether innocent or otherwise, when relating a narration) is not one of their habits. And it is the same with us, whether or not they specifically mention that they actually heard it.”

9. Knowledge of *mu‘ddal* narrations

This occurs when between the Prophet (ﷺ) and the first narrator there are two narrators who are not mentioned. This,

however, does not fall under the category of *mursal* narrations, which are specific to the *tâbi‘een* only.

10. The Knowledge of when a Companion says something mixed in with a Prophet’s saying; or, more generally speaking, removing any foreign¹⁴ letters, words or phrases from the Prophet’s speech

Al-Ĥâkim relates the following example: He related from ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) took his hand and taught him the *tashahhud* in the prayer, saying, “Say: The *tahîyyât* (all words that indicate the glorification of Allah, His eternal existence, His perfection, and His sovereignty) is for Allah. All acts of worship are for Him.”¹⁵ When he mentioned the *tashahhud*¹⁶ (testimony), he said, “If you have said this, then your prayer is over; if you wish to stand, then stand, and if you wish to sit, then sit.” Al-Ĥâkim said, “The words ‘If you have said this...’ are inserted, for they are the words of ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه). This is proven by another chain wherein the narrator related from ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه). In that narration, after it is mentioned that the Prophet (ﷺ) taught Ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) the *tashahhud*, the narrator said that ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) said, “When you finish with this, then you have completed your prayer,” which shows that it was he who said these words and not the Prophet (ﷺ).

¹⁴ ‘Foreign’ here means that it does not emanate from the Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him). (Translator)

¹⁵ Reported by Shuayb al-Arnâwoot, vol. 5, p. 99, hadith no. 4006. Its chain of transmission is authentic and its narrators are trustworthy people.

¹⁶ The testimony that states there is none worthy other than Allah, He has no partners, and that Muhammad (bpuh) is His slave and His messenger. When recited in the sitting position of the prayer, this testimony includes the *tahîyyât*: a formula containing words that indicate the glorification of Allah, His eternal existence, His perfection, and His sovereignty. (Editor)

11. Knowledge of the *Tâbi'oon*

This branch of knowledge divides into many sub-branches. One who is negligent in this knowledge may be led to confusion, not being able to distinguish between Companions and *Tâbi'oon*, nor between *Tâbi'oon* and the generation that followed them. Hâkim described their categories. The first consists of those who met the ten Companions about whom the Prophet (ﷺ) bore witness that they would enter Paradise. Examples from this category are Sa'eed ibn Musayyib, Qays ibn Abee Hâzim. The last category consists of those of the inhabitants of Basra who met Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه); those of the inhabitants of Kufa who met 'Abdullâh ibn Abee Awfâ (رضي الله عنه); those of the inhabitants of Madinah who met As-Sâ'ib ibn Yazeed (رضي الله عنه); those of the inhabitants of Egypt who met 'Abdullâh ibn al-Hârith ibn Jaz' (رضي الله عنه); and those of the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine, who met Abu Umâmah al-Bâhilee (رضي الله عنه).

12. Knowledge of the Companions' children

If one is ignorant of this knowledge, he can confuse one narration with another. Even before that, the Hadith scholar must know the children and grandchildren of the Prophet (ﷺ), as well as the narrations that are authentically related from them. Next, it is incumbent upon the Hadith scholar to know the children of the more eminent Companions, followed by the children of all other Companions; then the children of the *Tâbi'oon*, the children of the following generation, and the children of Muslim Imams in general. This branch of knowledge is indeed vast, and within the science of Hadith, it is a field in and of itself.

13. Knowledge of narrator criticism

This branch of knowledge is composed of two categories: positive judgments (those that establish the validity of an individual's

narrations) and negative judgments (those that rule a narrator's narrations to be invalid).

14. Knowledge of the authentic and the weak

This differs from the criticism of narrators, for there are many chains that are weak, even though they contain only trustworthy narrators. Al-Ĥâkim mentions an example, with his connected chain that goes back until Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) from the Prophet (ﷺ): «“The prayer of the night and day are performed two units at a time, and then the *witr* is one unit at the end of the night.”»¹⁷ Al-Ĥâkim commented:

“Every narrator in the chain of this hadith is trustworthy and precise, yet the mention of ‘day’ is a mistake. He gave another example, a hadith he related with his chain that goes back to Mâlik ibn Anas, from Ibn Shihâb, from 'Urwah, from 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), who said, “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never found fault with food; if he desired it, he would eat it, otherwise he would simply leave it.”¹⁸

Al-Ĥâkim noted:

“The Imams and trustworthy ones relate this chain, yet it is wrong, for by this chain, another hadith is intended, ‘The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never hit a woman with his hand,¹⁹ and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never exacted retribution on his own behalf, unless one of Allah's limits was transgressed, and then he would exact retribution in that matter for Allah (ﷻ).’²⁰ I tried to locate the one who erred in this narration, but I could not find him, except that it is most likely Ibn Ĥiyân al-Baṣree, who is a truthful, acceptable narrator.”

¹⁷ Abu Dâwūd and Nisâ'i, vol. 6, p. 156, hadith no.1295 and 1648; authentic and Nisâ'i said the word 'Day' is a mistake.

¹⁸ Reported by Muslim, vol. 10, p. 397, hadith no. 3844.

¹⁹ Reported by Ibn al-Jawzee, vo. 1, p. 102.

²⁰ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 21, p. 45, hadith no. 6288.

Then Al-Ḥâkim explained:

“Indeed, the authenticity of a hadith is not established based solely on its chain, for there are other factors that affect the validity of a hadith, such as the understanding of a narrator, the quality of his memory, and the experience he has with hadiths. The people of understanding, who can explain hidden defects in narrations, best contribute to this category of knowledge...”

15. Knowledge of the Fiqh of the Hadith — its meaning and bearing on Islamic rulings

This signifies the fruit of all other sciences within the Science of Hadith. Al-Ḥâkim mentioned a number of Imams in Hadith, who not only related hadiths, but had a profound understanding of their meanings as well. The following are some of those scholars — Ibn Shihâb az-Zuhri, ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn ‘Amru al-Awzâ’i, ‘Abduġlâh ibn al-Mubârak, Sufyân ibn ‘Uyainah, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

16. Knowledge of abrogated and abrogating hadiths

Al-Ḥâkim gave many examples of both abrogated hadiths and abrogating hadiths.

17. Knowledge of narrations that are famous

Al-Ḥâkim stated, “Famous narrations are altogether different from authentic narrations, for many hadiths are famous but not authentic.”

18. Knowledge of *ghareeb*²¹ narrations

There are different kinds of *ghareeb* narrations, for example:

²¹ A category of hadith: literally, ‘strange’ or ‘unusual’.

18.a. Authentic ghareeb narrations, those that are narrated by a single trustworthy narrator.

18.b. Hadiths that are narrated by a single narrator from a single narrator ... For example, the hadith,

«The dweller (of a city or town) must not sell to a nomad (or outsider).»²² Al-Hâkim said,

“This is a ghareeb narration of Mâlik ibn Anas from Nâfai‘, who is an Imam. Shâfi‘ee was the only one who narrated it — and he is an Imam — and we know of no one who related from him except for Ar-Rabee‘ ibn Sulaymân, who is trustworthy and honest.”

19. Knowledge of *mufrad* narrations

There are three categories of *mufrad* narrations:

19.a. Knowing those *Sunan* of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that the inhabitants of a single city related from a Companion; for example, the inhabitants of Kufa or of Madinah, from the beginning of a chain until its end — relate a hadith.

19.b. A hadith that a single narrator relates from a specific Imam.

19.c. A hadith specific to the inhabitants of a given city that is related by a single narrator — for example, a narrator from Makkah who relates a narration that is specific to the inhabitants of Madinah.

20. Knowledge of any kind of deception in Hadith, regardless of whether or not that deception is intentional

One category of this branch consists of those who do not clarify in their books between narrations that they had actually heard and narrations that they had not heard. Al-Hâkim said, “People in this

²² Reported by Bukhari, vol. 7, p. 371, hadith no. 2013.

category are found among the Tâbi‘oon, the generation after them, and it also includes people from every generation including this one.” He then mentioned the six categories of *tadlees*²³, giving examples for each category.

21. Knowledge of hidden defects in narrations

This branch of knowledge is independent of others within the Science of Hadith, for the trustworthiness of narrators is one matter and the detection of hidden defects is another. Al-Ĥâkim said:

“A negative judgment of a narrator plays no role in the detection of hidden defects in hadiths because the hadith of an untrustworthy narrator is weak in the first place, while hidden defects are most often found in the narrations related by those who are trustworthy... In our view, memorization, understanding, and long-standing experience are the only proofs valid in this category.”

He then mentioned ten categories, providing an example for each, without mentioning the principles that govern each category. Hidden defects revolve around three issues: one hadith being confused with another, a mistake on the part of a narrator, or the connection of a chain that is in fact *mursal*.

22. Knowledge of narrations that contradict others

Some schools of thought will rule according to one narration, while other schools will rule according to another. For example, certain narrations have the Prophet (ﷺ) performing the *mufrad* Hajj, others have him performing the *tamattu‘* Hajj, while yet others have him performing the *qârin* Hajj²⁴ — and all of them are authentic. Aĥmad and Ibn Khuzaymah base their ruling according on the

²³ Deception in narration.

²⁴ These are three Islamically legislated ways of performing Hajj. (Translator)

tamattu' narration; Shâfi'ee on the mufrad narration; and Abu Haneefah on to the qârin narration.

23. Knowledge of those narrations that are not opposed in any way

24. Knowledge of additional words

This category deals with those narrations in which a narrator is alone in adding words to a hadith... Al-Ĥâkim mentioned examples, such as the hadith of Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه), wherein he (رضي الله عنه) says, «“I asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), ‘Which deed is best?’ He (ﷺ) said, ‘Prayer in the beginning of its time.’ I said, ‘Then what?’ He (ﷺ) said, ‘Jihad²⁵ in the way of Allah.’ I said, ‘Then what?’ He (ﷺ) said, ‘Dutifulness to one’s parents.’”»²⁶

Al-Ĥâkim said:

“This is a preserved authentic hadith, which is related by a group of Muslim Imams from Mâlik ibn Mighwal and also from ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Umar. “In the beginning of its time” is mentioned in this hadith by only two narrators: Bindâr ibn Bash-shar and Al-Ĥasan ibn Mukrim, both of whom are trustworthy scholars of jurisprudence.”

25. Knowledge of the different sects that some narrators might belong to

The Imams of Hadith mention the sects or Sufi orders that some narrators belong to, so as to warn against them.

²⁵ Struggle or striving.

²⁶ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 9, p. 344, hadith no. 2574.

26. Knowledge of written errors in the text

Some Hadith scholars erred as they were transcribing hadiths.

27. Knowledge of written errors in the chain

After mentioning the preceding categories, Al-Hâkim goes on to mention other branches of knowledge within the Science of Hadith. Most of them discuss in detail the names of narrators, their lineages, their lifespan, their tribes, their contemporaries, their titles, their deeds, and so on, all of which indicate the tremendous effort of Hadith scholars for the preservation of authentic hadiths.

Fifth, Books on fabrications and fabricators

Scholars from the past would seek to ascertain the identities of liars and fabricators. Once they knew who a fabricator was, they would pronounce his name in gatherings, saying, “Such and such person is a liar, so do not take from him,” or, “So and so is a Zindeeq,” or, “So and so belongs to the Qadaree sect.”

Certain narrators are well known among hadith scholars to be fabricators:

— Abbân ibn Ja‘far an-Numairee: He invented 300 hadiths and then ascribed them to Abu Ḥaneefah, who in reality did not relate any of them.

— Ibrâheem ibn Zayd al-Aslamee: He related from Mâlik narrations that have no basis to them.

— Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdullâh al-Juwaibâree: He fabricated thousands of hadiths that were in favor of the Karâmiyah sect.

— Jâbir ibn Yazeed al-Ja‘fee: Sufyân said about him, “I heard Jâbir relate approximately 30,000 hadiths, yet I do not deem it permissible for me to relate anything from them...”

— Muhammad ibn Shujâ‘ ath-Thaljee: He fabricated hadiths ... and then ascribed them to the people of Hadith.

— Nooḥ ibn Abee Maryam: He fabricated hadiths about the virtues of the different chapters of the Qur’an.

The list continues:

— Al-Ḥârith ibn ‘Abdullâh al-‘Awar, Muqâtil ibn Sulaymân, Muhammad ibn Sa‘eed al-Masloob, Muhammad ibn ‘Umar al-Wâqidee, Ibrâheem ibn Muhammad ibn Abee Yahyâ al-Aslamee, Wahb ibn Wahb al-Qâḍee, Muhammad ibn as-Sâ’ib al-Kalbee, Abu Dâwood an-Nakha‘ee, Is-ḥâq ibn Nujaiḥ al-Miliṭṭee, ‘Abbâs ibn Ibrâheem an-Nakha‘ee, Ma‘moon ibn Abee Aḥmad al-Hirwee, Muhammad ibn ‘Ukkâshah al-Kirmânee, Muhammad ibn al-Qâsim aṭ-Ṭâyikânee, Muhammad ibn Ziyâd al-Yashkaree, and Muhammad ibn Tameem al-Firyâbee.

Scholars compiled books that contained only fabrications, so as to warn the general population of Muslims who might be deceived by them. Here are the most famous of these books:

1. *Al-Mawḍoo‘ât*, by Ḥâfidh Abee al-Farj al-Jawzee, who died in the year 597 (H). He included in this compilation every hadith that he believed to be fabricated, even if it was a hadith from the authentic compilations. In fact, he mentioned two hadiths from *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, one from *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*, thirty-eight from *Musnad Aḥmad*, nine from *Sunan Abee Dâwood*, thirty from *Jâmi‘ at-Tirmidhi*, ten from *Sunan an-Nasâ’i*, thirty from *Sunan Ibn Mâjah*, sixty from *Mustadrak al-Ḥâkim*, and a great many from the other compilations of the Sunnah. Some scholars voiced their disagreement with him: for example Al-‘Irâqee and Ibn Ḥajr, specifically regarding the narrations from *Musnad Aḥmad*; As-Suyooṭee, who disagreed in general about narrations from different compilations, in his book *at-Ta‘aqqubât ‘Ala al-Mawḍoo‘ât* and in

his summary of Ibn al-Jawzee's book, *al-Lâlee' al-Masnoo'ah*. Nevertheless, scholars agreed with Ibn al-Jawzee's ruling regarding most of the hadiths from his compilation, differing with him regarding only a few hadiths — especially hadiths from Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, and Imam Ahmad.

2. *Al-Mughnee 'Anil-Hifdh wal-Kitâb*, written by Abu Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn Badr al-Moosalee, who died in the year 622 (H). The author limited the scope of this work to mentioning only those issues regarding which no authentic hadith is related... Scholars also voiced their disagreement regarding some of his rulings.

3. *Ad-Dur al-Multaqit fee Tabyeen al-Ghalat*, written by the eminent scholar Aṣ-Ṣaghânee Ridâ' ud-Deen Abul-Faḍl Ḥasan ibn Muhammad ibn Ḥusain; he died in the year 650 H. Scholars also disagreed with him regarding some of his rulings.

4. *At-Tadhkiratul-Mawḍoo'ât*, by Ibn Ṭâhir al-Maqdasee (507 AH); he mentioned narrations that were related not only by fabricators, but also by weak, accused, or abandoned narrators.

5. and 6. *Al-Lâlee' al-Masnoo'ah fil-Aḥâdeeth al-Mawḍoo'ah* and *adh-Dhail*, both by Al-Ḥâfidh as-Suyooṭee. In the former, he summarized Ibn al-Jawzee's *al-Mawḍoo'ât*. As-Suyooṭee makes clear those hadiths regarding which he disagreed with Ibn al-Jawzee — that is, when Ibn al-Jawzee ruled a hadith to be a fabrication and As-Suyooṭee disagreed. In the latter book, As-Suyooṭee mentioned those fabrications that Ibn al-Jawzee did not mention in *al-Mawḍoo'ât*. Finally, he authored *at-Ta'aqqubât 'Alal-Mawḍoo'ât*.

7. *Tadhkiratul-Mawḍoo'ât*, by Muhammad ibn Ṭâhir ibn 'Ali al-Fatinnee (986 H); he attached to it *ar-Risâlah fil-Wadda'een waḍ-Du'afâ*, which is arranged alphabetically.

8. *Al-Mawḍoo'ât*, by Ash-Shaykh 'Ali al-Ḥanafî (1014 H)

9. *Al-Fawâ'id al-Majmoo'ah fil-Aḥâdeeth al-Mawḍoo'ah*, by Imam Ash-Shawkânee (1250 H)

10. *Risâlah*, by Imam Aṣ-Ṣan'âni, who mentioned most of the fabrications that were being spread by the storytellers and orators of his time. At the end of this work, he mentioned the names of weak and abandoned narrators.

11. *Al-Lu'lu' al-Marṣoo' fee mâ lâ Aṣla lahu bi-Aṣlihi Mawḍoo'*, by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abee al-Maḥâsin al-Qâwaqjee al-Ḥasani al-Masheeshee al-Azharee. He was born in Tripoli (Lebanon) and died in Egypt at the end of 1305 H. This work has been printed in one volume.

Sixth, Compilations of famous Hadiths

Scholars of Hadith also compiled famous narrations, clarifying those among them that are authentic, those that are weak, and those that are fabricated. Among these books are the following:

1. *Al-Lâlee' al-Manthoorah fil-Aḥâdeeth al-Mash-hoorah*, by Az-Zarkashee (794 H). As-Suyooti summarized this work in *ad-Durar al-Muntatharah fil-Aḥâdeeth al-Mushtahirah*.

2. *Al-Maqâsid al-Ḥasanah fil-Aḥâdeeth al-Mushtahirah 'Alal-Asinah*, by As-Sakhâwee (902 H).

3. *Kashf al-Khafâ' wal-Ilbâs fee mâ Yadooru min al-Aḥâdeeth 'Ala Alsinati an-Nâs*, by 'Ajloonee (1162 H). He basically took As-Sakhâwee's book and then added to it.

4. *Tamyeez-ut-Tayyib Minal-Khabeeth fee mâ Yadooru 'Ala Alsinatun-Nâs Minal-Hadeeth*, by Ibn ad-Deeba' ash-Shaybânee al-Atharee (944 H).

5. *Asnâ al-Maṭâlib fee Ahâdeeth Mukhtalifatul-Marâtib*, by Shaykh Muhammad al-Ḥoot al-Bairootee. He took *Tamyeez at-Ṭayyib* and then added to it.

Here ends a brief study of the stages through which the Sunnah passed. During those stages, it was exposed to plots, the goal of which was to distort the Sunnah; however, Muslim scholars contributed greatly to quelling those plots and to preserving the pure, authentic Sunnah. I cannot help but express great admiration for those scholars, whose work, I acknowledge, seems almost to transcend the known limits of human endeavor. May Allah reward them well for their contributions.

SECTION TWO

Various Doubts Raised Concerning the Sunnah over the Centuries

This Section Consists of Seven Chapters

5. The Sunnah vis-à-vis the Shi‘ah and Khawârij
6. The Sunnah vis-à-vis the Mu‘tazilah and the *Mutakallimeen*
7. The Sunnah vis-à-vis those from the early centuries who rejected its legislative status
8. The Sunnah vis-à-vis contemporary personalities who reject it
9. The Sunnah vis-à-vis those who reject *Aḥād* narrations
10. The Sunnah vis-à-vis the Orientalists
11. The Sunnah vis-à-vis certain contemporary writers

Introduction

*A*lthough the Sunnah along with the people of the Sunnah came out victorious over the efforts of fabricators and the enemies of Islam in general, it continued to be opposed by certain sects who professed to be Muslims. Here we discuss those groups and the doubts they raised regarding the Sunnah as an authentic and binding source of Islamic legislation.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Sunnah Vis-à-vis the Shi'ah and Khawârij

The Companions never doubted in the least that it is compulsory to obey the Prophet (ﷺ), that he was sent to all people, and that it was their responsibility to convey his message to all humanity as well as to posterity. History establishes for us that as a community, the Companions trusted one another unequivocally; moreover, their hearts were free from rancor: they were brothers who loved one another because they shared the same beliefs and goals and because they loved the same Prophet, the same Book, and the same Religion. Regarding their brotherhood, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رَحِمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ...﴾ (٢٩)

(سورة الفتح: ٢٩)

﴿Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful with each other. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate [in prayer], seeking Bounty from Allah and [His] Good Pleasure. The mark of them [of their Faith] is on their faces [foreheads] from the traces of [their] prostration [during prayers]...﴾ (Qur'an 48: 29)

And Allah (ﷻ) said about the Anṣâr specifically:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

(سورة الحنشر: ٩)



﴿And those who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, — love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given [from the booty of Bani an-Nadeer], and give them [the emigrants] preference over themselves, even though they were in need of that...﴾

(*Qur'an* 59: 9)

In their dealings with one another, they were models of love, cooperation, and sacrifice; they only differed among themselves when they had different views about the truth, but if the truth became clear, they would race to embrace it. Yet even when they differed, they were still polite and gracious with each other, maintaining respect for those whom they differed. This is how they were: each trusted that the other was truthful; they would not accuse one another; they acknowledged the superiority of those who accepted Islam prior to them; they appreciated the contribution of any individual, whether it was a financial contribution or otherwise; they were not jealous of each other over blessings with which Allah (ﷻ) favored some of them; they were satisfied with the good that they all had in common — they were the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), callers to Islam, whom Allah saved from misguidance, granting them guidance in its stead. Hence they were the happiest of people in the best state of affairs.

After the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, the first difference of opinion that surfaced among the Companions was — who should the next Caliph be? Although they differed in a matter of utmost

importance — the highest leadership position in the Nation — their tone of speech, the way in which they presented their opinions, and then the manner in which they reached a unanimous agreement — all point to their self-control, mutual respect, and love of the truth. In these times, we know of no similar example, so imagine a nation that existed fourteen centuries ago, when the concept of mutual council was unknown.

The following, in brief, outlines the famous historical event that took place in Saqeefah Banees Sâ'idah:

— The Anşâr gathered to choose a Caliph from among themselves.

— The most prominent *Muhâjiroon* hastened to join the Anşâr in their discussions; these were led by Abu Bakr (ﷺ), 'Umar (ﷺ), and Abu 'Ubaydah (ﷺ).

— Showing respect, patience, and their good manners, the *Muhâjiroon* listened to the arguments put forth by the Anşâr.

— Then Abu Bakr (ﷺ) presented his view and the view of the *Muhâjiroon*.

— During his presentation, Abu Bakr (ﷺ) first mentioned the rights and virtues of the Anşâr — mentioning how they helped Islam, defended the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), provided shelter for the *Muhâjiroon*, and welcomed them. Then he mentioned the virtues of the *Muhâjiroon*, showing neither pride nor boastfulness.

— He then mentioned that the Arabs could not be ruled except by one from the tribe of Quraysh. If the ruler were from the Khazraj (a tribe in Madinah), the Aws (the other tribe from Madinah) would contest his leadership for it and vice versa.

— The Anşâr withdrew their claim for sole possession of the caliphate, and they suggested that there should be two rulers: one from the Anşâr and one from the *Muhâjiroon*.

— The *Muhâjiroon* countered that such an arrangement — having two leaders for one Nation — would be the first display of weakness in the Muslim Nation.

— Abu Bakr (ﷺ) nominated, in the presence of all who were there, ‘Umar (ﷺ) or Abu ‘Ubayda (ﷺ) for the position of Caliph.

— ‘Umar said to Abu Bakr, “You are better than me.”

— Abu Bakr answered, “But you are stronger than me.”

— ‘Umar said, “Indeed, my strength is with your superiority,” and then he rushed to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr, and the *Muhâjiroon* pledged allegiance as well.

— The Anşâr too raced to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr; so keen were they in doing so that they almost trampled their leader, Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubâdah, who was their original nominee for the caliphate. There was a consensus among those who were present at Saqeefah, and then the masses pledged allegiance to him as well. Only ‘Ali (ﷺ) and a small group with him waited a little, and then they too pledged allegiance to him as their Caliph.

That was how the caliphate of Abu Bakr (ﷺ) began — without the spilling of blood, without the creation of division, and without the presence of rancor and accusations. Hence it was a society that left us with a clear picture of brotherhood and mutual cooperation. That state of peace and harmony in society continued throughout the caliphates of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar as well as through the earlier part of ‘Uthmân’s caliphate. Yet when it came to issues of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, the Companions would voice their opinions not allowing friendship, leadership, relationship, or anything else, for that matter, to stop them from expressing what they felt to be the truth. They had the candidness of Arabs, knowing neither hypocrisy nor deception; they had the manners of the civilized, displaying neither harshness nor rudeness; they cooperated

as brothers do, possessing neither haughtiness nor pride; they were obedient like soldiers, capable of showing neither rebelliousness nor dissent. They built the structure of the new Nation and Religion with a prodigious level of foresight and skill.

Then, in the latter part of 'Uthmân's caliphate, the Discord (trial) began: enemies from the Jewish tribes and other nations pretended to be Muslims, and both the third and fourth Caliphs were murdered. Then Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) became leader of the Muslims and many who had malevolent intentions spoke ill of the Companions, hiding behind the façade of their professed-love for 'Ali (ﷺ). The Shi'ah were not alone in this assault against the Companions, for the Khawârij too deemed the majority of Companions alive during their time to be disbelievers.

The majority of Muslims, however, took a more moderate and just stance regarding differences among the Companions. They felt that the first three Caliphs had more of a right to the caliphate than 'Ali (ﷺ) and that 'Ali had more of a right to the caliphate than Mu'âwiyah. Yet in their support of the earlier three Caliphs and in their support of 'Ali later on, they still maintained a high regard for those Companions who opposed them, finding excuses for those who disagreed with them. We must remember, after all, that the mujtahid is not sinning when he errs, as long as his goal is the truth. Now, the long-standing commitment shown by the Companions to Islam, their contributions to its spread, their many sacrifices for Islam, their companionship and support of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), their wonderful manners and record before the Discord — all go to show that we should believe them all to be good and noble. We should acknowledge that each one of them was a mujtahid who was seeking out the truth and that those among them who were truly right achieved two rewards, while those among them who were wrong achieved one reward. This is based on the famous hadith of the

Messenger of Allah (Blessings and peace be upon him) regarding the *ijtihâd* of a ruler.¹

Had the differences that arose among the Companions been contained, without outside interference or meddling, we would have seen the wonderful qualities of good manners for which they were known as well as the free expression of what each thought was correct. However, there was outside interference and meddling from the enemies of Islam (as well as the involvement of Nations who just recently accepted Islam) in the disputes and battles that took place. Also, the enemies of Islam ascribed false sayings to the Companions — sayings that the Companions indeed never uttered, nay, never could utter. Those sayings, in which other Companions were vilified, unfortunately found heedful ears among the masses of the Shi'ah. In fact, it was the Shi'ah who first introduced such lies when they fabricated hadiths that described the virtues of 'Ali (ﷺ).

The Khawârij

The differences that arose among the Companions resulted in the Khawârij and the Shi'ah having views about the Companions that were diametrically opposite of the views held by the great majority of the Muslims. Before the Discord occurred, each of the sects among the Khawârij held all of the Companions in high regard. Then, after the Discord and after the judgment 'Ali (ﷺ) accepted that two Companions should rule between him and Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ), they declared 'Ali (ﷺ), 'Uthmân (ﷺ), the people of the Camel and two

¹ It is related by Bukhari and Muslim and is mentioned by Ash-Shâfi'ee in *al-Umm*, 7/252. The exact wording of the hadith is as follows: "If a ruler (or judge) rules and carries out *ijtihâd* (exercises all of his knowledge and skill to arrive at the truth), and then is right, he has two rewards. And if he rules and exercises *ijtihâd*, but then is wrong, he has one reward."

rulings and those who were pleased with the that judgment and the two rulings (or one of them) to be disbelievers. And as such, they rejected the hadiths of the majority of the Companions after the Discord because of their claim that the Companions had accepted the judgment and followed the 'Imams of tyranny', which in the view of the Khawârij negated their trustworthiness.

The Shi'ah

The majority of the Shi'ah sects — we are referring to those who remained in the framework of Islam — inveighed against Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, and the majority of the Companions who supported them. To this day, they also vilify 'Â'ishah, Ṭalḥah, Az-Zubayr, Mu'âwiyah, 'Amru ibn 'Âṣ (may Allah be pleased with them), and those who worked with them to take away the caliphate from 'Ali (عليه السلام). More to the point, they vilify the majority of the Companions with the exception of the few who are known for their strong loyalty to 'Ali. Some have mentioned that they number fifteen in total, which explains why the Shi'ah reject the hadiths of the majority of the Companions. Of the majority of the Companions, they will accept only those narrations that are related by the supporters of 'Ali — those narrations also have to be related by their Imams, whom they deem to be infallible. The general principle among the Shi'ah is this: anyone who did not show full support for the caliphate of 'Ali was viewed as having betrayed the command of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), hence making him unworthy of being trusted. Within their sect, there was but one group of Shi'ah who opposed the majority — the Zaydiyyah, who believed that 'Ali was superior to Abu Bakr and 'Umar, but who also believed that both of their caliphates were valid and that they were indeed superior and virtuous Companions. They are considered to be the most just among

the various groups of the Shi'ah, and their interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence is very close to that of the people of the Sunnah.

The majority of Muslims

The majority of Muslims believed that all of the Companions were just and upright, including those who died before the Discord and those who lived through it, those who participated in it and those who avoided it. They rejected the narrations of 'Ali's followers unless a narration came by way of Ibn Mas'ood's companions, because the latter were trustworthy and above fabricating lies about 'Ali (ﷺ), unlike the Shi'ah.

The conflict and unrest of that period led to an assault against the Sunnah. The Shi'ah rejected the narrations of the majority of Companions, especially those narrations in which the virtues of certain Companions were extolled. The only hadiths they accepted were those that were related by their Imams, whom they believed to be infallible. Hence many hadiths that are graded as belonging to the highest level of *Ṣaḥeeh* (authentic) narrations, they ruled to be fabricated. For example, Bukhari related that the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered all doors of homes that connected to the Mosque to be closed, except for Abu Bakr's door. According to the majority of Muslim scholars, all of the conditions of authenticity are fulfilled in this hadith, yet the Shi'ah have rule that it is a fabrication. In its stead, they promote a narration wherein it is claimed that, yes, the Prophet (ﷺ) did order all doors of homes attached to the Mosque to be blocked, but according to their narration, he made an exception for 'Ali's door only. Conversely the hadith that is considered to be the basis for the Shi'ah, in which it is claimed that the Prophet (ﷺ) asserted that 'Ali (ﷺ) should be leader after him and that all of the Companions bore witness to that, has been rejected by the people of

the Sunnah, who have ruled it to be a fabrication that was concocted by extreme Shi'ah elements that wanted to justify their assault against the Prophet's Companions. We have already explained how, based on the sound principles of the Imams regarding hadith criticism, this narration is a fabrication.

I believe that anyone who is just, or at least neutral, must agree with the majority on this point, for it is impossible that every single Companion hid his or her knowledge of the Prophet's command, a command that the Shi'ah claim was made in the presence of all the Companions. Likewise, it is impossible that they all agreed to deny 'Ali (ﷺ) his right to the caliphate. It is they who strove throughout their lives to disseminate the truth, proclaiming it even to their leaders, fearing neither reproach nor punishment. They fought for the truth in small matters — the Imam sitting down between the two sermons of Friday, for example — so how is it possible that they hid the truth regarding the Prophet's command in which he mentioned who was to be the Caliph after him? It is established that to disobey the Prophet (ﷺ) on purpose is wickedness and to disobey him believing that it is permissible to do so is a form of disbelief. How, then, is it possible that all of the Companions tried to conceal the Prophet's command? We must also ask this: Is it befitting of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that all of his Companions should be liars? Indeed then, these are grave lies that were fabricated by the Shi'ah — lies that involve the most offensive of implications!

Just as the Shi'ah took an offensive stance vis-à-vis the hadiths related by the majority of Companions, the Khawârij did the same. Because of their piety and candidness, they did not invent lies as the Shi'ah did, but they did oppose the masses of Muslims in many rulings. Some of their rulings were downright strange; for example, they ruled that it is permissible for a man to marry a woman and her aunt (be it her father's sister or mother's sister). They also deny the

ruling for stoning, which is related in the Sunnah. The reason behind such rulings was not ignorance regarding the Religion, as some writers claim; rather, it is a result of the Discord that occurred, after which they rejected the narration of everyone who participated with 'Ali (ﷺ) or with Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ). Because of that view, they are just as dangerous as the Shi'ah are.

The majority of the Muslims had a more just view, for they understood that veracity, trustworthiness and precision are qualities that are sought after in a narrator. Moreover, we know that prevarication was contrary to the nature, the Religion, and the upbringing of the Companions. What, then, do their political views have to do with their narrations? Imagine someone who fought colonialism with both pen and sword, doing so for his country and people. Then imagine someone claiming that he is not patriotic, that he has no virtues, and that all of his sayings are lies. A person makes those claims simply based on the man's political outlook, because he was not satisfied with the ruling government. That is the case regarding historical figures and a just ruling regarding them. With greater reason, then, do we say that it is not permissible for the Shi'ah and the Khawârij to rule against the Companions who did not agree with 'Ali (ﷺ) in certain political matters; furthermore, it is not permissible for them to inveigh against their narrations, to rule that they are untrustworthy, or to stamp them with qualities that are not befitting even of commoners — much less of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)!

In short, the Shi'ah and the Khawârij for the most part rejected the authentic Sunnah. Their views and arguments greatly influenced the Orientalists and those of their ilk, who wished to raise doubts about the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).

CHAPTER SIX

The Sunnah vis-à-vis the Mu'tazilah and the *Mutakallimeen*

We have varying accounts of the Mu'tazilah and their views regarding the Sunnah. Are they with the majority of Muslims in the belief that both *Mutawâtir* and *Ahâd* narrations are valid proofs? Do they reject the validity of both categories as proofs? Or do they accept the validity of *Mutawâtir* narrations and reject only the *Ahâd* ones? Al-Âmidee relates that Abul-Husain al-Baṣri from the Mu'tazilah believed in the plausibility (in the mind) of it being compulsory to worship Allah (ﷻ) in accordance with *Ahâd* narrations. Yet it is related from Al-Jibâ'ee and a group from the *Mutakallimeen* that it is not plausible for it to be compulsory us to worship Allah based on *Ahâd* narrations. In *at-Tadreeb*, Suyooṭi relates from Abu 'Ali al-Jibâ'ee that the narration of an upright, just narrator is only accepted when it is coupled with the narration of another upright, just narrator; otherwise, he holds that the narration of a single narrator is only accepted when

— the narration is in accordance with the apparent meaning of the Qur'an or of another narration; or

— the ruling conveyed by the narrator was widely practiced by the Companions, or at least by some of them.

But according to the narration of Abu Naṣr at-Tameemi, Abu 'Ali would only accept a narration if it was related by four upright, just narrators. Ibn Ḥazm said,

“All adherents of Islam would accept the narration related by a single trustworthy narrator who related from the Prophet (ﷺ). All groups followed this way — including the people of the Sunnah, the Khawârij, the Shi'ah, and the Qadariyah — until the Mutakallimeen from the Mu'tazilah went against that consensus. 'Amru ibn 'Ubayd would act according to what he related from Al-Ḥasan and he would rule accordingly. Anyone who has the least amount of knowledge regarding this affair knows that.

Elsewhere he wrote that the Mu'tazilah reject the validity of *Aḥād* narrations as a proof in Islam:

“All of the Mu'tazilah and the Khawârij say that *Aḥād* narrations do not impart knowledge. They say that if something might be wrong or a lie then it is not permissible to rule by it in Allah's Religion...”

In *'Alâm al-Mawqî'een*, Ibn al-Qayyim says that the Mu'tazilah reject many clear narrations that establish intercession for sinning believers; they reject those clear narrations based on a *Mutashâbih* (a verse whose meaning is unclear to the masses) verse:

(سورة المدثر: ٤٨)

﴿فَمَا نَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ﴾

﴿So no intercession of intercessors will be of any use to them.﴾

(*Qur'an* 74: 48)

All of the above narrations, as you can see, contradict one another and do not really lead us to a conclusion in the matter. I deemed it best, then, to go back to the books of *Kalâm* (rhetoric, logic) to see

what the scholars of different sects had to say about the Mu‘tazilah on this issue. I found that Imam Abu Manşoor al-Baghdâdee ... and Ar-Râzi related from the Nidhâmiyah (a branch of the Mu‘tazilah) that they reject the validity of Mutawâtir narrations, deny that it imparts knowledge, and affirm the possibility of a Mutawâtir narration being a lie. Ar-Râzi also related that they reject Aĥâd narrations.

We have to understand that the Nidhâmiyah represent one of 22 sub-sects within the Mu‘tazilah and that their belief in the Sunnah hinges upon what they believed regarding the Companions. Here, then, I relate to you what Imam Abu Manşoor al-Baghdâdee (429 H) wrote (in *al-Farq Bayn al-Firaq*) when discussing the different sub-sects within the Mu‘tazilah, their opinions regarding the Companions, and their stances vis-à-vis the Sunnah. First, Imam Al-Baghdâdee mentioned those matters upon which the different sub-sects of the Mu‘tazilah agree, and then he went on to discuss those matters about which they disagree and he began with the Wâşiliyah.

Wâşil ibn ‘Aĥâ’ (131 H)

Wâşil went against the ways of our pious predecessors, inventing a third innovation. He found that the people of his time differed about ‘Ali (ﷺ) and his companions and about Ṭalĥah (ﷺ), Az-Zubayr (ﷺ), ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) and the rest of the people of the Camel. On the one hand, the Khawârij claimed that the latter group fell into disbelief when they fought ‘Ali and that ‘Ali was in the right when he fought the people of the Camel and when he fought the companions of Mu‘âwiyah at Şiffeen. On the other hand, they claimed that ‘Ali fell into disbelief when he accepted the judgment¹.

¹ When he (‘Ali) agreed to accept the judgment of two Companions regarding his dispute with Mu‘âwiyah.

The people of the Sunnah, however, said that both groups in the battle of the Camel were Muslims. They said that 'Ali was right in fighting them and that the companions of the Camel disobeyed him and were wrong in fighting him, yet their mistake was neither disbelief nor even wrongdoing on their part. The people of the Sunnah accepted the testimony of two just, upright narrators from both groups.

Al-Wâsil went against the opinion of both groups, claiming that one of the two groups was made up of wrongdoers, though he was not sure which group it was. He therefore deemed it plausible that the wrongdoers were 'Ali and his followers — such as Al-Ḥasan, Al-Husain, Ibn 'Abbâs, 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir, Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî (may Allah be pleased with them), as well as everyone else who was with 'Ali during the battle of the Camel. At the same time, he deemed it plausible that the wrong-doers were 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), Ṭalḥah (ﷺ), Az-Zubayr (ﷺ), and all of the other people of the Camel. Al-Wâsil said that if a man from 'Ali's camp and a man from the other camp were to give testimony over a matter as simple as a dispute regarding vegetables, he would have rejected both of their testimonies because he could be sure that at least one of them was a wrongdoer, even though he did not know which it was. However, if two men from the same camp were to give testimony, he would accept it from them.

'Amru ibn 'Ubayd

Imam Al-Baghdâdee then spoke of the 'Amrawiyah, the followers of 'Amru ibn 'Ubayd. He said that 'Amru added to the innovation of Wâsil, claiming that both groups on the Day of Camel were wrongdoers; therefore he did not accept the testimony of either of the two parties. Hence, in this issue, there developed contrary views among the Mu'tazilah themselves. An-Nidhâm, Mu'ammâr,

and Al-Jâhidh — all from the Mu'tazilah — agreed with Wâsil's viewpoint regarding the Day of the Camel. Meanwhile, Ḥawshab and Hâshim al-Awqaş — also from the Mu'tazilah — held a different opinion, claiming that the leaders of both camps were saved (from falling into wickedness) whereas their followers were destroyed.

Abu al-Hudhayl

Next, Imam al-Baghdâdee spoke about the Hudhayliyah, the followers of Abu al-Hudhayl Muhammad ibn al-Hudhayl, also known as Al-'Îlâf (227 or 235 H). Because of his gross errors and beliefs, other groups, even from the Mu'tazilah, rule that he is a disbeliever. Al-Ma'roof bil-Mirdâd, Al-Jibâ'ee, and Ja'far ibn Ḥarb — these, all leaders from the Mu'tazilah, wrote books in which they exposed his falsehoods and in which they ruled him to be a disbeliever.

He held that if a narration spoke about matters that are hidden to the senses — such as the miracles of the Prophets — it cannot be considered to be authentic unless it was related by twenty people, one of whom must have been granted Paradise — according to him, the dwellers of Paradise could only be those who were in his movement. He claimed that if a narration is related by four or less, it does not establish a ruling. If four or more relate it — but not more than twenty — it might impart knowledge, but then again, it might not. But if 20 narrators relate it and one of them is of the inhabitants of Paradise, then it necessarily imparts correct and authentic knowledge. He argued that twenty (such narrators) constitute an authentic narration based on the following verse:

﴿... إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عَشْرُونَ صَٰبِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ...﴾

(سورة الأنفال: ٦٥)

﴿... If there are twenty steadfast persons among you, they will overcome two hundred...﴾ (Qur'an 8: 65)

He said, "They cannot fight unless they represent a number that establishes them as proofs against their enemy." 'Abdul-Qâdir rightly said that Abu Hudhayl's intention was nothing other than to invalidate all narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) because he stipulated that one of the narrators had to have been granted Paradise, and it is known that according to him, the inhabitants of Paradise were only those who participate with him in his innovation — he considered all others to be disbelievers who would not be granted Paradise. Abu Hudhayl is credited with this innovation, for no one before him had stipulated that at least twenty narrators had to have related a narration for it to be authentic.

An-Nidhâm

Al-Baghdâdee then goes on to discuss the An-Nidhâmiyah sect, whose adherents follow Abu Is-hâq Ibrâheem ibn Sayâr, better known as An-Nidhâm. Their association with the Zanâdiqah, philosophers, and others of their ilk caused the corruption of An-Nidhâm and his immediate followers. An-Nidhâm disbelieved in the miracles of the Prophet (ﷺ) — such as the splitting of the moon, the pebbles in his hand that were glorifying Allah (ﷻ), and the gushing forth of water from between his fingers. By rejecting those miracles, he meant to reject the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) altogether. He then began to reject established Islamic proofs such as consensus and analogy. Moreover, he inveighed against the rulings of some of the most eminent of Companions.

Imam Al-Baghdâdi mentioned that most of the Mu'tazilah agree that An-Nidhâm was a disbeliever; only a few of the Mu'tazilah followed him in his misguidance — figures such as Al-Aswâree, Ibn

Hâyiṭ, Faḍl al-Hadathī and Al-Jâhidh — and even these differed with him in some of his false beliefs. Here are examples of Mu'tazilah leaders who ruled him to be a disbeliever: Abu al-Hudhayl, Al-Jibâ'ee, Al-Iskâfee, and Ja'far ibn Ḥarb, all of whom wrote books to refute his falsehoods. The following is a list containing some of his deviant beliefs:

— He believed that the Muslim Nation could agree upon falsehood, which effectively means that he rejected *ijmâ'*.

— He rejected *qiyâs* and *ahâd* narrations when they do not impart undeniable knowledge.

— He viciously attacked Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) and 'Umar (ﷺ), calling the former the greatest liar and accusing the latter of having doubts about his Religion on the day of Hudaibiyah, not to mention many other false accusations. He did not stop there, for he leveled many vicious, false accusations at 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and 'Ali (ﷺ) and Ibn Mas'ood (ﷺ).

— Nidhâm imputed ignorance and hypocrisy to many of the Companions, which implies that he believed them to be eternal dwellers of the Hellfire. That is because, according to him, the one who is ignorant regarding his religion is a disbeliever, while the hypocrite is also a disbeliever, and both groups are eternal dwellers of the Hellfire.

In short, that is what Abu Manṣoor al-Baghdâdi related about the different groups within the Mu'tazilah, and regarding most of what he said, Ash-Shayristâni, author of *al-Milâl wan-Nihâl* (548 H) agrees with him. We see, then, that among the Mu'tazilah, there were those who doubted the uprightness of the Companions — such as Wâsil — while others among them believed with certainty that they were wrongdoers — for example, 'Amru ibn 'Ubayd. There were yet others among them — like Nidhâm — who attacked the honor of eminent Companions, accusing them of prevarication, of ignorance,

and of hypocrisy. Therefore, based on the opinions of Wâsil, 'Amru, and their followers, they reject narrations that come from those Companions. And according to Abu al-Hudhayl, *Ahâd* narrations are only accepted when at least twenty narrators related it, with one of them being a dweller of Paradise. Finally, An-Nidhâm rejected the validity of *ijmâ'* and *qiyâs* and casts doubts even about *Mutawâtir* narrations, accepting the possibility that they are not authentic.

Such extreme views regarding the Sunnah obviously resulted in a division between the scholars of the Sunnah and the leaders of the Mu'tazilah. The Mu'tazilah obviously took the path of heaping accusation after accusation against the scholars of the Sunnah, claiming that their narrations were lies and that they did not understand the narrations that they related. They related laughable accounts of errors that, though they might be true regarding laypeople from the people of Hadith, they were surely lies regarding the Imams and scholars of Hadith. On the other hand, the scholars of Hadith accuse the Mu'tazilah of wickedness, innovations, and beliefs that are contrary to what Allah (ﷻ) revealed.

What Al-Baghdâdee relates to us regarding the Mu'tazilah — even though it is the talk of a man discussing his adversary — is, atleast for the most part, true, for the leaders of the Mu'tazilah movement were not particularly religious, nor did they mind perpetrating certain forbidden deeds. Al-Jâhidh, who himself is one of the Imams of the Mu'tazilah, wrote the following in his book *al-Madâhik*:

“One day, while Al-Ma'moon was riding his mount, he saw Thumâmah (a leader from the Mu'tazilah), who was inebriated at the time, and was rolling himself in mud. Al-Ma'moon said, ‘Thumâmah?’ He said, ‘Yes, by Allah.’ ‘Are you not ashamed?’ He said, ‘No, by Allah.’ Ma'moon said, ‘Upon you is the curse of Allah.’ He said, ‘Yes, one after another.’”

Al-Jâhidh also related that on one occasion, the servant of Thumâmah said to him, "Stand and pray." Thumâmah did not heed his words, and so his servant repeated, "The time for prayer is running out; stand, pray, and relax (i.e., during the prayer)." He said, "I am relaxed so long as you leave me alone."

The gap between the people of the Sunnah and the Mu'tazilah only widened when the discord regarding "the Qur'an being created" began, which was spurred on by Ma'moon (the leader during that time) in the year 218 H, when he officially imposed upon the people a belief that they did not accept and that the people of the Sunnah refuted in their noble stance to defend the truth. They stood firm in the face of enticements followed by threats of imprisonment and death. The Imam of the Sunnah, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, went through imprisonment and beatings for thirteen years, until finally, Al-Mutawakkil took over the caliphate in the year 232 H, for (Al-Mutawakkil) proclaimed his leanings toward the people of the Sunnah, hence removing that trial from the people. He raised the status of Hadith scholars, and as time went on, the Mu'tazilah movement dwindled away. Yet, sad to say, that struggle led to two dangerous results that have to do with the Sunnah:

1. The leaders of the Mu'tazilah raised doubts about the status of the Companions, which opened the door for certain Orientalists to attack them as well. Basing their views on what an-Nidhâm and others fabricated, they built up the temerity to accuse the Companions of lying.

2. In their Fiqh, most adherents of the Mu'tazilah sect were followers of the School of Imam Abu Ḥaneefah and his companions. Bishran al-Muraysee, a prominent figure among the Mu'tazilah, followed in his practice of fiqh the opinions of Abu Yoosuf al-Qâḍee; however, as soon as he proclaimed his view that the Qur'an was created, Abu Yoosuf broke off ties with him.

When the differences between the people of Hadith and the Mu'tazilah leaders heightened in intensity, the former group denounced all who said that the Qur'an was created, but unfortunately some of the more extreme elements among the people of Hadith attacked Abu Ḥaneefah and his companions as well, arguing that they ruled based on opinion. Abu Ḥaneefah was blameless in the matter, and just because the Mu'tazilah happened to follow his school in matters of fiqh, some ascribed to him the opinion of the Qur'an being created, despite the fact that the opposite is authentically related from him. Moreover, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan (a student of Imam Abu Ḥaneefah) said, "Whoever prays behind a Mu'tazilee must repeat his prayer." And when Abu Yoosuf (another student of Imam Abu Ḥaneefah) was asked about the Mu'tazilah, he said, "They are the Zanâdiqah." Thus certain Muslim Imams were attacked in a battle that they played no part in.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Sunnah Vis-à-vis those from the Early Centuries who Rejected its Legislative Status

The advent of the second century saw the emergence of those who rejected the validity of the Sunnah as a source of Islamic legislation, of those who rejected non-Mutawâtîr narrations (i.e., *Aḥād* narrations), and of those who rejected those hadiths that either did not explain what is in the Qur'an or did not affirm what is in the Qur'an: in other words, those hadiths that legislated independent rulings that are not found in the Qur'an.

Based on what we know, the first to write about such groups was Imam Ash-Shâfi'ee (may Allah have mercy on him). In *al-Umm*, he dedicated a chapter to give an account of a debate that took place between him and a man who denied the legislative authority of hadiths. Shâfi'ee relates the debate in the form of a dialogue, first beginning with his opponent who supposedly was a learned man.

His opponent: "You are an Arab, and the Qur'an was revealed in your tongue... If one were to doubt a single letter of the Qur'an, you would ask him to repent, and if he had repented, you would have left him alone; but if he had not, you would have killed him. Allah (ﷻ) says in the Qur'an:

(سورة النحل : ٨٩)

﴿... تَبَيَّنَا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ...﴾

﴿... as an exposition of everything...﴾

(*Qur'an* 16: 89)

So then how does it become permissible for you or for anyone else to say that a command is general one time and specific another time?... And for the most part, your rulings have thus differed because of a hadith that you relate from one man who has related from another... And I have found that you as well as those of your school do not deny that those to whom you give precedence for their veracity and memory could possibly forget or make a mistake in their hadiths. I have often found you saying, 'Such and such person made a mistake in such and such hadith.'... Is it correct to distinguish between different commands of the Qur'an, when their apparent meaning (i.e., that they impart a command) is one?... In spite of your description of certain narrators, you place their narrations at the same level as Allah's Book, and you allow (certain matters) based on those narrations and forbid (others) based on them as well."

Imam Shâfi'ee: "We rule based on certainty of knowledge, on authentic narrations, and on analogy: though some are stronger than others, we rule based on all of the above... For example, in a court case, we issue a ruling based on a man's confession, based upon proof (i.e., for the most part, witnesses), or finally, based on an oath. If any of the above proofs are established, we issue a ruling, yet they vary in their strength."

His opponent: "You accept that which narrators inform you of, yet you even acknowledge possible faults in them; what is your proof, then, against those who reject such narrations? Because of the possibility of error, I accept nothing from them. I only accept... Allah's Book, which no one can have doubts about, not even about a single letter. Can something have the same weight as sure knowledge, though that something does not reach its level?"

Imam Shâfi‘ee: When one has knowledge of Arabic and of the Qur’an which was revealed in that tongue, that knowledge will make it binding upon him to accept the narrations of truthful people regarding the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)... (Next, Ash-Shâfi‘ee began mentioning proofs to back up his statement) Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ ... ﴿٢﴾﴾
(سورة الجمعة: ٢)

«He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger [Muhammad] from among themselves, reciting to them His Verses, purifying them [from the filth of disbelief and polytheism], and teaching them the Book and the *Hikmah*¹...» (Qur’an 62: 2)”

His opponent: “We know that ‘the Book’ is Allah’s Book, but what is the *Hikmah*?”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “The Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”

His opponent: “It is possible that ‘the Book’ is the Qur’an in general, whereas the *Hikmah* is specific, and refers to its rulings.”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “You mean that Allah (ﷻ) has clarified his commands to them in a general way — commands such as the Prayer, zakât, Hajj, and so on. These matters He (ﷻ) clarified in His Book, yet He clarified their rulings and details on the tongue of His Prophet (ﷺ).”

His opponent: “That is indeed possible!”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “If you accept that, then you accept what I said earlier, which means that you will not arrive at those detailed rulings except through narrations from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”

¹ Literally: ‘wisdom’.

His opponent: “Unless one takes the view of repetition in speech (i.e., that ‘the Book’ and the Ḥikmah have one meaning — the Qur’an).”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “When you say, ‘The Book and the Ḥikmah’, which is more probable, that they represent two things or one thing?”

His opponent: “It is possible that they refer to two matters, as you have said — the Qur’an and the Sunnah. And it is also possible that they signify one and the same thing.”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “What you first said is more likely to be correct, and in the Qur’an is proof for what we said, proof that invalidates your view.”

His opponent: “Where?”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَأذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا﴾
 (سورة الأحزاب: ٣٤)

﴿And remember [O you members of the Prophet’s family] that which is recited in your houses of the Verses of Allah and the Ḥikmah. Verily, Allah is always Most Courteous, Well Acquainted with all things.﴾
 (Qur’an 33: 34)

He (ﷻ) informs us that two matters are recited in the home.”

His opponent: “I understand that the Qur’an is recited, but how is the Ḥikmah recited?”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “The meaning of ‘that which is recited’ here is that both the Qur’an and the Sunnah are articulated.”

His opponent: “Yes, more than your previous argument, this more clearly shows that the Ḥikmah is not the Qur’an.”

Imam Shâfi'ee: "Allah (ﷻ) commanded us to follow and obey His Prophet (ﷺ)."

His opponent: "Where?"

Imam Shâfi'ee: "Allah (ﷻ) says,

﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾^(٦٥)

(سورة التيساء: ٦٥)

«But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you [O Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept [them] with full submission.»
(*Qur'an* 4: 65)

Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ...﴾^(٨٠)

(سورة التيساء: ٨٠)

«He who obeys the Messenger [Muhammad], has indeed obeyed Allah...»
(*Qur'an* 4: 80)

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾^(٦٣)

(سورة الشور: ٦٣)

«... And let those who oppose the Messenger's [Muhammad] commandment beware, lest some discord befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.»
(*Qur'an* 24: 63)»

His opponent: "It is clear then that the Hikmah is the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)..."

Imam Shâfi'ee: "Allah (ﷻ) ordered us to obey the Prophet's commands:

﴿... وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا...﴾

(سورة الحشر: ٧)

﴿... And whatsoever the Messenger [Muhammad] gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it]...﴾ (Qur'an 59: 7)"

His opponent: "It is clear in revelation that we must follow what the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded us to do and abstain from what he (ﷺ) forbade us from doing."

Imam Shâfi'ee: "Is that obligation equally binding on us, on those who came before us, and on those who will come after us?"

His opponent: "Yes!"

Imam Shâfi'ee: "As regards those who did not meet the Prophet (ﷺ), but who came after him, do you not see that they can follow the commands of the Prophet (ﷺ) only through narrations about him that have been passed on?"

Ask yourself this: "Knowing that certain parts of the Qur'an abrogate other parts, how can we achieve knowledge of such matters except through reports that come to us from the Prophet (ﷺ)?"

His opponent: "The proof is well established on your side; we must accept narrations from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). I now believe that it is compulsory upon Muslims to accept narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ)..."

After Imam Shâfi'ee's opponent retracted his previous statements and accepted the truth, he asked the Imam why commands in the Qur'an are at times general and at other times specific. Imam Shâfi'ee explained to him that the Arabic language is complex and that though a statement might seem to be general in its implications, it might in reality be specific. But if it happens that an apparently general command is in reality specific, then that must be established either by the Qur'an or the Sunnah. He then went on to mention

examples of commands that seemed to be general in their implications, but that are not truly general, because the Sunnah mentions exceptions for those commands. For example, the Prayer is obligatory upon every sane adult; however, menstruating women are exempted. Though the command to pay zakât on wealth may seem comprehensive, certain categories of wealth are exempted. That fathers, mothers, and children inherit from one another is indicated by a general command, yet there are exceptions: the disbeliever does not inherit from a Muslim (even if the Muslim is his father), the slave does not inherit from the one who is free (even if the latter is related to the former), and the murderer does not inherit from the one whom he murdered. All these exceptions are established in the Sunnah. Imam Shâfi‘ee’s opponent was thus led to acknowledging that the knowledge thereof can be achieved only through the Sunnah...

His opponent: “If we are sure (through a proof that imparts certainty of knowledge) that a matter is Ḥarâm, can a proof that does not impart sure knowledge change that ruling to permissibility?”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “Yes. Is not the blood and wealth of the man sitting beside me inviolable?”

His opponent: “Yes, it is.”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “But what if two men testified that he killed a man and took his money?”

His opponent: “I would have him executed (for that crime) and his wealth returned to those who inherit from the one who was murdered.”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “We have sure knowledge that his wealth and blood are inviolable, yet we can not be absolutely sure that he murdered the man (the two witnesses might have lied, for example).”

His opponent: “We have been ordered to accept such testimony...”

Imam Shâfi‘ee: “Indeed, you have been ordered to accept that which witnesses inform you of, though only Allah (ﷻ) knows what is

hidden in their hearts. But we demand much more from a narrator (of hadith) than we do from a witness. In certain situations, we may accept the testimony of someone yet reject his narration of hadith, when the scholars of hadith have shown that he had erred earlier.”

In the end, Imam Shâfi‘ee’s opponent in the debate was satisfied that to accept the Prophet’s narrations is tantamount to accepting from Allah (ﷻ). Regarding the previous debate, the following are some important points:

First, Shâfi‘ee did not name the group that rejected narrations, nor did he identify his opponent in the debate. In *Târeekh at-Tashree‘ al-Islâmi*, Shaykh Al-Kiḍree — may Allah have mercy on him — said that he was referring to the Mu‘tazilah,

“Shâfi‘ee did not mention whom it was that he was debating with, and we do not know his identity from any other source, yet he did say that the man was from Basra. The Kalâmiyah² movement thrived in Basra, where many Mu‘tazilah sects originated. The leaders and well-known writers of the Mu‘tazilah were known for their dispute with the people of Hadith, so perhaps the man mentioned by Imam Shâfi‘ee was one of them.”

This deduction is further supported by Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah’s book, *Ta’weel Mukhtalaf ul-Hadeeth*, which describes how the leaders of the Mu‘tazilah movement attacked the Sunnah and disparaged many distinguished Companions.

There was a bitter dispute during or slightly before Shâfi‘ee’s time between the *Mutakallimeen* and the people of the Sunnah, and most of the *Mutakallimeen* were in Basra. Based on these two facts,

² It appears that this is a negative term, referring to people who were known for following arguments and rhetoric than revealed proofs; and Allah knows best. (Translator)

Al-Khidree concluded that the man was from the said group, which is a very strong possibility.

Second, in rejecting the validity of the Sunnah, deviant groups raised doubts about narrators and their mistakes. Hence they propounded the view that only the Qur'an should be followed, which means that they did not openly say that we must reject the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet (ﷺ). Not related from any Muslim group is the view that it is not compulsory to obey the commands of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) or that his sayings and deeds are not sources of legislation. The only group that openly says that it is not obligatory to follow the Prophet (ﷺ) is an extreme sect of the Shi'ah, but we have nothing to say about them here, for our scope of study in this work does not go beyond Muslim groups.

In *al-Umm*, Imam Shâfi'ee (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“I have not heard of a single person who is described as being a man of knowledge nor of anyone who describes himself as being a man of knowledge who disagrees regarding the status of the Sunnah: that Allah (ﷻ) ordered us to obey the commands of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and to surrender to his rulings and that all who come after the Prophet (ﷺ) must obey him. Nor do they differ in that there exists no statement that is binding except for Allah's Book and the Messenger's Sunnah — all else is secondary to those two sources. Nor do they differ in that it is incumbent upon us and upon those who come after us to accept narrations from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), with the exception of a group that I will describe, *inshâ' Allâh* (i.e., the group referred to in the previously mentioned debate).”

From Imam Shâfi'ee's debate, it is clear that the cause of dissension was the less than sure and certain knowledge that is imparted from narrations, as opposed to the certain and sure knowledge that the Qur'an imparts, for we are sure that the Qur'an is

authentically ascribed to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and then to Allah (ﷻ).

Ibn Hazm said:

“We have clarified that the Qur’an is the primary source of legislations, and we find therein an order to obey the commands of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Describing His Messenger in the Qur’an, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ﴾ (سورة النجم: ٣-٤)

﴿Nor does he speak [of his] own desire. It is only an inspiration that is inspired.﴾ (Qur’an 53: 3-4)

With that, we conclude that inspiration from Allah to His Messenger (ﷺ) is classified into two categories:

1. Inspiration that is a miracle (in its organization, eloquence, and other qualities) and that is recited and written in book form — which is the Qur’an; and

2. inspiration that is related and transmitted, that is not written in book form, that is not a miracle (in its flow, cohesiveness, and organization), and that is read not recited — which are the narrations we have from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). This second category clarifies and details Allah’s commands. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ ...﴾ (سورة التحل: ٤٤)

﴿... That you may explain clearly to people what is sent down to them...﴾ (Qur’an 16: 44)

We find that Allah (ﷻ) made it compulsory upon us to obey the second category (the Sunnah) just as He made it compulsory upon us to follow the first category (the Qur’an) without differentiating between the two. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ ...﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٩٢)

﴿And obey Allah and the Messenger [Muhammad]...﴾ (Qur'an 5: 92)

The narrations we have referred to constitute one of the three matters that we must follow based on the comprehensive verse for all legislations, the first of them to the last of them:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولَى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ...﴾ (سورة النساء: ٥٩)

(سورة النساء: ٥٩)

﴿O you who believe! Obey Allah﴾ this first source is the Qur'an.

﴿And obey the Messenger [Muhammad]﴾ this is the second source — that which is related to us from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

﴿And those of you [Muslims] who are in authority...﴾ (Qur'an 4: 59) — this third source is *ijmâ'*..."

He also said,

"In case of any disagreement, the Muslim who believes in Tawḥīd (Islamic monotheism) can seek judgment only in the Qur'an and Sunnah and no other source; furthermore, he must accept that judgment. If he seeks judgment from other than those two sources, then he is a wrongdoer; and after the proof is established upon him and he still feels that it is lawful for him to do so — to seek judgment from other sources — then in our view, he is without a doubt a disbeliever."

And on yet another occasion, he (Ibn Ḥazm) said,

"If one says, 'We only take what we find in the Qur'an,' then he is a disbeliever by the consensus of the Muslim Nation, and it is incumbent upon him — based on his own view — to pray only one unit of prayer from sunset until dusk and another unit at dawn, because that is the minimum amount necessary for the action to be

called prayer. (That is to say, the Qur'an only orders us to pray without mentioning the details of prayer, which are outlined in the Sunnah. So if one is only following the Qur'an, he can pray a single unit during the said times, and he will have fulfilled what, according to the implications of his view, is correct.)... The one who says this is a disbeliever and a polytheist whose blood and wealth are lawful. The only ones to take this view are some of the more extreme elements of the Râfiḍah, and the Muslim Nation agrees that they are disbelievers."

Suyooti said,

"Extreme factions of the Râfiḍah reject the Sunnah as a valid Islamic proof, limiting themselves to the Qur'an only, which is based on their belief that the Prophethood was supposed to have been for 'Ali (ﷺ) and that Jibreel (ﷺ) erred when he instead bestowed it upon the chief of the Messengers (ﷺ)."³

Third, based on what Imam Shâfi'ee related, we can summarize the arguments of those who reject the Sunnah outright in the following:

— If the Sunnah initiates a new legislation that is not established in the Qur'an, then knowledge that is established on a foundation that is less than certain (i.e., the Sunnah) is contradicting knowledge that is established on a foundation of certainty and of sureness (i.e., the Qur'an). And the former kind of knowledge is not strong enough to contradict the latter kind.

— If the Sunnah confirms a ruling in the Qur'an, then it is the Qur'an that is being followed, and not the Sunnah.

— And if the Sunnah clarifies what the Qur'an mentioned in general, then that which is established as certain knowledge — whoever disbelieves in a letter of the Qur'an disbelieves — is being clarified

³ *Miftâḥul-Jannah*, p. 3.

by that which is established as less than certain knowledge — whoever disbelieves in a letter of a narration does not disbelieve. And that is neither permissible nor correct.

It might occur to one that they accept Mutawâtir narrations (narrations related by such a large number of people that it must be a correct report, such as 5000 people from a town reporting an earthquake) because they impart sure knowledge. Then why did Imam Shâfi‘ee generalize when he said, “They reject all narrations.” It appears that, according to them, even Mutawâtir narrations do not even impart sure knowledge but instead impart less than sure knowledge. They claim that it is always possible for narrators to lie, even if a great number of them relate the same information. If what Al-Khidree said — that the opponent in the debate was a Mu‘tazilee — is true and if what is imputed to An-Nidhâm — that he rejected Mutawâtir narrations, saying that they do not impart sure knowledge — is true, then it also holds true that those who reject the Sunnah are not obligated to perform a particular number of units in their prayer. And that is significant because the number of units for each prayer is related in Mutawâtir form and is agreed upon by the consensus of the Muslim Nation.

When Shâfi‘ee’s opponent said that he did not accept anything that might be based on an error he did not mean that he accepted Mutawâtir narrations, because, according to him, they can contain errors.

Fourth, Imam Shâfi‘ee’s refutations or answers can be summarized as follows:

1. Allah (ﷻ) commanded us to obey and follow His Messenger (ﷺ), a command that embraces both those who lived during his lifetime and those who came after him. As regards those who were not contemporaries of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), they can only follow him through narrations that are related from him, which means that

Allah (ﷻ) also ordered us to follow and accept (authentic) narrations from him. This is based on the rule that if an obligatory action cannot be completed except with the help of another action, then the latter action is also obligatory.

2. To ascertain the rulings of the Qur'an itself, we must accept narrations. For instance, to know which verses are abrogated and which are abrogating, we must refer to the Sunnah.

3. There are certain rulings that are agreed upon by all, even by those who reject narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ). The Sunnah is the only source that establishes many of those rulings.

4. The Sharia established that it is possible for sure knowledge to be specified or limited by knowledge that is at a level below that of sure knowledge. For example, two witnesses are accepted in murder cases and financial dealings. Yet we are sure that one's blood and wealth are inviolable, whereas we are less than sure as to the veracity of the two witnesses.

5. Yes, it is possible that errors or lies occurred in some narrations. Yet that possibility certainly diminishes greatly when the uprightness of a narrator is established and when his narrations are compared to those of his contemporaries who were Hadith scholars. Furthermore, when a narration is at least to some extent supported by another narration from the Sunnah or a verse from the Qur'an, the aforesaid possibility almost becomes non-existent.

Fifth, Imam Shâfi'ee did not answer his opponent's argument when he said that Allah (ﷻ) sent down the Qur'an as an exposition of all matters. This is an issue that we will discuss in the next chapter, *inshâ' Allâh*.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Sunnah Vis-à-vis Contemporary Personalities who Reject it

In recent times, there are those of scanty knowledge who reject the validity of the Sunnah as an Islamic proof. In issues 7 and 9 of the magazine *Manâr*¹, two interviews with Tawfeeq Şidqee are printed, in which he proclaims that view under the title, *Islam is the Qur'an only*. The claims and doubts he raised as well as his arguments can be summarized as follows:

1. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ...﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٣٨)

﴿... We have neglected nothing in the Book...﴾ (Qur'an 6: 38)

And He (ﷻ) says:

﴿... وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيِينًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ...﴾ (سورة التحلل: ٨٩)

﴿... And We have sent down to you the Book [the Qur'an] as an exposition of everything...﴾ (Qur'an 16: 89)

¹ Refer to issues 7 and 9 of the magazine, from the 9th year of publication.
(Translator)

Both these verses indicate that the Qur'an deals comprehensively with all matters pertaining to Religion as well as all of its rulings and commands. In addition, they indicate that the Qur'an has clarified the detailed rulings of Islam, so that no other source — such as the Sunnah — is needed. Otherwise, the Qur'an could be described as being remiss regarding its stated purpose (i.e., to be an exposition of all matters), and that is impossible.

2. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾ (سورة الحجر: ٩)

﴿Verily it is We Who have sent down the *dhikr* [i.e. the Qur'an] and surely, We will guard it [from corruption].﴾ (Qur'an 15: 9)

This verse indicates that Allah (ﷻ) guaranteed to preserve the Qur'an, yet He (ﷻ) did not do so for the Sunnah. If the Sunnah were a proof like the Qur'an, Allah would have guaranteed to preserve it as well.

3. If the Sunnah were a valid proof, the Prophet (ﷺ) would have ordered it to be written down and the Companions as well as the *Tâbi'oon* would have worked to gather it and record it so as to preserve it from distortion, forgetfulness, or error and so as to pass it down to future generations of Muslims as an authentic and certain source of knowledge. Since none of that occurred, it is not a definite and sure source of knowledge; consequently, one cannot argue by it as if it were a valid proof. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ...﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣٦)

﴿And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge...﴾

(Qur'an 17: 36)

And He (ﷻ) says:

﴿... إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ ...﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٤٨)

﴿Verily, you follow nothing but conjecture...﴾ (Qur'an 6: 148)

Positive and definite knowledge is only obtained from a written record, which is the case with the Qur'an. In the case of the Sunnah, the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited the Companions from writing it down and whatever was previously written by them, he ordered them to erase. Such was the view taken by the Companions and the Tâbi'oon. 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) related that Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) burned 500 hadiths that he had previously written down, and he said,

"I feared that I would die and there would be among them (i.e., those 500 hadiths) hadiths from men that I trusted, but who related that which was incorrect, and I would be the one who transmitted them."

Zayd ibn Thâbit (رضي الله عنه) did the same when he met Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه). Mu'âwiyah asked him about a hadith and he informed him of it. Mu'âwiyah ordered someone to write it down, but Zayd (رضي الله عنه) said, "Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) ordered us not to write down anything from his hadith," and so he erased it. On one occasion, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) intended to record the *Sunan*, but he then changed his mind, saying,

"Verily, I wanted to write down the *Sunan*, but then I remembered a people before you who wrote books, dedicated themselves to them, and abandoned Allah's Book. I will never mix the Qur'an with anything else."

Likewise, 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) ordered someone who had written down some hadiths to erase them. Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) erased a scroll containing hadiths that was related from him. 'Alqamah, 'Ubaydah, Al-Qâsim ibn Muhammad, Ash-Sha'bee, An-Nakha'ee, Manşoor, Mugheerah, Al-'Amash — all of these Tâbi'oon also disliked writing down hadiths. There are many narrations from them that indicate this. They

did not stop there: it is related from some of them that they forbade people from relating hadiths or at least ordered them not to do it abundantly. The Sunnah was only recorded in later generations when error, forgetfulness, and distortion had already crept into it. All of the above proves that it cannot be depended upon as a source of Islamic legislation.

4. Certain narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) indicate that the Sunnah is not a valid Islamic proof. For example, “Indeed, hadiths from me will spread, so whatever comes to you that is in harmony with the Qur’an, it is from me. And whatever comes to you that contradicts the Qur’an, then it is not from me.”² Therefore, if the Sunnah establishes a new legislation that is not found in the Qur’an, it is not in harmony with the Qur’an (i.e., it contradicts the Qur’an). If it confirms a ruling that it is already in the Qur’an, then the proof is the Qur’an only. This is proven by the narration, “If you relate a hadith from me that you know and do not deny, then believe it, regardless of whether I really said it or not, for I speak of that which is known and that which is not denied. And if you relate from me a hadith that you deny, then do not believe it, regardless of whether I said it or not, for I do not say that which is unknown and that which is denied.”³ This shows that it is compulsory to compare what is related from the Prophet (ﷺ) to what the Muslims know and acknowledge in terms of rulings from the Noble Qur’an; therefore the Sunnah is not a valid proof. Another example is the narration, “Indeed I do not make lawful except that which Allah made lawful in His Book, and I do not forbid except that

² Reported by Aṭ-Ṭabarâni, vol. 3, p. 194, hadith no. 194 and Al-Bayhaqi, vol. 1, p. 9; Shaykh Al-Albâni said it is a weak hadith. See *al-Mu’jâm al-Kabeer, Ma’arifah as-Sunan wal-Âthâr* and *Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa’eefah wal-Mawḍoo’ah*.

³ Reported by Al-Uqayli, vol. 1, p. 33, Ad-Dâraquṭni vol. 1, p. 12 and Aṭ-Ṭahâwee, vol. 1, p. 286. Hadith status: Munkar a seriously denounced hadith. Shaykh al-Albâni said, Mawḍoo’, fabricated. See *adh-Dhuafâ, al-Ifrâd, Mushkil al-Âthâr* and *Silsilah al-Ahâdeeth aḍ-Ḍa’eefah*, vol. 3, p. 203.

which Allah forbade in His Book.”⁴ In another narration, “People should not grasp anything from me, for indeed, I do not make lawful for them except that which Allah has made lawful and I do not forbid except that which Allah has forbidden.”

This is a summary of ‘Doctor’ Sidqee’s arguments. The student of knowledge, however, will not hesitate to confirm the weakness, the inconsistency, the inherent contradiction, and the falsehood of those arguments. We will prove their falsehood in the following, *inshâ’ Allâh*.

The Answer to the first argument

The Noble Qur’an encompasses the fundamentals of Islam and the general principles of Islamic legislations, some of which are clearly spelled out and others that are left for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to clarify. As long as Allah (ﷻ) sent His Messenger to clarify the rulings of Islam to Muslims and made it compulsory for them to follow him, his clarification on those rulings is a clarification of the Qur’an. And as such, the rulings of the Sharia — from the Qur’an and the Sunnah and from what is subsidiary to them, *ijmâ’* (consensus) and *qiyâs* (analogy) — are in reality rulings from Allah’s Book, either directly or in derivation. Therefore there is no contradiction between the validity of the Sunnah as an Islamic proof and the Qur’an being an exposition of all matters.

Imam Shâfi‘ee said,

“No new matter befalls one in Allah’s Religion except that Allah’s Book contains a guideline, showing the way to guidance in it.”

⁴ Reported by Ibn Hazzam, vol. 1, p. 199; Al-Bayhaqi, vol. 3, p. 360; Ash-Shâfi‘ee, vol. 11, p. 56. Ibn Hazzam said, it is Mursal, disconnected while Ash-Shâfi‘ee and Al-Bayhaqi said, it is muqati, interrupted. See *al-Ahkâm, Ma‘rifah as-Sunan wal-Âthâr, al-Mufasssil fee ar-Radd ‘ala Shubhât A‘adâ al-Islam*.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿١﴾﴾
 (سورة إبراهيم: ١)

﴿... [This is] a Book which We have revealed unto you [O Muhammad] in order that you might lead people out of darkness into light, by their Lord's leave to the Path of the All-Mighty, the Owner of all Praise.﴾
 (Qur'an 14: 1)

﴿... وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾
 (سورة التحل: ٤٤)

﴿And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the reminder and the advice [the Qur'an], that you may explain clearly to people what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought.﴾
 (Qur'an 16: 44)

﴿... وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيِينًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ... ﴿٨٩﴾﴾ (سورة التحل: ٨٩)
 ﴿... And We have sent down to you the Book [the Qur'an] as an exposition of everything...﴾
 (Qur'an 16: 89)

In different ways, Allah (ﷻ) clarified to His slaves matters through which they worship Him:

1. There are matters that Allah (ﷻ) directly mentioned in the Qur'an — for instance compulsory deeds, such as the Prayer, zakât, Fasting, and Hajj; or for example, Allah forbade wicked deeds, those that are evident and those that are hidden. He clearly mentioned in the Qur'an that fornication and alcohol are forbidden, as well as eating the meat of an animal that died naturally (i.e. that was not slaughtered), or eating blood or pork. He outlined the obligatory elements of the ablution, as well as many other matters that He (ﷻ) clarified directly.

2. Then there are deeds that Allah (ﷻ) mentioned to be compulsory in the Qur'an but explained how they are performed through the speech of the Prophet (ﷺ) — for example, the number of units in the different prayers, the details of zakât, and other obligatory deeds that are revealed in the Qur'an.

3. In some matters, the Prophet (ﷺ) initiated legislation that Allah did not directly mention in the Qur'an. Yet Allah did make obedience of His Messenger compulsory in His Book. Whoever then takes from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has accepted Allah's command.

4. In yet other matters, Allah made His slaves strive to seek out a ruling, and He tests their obedience in those matters just as He tests their obedience in other matters that He (ﷻ) made compulsory upon them.

He then went on to say:

“Anyone who accepts Allah's commands in the Qur'an of necessity must accept the Messenger of Allah's Sunnah, because in the Qur'an, Allah commanded the creation to obey the Prophet (ﷺ). So whoever accepts something from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is accepting it from Allah (ﷻ)...”

In refutation of As-Sidqee's second argument

That Allah (ﷻ) guaranteed that He would preserve the dhikr is not limited to the Qur'an alone; rather dhikr refers to Allah's Sharia as a whole, with which He (ﷻ) sent His Messenger (ﷺ), so it is more general than referring to just the Qur'an or just the Sunnah. This is indicated by the following verse,

﴿... فَسْئَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة التحل: ٤٣)

﴿... So ask the people of the dhikr if you know not.﴾ (Qur'an 16: 43)

— meaning, ask the people of knowledge, the scholars of Allah’s Religion and Sharia. Just as Allah preserved the Qur’an, we can say for certain that He (ﷻ) also preserved the Sunnah. For Allah sent Imams who memorized the Sunnah, transmitted it to one another, scrutinized its many narrations, and distinguished between the authentic and the fabricated. They dedicated their lives completely to those ends and made contributions that we have hitherto discussed in this work. As such, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is preserved and recorded in its sources, with nothing missing from it.

The scholars, the foremost among whom was Imam Shâfi‘ee (may Allah have mercy on him), have stated that the Sunnah is found among the people of knowledge, even if some scholars have more (knowledge of it) than others. But if the knowledge of all those scholars were to be gathered, then the Sunnah would also be gathered in its entirety.

Without a doubt, that conclusion holds true. Regarding the prayer, zakât, Hajj, fasting, dealings, and compulsory duties — nothing from the Sunnah has been lost. Every action and every statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) has been collected and recorded, though the paths that lead to those Sunan may differ. Ibn Hâzim said: “Among the scholars of Arabic and of the Sharia, all agree that everything that is revealed from Allah (ﷻ) is dhikr. We know with certainty, then, that Allah preserved for us all that He revealed [to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)]. Anything that Allah took upon Himself to preserve is guaranteed to remain intact without any part of it ever being lost or distorted.”

Ibn Hâzim then refutes those who claim that dhikr in the above-mentioned verse refers to the Qur’an only:

“This is a false claim that is not supported by any proof whatsoever... Dhikr is a word that refers to all that Allah revealed to His Messenger (ﷺ) in terms of the Qur’an or revealed Sunnah through which the

Qur'an is explained. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ ...﴾

(سورة التحل: ٤٤)

﴿... And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the reminder and the advice, that you may explain clearly to people what is sent down to them...﴾ (Qur'an 16: 44)

Therefore the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was charged with the duty of explaining the Qur'an to people, and in the Qur'an are found many general commands, such as the command to pray, to fast, to pay zakât, to perform Hajj, and so on — all of which were clarified in detail by the Prophet (ﷺ). If the Prophet's clarification of those general commands was not preserved or not guaranteed to be free of fabrications, then we would not have benefited in the least from those general commands; hence most commands that we must follow from the Qur'an would have, in effect, become invalidated (meaning that we would have no way of knowing how to execute those general commands), and consequently, we would not have known what Allah (ﷻ) intended by those commands."

Answering As-Sidqee's third argument

That the Prophet (ﷺ) did not order his Companions to record the Sunnah, or in some authentic narrations that he (ﷺ) forbade the recording of the Sunnah does not indicate or prove that the Sunnah is not a valid source of Islamic legislation. In previous chapters, we have already explained that the situation during the Prophet's lifetime called for the few who could write to combine their efforts in recording the Qur'an and for the rest to strive to memorize Allah's Book, so as to prevent it from being lost or being mixed with other words. We have also hitherto established that parts of the Sunnah

were recorded even during the Prophet's lifetime, though it was not officially recorded in that period, unlike the Qur'an, which was officially recorded at that time.

We have to understand that for a matter to be a proof it does not have to be written down, so one cannot say, "Had the Sunnah been intended as an Islamic proof, he would have ordered it to be recorded." Any given proof is established by many means: by Mutawâtîr narrations, by the transmission of narrations by upright and trustworthy narrators, as well as by a written record. In fact, during Abu Bakr's caliphate, they were not satisfied that each verse should simply be written down, they also demanded that each verse be related in Mutawâtîr form from the memory of the Companions. with regard to transmissions it is not necessarily the case that memorized narrations are not as authentic as and less precise than writing; this is especially so in the case of the Arabs, who were known for their ability to retain information. An ordinary man from among them would memorize an entire poem by simply listening to it once. For example, it is authentically established that Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) memorized a long poem of 'Umar ibn Abi Rabee'ah in one sitting.

There are many other examples of their prodigious ability to memorize and retain information. Ibn 'Asâkir related from Az-Zuhri that 'Abdul-Mâlik sent a long letter to the people of Madinah, reproaching them for their stance vis-à-vis Ibn az-Zubayr's predicament. That letter was read out loud in the mosque, and as Sa'eed was not present, he asked his students about it, wanting to know what was in that letter. They informed him, but he was left unsatisfied with their reply. Az-Zuhri said to him, "O Abu Muhammad (Sa'eed), do you wish to know all that was contained in that letter." He said, "Yes." He (Az-Zuhri) read out the letter from his memory, without omitting a single word. Similar incidents are

related from Shâfi‘ee and others. When relating and studying the Prophet’s Sunnah, they relied primarily on their memories.

As-Sidqee mentioned some scholars who disliked hadiths being written down, yet he failed to grasp the reasoning behind that view. Because of their prodigious ability to memorize and retain information, those scholars felt that that ability would weaken if they began to depend more and more on written narrations. After relating the sayings of Companions and Tâbi‘oon who disliked for knowledge to be written down, Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr went on to say:

“Those who we mentioned held the aforesaid view only because they took after the way of the Arabs, who were naturally gifted with powerful memories... Ibn Shihâb used to say, ‘Whenever I pass by the Baqee‘ graveyard, I block my ears, fearing that some obscene words might enter them; for, by Allah, I have never forgotten anything that has entered my ears.’ A similar saying is related from Ash-Sha‘bee. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, «We are an illiterate nation; we neither write nor count.»⁵ It is well known that the Arabs had specialized in memorization.”⁶

Supposing that the narration from Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) is authentic, if anything, it only points to the piety of the Companions, who feared that the hadiths they inscribed might contain mistakes. However, Adh-Dhahabi said regarding that narration, “It is not authentic.”

That some Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) refused to relate hadiths points only to their piety and their fear of making mistakes when relating the Prophet’s sayings; this was clearly expressed in a narration we have previously related from Az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه). As for Companions who had stronger memories — such as Ibn ‘Abbâs, Ibn Mas‘ood, and Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be

⁵ Reported by Bukhari, hadith no. 1913 and Muslim, hadith no. 1080.

⁶ *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, (1/69).

pleased with them) — they would relate narrations without hesitating in the least. Zayd ibn Thâbit (رضي الله عنه) was among those who refused to have his narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ) written down. He explained why he refused, saying, “Perhaps all that I have related to you is not correctly related to you (i.e., it might contain mistakes).” So if some Companions refused to narrate hadiths or write them down, it was simply a matter of being careful regarding Allah’s Religion. However, for the most part, Companions and Tâbi’oon would write down narrations — this is related in one form of Mutawâtir narration. Many such narrations are related in Ibn ‘Abdul Barr’s *Jâmi’ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm* as well as Al-Khaṭeab’s *Taqyeed al-‘Ilm*.

As-Sidqee then argued that the Sunnah was recorded at a very late date in Islamic history, which he said diminishes its precision and leaves much room for doubt as to its authenticity. He then said that doubts or guesses are not permissible in Allah’s Religion. His arguments only serve to show his ignorance regarding the efforts and contributions of the scholars in eradicating distortion and fabrication. Because the Sunnah was related precisely by memory for the most part, and in written form to a lesser extent, and because Az-Zuhri recorded the Sunnah at the end of the first century (based on ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez’s command), the chain of narration is unbroken, leaving no room for doubt. And whenever any lies were fabricated regarding the Sunnah, the scholars clarified and exposed those lies, again leaving no room for doubt. So great and comprehensive were their contributions to preserving the Sunnah, one feels almost one hundred percent absolute certainty as to the veracity of narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ). Yet still, we do not say that Aḥâd narrations impart one hundred percent, absolute knowledge, even though some scholars have said so. We hold that they impart knowledge that makes us almost one hundred percent sure as to their authenticity, and I think that only someone who is intransigent in his views will

disagree about that. But being almost sure about a narration is enough for it to be a binding proof in our Religion.

The claim that less than absolute knowledge is not permissible regarding rulings in Religion is clearly wrong as it only pertains to the basic tenants of the Religion, which one must believe in — or else he is a disbeliever even if he doubts in them. Such matters include the Oneness of Allah (ﷻ), the veracity of His Messenger (ﷺ), the attribution of the Qur'an to the Lord of all that exists; similarly, the pillars of Islam, such as the Prayer and zakât and other matters that must be known and accepted by all. Secondary or subsidiary matters, however, may be established by less than absolute knowledge. Even regarding the Qur'an, rulings that are clearly outlined therein are less than rulings that are based on ijtihâd regarding its verses. For the Qur'an contains general and specific (exceptions), categorical, and limiting verses, general verses and verses (or hadiths) that clarify meaning, all of which makes it very difficult to say that such rulings impart absolute knowledge. This principle is established and recognized in the principles of Islamic jurisprudence; it is exemplified in the aforementioned case mentioned by Shâfi'ee of two witnesses who bear witness that someone is a murderer. We know for sure that that someone's blood is inviolable, yet we are less than sure that he is a murderer because it is possible that the witnesses lied or made a mistake. Nonetheless, a judge issues a ruling in accordance to the testimony of those witnesses, which proves that rulings may be established based on proof that imparts less than one hundred percent, absolute knowledge.

A Refutation of the fourth claim

As-Sidqee's fourth claim consisted of a number of hadith narrations.

The First Hadith: “Indeed, hadith from me will spread, so whatever comes to you that is in harmony with the Qur’an, it is from me. And whatever comes to you that contradicts the Qur’an, then it is not from me.” Regarding this hadith, Bayhaqi said,

“It is related by Khâlid ibn Abi Kareemah from Abu Ja‘far from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Khâlid is unknown and Abu Ja‘far is not a Companion, so the hadith is disconnected.”

Shâfi‘ee said,

“None of the narrators of this hadith have authentically related anything — nothing small nor anything large. It is simply a disconnected narration related by an unknown narrator, and we do not accept a narration such as this one for any reason.”⁷

Ibn Ḥazm commented on Al-Ḥusain ibn ‘Abdullâh, a narrator in some of the chains of this hadith: “Al-Ḥusain ibn ‘Abdullâh is fallen, accused of being a Zindeeq.”

Al-Bayhaqi also said,

“The hadith related about comparing a hadith to the Qur’an is false and not authentic. The text is itself contradictory, for there is no indication in the Qur’an that we have to compare a hadith to the Qur’an (i.e., judge it by the Qur’an).”⁸

That summarizes what the people of knowledge had to say about the hadith, yet I must pause briefly here to comment. If we reject the authenticity of this hadith based on the chain, as the Scholars have mentioned, then we must wholeheartedly accept their ruling. However, they do not all agree that it is fabricated; some among them merely rule that it is weak, as has been ruled by Shâfi‘ee

⁷ *Ar-Risâlah*, p. 225.

⁸ *Miftâḥul-Jannah*, p. 6.

and Bayhaqi. If we reject the narration based on its text, then we have to consider that it has been related with different wordings. Most of its narrations are worded thus: "Whatever is in harmony (with the Qur'an), then accept it; and whatever is contrary to or is not in harmony with (the Qur'an), then reject it." This wording does not warrant from us that we rule it to be weak, despite 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn Mahdee's statement, "It is one of the fabrications of the Khawârij and the Zanâdiqah." We discussed earlier that one of the indications of a hadith having been fabricated is that it contradicts rulings of the Qur'an and Sunnah that impart one hundred percent, absolute knowledge. Therefore if a hadith imparts a ruling that is contrary to or is not in harmony with clear rulings from the Qur'an, we declare that hadith to be fabricated, and all scholars agree upon this principle. And does the hadith we are discussing here say anything more than that? Yes, certain narrations of this hadith indicate a false meaning, causing us to rule it to be fabricated; for instance, this narration: "Whatever (hadiths) you find in Allah's Book, then accept them; and whatever (hadiths) you do not find in Allah's Book, then reject them." We obviously rule that this narration is fabricated, because there are many hadiths that establish rulings which are not found in Allah's Book. There is a consensus among scholars in that they apply such rulings, so long as the hadith is authentic.

The people of knowledge agree that the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) does not contradict the Qur'an in any way. If any narration indicates rulings that are contrary to the clear rulings of the Qur'an, then it is rejected, by consensus. Ibn Hâzim said, "There is nothing in authentic hadiths that contradicts the Qur'an." Muhammad ibn 'Abdullâh ibn Misrah said:

"There are three categories of hadith:

1. The hadith that is in agreement with the Qur'an; following it is compulsory;

2. The hadith that conveys more than the Qur'an; it is added to what is in the Qur'an, and following it is compulsory;
3. The hadith that is contrary to what is in the Qur'an, and it is discarded."

Ibn Hāzīm said:

"In the first place, there exists no authentic narration that is contrary to what is in the Qur'an. Every narration in the Sharia (i.e., every hadith) is either an addition to what is in the Qur'an, attached to it and explaining what it mentioned in general terms or it is an exception, clarifying that which it mentions in general, and there exists no third viewpoint."

If that is the case — according to the way the matter appears to me — we cannot rule the text of the narration to be fabricated based on the meaning it communicates if its wording is as follows: "Whatever does not agree with or is contrary to (the Qur'an), then it is rejected." I took to this opinion even more after reading what Ash-Shāṭibee (may Allah have mercy on him) said about this hadith:

"Indeed, (the Prophet's) hadith is inspiration from Allah (ﷻ), and it is therefore impossible for there to exist any contradiction between it and Allah's Book. Yes, it is correct for the Sunnah to bring forth that which neither contradicts nor agrees with the Qur'an, but which speaks about that which is not mentioned in the Qur'an — unless a proof exists that is against that being correct, in which case every hadith has to be in accordance with Allah's Book, and that is clearly articulated in the aforesaid hadith. The meaning of the hadith, then, is true..."

Reflect ... based on that, the hadith contains no proof for As-Sidqee's claim in the first place, even if the chain were authentic, because it conveys a meaning that we accept.

The Second Hadith: *“If you relate a hadith from me that you know and do not deny, then believe it, regardless of whether I really said it or not, for I speak of that which is known and not denied. And if you relate from me a hadith that you deny, then do not believe it, regardless of whether I said it or not, for I do not say that which is unknown and which is denied.”*

The various narrations of this hadith are all weak. Abu Muhammad ibn Ḥazm said, “This hadith is mursal and Al-Asbagh is unknown.” In the text of this hadith is that which absolutely shows it to be a fabrication: *“then believe it, regardless of whether I really said it or not.”* Far above is the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from permitting a lie about himself; it was he (ﷺ) who said in Mutawâtir narrations, «Whosoever lies about me on purpose, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire.»⁹ Further commenting on this fabrication, Ibn Ḥazm said, “‘Ubaydullâh ibn Sa‘eed — one of the narrators of the hadith — is a known liar...” Scholars reject this narration based on many other discrepancies as well.

Yes, the hadith is related in acceptable chains without the wording, “Whether I said it or not,” but narrations without that phrase go nowhere in supporting the claims of As-Sidqee and those of his ilk. The existence of narrations of this hadith without that phrase simply shows that one of the signs of an authentic hadith is that it is in accordance with the Sharia; and if it is not in accordance with the Sharia, then that is an indication that the hadith is a fabrication.

The Third Hadith: *“Indeed I do not make lawful except that which Allah (ﷻ) made lawful in His Book, and I do not forbid except that which Allah forbade in His Book.”* As-Suyooṭi said, “It is related by Shâfi‘ee and Bayhaqi by way of Ṭâwoos.” Shâfi‘ee said, “It is disconnected.” Bayhaqi said,

⁹ Bukhari, vol. 5, p. 37, hadith no. 1209; Muslim, vol. 1, p. 12, hadith no. 4.

“Suppose this hadith were authentic and refer to what Allah revealed. What Allah’s revelation is of two categories:

1. Revelation that is recited, and
2. Revelation that is not recited.”

Here, Bayhaqi interpreted “the Book” as having a meaning more general than the Qur’an. Yet there is no harm in giving “the Book” its most apparent meaning — the Qur’an, for whatever the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded in terms of lawful and the unlawful is in Allah’s Book because He (ﷻ) ordered us to follow the Prophet (ﷺ).

Fourth Hadith: *“People should not grasp anything from me, for indeed, I do not make lawful for them except that which Allah has made lawful and I do not forbid except that which Allah has forbidden.”* Shâfi‘ee said, “It is a narrations by Ṭâwoos, and it is disconnected.” Even if it were authentic, it would mean that people have no right to say that the Prophet (ﷺ) permitted or forbade matters that are not mentioned in the Qur’an. And that is because the Prophet (ﷺ) is a legislator, who permits only that which is permissible in Allah’s Sharia and forbids only that which is unlawful in Allah’s Sharia.”

Based on our analysis of the above-mentioned hadiths, we see that the people of knowledge discount a few of them as inauthentic, whereas the others may be authentic, but still are not proofs to support As-Sidqee’s claims. Moreover there are many authentic narrations in the Sunnah that refute his claims and the claims of others like him.

Shâfi‘ee related from Sufiyân ibn ‘Uyainah from Sâlim Abi an-Naḍr that he heard ‘Abdullâh ibn Abi Râfai‘ relate from his father that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Let me not find one of you leaning on his cushion when a command comes to him from me in a matter that I ordered or forbade, and he says, ‘I do not know. What we find in

Allah's Book we follow.”¹⁰ This hadith is related by Abu Dâwood, Ibn Mâjah, at-Tirmidhi, and Aḥmad. Al-Ḥâkim related with his chain to Al-Miqdâm ibn Ma'adykarib, who said, “The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade certain things on the Day of Khaybar, among them was the domesticated donkey...”¹¹ And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “The time is near when a man from you will sit on his cushion, relate a hadith from me, and say, ‘Between me and you is Allah's Book.’ What we find in it to be lawful, we rule that it is lawful. And what find in it to be unlawful, we rule that it is unlawful.’ Yet indeed, what the Messenger of Allah forbids is just like what Allah forbids.” Shâfi'ee said, “Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade people from rejecting his commands, and he (ﷺ) is referring to Allah's command that they are to obey him [the Messenger (ﷺ)].”

Basically, a Muslim who has any knowledge of Islam would never say that Islam is the Qur'an alone, for the Sunnah establishes most of the rulings in the Sharia. For the most part, the Qur'an consists of general and universal principles. Where, then, can we find in the Qur'an the number of units for the Prayer, the amount due in zakât for different kinds of wealth, the detailed rites of Ḥajj, and all other rulings in matters pertaining to worship or worldly dealings? Ibn Ḥazm said:

“We ask the proponent of that false view: where in the Qur'an do we find that the midday prayer is four units, that the sunset prayer is three units, that each unit of prayer is performed in such and such manner, that the prostration is performed in such and such manner, that certain actions must be avoided when one fasts, that the zakât is paid in such and such way for gold and silver ... where are the rulings for

¹⁰ *Ar-Risâlah*, p. 403. This hadith is related by Abu Dawood, Ibn Mâjah, At-Tirmidhi and Aḥmad.

¹¹ Reported by Al-Bayhaqi in *as-Sunan al-Kubrah*, vol. 7, p. 76.

punishments mentioned, the rulings of business ... and of all other matters in jurisprudence? If we were left only with the Qur'an, we would not know how to apply all of that. All of the aforesaid matters are explained in narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ). Even ijmâ' resolves only a small number of issues. Therefore we must return to Hadith. Were a man to say, 'We take only that which we find in the Qur'an', he would be a disbeliever by the consensus of scholars..."

CHAPTER NINE

The Sunnah Vis-à-vis those who Reject the Validity of *Aḥād* Narrations

The scholars of hadith have classified narrations into two categories:

1. Mutawâtir: Narrations that are related by a group of upright and trustworthy narrators who also related from a group of upright and trustworthy narrators, and so on, until the narration ends at the Prophet (ﷺ).
2. Aḥād: Narrations that are related by one or two narrators who in turn related it from one or two narrators until the chain ends at the Prophet (ﷺ), or a narration that is related by a group of narrators who constitute a number that is still fewer than the minimum requirement for the Mutawâtir narration.

The Ḥanafī School adds a third category, which is called Mash-hoor. It is a kind of narration that was Aḥād at first but became Mutawâtir in the second and third centuries, such as the hadith, “Verily, deeds are only by their intentions.”

The scholars agree that the Mutawâtir narration imparts absolute, sure knowledge that must be applied. Hence they agree, without any

dissension, that the Mutawâtir narration is a binding proof. The only exception — if we can refer to them as an exception, for they are not from the scholars — are those who reject the validity of the Sunnah and those such as An-Nidhâm as well as others of his ilk.

As regards Aḥād narrations, the majority of scholars agree that they are binding proofs which must be applied, even though an individual Aḥād narration might not impart one hundred percent, sure knowledge. In *al-Maḥṣool*, Ar-Râzee goes as far as to declare the consensus of the scholars upon that view (that is, that they might not impart sure knowledge but are still binding proofs). There is another group of scholars — such as Imam Aḥmad, Al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibee, Al-Ḥusain ibn ‘Ali al-Karâbisee, and Abu Sulaymân (it is also related by Mâlik) — who hold that Aḥād narrations do indeed impart sure, absolute knowledge which must be applied. Whether Aḥād narrations impart one hundred percent, sure knowledge or close to one hundred percent, sure knowledge is an issue that is discussed in books of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, but it is an issue that has no bearing on our discussion here, because all scholars agree in the end — and that is what is important — that Aḥād narrations are valid proofs that must be applied.

It is only deviant sects who have a dissenting view about the Aḥād narration. It is related from the Râfiḍah, Al-Qâsânee, and Ibn Dâwood that they reject its validity as a proof, and this view is ascribed to the Râfiḍah and Ibn Dâwood in *at-Taḥreer* and in its commentary.

It is understood from what Ibn Ḥazm said that that opinion is also held by the Mu‘tazilah; however, Shâfi‘ee did not inform us, neither in *ar-Risâlah* nor in *al-Umm*, who it was that rejected its validity, but we do know from what he said in *al-Umm* that the man was from Basra. Hence there is a strong possibility that he was either

a Mu'tazilee or one of the Râfiḍah, because during the era of Shâfi'ee, Basra was a centre wherein gathered adherents from many different sects. The commentator of *al-Musallam* and of *Mukhtaṣir* ascribes the said view to the Râfiḍah and the Dhâhiriyyah. But his imputation to the Dhâhiriyyah is doubtful, for the books of Ibn Ḥazm as well as what is related to us by the scholars indicate that the Dhâhiriyyah are with the majority in this issue.

The Arguments of those who reject the validity of Aḥâd narrations

Those who reject the validity of Aḥâd narrations as binding proofs in Islam argue the following points:

1. Allah (ﷻ) says:

(سورة الإسراء: ٣٦) ﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ...﴾

﴿And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge...﴾

(Qur'an 17: 36)

And He (ﷻ) says:

(سورة النجم: ٢٨) ﴿... وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا﴾

﴿... And verily, guesswork is no substitute for the truth.﴾

(Qur'an 53: 28)

The way of the Aḥâd narration is a form of guesswork, for it is susceptible to error and forgetfulness from the narrator. It does not, therefore, endow us with certainty of knowledge and cannot, as a consequence, be used as a proof.

2. Had it been permissible to apply the Aḥâd narration in secondary matters, it would also have been permissible to apply it in primary matters, such as in issues regarding fundamental Islamic beliefs. But

the reality is that there is a consensus between you and us that Aḥād narrations are not accepted in primary matters, and with greater reason, then, they should not be accepted in secondary matters.

3. It has been authentically narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he hesitated to accept information from Dhul-Yâdayn. On one occasion, when the Prophet (ﷺ) completed the night prayer after only two units — whereas he normally completed it after four units — Dhul-Yâdayn asked, “Did you shorten the prayer or is it that you forgot?” The Prophet (ﷺ) did not immediately accept what he said, but rather only accepted his statement when it was corroborated by Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) as well as others who were in the first row. Only then did he complete the prayer and perform the prostration for forgetfulness. Had the Aḥād narration been considered a valid proof, the Prophet (ﷺ) would have completed his prayer immediately without having hesitated and without having first asked others to confirm Dhul-Yâdayn’s statement.

4. It has been related by a number of Companions that they did not act according to Aḥād narrations. Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) rejected the narration of Al-Mugheerah (رضي الله عنه) when a woman whose grandchild had died came to him, demanding her share of inheritance, and he only accepted Al-Mugheerah’s statement once it had been corroborated by Muhammad ibn Maslamah (رضي الله عنه). And ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) rejected the narration of Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه) regarding the issue of first seeking permission before entering another man’s house, and then only accepted Abu Moosa’s statement after Abu Sa‘eed (رضي الله عنه) confirmed it. ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) would only accept a narration from someone after that person first made an oath, and the only exception he made to that rule was with Abu Bakr. Finally, ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) rejected the narration of Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) regarding the deceased being punished on account of his family weeping for him.

A Refutation of the aforesaid arguments

1. The verses mentioned apply to issues pertaining to the fundamentals of the Religion and to its universal principles. As for the details of the Religion and its secondary matters, then to act based on narrations that impart less than one hundred percent knowledge is compulsory, because for the most part, we cannot arrive at a ruling except through those narrations. Consider the fact that the level of understanding among scholars differs regarding verses of the Qur'an and that the mujtahidoon are of different schools in different issues, yet not a single one of them claims that he is one hundred percent sure of his ijtihâd being correct. But still, ijma' (consensus) dictates that it is compulsory for the mujtahid to act based on the results of his Ijtihaad. Furthermore, that the Ahad narration is a valid proof is established not by less than one hundred percent, sure knowledge, but rather by one hundred percent, sure knowledge, for there is a consensus to that effect among the scholars from the era of the Companions and onward. Since ijma' dictates that the Ahad narration must be applied and since ijma' imparts absolute knowledge, we can say that the Ahad narration is applied based on one hundred percent, sure knowledge.

2. It is simply wrong to use an analogy to say that as it is compulsory for narrations to impart one hundred percent, sure knowledge in matters pertaining to beliefs and the universal principles of Islam, it is also compulsory for the same requisite to be fulfilled in secondary matters. Whereas the universal principles of Islam and our primary beliefs can be established, and indeed are established, through narrations that impart one hundred percent, sure knowledge, secondary matters and the details of the religion can realistically only be established through narrations that impart less than one hundred percent, sure knowledge. None argues, therefore, in this matter except someone who is intransigent or who has an ulterior motive.

3. The Prophet (ﷺ) hesitated when Dhul-Yâdayn spoke because of the possibility that he erred, for it was highly unlikely that he alone among the congregation should have noticed a matter that many more among them should also have noticed. So when there is an indication that an Aḥâd narration contains a mistake, one must hesitate and scrutinize it before accepting it. When the others confirmed his statement, it became clear that Dhul-Yâdayn had not imagined that the Prophet (ﷺ) had shortened the prayer. We must also understand that even with Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) and those in the first row, all of them together do not amount to a number of narrators that satisfies the conditions of the Mutawâtir narration, so the example given does not even enter into the sphere of what we are discussing here.

4. It is authentically narrated in Mutawâtir narrations that the Companions would act on Aḥâd narrations. To establish that here, we will list a number of proofs. Granted, a few narrations indicate that they hesitated in accepting Aḥâd narrations in specific situations, but that does not prove that their overall opinion was to reject Aḥâd narrations. In those isolated instances, they either hesitated because of external factors, because they wanted to make sure that the narrator was correct in his report, or because they wanted to instruct Muslims about the importance of making sure that a narration is authentic. For example, Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) hesitated to accept Al-Mugheerah’s narration simply to make sure that what he was relating was correct. As we said earlier, the Qur’an mentions in detail rulings related to inheritance, and since a grandmother is not mentioned in the Qur’an as an inheritor, Abu Bakr needed to make sure that she had a right to one sixth of the estate. When Muhammad ibn Maslamah (رضي الله عنه) confirmed that he had heard the same narration as Al-Mugheerah (رضي الله عنه) had, Abu Bakr did not hesitate to apply Al-Mugheerah’s narration. The same can be said for ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) when he rejected Abu Moosa’s narration, for in reality, he was teaching an

important lesson to other Companions as well as to Muslims who had only recently accepted Islam, warning them all to be careful when relating a hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). And that is why ‘Umar said to Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه), “Indeed I did not accuse you, but it is hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).” And the same can be said for any other similar narration. Hence the previous examples go nowhere to prove the claims of those who reject Ahâd narrations, for both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar accepted the narration when a second witness corroborated it, and two narrators are hardly enough to constitute a Mutawâtir narration. Al-Âmidee said, “Whenever the Companions hesitated to accept an Ahâd narration, it was because of external factors or internal factors within the narration itself that caused them to reject it, and not because they outright rejected Ahâd narrations...”

The arguments of those who reject Ahâd narrations are clear and are clearly refuted by the scholars; what remains is for us to mention proofs which establish that it is compulsory for us to apply authentic Ahâd narrations. The scholars of the fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence have mentioned many proofs in their books, but the first Imam to discuss the topic was Imam Shâfi‘ee in *ar-Risâlah*. We will now relate to you the proofs that he mentioned.

Proofs indicating the validity of Ahâd narrations as binding proofs in Islam

1. ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) related from his father that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«May Allah make shine the slave that hears my speech, memorizes it, retains its, and then conveys it; for there are many like the one who communicates Fiqh but is not a Faqeeh and there are many like the

one who communicates Fiqh to one who has a higher level of understanding than he has...»¹

The Prophet (ﷺ) exhorted his Companions to listen to what he said, to memorize it, and then to convey it, and the Prophet (ﷺ) only ordered them to convey his sayings because doing so would be a sufficient proof. Otherwise, if what they passed on from him were not binding, it would have made no sense for him to order them to convey his message.

2. ‘Ubaydullâh ibn Abi Râfay’ related from his father that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Let me not find one of you leaning on his cushion when a command comes to him from my affair, either what I have forbidden him or what I have commanded him to do, and then he says, “We do not know! Whatever we find in Allah’s book, we will follow.”»²

This hadith suggests that it is binding on Muslims to accept a hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) when a truthful person brings them news of that hadith.

3. ‘Aṭâ’ ibn Yasâr related that once, when a man kissed his wife while he was fasting, he later on felt a great deal of regret for what he did, and so he sent his wife to ask about the matter. When she met with Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها), the Mother of the Believers, she informed her of what had happened, and Umm Salamah said: “Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) kisses while he is fasting.” The woman returned to her husband and told him the good news, but that only increased his misery, for he said, “We are not like the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”

¹ Reported by At-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 11712, Ibn Mâjah, vol. 1, p. 273, hadith no. 232. Shaykh al-Albâni said it is authentic. *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Jâmi’*, hadith no. 6766.

² Reported by Abu Dâwood, vol. 12, p. 209, hadith no. 3989 and At-Tirmidhi, vol. 9, p. 268, hadith no. 2587. Shaykh al-Albâni said it is authentic. See *Ṣaḥeeḥ wa Ḍa’eef Sunan at-Tirmidhi*, vol. 6, p. 163.

Allah makes permissible for His Messenger whatsoever He (ﷺ) wills.” And so again, the woman returned to Umm Salamah, but this time she found that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was with her. He (ﷺ) asked, “What is the matter with this woman?” Umm Salamah informed him and he said, “Did you not inform her that I do the same?” She said, “I did indeed inform her, but when she went to her husband and informed him, his situation worsened, and he said, ‘We are not like the Messenger of Allah: Allah makes permissible for his Messenger whatsoever He (ﷺ) pleases.’” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) became angry and said, “By Allah, I fear Allah more than anyone among you and I have more knowledge than anyone among you regarding His limits.”

4. Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنهما) said: “As the people were performing the morning prayer at Qubâ’, a newcomer arrived, saying, ‘Indeed the Qur’an (i.e. part of it) has just been revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he has been ordered to face the *Qiblah*, so turn you all toward the *Qiblah*.’” They were facing Palestine at the time and they immediately changed their direction to the *Qiblah*. The people of Qubâ’ were Anşârees and they were people of Fiqh. They were already oriented to a *Qiblah* (direction for prayer) that Allah (ﷻ) had commanded them to turn to, and it was not proper for them to change the direction of that *Qiblah* unless they had some kind of binding proof, for they had not directly received the command from the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. In fact, they did not even hear news of the new command from a group of people: they relied on the narration of a single individual who was relating it from the Prophet (ﷺ). Yet they were immediately convinced that a binding proof had come to them. Furthermore, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not later on say to them, “You were indeed oriented to a *Qiblah*, and you should not have left it unless you had sufficient proof, such as hearing the command from me directly, or at least, from a group of people.”

5. Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) said: “I used to share an alcoholic drink made

from ... dates with Abu Ṭalḥah, Abu ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarāḥ, and Ubay ibn Ka‘b. Someone once came to them and said, ‘Indeed alcohol has (just) been made forbidden.’ Abu Ṭalḥah said, ‘Stand, O Anas, to these jars, and break them.’ I stood ... and struck one at the bottom until it broke.”

All of these Companions were knowledgeable, and they were also distinguished for having accepted Islam early. At the time of the narration, these eminent Companions had full knowledge that alcohol was permissible, yet when a single man came, informing them that it had just been made forbidden, Abu Ṭalḥah (ﷺ) — the owner of the barrels — ordered for the barrels to be broken. Not a single one from them said, “We are sure it is ḥalāl until we meet with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), for he is nearby and easily accessible.” Nor did they say, “We will wait until the news of the prohibition becomes more widespread.” Had they not been convinced by the narration of a single truthful narrator, they would not have spilled the alcohol, for doing so would have been considered an extravagant and wasteful act.

6. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) ordered Unays (ﷺ) to go to the wife of a man who had accused her of fornicating. When he sent Unays, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “If she confesses, then stone her to death.”³ She did confess and he did stone her to death.

7. ‘Amru ibn Sulaym az-Zarqī related that his mother said: “While we were at Mina, ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ), who was mounted upon a camel, came to us and said, ‘Indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) says, ‘Verily, these are days of food and drink, so none among you should fast.’⁴ He was upon his camel, shouting out these orders to them.”

³ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 21, p. 103, hadith no. 6326 and Muslim, vol. 9, p. 71, hadith no. 3210.

⁴ Reported by Ash-Shāfi‘ee in his *Musnad*, vol. 3, p. 61, hadith no. 1112.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would not have sent a single truthful person unless his narration from the Prophet (ﷺ) was absolutely binding. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was himself making the pilgrimage that year, so had he thought it necessary, he could have gone himself and spoken to them directly or he could have sent a group of messengers (consisting of enough men to fulfill the conditions of the Mutawâtir narration) to convey his message.

8. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) to lead the pilgrims during the ninth year (H). Muslims from various regions attended that pilgrimage. Abu Bakr led them and informed them about the rites that they had to perform, and of course, he was conveying that information from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

9. During that same year, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) to read verses of the Ninth Chapter (Repentance) to the Pilgrims; he (رضي الله عنه) explained certain matters to them and forbade them from other matters. Both Abu Bakr and 'Ali were known to the people of Makkah, known for their virtue, their religion, and their honesty. If there was a pilgrim who did not know them — or one of them — he found others at that gathering who could inform him about their honesty and their eminence. Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would not have sent a single messenger — or merely two messengers — unless the information they were relating from him was absolutely binding upon those to whom it was conveyed.

10. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent governors to the different regions of the Muslim Nation. He sent Qays ibn 'Âsim, Az-Zabarqân ibn Badr, and Ibn Nuwayrah to their tribes — tribes that trusted in their honesty. When emissaries from Bahrain were returning to their homeland, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent Ibn Sa'eed ibn al-'Âṣ (رضي الله عنه) with them. He (ﷺ) sent Mu'âdh ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه) to Yemen, commanding him to inform its inhabitants about the obligatory deeds in Islam; the people there were familiar with Mu'âdh's status and they were

confident about his truthfulness. In all of these examples, no one said, “You are only one, and we shall wait until the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) informs us directly or until he sends more people to us, so that we can be sure that you are speaking the truth.”

11. Similarly, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent some of his Companions to lead military expeditions. It was the duty of those Companions to call other nations to Islam, and then to fight them if necessary. In one instance, he ordered that Zayd ibn Ḥārithah (رضي الله عنه) should lead the army, and that if he was killed, Ja‘far (رضي الله عنه) should replace him, and if Ja‘far (رضي الله عنه) was killed, that Ibn Rawāḥah (رضي الله عنه) should replace him. Yet it was possible for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to have sent a number of leaders for a single expedition; however, he (ﷺ) deemed that the proof was established upon a nation as soon as a single truthful person invited them to Islam.

12. During the Prophet’s lifetime, he would send envoys to convey commands to the governors of the various Muslim regions. It was not correct — and it did not occur — that any one of those governors should hesitate to apply or execute his commands, for he (ﷺ) only sent truthful envoys.

13. The way of the Caliphs and governors after the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ) was the same. The Muslims agreed that there should be a single Caliph, a single judge, and a single Imam. Therefore they chose Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) for the caliphate, who in turn chose ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), who commissioned a council to choose the Caliph after him, and they chose ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه).

14. When a judge or leader issues a ruling in any given matter, that ruling must be executed. In such cases, a single individual (i.e. the judge) is in reality relating from the Prophet (ﷺ), for his ruling is based on the Prophet’s legislations, either through an exact precedent or through derivation.

15. When ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) was leading an expedition to Syria, ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf (رضي الله عنه) advised him not to continue his journey, saying that there was an outbreak of a plague in Syria. He informed ‘Umar that the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade the inhabitants of a land wherein there was an outbreak of a plague from leaving that land and that he (ﷺ) also forbade outsiders from entering that land. Acting on this narration from ‘Abdur-Raḥmān, ‘Umar turned back and returned home.

16. Ja‘far ibn Muhammad related from his father that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) mentioned the adherents of the Magian religion, saying, “I do not know what I should do regarding their affair.” ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf said: “I bear witness that I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, ‘Deal with them in the same manner that you deal with the People of the Book.’” Up until that point, ‘Umar had not taken the *jizyah*⁵ from the Magians, for it was a tax that was specific to the People of the Book. But after he received new information from a single trustworthy and truthful narrator, he began to take that tax from them. Whereas Muslims must fight the disbelievers until they accept Islam, the *jizyah* may be accepted from the People of the Book. This ruling applies only to the People of the Book, and that is mentioned in this verse: ﴿... Among the people of the Scripture [Jews and Christians] until they pay the *jizyah*﴾.

Imam Shāfi‘ee then briefly discussed the occasions wherein ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) demanded an additional narrator, such as in the example of Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه). Imam Shāfi‘ee explained that that could have been precipitated by three causes:

16.a. That ‘Umar wanted to be careful and wanted to make sure that the narration was authentic.

⁵ *Jizyah*: A tax levied on the people of the Scripture, who are under the protection of a Muslim government.

16.b. That ‘Umar didn’t know who the narrator was.

16.c. That the narrator was not an upright and truthful person.

‘Umar’s stance vis-à-vis Abu Moosa was due to the first cause — he was simply being careful and cautious, for he knew Abu Moosa to be trustworthy and truthful. ‘Umar himself said to Abu Moosa, “Verily, I did not accuse you, but rather I feared that people would begin to ascribe false sayings to the Messenger of Allah.” This is further corroborated by the fact that, on other occasions, ‘Umar did accept the narration of a single narrator.

17. In Allah’s book, there is further proof to establish the validity of Aḥād narrations. Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿Verily, We sent Nooh [Noah] to his people﴾. Imam Shâfi‘ee then went on to mention those verses that speak of Prophets Ibrâheem, Ismâ‘eel, Hood, Sâleḥ, Shu‘ayb, Loot, and Muhammad (may Allah’s peace be upon them) — all being sent to their nations. This clearly indicates that one person is enough to establish a binding proof.

18. Sa‘eed ibn Jubayr stated: “I said to Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه), ‘Nawfan al-Bakâlee claims that Moosa, the companion of Khiḍr, is not the Moosa of the Children of Israel.’” Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said, “He has lied, the enemy of Allah. Ubay ibn Ka‘b said to me, ‘The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave us a sermon and then mentioned the hadith of Moosa and Khiḍr in such a way that proves Moosa (of the Children of Israel) to be the companion of Khiḍr.’” Ibn ‘Abbâs, a Companion of profound understanding and piety, accepted the narration of Ubay ibn Ka‘b (رضي الله عنه) from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

19. Ibn Jurayj related that Ṭâwoos informed him that he asked Ibn ‘Abbâs about two units of prayer after ‘Aṣr, and Ibn ‘Abbâs forbade him from performing them. Ṭâwoos said to him, “I will not abandon them.” Ibn ‘Abbâs recited to him,

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلًّا مُبِينًا﴾ ﴿٣٦﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٣٦)

﴿It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed in plain error.﴾ (Qur'an 33: 36)

Here, Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) reminded Ṭāwoos that the proof was established in this issue, first because the Messenger (ﷺ) decreed a command, and second, because he was relating that command from him (ﷺ). Furthermore, Ṭāwoos did not then say, "This is your narration and I do not accept it to be from the Prophet (ﷺ) because it is possible that you have forgotten."

20. Abu Shurayḥ al-Ka'bee related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said during the year of Makkah's conquest: «When one's own (family member) has been murdered, he may choose between the best of two choices: if he pleases, he may take the blood money, or if he pleases, he may choose for the murderer to be executed.» Abu Ḥaneefah ibn Simâk ibn al-Faḍl ash-Shihâbee stated, "I said to Ibn Abi Dhayb, "Do you rule according to this (narration), O Abu Ḥârith?" He struck me on the chest and shouted at me with emotion, reproaching me, and saying, 'I relate to you from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), yet you say: 'Do you rule according to this narration?' Yes I do rule by it, for that is compulsory upon me and upon all who hear it. Indeed, Allah chose Muhammad (ﷺ) over all other people, and He (ﷻ) guided them through him and at his hands... So it is obligatory for all creation to follow him, either through voluntary obedience or through subjugation and humiliation. A Muslim has no way out from that.' He continued to talk for so long that I was hoping for his silence (from the shame that I felt)." There are many more hadiths that

confirm the validity of Aḥād narrations, but the few that we mentioned are enough to serve our purpose here.

21. Imam Shâfi‘ee then said that he knew of no dissent among Islamic jurists regarding the validity of Aḥād narrations. He then briefly mentioned a few reasons why a scholar might not apply a narration that is presented before him. He said that the scholar must be excused in those instances, because he perhaps is aware of a hadith that is in conflict with the new one, because the narrator might not have a strong enough memory, because the narrator is accused of not fulfilling the requisite qualities of an upright and truthful narrator, or because the hadith bears two interpretations. One should not think that a scholar would abandon applying a hadith without a valid interpretation or excuse. And Allah knows best.

Thus did Imam Shâfi‘ee (may Allah have mercy on him) establish irrefutable proofs from the Qur’an, the Sunnah, the practice of the Companions, the Tâbi‘een, those who came after the Tâbi‘een, and Muslim jurists — all showing that it is compulsory upon Muslims to accept and apply Aḥād narrations.

CHAPTER TEN

The Sunnah Vis-à-vis the Orientalists

Historical overview of the Orientalists and their Objectives

*W*hen the armies of the Crusaders attacked Muslim lands, they were driven by two motives:

First, they were driven by religious fanaticism, for the men of the church invented wicked lies against the Muslims, thus inviting faithful Christians to cleanse the lands of their savior from the hands of the ‘disbelievers’ (meaning the Muslims). Therefore, the majority of combatants in the Army of the Crusaders were those who were prompted by religious zeal to leave their homes, those who volunteered to go forth in the path of death — which continued foray after foray, attack after attack, and battle after battle.

Second, political and colonial ambitions inspired the kings of Europe to look outward to the lands of the Muslims, from where news came of unparalleled peace, civilization, and advancement. They also heard much of the treasures, factories, and fertile land that were in the hands of Muslims. They led their armies in the name of Christ, but in their souls was no more than the desire to occupy, to conquer, and to gain sole possession of the treasures and blessings that the Muslims

had. By the will of Allah, those armies were in the end unsuccessful, even after two centuries of continuous battle. The Crusaders returned to their lands with sad hearts and with distress written on their foreheads. However, they did return with something from the light of Islam — in terms of knowledge — and in their hands they did bring back some of the civilization that their own countries were deprived of for so long. Though many among them were satisfied with these results, the kings and rulers remained intent upon conquering the lands that they fought so long and hard to gain. But upon reflection, and after seeing that a complete military victory was virtually impossible, they decided to study the beliefs and affairs of the Muslims, in preparation for an intellectual and moral battle. And until recently, the Orientalists were made up of men from the Christian and Jewish faiths, who without a doubt, were the most staunch of enemies against Islam, though a group of their scholars has always been just and has always studied Islam in a manner that can overall be described as impartial and fair. Nonetheless, most of them have researched Islam in order to distort its beliefs as well as its beauty. Others interested in studying Islam were those who were also interested in colonialism and in poisoning the minds of Muslims with so-called progress and civilization. In fact, most research about Islam that is taken up by non-Muslims is characterized by the following traits:

1. An unjust understanding of Islam and all that is connected to it in terms of its goals and aims.
2. An unjust and unbalanced view of Muslims scholars, jurists, and leaders.
3. The depiction of the Muslim civilization — especially the first generation — as being one that is backwards and one whose leaders strive to destroy individualism.
4. A distorted depiction of Muslim civilization in an attempt to ridicule and belittle it.

5. A presentation of Islam that indicates ignorance on the part of the researcher, who wants to judge Islam based on the manners and customs of his own country.
6. A subordination of revealed text to the beliefs and desires of the researcher.
7. A distortion of revealed texts, through which the researcher attempts to mar the principles of Islam.
8. A despotic and capricious way of studying history, for the non-Muslim researcher will arbitrarily authenticate that which is related by Ad-Dumayri, in *al-Ḥayawân*, while he will reject what is related by Mâlik in *al-Muwattâ'*. Hence the standard by which they judge is not the truth, but rather their own desires.

Encouraged by their governments and able to dedicate themselves wholly to the task, Orientalists were able to study all branches of knowledge that are related to Islam — history, fiqh, tafseer, Hadith, and so forth. Furthermore, they were furnished with an ample supply of reference books for each branch of knowledge, which enabled them to give an impression of profound scholarship and erudition. Meanwhile, Muslim scholars, who live today in societies that are stable neither in the political sense nor in the economic sense, are not able to devote themselves to the extent that the Orientalists have devoted themselves, and as a result, the books of the Orientalists are considered to be trustworthy reference books to many of our own intellectuals, some of whom have been deceived by their works, considering them to be written by honest seekers of the truth. Thus it is that our own intellectuals run after the views and opinions that are related by non-Muslim researchers; some Muslim intellectuals take pride in the fact that they take from the views of the Orientalists and attempt to give Islam a new framework, though in reality they are deviating from the true teachings of Islam. A prime example of Muslim thinkers who follow the Orientalist school is Ahmad Ameen, author of *Fajr al-Islâm*.

A Summary of Goldziher's attacks against the Sunnah

Here, we discuss the stance taken by the Orientalists vis-à-vis the Sunnah in terms of the doubts they have raised regarding it. Perhaps the most dangerous of the Orientalists as well as the most despicable in this regard is the Jewish Orientalist, Ignaz Goldziher. With his extensive knowledge of Arabic sources, he is considered to be the 'Shaykh' of Orientalists in recent generations. His books and works continue to be considered as important reference books for the Orientalists of today. In an unofficial manner, Ahmad Ameen has related to us much of his ideas and beliefs in *Fajr al-Islâm*. Dr. 'Ali Ḥasan 'Abdul-Qâdir has also related many of Goldziher's views in his book, *Nadhrah 'Âmâ fee Târeekh al-Fiqh al-Islâmi*.

In this section, we will first relate some of Goldziher's views, at least those that are directly related to the subject, and then we will move on to answer his claims one at a time. A more detailed refutation of his views, however, would fill up the pages of an entire volume, so I leave that task for another occasion, hoping that Allah (ﷻ) prolongs my life to the extent that I may fulfill that duty.

Dr. 'Ali Ḥasan 'Abdul-Qâdir relates that Goldziher claims: "It is not correct to say that the greater part of hadith literature was brought about in the first generation of Islam, the generation of infancy. Instead, the greater part of hadith literature was the result of the efforts taken up by Muslims in the era of growth (i.e. the following generations of Islam)."¹

¹ Due to fact that Goldziher, like the other Orientalists, wrote not in Arabic but in a European language, the words in this 'quote', and the others like it in this book, are not his own, but the translator's rendition of the words of the=

Here Goldziher expresses his views in more detail, saying that the era of growth was the period of great strife between the Umawiyeen rulers and the righteous scholars, who occupied themselves with the gathering of hadith and the Sunnah. Because the narrations they had did not help them in their aims and goals, they began to invent hadiths that, at least according to them, did not contradict with the spirit of Islam. They justified this to their consciences, feeling that through their actions they were fighting polytheism and despotism. They were promoting the cause of the enemies of the rulers, the 'Ulwiyoon, and so the majority of fabrications in the early stages were directed to the praise of the Prophet's family. Thus they were indirectly attacking the Umawiyeen...

The matter did not rest there, for the ruling government did not remain silent when faced with invented fabrications, fabrications that were meant to bring them down. They too fabricated narrations that were in accordance with their views. Basically, they resorted to the same tactics that were used by their enemies. Mu'âwiyah said to Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah, 'Do not be negligent in cursing 'Ali, nor in asking for mercy to be granted to 'Uthmân. Also, curse the companions of 'Ali and strive to eradicate their hadiths. On the other hand, praise 'Uthmân and his family, improve relations with them, and listen to their sayings.' Upon this foundation, the hadiths of the Umawiyeen were established against 'Ali. The Umawiyeen and their followers had no qualms about fabricating hadiths that were in accordance with their whims and desires.

Relying on their cunning natures, the Umawiyeen used the likes of Imam Az-Zuhri to further their objectives of fabricating

=Arab scholar who had originally rendered the meaning of the German-language text into Arabic. (Editor)

hadiths. During the days of Ibn az-Zubayr's trial, 'Abdul-Mâlik ibn Mirwân forbade the people from making pilgrimage and he built the Dome of the Rock in the Aqsa Mosque, so that people would make pilgrimage to it instead of to the Ka'bah. He wanted to compel people to do this based on religious beliefs. To further those aims, he found that Imam Az-Zuhri, a man of great repute in the Muslim nation, was prepared to fabricate hadiths for him. One such hadith was the following: 'Journeys must not specifically be made except to three mosques — this Mosque of mine, the inviolable Mosque, and al-Aqsâ Mosque.'² Another example is the hadith, 'Prayer in al-Aqsâ Mosque is equivalent to 1000 prayers elsewhere.' What proves these hadiths to be fabricated by Az-Zuhri is the fact that he was a friend of 'Abdul-Mâlik and that he used to visit him frequently. Furthermore, those hadiths that extol the virtues of al-Aqsâ Mosque are related by way of Az-Zuhri only.

The Umawiyoon did not convince the likes of Az-Zuhri to help them through material benefits and favors, but rather, simply through cleverness. Mu'ammir ibn Râshid related that al-Waleed ibn Ibrâheem al-Umawee went with a scroll to Az-Zuhri, demanding permission from him to promulgate hadiths found within that scroll in a manner that showed him to have heard them from Az-Zuhri. Az-Zuhri assented without much hesitation and said, 'And who is able to inform you of them other than I?' Hence the Umawee was able to relate the hadith found in that scroll and to ascribe what he related to Az-Zuhri. This is in harmony with what we related earlier in terms of the examples that showed Az-Zuhri to be prepared to fulfill the wishes of the ruling house. His piety, at times, made him have doubts about the honor of his actions, which is exemplified by this saying of his that is related by Mu'ammir, "Those rulers have forced us to

² Reported by Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 376, hadith no. 1115 and Muslim, vol. 7, p. 159, hadith no. 2475.

write hadiths.” This shows that Az-Zuhri was prepared to acquiesce and to lend support to the government by stamping his reputed name on their false fabrications. Az-Zuhri was not scornful of the government; rather, he viewed that it was necessary to work side-by-side with the government. He frequented the castle of the ruler and he would often walk in his retinue. Indeed he was even to be found in the retinue of Al-Ḥajjāj, that most reprehensible man. Hishām appointed him as teacher to his heir apparent. And during the era of Yazeed the Second, he accepted the position of judgeship. Under the circumstances, he turned a blind eye to the foibles and wrongs of the Umawiyeen, and was therefore not one who resisted unjust rulers. In contrast to him a man like ash-Sha‘bee wore colored clothing and played in the streets with children in order not to be given the position of judgeship; he even fought against Al-Ḥajjāj along with the help of Ibn al-Ash‘ath. This axiom is established among scholars: whoever takes on the position of being a judge has been slaughtered without the use of a knife. But Az-Zuhri did not stop at inventing hadiths for the political benefit of the ruling house; instead, he went beyond that to affairs of worship, opposing any opinion that was not held by the inhabitants of Madinah. The Friday sermon consisted of two separate sermons, the leaders would preach while in a standing position, and the ‘Eid sermon used to follow the prayer. The Umawiyoon changed all of that. For example, based on a narration they had with them, they claimed that the Messenger (ﷺ) used to give a sermon while in a seated to position.

A similar situation occurred when Mu‘āwiyah increased the number of steps of the pulpit. The Umawiyoon did not limit themselves to fabricating hadiths that were in their favor, but they also worked to conceal or to raise doubts about those hadiths that did not correspond to their own views. The same happened with the next set of rulers, for many hadiths that were in favor of the Umawiyeen faded away with the advent of the ‘Abbāsiyeen. The means they used

to create doubts in certain narrations was the ostensible claim of criticizing narrators for the sake of the truth and in order to distinguish between the trustworthy and untrustworthy narrator. There are many examples to support this. 'Āsim ibn Nabeel said, 'I have not seen Şâleḥ lie in any matter to the degree that he lied about hadiths.' They were aided in this quest by the narration, 'Hadiths related from me will increase, and so whoever relates to you a hadith, compare it to Allah's book. Whatever is in accordance with it, then it is from me, regardless of whether I have said it or not.'

There are even many supposedly authentic narrations that are clearly fabricated. For example, Muslim related that the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered for dogs to be killed except for the dog that helps its master in hunting and the dog that helps the shepherd with his flock. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) related that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) added 'the dog that works in the field.' Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said, 'Indeed, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) had a field that he would use for planting.' Ibn 'Umar's comment points to what the Muḥaddith may do based on personal motives.

Other than narrations that were related verbally, there appeared written scrolls that indicated the wishes or commands of the Messenger (ﷺ). It is quite unfortunate that such scrolls are not scrutinized in order to ascertain their authenticity. For example, there is nothing authentically related (i.e. verbally) regarding how much zakât should be paid for the ownership of young and old cows. And so to specify those amounts, the people resorted to written scrolls that are ascribed to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

These views, which were originated by Goldziher, have dominated Orientalist circles in the last century.

In Response to Goldziher's claims

The diligence of the Companions to preserve the authentic Sunnah, the same diligence shown by the next two generations, the prodigious efforts of the Imams of hadith to gather the authentic Sunnah and purify it from distortion and fabrication, and the thorough research of the scholars to follow up on the biographies of liars and fabricators in order to expose their plots — if you were to reflect upon all of those labors, you would come to know that the Orientalists are speaking from their imagination, making up lies as they go along in order to distort the truth and satisfy their desires.

In this upcoming section, we will discuss in brief, and in detail when necessary, each of the views of the Orientalists vis-à-vis the Sunnah, as exemplified by the proclamations of Goldziher. We call upon the reader not to be blinded by the biased claims of the Orientalists, for through the mention of incontrovertible proofs, we will show those claims to be false.

Were most hadiths fabricated as a result of progress among the Muslims?

Goldziher claimed that the greater portion of hadith literature did not originate in the first generation of Islam, but rather through progress, both political and social, in the latter part of the first and second centuries. I cannot even begin to fathom how he had the temerity to make that claim when all established authentic narrations disprove it. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died only after the complete building and structure of Islam was erected, which consisted of what was revealed to him in terms of the Qur'an and in terms of the methods and the legislations that make up his Sunnah. Just before he

died, he (ﷺ) said, «I have left with you two matters, and you will not go astray as long as you adhere to them — Allah's book and my Sunnah.»³ It is also well-known that among the last verses revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) was this verse:

﴿... الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَمَّتْ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا...﴾
 (سورة المائدة: ٣)

«... This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion...»

(*Qur'an* 5: 3)

When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, Islam had grown to its perfection and was not, as Goldziher claims, in its stage of infancy. In the early years after the Prophet's death, Muslims faced new issues and dilemmas that were not specifically mentioned in the Qur'an or Sunnah; in these instances, they derived and deduced, finding rulings for new matters and new situations, and in doing so, they did not go outside of the teachings of Islam. To perceive the extent of the completeness of Islam in the first generation, you simply have to reflect upon how 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) had full control over the kingdoms of Kisrah and Qaysar, kingdoms that were already extremely well developed and civilized. Yet 'Umar was able to rule over those kingdoms and was able to deal justly among its citizens in the most comprehensive and just of ways, more so than the way in which the previous two rulers governed them. If Islam at that stage was indeed in its early stages of infancy, how then was 'Umar able to rule over that vast dominion and to establish a system that provided both safety and happiness to its citizens?

³ Reported by At-Tirmidhi, vol. 2, p. 308, hadith no. 2680; Aṭ-Ṭabarāni and Al-Ḥākim. Shaykh al-Albāni said, it is authentic. See *Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥah*, vol. 4, p. 355.

Furthermore, a just observer will notice that the Muslims of various lands worshipped in the same manner and lived under the same set of laws — at a societal level, at the level of the family, and at the individual level. They were one, united in their worship, in their dealings, and in their beliefs — and even in their customs for the most part. Such results could not have come about had the Arabs not set out from the Arabian Peninsula with a truly complete and perfect system and set of laws. Had the greater part of hadith literature been the result of progress in the second century, it would have been impossible for the worship of Muslims in Northern Africa to be the same as the worship of Muslims in southern China, because the environment and culture of the two areas are so different. How then is it that the worship, the laws, and the manners of both geographical areas, as well as all other areas that were inhabited by Muslims, were the same?

The number of schools of jurisprudence did increase after the first century, but that was because the Companions sometimes differed in their understanding of Allah's Book and the Prophet's Sunnah. One will not find an opinion that surfaced in the second or third century except that that opinion was previously held by a Companion or at least by a *Tâbi'ee*. And that is much before the progress in religion that is claimed to have come about by Goldziher. This alone should serve to destroy Goldziher's claim from its root.

The Umawiyoon and Islam

Goldziher bases all of his ideas upon the supposed discord and enmity that existed between the Umawiyoon and the pious scholars. He depicts the Umawiyoon government as a worldly group that was only interested in conquering and colonizing. He claims that they were an ignorant lot that had no ties whatsoever with the teachings

and manners of Islam. This is a distortion of reality and is disproved by authentic historical accounts. First of all, the accounts we do have about that government are related to us by the next government, the ‘Abbâsiyoon, who were their bitter enemies. The narrators of the ‘Abbâsiyoon were able to add any fabrication that they wanted because it was their books that replaced the books of the Umawiyoon. So because of a hatred that the ‘Abbâsiyoon and the Shi‘ah harbored against the Umawiyoon, the historian must be very careful in judging narrations and he must scrutinize the books of history to glean only authentic narrations that relate to the period of the Umawiyoon, or to any other period for that matter.

In spite of the political situation that we have just outlined, there still remains a great deal of historical narrative that disproves the claims of Goldziher. In his *Tabaqât*, Ibn Sa‘d relates many narrations that describe the piety and worship of ‘Abdul-Mâlik before he became Caliph; he was found in the mosque so often that he was nicknamed “the Pigeon of the Mosque.” Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) was asked, “When the Messenger of Allah’s Companions are all gone, whom should we ask?” He said, “Ask this young man,” and he was pointing to ‘Abdul-Mâlik. In our discussion of Imam Az-Zuhri, you will see that ‘Abdul-Mâlik was eager to guide scholars and students of knowledge to follow authentic narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ). One day he said to Az-Zuhri, who at the time was a young man, “Go to the Anşâr, for you will find a great deal of knowledge with them.” Al-Waleed ibn ‘Abdul-Mâlik was of a similar character, for many of the Mosques still known today were built during his era. We can say the same for the rest of the Caliphs who ruled during the Umawiyoon period, with the exception of Yazeed ibn Mu‘âwiyah, for it appears that he had deviated, at least to a certain extent, from the manners of the Sharia on a personal level. Nonetheless, his foes among ‘Abbâsiyoon and Shi‘ah narrators invented many lies about him. In some narrations, it is even claimed that Al-Waleed threw down

Allah's Book and tore it up. Any unbiased and just person that reads such narrations will not doubt that they are fabricated lies.

History clearly relates the many victories of the Umawiyoon armies, and we find that the dominion of Muslims did not increase significantly after the Umawee period. The expansion that occurred during that period was, to a great extent, because of the bravery shown by the Umawee rulers, who would send their own children as leaders of the conquering armies that went forth to make Allah's Word supreme and to spread His Sharia. One must ask, then, why would the scholars show enmity to them? And why is it claimed that they did not understand Islam?

Goldziher's claims rest on the supposition that there was great enmity between the Umawiyoon and the righteous scholars, and that supposition itself has no basis in the truth. Yes, it is true that there was enmity between the Umawiyoon and the leaders of the Khawârij as well as the 'Alawiyoon, but members of those groups were not the scholars who rose to the task of gathering and reporting the authentic Sunnah. The scholars who gathered and recorded the Sunnah were the likes of Sa'eed ibn al-Musayib, Abu Bakr ibn 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn al-Hârith ibn Hishâm al-Makhzoomi, 'Ubaydullâh ibn 'Abdullâh ibn 'Utbah, Sâlim Mawlâ 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar, Nâfay' Mawlâ ibn 'Umar, Sulaymân ibn Yasâr, Al-Qâsim ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, Imam Az-Zuhri, 'Aṭâ', Ash-Sha'bee, 'Iqamah, Al-Ḥasan al-Başree, and others from the Imams of hadith. These scholars did not enter into battles with the Umawiyeen, not at a military level, and certainly not at an intellectual or a religious level. None of them had any disputes with the government, with the exception, perhaps, of Sa'eed ibn al-Musayib, who took issue with 'Abdul-Mâlik, but the reasons for that are all too well-known. 'Abdul-Mâlik wanted him to pledge allegiance to his son Al-Waleed and then to Sulaymân. Abu Sa'eed refused, saying, "Indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

prohibited two pledges of allegiance at the same time.” This resulted in a rupture between the two. The only other time that a similar situation occurred was during the era of Al-Ḥajjāj.⁴ Some scholars during his era found great fault with him not because he was wicked or misguided, but because of his severity in dealing with those who rebelled against the Umawee government. How can it be claimed that he was against the teachings of Islam, when it was he who had the honor of having placed vowel markers on the words of the Qur’an, an action that shows his concern for preserving Allah’s Book, which could only have resulted from a deep-rooted love of the religion.

So Goldziher was correct in saying that the Umawiyoon had a dispute, but their dispute was with the leaders of the Khawârij and the ‘Ulwiyoon, and not with the scholars who strove to preserve and disseminate and purify the authentic Sunnah. If Goldziher was referring to the latter group — which consisted of the likes of ‘Aḫā’, Nâfai’, Sa‘eed, and Al-Ḥasan — then we know for sure that he was lying and that his claims are disproved by all historical accounts.

Were the scholars of Madinah fabricators?

In his books *Muslim Studies* and *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Goldziher makes an even stranger claim than before — that because there was enmity between the Umawiyoon and the scholars of Madinah, the latter group is the first to have fabricated narrations, using them to fight the Umawiyoon. An important lesson for Goldziher is that a liar must at the very least make his lies seem plausible. If the scholars of Madinah fabricated many narrations, we must ask, were they the only scholars of Islam

⁴ Al-Ḥajjāj served as Governor of Iraq during the reigns of ‘Abdul-Malik and Al-Waleed. (Editor)

during that era? Were there not scholars in Makkah, Damascus, Kufa, Basra, Egypt, and all other Islamic provinces? During that era, Makkah boasted the likes of 'Aṭā', Ṭâwoos, Mujâhid, 'Amru ibn Deenâr, Ibn Jurayj, and Ibn 'Uyainah. Basra was inhabited by the likes of Al-Ḥasan, Ibn Seereen, Muslim ibn Yasâr, Abu ash-Sha'thâ', Ayyoob as-Sikhtiyâni, and Miṭraf ibn 'Abdullâh ibn ash-Shukhayr. All of these eminent scholars lived in Kufa — 'Iqimah, Al-Aswad, 'Amru ibn Sharahbeel, Masrooq ibn al-Ajda', 'Ubaydah as-Silmânee, Suwayd ibn Ghafilah, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Utbah ibn Mas'ood, 'Amru ibn Maymoon, Ibraheem an-Nakha'ee, 'Âmir ash-Sha'bee, Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, and Al-Qâsim ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Abdullâh ibn Mas'ood. The following scholars lived in Syria during that period — Abu Idrees al-Khoolâni, Qabeeṣah ibn Dhu'ayb, Sulaymân ibn Ḥabeeb, Khâlîd ibn Mai'dân, 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Ghanam al-Asha'ree, 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Jubayr, and Makḥool. Egypt boasted the likes of Yazeed ibn Abi Ḥabeeb, Bukayr ibn 'Abdullâh al-Ashajj, 'Amru ibn al-Ḥârith, Al-Layth ibn Sa'd, and 'Ubaydallah ibn Abi Ja'far. Miṭraf, and other eminent scholars inhabited Yemen.

These were all eminent scholars during the era of the Umawiyeen; is it possible that they colluded with the scholars of Madinah in fabricating so many hadiths? And how did that come to pass? And where was the conference held in which they agreed to work together? And if they did not conspire with the scholars of Madinah — and it is impossible that they did — how is it possible that they silently acquiesced to spreading their fabricated hadiths? Where is it written in history books that they disapproved of those scholars? On the contrary, we find in all authentically related historical narrations that the scholars of the various Islamic provinces agreed and acknowledged that the hadiths of the Arabian Peninsula were the most authentic of all. 'Abdul-Mâlik acknowledged the superiority of scholars in Madinah when he advised Imam Az-Zuhri

to go to the district of the Anṣâr in order to learn from them. How is it possible that the scholars acknowledged the superiority of scholars from Madinah if it were a centre of hadith fabrication and invention? Goldziher's claims are therefore weak and baseless; in making them, he was obviously driven by blind desire, and not a desire to seek out the truth.

Using the disagreement that occurred between 'Abdul-Mâlik and Sa'eed ibn al-Musayib to the best of his advantage, Goldziher took a huge jump by claiming that all of the scholars of Madinah were liars; however, he did not mention Sa'eed's role in the origination of fabrications. If there were a movement in Madinah that strove to fabricate narrations, he would surely have been the leader of that movement — he was one of Madinah's most respected scholars. Yet Goldziher altogether neglects to mention his role. Was Goldziher accusing him of fabricating narrations as he had previously accused Az-Zuhri? He was not so bold as to do that, for he did not find a single narration, not even a fabricated one, which would help to further that claim. But if Goldziher absolved Sa'eed from any involvement in the invention of fabrications, how did he justify that, for we know that, according to Goldziher's claim, Sa'eed was the leader of the righteous scholars who rebelled against the Umawiyoon? When we analyze and dissect his claims and arguments, we find that the foundation of those claims crumbles ever so easily.

The true scholars of Islam searched out for fabricators and liars and then gave them the label of wrongdoers. Goldziher gave those same wrongdoers the title of "the righteous scholars". He then claimed that they inhabited Madinah, but in reality, the truly righteous scholars, those who really took on qualities of knowledge, piety, and truthfulness regarding the Sharia, were the ones who inhabited Madinah.

Did our scholars sanction lying in order to protect the religion?

Goldziher alleges:

“...To the period of great strife between the Umawiyeen rulers and the righteous scholars, who occupied themselves with the gathering of hadith and of the Sunnah. Because the narrations they had did not help them in their aims and goals, they began to invent hadiths that, at least according to them, did not contradict the spirit of Islam. They justified this to their consciences, feeling that, through their deeds, they were fighting polytheism and despotism.”

This is how Goldziher justified not only his claim but also their supposed fabrications. This is the claim of a man who never reached the higher qualities attained by our distinguished scholars, scholars who never lied even in insignificant matters, scholars who feared Allah (ﷻ) in the minute details of everyday life, never mind important issues pertaining to the Religion. So strict was their view regarding liars that some scholars ruled that a fabricator is a disbeliever, that he should be killed, and that his repentance is not accepted. We might find an excuse for Goldziher by saying that when a man habitually lies, he thinks that all other people are greater liars than he; and the thief thinks that all people are thieves just as he is one. Otherwise, who in their right mind would say that one such as Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayib would lie regarding the Prophet’s Sunnah? He was tortured and humiliated because he was not willing to make two pledges of allegiance at the same time; his reasoning was that he was not willing to go against the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Would he then permit himself to lie about the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)? Anyone of sound reason will disregard and reject Goldziher’s claims immediately upon hearing them.

How did fabrications begin?

Goldziher asserts,

“They were promoting the cause of the enemies of the rulers, the ‘Alawiyyoon, and so the majority of fabrications in the early stages were directed to the praise of the Prophet’s family. Thus they were indirectly attacking the Umawiyyoon...”

Now the matter changes from fabricating hadiths in order to protect the Religion to fabricating hadiths in order to attack the Umawiyyoon. Goldziher claimed that it was our pious scholars who fabricated hadiths that extolled the good qualities of the Prophet’s family. It is true that Allah (ﷻ) praised certain Companions in His Noble Book and that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) praised ‘Ali (ﷺ) just as he praised Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, Ṭalḥah, ‘Â’ishah, Az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them), and others like them from the more distinguished Companions. There is, without a doubt, a great portion of hadiths in which many distinguished Companions are praised, and among them were the Prophet’s family. However, the Shi‘ah added to those narrations, inventing false ones that extolled the virtues of the Prophet’s family and that inveighed against the Umawiyyoon and their supporters. The scholars of the Sunnah, who exposed all of their lies, held such fabricators at bay. It was not, therefore, the righteous scholars from the inhabitants of Madinah who invented hadiths that extolled the virtues of the Prophet’s family; rather, the role of the righteous scholars in this affair was to fight the movement of fabrication, to the extent that Ibn Seereen said: “They would not ask about the chain (of narrators), but when the Discord occurred, they said, ‘Name to us your men.’ They would see which ones were from the people of the Sunnah and accept their hadith. And they would see which of them were from the people of innovation and reject their hadith.”

If Goldziher was sincere in wanting to know who the people of innovation were according to the people of the Sunnah, he should have referred to the same Arabic reference books that he distorted and related from. He would quickly have ascertained that the people of innovation were the Shi'ah and the Khawârij and those who followed their way. It does not make sense that our scholars should first fight those groups who fabricated hadiths in which the virtues of the Prophet's family were extolled, and then do the same evil deed with the exact same intention.

If they were prepared from the very beginning to fabricate hadiths, they should not have resisted the movement of the Shi'ah; rather, they should have cooperated with them since their goal was one and the same. Then why did they not do so? It was a Shi'ah scholar, Ibn Abi al-Hadeed, who himself admitted that the Shi'ah were the first to fabricate hadiths, doing so because they wanted to raise the status of the Prophet's family. Then comes Goldziher with the temerity and the willingness to lie and distort, ascribing clear falsehood to the righteous scholars of Madinah. The most wicked and deviant of minds could not have distorted historical facts in a more twisted manner than did Goldziher.

Did the Umawee government implicate itself in the fabrication of hadiths?

Goldziher continues,

“The matter did not rest there, for the ruling government did not remain silent when faced with invented fabrications — fabrications that were meant to bring them down, but they themselves also fabricated narrations that were in accordance with their views. Basically, they resorted to the same tactics that were used by their enemies.”

That the Umawee government fabricated hadiths in order to disseminate its views is a recent claim, existing for the first time in the imagination of Goldziher. Where are those hadiths that the Umawee government fabricated? Our scholars relate every single hadith with its chain of narrators, so where are the authentic and preserved hadiths in whose chains are found the likes of ‘Abdul-Mâlik, Yazeed, or Al-Waleed, or the likes of one of their governors, such as Al-Hajjâj and Khâlîd ibn ‘Abdullâh al-Qasaree? And why have their narrations been lost in the books of Sunnah? If the Umawee government did not fabricate, but only incited others to fabricate, what is the proof to establish even that claim?

Did Mu‘âwiyah implicate himself in the invention or spreading of fabrications?

Goldziher relates the following:

“Mu‘âwiyah said to Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah, ‘Do not be negligent in cursing ‘Ali, nor in asking for mercy to be granted to ‘Uthmân. Also, curse the companions of ‘Ali and strive to eradicate their hadiths. On the other hand, praise ‘Uthmân and his family, improve relations with them, and listen to their sayings.’ Upon this foundation, the hadith of the Umawiyeen were established against ‘Ali.”

Let us analyze this proof and see whether it works for Goldziher or against him. Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ) said to one of his followers, “Oppose the companions of ‘Ali (ﷺ) ... and improve relations with [the companions of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ)].” In what way does this statement prove that he fabricated hadiths? Does not that occur in every government, in terms of how it deals with its supporters and how it deals with its opponents? But what does that have to do with the fabrication of hadith? And why did we not find Mu‘âwiyah saying, “Do not be negligent in fabricating hadiths

against ‘Ali (ﷺ) and for ‘Uthmân (ﷺ)?” Had Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ) said that, it would have been a reasonable proof to support Goldziher’s claim. But, of course, he never said that.

Goldziher claims that Mu‘âwiyah said, “Curse the companions of ‘Ali and strive to eradicate their hadiths.” All those who give Goldziher and other Orientalists like him the benefit of the doubt must learn a lesson from this example. The correct quotation as related by Aṭ-Ṭabari is as follows, “Be diligent in censuring the companions of ‘Ali and keeping them at a distance.” Observe how this Orientalist distorted the quotation, adding in the words, “eradicate their hadiths.” The word hadith is not even found in the original text. Even if it were found in the text and even if Goldziher had not made the statement up, hadith would be referring to their every day speech and conversation, and not to the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

Did the Umawiyoon use Az-Zuhri to fabricate hadiths?

Goldziher goes on to say:

“The Umawiyoon and their followers had no scruples about fabricating hadiths that were in accordance with their whims and desires. Relying on their cunning natures, the Umawiyeen used the likes of Imam Az-Zuhri to further their objectives of fabricating hadith.”

We feel it our responsibility here to expose Goldziher’s plot to stain the character of the most distinguished of the Imams of the Sunnah during his era — moreover, of the first to have recorded the Sunnah from among the Tâbi‘oon. There was a clear plan behind Goldziher’s attack upon the foundations of the Sunnah, for he attacked the most prolific of narrators among the Companions, Abu

Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه); after attacking the honor of that distinguished Companion, he went on to attack the foundation of the Sunnah during the era of the Tâbi'oon — Imam Az-Zuhri. In spite of Goldziher's plots, the truth must overcome falsehood. No matter for how long falsehood is able to find shade or sanctuary, it will eventually be defeated.

Imam Az-Zuhri and his status in history

Before I begin to disprove Goldziher's accusations against Imam Az-Zuhri, it is appropriate to first mention the latter's biography, the opinions that the scholars held concerning him, and his true status in Muslim history. For if we relate what Goldziher claims, we must also, in all justice, relate the true picture of Imam Zuhri's life, of his scholarly achievements, and of his contribution to the Muslim Nation.

His name, birth, and life

He was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn 'Ubaydullâh ibn 'Abdullâh ibn Shihâb ibn 'Abdullâh ibn al-Ĥârith ibn Zuhrah al-Qurashee az-Zuhri. According to the most authentic report, he was born in the year 51 H. His father, Muslim ibn 'Ubaydullâh, participated with 'Abdullâh ibn az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) in his wars against the Umawiyeen. He died, leaving behind a young son who had neither wealth nor material possessions. Imam Az-Zuhri grew up as a poor orphan without anyone to raise him or to care for him, other than an older brother, whom history has mentioned nothing about.

Before all else, he betook himself to memorizing the Qur'an, a task which he completed in eighty nights, as is related by his nephew, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullâh ibn Muslim. Imam Az-Zuhri then went on to study under the tutelage of 'Abdullâh ibn Tha'lab, from whom he

learned the ancestry of his people. Next, he deemed it necessary to learn the rules of what is lawful and prohibited in Islam, as well as the narration of hadith. He traveled far and wide, learning from any Companion that he could meet, and he met with ten in total — among whom were Anas (ﷺ), Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ), Jâbir (ﷺ), and Sahl ibn Sa‘d (ﷺ). He then sat with the most distinguished Tâbi‘oon that were alive at the time: Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayib, ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, ‘Ubaydullâh ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Utbah ibn Mas‘ood, and Abu Bakr ibn ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn al-Ĥârith ibn Hishâm al-Makhzoomi, to mention a few. Of the above-mentioned scholars, he spent the most time with Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayib; he kept company with him for eight continuous years. He traveled often to Syria, the first time being when he was a young man during the caliphate of Mirwân. Then, after ‘Abdullâh ibn az-Zubayr (ﷺ) was killed, Az-Zuhri strengthened ties with ‘Abdul-Mâlik; he also had good ties with all the later Caliphs — Al-Waleed, Sulaymân, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez, Yazeed the Second, and Hishâm ibn ‘Abdul-Mâlik. He traveled often to Iraq and Egypt during his life, until finally, he died in a place called Udâmee in the year 124 H (according to the most authentic of narrations); he died at the age of 72 and requested to be buried at the side of the road, so that when people passed by, they could supplicate for him — may Allah be pleased with him and have mercy on him.

His most prominent traits and characteristics

He was short and had a short beard; he would dye his hair and beard with henna. He was eloquent, so much so, that it used to be said, “The eloquent ones from his era are three: Az-Zuhri, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez, and Ṭalhah ibn ‘Ubaydullâh.” His most prominent attribute was generosity; in that regard he was truly amazing. Al-Layth ibn Sa‘d said, “Ibn Shihâb (Az-Zuhri) was the most generous of men that you could ever meet. He would give to anyone that came

to him and asked for help, and if he had nothing left of his own with which to give, he would borrow from his friends. And if that was not possible, he would borrow from his slaves...”

It was well known during his time that he would provide honey and sugar cane for those who would pass by his road. On one occasion he went to a place that was inhabited by eighteen forlorn elderly women, who owned nothing and who had no one to help them. He borrowed enough money to provide each one of them with a young female servant.

If one of the people of hadith was bold enough to refuse an invitation to eat with him, Az-Zuhri would take an oath not to speak with that person for ten days unless he accepted his invitation. Among his many travels, he would go to outlying areas that were inhabited by Bedouins in order to teach them their religion and to furnish them with necessary food supplies. With such generosity, he would often incur huge amounts of debt, which would accumulate, but which would eventually be paid off by the Caliphs of Bani Umayyah or by his friends. He was blessed with two other notable characteristics, both of which enabled him to achieve fame and superiority over his contemporaries:

1. He was patient, toiling hard and long to seek out knowledge. He took advantage of any opportunity — and would actually seek out opportunities — to meet with scholars and record all that he heard from them. He would stay up all night long in order to revise and study the knowledge that he gained. Here is what some of his contemporaries had to say about him.

Abu az-Zinâd said, “We used to write down the lawful and the prohibited, but Ibn ash-Shihâb would write down all that he heard. And when he was in demand, I knew that he was the most knowledgeable of people.”

Ibrâheem ibn Sa‘d said: “I asked my father, ‘What was it that made Ibn Shihâb surpass all of you?’ He said, ‘He would come to gatherings from the front, and any elderly or young person that he met, he would ask; then he would go to the district of the Anşâr, and ask questions to every young man, elderly man, or elderly woman that he met.’”

Az-Zuhri was so eager and determined to gain knowledge that he would act as a servant to ‘Ubaydullâh ibn ‘Utbah ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood, simply in order to seek knowledge from him. He would fetch water for him and then stand at his door, waiting for him to come out. ‘Ubaydullâh would say to his servant, “Who is at the door?” She would say, “Your young servant, who is crippled (she was referring to Az-Zuhri, who walked with a slight limp).” She thought that he was his servant because she would often see him serving her master and waiting at his door. Contemporaries would say about him that when he would be alone in his house, he would surround himself with books, betake himself to them, remaining oblivious of all else. This would vex his wife to such a degree that she said one night, “By Allah, these books are more severe upon me than three competing wives.” It was his wont that when he would hear something new from some of his teachers, he would return to his house, wake up his servant, and say to her, “Listen to me — such and such person has related to me...” She would say in response, “What do I have to do with this hadith?” He would answer, “I know that you will not benefit by it, but I have just heard it and wish to revise it.”

2. He was blessed with an amazingly powerful and retentive memory. You have already heard his brother relate that he memorized the entire Qur’an in eighty nights. Al-Layth related that Az-Zuhri once said, “I have never stored knowledge in my heart and then afterwards forgotten it.” On another occasion, he said, “I have never had to repeat a hadith in order to revise it, and I never doubted

my memory except regarding a single hadith, about which I asked a Companion, who then related it to me, making me realize that it was exactly as I had memorized it.”

Ibn ‘Asâkir related in *at-Târeekh* that ‘Abdul-Mâlik once wrote to the people of Madinah, reproaching them. That letter was read to the people from the pulpit, and when they departed, a group betook themselves to the gathering of Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayib. He asked them, “What was in the letter? I wish to find one who could relate to me its contents.” One after another, his companions related to him what they remembered from the letter. Sa‘eed was not satisfied, and then finally Ibn Shihâb said, “Do you wish, O Abu Muhammad, to hear all that is in it?” He said, “Yes.” He recited the contents of the letter to him from beginning to end as if it was before him and he was reading it.

So famous did Az-Zuhri become for his memory, that the Caliph, Hishâm ibn ‘Abdul-Mâlik, wanted to test him. He asked him to dictate four hundred hadiths to his children. An entire month elapsed before Hishâm said, “O Abu Bakr, the book you dictated is lost.” He asked him to dictate it a second time, and after he did, Hishâm compared it to the first book and found them to be exactly the same, word for word, letter for letter.

Az-Zuhri would consume honey in great quantities and he would say, “It helps to strengthen the memory.” And he disliked eating sour apples and vinegar, reasoning that both of them cause forgetfulness. It is also related that he said, “Whomever it pleases to memorize hadith, then let him eat raisins.”

His fame and popularity

After Az-Zuhri’s many travels, prodigious efforts, and service to his teachers, and after people learned of his retentive memory, his trustworthiness, and his extensive knowledge, it is not surprising to

learn that his reputation spread throughout the lands. People came to him from all provinces of the Islamic state in order to learn hadith narrations from him.

Imam Mâlik said, “When Az-Zuhri would enter Madinah, not a single scholar would relate a hadith until he left. At that time, Madinah was blessed with scholars who were in their seventies and eighties, but instead of taking (knowledge) from them, people would give precedence to Ibn Shihâb, even though he was so young at the time.”

The scholars’ praise for him

Adh-Dhahabi related in his *Tadhkirah* and Al-Ĥâfidh ibn ‘Asâkir related in his *Târeekh* that Al-Layth ibn Sa’d said, “I have never met with a scholar who had as much extensive knowledge as did Az-Zuhri...”

Imam Mâlik related that when Ibn Shihâb (Az-Zuhri) once came to Madinah, he took Rabee‘ah by the hand and entered a house. When the time for ‘Aṣr drew near, Ibn Shihâb came out, saying, “I did not think that I would find a man in Madinah who is like ar-Rabee‘ah.” Rabee‘ah came out, saying, “I did not imagine that anyone had reached the level of knowledge that Ibn Shihâb has reached.”

After having accompanied Az-Zuhri for a long time, ‘Amru ibn Deenâr said, “By Allah, I have never met anyone who is like this man from the Quraysh (i.e., Az-Zuhri).”

His status in the Sunnah

In *al-Jarĥu wat-Ta‘deel*, Ibn Abi Ĥâtim related that ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez said one day to his companions, “Do you go to Ibn Shihâb?” They said, “Indeed we do.” He said, “Then continue to go

to him, for there is none today who has more knowledge of the Sunnah ... than he." Commenting on this statement, Mu'ammarr said, "Ḥasan and others of his caliber were alive at the time."

‘Alī ibn al-Madeeni said, "The knowledge of the trustworthy ones is with Az-Zuhri and ‘Amru ibn Deenâr, in the Ḥijâz; Qatâdah and Yaḥyâ ibn Abi Katheer, in Basra, and Abu Is-ḥâq al-‘Amash, in Kufa (i.e., the majority of authentic hadiths are found among these five)."

‘Amru ibn Deenâr said, "I have never seen anyone who was more precise and insightful in Hadith than Az-Zuhri."

Ayyoob said to Sufiyân ibn ‘Uyainah, "Beyond Az-Zuhri, I know of no one who is more acquainted with the knowledge of the people of the Ḥijâz than Yaḥyâ ibn Bukayr." Sufiyân said, "There was no one among the people who was more knowledgeable about the Sunnah than Az-Zuhri."

There are countless reports from the scholars which indicate that the person most knowledgeable about the Sunnah during that era was Imam Az-Zuhri. Perhaps this goes back to what Az-Zuhri himself said, in a narration that is related by Ibn ‘Asâkir, "I spent thirty-five or thirty-six years spreading the hadiths of the inhabitants of Syria to the Ḥijâz and the hadiths of the inhabitants of the Ḥijâz to Syria. Thereafter I could not find anyone who could give me the delight of hearing a hadith that I had not already heard before."

His contribution to the knowledge of the Sunnah

1. Charged with the task by ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez, Imam Az-Zuhri recorded the Sunnah. And as we have seen in an earlier chapter, Az-Zuhri was the first to have compiled the Sunnah in written form during his era. In *al-Fath*, Al-Ḥâfidh ibn Ḥajr said, "The first to have recorded knowledge was Ibn Shihâb (Az-Zuhri), a task that was undertaken at the behest of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez." Abu

Na'eem reported that Mâlik said, "The first to have recorded knowledge was Ibn Shihâb." These narrations and others like it all point to Imam Az-Zuhri as being the first to have gathered and recorded the Sunnah; thereafter, other scholars took up the work that he began.

2. There are certain narrations that no one had memorized save Imam Az-Zuhri, narrations that would have been lost had he not passed them down to others. Ibn 'Asâkir related from Al-Layth ibn Sa'd that Sa'eed ibn 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn 'Abdullâh ibn Jameel al-Jamhee said to him, "O Abu Hârith, had it not been for Ibn Shihâb, much of the Sunnah would have been lost." And Imam Muslim said, "There are seventy hadiths that no one relates save Az-Zuhri, not counting narrations that do not have a good chain."

3. He was the first to have directed the attention of people to the importance of chains. Before his time the chain of narration was not a matter that was examined in any detail. Mâlik said, "The first to have mentioned the chain of narrators was Ibn Shihâb." By this statement, Mâlik was perhaps referring to the region of Syria and Palestine; this is indicated by Ibn 'Asâkir's narration, in which Az-Zuhri said, "O people of Syria, why do I see that your hadiths do not have ... bridles (i.e. chains of narrators)?"

What the scholars of narrator criticism had to say about Az-Zuhri

Ibn Sa'd, the author of *at-Tabaqât*, said, "Az-Zuhri was trustworthy, with a great amount of knowledge, hadith, and narration. He was a *faqeeh* (expert in jurisprudence) and a gatherer of hadith."

An-Nasâ'i said, "The best chains related from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) are four: Az-Zuhri from 'Ali ibn al-Ḥasan from his father, from his grandfather; Az-Zuhri from 'Ubaydullâh from Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه)..." He then mentioned two other chains.

Imam Aḥmad said, “Az-Zuhri is the best of people with regard to his hadith and isnaḍ (chain of narration).” Ibn Ḥātim reported that Abu Zur’ah was asked, “Which chain is most authentic?” He said, “They are four — the first is Az-Zuhri from Sâlim, from his father...”

In *ath-Thiqât*, Ibn Ḥibbân said, “The Kunyâ of Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihâb ibn az-Zuhri al-Qurashee is Abu Bakr; he saw ten Companions. He had the best memory during his era and he was the best in relating texts of narrations. He was as much a faqeeh as he was a superior man, and many people related from him.”

Şâleḥ ibn Aḥmad said, “My father said to me, ‘Az-Zuhri is one of the inhabitants of Madinah and one of the Tâbi’oon; and he is trustworthy.” In the introduction of his *Şaḥeeḥ*, Imam Muslim said, “Who is depended upon as much as Az-Zuhri with his eminence and his many companions who are proficient retainers both of his hadith narrations and the hadith narrations of others...”

In *Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb*, Ibn Ḥajr said, “He is Al-Faqeeh, Abu Bakr, Al-Ḥâfīdh, Al-Madaneeh (ascribed to Madinah), one of the noble and distinguished Imams. He is the scholar of the Ḥijâz and Syria.” Adh-Dhahabi said, “...He is the Imam, the Ḥâfīdh, and the *Hujjah* (proof; i.e., the narrations he related are trusted and thus become a proof for all who hear them).”

Who related from him – Either directly or indirectly through others

Many people related from him, the most famous of them being Mâlik, Abu Ḥaneefah, ‘Aṭâ’ ibn Abi Rabâh, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez, Ibn ‘Uyainah, Al-Layth ibn Sa’d, Al-Awzâ’ee, and Ibn Jurayj. The two Shaykhs, Bukhari and Muslim, related chains in which he was one of the narrators. He is a narrator in the following books — *Sunan Abu Dâwood*, *Sunan an-Nasâ’i*, *Sunan at-Tirmidhi*,

Sunan Ibn Mâjah, al-Muwattâ' (of Imam Mâlik), *al-Musnad* of Imam Shâfi'ee, and *al-Musnad* of Imam Aḥmad. You will not find a single chapter in any hadith compilation that does not have a hadith, a narration, or an opinion of Az-Zuhri.

In refutation of the doubts raised about Imam Az-Zuhri

Such is Imam Az-Zuhri's ranking in the Muslim Nation. You have seen how favorably Muslim scholars have judged him; none of them even accuse him of the most minor of offences that might tarnish the reputation of a narrator of hadith. Among the Muslim scholars, his trustworthiness and his piety are considered to be beyond reproach. Even apart from of Muslims scholars, we know of no one who has attacked the honor of Az-Zuhri except for this fanatical, Jewish Orientalist, Goldziher. But by the grace of Allah, all of his assertions crumble ever so easily in the face of true scholarly research.

Imam Az-Zuhri's attachment to the Umawiyeen

By virtue of Az-Zuhri's ties with the Umawiyoan, Goldziher claims that they were able to use him in fabricating hadiths that were in accordance with their desires. I do not know how the attachment of a man such as Az-Zuhri — a man so truthful and trustworthy — to the Umawiyoan could indicate that they used him for that purpose. In previous times, the scholars used to have good ties with the Caliphs and kings without that having any effect whatsoever on their trustworthiness. That Az-Zuhri had good ties with the rulers did not affect his piety, religion, or trustworthiness. At any rate, those who benefited from him were the masses of Muslims, whose Shaykh would go from circles of knowledge to the gatherings of the rulers — all for the purpose of relating hadiths, or spreading knowledge, or

clarifying a ruling, or training children, or reminding the rulers of their duty to Allah (ﷻ) and of the rights that the Muslim Nation has upon them.

It has been related in *al-'Aqd al-Fareed* that on one occasion when Az-Zuhri went to Al-Waleed ibn 'Abdul-Mâlik, the latter said, "What of the hadith that the people of Syria relate to us?" He said, "And what is that, O Leader of the Believers?" He said, "They relate to us that if Allah makes a slave responsible over his flock, good deeds are written for him while bad deeds are not written against him!" Az-Zuhri said, "False, O Leader of the Believers! Is a prophet-caliph more honorable to Allah or a caliph who is not a prophet?" Al-Waleed said, "Of course, a prophet-caliph." Az-Zuhri said, "For indeed, Allah said to his Prophet, Dâwood (ﷺ):

﴿يٰۤاٰدُوۤدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيۡفَةً فِى الْاَرْضِ فَاحۡمَمۡ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنۡ سَبِيۡلِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ يَضِلُّوۡنَ عَنۡ سَبِيۡلِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ شَدِيۡدٌۢ بِمَا نَسُوۡا
 يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٦﴾

(سورة ص: ٢٦)

﴿O Dâwood [David]! Verily! We have placed you as a successor on earth, so judge you between men in truth [and justice] and follow not your desire — for it will mislead you from the Path of Allah. Verily! Those who wander astray from the Path of Allah [shall] have a severe torment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.﴾ (*Qur'an* 38: 26)

O Leader of the Believers, this is a warning to a prophet-caliph, then what do you think is the position of a caliph who is not a prophet?" Al-Waleed said, "Indeed, people are trying to make us deviate from our religion."

Contemplate this last narration and notice how, in the end, the attachment of a great scholar with a noble ruler benefits the Muslims. Did Imam Az-Zuhri surrender his will to that of the ruler and follow him blindly? Rather, as we have just seen, his was the stance of the

noble, sincere scholar who is advising the ruler about Allah's religion and protecting the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from lies and fabrications. Yes, he was helping the ruler, in the sense that he was protecting him from treading a dangerous path — the path of falsehood and oppression.

With his chain that goes back to Shâfi'ee, Ibn 'Asâkir related that Hishâm ibn 'Abdul-Mâlik asked Sulaymân ibn Yasâr about the explanation of this verse:

﴿... وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾ (سورة الشورى: ١١)

﴿... And as for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be a great torment.﴾ (Qur'an 24: 11)

Hishâm asked, "Who is the one among them who had the greater share therein?" Sulaymân said, "He was 'Abdullâh ibn Ubay ibn Sulool." Hishâm said, "You have lied; rather, he was 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib." It appears that Hishâm was not serious in what he said, but rather was trying to test the scholars, to see how steadfast they were upon the truth. Sulaymân ibn Yasâr said, "The Leader of the Believers is more knowledgeable as regards to that which he speaks of." Next came the turn of Ibn Shihâb (Az-Zuhri); Hishâm said to him, "Who was it among them who had the greater share therein?" Az-Zuhri said, "He was 'Abdullâh ibn Ubay ibn Sulool." Hishâm said, "You have lied; rather it was 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib." Az-Zuhri was brimming with anger as he said, "I, lie? May you have no father! For by Allah, were a caller from the sky to call to me and say that Allah (ﷻ) has made lying permissible, I still would not lie... Such and such person related to me that the one who had the greater share therein was 'Abdullâh ibn Ubay ibn Sulool." Shâfi'ee said, "The people present continued to spur Hishâm against Az-Zuhri until the former finally said, "Leave, for by Allah, we should not have paid off the debts of one like you." ...Ibn Shihâb said, "I know and your father

before you knew that I did not borrow that wealth thinking that you would repay it or that your father would repay it.” Later on, Hishâm became propitiated and pleased with Az-Zuhri, and so he paid off his huge debt, which of course he had incurred through giving out charity. When Az-Zuhri received news of that, he said, “All praise is for Allah, from Whom this blessing comes.”

That is what Ibn ‘Asâkir establishes in a narration that is related by Shâfi‘ee, who was one of the Imams of justice and truth. Does not the above-mentioned incident show you the degree of Az-Zuhri’s trustworthiness? His ties with the rulers were definitely not so strong as to affect his religion or trustworthiness in any way. He said to the ruler, “May you have no father!” The average man would not say such a statement to another man who is like him, at least not if he respected him in the smallest degree possible. Thus we see that his tie with the rulers was not the connection between the weak man and the strong one nor of the deceived and the deceiver, but rather it was the connection of one who was sure about his religion and honored through his knowledge. He was prone to anger if a lie was uttered in his presence, especially if that lie distorted the historical facts that pertain to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He was filled with rage when he heard the ruler distrust his interpretation — and the interpretation of the scholars before him — of a verse from Allah’s book. Does it then make sense that he would succumb to the desires of the ruler and fabricate lies for him? He said, “May you have no father! By Allah, were a caller to call me from the sky, saying that Allah had made lying permissible, I still would not lie.” Az-Zuhri was of a rare and precious strain of men in history, for he was raised upon the guidance of Muhammad (ﷺ).

Next, we must ask the question, what would Az-Zuhri have desired from acquiescing to the demands of the Umawiyyoon? Did he want wealth? Even Goldziher acknowledges that Az-Zuhri was not

the kind of man who could have been enslaved by money. Speaking of Az-Zuhri, 'Amru ibn Deenâr said, "I have not seen the deenâr and dirham to be as insignificant in the eye of anyone as they were to Az-Zuhri. It was as if he considered them to be at the same level as manure." Did he desire status? Goldziher acknowledges that Az-Zuhri was famous and had a good reputation in the Muslim Nation, so what higher status could he possibly desire? If Az-Zuhri was not seeking status or wealth — and you have seen his bravery when it came to defending the religion — could he have really reached such a level of stupidity that he would sell his religion to the Umawiyyoon and in the process lose the respect of the Muslims?

Then Goldziher depicts the Bani Umayyah period as being one replete with oppression and wrongdoing. He claimed that the righteous scholars of Madinah fought with all of their powers against the ruling government. We know that Az-Zuhri grew up in Madinah and studied under the scholars who lived there. He studied under the tutelage of Sa'eed ibn Musayib until the latter died. Every time Az-Zuhri traveled to Madinah, Mâlik would sit with him, taking from his knowledge. Az-Zuhri says about himself that he traveled for thirty-five years between Madinah and Syria. If Goldziher's claims hold true, why did the scholars of the various Muslim provinces not hate Az-Zuhri? If in fact he did lie for the benefit of the Umawiyyoon, why did they not declare that he was a liar? Why did his teacher Sa'eed not absolve himself from him, for he was one who paid no heed to the punishment and strength of 'Abdul-Mâlik? What was it that made them remain silent? Was it fear? They were men who knew no fear when it came to criticizing narrators, regardless of whether that narrator was the ruler or the lowest man in society. But suppose that they were afraid: why did the scholars not criticize him during the government of Bani al-'Abbâs? The supporters of Bani al-'Abbâs did indeed accuse the rulers of Bani Umayyah of many crimes, but they accused Az-Zuhri of nothing. Nor was he attacked by any of the

scholars of narrator criticism — including Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Yaḥyâ ibn Mu‘een, Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Abu Ḥâtim, and others like them who did not fear the reproach of anyone when they were speaking the truth for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). During the rule of Bani al-‘Abbâs, the scholars declared Az-Zuhri to be a most upright and truthful scholar and narrator — despite the fact that he had had strong ties with the rulers of Bani Umayyah. That perhaps is the greatest proof that shows him to be above suspicion.

The story of the rock and the Hadith, “Do not undertake to travel...”

Goldziher claims that ‘Abdul-Mâlik built the Dome of the Rock in order to turn people away from making pilgrimage to the Ka‘bah. According to Goldziher’s claim, he wanted to give the act of visiting the Dome of the Rock the air of a religious duty, and so, his friend, Az-Zuhri, fabricated the hadith, “Do not undertake to travel...” Rarely have I seen anyone distort historical facts to the degree that Goldziher does in this issue.

First, all trustworthy historians agree that the one who built the Dome of the Rock was Al-Waleed ibn ‘Abdul-Mâlik; this is related by Ibn ‘Asâkir, Aṭ-Ṭabari, Ibn al-Atheer, Ibn Khaldoon, Ibn Katheer, and others. We do not find them to have related, not even in a single narration, that it was ‘Abdul-Mâlik who built it. Suppose that Goldziher’s claim is true, that ‘Abdul-Mâlik wanted to force people to make pilgrimage not to the Ka‘bah, but to the Dome of the Rock Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Aqsâ*). Would not that have been an important event in the history of Islam, worthy of being mentioned in history books? It was the custom of Muslim historians to record the most minute of details of Islamic history — from the birth dates of scholars, to the dates of their deaths, to the appointment of judges, to

matters even more minute than that. Had ‘Abdul-Mâlik built the Dome of the Rock and had he forced the people to make pilgrimage to it, our historians would have mentioned that. But the opposite is the case, for no trustworthy historian has related anything to support Goldziher’s claims. Among historians in general, Ad-Dumayree is the only one to relate a narration, which he ascribes to Ibn Khilkân, that points to ‘Abdul-Mâlik as having been the one who built the Dome of the Rock. Yet even in his book, Ad-Dumayree merely says that: “ ‘Abdul-Mâlik built it and people would stand beside it on the day of ‘Arafah.” Despite the fact that this narration is weak and that it is contrary to the narrations found among all other trustworthy historians, the text related indicates nothing to further Goldziher’s accusations. It does not show that he built it so that people would stand beside it on the day of ‘Arafah, but rather it only indicates that they would do so of their own volition. It is not even mentioned in this narration that they were making pilgrimage to the Dome of the Rock instead of to the Ka‘bah; it only says that people would stand beside it on the day of ‘Arafah. This custom was widespread in many of the Muslim provinces, and it was a custom that the scholars warned against, ruling it to be disliked. There is a great difference between people making pilgrimage to it instead of to the Ka‘bah and between people merely standing beside it, imitating those who are standing during the pilgrimage on the day of ‘Arafah. People would do so in different lands (i.e. stand beside mosques on the day of ‘Arafah) in order to participate with those who had made pilgrimage, in an attempt to share with their reward. That practice was not limited to the Dome of the Rock, but people from all Muslim regions would go out on the day of ‘Arafah and stand either in the center of the city or beside an important mosque.

Second, the wording of Goldziher’s claim is itself self-contradictory, for to build something and to request people to make pilgrimage to it instead of to Makkah is a clear instance of disbelief.

How could a man such as ‘Abdul-Mâlik do such a vile deed when he was nicknamed “The Pigeon of the Mosque” for his constant worship? His opponents leveled many accusations at him, but we do not find a single one of them to have accused him of being a disbeliever, nor do we find that any of them reproached him for having built the Dome (and, at any rate, it was not even he who had built). Had he done anything blameworthy, his enemies would have been the first to find fault with him.

Third, as we have mentioned earlier, Az-Zuhri was born either in the year 51 H or 58 H. ‘Abdullâh ibn az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was killed in the year 73 H. Based on the first narration, Az-Zuhri was 22 years old at the time, and based on the second one, he was only 15 years old. Does it make sense that he was famous in the Muslim Nation at such an early age, to the extent that a fabricated hadith of his would be immediately accepted by both the scholars and the masses, and in this instance, regarding a hadith so grave in its implications that it required the people to make pilgrimage no more to the Ka‘bah, but only to the Dome?

Fourth, authentic historical narrations leave no room for doubt that during the lifetime of Ibn az-Zubayr, Az-Zuhri did not even know ‘Abdul-Mâlik and had never even seen him. Adh-Dhahabi relates that Az-Zuhri made acquaintance with ‘Abdul-Mâlik for the first time approximately in the year 80 H. Ibn ‘Asâkir relates that they met for the first time in the year 82 H. Hence Az-Zuhri only made acquaintance with ‘Abdul-Mâlik a few years after Ibn az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was killed. Even when they first met, Az-Zuhri was a young man, and ‘Abdul-Mâlik advised him to seek knowledge in the precincts of the Anṣâr. The claim that Az-Zuhri fabricated a hadith during the lifetime of Ibn az-Zubayr in order to force people to make pilgrimage to the Dome of the Rock Mosque is obviously a false claim.

Fifth, all the books of the Sunnah relate the hadith in question. It is related through many chains, many of which are not related through Az-Zuhri. Bukhari related it by way of Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) and not by way of Az-Zuhri. Muslim related it in three chains, one of which contained Az-Zuhri, and the other two did not, but rather were related by way of Jareer from Ibn ‘Umayr from Quz’a from Abu Sa‘eed (رضي الله عنه); and by way of Ibn Wahb from ‘Abdul-Hameed ibn Ja‘far from ‘Umrân ibn Abi Anas from Salmân al-Aghar from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). So we see that Az-Zuhri was not the only one to have related this hadith as is falsely claimed by Goldziher. Shaykh al-Islam ibn Taymiyah — may Allah have mercy on him — was once asked whether it is permissible to visit Bayt al-Maqdis and pray in it. We must remember that he held that it was not permissible to make a journey in order to visit graves. But regarding the issue in question he wrote:

“It is established in *Ṣaḥeḥ al-Bukhari* and *Ṣaḥeḥ Muslim* from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said, ‘Do not undertake a journey...’ The hadith is related through many chains, and it is widely accepted by all scholars. In fact, the people of knowledge agree that it is authentic. And in consequence, the Muslim scholars agree that it is recommended to travel to Bayt al-Maqdis⁵ to perform worship that is legislated. Among the Companions, it is known that Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) used to visit it and pray in it.”

Sixth, the hadith in question is related by Az-Zuhri, who related it from his Shaykh, Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayib. It is obvious that had Az-Zuhri fabricated this hadith in order to please the Umawee ruler, Sa‘eed would not have remained silent, for as we have seen, he was punished and tortured at the hands of an Umawee ruler. Sa‘eed died

⁵ *Bayt al-Maqdis* is the Arabic name for Jerusalem, and here it specifically refers to the Dome of the Rock Mosque. (Editor)

in the year 93 H, i.e. twenty years after the death of Ibn az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه). How could Sa'eed have remained silent for such a long period, especially when we know that he was very candid and forthright when it came to defending the truth? When he did something for Allah (ﷻ), he did not fear the blame of anyone.

Seventh, let us suppose that Az-Zuhri fabricated a hadith in order to please 'Abdul-Mâlik, why did he not clearly mention the superiority of the Dome of the Rock if he in fact wanted people to make pilgrimage to it? All that is said in this hadith and in every other hadith that is authenticated about the Bayt al-Maqdis is the superiority of praying in it and the virtue of visiting it without the time of the visit being specified. And in a general way, this is established in the Qur'an. The narration in question therefore goes nowhere to further the supposed objective of 'Abdul-Mâlik — to force people to make pilgrimage to the Dome of the Rock.

Eight, the hadith "Do not undertake a journey..." is not connected in any way to those fabricated narrations that speak about the virtues of the Dome; not a single one of them is related by Az-Zuhri. The scholars criticize those narrations, saying, "Every hadith that is related about the Rock is a lie." They also say, "Regarding the virtues of Bayt al-Maqdis, there are only three authentic narrations:

1. 'Do not undertake a journey...'
2. He was asked about the first house that was created on earth, and he said, '*al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm.*' He was then asked, which next? He said, '*al-Masjid al-Aqsâ.*'
3. 'Indeed prayer in it is equal to seven hundred prayers elsewhere.'

The Story of Ibrâheem ibn al-Waleed al-Umawee

Goldziher said that Ibrâheem ibn al-Waleed al-Umawee went to Az-Zuhri with a scroll and requested that he give him permission

to disseminate the hadiths that were in it and to make it known to others that he heard it directly from him. Without hesitating, Az-Zuhri gave his permission, saying, "And who else would be able to give you a license to relate them?"

First, Ibn 'Asâkir pointed out that Ibrâheem had indeed heard narrations from Az-Zuhri. In that case, then, Ibrâheem was presenting a scroll of hadiths which he had previously heard from him. And according to the terminology of Hadith scholars, this is referred to as 'license granted'. In his *Muqaddimah*, Ash-Shaykh ibn aṣ-Ṣalâḥ said:

"The fourth category of conveying hadith is license granted, which may be given with a license, which means for the student to give a book to his teacher that he had heard from him, and for the teacher to say, 'Relate this from me.' Perhaps the teacher might dwell on the matter first and then say to the student, 'Relate this from me.' And this is called 'license granted'."

Al-Hâkim said,

"This is considered to be a direct transmission by many scholars of the early generations. This opinion is related from Mâlik, Az-Zuhri, Ar-Rabee'ah, Yaḥyâ ibn Sa'eed, Mujâhid, Sufiyân, and others."

Ayyoob said, "We used to present (what we wrote in terms of) knowledge to Az-Zuhri." 'Ubaydullâh ibn 'Umar said, "I went to Az-Zuhri with a book, he dwelled upon it, and then said, 'I give you license to relate it.'" Many of Az-Zuhri's students gave similar accounts (i.e., they would present to him hadiths that they had previously heard from him and then take his permission to relate them). The action of Ibrâheem ibn al-Waleed in this instance — supposing the narration to be authentic — is from that category of hadith transmission. The other possibility, for Ibrâheem to have invented the hadiths himself, then for him to have requested Az-

Zuhri to give permission to relate them, and for Az-Zuhri to have then agreed is impossible. Az-Zuhri was famous and well accepted in the Muslim nation, and he did not reach that status except by his trustworthiness, his honesty, and his precision.

Second, Az-Zuhri supposedly said, “And who other than I can give you license to relate them?” This statement, even if we suppose it to be true, cannot be held against him, for who other than Az-Zuhri could have given Ibrâheem permission to relate those hadiths if Ibrâheem had heard them from him only. Through Muslim’s narration, we know that Az-Zuhri was the sole narrator of approximately 90 hadiths. Therefore the meaning of what he said to Ibrâheem is, “And who other than I knows these hadiths so that he could give you license to relate them?”

Third, though Ibn ‘Asâkir said that Ibrâheem had heard narrations from Az-Zuhri, the Ibrâheem in question is not a narrator in any of the books of Sunnah, nor do scholars of narrator criticism mention him — not among the trustworthy ones, not among the weak ones, and not even among the abandoned ones. So where are those hadiths that he disseminated by permission of Az-Zuhri? And where are they found in the books of Sunnah? And who related them? And how did this scroll disappear, there remaining no trace of it in the books of history?

Az-Zuhri’s saying, “They coerced us to write hadiths”

Goldziher claimed that Az-Zuhri confessed to his mistakes when he said in a narration related by Mu‘ammar, “Indeed the rulers forced us to write hadiths.” Goldziher propounds the view that this statement shows that Az-Zuhri was prepared to lend his recognized name to the wishes and desires of the government.

We have already shown that Az-Zuhri was brave when it came to defending the truth and that he was the last of people who would submit himself to the wishes of the rulers. From the narrations that we have previously related, we can plainly see that he was not the kind of man who was prepared to lend his recognized name to the cause of falsehood, even if the government demanded that of him.

The text related by Goldziher is moreover a distortion, behind which he intended to twist the facts. In the original narration, which is related by Ibn 'Asâkir and Ibn Sa'd, "Az-Zuhri would refuse to write hadiths for the people." And it appears that he did this so that people would depend on their memories, and not on books — and we have discussed this issue in detail earlier in this work. When Hishâm persisted in demanding him to dictate hadiths to his son in order to test his memory, Az-Zuhri dictated four hundred hadiths. He thereafter left the company of Hishâm and said in a loud voice, "O people, we have hitherto forbade you from a matter which we ourselves have just performed for these rulers, who have forced us to write the hadiths. So come here that I may relate them to you." He then related to them the same four hundred hadiths.

In the original narration, Az-Zuhri said "Hadiths", meaning known hadiths that are related from the Prophet (ﷺ). And in Goldziher's narration, Az-Zuhri purportedly said, "Hadiths" (any given hadiths). There is a great difference between the original and the distorted narration: according to the former, Az-Zuhri is saying that the rulers forced him to write down the Prophet's hadiths; according to the implications of the latter (when the definite article "the" is not used), he is saying that the rulers forced him to write down hadiths, and without the definite article, this could be referring to any hadiths, even fabrications. From this we see that Goldziher used any and all means at his disposal to distort true facts.

“Az-Zuhri frequented the castle and walked in the retinue of the ruler”

Goldziher asserts,

“Az-Zuhri was not one of those that could not agree with them, but rather he was of the view that it is correct to cooperate with the government. Therefore he did not hesitate to go to the castle of the ruler; he even used to walk in his retinue.”

We have previously clarified that the scholars used to frequent the gatherings of the rulers and that that did not take anything away from their religion and from their trustworthiness. We have shown that, yes, Az-Zuhri did have strong ties with the rulers from Bani Umayyah, but they were the ties of a scholar who had honor through his knowledge, his religion, and his status — of a scholar who did not hesitate to oppose the ruler in any instance when the truth needed to be clarified. In earlier times, the Companions would often visit Mu‘āwiyah. And the *Tābi‘oon* would do the same with Umayyad rulers. Thereafter, Abu Ḥaneefah frequently visited Al-Mansoor. And it is well known that Abu Yoosuf would constantly be in the company of Hâroon ar-Rasheed. Despite all of that, their honor and reputation was not tarnished and they did not descend from the level of being just and trustworthy scholars.

His pilgrimage with Al-Ḥajjāj

To further tarnish Az-Zuhri’s image, Goldziher claimed that he was in the retinue of Al-Ḥajjāj when he made the Pilgrimage. But in reality, Az-Zuhri was with ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) when the latter gathered with Al-Ḥajjāj. In *Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb*, Ibn Ḥajr relates a narration that goes back to Az-Zuhri, who said, “ ‘Abdul-Mâlik wrote to Al-Ḥajjāj, ordering him to follow Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) in the rites of Ḥajj... [Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ)] went to him with Sâlim and

me...” So Az-Zuhri was with ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar, and not with the entourage of Al-Ḥajjāj.

His training of Hishâm’s children

One way in which Goldziher tried to belittle Az-Zuhri was by vilifying him for having trained the Hishâm’s heir apparent. Historically this is false, for Hishâm’s heir apparent was not his son, but his nephew, Al-Waleed ibn Yazeed. Between this Waleed and Az-Zuhri there existed bad feeling and hostility, which commonly occurs between the evil ones and the righteous ones. Az-Zuhri only trained Hishâm’s children when he made Ḥajj with him in the year 106 AH. And what if he taught their children? Is not that better than for a wicked person or an enemy of Allah (ﷻ) to have taught them? We know that the children of Hishâm fought valiant battles against Roman-held territories and that they deserve credit for spreading Islam to many lands. Is it not just that we should ascribe some of those valiant deeds to what their teacher and Shaykh, Imam Az-Zuhri, instilled in them?

His appointment as judge

Goldziher found fault with Az-Zuhri for having accepted the post of judge that Yazeed the Second offered him. Goldziher said that if Az-Zuhri were indeed pious, he should have fled from taking such a position, as did Ash-Sha‘bee and other righteous scholars. Is this criticism appropriate? We know of no scholar who ruled that the reputation of someone becomes tarnished when he becomes a judge. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed all of the following as judges — ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه), Mu‘âdh ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه), Ma‘qal ibn Yasâr (رضي الله عنه) and others. Many of the Tâbi‘oon were judges during the era of Bani Umayyah — distinguished scholars such as Shurayh, Abu Idrees al-Khoolânee, ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi Laylâ, and Al-Qâsim ibn ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood. Some from

among them were even judges for Al-Ḥajjāj, but we know of no scholar who found fault with them because of that. Yes, Ash-Sha‘bee did flee from being appointed a judge and he also fought against Al-Ḥajjāj with Ibn al-Ash‘ath. But when the Discord on the part of Ibn al-Ash‘ath died down, Ash-Sha‘bee accepted the appointment of judgeship. This was his final act, so one wonders why Goldziher neglected to mention it.

He also claimed that the righteous ones would decline any judgeships offered to them, and they would consider it to be a defect in someone if he were to become a judge. He argued by the hadith, “Whoever undertakes the position of judgeship or whoever is made to be a judge has been slaughtered without the use of a knife.” But all that this narration means is that a judge must be careful when issuing rulings and that he must be just in those rulings. It is a warning for judges not to become corrupt.

In *al-Hidâyah*, Shaykh al-Islam Al-Mirgheenâni said:

“It is permissible to be appointed by an oppressive ruler just as it is permissible to be appointed by a just ruler. The Companions accepted positions from Mu‘âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) even though the truth was with ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه). The *Tâbi‘oon* took positions from Al-Ḥajjāj, yet he was oppressive. The only instance when they would not accept a position from the ruler was when the conditions were such that it was impossible for them to rule justly.”

A Mâlikee scholar, Ibn al-‘Arabi said:

“To accept a position of authority is not compulsory upon individuals, but rather it is a collective responsibility. If the Imam were to demand help from the people and then every one of them abstained from answering his call, they would all be sinning. But if some of them answered his call, they would be rewarded, and the duty to respond would no longer be compulsory upon the rest.”

In *Tabṣīratul-Hukkâm*, Ibn Farḥoon said:

“And know that all that is related in hadiths in terms of warning in this regard is specifically directed to oppressive judges and scholars or to the ignorant ones that thrust themselves into such positions without knowledge. It is for these sorts of people that the warnings and threats have come.”

And as such, we see that one’s status as a just and upright person is not affected simply by becoming a judge. The position of judgeship is most honorable in many regards, but especially in the sense that one is acting as a deputy to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Yes, there were many scholars who fled from the position of judgeship. Many among them bore much hardship in fleeing from that position, but they did not flee from becoming judges because they feared that their reputation as upright people would become tarnished. Rather they did so, fearing that they would meet Allah (ﷻ) and upon them would be the burdens of the mistakes they might have made concerning the affairs of people.

Goldziher knew that by raising doubts about Imam Az-Zuhri, he was in fact raising doubts about all compilations of hadith, for as we have mentioned earlier, Az-Zuhri contributed greatly to the dissemination of the Prophet’s Sunnah. He was the first to have recorded it and he was the sole narrator of many hadiths.

As we have seen thus far, all of Goldziher’s claims are baseless and are easily disproved. A pithy yet profound depiction of Imam Az-Zuhri’s status was given by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah when he said, “(Imam Az-Zuhri) acted as a servant to Islam for 70 years.”

Imam Az-Zuhri used to say,

“Allah has not been worshipped through any means that is better than knowledge... And it is through knowledge that Allah has trained His

Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him)... Whoever hears knowledge should make it as a proof for him between him and Allah (ﷺ).”

And he used to say, “Indeed learning can be negatively affected by certain matters: forgetfulness, lying, and for the scholar to abandon his knowledge until it abandons him.” During his lifetime, he was a sign of knowledge and guidance, and he will remain so for as long as Allah pleases, in spite of all false, wicked, and fanatical opponents. And all praise is for Allah, the Lord of all that exists.

Goldziher alleges,

“But Az-Zuhri did not stop at inventing hadiths for the political benefit of the ruling house; instead, he went beyond that to affairs of worship, fighting views that were not in accordance with the opinions held by the inhabitants of Madinah.” The Friday sermon consisted of two separate sermons, the leaders would preach while in a standing position, and the ‘Eid sermon used to follow the prayer. The Umawiyoon changed all of that. For example, based on a narration they had with them, they claimed that the Messenger (ﷺ) used to give a sermon while in a seated position.

A similar situation occurred when Mu‘âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) increased the number of steps of the pulpit. The Umawiyoon did not limit themselves to fabricating hadiths that were in their favor, but they also worked to conceal or to raise doubts about those hadiths that did not correspond to their own views.

Throughout history, governments have often taken practical steps to strengthen their position in the eyes of the people, to make things easier for their citizens, and to improve and renovate the infrastructure of their cities. For the most part, these matters had nothing to do with changing the religion. Even during the caliphates of the four rightly-guided Caliphs, we discern such steps being taken,

but we must remember that those steps either had a basis in the Sharia or at least did not contradict its teachings.

For example, it was Abu Bakr (ﷺ) who gathered the Qur'an in one *muṣ-ḥaf*⁶; this was for the benefit of Islam and Muslims. 'Umar (ﷺ) gathered the people behind one Imam for the Ramaḍân night prayers; this practice has its source in the Prophet's Sunnah; 'Uthmân (ﷺ) founded a first *adhân* (call to prayer) outside of the mosque; this was needed because of the expansion of Madinah. And 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez expanded the Prophet's Mosque; with more and more people visiting Madinah, this was inevitable.

Goldziher censured Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) for having added steps to the pulpit. However, a similar change occurred during the life of the Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him). After having delivered his sermon at the root of a date-palm tree for a period of time, he took a pulpit consisting of three steps because there was an increase in attendance at the mosque; the Prophet (ﷺ) needed a higher place to speak from so that all could hear him. Because of the expansion of the Muslim Nation during Mu'âwiyah's era, even more people attended the mosque. Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) increased the number of steps so that people could hear him, and of course, there is nothing wrong with that.

Goldziher then blamed Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) for sitting down during the second sermon. We acknowledge that this constituted a change in the form of worship, for all before Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) stood during the second sermon. But he did not make that change by choice; rather he did it from necessity: he became so overweight that he was no longer able to stand for long periods of time. Ash-Sha'bee said, "The first to give a sermon while sitting down was Mu'âwiyah,

⁶ *Muṣ-ḥaf*: the Arabic text of the Qur'an without exegesis or extraneous text; the volume containing this. (Editor)

and that was when he increased in fat and when his stomach became large.” Regarding this issue, Goldziher lied, for no one from the Umawiyoon justified giving a sermon in a seated position by saying that the Prophet (ﷺ) did the same.

As for delivering the ‘Eid sermon before the ‘Eid prayer, Mirwân excused himself, saying that he did that out of necessity, because people would no longer listen to the sermon after the prayer. This is the excuse he gave; he did not, however, invent a hadith or ask someone else to fabricate one for him in order to justify his action. Nonetheless, the Companions and the Tâbi‘oon reproached him for having changed the order of the prayer and the sermon.

Bukhari related in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) censured Mirwân, then the governor of Madinah, for performing the sermon before the ‘Eid prayer. Abu Sa‘eed said to him, “You have changed matters, by Allah!” Mirwân said, “O Abu Sa‘eed, what you know has gone.” Abu Sa‘eed said, “What I know, by Allah, is better than that which I do not know.” Mirwân said, “Indeed, people would not sit down (to hear us) after the prayer.” And Imam Muslim related a similar narration.

Mirwân did not argue his point by mentioning a hadith and neither did Mu‘âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) when he gave a sermon sitting down or when he added steps to the pulpit. We acknowledge that these modifications did occur, but at the same time we do not accept the view that the Umawiyoon leaders intended to change the Religion or that they justified their actions with fabricated narrations.

Goldziher then said:

“In the second century, Muslims felt that it was enough for a narration to be correct in appearance in order for them to authenticate it. And many hadiths they consider to be acceptable are in fact fabricated. They were aided in this quest by the narration, ‘Hadiths

related from me will increase, and so whoever relates to you a hadith, you should then compare it to Allah's book. Whatever is in accordance with it, then it is from me, regardless of whether I have said it or not.' ”

Goldziher implies that scholars acknowledged there to be many fabrications among hadiths that they ruled to be acceptable. No Muslim scholar has ever made such a statement. Goldziher made that claim without providing any proof whatsoever. He should have realized that in all scholarly work, one needs to provide proofs to support one's claim; it is in the fish market, perhaps, that one can speak as ignorantly as one pleases. As for the hadith he mentioned, scholars of hadith have ruled it to be a fabrication.

Goldziher also suggested that Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) did not accept a hadith from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه); we examine that claim in detail in our discussion on Ahmad Ameen.

Goldziher asserts,

“Other than narrations that were related verbally, there appeared as well written scrolls that indicated the wishes or commands of the Messenger (ﷺ). It is quite unfortunate that such scrolls are not scrutinized in order to ascertain their authenticity. For example, there is nothing authentically related (i.e. verbally) as regards to how much zakât should be paid for the ownership of young and old cows. And so the people resorted to written scrolls that are ascribed to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”

Scholars of the Sunnah treated written scrolls in the same manner that they treated verbal narrations: they scrutinized them in order to differentiate between the authentic and the fabricated. In fact, they rejected a number of written scrolls that were ascribed to the Prophet (ﷺ) on that basis. As for narrations about zakât, there were many. Scholars sifted through them, applying principles of hadith

criticism. In the end, they found some of them to be authentic, others to be acceptable, and still others to be weak.

From the previous discussion, it becomes clear that Goldziher did not adhere to dignified scholarly principles of research; he distorted (the truth) whenever he needed to, he twisted facts whenever he felt the need to do so, and he lied whenever it would help further his claims. And it is sad to see some Muslims, such as Ahmad Ameen, take Goldziher to be their Shaykh. How perfect Allah is! He guides whom He wills and He leads astray whom He wills.

﴿فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ، يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ، يُغْلِقْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيْقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَقُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾
(سورة الأنعام: ١٢٥)

﴿And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islam, and whomsoever He wills to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky. Thus Allah puts the wrath on those who believe not.﴾ (Qur'an 6: 125)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Sunnah Vis-à-vis Some Contemporary Writers Who Reject It

We have hitherto discussed one Orientalist's view of the Sunnah. Yet there is a darker shade than his, one even more sinister, which consists of deceptive attacks that are leveled against the Sunnah. These attacks are carried out by "Muslims" who have become students of the Orientalists. Their way of attack is neither clear nor direct, definitely not like the direct offensive of the Orientalists before them. Rather, these so-called Muslims hide under a veneer of knowledge, under an ostensible purpose of sincere scholarly endeavor. Seeking not to walk in open terrain and not to clearly enunciate the views that lie in their hearts, they choose trickery and hidden deception, fearing the rage of the masses. And we will see — *inshâ' Allâh* — that the falsehood of these so-called Muslims is even more vile and reprehensible in its effects than the work of the Orientalists. And we seek help from Allah, for He is sufficient for us and He is a most perfect Benefactor.

The most prominent of contemporary writers who has taken such a path is Ahmad Ameen, a graduate of Islamic law. He has written *Fajr al-Islâm*, *Duḥâ al-Islâm* and *Duḥr al-Islâm*. He spoke

about hadith literature in *Fajr al-Islâm*, a book in which he confounds truth with falsehood, reality with lies, guidance with deviance. In it, the author levels vicious attacks against a group of distinguished Companions and *Tâbi'oon*.

A Summary on the "Hadith" chapter in *Fajr al-Islâm*

Ahmad Ameen dedicates approximately twenty pages of his work to discussing the Prophet's Sunnah. He attempts to give an historical account of the Sunnah and of its recording. He defines the Sunnah and mentions its status in the Sharia. He then goes on to mention that hadith narrations were not recorded during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), though he does say that some Companions wrote some narrations for themselves. He writes that the Companions were of two groups after the death of the Messenger (ﷺ): the first group disliked to relate hadiths abundantly and they would demand proof from the narrator to show that what he related was authentic, and the second group would relate abundantly from the Prophet (ﷺ). He alleges that because the Sunnah was not recorded in any specific book and because the early generations of Muslims depended mainly on their memory, there resulted a great deal of fabrications and lies about the Messenger (ﷺ). He maintains that such lies began to surface during the Prophet's lifetime. He asserts that the acceptance of Islam by various peoples led to the spread of many fabricated narrations, to such an extent that Imam Bukhari had to choose for his authentic book from approximately 600,000 hadiths that were widespread during his era. The author of *Fajr al-Islâm* then goes on to mention the main causes that led to fabrication — and we have discussed them ourselves in a previous chapter.

Ameen then proceeds on to mention the efforts of the scholars in quelling the spread of fabrications, but he differed with Muslim scholars when he asserts the following: hadith scholars were derelict in defending the Sunnah because they directed most of their criticism to the chain of a narration and not to the text itself; he writes that they directed one tenth of their attention to the text and the rest to the chain. He then mentions those Companions who related hadiths abundantly. And of course he mentions Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). He said, "Indeed he would not write, but rather would relate from his memory. He would relate narrations that he did not directly hear himself from the Prophet (ﷺ). Some Companions complained about his hadith narrations, criticizing him most vehemently."

Ameen ends the "Chapter of Hadith" by going through the historical stages that led to the recording of the Sunnah, ending his analysis with the period of Bukhari, Muslim, and other compilers of the 'Six Books'¹.

That summarizes the "Chapter of Hadith," pages 255 to 274 from *Fajr al-Islâm*. Before commenting in detail on all of Ameen's statements, we must first begin with some background. A deviant "Muslim" in Egypt, Ismâ'eel Adham, distributed a pamphlet in the year 1353 H on the history of the Sunnah. In it, he wrote that the majority of hadiths that Muslims rely upon are not authentic, and at best are doubtful. According to him, many of them are fabrications. This pamphlet provoked the anger of many Muslims, and the Egyptian government was forced, based on a request from the scholars of Azhar University, to ban the publication. Adham went on to defend his views in another publication, claiming that he was not

¹ The 'Six Books' refers authentic compilations of the six greatest collectors of hadiths: Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dâwood, Nasâ'i and Ibn Mâjah. (Editor)

alone in the doubts he raised about the Sunnah, but rather that a large group of scholars agreed with him. Among those scholars, he mentioned Ahmad Ameen. We waited long and hard for Ameen to disassociate himself from that liar ... but he did not do so. Instead he wrote an article in a weekly journal, expressing his grief over what happened to his friend (Adham), saying that freedom of expression had been crushed.

In 1360 H, a debate took place at Azhar University about Imam Az-Zuhri. It was instigated by Dr. 'Ali Ḥasan 'Abdul-Qâdir, who told me that Ahmad Ameen said the following words to him after the debate:

“Indeed, Azhar University does not accept scholarly views that are borne from freedom of expression, so the best way to spread your views which are taken from the Orientalists is not to ascribe those views to them directly. Rather, present your views to Azhar scholars, saying that all of the research is yours. And present those views in such a delicate way as will not anger them, for that is what I have done in *Fajr al-Islâm* and *Ḍuḥâ al-Islâm*.”

In the following section, we will go beyond merely accusing Ameen; we will also present proof to establish his guilt.

Did fabrications begin during the lifetime of the Messenger (ﷺ)?

On page 256 of *Fajr al-Islâm*, Ahmad Ameen writes,

“It appears that fabrications first came into being during the lifetime of the Messenger (ﷺ). The hadith, «Whoever lies about me on purpose, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire,» was probably spoken because of an incident wherein someone falsely ascribed a saying to the Messenger (ﷺ).”

This claim is not supported by any authentic historical narration, nor does Ameen mention any hadith related in a trustworthy source to back up his words.

History establishes that, without a doubt, no one who accepted Islam during the life of the Messenger (ﷺ) falsely ascribed any saying to him. As for the hadith that Ameen refers to, the authentic books of Sunnah agree that the Prophet (ﷺ) said those words when he ordered his Companions to convey his hadiths to posterity. In a hadith related in Bukhari, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «Convey from me even if it is one verse, and relate from the children of Israel, and there is no harm in that (i.e., news of previous nations that does not contradict with the Book or the authentic Sunnah). And whoever lies about me on purpose, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire.»² Muslim related from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, «Do not write from me, and whoever has written from me other than the Qur'an, then let him erase it. And relate from me, for that is all right. And whoever lies about me on purpose, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire.»³ And At-Tirmidhi related from Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «Beware of hadith from me except for that which you know, for whoever lies upon me on purpose, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire.» Imam Ahmad reported that Abu Moosa al-Ghâfiqee said, "Indeed the final command that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave to us was when he said, 'Upon you is Allah's Book, and you will return to a people who love hadith from me, so whoever says upon me that which I have not said, then let him take his seat in the Hellfire. And whoever has memorized something, then let him relate it.' " Others have related narrations that convey a similar meaning. All of these narrations

² Reported by Bukhari, vol. 11, p. 227, hadith no. 3202.

³ Reported by Muslim, vol. 14, p. 291, hadith no. 5326 and Al-Ĥâkim in *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 2, p. 229. Hadith status: authentic.

show that the Prophet (ﷺ) knew that Islam would spread to the people of many nations, and so he pointed out in clear words that they should be careful and cautious when relating his sayings. In these narrations, he was addressing his Companions because they were the ones who were to convey his message to the Muslim nation and they were the ones who had first witnessed his message. But none of the above-mentioned narrations indicates that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave that warning because someone had already falsely ascribed a saying to him. There are, however, two narrations that are contrary in their implications to those mentioned above:

1. In *Mushkil al-Âthâr*, At-Ṭaḥâwi related from ‘Abdullâh ibn Buraydah from his father, who said, “A man went to a people who were living on the outskirts of Madinah, and he said, ‘Indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has ordered me to rule among you according to my opinion in such and such matter...’ During the days of ignorance, he had proposed to a woman from among them, and they had refused to marry her off to him. So he went to them until he reached the woman, but the people to whom he went betook themselves to the Prophet (ﷺ), asking him about what happened. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘He has lied, the enemy of Allah.’ He then sent a man, instructing him, ‘If you find him alive, then strike him in his throat, but I do not perceive that you will find him to be alive. And if you find him to be dead, then burn him.’ When he found him, he saw that he had been bitten and as a result died, and so he burned him. After that happened, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «Whoever lies about me...»”

2. In *al-Awsaṭ*, At-Ṭabarâni related from ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amru ibn al-‘Âṣ that a man wore a robe similar to the robe of the Prophet (ﷺ); he then went to the inhabitants of a house in Madinah, saying to them, “Indeed the Prophet (ﷺ) told me to go to the dwellers of any house that I wished to go and he gave me permission to go in and see (and take) whatever I want.” They prepared a house for him and they sent

a messenger to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to inform him of what happened. He (ﷺ) said to Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), "Go to him and if you find that he is alive, then kill him, and after that burn him with fire. And if you find that he is dead, then you will have been sufficed and I do not perceive except that you have been sufficed."⁴ They went to him and found that he had gone out in the night to urinate, and while he was out he was bitten by a poisonous snake and consequently, he died. They burned him and then returned to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), informing him of what happened. He (ﷺ) said, «Whoever lies about me...».

We must discuss these two narrations from various angles:

First, the texts of the two narrations impart strange meanings and have all the telltale signs of fabrications. We do not know from the biography of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that he ever ordered for the dead to be burned. The authentic books of Sunnah do not relate to us that he did that even once.

Second, the chains of both narrations are weak and contain narrators whose hadiths are not acceptable. And that is why As-Sakhâwi ruled that they are fabrications.

Third, suppose that they are authentic; in both narrations, the reason why the perpetrator fabricated a hadith was a worldly one that had specifically to do with the falsifier. What does that have to do with fabrications pertaining to the Religion, which Muslims relate as if they are the hadith of their Messenger (ﷺ)? How does the falsification mentioned in these isolated instances, instances where the motive was purely worldly and purely specific to the perpetrator, indicate that fabrications had occurred during the lifetime of the Messenger (ﷺ)?

⁴ Reported by Aṭ-Ṭabarâni in *al-Awsat*, vol. 5, p. 131, hadith no. 2172. Hadith status: There is a narrator in its chain of transmission, who become *confused* and was *disorganized*. See *Majmoo' al-Zawâ'id*, vol. 1, p. 145.

Fourth, it is clear from both narrations that the perpetrator in each instance was unknown. It is probable that the perpetrator had never even met the Prophet (ﷺ). It is even quite likely that he had not accepted Islam, which means that he was not a Companion. Therefore, there is no basis, in these narrations to support the claims of anyone who wishes to raise doubts about the truthfulness of the Companions.

Regardless of whether the hadith was spoken because of the reason mentioned in the authentic books of Sunnah or because of the reason mentioned in the previous two narrations — which some scholars rule to be fabricated — there is no indication or proof to show that fabrications occurred during the life of the Messenger (ﷺ). The supposition that fabrications occurred during his lifetime is dangerous, for the first consequence of that assumption is that one ascribes lies to the Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ). And that is contradictory to the truth and reality that is known regarding the history of those Companions. It is also contrary to what the masses of the Muslims agree upon in terms of their uprightness and unquestionable trustworthiness — the only ones to deviate from that were the Shi‘ah, some groups from the Khawârij, and the Mu‘tazilah. Whatever Ahmad Ameen’s motive was for forming that supposition, he strayed from the truth and built upon a false foundation that is not supported by any authentic hadith.

Hadiths of Tafseer

Ameen writes on page 529,

“Imam Aḥmad’s statement about hadiths of tafseer clearly indicates the enormous amount of hadith fabrications. He said that no narration of tafseer is authentic. And Aḥmad himself gathered thousands of hadiths about tafseer. The compilation of Bukhari consists of 7000

hadiths, of which 3000 are repetitions. They say that these are the ones he chose and deemed to be authentic out of the 600,000 hadiths that were widespread during his era.”

No one denies that there are a great number of narrations that are fabricated, but to prove that, Ameen referred to two points: the hadiths of tafseer (i.e. hadiths that explain verses from the Qur’an) and the hadith of Bukhari. The apparent meaning of Ameen’s words is that he has doubts about all hadiths that clarify the tafseer of the Qur’an.

If one were to delve into the books of Sunnah, one would find that a great number of hadiths that speak about tafseer are authentic, related through authentic chains. In every book of Sunnah, the author dedicates an entire chapter to what is related about tafseer — including narrations from the Messenger (ﷺ), from the Companions, and from the Tâbi‘oon. Furthermore, the scholars of tafseer have stipulated that whoever wishes to interpret Allah’s Book must depend on what is related from the Prophet (ﷺ).

Imam Abu Ja‘far at-Ṭabari said in his tafseer,

“Some of what Allah (ﷻ) revealed in the Qur’an to His Prophet (ﷺ) cannot be interpreted with any certainty except through clarification from the Messenger (ﷺ)...”

When discussing some of the matters that a *mufasssir*⁵ needs to clarify, Abu Ḥiyân al-Andaloosi, the author of *al-Baḥr al-Muḥeet* said,

“To specify that which is unspecified, to clarify that which is general, to clarify the reason that a verse was revealed, and to clarify the occurrence of abrogation. These matters are taken from authentic narrations that are related from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)...”

⁵ *Mufasssir* (pl. *mufasssiroon*): one who engages in tafseer, i.e., one who interprets the Qur’an. (Editor)

And As-Suyooti related in *al-Itqân* that Ibn Taymiyah said: “It is compulsory to know that the Prophet (ﷺ) clarified the meanings of the Qur’an to his Companions just as he clarified to them its text. This verse,

﴿... وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ ...﴾ (٤٤)

(سورة التحل: ٤٤)

﴿... And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the reminder and the advice [the Qur’an], that you may explain clearly to people what is sent down to them...﴾ (Qur’an 16: 44),

— encompasses both aims.”

Az-Zarkashee classified the Qur’an into two categories: in the first category, the tafseer of a verse is related either from the Prophet (ﷺ), from the Companions, or from the Tâbi‘een. And in the second category, there is no narration that has reached us in which the tafseer is given.

Other scholars, like Az-Zarkashee, classified tafseer into that which is transmitted and that which is not transmitted. They ruled that it is incumbent upon the mufassir to always to resort to the first category. Had the greater portion of hadith literature pertaining to tafseer not been authentic, they would not have issued this ruling. There are even some scholars who hold that it is not permissible to interpret a verse from the Qur’an except with what is related from the Prophet (ﷺ).

As-Suyooti said in *al-Itqân*, “People have differed regarding the tafseer of the Qur’an — is it permissible for any person to delve into it? A group of scholars hold that it is not permissible for anyone to interpret parts of the Qur’an, even if he or she is a knowledgeable scholar whose knowledge of proofs, fiqh, grammar, and hadith

literature is extensive. The most knowledgeable of scholars have no recourse except to take that which the Prophet (ﷺ) related...”

Each of the above narrations and sayings of the scholars shows that it is not permissible for a scholar to reject authentic narrations about tafseer. In *Mukhtaṣir al-Buwayṭee*, Shâfi‘ee said that it is not permissible to interpret verses whose meanings are not clear and obvious except through the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ), through a narration from one of his Companions, or through the consensus of the scholars. Yes, it is true that the total amount which is related about tafseer from the Prophet (ﷺ) is less than that which is not related from him. And the amount that is authenticated from those narrations is less than that which is not authenticated. Nonetheless, it is not permissible to raise doubts about those narrations that are in fact authentic.

When Ahmad Ameen mentioned Imam Aḥmad, he was referring to this statement that is related from him: “Three...have no foundation: ‘Tafseer’, ‘Trials’, and ‘Battles’.” And in another narration, “There are three books that have no foundation: ‘Battles’, ‘Trials’, and ‘Tafseer’.” In arriving at the true meaning of this statement, we have to discuss it from a number of angles.

First, it is doubtful as to whether the above-mentioned narration from Imam Aḥmad is authentic, for he himself related many hadiths about tafseer. Does it make sense that he would relate them and establish them from his Shaykhs in his *Musnad*, and later on rule that nothing authentic has been related concerning tafseer? Furthermore, the implication of that statement is that all narrations from the Arabs concerning Muslim battles are lies, and no scholar — or layman for that matter — says that.

Second, it is well known from Imam Aḥmad that he would negate the authenticity of a hadith that was, if not authentic, then at least acceptable. The scholars have said that Imam Aḥmad used

terminology that was specific to him in this matter. In *ar-Raf‘a wat-Takmeel*, Al-Laknawee said: “They would often say, ‘it is not authentic,’ or, ‘it is not established’. One who has no knowledge might suppose that they were referring to fabricated or weak narrations, but that is because he is ignorant of the terminology that they use. In *Tadhkiratul-Mawḍoo‘ât*, ‘Ali al-Qâri said, ‘That a narration is not established does not mean that it is fabricated.’ Al-Ḥâfidh Ibn Ḥajr said ... that it is acknowledged that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, ‘I do not know of an established hadith regarding the *Tasmiyah* (i.e. saying *Bismillâh* before making ablution).’ Ibn Ḥajr commented, ‘That he negated having any knowledge of such a hadith being established does not mean that any such narration is weak. Perhaps by ‘established’, he was referring to ‘authentic,’ which does not negate the possibility of *Ḥasan* (acceptable).’ ”

Third, Imam Aḥmad did not say that there is nothing authentic about tafseer; rather, he only said that there are three that have no foundation. It is probable that he was negating the authenticity of specific books that dealt with the three said branches of knowledge. This is proven by the second narration, in which he clearly said, ‘three books’. This meaning is understood by Al-Khateeb al-Baghdâdi when he said, “He was referring to specific books...(of the three) one is by al-Kalbi and another is by Muqâtil ibn Sulaymân.” And Imam Aḥmad said about *Tafseer al-Kalbi*, “It is a lie from its beginning to its end, and it is not permissible to read it.”

Fourth, perhaps Imam Aḥmad meant that what is authentic in tafseer is only a small amount when compared to that which is not authentic. This interpretation is accepted by many scholars.

In *al-Burhân*, Az-Zarkashi said about hadiths that give an interpretation of the Qur’an,

“It is necessary to be cautious about what is weak and what is fabricated, for there is much in that regard. That is why Imam Aḥmad

said, ‘Three books have no foundation, *The Battles, The Trials, and Tafseer.*’ Some of the more knowledgeable scholars from his school said, ‘He meant that many narrations do not have authentic, connected chains, yet there is still much that is authentic.’”

Therefore, to use Imam Aḥmad’s statement in order to raise doubts about *Aḥâdeeth* of tafseer is not correct; it is a view that is disproved by authentic narrations in the major books of Sunnah, such as *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari, Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim, al-Muwaṭṭâ’, At-Tirmidhi* — and *Musnad Imam Aḥmad* as well.

Is Imam Bukhari’s *Ṣaḥeeḥ* comprehensive of all that is authentic?

Ahmad Ameen claimed that Bukhari chose the hadiths of his authentic compilation from a store of 600,000 hadiths. Our discussion here revolves around two topics.

First: the number of hadiths that were widespread at that time. No doubt, there was a huge number of hadiths that were widespread during the lifetime of Bukhari — reaching 600,000 or even more. It has been related that Imam Aḥmad said, “There are slightly more than 700,000 hadiths that are authentic. And this young man (i.e. Abu Zur‘ah) has indeed memorized 700,000.” But what is the reality of this great number? Are they all hadiths that discuss different topics? Or are they simply different chains for the same hadiths? And are they all hadiths that are ascribed to the Prophet (ﷺ) or are they also ascribed to the Companions and the Tâbi‘oon? To answer these questions, we must first mention the different meanings of hadith, *khabr*⁶, and *âthâr*⁷.

⁶ *Khâbr*: literally: news.

⁷ *âthâr*: literally: traces, remains

A group of scholars have said: “A hadith is that which is ascribed to the Prophet (ﷺ), and is therefore specifically meant to be what he (ﷺ) said. It cannot refer to a saying of anyone else unless there is additional proof to indicate that. As for *khabr*, it is more general in its implications, for it is also comprehensive of that which is ascribed to the Companions and to the Tâbi‘oon. And as such, every hadith is a *khabr*, but not every *khabr* is a hadith.”

Others have said, “Hadith is that narration whose chain goes back all the way to the Prophet (ﷺ), and it also refers to that which stops short at the Companions and the Tâbi‘oon. By this definition, hadith is a synonym of *khabr*.” As for *âthâr*, it is synonymous to the first meaning of *khabr*: it encompasses all narrations, regardless of whether they are related from the Prophet (ﷺ), from the Companions, or from the Tâbi‘oon. The jurists of Khorasan call a narration that stops short at the Companions or the Tâbi‘oon an *âthâr*, and a narration that goes back to the Prophet (ﷺ) a *khabr*.

Therefore scholars differ in their understanding of the terms hadith, *khabr*, and *âthâr*. And based on that difference, we can easily understand how there can be so many hadiths, 700,000 or even more, for that number includes narrations that are related from the Prophet (ﷺ) as well as narrations that are related from Companions and Tâbi‘oon. Also, they include many chains of a single hadith. A scholar of hadith may relate a single hadith with many different chains. There might be many people, for instance, who relate from a single Companion, and all of their narrations are passed down. The job of the Hadith scholar is to gather the different chains of hadith; consequently, he may even have ten chains for a single hadith, though he counts them to be ten hadiths, and not one hadith.

If we were to gather the sayings, the deeds, and the approvals of the Prophet (ﷺ), adding to them the sayings of the Companions and the Tâbi‘oon, and adding to all of that the many chains of

narrations, it is not strange if that total would add up to hundreds of thousands.

Al-'Allâmah ash-Shaykh Ṭâhir al-Jazâ'iree wrote:

“Some Hadith scholars use the term hadith both for the Prophet’s sayings and for the sayings of Companions and Tâbi’oon. People should not be surprised, therefore, when it is said to them that such-and-such had memorized 700,000 authentic hadiths. Many people deem that to be an exaggeration, saying, ‘Where are those hadiths and why have they not reached us? And why did the retainers of hadith not relate even one-tenth of that? And how is it correct that they have neglected to relate most of what has been established from the Prophet (ﷺ)? Hadith scholars are famous for the efforts they made in preserving the authentic Sunnah, which means that they should not have abandoned any of that.’”

It is related that Imam Aḥmad said: “There are slightly more than 700,000 hadiths that are authentic, and this young man — he was referring to Abu Zur‘ah — has memorized 700,000 hadiths. And he has memorized 140,000 about tafseer.” It is related that Bukhari said, “I have memorized 100,000 authentic hadiths and 200,000 that are not authentic.” It is related that Muslim said, “I have compiled in this authentic *Musnad* (hadiths taken) from a store of 300,000 hadiths which I have heard.” As for what is related about Abu Zur‘ah having memorized 140,000 hadith about tafseer, you will be less astonished when you learn that in this verse:

(سورة التكاثر: ٨)

﴿ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ﴾

﴿Then, on that Day, you shall be asked about the delight [you indulged in, in this world]!﴾

(Qur'an 102: 8),

An-Na‘eem mentioned ten sayings of the mufasssiroon, and each saying from them is called a hadith according to their terminology.

﴿الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ﴾ ﴿٦﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾ (سورة الماعون: ٦-٧)

«Those who do good deeds only to be seen [of men], and refuse *al-Mâ'oon* [small kindnesses, e.g. salt, sugar, water, etc.]»

(*Qur'an* 107: 6-7)

As regards *al-Mâ'oon* in this verse, the scholars of tafseer have mentioned six opinions, each one except for the sixth is considered to be a hadith.”

Second: that which is considered to be authentic by Bukhari. The author of *Fajr al-Islâm*, Ahmad Ameen, claims that the 4000 (not counting repetitions) hadiths that Bukhari compiled constitute all that Bukhari considered to be authentic from among the 600,000 or so hadiths that were widespread during his era. This claim is unprecedented, for scholars agree that Bukhari did not include in his compilation every hadith that he considered to be authentic.

In his *Muqaddimah*, Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâḥ noted:

“Neither Bukhari nor Muslim covered the authentic hadiths extensively in their compilations, nor did they claim to do so. We have related from Bukhari that he said, ‘I have not inserted into *al-Jâmi'* (i.e. *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*) other than what is authentic, and I have left out other authentic narrations... because it (the compilation) would be too long otherwise.’ And we have related from Muslim that he said, ‘I have not placed in this book everything that I considered to be authentic. All that I put here is that which has been agreed upon.’ ”

Al-Hâfidh Ibn Katheer wrote:

“Neither Bukhari nor Muslim adhered to the methodology of relating all that has been ruled to be authentic. Both of them have authenticated hadiths that are not found in their compilations. At-Tirmidhi related that Bukhari authenticated hadiths that he did not

include in his own compilation; rather, they are found in other compilations of the Sunnah.”

In his book *Shurooṭ al-Ā’immah al-Khamsah*, Al-Hâfidh Al-Hâzimee said:

“As for Bukhari, he did not adhere to the practice of relating every single authentic hadith, a fact that is attested to by what Abu al-Faḍl ‘Abdullâh ibn Aḥmad ibn Muhammad related. He related from Ṭalḥah from Abu Sa‘eed al-Mâleeni from ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Adee from Muhammad ibn Aḥmad from Muhammad ibn Ḥamdawiyah, who said, ‘I heard Muhammad ibn Ismâ‘eel (Bukhari) say, ‘I have memorized 100,000 authentic hadiths and 200,000 hadiths that are not authentic.’” And with his chain, he related that Bukhari said, ‘I have only related the authentic in this book, but the authentic narrations that I have not put here are more.’”

If the scholars agree that Bukhari did not relate in his compilation every hadith that is authentic and that he memorized 100,000 authentic hadiths, the author of *Fajr al-Islâm* ascribed incorrect sayings to them. He used the words, “They said”. If he was referring to the ordinary people, then that is something else, but here we are discussing knowledge and scholarly criticism, which is no place for reporting the speech of laypersons.

Was ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak negligent?

Speaking about fabricators, Ahmad Ameen alleges on page 260:

“And some narrators, who had good intentions, would gather all that came to them, considering every narration to be authentic. A narrator of this kind was truthful himself, but would relate everything that he had heard, and so the people, being deceived by his truthfulness, would take narrations from him. This has been said about ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak. It has been said that he was trustworthy and truthful but that he took narrations from all who came and went.”

In a footnote, Ameen says that this saying concerning ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak is related in *Şaḥeeḥ Muslim*.”

Ameen is speaking about hadith fabricators, and they are those who would falsify hadiths, wrongly ascribing them to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), doing so for different reasons — reasons that we have elaborated upon earlier in this work. As for someone who has a good intention and who gathers all that comes to him, he is not a fabricator because he did not lie, neither in the chain of the hadith nor in its text. The most that can be said about such a person is that he is negligent and that he accepts hadiths without scrutinizing them. His narrations are put on hold until further study. If a scholar then finds that this hadith gatherer related from trustworthy narrators and that other trustworthy narrators related what he related, then his narrations are accepted, and if not, then they are not. But to include such a person among the ranks of fabricators, as Ameen did, is a clear mistake, which is a result of a lack of precision in scholarship. Also, what he said about ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak suggests that he considers him to be a fabricator. This is a criticism of Ameen’s choice of wording; as for a criticism of what he actually says, we can begin by summarizing his claims in three points:

1. ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak had good intentions but would relate all that he had heard without scrutinizing and criticizing narrators.
2. People were deceived by his truthfulness and would accept all of the hadiths they heard from him, considering them to be authentic.
3. The quote that Ameen related from *Şaḥeeḥ Muslim* is referring to ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak.

Ahmad Ameen is entirely wrong on all three counts.

1. The claim that, though ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak had good intentions, he would relate all that he heard is contrary to reality, for Ibn al-Mubâarak was among the famous Imams during his day who

were known for criticizing narrators and for discerning between the trustworthy ones and the falsifiers who could not be trusted. In the introduction of his compilation, Imam Muslim (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions a number of examples wherein Ibn al-Mubâarak criticized narrators.

Muslim relates in a chain that goes back to Is-hâq Ibrâheem ibn ‘Eesâ aţ-Ṭâliqâni that the latter said, “I said to ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak, ‘O Abu ‘Abdur-Raḥmân, what about the hadith which states that it is one of the highest levels of piety to pray for your parents and to fast for them along with your fast?’ ‘Abdullâh said, ‘O Abu Is-hâq, who is this from?’ I said, ‘This is from the hadith of Shihâb ibn Khirâsh.’ He said, ‘Trustworthy, from whom?’ I said, ‘From Al-Ḥajjâj ibn Deenâr.’ He said, ‘Trustworthy, but from whom?’ I said, ‘The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).’ He said, ‘O Abu Is-hâq, indeed between Al-Ḥajjâj ibn Deenâr and the Prophet (ﷺ) is a great gap (i.e., they were not contemporaries)...’ ”

And Muslim also related a chain that ends with ‘Ali ibn Shaqeeq, who said: “I heard ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak say to a large gathering, ‘Forsake the hadith of ‘Amru ibn Thâbit, for he used to curse our pious predecessors.’ ”

There are many other examples that Muslim mentioned in the introduction of his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, all indicating that ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak was a strict critic of narrators and that he paid special attention to the chains of narrators. Muslim related with his chain that ends at Al-‘Abbâs ibn Abi Rizmah, who said, “I heard ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak say, ‘Between us and the people is the chain (of narrators).’ ”

In his *Tadhkirah*, Al-Ḥâfiḍh adh-Dhahabi related that Al-Musayib ibn Wâḍaiḥ said, “I heard Ibn al-Mubâarak being asked, ‘Whom should we take (knowledge) from?’ He said, ‘From the one who sought out knowledge for Allah and was most firm (and meticulous)

about his chain (of narrators). One might meet a trustworthy person who related from one who is not trustworthy. And one might meet a man who is not trustworthy but he related from one who is trustworthy. But instead, it should be a trustworthy one who related from another trustworthy one.”

Adh-Dhahabi also related that Ar-Rasheed captured a Zindeeq and intended to execute him. The Zindeeq said, “And what will you do about the one thousand hadiths that I fabricated?” Ar-Rasheed said, “O enemy of Allah, what will you do about Abu Is-hâq al-Fazâree and Ibn al-Mubârak, who will both sift through them and remove them letter by letter?” In another narration, Ibn al-Mubârak was asked about fabrications, and he answered, “There are geniuses that live for them (that is, that live to expose and eradicate them).”

Adh-Dhahabi reported that Ibraheem ibn Is-hâq said: “I heard Ibn al-Mubârak say, ‘I heard (narrations) from four thousand Shaykhs, and I related from only a thousand of them.’” The above-mentioned narrations clearly show Ahmad Ameen’s claim to be false.

2. Ameen then says that people were deceived by his honesty... You have just learned that Ibn al-Mubârak was a strict critic of narrators. When the qualities of truthfulness, uprightness, and precision in ascertaining the truth are all combined in one man, then it is compulsory to accept what he relates. And it is incorrect to say that, “People have been deceived by his truthfulness.”

Furthermore, we know that the scholars of narrator criticism agree that Ibn al-Mubârak was trustworthy and, among the scholars, he was an Imam of high standing. Ibn Mahdee said, “There are four Imams: Ath-Thawri, Mâlik, Hammâd ibn Zayd, and Ibn al-Mubârak.”

Imam Ahmad said about him: “There was none from his era who sought out knowledge more (assiduously) than he did. He compiled a great deal...” Ibn Mu‘een described him as being sagacious and

trustworthy. Ibn Sa'd, the author of *aṭ-Ṭabaqât*, said: "He was trustworthy, he was himself a proof, and he had many hadiths." Al-Ḥâkim said: "During his lifetime, he was the Imam of all lands, and he was the best among the people in terms of his asceticism, his bravery, and his generosity." Nasâ'i said: "During Ibn al-Mubârak's lifetime, we know of no one who was more honorable than he, nor of anyone who was more knowledgeable than he, nor of anyone who was more complete than he was in all praiseworthy characteristics."

In his explanation of *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, An-Nawawi said about him that, "The scholars agree about his eminence, about him being an Imam, and about his elevated status."

The scholars of narrator criticism agree that not only was Ibn al-Mubârak upright and truthful, but he was also very discerning when it came to accepting narrations; it is therefore sad to see one in recent times say about him that people would take hadiths from him, being deceived by his truthfulness."

Furthermore, the fact that the scholars acknowledge him to be an Imam and to be of an elevated status in the science of Hadith shows us how wrong Ameen is in his allegation. Muslim related with his chain that Imam Mâlik (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Know that a man is not safe from error if he relates all that he hears, and as long as he persists in doing so, he can never be an Imam."

3. As for the statement that he related from *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* regarding 'Abdullâh ibn al-Mubârak, one will find, upon closer inspection, that Ameen made a gross error. What Muslim really said is this: "Ibn Quhẓâdh related ... that Ibn al-Mubârak said, 'Baqiyah has a truthful tongue but he takes from everyone that comes and goes.'" Upon reading this, you no doubt perceive that the words are those of 'Abdullâh ibn al-Mubârak, who is speaking about Baqiyah, one of the Hadith scholars during that period. Ameen, however, somehow understood from that statement that the saying was about 'Abdullâh

ibn al-Mubârak. Moreover, it is established that Baqiyah ibn al-Waleed was in fact famous for relating all that he heard. Muslim then related this statement from Abu Is-hâq al-Fazâri: "Write from Baqiyah that which he related from known narrators, and do not write from him that which he related from unknown narrators." Adh-Dhahabi related that Ibn al-Mubârak said about Baqiyah, "He would relate from all who crawled or walked." As regards the statement of Muslim, Ahmad Ameen made two mistakes. First, Muslim did not make the statement in reference to Ibn al-Mubârak, but rather he was quoting Ibn al-Mubârak, who was speaking about someone else. Second, Ameen related the word "*Thiqah* (trustworthy)" and in *Şaheeh Muslim* the correct wording is "Baqiyah." Therefore there are only three possibilities: the author read the statement himself in *Şaheeh Muslim* but because he misunderstood it, he made a mistake; or he understood the statement, but he intentionally distorted it for some purpose he had in mind; or he saw that the statement was related by some Orientalists, and he simply took their statement, trusting to their truthfulness. If the third possibility is true, then he was relating from the enemies of Islam without having first checked for himself in the text of *Muslim*. I myself searched through the various editions of *Şaheeh Muslim*, perhaps that I might find one of them to contain a misprint, specifically the statement related by Ameen, thus giving him an excuse for his mistake. However, I found that all copies contained the original text, without any of them containing the misprint that I was looking for. If we try to find an excuse for the Orientalist — that he is a foreigner, that he is not faithful to Islam, or that he does not have the ability to understand texts in Arabic — what excuse can we find for a (Arabic-speaking) Muslim author who followed that Orientalist in his distortion, especially considering that he built a very dangerous opinion based on that distortion, an opinion that attacks the honor of a very distinguished Imam from the early generations of Islam?

The Hadith, “Block off all doors”

On page 260, the author discusses some of the more important factors that led people to fabricate hadiths. The first one that he mentioned was political differences — such as between those who wanted ‘Ali (ﷺ) to be Caliph and those who wanted Abu Bakr (ﷺ) to be Caliph, between Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ) and ‘Ali (ﷺ), between ‘Abdullâh ibn az-Zubayr (ﷺ) and ‘Abdul-Mâlik, and finally between the Umawiyeen and the ‘Abbâsiyeen.

We do not disagree with Ameen in this matter. But he then related these words from Ibn Abi al-Hâdeed:

“Indeed the source of lies in the hadiths of virtues came from the Shi‘ah. When those who preferred Abu Bakr saw what the Shi‘ah had done, they too invented hadiths for the Companions they preferred, such as, ‘If I were to take a Khaleel...’⁸ They invented it in contrast to the hadith of brotherhood. Another example is the (hadith about the) blocking off of doors, for it was related specifically in reference to ‘Ali, but then the supporters of Abu Bakr changed it, making it refer to Abu Bakr (ﷺ)...

Considering that Ibn al-Hâdeed was a Mu‘tazilee and Shi‘ah, we can at least find some excuse for him: that he was blindly supporting his beliefs as a Shi‘ah. However, we find no excuse for Ameen for not having commented on those claims, unless he actually agreed with Ibn Abi al-Hâdeed. We must remember, however, that both hadiths are authentic and are related by the Imams of hadith.

The first one is related by Bukhari by way of Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ) and Ibn az-Zubayr (ﷺ). Muslim related it as well, by way of Abu Sa‘eed (ﷺ) and Ibn Mas‘ood (ﷺ). As for the second hadith, a

⁸ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 11, p. 492, hadith no. 3384 and Muslim, vol. 12, p. 97, hadith no. 4391.

command is given for all doors connected with the Mosque to be blocked off, with exception of Abu Bakr's door. This hadith is related by Bukhari, by way of Abu Sa'eed and Ibn 'Abbâs. Muslim related it as well, by way of Abu Sa'eed, Jundub (ﷺ), and Ubay ibn Ka'b (ﷺ). Both hadiths are related by other compilers of the Sunnah as well — by Mâlik, Tirmidhi, Ṭabarâni, Aḥmad, Ibn 'Asâkir, Ibn Hîbbân, and others.

As for the hadith of brotherhood, Ibn al-Ḥadeed refers to the hadith accepted by the Shi'ah, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) makes a bond of brotherhood between 'Ali and himself. This hadith is not authentic through any chain that can be trusted, nor has any book from the books of the Sunnah or any reliable narrator related it. Shaykh al-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah stated:

“Indeed, according to the people of Hadith, this hadith is fabricated. None of those who have knowledge of Hadith will doubt that in the least. Its fabricator is ignorant and a liar, whose lies are manifest and whose falsification has been exposed.”

As regards the hadith about blocking off all doors to the mosque, according to the narration of the Shi'ah, the exception is the door of 'Ali (ﷺ). Most hadith critics ruled that their narration is fabricated. This ruling has been given by Ibn al-Jawzi, Al-'Irâqi, Ibn Taymiyah, and others. Yet supposing it to be authentic, scholars have given a sufficient explanation for it. In *Fath al-Bâri*, Ibn Ḥajr relates that the Prophet (ﷺ) at first ordered for the blocking off of all doors except the door of 'Ali. When they had blocked the doors off, they created another sort of passage, through which they would enter into the mosque. He (ﷺ) ordered for all of these to be blocked except for the one of Abu Bakr (ﷺ). Ibn Ḥajr said, “This is a good way to combine between the meanings of both hadiths. This understanding is upheld by Abu Ja'far aṭ-Ṭahâwi, in *Mushkil al-Âthâr* and Abu Bakr al-Kilâbâdhi, in *Ma'ânee al-Akhbâr...*”

Aḥâdeeth (Hadiths) about virtues

Ameen states on page 261:

“When you see certain hadiths, you will not doubt as you are reading them that they have been fabricated to support the Umawiyeen, the ‘Abbâsiyeen, or the ‘Ulwiyeen, or to discredit them, depending on who it is that is fabricating the narration. Similar to this are those hadiths that the fabricator invents in order to give preference to his tribe. How many hadiths have been fabricated about virtues of the Quraysh, the Anṣâr, the Juhaynah, and the Mazeenah? And also similar is the fanaticism shown for one’s country. You will hardly find a large country except that there is a hadith related about it. Cities such as Makkah and Madinah are extolled. The mountain Uḥud is extolled. Hġjâz, Yemen, Syria and Palestine, Bayt al-Maqdis, Egypt, and Fâris — the superiority of all of these places has been related in hadith narrations.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) lived among Companions who would give up their wealth and their very souls for Islam. Though they were all of that nature, there was a disparity among them as to the degree of how much they were willing to sacrifice. There is also a disparity among them as to who accepted Islam in the early stages and who accepted Islam much later on. It is therefore not strange that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) should specify praise for some of his Companions or should mention the talents of one of his Companions, or mention anything else that would point out to others the status and superiority of a Companion or a group of Companions. The same can be said for Makkah, for that was where the *Da‘wah* had begun; and Madinah, where a nation was formed; and Bayt al-Maqdis, which Allah (ﷻ) praised in his Book. Likewise, tribes and the inhabitants of other cities would compete in the performance of good deeds and the children of those tribes and cities would participate in making Allah’s Religion supreme in all lands. And so the Prophet (Blessings and

peace be upon him) would make known to all the merits of different tribes and places.

Yet in some instances, it is also possible — and in fact it did happen — that certain fanatical and ignorant elements fabricated hadiths in order to raise the status of their leaders, their countries, or even their tribes. They would invent hadiths about the virtues of peoples and places.

No one disagrees that both matters occurred: that there are authentic hadiths that are related about virtues of peoples, countries, and tribes, and that there are also fabricated narrations invented for the same purpose. The job of the just scholar in such a situation is not to hasten to give credence to all of these hadiths or to disbelieve in them all. Simply because some of them are fabricated, the just scholar will not rule them all to be fabrications. On the other hand, simply because there are authentic narrations, he will not rule all other narrations to be authentic as well. Scholars have precise means of distinguishing between the authentic and the fabricated; they resort to scholarly evidence to criticize both the chain and the text of a narration. After scrutinizing any given narration, they will rule a hadith to be authentic or otherwise. This is the logical way in dealing with situations such as the one mentioned. And that is what our Imams have done when they were faced with a huge quantity of hadiths.

After scrutinizing narrations in which people or places are extolled, our scholars have found many of them to be authentic. Imam Bukhari, for instance, has authored the most authentic book in hadith, and he was the most severe in his conditions for accepting a narration; even the author of *Fajr al-Islâm* acknowledges his status, his precision, and his contribution to Islam. In his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, Bukhari dedicated chapters to show the superiority of the *Muhâjiroon* and the Anṣâr as well as the virtues of specific Companions, such as Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, ‘Ali, Sa‘d, Ubay, and Mu‘âdh (may Allah be

pleased with them). There are also numerous authentic hadiths about the virtues of Makkah, Madinah, Yemen, Shâm (Syria and Palestine), and other places; as well as about the virtues of certain tribes, such as the Quraysh, Muzeenah, and Juhaynah. Bukhari was not alone in authenticating these narrations; the likes of Aḥmad, Muslim, and at-Tirmidhi also authenticated them. But at the same time, they clarified which narrations were fabrications, exposing their fabricators, and giving precise critiques on their chains.

What made the author of *Fajr al-Islâm* feign to be ignorant about the many authentic narrations in this regard? And why did he raise doubts about all narrations that dealt with virtues of places, peoples, and tribes? In this matter, as well as in other matters, he followed the way of Orientalists like Goldziher.

The hadiths of Abu Ḥaneefah

Moving on to the second motive for the invention of fabrications, Ameen asserts on page 162:

“And the same goes for fiqh. You will not find a secondary issue in jurisprudence except that there is a hadith to support the claim of each jurist whose ruling in the matter differs from that of other jurists. The scholars relate from Abu Ḥaneefah that he considered only a small number of hadiths to be authentic. Ibn Khaldoon said, ‘They amount to seventeen narrations.’ Yet the books of his school are replete with numerous and countless hadiths — and sometimes, with texts that, if anything, are similar to the texts of Fiqh books...”

We do not disagree that differences in opinion in matters of jurisprudence did play a role in the invention of fabrications, and we ourselves have pointed this out in a previous chapter. But Ameen is wrong when he imputes to scholars the opinion that Abu Ḥaneefah only considered seventeen hadiths to be authentic.

The Ḥanafī School is the most extensive of the schools of jurisprudence in terms of deducing and deriving rulings. The issues in which Imam Abu Ḥaneefah ruled are related to be in the hundreds of thousands. Hence it does not make sense that Abu Ḥaneefah derived those rulings from a relatively small number of verses that deal with jurisprudence and from seventeen or so hadiths. It might be said that he derived those rulings from the use of analogy. But in response, we say that there are seventeen books of narrations that Imam Abu Ḥaneefah's students related from him, which indicates that a great part of his fiqh is taken from the Sunnah. Imam Abu Ḥaneefah's rulings correspond to a great number of hadiths, so if he ruled based on those hadiths, how can it be said that he did not consider them to be authentic?

As for the statement of Ibn Khaldoon, it was not his, but rather he was quoting it, and the context was such that the reader feels that Ibn Khaldoon found it to be a strange statement. And we do not know of any one before Ibn Khaldoon who even mentioned it. On the contrary, there are many sayings from scholars which show that Abu Ḥaneefah authenticated a great number of hadiths. In a more detailed manner, we shall deal with this issue later on in this book (*inshā' Allāh*), when we discuss the biography of Abu Ḥaneefah — may Allah have mercy on him.

Did people exaggerate in their dependence on the Sunnah?

Discussing the factors that led to hadith fabrications, Ameen comments on page 263 of his book:

“I cannot help but feel that extravagance in many people led to fabrications of hadith. How? They would not accept knowledge unless the source of that knowledge had a strong link with the Qur'an and the Sunnah; otherwise, they would not consider that knowledge

to be of any great value. If rulings of prohibition and permissibility were based on analogy, those rulings would not be given the same weight as rulings that were based on hadith. If the source of knowledge was analogy, many scholars of that period would reject it and would not lend any importance to it; furthermore, some of them would even reject wisdom, admonition, or good sermons if the source was Greek, Indian, or Fârisee, or even if the source was the Torah or the Bible. If these were the sources of knowledge, people were forced to make it appear that a wise saying, for instance, was founded in religious texts so that people would accept it. They found that the only door open to them was hadith, and so people entered into it without fearing Allah, the Exalted, in their actions. As a result, we find rulings in jurisprudence to be manufactured — either from Indian wisdom, Greek philosophy, or insight from the Christians and Jews.”

In the past and present, Muslims agree — except for those who are not even considered, meaning people who simply follow their desires and practice innovation — that the Qur’an and the Sunnah are the two sources of Islamic legislation upon which the Muslim scholar must rely when he is issuing rulings. After agreeing on this initial premise, the scholars then split into two groups:

1. A group that deems it mandatory to take from the apparent meanings of texts, without the use of reasoning and without relying excessively on the use of analogy. This group consists of the Dhâhiriyyah and most of the people of hadith.
2. A group that holds it necessary for the mind to work in order to deduce rulings from texts. They use analogy along with the Book and the Sunnah. They search out for the reasons behind rulings, they specify that which is general, and they limit that which seems to be comprehensive. They also distinguish abrogated from abrogating rulings whenever an additional proof is available to them. This group

consists of the majority of the *mujtahideen*⁹, the bearers of knowledge from the time of the Companions until this day.

Yes, there is a disparity among the scholars as regards using analogy and to the conditions that must be stipulated for accepting a narration to be authentic. And here lies the difference between the school of opinion and the school of hadith. Nevertheless they all agree that it is not permissible to practice *ijtihâd* in *fiqh* without first resorting to the Sunnah. The scholars also agree that it is necessary for a *mujtahid* to have a comprehensively knowledge of all hadiths of jurisprudence.

In *Jâmi' al-Bayân al-'Ilm*, Al-Hâfidh ibn 'Abdul-Barr related that Imam Shâfi'ee (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“It is not for anyone to say *Halâl* or *Harâm* about something except through knowledge, and knowledge is what is found in the Qur'an or in the Sunnah or in consensus or in analogy...”

The scholars also agree that a *mujtahid* must first look in Allah's Book, then in the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), then in the sayings of the Companions, and then into deduction and analogy, unless there is consensus. In our discussion about the four Imams, we will further elaborate on this principle.

Ameen asserts that when rulings of permissibility and prohibition are based on *ijtihâd*, they do not have the same value as rulings that are based on hadith. His statement implies that when a *mujtahid* has a hadith that he can use for a ruling, there is a kind of *ijtihâd* that is not based on that hadith. No Muslim scholar has ever applied that kind of *ijtihâd*. A principle that all scholars agree upon is that *ijtihâd* in the presence of a text is not permissible.

⁹ *Mujtahideen*: pl. of *mujtahid*, one who uses *ijtihâd*, or reasoning, in deriving rulings from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. (Editor)

As for a wise saying or a good admonition — as long as it does not contradict revealed texts, the spirit of revealed texts, or one of the higher aims or morals that are derived from revealed texts, we know of no Imam who rejected it simply because it was not related in the Qur'an or the Sunnah. It is related by Tirmidhi in a hadith that is graded as 'acceptable' wisdom is the goal of the believer; he takes it wherever he finds it. When Allah describes the believers, He (ﷻ) says that they listen to what is said, and then follow the best of it. Allah relates to us many stories from ancient nations, as well as their wisdom and noble sayings. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did the same, pointing out that there is no harm in taking from previous nations, as long as what is related is not in contradiction with the aims and principles of the Sharia.

Bukhari related in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* from 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amru (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Convey from me, even if it is a single verse. And relate from the children of Israel, and there is no harm in that." Al-Ḥāfiḍh Ibn Ḥajr wrote,

"There is no restriction upon you when it comes to relating from them. At an earlier time, the Prophet (ﷺ) reproached his Companions for taking from them and for reading their books. Thereafter he gave them more leeway in that regard. Because it was feared that some people might be put to trial, the prohibition took effect, and this was before Islamic rulings became well established. When there was no longer any danger, the Prophet (ﷺ) gave his permission because there were lessons to be learned from narrations that were being relayed at that time."

Ibn Ḥajr then related this saying of Mālik: "The meaning of this narration is that it is permissible to relate from them in noble and honorable matters. If something is known to be a lie, then it is not (permissible)." Some Companions related much from Ka'b al-Aḥbār and Wahb ibn Munabbih, to the extent that books of tafseer are

replete with narrations from the Children of Israel. Likewise, Sufi books and books on manners and wisdom are replete with sayings related from other nations. Then how does the claim hold true that Muslims would reject wisdom or a good sermon if its source were not a revealed Islamic text?

In short, Ameen has no basis for his claim. In fact, important Islamic reference books are full of narrations that disprove it. I do not know what made him make such a statement. Was he trying to assert that adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah had a harmful effect on the Religion because it gave people a motive to fabricate?

The uprightness of the Companions

On page 265, Ameen writes:

“Most hadith critics have ruled that every single Companion is upright and trustworthy; no hadith critic has found fault with or ascribed a lie to any of them. Few among them have depicted the Companions in a negative light as others have done... Most scholars, especially ones from recent centuries, have ruled that every single Companion is upright and just...”

Among the matters that the Tâbi'oon and the masses of Muslims from ensuing generations agree upon is that the Companions are all upright and just, and they are all above telling lies or fabricating hadiths. The only ones to disagree in this matter are those whose opinion is not even considered — the Khawârij, the Mu'tazilah, and the Shi'ah.

That consensus is well established; however, Ameen tries, for a purpose that is known only to him, to raise doubts about it, first claiming that *most* hadith critics ruled every single Companion to be upright and just, whereas in reality, *all* hadith critics have ruled them to be so. Second, he claims that few of them have depicted the

Companions in a negative light, and that this is opposed to what others have done. The truth, however, is that those who spoke negatively about any of the Companions are not considered to be hadith critics. Instead, they are people with well-known leanings and well-known fanatical attachments to a specific Companion to the exclusion of the rest.

Al-Hâfidh ibn Katheer said: “All of the Companions are upright and just; this is upheld by *Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamâ’ah*.” Commenting on a view from the Shi’ah, that only seventeen Companions were upright and just, Ibn Katheer inveighs against that claim, saying, “It is madness without proof.”

You will see that those who spoke negatively about the Companions are from well-known sects, people who have specific political leanings and obsessive attachments to some Companions more than to others. Therefore it was not hadith critics who attacked any of the Companions. Third, Ameen says that most hadith critics ruled every single Companion to be upright and just, especially scholars from recent centuries. However, it is not related that any scholar from the early centuries ever attacked a Companion or abstained from relating his hadith narrations.

Did the Companions ever accuse one another of lying?

Ameen did not limit himself to an implicit attack against the Companions; he was at times explicit in his assault: “But it appears that during their lifetime, the Companions would criticize one another and would accord to some among them a higher status than to others...” With these words, Ameen is disapproving of the stance taken by hadith scholars, saying that it is not correct to say that all Companions are upright and just. He says that the Companions doubted the honesty of some among them, and in an attempt to prove

that, he based his arguments on the following three matters:

1. He related that Ibn ‘Abbâs (ؓ) and ‘Â’ishah (ؓ) criticized Abu Hurayrah (ؓ).
2. He related that if a hadith were to be narrated in the presence of a Companion, he would demand from the narrator that he prove the veracity of his narrations.
3. He alluded to an incident that took place between ‘Umar (ؓ) and Fâtimah bint Qays (ؓ).

We will deal with each of these points, showing that they do not serve to further Ameen’s claim. First, I know of no authentic source in which it is related that some Companions doubted the honesty of other Companions, except of course, the books of the Râfîdah and the extreme sects of the Shi‘ah. These deviant groups related that ‘Ali (ؓ) cursed those Companions who went against him and deemed them to be liars. However, every single authentic narration pertaining to this issue establishes that the Companions were far above cursing one another or even doubting the truthfulness of one another. The proofs to establish this are plentiful indeed.

If a Companion heard a hadith from another Companion, he would immediately believe it to be true, without doubting it in the least. He would then ascribe the hadith to the Messenger (ﷺ) in such a way as if it was he who had heard it directly himself. Anas (ؓ) said, “We would not accuse one another of lying.” They trusted so much in the piety and truthfulness of one another that there was no room left in their hearts for any doubt. As for ‘Â’ishah and Ibn ‘Abbâs’s criticism of Abu Hurayrah, we will delay its discussion until the chapter we have dedicated to Abu Hurayrah (ؓ).

When Ameen referred to situations wherein some Companions would ask for proof from other Companions to make sure that a hadith was authentic, he was referring to the same issue that we have hitherto discussed in a previous chapter, wherein

we mentioned that Abu Bakr (ﷺ) demanded from Mugheerah (ﷺ) that he furnish witnesses to support his narration; likewise, ‘Umar demanded the same from Abu Moosa (ﷺ). As regards these two isolated instances, we have already mentioned the wisdom behind Abu Bakr and ‘Umar asking for witnesses. And we have already established that they would accept narrations from the Companions in other situations without demanding any additional witnesses. This, in fact, was their habitual way when receiving narrations, a way that they deviated from only in isolated and specific instances when it was necessary to teach the Muslims that they had to be careful when accepting hadith narrations. How could ‘Umar have doubted Abu Moosa when he himself said, “Though you were most trusted by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I did not want for people to become brazen with hadith.” And when that incident occurred, Ubay (ﷺ) reproached ‘Umar for his treatment of Abu Moosa (ﷺ). Muslim related that Ubay (ﷺ) said, “Do not inflict punishment on the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).” Does not this severe reproach prove that ‘Umar’s stance in the said situation was not one that the Companions were accustomed to?

As for the story between ‘Umar (ﷺ) and Fâtimah bint Qays (ﷺ), Ameen says:

“It has been related that Fâtimah bint Qays reported that her husband gave her a final divorce, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not grant her spending money or her former husband’s home (during the waiting period). He said to her, ‘Wait out your period in the home of Ibn Umm Maktoom, for verily, he is a blind man.’ When she related that statement, the Leader of the Believers refuted her, saying, ‘We will not leave the Book of our Lord nor the Sunnah of our Prophet (ﷺ) for the saying of a woman, regarding whom, we do not know whether she spoke the truth or lied, nor whether she memorized or forgot.’ And ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ) said to her, ‘Will you not fear Allah...’”

This hadith is related in most of the books of the Sunnah, and it is well known by jurists. Yet it must be analyzed from various angles.

First, there was a disparity among the Companions regarding their level of understanding and their ability to deduce rulings. In another context, some of them had extenuating circumstances, because of which the Messenger (ﷺ) issued specific rulings for them. Then that person would relate the ruling to others, saying that it was general and applicable to everyone. A scholarly discussion would ensue, which had nothing to do with criticism based on the doubtfulness of someone's truthfulness. For example, person "A" related a hadith, while person "B" held that it was abrogated or that its implications were limited by another narration. One person might have related a narration in which the Messenger (ﷺ) issued a ruling based on extenuating circumstances, and the narrator felt that the ruling was specific to him; but another person might have thought that the ruling was general and applicable to all who were in the same circumstances. It might have occurred that one of them related a hadith and that someone else narrated it differently, ruling that the first person made a mistake or forgot. The point is that everything we have in terms of differences that occurred among the Companions are instances of differences of opinion based on the reasons mentioned above, and not based on the reason that some disbelieved in the truthfulness of others.

Second, the quote attributed to 'Umar, "Whether she spoke the truth or lied," is not related in any of the books of hadith. I sifted through every hadith reference book that I could get my hands on, but I could not find the purported narration with this specific wording. All that I could find was the statement, "Whether she remembered or forgot," and even that statement is related in some sources only, such as in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*.

One is shocked by Ameen's method, for immediately after relating the hadith with the said wording, he says in a footnote, "Refer to the explanation of An-Nawawi for *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* and to the explanation of *Muslim ath-Thaboot*." When referring to the explanation of An-Nawawi, I did not find the statement, "Whether she spoke the truth or lied." And when referring to the second source, I found that its author said that the statement was an addition and was not actually related in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*. Nonetheless, Ameen should know that *Muslim ath-Thaboot* is not from the books of the Sunnah and one should not refer to it in order to find out whether a narration is an authentic hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Since Ameen was giving a historical account of the recording of the Sunnah, and since he claims that he is a scholar, he should have fulfilled the basic scholarly duty of referring to primary sources. He neither looked in the primary sources of hadith nor was he trustworthy in giving an accurate account of what he read in the books of hadith. He ascribed a false saying to the explanations of both An-Nawawi and *Muslim ath-Thaboot*. I do not know, did he think that his readers would simply accept his claim without actually looking it up in the two sources he cited?

Third, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) only refuted Fâtimah's narration because he found it to be contrary to what was authentic from the Book and the Sunnah. It is an established rule that when two narrations contradict each other, one must accept the stronger of the two. And we know that a proof from the Book is stronger than a proof from the Sunnah. So without a doubt, it was necessary for 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) to forsake her narration and to adhere to the proofs that were strongest according to his understanding. Meanwhile, we give her the benefit of the doubt, saying that perhaps she had forgotten, an explanation that involves no staining of her character.

Fourth, ‘Ā’ishah’s statement, “Will you not fear Allah”, was based on what she knew from the Messenger (ﷺ) — he did not rule for financial support or for shelter in Fâtimah’s case because of her extenuating circumstances. Hence it was not a general ruling for all women who are given a final divorce. When ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) saw that Fâtimah (رضي الله عنها) was relating the Prophet’s ruling in her situation, making it seem that it was a general ruling, ‘Ā’ishah pointed out the truth to her and made her to understand that it was a specific ruling for her. It is established in Muslim that Fâtimah said, “O Messenger of Allah, my husband has divorced me for the third time and I fear that he will come forcefully upon me.” The Prophet (ﷺ) then ordered that she should move. This is further corroborated by other narrations in Bukhari, that ‘Ā’ishah said, “It is not well for her to mention this hadith. Fâtimah was in an isolated place and it was feared that something might happen to her, and so the Prophet (ﷺ) gave her license (to leave).”

After refuting all of the doubts raised by Ameen, we see that the Companions did not in fact doubt in the truthfulness of one another. And any narration which shows that they differed in a matter is based on scholarly argumentation and on their different understanding of hadith narrations; in other instances, they asked for a witness, not because they doubted in one another, but rather to teach the next generation to be cautious and careful when judging a hadith to be authentic or not. All of this goes to show how vigilant they were in preserving the truth, how sincere they were in transmitting knowledge, and how discerning they were in accepting only authentic narrations of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), so that they could convey them to ensuing generations free from impurity. Allah (ﷻ) was pleased with that generation, a generation that was superior to all other generations throughout history. May Allah reward them well.

Disagreement among the scholars in grading narrators

On page 266, Ameen wrote:

“As a result of differences among the schools of jurisprudence, scholars differed in grading narrators. The people of the Sunnah would often attack the honor of the Shi‘ah, to the extent that they forbade relating narrations from ‘Ali (ﷺ) that were related through his companions and supporters. They only accepted his narrations if they were related through the companions of ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (ﷺ). The Shi‘ah took a similar stance vis-à-vis the people of the Sunnah; they would only rule a narrator to be trustworthy if he was from the Shi‘ah... As a result, some would rule a narrator to be upright while others would attack his honor. Adh-Dhahabi said, ‘No two of the scholars of this field agree in terms of ruling a weak narrator to be trustworthy or of ruling a trustworthy narrator to be weak.’ Although the statement is an exaggeration, it shows us that scholars did differ in their opinions when it came to grading narrators. To mention just one example, Qatâdah said about Muhammad ibn Is-hâq, one of the greatest Islamic historians, ‘People will still have knowledge as long as Muhammad ibn Is-hâq is alive.’ Nasâ‘i said, ‘He is not strong.’ Sufiyân said, ‘I have not heard anyone accuse Muhammad ibn Is-hâq.’ Ad-Dâraqutnee said, ‘One cannot use him and his father as proofs.’ And Mâlik said, ‘I do witness that he is a liar...’”

Our discussion here revolves around two points:

1. The principles of narrator criticism.
2. The statement of Adh-Dhahabi and the opinions about Muhammad ibn Is-hâq.

As regards the first point, the author was very vague in discussing the principles of hadith criticism, just as he was vague in

discussing the effects of differences among the schools of jurisprudence. His statement, “As a result, some would rule a narrator to be upright while others would attack his honor,” implies that the cause of differences in rulings pertaining to narrator criticism was the disputes among schools of jurisprudence. To begin with, the differences in narrator criticism either occurred between the people of the Sunnah and those who differed from them in terms of the various sects or between the people of the Sunnah among themselves.

Different rulings among the people of the Sunnah resulted from the differences of opinion regarding the truthfulness of a narrator, regarding whether he was upright, and regarding whether he had a good memory.

Differences between the people of the Sunnah and others did not result because of any disparity between the different schools. As has been established in our discussion of narrator criticism, the people of the Sunnah did not vilify or discredit their opponent unless,

1. his innovation led to disbelief,
2. he attacked one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ),
3. he was inviting others to his innovation,
4. or the hadith he was narrating was in harmony with the innovation to which he was inviting others.

The scholars of hadith criticism would consider all of these points as evidence showing that the narrator was not truthful or sincere. Other than those points, they differed about a narrator who was outside of the ranks of the people of the Sunnah not based on differences between schools of thought, but based on the truthfulness of a narrator. This is why the books of the Sunnah, and in their forefront *Bukhari* and *Muslim*, related hadiths from some innovators whom history has shown to be truthful. Examples of such narrators are ‘Umrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân al-Khârijee and Abbân ibn Taghlab ash-Shi‘ee. As he was discussing the biography of Abbân ibn Taghlab al-Koofi,

Al-Hâfidh adh-Dhahabi said, “A dyed-in-the-wool Shi‘ee, but he is truthful. For us is his honesty and against him is his innovation.”

It is true that the people of the Sunnah do not accept narrations of ‘Ali (ﷺ) which are related through his supporters, but that is because they distorted his knowledge, imputed to him opinions that he never held, and attributed to him sayings that he never even uttered. It is related from Ibn Is-hâq that he said, “When they perpetrated those actions after ‘Ali, one among them — who was against their actions — said, “May Allah fight them; how priceless is the knowledge that they have distorted!” All these points only highlight the generalizations and obfuscations resorted to by Ameen.

As regards the second point, Ameen said that as a result, some would rule a narrator to be upright while others would attack his honor. He attempted to prove this point based on the statement of Adh-Dhahabi. But he committed a sequence of errors:

First, he was wrong in using Muhammad ibn Is-hâq as an example to show that differences among the schools of jurisprudence had an effect on narrator criticism, for Muhammad ibn Is-hâq was one of the people of the Sunnah. Every scholar who disagreed about him was also one of the people of the Sunnah. So Ameen did not prove his point by using him as an example.

Second, he misunderstood Adh-Dhahabi’s statement; he understood from it that it showed how great a disparity there was among scholars of narrator criticism in their judgments. But if one reads the statement of Adh-Dhahabi closely, one will come to a completely different understanding. In effect, Adh-Dhahabi is making the following point: the scholars in this field are careful and precise in criticizing narrators, so it has never occurred that they differed about the trustworthiness of a narrator who was famous for being weak, nor about the weakness of a narrator who was known to be upright and trustworthy. Instead, they only disagreed about one who was neither

famous for being weak nor for being upright. He said, “Deem upright a weak narrator and deem weak a trustworthy narrator.” If he had intended to say what Ameen understood, he would have said, “No two agreed about the uprightness of any given narrator.”

The question that remains, then, is this: did Ameen really not understand the statement of Adh-Dhahabi or did he understand it but choose to ignore its true implications in order to take away from the honor of Hadith scholars, hoping to convince the reader that they were often self-contradictory in their views? The implications of what Ameen says are indeed dangerous. In effect, he is saying that if a scholar rules a narrator to be satisfactory in his narrations, then there are others who will consider him to be weak; consequently, it is not binding upon us to accept a hadith that Bukhari relates, because the narrators that he rules to be trustworthy will be judged as being weak by other scholars. Contemplate these most dangerous ideas.

The principles of criticism in the chain and in the text

Ameen comments on page 266:

“The scholars have established rules for narrator criticism, but this is not the place to mention them. However, we can say that — and the truth must be told — they gave more attention to criticizing the chain of narrators than to criticizing the text of a hadith. Rarely do we find them criticizing a narration because the words ascribed to the Prophet (ﷺ) do not agree with historical circumstances and realities. Nor do we find them criticizing a hadith because the style of the wording used was philosophical in nature as opposed to the style of speech that we know from the Prophet (ﷺ). And we do not find them criticizing a hadith because the style of its wording... is too similar to texts of jurisprudence. Regarding these matters, we find that scholars of hadith criticize and analyze narrators 10 times more than they do

the texts of narrations. We even see that Bukhari — despite his high and noble status and his precision in his research — established a hadith, which is proven to be untrue through historical occurrences and visible facts. This is because he limited his criticism to narrators. For example, there is the hadith, ‘There will not remain on the face of the earth a breathing soul after one hundred years,’¹⁰ and the hadith, ‘Whoever eats seven dates every day will be harmed neither by poison nor by magic on that day until the night.’¹¹

Ameen’s claim involves two matters:

1. A criticism of the rules established by the scholars of hadith criticism.
2. A criticism of two hadiths that are related in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*. His comments are based on the new principles that he establishes for himself in the science of Hadith.

Rules laid down by the scholars for criticizing Hadith

We must pause here to see whether the scholars were indeed derelict when it came to criticizing the text of a narration and whether there was anything more they could have done in that regard.

When a man brings you some news about another man, the first thing that comes to mind is to ask yourself whether the bearer of the news is truthful or not — which you probably judge based on what you know of his situation, his past, his trustworthiness, his dealings, and so on. After learning that he is trustworthy, you then move on to what he actually said, comparing it to what you know

¹⁰ Reported by Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwi in *Mushkil al-Āthār*, vol. 1, p. 386, hadith nos. 3384 and 4391.

¹¹ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 18, p. 63, hadith no. 5326 and Muslim, vol. 6, p. 123, hadith no. 5388. See *al-Musnad al-Jāmi’*, vol. 12, p. 177.

about the person who is being spoken of, in terms of his sayings, deeds, as well as his situation. If the news corresponds to what you know of his situation, you will not doubt that the bearer of news has spoken the truth. Otherwise, you will hesitate in accepting the news — even though you know that the bearer of news is truthful — because of some evidence in the report itself that makes you unsure. In the end, that might have been because the bearer of news had forgotten or had imagined the information, thinking all the while that what he was relating was true. Yet there might be another reason why his news is false. If you not only hesitated in such a situation but went so far as to rule his information to be a lie, then that was an arbitrary and wrong ruling on your part, because you disbelieved in the news of a man whom you acknowledge to be truthful and trustworthy.

The situation described above is the same as that of the scholars who found before them many narrations from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). In criticizing those narrations and discerning between the authentic and the unauthentic, they took two steps: first, to criticize the chain of narrators, and second, to criticize the text of the narration.

As for the chain, we have already mentioned the conditions they stipulated for a narrator to be acceptable — qualities such as uprightness, precision, and memory. They also stipulated that each narrator in the chain had to have heard directly from the one before him until the chain reaches a Companion. I believe that neither the author in question nor those who preceded him from the Orientalists are able to accuse our scholars of dereliction when it comes to criticizing narrators. They laid down precise rules, which provide the guidelines for grading a narrator to be acceptable or not. Even the Orientalists agree with this: that our scholars — may Allah have mercy on them — have reached the pinnacle of circumspection and precision in grading narrators.

As regards the text of a narration, we have hitherto mentioned some of the principles they have outlined to criticize it:

1. The wording of the narration should not be stilted to an extent that an eloquent person would not speak in that manner.
2. The narration should not be contrary to obvious realities that the mind accepts, unless there is a possible (variant) interpretation.
3. The narration should not be contrary to general rules of wisdom and manners.
4. The narration should not be contrary to what is felt by the senses or to what is witnessed.
5. The narration should not be contrary to obvious facts of medicine and wisdom.
6. The narration should not be inviting to baseness, from which Islam absolves itself from.
7. It should not be contrary to what is instinctively accepted and understood regarding the basic principles of belief — regarding Allah's attributes or the attributes of His Messengers.
8. It should not be contrary to Allah's Sunnah regarding the universe and humankind.
9. It should not consist of foolish sayings, which the wise ones would never utter.
10. It should not be contrary to the Qur'an, to the clear Sunnah, to that upon which there is consensus, or to that which must necessarily be known in the Religion — in cases that there is no room for interpretation.
11. It should not be contrary to known historical realities from the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).
12. It should not be in accordance with the sect or school of jurisprudence that the narrator is an adherent of and that he invites others to join.
13. It should not inform us of a matter that occurred in front of a huge audience, but then is related by a single person only.

14. It should not be inspired by personal motive, which caused the narrator to relate his narration.

15. It should not exaggerate in mentioning a huge reward for small deeds, nor should it exaggerate in mentioning severe punishment for a small, insignificant deed.

Based on these well-developed and solid principles, the scholars dedicated themselves to criticizing hadith texts, in order to distinguish between the authentic and the unauthentic. No doubt, they are sound principles, by which a just person cannot help but be impressed — impressed by their strength, depth, and precision. But our scholars did not stop at these principles; they compared a given narration to other narrations, to see whether it contained any hidden defects. They also studied to see whether the wording of a narration had been distorted or whether another person's words were mistakenly inserted into the wording of a text. Books of hadith criticism are replete with examples of hadiths that are rejected based on a flaw in the text of a narration.

Further illustrating their prodigious level of circumspection and precision, the scholars have said that there is a possibility that an authentic, Ahâd narration only imparts almost sure knowledge and not absolute knowledge; however, they also say that that is enough to make it binding on us to apply them. Just that they made the former statement shows how careful they were regarding Allah's Religion, for they acknowledged that there always is the possibility that a narrator might forget or make a mistake that goes undetected.

All of that circumspection did not seem to impress the author of *Fajr al-Islâm*, and that is because it did not impress his Orientalist teachers. Ameen says that when criticizing narrations, hadith scholars should have paid more attention to the following issues:

1. Does the narration ascribed to the Prophet (ﷺ) correspond to the conditions that are spoken of?

2. Do historical events corroborate the narration?
3. Is the style of the hadith one that is philosophical, contradicting what is known from the style of the Prophet's speech?
4. Is the hadith similar in its form to a text of jurisprudence?

And in *Duḥa al-Islâm* (2/130-131), he added the following matters:

5. Does the hadith correspond to reality?
6. Was there a political motive for fabrication?
7. Does the hadith correspond to prevailing circumstances?
8. Was there a personal motive that led the narrator to fabricate?

These are the new and improved principles of hadith criticism that Ahmad Ameen lays down. He claims that Islamic scholars ignored these principles and that had they paid attention to them, they would have ruled correctly in many hadiths that they ruled to be authentic, when in fact — according to his claim — they are fabricated.

He gave two examples, both of which are hadiths found in Bukhari. In *Duḥa al-Islâm*, he gave the example of a hadith related in *Tirmidhi* from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه): "Truffles...and their juice are a cure for the eye, and the 'Ajwah (date) is from Paradise, and it is a cure for poison."¹² Ameen says, "When hadith scholars criticized this narration, they should have tested the potency of Truffles, in spite of the claim of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), who said that he tried them and that they led to his cure."

Concentrating our study on his new principles and standards, let us look at the examples Ameen chose to see the extent to which he was correct.

1. He said that hadith scholars did not first check to see whether the conditions that are spoken of in the narration correspond to reality.

¹² Reported by Bukhari, vol. 17, p. 476, hadith no. 5272 and Muslim, vol. 10, p. 362, hadith no. 3816. See *al-Musnad al-Jâmi'*, vol. 12, p. 177.

You have already seen that this claim is false because they did in fact lay down principles to criticize the text of a narration; we have previously given the example of the hadith of the washroom; the scholars rejected it because during his lifetime, the Prophet (ﷺ) never entered a washroom and washrooms were not even known in Hijâz.

2. Ameen then spoke about historical events that corroborate or disprove a narration. You have hitherto seen that hadith scholars counted that as one of the signs of a fabrication. For example, they rejected the hadith in which it is said that the jizyah tax was imposed on the people of Khaybar. Scholars rejected it because historical events disprove it — the jizyah tax was only imposed at a later date. Notice in this example how scholars used history and the chronology of events to expose the lie of a narrator. And you have also seen how they used the chronology of events to show that a narrator lied in his claim that he met the Shaykh from whom he purportedly heard a narration.

3. He then said that scholars should have studied the style of wording in a text, for if the style was philosophical in nature and if it was contrary to the known style of the Prophet (ﷺ), we can know that that narration is a fabrication. This comes under the topic of ‘stilted speech’. The principle behind that rule is that we know that the Prophet (ﷺ) could not possibly have uttered the words that are ascribed to him. In this regard, we have related to you ibn Daqeeq al-‘Eid’s words,

“Often, they would rule it to be a fabrication because of matters that revolved around the text. They knew what the Prophet (ﷺ) might have said and what it was impossible for him to have said.”

Hence it was easy for them to reject a hadith that consisted of a philosophical style that they were not accustomed to in statements from the Prophet (ﷺ). We challenge Ameen to relate to us a single

hadith that scholars of Islam have authenticated, though it is from this category.

4. Next, Ameen mentioned that a hadith should be rejected if its form is very similar to texts of jurisprudence. We mentioned earlier that scholars stipulate that a narration must not be in accordance to the sect or the school to which a fanatical narrator adheres. They reject many hadiths that discuss beliefs when those hadiths support the views of schools or sects of narrators. They also rejected hadiths about jurisprudence for the same reason. For example, the narration, "For the person who is in a major state of impurity, rinsing the mouth and the nose three times each is compulsory." Another example is, "If there is a quantity of blood equal to the size of a Dirham on one's garment, then the garment must be washed and the prayer must be repeated."¹³ There are many other examples of hadiths similar to these, many of which the scholars have ruled to be fabrications. Refer to *Naşb ar-Râyah*, *Mawđoo'ât Ibn al-Jawzi*, and *al-Lâlee' al-Maşnoo'ah*, by As-Suyooŋi.

5. He then asked whether the hadith corresponds to reality. Scholars of hadith mention this issue; in fact, based on it, they have rejected many narrations. For example, "Allah is in no need of any newborn that will be born after the year 100."¹⁴ This is contrary to the actuality of what we know, for some of the most famous Imams were born after the first century. Another example is the narration, "Egg plant is a cure for every ailment."¹⁵ And another example is the narration, "Eat lentils, for they are blessed. They soften the heart and

¹³ Reported by Ad-Dâraqutnee, vol. 4, p. 168, hadith no. 5272; Al-Bayhaqi, vol. 2, p. 404, hadith no. 3816 and Ibn Mâjah. Shaykh al-Albâni said it is fabricated hadith. See *Silsilat al-Aḥâdeeth aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, vol. 1, p. 225.

¹⁴ Imam Aḥmad said: it is not authentic. See *al-Mawđoo'ât* by Ibn al-Jawzee, vol. 3, p. 192.

¹⁵ Imam al-Jizzee said: It is false and fabricated hadith, which has no root. See *al-Mawđoo'ât* by Ibn al-Jawzee, vol. 2, p. 301.

increase tears.”¹⁶ The scholars have ruled all of these narrations to be false because they do not correspond to reality.

6. He then asked whether there was any political motive for fabrication. The scholars rejected narrations that were related by fanatical adherents of schools of jurisprudence or of sects. Hence they rejected narrations about ‘Ali (ﷺ) that came from the extreme elements among the Shi‘ah. Similarly they rejected narrations about Abu Bakr (ﷺ) that came from the sect that over-zealously supported him; about ‘Uthmân that came from the sect that over-zealously supported him; about Banu Umayyah that came from the Umayyoon; and about Banu al-‘Abbâs that came from the ‘Abbâsiyoon. Scholars pointed out that political disagreement was among the most important of factors that led to fabrication. In fact, they were very severe in criticizing narrations that pertain to this issue. After they scrutinized narrations from this category, they ended up rejecting more narrations than they had accepted.

7. He then asked whether the hadith corresponded to prevailing circumstances. In this regard, scholars have rejected many hadiths, among which is this one: “I had sore eyes so I complained to Jibreel. He said to me, ‘Continue to look at the *muş-haf*.’” Scholars have said, “During the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ), there was no *muş-haf* that he could look at,” and therefore they ruled that this narration is a fabrication.

8. He then asked whether there was a personal motive that led a narrator to fabricate. From a previous chapter, we know that scholars did not overlook this issue. One scholar said, “We might find out that a narration is a fabrication through the situation of the narrator.”

¹⁶ This hadith is mentioned in *al-Mawḍoo‘ât* by Ibn al-Jawzi, vol. 2, Pp. 294-295 and by As-Saghânee in *al-Aḥâdeeth al-Mawḍoo‘ât*, p. 9. Shaykh al-Albâni said, it is fabricated hadith. See *Silsilat al-Aḥâdeeth ad-Ḍa‘eefah*, vol. 1, p. 114.

They exemplified this by the narration, “Mash strengthens the back.” The narrator of this hadith used to make mash. Another example is the hadith, “The teachers of your children are the most evil among you...” The narrator was Sa’d ibn Tareef, who said this statement when his son came home crying, informing him that his teacher had hit him.

The scholars of hadith were not derelict in any of the matters that Ameen mentioned. They went much further than he did in laying down principles through which they would criticize narrations. Had Ameen read the many compilations of fabrications and had he studied the books of the scholars on the various hadith sciences, he would have acknowledged that Muslim scholars were thorough in their efforts to preserve the authentic Sunnah and that they adhered to precise scholarly principles, through which they were able to detect an error either in the text or in the chain of a narration. We have already clarified that the scholars have established approximately fifteen rules for testing the text of the narration.

It is true, however, that the scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) did not use those principles except in a very limited scope, only when it was necessary to resort to them. They only rejected hadiths based on the text when there remained no possibility for an alternative, plausible interpretation. They made sure that one of the conditions of authenticity was indeed lost or that one of the signs of fabrication was indeed present. They relied heavily on criticizing the chain, and through that criticism they brushed aside thousands of fabricated narrations. They then criticized the text, but within the limited scope that we have mentioned. They did not risk issuing a ruling in Allah’s religion based simply on their emotions or desires. And because of that, they were saved from falling into the error that Ameen fell into when he wanted to use those principles without being circumspect and without having correct guidance. Hence he ruled

that certain authentic hadiths, which are above suspicion or doubt, are fabrications.

That the scholars were hesitant and circumspect in rejecting hadiths based on their texts is perfectly understandable; they were scrutinizing narrations ascribed to the Prophet (ﷺ), who had circumstances that were specific to him. The principles for criticizing his hadith are more precise and more difficult than the principles for criticizing the hadith of anyone else because he was a Messenger who received inspiration from Allah (ﷻ); he was given the most comprehensive of words; he was given the authority to legislate; and he had knowledge from Allah (ﷻ) about certain matters from the unseen. It is not strange, then, to say that some of his hadiths were above the understanding of people. So a statement that might be perceived as philosophical might later on be understood as a clear statement. It is also reasonable to say that he legislated with concise phrases, which are similar to the phrases of jurisprudence in books of Islamic law. He (ﷺ) said, «The buyer and seller are still at liberty (to annul the deal) as long as they do not part from one another.»¹⁷ He (ﷺ) also said, «One cannot marry a woman and at the same time marry her aunt from the father's side or her aunt from the mother's side.»¹⁸ And he (ﷺ) also said, «What is forbidden because of (blood) relation is also forbidden because of foster relations.»¹⁹ One cannot reject these phrases simply because they are similar to texts of jurisprudence. If these phrases are spoken in clear and eloquent Arabic and if later on the jurists hear those phrases and put them in their books, it is not fair to say that they are unauthentic narrations.

¹⁷ Reported by Abu Dâwood, vol. 14, p. 6, hadith no. 4407 and An-Nisâ'i. Shaykh al-Albâni said, it is an authentic hadith. See *Şaḥeeḥ al-Jâmi'*, hadith no. 6673.

¹⁸ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 16, p. 61, hadith no. 2518; Muslim, vol. 7, p. 209.

¹⁹ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 9, p. 124, hadith no. 2451.

In other situations, the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke about some special qualities of herbs or fruits. Such narrations might be miracles of Prophethood, so that people from each generation might have a proof as to his genuineness. If people did not discover the secret behind a hadith during their era that does not prove that a hadith is a fabrication. This is the reason why scholars have limited the scope of criticism based on a text as opposed to the chain, where their criticism was much more extensive. Those who are criticized in the chain of a narration are just like other people — the same rules apply to them all. But as for the text, it is speech that is imputed to one who is higher than the ordinary human being in his knowledge.

Perhaps he (ﷺ) might have said something figuratively, as occurs often in the Qur'an. When one first looks at this kind of statement, one might imagine it to be unauthentic, whereas the intended meaning is different from the apparent linguistic meaning that first comes to mind.

The Prophet (ﷺ) might have said something to inform us about the unseen, about a matter that was to occur after his lifetime. That matter might already have taken place, or it will come to pass at a time we do not know of, so one should not hasten to reject such narrations.

The Prophet (ﷺ) might have said something about a matter that was not discovered during his lifetime or in ensuing centuries. As regards the hadith that mentioned the jurisprudential ruling for purifying a container that has been licked by a dog, modern science has only recently discovered that its implications are true. The scholars from the past believed it to be true, not because they had scientific proof to back up their belief, but because they implicitly believed in the words of the Prophet (ﷺ). Our scholars would not say that the implications of such narrations are impossible, especially after they first ascertained that the chain was correct and that the narrators were all trustworthy.

The Orientalists, however, did not hold the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the same regard. They criticized the Prophet (ﷺ) using the same principles they used when they criticized the sayings of any other man. This was because they viewed the Messenger (ﷺ) as they did any other man who had no link to revelation and who had not been informed by Allah of unseen matters. So if his hadith informed us of a physical reality that is not part of human knowledge, the Orientalists and those of their ilk would say that that hadith is fabricated, arguing that it does not correspond to the knowledge of the day. Likewise, if a hadith is related and contains words that are legislative in their style, they would say that it is fabricated because it represents Islamic jurisprudence after it became more developed, and it does not represent the simple style of speech that was used during the life of the Prophet (ﷺ). And if the Messenger (ﷺ) gave information of what was to occur to Muslims after his death, they would say that the circumstances of the Prophet (ﷺ) did not permit him to make such prophecies.

The Orientalists rejected the Prophet's message and disbelieved in the truthfulness of what he was conveying from Allah (ﷻ). As a consequence they attacked our scholars as well because they did not take a similar stance.

Of course our scholars are excused for not having taken the same path as the Orientalists in their misguided way, for our scholars believe that Muhammad ibn 'Abdullâh (ﷺ) was a noble Messenger, whom Allah sent to all people, sending with him a perfect set of laws, laws that bring happiness to people in this world and in the Hereafter.

It is truly unfortunate to see Muslims, such as the author of *Fajr al-Islâm*, follow the way of the Orientalists. Authors like Ameen do not, or do not want to, perceive the danger of what the Orientalists are encouraging, and so they find fault with our scholars, arguing that they were negligent in criticizing the texts of narrations. Following

that methodology, they disregard all proofs except those that are proffered by the Orientalists.

In all that Ahmad Ameen wrote on this topic, I was not able to find a single aberrant opinion of his that he did not take from the Orientalists. He argues that we must always seek judgment in reasoning and in the mind when we are judging narrations. I do not know whose mind it is that he wants to make the judge. Are not the precise principles that our scholars derived better and more learned? We do not have one mind by which we may establish a standard for different matters; rather there is a disparity among our minds and our ways of thinking. We each have different standards and we each have different talents. A concept that one person might not comprehend or understand another person might easily understand. So Ameen commits a grave error when he says that we must seek judgment in the mind when accepting hadith narrations.

The wisdom behind the legislation of a ruling in Islam might be hidden to people from a given generation, but then it may become clear to another generation, when the sciences become more advanced and when some of the secrets of life are discovered. To open the door to criticism of the text based on what the mind perceives to be true is neither a precise principle nor a very scholarly one. To broaden the scope in that regard is tantamount to opening the door for critics to rule based on their desires or based on their weak understanding, lack of insight, or ignorance of established facts. To open doors in this regard will inevitably result in chaos, the extent of which none knows except Allah (ﷻ). One will reject a hadith, another will accept it to be true, and another will vacillate between both judgments. This is because the minds of people differ in how they rule, in the opinions they hold, and in their understanding. Perhaps the greatest lesson we can learn in this issue is from the mistakes that the author of *Fajr al-Islâm* made. He ended up disbelieving in narrations that are

unquestionably true, and he ruled certain narrations to be fabricated when all proofs establish them to be authentic!

A Criticism of Hadiths in *Şaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*

The first Hadith

«After one hundred years pass, there will not remain a breathing soul on the face of the earth.»

Bukhari, Muslim, and other compilers of the Sunnah relate this hadith. Because Ameen understood from it that the Messenger (ﷺ) informed his Companions of the end of the world and because the world did not in fact come to an end after the appointed term, Ameen ruled it to be a fabrication.

But this hadith is only a portion of a longer hadith that is related by Bukhari in the “Book of Prayer”. In it, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: «“On one occasion when the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed the ‘Isha’ prayer at the end of his life, he stood after completing it, and said, ‘Do you see this night of yours, for after one hundred years pass, there will not remain a single person from those who are today on the face of the earth.’ ”» The Prophet (ﷺ) meant that no one who was alive when he spoke the hadith would be alive after the passing of one hundred years. Some Companions misunderstood the Prophet’s words, “from those who are today on the face of the earth”, and so they thought that the world would end after one hundred years. But Ibn ‘Umar clarified to them the exact phrase spoken by the Messenger (ﷺ) and then clarified the meaning of that phrase. From a narration in Aṭ-Ṭabarāni we learn that ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) also explained the correct meaning of the hadith.

Scholars researched this issue and found that the last Companion to die was Abu Ṭufayl ‘Āmir Wāthilah (رضي الله عنه), who died

in the year 110 H, which was exactly one hundred years after the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke those words in the aforementioned hadith. The hadith is therefore one of the miracles of the Prophet (ﷺ), for in it he gave a true account about the future. Let us see what some of the commentators of *Bukhari* say about the incident.

In *Fatḥ al-Bâri*, Al-Ḥâfidh Ibn Ḥajr said, “Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) clarified in this hadith the intended meaning of the Prophet (ﷺ): that one hundred years later — from the time that he spoke the words — their generation was to come to an end. No one who was alive when he spoke would still be alive after the passing of one hundred years, and that is what in fact happened.”

Scholars of hadith agree that the last Companion to die was Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl ‘Âmir ibn Wâthilah (رضي الله عنه). And based on different accounts, the longest he is reported to have lived was until the year 110 H, and that was exactly one hundred years after the Prophet (ﷺ) made the said statement.

Imam Muslim mentioned this hadith through many chains, and in one of those chains, he relates this wording from Jâbir (رضي الله عنه): «There is not a breathing soul today that will still be alive after the passage of 100 years.»

An-Nawawi said: “These narrations, which explain one another, contain in them one of the signs of prophethood. They convey the meaning that no soul who was alive when he spoke those words would still be alive after the passing of one hundred years, regardless of whether one was young or old at the time when the phrase was uttered. It does not, however, negate the possibility that anyone, who was born after that date, should live for more than a hundred years.”

Al-Kirmâni related that Ibn Baṭṭâl said: “The Messenger (ﷺ) intended to say that after the passing of the said period, the generation

that was alive at the time would become extinct. He was admonishing them by reminding them of the shortness of their years, telling them that their life span was not like the prolonged life span of those who preceded them from previous nations. He was, in so many words, exhorting them to strive harder in their worship.”

In his *Muqaddimah*, Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ said: “For sure, the last of them to die was Abu Ṭufayl ‘Âmir ibn Wâthilah (ؓ), who died one hundred years after the Migration... It is also said that he died in the year 110 H. He was the last to die of those who saw the Prophet (ﷺ).”

In one of the narrations, it is related that the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke those words one month before he died. Hence scholars rejected the declaration of anyone who claimed to be a Companion after the year 110 H. After that date, some people — for instance, Ratnu of India — claimed to be Companions, but their claims were of course known to be false.

The hadith in question, which in reality is one of the Prophet’s miracles, has become distorted according to the logic of new criticism; Ahmad Ameen, one of the main proponents of that criticism, claims that it is a fabrication!

The question is, then, how did Ameen arrive at his conclusion? It seems that he strove to invent new principles of hadith criticism in his relentless struggle to belittle Muslim scholars. It also appears that he depended greatly on the attacks of An-Nidhâm in the past, and of the Orientalists in the present. He turned a blind eye to what the commentators of the hadith explained in terms of its correct meaning and to what Ibn ‘Umar (ؓ) clarified in *Bukhari* itself. He also turned a blind eye to the narration of Jâbir (ؓ) in *Ṣaḥeḥ Muslim*. He only mentioned the portion that was related by Bukhari in the ‘Book of Knowledge’. Bukhari has an excuse in that it was his wont to break up hadiths into portions and then relate them in different chapters. Ahmad Ameen, however, has no excuse for limiting

himself to relating only a small portion of the hadith, especially considering that the commentators of the hadith gave sufficient explanation for it. Ibn Ḥajr, perhaps the most famous commentator of Bukhari, points out in the 'Book of Knowledge', that Bukhari related the rest of the hadith in the 'Book of Prayer'.

What is most astonishing is that the author of *Fajr al-Islâm* mentioned at the end of the chapter the most important reference books that he used. At the forefront he mentioned Ibn Ḥajr's *Fatḥh al-Bâri*, which is an explanation of Bukhari; *al-Qistilâni*, another explanation of Bukhari; and *Sharḥ an-Nawawi*, an explanation of *Ṣaḥeḥ Muslim*. All of these commentators clarified the true meaning of the hadith, and they all pointed out that Bukhari summarized the hadith in one chapter and mentioned it completely in another. When discussing the shortened version, they referred the reader to the complete version. If the author actually referred to the books that he claimed to have used in his research, how could he have then honestly asserted that the hadith is a fabrication? And if he did not refer to those books in his research, why he did he mention them as reference books that he used? And furthermore, on what basis did he deem it permissible for himself to delve into a matter without proper guidance?

The second Hadith

«Whoever eats seven 'Ajwa dates every day will not be harmed by poison or magic on that day until the night.»

Bukhari related this hadith in the 'Book of Medicine'; Muslim related it too, and Aḥmad related it from Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs (رضي الله عنه). In understanding this hadith, scholars approach it in different ways:

Some scholars ruled that this hadith is specific to the dates of Madinah, basing that ruling on the narration of Muslim: "Whoever eats seven dates within the limits of Madinah..." It is also

corroborated by the hadith of ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), which is related by Muslim: “Indeed this ‘*Ajwâ al-‘Āliyah* is a cure.” Scholars who hold this opinion say that there is nothing to prevent Allah (ﷻ) from specifying a city or place with any given distinction — with a specific quality or merit that is not found elsewhere. We know that some medicines are found in some places or in some countries and are not found elsewhere; and even if they are found elsewhere, they are not as potent because of some special quality, for instance, in the soil of that particular land. We know that the Prophet (ﷺ) was blessed, and the ‘*Ajwah* was among the trees that the Prophet (ﷺ) planted in Madinah. Other scholars have said that the hadith is general, and applies to all ‘*Ajwah*. Yet most scholars hold that the hadith is specific to the ‘*Ajwah* of Madinah.

In my judgment, it is not correct to be hasty in rejecting a hadith and ruling it to be a fabrication, except if its chain is weak or if the established principles of truth and wisdom categorically and conclusively indicate that it is a lie. This hadith is authentically established through many chains. It is related by the upright, trustworthy ones, and so there is no room left for doubt. And its text is correct as well; many people, myself included, have tested it, and the truthfulness of the hadith has become apparent, for ‘*Ajwah* is indeed beneficial. In modern medicine, it has been proven that the ‘*Ajwah* is nourishing, is beneficial to the digestive system, is helpful in strengthening the body, and is potent in fighting harmful bacteria. Likewise, if the ‘*Ajwah* is beneficial to the body, it is also beneficial to the soul of the one upon whom magic is cast. We must remember that it was the Prophet (ﷺ) who described the potency of this medicine, and he is not one who spoke from desire. As long as we can find some interpretation of the hadith, and as long as it has an authentic chain, we must not be rash by judging it to be a fabrication.

If modern medicine has not succeeded in finding all of the special qualities of the ‘*Ajwah*, that does not mean that the hadith is a

fabrication. Can anyone claim that medicine has reached its pinnacle or that it has discovered the medicinal qualities of all foods, drinks, or plants? Therefore Ameen showed a great deal of temerity in asserting so positively that the hadith is a fabrication. With Muslim scholars, as long as the chain of a hadith is authentic and as long as the text can be given a general, plausible interpretation, they rule the hadith to be authentic. And if they do not discover all of the therapeutic benefits of the 'Ajwah today, then they will tomorrow *inshâ' Allâh*.

The third Hadith

«Truffles ... are a cure for the eye; 'ajwah is from Paradise and is a cure from poison.»

At-Tirmidhi related this hadith from Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) and Aḥmad related it in his *Musnad* from Sa'eed ibn Zayd (ﷺ). Commenting on it, the author of *Fajr al-Islâm* said:

“In criticizing this hadith, did they even test the truffle to see whether it contains an anecdote? Yes, they have related that Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) said, ‘I took three truffles, or five, or seven, and then squeezed them into a container. A bleary-eyed female slave of mine darkened her eyelids with them, and she became cured.’ But is this enough to prove that the hadith is authentic? Logically speaking, an isolated instance is not enough to establish the potency of any given medicine; the only way to establish that is by testing the medicine many times over. Yet even better is to analyze the medicine in a laboratory to see what elements it is made of. If chemically analyzing its elements was not possible during that period, then they should at least have tested it many times over, and that would have been the correct way of testing whether the hadith is authentic or fabricated.”

Here we have two matters: first, the hadith is authentically related by Bukhari, Muslim, and others. Its chain is strong, for it does not contain an accused or unreliable narrator. Second, Abu Hurayrah

(ﷺ) tested the hadith and found it to be correct, and many others after him tested it as well, and they too found it to be correct. An-Nawawi related that a scholar in his day was afflicted with blindness; he darkened his eyes with truffle and was then cured. That scholar was pious and was known for his narration of hadith. Many other scholars throughout history have also attested to the potency of truffles regarding ailments of the eye.

It seems that Ameen wants every single Muslim to take a quantity of truffle, to squeeze it, and then to use it as drops for the eye. We have already seen that many scholars from the past have found it to be potent. Did the author ever hear of anyone who used it and then was harmed by it? Let us suppose that he tested truffles, were they the same truffles that grew in the Arabian Peninsula during the era of the Messenger (ﷺ)? And has medicine today reached its pinnacle, so that if modern medicine does not prove a hadith to be true, we rule it to be a fabrication? In truth, Ameen was totally off base in this example as well as in the previous two examples. I cannot see how it is permissible to doubt a hadith whose chain is authentic and whose text many scholars have tested and found to be true.

The fourth Hadith

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) related that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: «Whoever takes possession of a dog — except for the dog that is used for hunting or for (herding) livestock — loses two *qeerât*²⁰ of reward every day.»²¹ It was said to Ibn ‘Umar, “Indeed, Abu Hurayrah adds to the narration, ‘or the dog that is used in the field.’” Ibn ‘Umar said, “Indeed, Abu Hurayrah has a field.”

²⁰ Lit., an amount of gold equal to three grains of wheat (i.e., a carat); here, an unspecified but large amount of reward.

²¹ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 17, p. 141, hadith no. 5059; Muslim, vol. 8, p. 225, hadith no. 2941.

Ahmad Ameen commented, “This criticism from Ibn ‘Umar was special in that it pointed out the personal motive (for fabrications).” By this he means that Ibn ‘Umar was accusing Abu Hurayrah of the addition, “or the dog that is used in the field”. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) had a field of vegetables, and so Ameen claimed that he added to the hadith in order to justify his taking a dog to help him in his field.

Bukhari related Abu Hurayrah’s addition, yet he did not relate Ibn ‘Umar’s commentary. Muslim related both Abu Hurayrah’s addition and Ibn ‘Umar’s words; but then Muslim related the hadith through other narrators, who related the addition from Ibn ‘Umar, which he took from Abu Hurayrah. That Ibn ‘Umar related this narration proves that he accepted it to be authentic. Furthermore, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was not the only one to relate it, but others from the Companions related it as well from the Prophet (ﷺ). In *Fatḥh al-Bâri*, Ibn Ḥajr said, “Sufiyân ibn Zuhayr and ‘Abdullâh ibn Mughaffil’s narrations both correspond to Abu Hurayrah’s mention of (using a dog in) the field.”

The commentators of hadith compilations have clarified Ibn ‘Umar’s intent. An-Nawawi commented on Ibn ‘Umar’s statement: “He was not disparaging or doubting Abu Hurayrah’s narration. He meant that since Abu Hurayrah had his own field that he used for planting, he paid special attention to this hadith, memorizing it, and perfecting his narration of it. When one is affected by a specific matter, one becomes skillful in areas that others do not excel in...”

Muslim related this narration from other narrators as well, and not only from Abu Hurayrah. The point is that Ibn ‘Umar himself relates the hadith. It is therefore possible that when he heard it from Abu Hurayrah, he then went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and made sure for himself. An important thing to remember here is that a group of

Companions, and not Abu Hurayrah alone, related it from the Prophet (ﷺ).

We must also remember that Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) acknowledged the superiority of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), saying that he had memorized more hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) than anyone else. We will discuss later on how highly the Companions, Ibn ‘Umar included, held Abu Hurayrah in their regard. If Ibn ‘Umar accused Abu Hurayrah of lying, then why did he later on relate the said narration from him? And why did jurists apply the narration, building so many rulings upon it?

Ameen again had the temerity to impute his claims to the books of hadith, when in fact those very books disproved all of his assumptions. You might be asking the same question that I asked: did he did not understand an-Nawawi’s statement? Or did he understand it but prefer the opinion of the Jewish Orientalist, Goldziher?

These are the examples through which Ameen attempted to attack the Sunnah. He did not in reality contribute any new principle to hadith criticism; the only matter that was novel about his approach was the rashness he showed in applying established principles without knowledge and without proper guidelines. He attacked hadiths that were established to be authentic, and in doing so he exposed his bias, showing everyone that his knowledge and opinions were taken from the Orientalists.

The scholars of Islam were more judicious in applying the rules of hadith criticism. As long as a hadith reached us through authentic and correct chains and as long as the text can be interpreted in a plausible manner, it is not permissible to reject that hadith, because doing so is tantamount to rejecting a saying of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). And no Muslim would take such a bold step. It might also be tantamount to accusing Companions of lying, and we have established that the Companions were all upright and trustworthy.

Applying *Aḥād* narrations

Ameen continues his attack on the Sunnah by saying:

“Scholars of hadith have classified hadith into two categories: *Mutawâtir*, which imparts sure knowledge, though it does not exist in reality. Some have said that it exists in a single hadith and some have counted *mutawâtir* narrations to be seven in number. The second category is *Aḥād* narrations, and this kind of narration imparts less than sure knowledge. When there is a greater possibility of truthfulness and correctness, it is permissible to apply such a narration.”

Here we must pause, for those who counted the number of *mutawâtir* narrations to be so few followed deviant ways. As for the people of the Sunnah, *mutawâtir* narrations are without a doubt many, and are not limited to one, two, or even seven.

When mentioning *Aḥād* narrations, Ameen relates this from the scholars of hadith: “It is permissible to apply them.” We do not know any Muslim scholar who made this statement. We have previously seen that those who reject the validity of the Sunnah, such as the extreme *Râfiḍah*, do not apply a narration unless it is related through their Imams. Those who say that it is a valid proof are the majority of Muslims, who agree that it is compulsory to apply *Aḥād* narrations as long as the chain is authentic. Others went even further, not only saying that it is compulsory to apply *Aḥād* narrations, but also that they impart sure knowledge. When Ameen said that it was permissible to apply *Aḥād* narrations, he was saying so either because he was lacking in knowledge, and this is strange for someone who claims to be knowledgeable and who sets himself up as a judge between different schools of thought, or the other possibility is that he knew but distorted. Regrettably, there is no third possibility.

This distortion of his is of course an attempt at raising doubts about the Sunnah. If *mutawâtir* narrations do not exist and if it is only permissible to apply *Aḥād* narrations, what then remains of the

Sunnah? And what status does the Sunnah have in Islamic legislation? And do the Muslims really need it? Contemplate these results and then make your own judgment about Ahmad Ameen and his trustworthiness as a scholar.

About Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ)

This final discussion of *Fajr al-Islâm* pertains to a noble Companion and prolific narrator of hadith. The author of *Fajr al-Islâm*, Ahmad Ameen, was most cunning in leveling his attacks against Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ), and in doing so he followed the path taken by An-Nidhâm and the Orientalists. Those attacks are dispersed throughout his research; he spread them out, being careful not to openly proclaim his beliefs. Ameen's distortions of certain historical events, his eagerness to raise doubts about the honesty of Abu Hurayrah, and his quickness to ascribe such doubts to other Companions — all of these issue forth from Ameen's inner beliefs, which, however hard he tries to conceal, are manifest and plain for all to see.

I feel that it is necessary to relate a summarized biography of Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ), after which we can move on to a discussion of Ameen's claims regarding this distinguished Companion. It is important to relate his true biography, to relate what the Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ) thought about him, and to relate how Muslim scholars viewed him, so that we can then compare that picture to the one depicted by Ameen.

His name and nickname

Scholars differ about his name and about the name of his father; there are many opinions regarding this. However, the most famous and most widely accepted of those opinions is that during the

days of ignorance, his name was ‘Abd Shams ibn Şakhr. When he accepted Islam, the Messenger (ﷺ) named him ‘Abdur-Raḥmân. He was from the tribe Daws, one of the tribes of Yemen. His mother’s name is Ameemah bint Şafeeḥ ibn al-Ĥârith.

In a narration related by At-Tirmidhi, he himself mentioned the reason why he was given the nickname “Abu Hurayrah”: “I used to look after the sheep that belonged to my family, and I had a kitten (in Arabic, *hurayrah*). At night, I would place it on a tree, and during the day, I would take it with me and play with it. And so they gave me the nickname, Abu Hurayrah.”

His Islam and Companionship

According to the most famous account, he accepted Islam in the year 7 H, between the events of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah and the Battle of Khaybar. At the time, he was approximately thirty years of age. He went to Madinah with the Prophet (ﷺ) as the latter was returning from Khaybar. He lived in aş-Şuffah, a special place in the Prophet’s Mosque, which the Messenger (ﷺ) had allocated to the poor migrants, who found no house to take shelter in when they came to Madinah. He kept close company with the Messenger (ﷺ), following him wherever he went, and eating with him on most occasions, until the Messenger (ﷺ) died.

His traits and qualities

He (Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه) had a broad chest, he had a gap between his two front teeth, he would dye his beard yellow and allow it to grow, and he would trim his mustache. He had a truthful tongue and he was loved by the Companions. Also, he liked to joke.

On one occasion, a man said to Abu Hurayrah: “I woke up with the intention to fast, but when I went to my father and found that he had bread and meat with him, I ate with him until I became full,

and all the while I had forgotten that I was fasting.” Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, “Allah fed you.” The man continued, “I left him and went to so and so, and with him was a female sheep that was giving milk. I drank the milk until my thirst was quenched.” Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, “Allah gave you drink.” The man continued, “I returned to my family and took my noon nap. When I woke up, I called for water and I drank it.” Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, “O cousin, you have not accustomed yourself to fasting!”

In *al-Ma‘ârif*, Ibn Qutaybah related that Mirwân ibn al-Ḥakam appointed Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) as governor over Madinah. One day, he rode on a donkey, upon which he placed a saddle. As he was riding the donkey, he would pass by a man and playfully say, “Make way, for the leader has come.” Those who attack Abu Hurayrah (for example, Goldziher) use this playful joking against him, claiming that he was dull-witted.

It seems that Ameen was of the same opinion, which is why he related the incident. But the claim is unfounded. For a man to show a playful and joking nature does not take anything away from his status nor does it show him to have a deficient mind. Otherwise that would mean that every person of a playful, joking nature is weak minded, while every cold, dry person is of great intellect and mental faculty.

His piety and worship

We already mentioned that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was most often in the company of the Prophet (ﷺ) and that he would frequently partake of his meals with him. In his determination not to miss a single hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he would often have to bear the hardship of hunger.

Bukhari related that Abu Hurayrah said: “By Allah, and there is none worthy of worship except He, I used to press myself with my liver against the ground because of severe hunger, and I would also

tie a rock around my stomach.” He also said, “I would have a fit between the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the apartment of ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها). It would be said that I was crazy; however, there was no madness in me, but all that was in me was hunger.”

He speaks falsely who claims that Abu Hurayrah was afflicted with epilepsy. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) explains that his fits were because of hunger and not because of madness. No Muslim historian has ever related that he was afflicted with any mental ailment. So what is the source of that claim — which of course originated with the Orientalists? How could they have made that claim when the only source they had in terms of the history of his life was what was written by Muslim historians?

Abu Hurayrah was pious as well as generous. In a narration related by Ibn Hajar, Abu Hurayrah is described as being one of the most generous of people to his guests. In a narration that points to Abu Hurayrah’s piety, Ahmad related that ‘Uthmân of India said, “I hosted Abu Hurayrah for seven (days). He, his wife, and his servant would divide the night into three portions. In the first portion, one of them would pray, and would then wake the second person at the beginning of the second portion. The second person would pray and then wake the third person at the beginning of the third portion...” Ibn Sa’d related from ‘Ikrimah that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) would recite *tasbeeh* (saying, *Subhânallâh*: How perfect Allah is!) 12,000 times every day, and he would say, “I recite *tasbeeh* in proportion to my sins.” ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) appointed him as governor over Bahrain. When Abu Hurayrah returned from his duties, ‘Umar called him to assign him another post, but this time Abu Hurayrah refused. ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said, “One better than you sought work: he was Yoosuf, a prophet of Allah, the son of a prophet of Allah.” He answered, “And I am Abu Hurayrah ibn Ameemah. I fear three matters: that I will speak without knowledge, that I will judge incorrectly, and last, that I will be

flogged, that my honor will be cursed, and that my wealth will be appropriated.”

His prodigious ability to retain information

As a result of his constant adherence to the company of the Messenger (ﷺ), Abu Hurayrah witnessed many sayings and deeds of the Messenger (ﷺ) that others had missed. When he accepted Islam, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) had a very poor memory, and so he complained about it to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who said to him, “Open your garment.” Abu Hurayrah then unfolded it, after which the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Press it to your chest.” He did so and never forgot a single hadith from that day forward. The Imams of hadith — such as Bukhari, Muslim, Aḥmad, Nasâ’i, Abu Ya’lâ, and Abu Na‘eem — related this narration.

Goldziher clearly lied when he said that this narration is a fabrication and that the commoners invented it to justify Abu Hurayrah’s prolific narration of hadiths. Goldziher definitely has no scholarly proofs to support his claim. Every Hadith scholar that relates this hadith relates it through authentic chains, so the question becomes, does Goldziher have any proof to show that they were wrong or that their chains are weak? Of course, the answer is no.

Orientalists and those who follow them show astonishment at the powerful memory of Abu Hurayrah, but were they to view the matter with more justice and with more insight into the society in which Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) lived, they would neither be surprised nor incredulous.

Memorization, for certain, is one of the distinctive abilities of the Arabs. Among the Companions and the tâbi‘oon, we know of wonderful stories of retentive memories. Imam Bukhari memorized 300,000 hadiths with their chains; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal memorized

700,000 hadiths; Abu Zur'ah memorized 700,000 hadiths as well. It is not odd to say that Abu Hurayrah had a powerful memory, for we must remember that, as is related in the *Musnad* of Baqee ibn Mukhallid, Abu Hurayrah related a total of 5374 hadiths. That number is obviously minute when compared to the 700,000 that Aḥmad and Abu Zur'ah memorized. So why should we be so surprised? There were Arabs in the past that memorized a total of 5000 long poems, and there are many examples of this throughout Arab history. And in recent times, we know of the example of Aḥmad ibn al-Ameen ash-Shinqeeti (may Allah have mercy on him), who memorized all pre-Islamic poetry and all the poetry of Abu al-'Alâ al-Ma'arree (and much, much more than that). Now considering the long period of time that Abu Hurayrah accompanied the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), it is not surprising that he related more than 5000 hadiths, especially when we consider his retentive memory.

The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) acknowledged the superiority of his memory, and on one occasion, Mirwân tested its precision. In *al-Iṣâbah*, Ibn Ḥajr related from Abu az-Zu'aiza'ah, the scribe of Mirwân, that Mirwân requested Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) to relate many hadiths. He made Abu az-Zu'aiza'ah sit behind him in order to transcribe all that he related. After one year passed, Mirwân called Abu Hurayrah back and asked him to repeat the same hadiths. Abu Hurayrah assented, and as he was repeating them, Mirwân looked at what was written down and found that Abu Hurayrah repeated the exact same hadiths without skipping a single letter. This narration alone should quell all doubts about the memory of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). I do not think, however, that these proofs will convince the Orientalists. They have no special enmity toward him as a person, but rather they are simply attempting, as they did many times before, to attack Islam and to raise doubts about its solid foundation, relying not on the truth, but on blind and misguided desires.

The Companions and Scholars' praise of Abu Hurayrah

Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullâh (رضي الله عنه) said: "I do not doubt that Abu Hurayrah heard sayings from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that we did not hear." Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said, "Abu Hurayrah is better than me and is more knowledgeable regarding that which he relates." A man went with a question to Zayd ibn Thâbit (رضي الله عنه), and his answer was, "You must go to Abu Hurayrah, for as Abu Hurayrah, so and so, and I were in the mosque, we were invoking Allah (ﷻ) and remembering Him. Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came, sat near us, and said, 'Return to that which you were busy in.'"²² Zayd continued, "Then my companion and I supplicated, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, 'Âmeen' for our supplications. Abu Hurayrah supplicated, saying, 'O Allah, I invoke you for the same matters that my two companions invoked You, and I ask you for knowledge that is not forgotten'. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, 'Âmeen.'" "

Zayd (رضي الله عنه) and his companion said, "And us, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), we ask for knowledge that is not forgotten." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "This young Dawsee boy (ascribing him to his tribe) has preceded you." 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) once said to Abu Hurayrah, "Among us, you adhered most closely to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and you memorized more of his hadith than any of us." Ubay ibn Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) said, "Abu Hurayrah was brave in asking the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about matters that no one else would ask of him."

Shâfi'ee said, "In his day, Abu Hurayrah had the best memory among those who related hadith." Bukhari said, "Approximately 800

²² Reported by Aṭ-Ṭabarâni, vol. 16, p. 61, hadith no. 1282. and Al-Ḥâkim, vol. 7, p. 209, hadith no. 6215. Aṭ-Ṭabarâni said, its men are trustworthy and Ḥâkim said, its chain of transmission is authentic though not reported by two Imams. See *Majmoo' al-Zawâ'id*, vol. 9, p. 361 and *al-Mustadrak alaṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥayn*.

of the people of knowledge related from him. He had the best memory of those who related hadith in his era.” Abu Şâleḥ said, “Abu Hurayrah had the best memory of all the Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ).” Sa‘eed ibn Abi al-Ḥasan (the brother of Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri) said, “None among the Companions memorized more hadith than Abu Hurayrah.” Al-Ḥâkim said, “Among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he memorized the most and he adhered most closely to the Prophet’s company... he followed him wherever he went until the Prophet (ﷺ) died, and that is why he narrated so many hadith.” Abu Na‘eem said, “He memorized more narrations from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) than any other Companion. And the Prophet (ﷺ) invoked Allah (ﷻ) to make him loved by the believers, and so every believer loves Abu Hurayrah.” Commenting on the story of the garment, Ibn Ḥajr said, “The hadith is one of the signs of prophethood, for Abu Hurayrah did in fact become the one Companion who memorized more hadiths than any other Companion.”

Those he related from and those who related from him

He related from a number of Companions, among whom are Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, Al-Faḍl ibn al-‘Abbâs, Ubay ibn Ka‘b, Usâmah ibn Zayd, and ‘Â’ishah (may Allah be pleased with them). And a great number of Companions related from him, among whom are Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbâs, Jâbir, Anas, and Wâthilah ibn al-Asqa‘ (may Allah be pleased with them).

These are some of the tâbi‘oon who related from him — Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayib (who married Abu Hurayrah to his daughter), ‘Abdullâh ibn Tha‘labah, ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, Qabeeṣah ibn Dhu‘ayb, Salmân al-Aghar, Sulaymân ibn Yasâr, ‘Urâk ibn Mâlik, Sâlim ibn ‘Umar, Abu Salamah and Ḥameed ibnâ ‘Abdur-Raḥmân

ibn ‘Awf, Muhammad ibn Seereen, ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abi Rabâḥ, ‘Aṭā’ ibn Yasâr, and many others. Bukhari said that 800 of the people of knowledge and fiqh related from Abu Hurayrah. That 800 scholars related from him is a clear proof indicating his lofty status and his truthful tongue; and that means that there are 800 proofs against the enemies of Islam and those who follow them from the Muslims.

His sickness and death

During Abu Hurayrah’s final sickness, Mirwân went to him and said, “May Allah cure you.” Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) said, “O Allah, I indeed love to meet You, so love to meet me.” Mirwân left him, and no sooner did he reach the middle of the marketplace than Abu Hurayrah died. It was the year 57 (or 58 or 59) H, and after the ‘aṣr prayer, Al-Waleed ibn ‘Uqbah ibn Abi Sufiyân prayed over him. Abu Hurayrah died at the age of 78 or 79. When news of his death reached Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ), he ordered the governor of Madinah to give 10,000 Dirhams to Abu Hurayrah’s inheritors [he was among those who supported ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) on the day of the Dâr]. May Allah be pleased with him and give him ample reward.

Ahmad Ameen’s accusations against Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ)

We have just seen a truthful and factual depiction of Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ), as is related to us in history. How then did Ameen justify his distorted representation of Abu Hurayrah?

Ameen mentions in the beginning of the chapter on hadith that Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ) and ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) rejected Abu Hurayrah’s hadith. Ameen then claimed to be giving a biography of Abu Hurayrah, yet he limited himself to mentioning only his ancestry, his roots, and the story of how he accepted Islam. In elaborating on his biography, he limited himself to relating stories in which Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) was

speaking in a joking manner, and we know Ameen's intentions behind relating those narrations. If he had adhered to just and correct scholarly criticism, he would have mentioned Abu Hurayrah's status among the Companions as well as their praise for him, their acknowledgment of his prodigious memory, and their recognition of his venerable status. However, Ameen mentioned nothing in that regard, and that is of course because he only wanted to present an evil portrayal of Abu Hurayrah, and in doing so he was following the footsteps of his predecessor, Goldziher and other like-minded Orientalists. His accusations can be summarized as follows:

1. Some Companions, such as Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) and 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), rejected some of his hadith.
2. Abu Hurayrah did not write down hadith, but rather depended in his narrations on his memory.
3. He did not limit himself to what he heard from the Messenger (ﷺ), but he would also relate what he heard from others, who heard from the Prophet (ﷺ).
4. Some Companions criticized him frequently and doubted his truthfulness.
5. The Ḥanafiyah forsook his hadith whenever his hadith was in contradiction with analogy and they said of him, "He is not a faqeeh."
6. Fabricators took advantage of his many narrations, and so they ascribed many narrations to him that they themselves invented.

You will see that in these issues, Ameen made many mistakes and perpetrated many distortions. And in the process of discussing his claims, we will expose his plots against a most distinguished Companion.

Did some of the Companions criticize Abu Hurayrah

Ameen claims:

“It has been related that Abu Hurayrah narrated the hadith, «Whoever carries the bier of the deceased must make ablution.»²³ Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) did not apply his narration; he said, “We are not required to make ablution for carrying two dry rods.” Similarly, he related the following hadith, which is related by Bukhari and Muslim: «Whenever one of you wakes up from sleep, then he must wash his hand before putting it in a basin, for one among you does not know where his hand was during the night.» ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) did not apply this narration, saying, “What should we do with the *mihrâs* (a huge rock that is hollowed out and then is filled with water so that ablution can be performed from it)?” The commentator of *Musallim ath-Thaboot* related these narrations.

Ameen mentions these two incidents in order to prove that the Companions would criticize one another and would accord more honor to some among them than to others. We had hitherto clarified that whenever the Companions argued with one another, their arguments were purely scholarly in nature. Their arguments were based on their different levels of understanding when it came to deducing rulings from revealed texts. Or perhaps, one of them might have forgotten a hadith while another reminded him of it. Yet none of that had its source in doubts or in being skeptical of one another. That then is our understanding of the scholarly discussion that took place between Abu Hurayrah and others of the Companions. This is the only correct way to understand their disagreements, for we have already established through many narrations that they had total faith in one another’s honesty, and especially in the honesty of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), for the other Companions acknowledged his skill, his memory, and his truthfulness in narrating hadith. We have just given a general course for understanding disagreements between

²³ The author of *al-Mabsoot* said the hadith is weak based on the objection Ibn ‘Abbâs has towards it. *al-Mabsoot*, vol. 1, p. 234.

Companions, but let us look more closely at specific narrations mentioned by Ameen:

First, the hadith, «Whoever carries the bier in a funeral must perform ablution.» Ameen claims that Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) did not accept this narration from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). We must discuss this claim from various angles:

1. I have not seen this hadith with the said wording in any book of hadith, nor in any book of Fiqh. Nor could I find any mention of the incident wherein Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) refused to accept Abu Hurayrah’s narration. Had the hadith been authentic and had the ensuing incident actually occurred, the scholars of hadith would not have neglected to mention it. Yes, some scholars of *Uşool* do mention it — among whom is the author of *Musallim* — but this group of scholars is known for being lenient in mentioning narrations that do not have a foundation, or that do have a foundation but are related through weak chains. This is because hadith is not their specialty, and at any rate, their books are not considered to be reference material or primary sources for the knowledge of hadith. Only a man with insincere intentions would rely on their narrations.

2. What is found in books of hadith is contrary to what Ameen related. At-Tirmidhi related from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) the narration, “From washing it (i.e. the corpse), a ritual shower, and from carrying it, ablution.”²⁴ Then At-Tirmidhi said, “...This hadith of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) is *hasan*...” The people of knowledge disagree about the one who washes a dead body. Some of the people of knowledge — the Prophet’s Companions and others — hold that, “If one washes

²⁴ Reported by Abu Dâwood, hadith no. 3162; At-Tirmidhi, hadith no. 1463; Ibn Mâjâh, hadith no. 993; Aḥmad, hadith no. 3011; Ibn Ḥibbân, hadith no. 1158 and Al-Bayhaqi, hadith no. 4542. Tirmidhi said, it is a *good* hadith and its men are the men of Imam Muslim. Al-Ḥâfidh said in *at-Talkhees* its narrators are *trustworthy* and authenticated by Shaykh al-Albâni.

the deceased, then he has to take a shower.” And others have said, ‘He has to perform ablution.’ Mâlik ibn Anas said, ‘I prefer taking a shower after washing the deceased, but I do not see that as being compulsory.’ Shâfi‘ee said the same.

Aḥmad said, ‘Whoever washes the deceased, I hope that it is not compulsory upon him to take a shower. As for ablution, that is the least that is compulsory after it.’ Is-ḥâq said, ‘One must perform ablution.’ It is related from ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak that he said, ‘Neither a shower nor ablution is necessary after washing the deceased.’

What we derive from the above-mentioned narrations is that Abu Hurayrah was not alone in narrating the hadith; it is also related by ‘Ali (ﷺ) and ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ). And even in Abu Hurayrah’s narrations, it is at times related as a saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) and at other times it is related as being simply a saying of Abu Hurayrah. But there is no narration that relates the criticism of Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ); had it been authentic, it would have been related in the books of hadith. These proofs show beyond all doubt that the incident referred to by Ameen — between Ibn ‘Abbâs and Abu Hurayrah — never even occurred.

3. Let us suppose that the hadith is authentic and that Ibn ‘Abbâs’s criticism is authentically related as well, that still does not mean that Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ) attacked the honor of Abu Hurayrah or accused him of lying. All that we can conclude from those narrations, if they prove to be true, is that they differed in their understanding of the hadith. Abu Hurayrah ruled that ablution was compulsory, basing his ruling on the apparent meaning of the hadith. Meanwhile, Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ) ruled that a command is not intended by the hadith, but rather that the action mentioned in the hadith is recommended. That is why he said, ‘It is not necessary for us to perform ablution.’ The words, ‘it is not necessary for us,’ represent the reason for their different views. Each

one of them was a distinguished and superior Companion, and each one of them was a faqeeh and a mujtahid. There is no harm, therefore, in their having a different understanding of the hadith.

Second, the hadith, “Whenever one of you wakes up...” This authentic hadith is related by Bukhari, Muslim, and other compilers of the authentic Sunnah. In its different chains, it is related from Ibn ‘Umar, Jâbir, and ‘Â’ishah (may Allah be pleased with them).

The statement attributed to ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ): “And what should we do with the *mihrâs*,” is not authentically related in any book of hadith; for that matter, it is not even mentioned in any book of hadith. What is established in this regard is reported by Al-Ḥâfidh al-‘Irâqee in *Ṭarḥ at-Tathreeb Sharḥ at-Taqrêeb* when he related the following from Al-Bayhaqi: “The one who disagreed with Abu Hurayrah in this regard was Qayn al-Ashja‘ee, one of the companions of ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (ﷺ).” ‘Irâqee pointed out that “container” is specifically mentioned in the narration of Muslim. This is significant because it proves that the prohibition was specific to containers, and was not applicable to large vessels or to a pond, for instance, for with large quantities of water, it is not feared that any impurity on the hand will spoil the water. And that is why Qayn al-Ashja‘ee said to Abu Hurayrah, “What about the *Mihrâs* (a huge rock that is hollowed out)? What should we do with it?” Abu Hurayrah said, “I seek refuge in Allah from your evil.”²⁵

Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) was not alone in his narration of this hadith; it is also related by Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ), and at-Tirmidhi reports that is also related by ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ). When Ibn ‘Umar related the hadith, someone else in his case also voiced his disagreement. In the case of Abu Hurayrah, disagreement was not voiced by Ibn ‘Abbâs or ‘Â’ishah, but rather by Qayn, who was a tâbi‘ee and a companion of

²⁵ Related by Al-Bayhaqi.

Ibn Mas‘ood (ؓ). Ibn Ḥajr confirmed this when he said, “Qayn al-Ashja‘ee was a Tâbi‘ee, from the companions of ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood. An incident occurred between him and Abu Hurayrah...” Ibn Ḥajr then went on to mention the incident in question.

Therefore it is clear that it was not ‘Â’ishah who took issue with Abu Hurayrah’s narration. But let us suppose that it was she who disagreed — their difference of opinion would have stemmed from their different understanding of the hadith. Abu Hurayrah was of the opinion that washing the hands in that situation was compulsory; Aḥmad, Dâwood, and At-Ṭabari were of the same view. Meanwhile, ‘Â’ishah (ؓ) and Ibn ‘Abbâs (ؓ) both had a different opinion, one that is upheld by the majority of scholars. Accusations and doubts do not even enter into the matter.

There remains another issue — Ameen imputed his claim to the commentator of *Musallim ath-Thaboot*; however, when checking for myself, I found that it was the author of *Musallim* and not its commentator who mentioned that ‘Â’ishah rejected Abu Hurayrah’s narration. As for the commentator, he was the one who pointed out that the narration from ‘Â’ishah is not authentic. These are the very words of the commentator: “This is not established from them — from Ibn ‘Abbâs and ‘Â’ishah — but rather it is established from a man named Qayn al-Ashja‘ee, and scholars differ regarding whether he was indeed a Companion.” Based on the above, we see that Ameen strayed from the truth in two issues:

1. He ascribed the purported disagreement to the commentator of *al-Musallim*, when in reality, it was the author of *Musallim* himself who mentioned it.
2. He neglected to mention that the commentator of *Musallim* pointed out the author’s mistake. How can we find an excuse for Ameen? Every statement of his seems to be a calculated maneuver in an overall attempt to disparage the Companions and to attack the Sunnah.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) did not commit his narrations to writing

Abu Hurayrah was not the only Companion to have related his narrations from memory; rather, this was the way in which all Companions related from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), with the exception of ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amru ibn al-‘Âṣ (رضي الله عنه), who did write down narrations. It does not make sense that Ameen should single out Abu Hurayrah when he himself acknowledges the following:

“At any rate, the first generation came to an end and the recording of the Sunnah in written form was not widespread. They would relate narrations verbally, relying on their memory, and whoever did record the Sunnah was doing so for himself.”

The only possible reason why Ameen would single out Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) is because he wanted to raise doubts about his narrations. Ameen argues on the following levels: as long as the man does not write down his hadiths, as long as he is relating from his memory only, and as long as his memory is subject to error, we doubt the veracity of his hadith. Ameen went a step further in his treachery, purposefully neglecting to mention the praise accorded by the Companions to Abu Hurayrah’s memory, truthfulness, and piety. We have hitherto established that, as is related by Bukhari, more than 800 scholars related directly from him.

Ameen knew that had he mentioned these points, he would not have been able to attack Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) from that angle. A man possessing Abu Hurayrah’s reliable and retentive memory is not reduced in status simply because he does not relate from a book. There are even scholars who prefer the narrations of one who relates from his memory to one who relates from his book, especially if the former is reliable and truthful. This is because of the possibility of misprints and errors in writing.

From that perspective some scholars from the Companions and the tâbi'oon disliked for hadith to be written down; they also preferred not to write so that people would not depend on writing alone and in the process weaken their ability to memorize. In *Jâmi' al-Bayân al-'Ilm*, Ibn 'Abdul-Barr reported that Ibrâheem an-Nakha'i said: "Do not write and then become dependent." Ibn 'Abdul-Barr also reported that Al-'Awzâ'ee said:

"This knowledge is honorable when it remains on the tongues of men, spreading from one man to another, and being revised mutually. When that knowledge is transferred to books, its light vanishes and it goes to those who do not deserve it."

Many scholars refused to write hadith narrations because memorization was an inborn quality with them. Ibn Shihâb said: "Whenever I pass by the Baqee' (famous graveyard in Madinah), I block off my ears, fearing that some obscene words will enter them, for by Allah, whenever words enter my ears, I never forget them." A similar saying is ascribed to Ash-Sha'bee. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "We are an illiterate Nation — we neither write nor make calculations."²⁶ We have hitherto elaborated on the fact that Arabs were known for their prodigious ability to retain information.

"He would relate that which he did not hear"

Ameen said that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) would not limit himself to narrating what he heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but he would also narrate from other Companions. Ameen claimed that Abu Hurayrah related that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: «Whoever wakes up, being in the major state of impurity, then there is no fast for him.» 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) repudiated that, saying, «During Ramaðân,

²⁶ Reported by Bukhari, hadith no. 1913 and Muslim, hadith no. 1080. See also *Takhreej adh-Dhalâl*, vol. 1, p. 138.

when *fajr* began, if the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was in a major state of impurity that did not result from a dream, he would take a shower and fast.» When Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) heard this narration, he said, “Indeed she is more knowledgeable than me; I did not hear it from the Prophet (ﷺ), but rather I heard it from Al-Faḍl ibn al-‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه).”

Our discussion revolves around two issues:

First, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) would sometimes attribute words to the Messenger (ﷺ) that he heard from others, and not directly from him, but he was not alone in doing that. Younger Companions as well as those who accepted Islam at a later date did the same. Of the major Companions, all of the following attributed sayings to the Messenger (ﷺ) that they heard from other Companions who were relating from him: ‘Â’ishah, Anas, Al-Barâ, Ibn ‘Abbâs, and Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them). They did this because they all implicitly trusted in the truthfulness and uprightness of one another and because they deemed this action of theirs to be correct. Ibn ‘Abbâs related the following two narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ): «*Ribâ* (usury) is only in *an-Nasee’ah* (a kind of usury),» and, «The Prophet (ﷺ) continued to make the *Talbiyah* until he threw (pebbles) at Jamaratul-‘Aqabah.» When Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) was questioned about the first narration, he said, “Usâmah ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه) informed me about it.” And he later said about the second narration, “My brother, Al-Faḍl ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه), informed me about it.” Ibn ‘Umar related the following hadith from the Prophet (ﷺ): «Whoever prays over a funeral, then he has a *qeerât* (of reward).» Afterwards, he attributed the narration to Abu Hurayrah. And we have previously related the saying of Anas (رضي الله عنه): “Not all that we relate to you from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did we hear from him, and we would not accuse one another of lying.”

We have already discussed the *mursal* narration; according to scholars of hadith, what we are discussing here is called the *mursal* of

a Companion. Scholars agree that this kind of narration is without a doubt a valid proof and is considered to be part of the Prophet's Sunnah. Only Abu Is-hâq al-Isfarâyeeni dissented, saying, "It is possible that the Companion was relating the hadith from a tâbi'ee (and not from another Companion)." This opinion has been disproved, and enough for us is the consensus of the people of hadith (as well as agreement from the majority of Uṣool scholars).

In his *Muqaddimah*, Shaykh Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâh wrote:

"We do not count what is known in *Uṣool al-Fiqh* as mursal of a Companion to be from the categories of mursal narrations. The mursal of a Companion occurred when Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه), for instance, and other younger Companions related from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that which they did not hear directly from him. Such a narration is given the ruling of a connected chain. Companions related these narrations from other Companions. That we do not know the Companion who is not mentioned in this kind of narration does not have a negative impact on the narration, because all Companions are upright."

In his commentary of *Muqaddimah*, Al-'Irâqi pointed out that all scholars of hadith concur that the *Mursal* of a Companion is a valid proof in Islam. There is a difference of opinion among scholars of Uṣool, for Abu Is-hâq al-Isfarâyeeni held that this kind of narration is not considered to be a valid proof; however, the majority of Uṣool scholars ruled to the contrary, affirming that it is in fact a valid and binding proof.

After discussing the validity of the mursal narration in general, Imam an-Nawawi went on to say, "None of the preceding has anything to do with the mursal of a Companion... the scholars of hadith ruled that the mursal narration cannot be used as a proof, yet they all agree that the mursal of a Companion is a binding and valid proof. Both *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari* and *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* contain

innumerable narrations of this kind.” He then went on to establish this opinion, supporting it with proofs.

This summarizes the opinions of the scholars regarding the *mursal* narration of a Companion. Although this kind of narration was widespread among the younger Companions, Ameen singled out Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) in an attempt to discredit him.

Second, we move on to discuss the hadith that Ameen mentioned. The authentic books of the Sunnah do not mention that ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) repudiated Abu Hurayrah’s narration. What they do mention is that Abu Hurayrah was asked to give a ruling about the fast of one who wakes up and finds that he is in a major state of impurity. He ruled that the fast of such a person is not valid. Meanwhile, ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) and Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) were asked to rule in the same issue, and both of them ruled that the fast of such a person is correct. ‘Ā’ishah said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would wake up in a state of major impurity and he would still fast.” When news of their rulings reached Abu Hurayrah, he retracted his ruling and said, “Both of them are more knowledgeable than I.” Each Companion ruled based on what he or she knew from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); in no way does this mean that ‘Ā’ishah accused Abu Hurayrah of any falsehood.

Let us relate to you the exact text from Muslim. He related with his chain from Abu Bakr ibn ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn al-Ḥârith, who said: “I heard Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه)...say, ‘If a person is in a state of major impurity when *fajr* arrives, then he must not fast.’ I mentioned that to ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn al-Ḥârith (his father) and he repudiated it. ‘Abdur-Raḥmân, and I along with him, went to ‘Ā’ishah and Umm Salamah. He asked them, and both of them said, ‘The Prophet (ﷺ) would wake up in a state of major impurity that did not result from a dream and he would then fast.’ We then went to Mirwân and ‘Abdur-Raḥmân mentioned to him what happened. Mirwân said, ‘I urge you to go to Abu Hurayrah...’

When they reached Abu Hurayrah, ‘Abdur-Rahmân (ﷺ) repeated to him what he had heard. Abu Hurayrah said, ‘Did they both say that to you?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ Abu Hurayrah said, ‘They are both more knowledgeable (than I),’ after which he retracted his ruling and clarified that he heard the saying from Al-Faḍl ibn al-‘Abbâs (ﷺ). He said, ‘I heard that from Al-Faḍl, and not from the Prophet (ﷺ).’”

This exact text from *Muslim* plainly shows that ‘Ā’ishah did not in fact reject any narration from Abu Hurayrah, a point that was clarified by the commentator of *Musallim ath-Thaboot*:

“This contains no repudiation on the part of The Mother of the Believers of Abu Hurayrah, nor does any narration that indicates such a repudiation contain a chain of narrators.”

Observe how brazen Ameen was when he tried to further his claim. Not only did he neglect to mention the true stance taken by the commentator of *Musallim*, but also he misleadingly ascribed the false claim to him. When quoting from books, Ameen would often resort to that stratagem.

Yet let us suppose it to be true that ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) refuted Abu Hurayrah’s view; that does not mean that she accused him of lying in his narrations. Rather, all it indicates is that the ruling she felt to be correct was contrary to the one that he felt was correct. It is simply one instance among other instances wherein the Mother of the Believers (رضي الله عنها) corrected other Companions in their rulings. The Companions would often disagree in matters of jurisprudence, but they did not see that as accusing one other of lying, but rather as making sure that their rulings were correct; moreover, by clarifying, and not hiding, what they knew, they were being trustworthy in their pursuit of spreading the truth. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, «Whoever hides knowledge, then Allah will bridle him with a bridle from fire.»

Furthermore, most narrations do not mention that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) ascribed the hadith to the Prophet (ﷺ); instead, they

mention the saying as being a ruling from him. Only a few narrations indicate that his ruling was in fact a hadith that he ascribed to the Prophet (ﷺ). And in some of the narrations, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) imputes the ruling to Al-Faḍl (رضي الله عنه); in others, to Usâmah ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه); and in one narration, “So and so informed me.” This shows that he heard it from Al-Faḍl and Usâmah. Some of the narrators, however, only mentioned Usâmah. Instances of this kind occurred often among narrators.

Al-‘Allâmah Ibn Ḥajr said, “Abu Hurayrah retracted that ruling, either because he believed the narration from the Mother of the Believers... to be stronger than other narrations... or he believed her narration to be an abrogation of other narrations. This latter opinion is held by most scholars...” The truth in this issue is now clear, at least for those who are seeking it and who do not have an ulterior motive.

“The Companions found fault with him for abundantly relating too many Hadiths”

Ameen said:

“It occurred frequently that some Companions criticized Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) for his numerous narrations of hadith. They also had doubts about him, which is indicated by what Muslim related in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* — that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, ‘Indeed you are claiming that Abu Hurayrah relates many hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). With Allah is our appointment. I was a poor man who served the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), being content to fill my stomach. Transactions in the marketplace occupied the Muhâjïroon, while the Anṣâr were preoccupied with watching over their wealth.’ And in another hadith related by Muslim, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, ‘They say that Abu Hurayrah has (related) too much — and with Allah is our appointment. They also say: why do not the *Muhâjïroon* and the

Anṣâr relate hadith as he does? And I will inform you about that: my brothers from the Anṣâr were preoccupied with working in their fields, and my brothers from the *Muhâjiroon* were preoccupied with transactions in the marketplace. But I would adhere closely to the company of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), being satisfied just to fill my stomach. I was present when they were absent, and I would memorize when they forgot.’ ”

This excerpt is an almost exact reproduction of Goldziher’s words, except that Ameen’s accusations are presented in a more cautious and cunning manner. Goldziher was more straightforward when he said:

“It appears that his extensive knowledge of hadith, which he was always quick in recalling, excited doubt in the hearts of those who took narrations from him directly and of those who did not hesitate to voice their doubts in a mocking manner.”

Here lies another slight difference between Goldziher and Ameen: whereas the Orientalist imputed the doubts to those who took directly from Abu Hurayrah — namely the tâbi’oon — Ameen imputed them to some of the Companions. In his cunning and more hidden attack, Ameen made even a more vulgar claim than did Goldziher.

At any rate, the narrations that Ameen related do not in any way lead to a disparagement of Abu Hurayrah’s character or to an attack against his truthfulness, for it is well known that Abu Hurayrah was among those who related many narrations from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), even though he accepted Islam late in the Messenger’s life. He was able to relate so much because he adhered closely to the company of the Messenger (ﷺ); in fact, he followed him wherever he went. And when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, he would go around asking the older Companions to inform him of narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ). This was a common practice among the younger Companions — such as ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه),

‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), and Anas (رضي الله عنه). Also, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) attested to the fact that Abu Hurayrah was more keen and assiduous than any other Companion in taking hadith from him. During the period of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, a time when the Companions were spread throughout the lands, he felt it his duty to convey to the Muslim Nation all that he memorized from the Prophet (ﷺ). He could have easily refrained from narrating hadiths, but he feared the evil results of hiding knowledge. He clearly expressed that sentiment in a saying of his that is related by both Bukhari and Muslim: “Had it not been for two verses from Allah’s Book, I would not have related a single hadith.” He then recited,

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنَّوْا فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَثُوبٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٥٩-١٦٠)

﴿Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers. Except those who repent and do righteous deeds, and openly declare [the truth which they concealed]. These, I will accept their repentance. And I am the One Who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.﴾
(*Qur’an* 2: 159-160)

Because Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) accepted Islam at a later date and because he related so much from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), it is only natural that the Tâbi‘oon and those who lived far away from Madinah were amazed by the fact that he related so much. The question that came to their minds was, “How is it that he relates so much? And why do not the other Companions relate as much as he does?” Without doubting him and without disbelieving in him, they

asked these questions, the purpose behind which was to expel the amazement that was in their hearts as well as to hear for themselves an explanation from Abu Hurayrah. When he explained the matter to them — as we have related — they remained silent, being pleased and satisfied with his answer. Where, then, do we find their abundant criticism of him? Ameen claims that they doubted in his memory and his truthfulness — so in which narration are those doubts authentically related? The hadith that Ameen related indicates amazement only because of Abu Hurayrah's many narrations, and when did an expression of amazement become tantamount to an accusation? A friend that you trust might give you an account of an incident that is strange, and you in return might express your amazement, not because you accuse him of being a liar, but because you want him to drive away your amazement by giving you more to go on. This is what happened in the case of Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ). When he told them the secret behind why he related so many narrations and why he related more than the other Companions, they were pleased and satisfied with his answer.

Had they truly doubted in his honesty, do you suppose that they would have allowed him to continue relating his narrations? We know how stern 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was in upholding the truth; then why did he remain silent, allowing Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) to relate so many hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ)? During Abu Hurayrah's lifetime, many other Companions were alive too, so why did they not put a stop to his narrations? Through many incidents, we know that they strove to preserve the authentic Sunnah and to correct the mistake of anyone, even if they were correcting the Leader of the Believers, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه)! If what Ameen says is true, then why would they remain silent in the face of one who lied about the Prophet's Sunnah?

There remains another question that has a great bearing on this discussion: who were the ones to whom Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was referring in his statement? I see nothing in that statement which

shows that he was referring to the older Companions or to the more distinguished Companions. What seems more probable to me is that they were not even from the Companions. Did you not note that he said: "They say, 'Why do not the Muhâjiroun and the Anşâr relate hadith as he does?'" If those who asked him about his many narrations were from the Muhâjiroun and the Anşâr, he would have quoted them as saying, "Why do we not relate as much as he does?" And in Abu Hurayrah's response, he said, "My brothers from the Muhâjireen... and my brothers from the Anşâr." If they had been the ones who took issue with him, he would have said to them, "Indeed you were busy with business or with farming." And in Bukhari's narration, he said, "...would memorize that which they would not memorize." If he was addressing the Companions, he would have said, "Which you would not memorize."

Then when I read various accounts of Abu Hurayrah's biography, I could not find the name of a single Companion who criticized Abu Hurayrah with the aforementioned criticism. Ibn Sa'd related that on one occasion, when Abu Hurayrah admonished Mirwân, the latter became angry and said, "The people say that Abu Hurayrah relates too many hadiths..." First, this incident occurred at a very late date; second, Mirwân is a Tâbi'ee, not a Companion; third, he said that when he was angry; and fourth, he imputed that statement to the people. Had Companions doubted Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ), they would not have remained silent for so long, waiting for Mirwân to find the right moment to inform him of their doubts.

Therefore neither the narration referred to by Ameen nor any other narration indicates that the ones who criticized Abu Hurayrah were the Companions or anyone else who was well known. Had that been the case, history would have informed us thereof. We challenge Ameen and his Orientalist teachers to bring forth a single authentic historical account which proves that any known Companion had

criticized him or prevented him from relating narrations or clearly expressed an accusation against him. Of course, they can bring forth no such narration, for all historical accounts affirm that the Companions acknowledged his retentive memory and his vast knowledge of hadith. Even if ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ), Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) or other Companions were surprised at some of his hadiths, they would not hesitate for long before accepting his narration, for they admitted that he knew that which they did not know themselves.

On one occasion, Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Whoever follows a funeral (procession), then he has a *qeerât* (in reward).” When Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) heard that, he said, “Abu Hurayrah has related much to us,” but ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ) confirmed Abu Hurayrah’s narration. Then Ibn ‘Umar said, “Therefore we have indeed been negligent in many *qeerât*.” He then began to relate the hadith himself and to ascribe it directly to the Prophet (ﷺ). When he was asked about it, he said, “Abu Hurayrah related it to me...” Abu Hurayrah said to Ibn ‘Umar, “I kept company with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) more than anyone among us, and I know more hadith than anyone among us.”

Muhammad ibn ‘Ammârah ibn ‘Amru ibn Ḥazm once sat in a gathering wherein there were ten shaykhs who were Companions. Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) began to relate hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Some of them did not know the hadiths, and he would relate to them until they learned those narrations from him. He continued to relate a number of hadiths, and Muhammad ibn ‘Ammârah later said, “That day I realized that Abu Hurayrah had memorized more than any other person.” This incident is related by Bukhari in *at-Târeekh* and by Bayhaqi in *al-Madkhal*.

“At Times, the Ḥanafiyah forsook his Hadith”

Ameen said:

“The Ḥanafiyah sometimes forsake his hadith, and that happens when his narration is contrary to analogy. This occurred, for example, in the hadith that contains a ruling about the practice of not milking an animal for a number of days, so that its udder swells up and the buyer thinks that it gives a lot of milk every day. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) related that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, «Do not abstain from milking camels and sheep for a number of days (making the buyer think that the animal produces a lot of milk). Whoever buys it after that may choose between the better of two options after he milks it. If he is satisfied, he may keep it. And if he does not like it, he can return it along with a *ṣâ'*²⁷ of dates.»²⁸ The Ḥanafī scholars say, ‘Abu Hurayrah is not a faqeeh, and this hadith is contrary to all known analogy. To milk the animal is a transgression, and the compensation for transgression is paid in that which is equivalent or of the same value. And a *ṣâ'* of dates is not any of those.”

Here are some of Ameen’s claims:

1. The Ḥanafiyah are of the opinion that analogy is given preference over a narration whenever the two are in conflict with each another.
2. They applied this rule to the hadiths of Abu Hurayrah whenever his narrations conflicted with analogy. Ameen made it seem that they took this stance particularly with Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).
3. They do not consider Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) to be a faqeeh.

First, the Ḥanafiyah do not give precedence to analogy over hadith. Imam Abu Ḥaneefah, his two companions, and the majority of his followers hold that a hadith is categorically given preference to analogy, regardless of whether the narrator is a faqeeh or not. This is the opinion of Shâfi‘ee, Aḥmad, and the majority of scholars of the foundations of jurisprudence.

²⁷ *Ṣâ'*: a measurement roughly equivalent to 3 kg. (Editor)

²⁸ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 7, p. 358, hadith no. 2004.

The following scholars are of the opinion that, if the narrator is a faqeeh, his narrations are categorically given precedence over analogy: Fakhr al-Islâm, Ibn Abbân, and Abu Zayd (all from the Ḥanafiyah). And if he is not a faqeeh, they still hold that his narration is given precedence to analogy, except if his narration conflicts with all analogies, and all the doors of reasoning are blocked off. They exemplify such a situation with the above-mentioned hadith. Al-Kamâl ibn al-Hammâm and Ibn al-Ḥâjib al-Âmidee say that if the wisdom or reason in analogy is stronger than a narration and if that reason is present both in the secondary issue and in the primary issue, then analogy is put forward. If the narration is just as strong, than the matter is put on hold; otherwise, the narration is given precedence.

That summarizes the different opinions of the scholars regarding a situation wherein a narration is in apparent contradiction with analogy. Hence we know that the majority of Ḥanafî scholars, at their forefront the Imam and his two companions — ruled that a narration is categorically preferred over analogy, regardless of whether the narrator is a faqeeh or not. So what Ameen ascribed to them is absolutely false.

Second, this stance taken by some Ḥanafî scholars is not restricted or applied particularly to Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه); rather, they generalized their ruling for every narrator who is not a faqeeh. Here is what is in *Musallim ath-Thaboor*:

“Fakhr al-Islâm said: ‘If the narrator is a mujtahid, then the narration is given precedence. If he is known to be upright but is not a faqeeh — for example, Abu Hurayrah and Anas (رضي الله عنه) — then his narration is not forsaken when it is in contradiction to analogy, except if all doors of reason are blocked off, such as in the case of the hadith about the practice of not milking an animal for a number of days. Therefore Ameen was incorrect in saying that the Ḥanafiyah apply this issue to Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) only.

Third, Ameen was also wrong in relating from the Ḥanafiyah the view that Abu Hurayrah is not a faqeeh. Only Fakhr al-Islâm and his companions held that view, while the majority of the Ḥanafiyah were of the opposite opinion; in fact, they inveighed against Fakhr al-Islâm's opinion. Al-Kamâl ibn al-Hammâm reports this statement from *Musallim ath-Thaboot*: "Abu Hurayrah is a faqeeh." Its commentator, Ibn Ameer al-Ḥâj explained:

"Abu Hurayrah is not lacking in any of the requisites of ijtihâd. He issued rulings during the period of the Companions, and no one would issue rulings during their time except for a mujtahid. More than 800 of the Companions and the tâbi'oon related from him, and among them were the likes of Ibn 'Abbâs, Jâbir, and Anas (may Allah be pleased with them)..."

Yes, because some of the Ḥanafiyah gave precedence to analogy when it was in conflict with a narration, they forsook this narration of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) (i.e. the hadith at issue here). They did so, not because it was a narration of Abu Hurayrah, but rather because they were applying their principle and they were also following an even more fundamental principle: If a narration is in contradiction with the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and consensus, it is not applied. The rule is that when proofs conflict with one another, one resorts to the strongest proof. No doubt the Qur'an, the Sunnah in its entirety, and consensus are stronger than a single Aḥâd narration. According to the opinion of the Ḥanafiyah, this narration conflicted with the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and consensus, and therefore they do not apply it. Some of them are even of the view that the hadith is abrogated, and that opinion is related from Abu Ḥaneefah himself. At any rate, there is a difference of opinion in this issue, but there is nothing to indicate that the Ḥanafiyah criticize Abu Hurayrah. Even Fakhr al-Islâm, who says that Abu Hurayrah is not a faqeeh, clearly praises him for his lofty status, his honesty, and his uprightness.

The author of *Musallim* ascribed the said view to Fakhr al-Islâm; Ameen said that he ascribed it to all of the Ḥanafiyah. But by now, we have seen so much in terms of Ameen's distortions that we expect no better from him.

"Fabricators took advantage of his many narrations"

That the fabricators ascribed hadiths to him that he never related is not something that is particular to Abu Hurayrah (ؓ); fabrications were invented and then falsely attributed to the following Companions as well: 'Umar, 'Ali, 'Â'ishah, Ibn 'Abbâs, Ibn 'Umar, Jâbir, and Anas (may Allah be pleased with them). So why did Ameen mention this with regard to Abu Hurayrah alone?

The answer to this question flashes before us when we read *Muslim Studies*, wherein Goldziher made approximately the same statement. Goldziher then went on to say, "All of these conditions make us cautious and doubtful about the hadiths of Abu Hurayrah." Because Goldziher ended his discussion on that note, it consequently follows that Ameen would end his biography of Abu Hurayrah on the same note. Ameen was sincere to the enemies of Islam and followed their footsteps closely. Throughout our discussion in this chapter, we see that Ameen either singled out Abu Hurayrah (ؓ) erroneously or distorted facts in order to disparage him. Anything in favor of Abu Hurayrah, he neglected to mention; and any falsehood that he could hold against him, he mentioned.

We must ask Ameen and the Orientalists who preceded him, what was the true status of Abu Hurayrah? Forty-seven years after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Hurayrah was still narrating hadiths, and he was doing so within hearing distance of the most distinguished of Companions. Yet he was honored and venerated by them and by others. In issues of hadith, people would go to him and

the tâbi'oon would go to hear him, traveling for that purpose from far off places. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) married the daughter of the most distinguished scholar of the tâbi'oon, Sa'eed ibn al-Musayib. What is more, 800 scholars related narrations directly from him; perhaps no other Companion reached his level in that regard. Scholars agree that he was an upright, trustworthy, and pious Companion. Throughout fourteen centuries, we have nothing but proofs pointing to his honesty and uprightness. After all of that proof, and after all of that time, a man comes and says that the Companions and the great scholars of Islam did not know his true character and that in reality, he told lies. The man who ascribes such lies to such a noble Companion is worthy of all manner of ridicule and humiliation.

Abu Rayyah

Continuing to focus on those who have written negatively about Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), we move on to the author of *Adwâ 'Alas-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*, Abu Rayyah. This author was even more vicious than his predecessors, for he claimed that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was not sincere in his acceptance of Islam, that he was not honest when relating the Prophet's narrations, that he had a voracious appetite for both food and wealth, that he was a biased partisan of Bani Umayyah, and much more that we will presently discuss in detail. Abu Rayyah's fulminations were more wicked than those of the Mu'tazilah, the Râfiḍah, and the Orientalists. May Allah reward him in like for his falsehoods, lies, and distortions of the truth.

Abu Hurayrah's name

Abu Rayyah writes:

"People have not differed more about the name of anyone — during the days of ignorance and the days of Islam — than about the name of

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). After much inspection, historians still do not know the name that was given to him by his parents and by which he was identified among people.”

He then related from An-Nawawi that his name was ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Sakhr, which he said is corroborated in thirty-three opinions. He then relates this from Al-Quṭb al-Halabee: “Including the sayings about his name and the name of his father there are forty-four opinions.”

With these claims, Abu Rayyah attempts to belittle Abu Hurayrah by saying that he was not known among the Companions. We refute his rather shallow claim with the following:

1. A man’s status is not diminished simply because there is a difference of opinion about his name. A man is valued by his deeds and not by his name or by the name of his father. Allah (ﷻ) did not make entry into Paradise hinge upon names, titles, or nicknames, and whoever claims the contrary is indeed ignorant of Allah’s Religion.
2. There is a difference of opinion among scholars regarding the names of many Companions; however, that does not take anything away from their status, their service to Islam, or the veneration granted them by the Muslims.
3. There is a rather simple reason why there is a difference of opinion about Abu Hurayrah’s name, so simple that it shows Abu Rayyah’s words to be flatulent and inane. From the time that he accepted Islam, the noble Companion in question was always known as Abu Hurayrah. We find that most Muslims today do not know the true name of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (رضي الله عنه), and that is because from the time they were young, they knew him by his nickname (Abu Bakr).

But what harm is there in this? From the day that he accepted Islam and from the moment that he kept company with the Prophet (ﷺ), he was not called by any name other than Abu Hurayrah. Is it then so

strange that the name given to him by his parents should have been forgotten?

4. It is not true that there are thirty or forty opinions about his name and the name of his father. Some scholars mention thirty or forty opinions only because narrators made mistakes, by placing one part of the name before another; but after close inspection, scholars have shown that there are in reality only three opinions. And this is clearly mentioned by Ibn Ḥajr, who said that the difference of opinion came back to three names: ‘Umayr, ‘Abdullâh, and ‘Abdur-Raḥmân. We know that scholars differed about the names of tens of Companions, and regarding some of them there are four, five, or six opinions. So why did Abu Rayyah single out Abu Hurayrah, unless Abu Rayyah’s intentions were malevolent in the first place?

His roots and his early years

Abu Rayyah alleges:

“If they differed about Abu Hurayrah’s name, they similarly knew nothing about his early years or about his past before Islam, except for what he mentioned himself — that he used to play with a kitten and that he would serve people in return for enough food for his stomach. All that is known of his background is that he was from the family of Saleem ibn Fahm, from the tribe of Azd, and then from Daws.”

Abu Hurayrah was known and trusted by his contemporaries and by posterity. So we answer Abu Rayyah’s claims with the following:

1. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was from the Daws tribe, a well-known tribe that was honored among other Arabs.
2. With the exception a handful of people, we do not know anything about the biographies of the Companions during the days of ignorance, the days before they accepted Islam. The Arabs were in an

abyss of ignorance, restricted to their peninsula — they cared not about the affairs of the world, nor did the world care about their affairs, except of course, in matters of business, for caravans would pass through Arab lands. With the advent of Islam, the Companions were given honor because they carried the divine message. Each one of them had a history worth recording. Narrators and historians strove hard to find out more about them and to gain knowledge from them. Is the affair of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) any different in this regard than that of the majority of Companions? We do not know his entire history during the days of ignorance, but how does that diminish his status? Where in Allah's Book does Abu Rayyah find verses to support his criticism? How perfect Allah is! The evil that Abu Rayyah has spoken is inspired from no source other than the Devil and his own desires.

3. Were we to ask Abu Rayyah about the history of thousands of Companions — through the research of the scholars, we know that during the final pilgrimage, there were 114,000 Companions with the Prophet (ﷺ) — before the advent of Islam, he would not be able to find information for more than ten or twenty of them, and that information would amount to perhaps two lines in writing. Other than those twenty, are all other Companions discredited, and of no worth? Are these scholarly deductions or simply the ravings of a man blinded by prejudice?

His illiterateness

Abu Rayyah said: "He was illiterate; he could neither read nor write."

Before Abu Rayyah, and throughout the centuries, no one considered the illiterateness of a Companion to have negative implications concerning his character. Illiteracy was a predominant characteristic among the Arabs to whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was sent. The vast majority of Companions, at least during the early

stages of Islam, were illiterate. Then why did Abu Rayyah single out the illiterateness of Abu Hurayrah? Was that to raise doubts about the hadiths that he memorized and related? We have hitherto established that none of the Companions, with the exception of ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amru (رضي الله عنه), wrote down hadith narrations. Does Abu Rayyah want to attack the narrations of all Companions just because they were illiterate? No one before Abu Rayyah has ever made such ludicrous statements.

His poverty

On more than one occasion, Abu Rayyah stressed the point that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was poor; but he did not stop there — he tried his utmost to belittle and discredit him simply because he owned nothing in terms of material possessions. He claimed that Abu Hurayrah only kept company with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in order to fill his stomach. He repeatedly mentioned that Abu Hurayrah was unimportant in his tribe and that he was not from the nobility among the Arabs. And because of these reasons, Abu Rayyah felt that Abu Hurayrah deserved ignominy and humiliation.

We know that the enemies of the Prophets would insult and belittle the poor; for example, the people of Noah (عليه السلام) said to him:

﴿... وَمَا نُرَبِّكَ أَتْبَعَكَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ هُمْ أَرَادُوا بِادِّئِ الرَّأْيِ ...﴾ (سورة هود: ٢٧)

(سورة هود: ٢٧)

﴿... Nor do we see any follow you but the meanest among us and they [too] followed you without thinking...﴾ (Qur'an 11: 27)

We also see how those who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day take material possessions to be the standard or the criteria by which they judge someone to be honorable. We can also understand such criteria to be prevalent in aristocratic or capitalistic societies. When

Abu Rayyah was disparaging Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) for being poor, was he speaking with the mindset of those who disbelieved in the Messengers of Allah? If he is indeed a believer in Allah and in his Messenger, he should know what Noah (عليه السلام) said to those who were mocking his poor followers:

﴿... وَمَا أَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُلْقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَلَكِنِّي أَرَأَيْتُمْ قَوْمًا
يَجْهَلُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾﴾
(سورة هود: ٢٩)

﴿... I am not going to drive away those who have believed. Surely, they are going to meet their Lord, but I see that you are a people that are ignorant.﴾
(Qur'an 11: 29)

He (عليه السلام) also said to them:

﴿وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ وَلَا
أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَرُدُّونَ أَعْيُنَكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي
إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾﴾
(سورة هود: ٣١)

﴿‘And I do not say to you that with me are the Treasures of Allah, nor that I know the unseen; nor do I say I am an angel, and I do not say of those whom your eyes look down upon that Allah will not bestow any good on them. Allah knows what is in their inner-selves. In that case, I should, indeed be one of the wrong-doers.’﴾ (Qur'an 11: 31)

And if he was talking with the mindset of the rich, then he should have realized that Islam has nullified material standards by which people are judged. There is only one criterion in Islam, and that is the measure of righteousness. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ... ﴿١٣﴾﴾
(سورة الحجرات: ١٣)

﴿... Verily, the most honorable of you to Allah is that [believer] who has the most *at-Taqwa*...﴾
(Qur'an 49: 13)

In fact, there is no justification for Abu Rayyah's base views. We know that Bilal (رضي الله عنه) was a freed slave, yet he was the caller to Prayer of the Messenger (ﷺ). On the day of the Conquest of Makkah, he was the one who climbed onto the roof of the Ka'bah, standing above the chiefs of the Quraysh, in order to announce the word of Islam. During his caliphate, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) would give preference to Suhayb (رضي الله عنه), Bilal (رضي الله عنه), and other poor Companions over the rich ones.

It is well known that those who believed in the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) during the early days of his message were the weak, the poor, and the slaves. Did that have a negative impact on their status with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?

Perhaps in the eyes of the disbelieving Quraysh — and of the likes of Abu Rayyah — they were nothing more than poor and weak burdens to society, but history has recorded for them pages of honor, sincerity, and sacrifice in the way of propagating Allah's Religion. And of course, the likes of Abu Rayyah are only as minute specks when compared to their lofty status.

But here is an interesting point — the same standards by which Abu Rayyah judges Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) can be applied to Abu Rayyah himself. Based on those standards, one ought to insult and vilify him because he too is poor and because he has no honored status in society.

The reason Abu Hurayrah accepted Islam and kept company with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

We have previously alluded to the report that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) accepted Islam in the year 7 H, during the battle of Khaybar. But we must point out here that we consider the correct opinion to be that he had accepted Islam a great deal earlier, though we do hold that he emigrated in order to join the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the year

7 H. We maintain that he accepted Islam prior to the year 7 H based on the following two pieces of evidence:

1. In *al-Iṣâbah*, when Ibn Ḥajr was relating the biography of Ṭufayl ibn ‘Amru ad-Dawsee, he mentioned that Ṭufayl had accepted Islam before the Hijrah. After he accepted Islam, he returned to his tribe (the tribe of Abu Hurayrah); he invited his people to Islam, and only two people answered his call — his father and Abu Hurayrah. This is clear in its indication that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) had accepted Islam a number of years before he actually went to the Messenger (ﷺ).

2. Bukhari and Muslim related that there occurred a small conflict between Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) and Abbân ibn Sa‘eed ibn al-‘Âṣ when the spoils of war were being distributed after the conquest of Khaybar. Abbân asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to give him a portion of the spoils, but Abu Hurayrah interjected, saying, “Do not give him a share, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), for he killed Ibn Qawqal (Nu‘mân ibn Mâlik ibn Tha‘labah, whose title was Qawqal ibn Asram).” During the battle of Uḥud, when Abbân was still a polytheist, he killed Ibn Qawqal.

We deduce from this story that when Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) emigrated in order to join the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) during Khaybar, he was not new to Islam; he was well aware of previous events and he even knew what had happened during previous battles. And among those who maintained that Abu Hurayrah accepted Islam before Khaybar was Al-Ḥâfidh Ibn Ḥajr.

Abu Hurayrah’s acceptance of Islam, like that of all other Companions, was sincere, and was purely for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). He first heard of Islam through Ṭufayl ibn ‘Amru (رضي الله عنه), at which time he embraced it and applied its rulings. His wish to emigrate to join the Messenger (ﷺ) grew in intensity, until he finally was able to do so, at a time when the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions were engaged in the battle of Khaybar.

Most narrations suggest that he arrived at the end of the battle; however, he was present when the spoils of war were being given out. Some narrations — the more authentic ones — establish that the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the Muslims to allot a share for him.

Thereafter, he continued to remain in the company of the Prophet (ﷺ), oblivious to all worldly pursuits, so that he could dedicate himself to hearing the hadith of the Messenger (ﷺ). It is only natural that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) should have taken his place in aṣ-Ṣuffah, for it was an area in the Mosque that was specific to those who dedicated themselves wholly to knowledge and to jihad with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), those who had neither wealth nor family in Madinah. Some of the most honorable of Companions were in aṣ-Ṣuffah, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would honor them and would encourage others to honor them as well.

Until the Prophet's death, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) continued to adhere closely to his company, following him wherever he went. Because he remained close to him from the year 7 AH to the year 10 AH and because he was assiduous in asking the more distinguished Companions to relate narrations to him, he of course knew more hadith than those Companions who did not dedicate themselves solely to the purpose of listening to hadith and of always remaining closely to the Prophet's side.

That is the story of his Islam. Bukhari related that when Abu Hurayrah was migrating to the Prophet (ﷺ), a slave of his ran away. When Abu Hurayrah reached the Prophet (ﷺ) and when he pledged his allegiance to him, the slave reappeared. The Messenger (ﷺ) said, "O Abu Hurayrah! Here is your slave." Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, "He is (free) for the Countenance of Allah." So happy was he to meet the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that he freed the only slave he had. This of course was a wonderful display of sincerity to Islam and of thankfulness for the blessings of Allah.

Sincere Muslims are of course inspired by such a story and cannot help but to love and trust Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) completely. But Abu Rayyah, filled with malice and spite, only perceived that his acceptance of Islam was a story of one who was looking to fill his stomach! Without a doubt, the scholars of Islam, from the early as well as the later centuries, see Abu Hurayrah as being a noble example of one who fulfilled the trust of knowledge taken from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

The story of his hunger and his constant accompaniment of the Prophet (ﷺ)

1. Abu Rayyah went on to say that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) used his poverty as a means of finding a place in aş-Şuffah. Had Abu Rayyah known any shame, he would not have said that. Poverty is not considered to be a fault in a person, nor is living in aş-Şuffah. Only base souls who feel that honor is in wealth and status would make such a statement. The only refutation we need in this issue is to refer you to those verses of the Qur'an that speak about groups of extravagant, rich people from previous nations who waged war against the Messengers and their followers.

2. Abu Rayyah alleges:

“He was candid in expressing the reason why he kept company with the Prophet (ﷺ), just as he was candid in informing others about the reality of his upbringing.

(That is he was an orphan - as if he considers being an orphan a fault.)

He did not say that he kept company with him for love or for guidance, which was the reason other Muslims kept company with him. What he said is that he kept company with him and was satisfied with just filling his stomach.

He mentioned in the footnote that the Arabic word ‘*alâ*’ (in Abu Hurayrah’s explanation) means ‘because’. He therefore concludes

that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) kept company with the Prophet (ﷺ) because he wanted to fill his stomach!”

Only if one is defective in mind or if one has an ulterior motive will one come to the conclusion that Abu Rayyah came to. Otherwise, who of sound mind would say that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) left his country, his tribe, and his land that he grew up in just to be able to eat and drink!

Could he not find enough to eat and drink in his own land? The Daws tribe was huge and was honored among the Arabs. Moreover, their land was fertile. Therefore, it is a far-fetched conclusion indeed to say that Abu Hurayrah traveled to Madinah in order to find food and drink. It is but blind malice and spite that can lead one to making such ludicrous claims.

3. The authentically established hadith from the Prophet (ﷺ) in this regard is not the same as Abu Rayyah’s narration. The correct narration is as Bukhari related it: “I would stay close to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), being satisfied just to fill my stomach.” He said this to clarify that he had no worldly ambitions, no aspirations for wealth: all he wanted was to be with the Prophet (ﷺ) and learn from him. And to fulfill that noble aim, he needed neither wealth nor property, just food and drink to keep him going from one day to the next.

The following is Muslim’s narration: “I was a poor man, and I would serve the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), with enough to fill my stomach.” Neither in this nor in the previous narration is companionship mentioned; rather, what is mentioned is close adherence to the Prophet (ﷺ) at all times and serving his needs. Therefore, the narrations do not reveal the reason why he became a Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was simply explaining why he related more hadiths than any other Companion: the Muhâjirun were busy with transactions in the

marketplace, while the Anṣâr were busy taking care of their fields. Meanwhile, he kept close to the Prophet (ﷺ), following him wherever he went.

4. Abu Rayyah did not stop short at distorting words, but he went on to make another claim: that ‘*alâ* means ‘because’. Consequently, he claims that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, “Because I could fill my stomach.” He quoted Ibn Hishâm as saying, “‘because’ is one of the meanings of ‘*alâ*, as in this verse:

﴿... وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَيْنَكُم ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٥)

﴿... And that you must magnify Allah for having guided you...﴾

(*Qur'an* 2: 185)

This proves that Abu Rayyah did not want the truth. Ibn Hishâm — may Allah have mercy on him — said that ‘*alâ* has nine meanings, one of them being ‘because’. From those nine meanings, Abu Rayyah chose ‘because’, when most of the nine meanings are plausible meanings of ‘*alâ* in Abu Hurayrah’s statement. Imam An-Nawawi explained Abu Hurayrah’s statement according to its correct meaning:

“with enough to fill my stomach, meaning, I adhere closely to his company and I am satisfied with my sustenance, for I do not gather and save wealth; I do not take more than the sustenance I need...”

Ibn Ḥajr said, “‘With enough to fill my stomach’, means ‘I am satisfied just to have enough sustenance’.”

In short, Abu Rayyah exposed his own unscholarly and unwarranted bias by attacking Abu Hurayrah in this manner. He used the story of Abu Hurayrah’s acceptance of Islam against him, yet that story is one of the strongest proofs that establishes Abu Hurayrah’s love for Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ), a love that was not mingled with the love of the world or the desire for wealth.

He forsook worldly pursuits when he decided not to do business in Madinah and not to work in its fields. His sole concern and occupation was to always remain by the Prophet's side, so that he could take from his Sunnah and then convey it to posterity. As for wealth, even Abu Rayyah — despite his foolishness — did not claim that Abu Hurayrah accepted Islam because he desired wealth.

Ibn Katheer related with his chain from Sa'eed ibn Hind from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "Will you not ask me concerning these spoils of war that your companions ask about?"²⁹ Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) answered, "I ask you to teach me some of what Allah has taught you."

Ibn Katheer also related that one day, Abu Hurayrah's daughter said to him, "O my father, the girls find fault with me, saying, 'Your father has not adorned you with gold.'" He replied, "O my daughter, say to them, 'Indeed, my father fears for me the heat of embers.'"

Was he seeking status? During his migration to the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was content to serve the caravan he was accompanying. He was content to live in aş-Şuffah, a sanctuary for those who had no home of their own. He endured severe hunger during the days that he was seeking knowledge. Therefore, no, he was not seeking status. That is the truth concerning Abu Hurayrah's Islam, so how does Abu Rayyah justify his lies when he himself said, "The curse of Allah upon the liars, those who lie on purpose and those who lie unintentionally!"

5. Abu Rayyah accuses Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) of having been a glutton, saying that he would eat every day in the house of the Prophet (ﷺ) or in the house of one of his Companions, to the extent that some of the Companions would find excuses not to be in his company!

²⁹ Reported by Abu Nu'aym, vol. 1, p. 381 and Ibn Asâkir, vol. 19, p. 113. Its narrators are trustworthy. See *Siyar al-Alâm an-Nublâ*, vol. 2, p. 594.

This, of course, is another distortion of historical facts. As for him being a glutton, no authentic source has related that information to us. Yet suppose it to be true, it does not have a negative impact on his uprightness, his truthfulness, or his status. In no religion does eating a lot affect one's reputation or status. As for him eating every day in the house of the Prophet (ﷺ) or the house of one of his Companions, that is something that we have hitherto mentioned, explaining that he was always at Prophet's side and that he was satisfied just to have enough to eat. He was oblivious of worldly endeavors, preoccupied in the pursuit of learning hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

When a man asked Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullâh (رضي الله عنه) about Abu Hurayrah's many narrations, he said:

"We do not doubt that he heard sayings from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) which we did not hear and that he knew things that we did not know. We were an affluent people; we had houses and families. We would go to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) at the beginning and at the end of the day, but then we would return. He, on the other hand, was poor, having neither wealth nor family. His hand was with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he followed him wherever he went. So we do not doubt that he knew that which we did not know and that he heard that which we did not hear."

All Muslims appreciate Abu Hurayrah's sacrifices, but Abu Rayyah strays from the way of the believers. He then added another claim, saying that the Prophet (ﷺ) advised Abu Hurayrah, saying: "Visit at intervals, and your love will increase." Abu Rayyah relates that to suggest that the Prophet (ﷺ) was telling him not to visit people's houses so frequently. This is a vile and baseless lie, which Abu Rayyah himself exposes when he mentions the context in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said those words. One day, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked him where he was the previous day. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) answered,

“I was visiting people from my (family).” The Prophet (ﷺ) is commending Abu Hurayrah for having visited his relatives, which he might not have done for some times because he was constantly in the Prophet’s company. Furthermore, there is much discussion among hadith scholars about the chain of this hadith. But even supposing it to be authentic, it is not established that the Prophet (ﷺ) said those words specifically to Abu Hurayrah; rather, more than ten Companions relate the narration. Abu Rayyah cannot claim that they were all burdensome visitors, who frequently intruded into the homes of others.

Abu Rayyah lied again when he claimed that some Companions would resort to subterfuge in order to avoid Abu Hurayrah’s company. We challenge him to bring forth one authentic narration that establishes his claim. On the contrary, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was loved by all Muslims, which was Allah’s answer to the Prophet’s supplication for him, as is related by Bukhari and other compilers of the Sunnah.

6. Let us move on to yet another of Abu Rayyah’s accusations: he says that Abu Hurayrah gave precedence to Ja‘far ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) over all other Companions, deeming him to be superior even to Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Ali, and ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them). This, of course, is a blatant lie. It is true that Abu Hurayrah praised Ja‘far ibn Abi Ṭâlib, saying about him, “He is the best of people to the poor.” But that is true, for the generosity of Ja‘far and his love for the poor was well known to the Prophet (ﷺ) and to his Companions. The Prophet (ﷺ) gave him the title “*Abu al-Masâkeen*”³⁰.

Are we to find fault with Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) because he praised Ja‘far (رضي الله عنه)? When he praised Ja‘far, he was in the process of speaking about those who loved the poor and those who were

³⁰ Literally, ‘Father of the Poor’. (Translator)

compassionate to them, and not in the process of judging which Companion of the Prophet was superior in the overall sense. Therefore, Abu Rayyah's claim that Abu Hurayrah deemed Ja'far to be superior over all other Companions is baseless. But since when is Abu Rayyah so zealous in championing the cause of the Companions? He is the one, after all, who leveled so many accusations of mendacity and dereliction against them.

7. Next, Abu Rayyah related from Ath-Tha'âlabi and Badee' az-Zamân al-Hamdhâni that Abu Hurayrah (ؓ) was enamored by a kind of food called *maḍeerah*. They reported that he was given the title "Shaykh al-Maḍeerah". Neither in the Qur'an nor in the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) did Allah (ﷻ) forbid Muslims from loving a specific kind of food. The best of people and the most pious of them, Muhammad (ﷺ), loved certain kinds of dishes. And he (ﷺ) is an example and role model for all. Deprivation of the stomach or of one's private parts is not a part of Islam. Therefore the uprightness, the honor, and the status of Abu Hurayrah (ؓ) are not negatively impacted simply because he loved a certain kind of food.

It is also claimed that he would eat *maḍeerah* with Mu'âwiyah (ؓ) and then pray behind 'Ali (ؓ); however, this is narrated in books of literature and the books of the Shi'ah, in which the authenticity of a narration is not a major concern for authors, especially not with the likes of Ath-Tha'âlabi and Al-Himdhâni. It is established that Abu Hurayrah did not participate in the disputes between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah. Allah (ﷻ) purified his sword and his biography from any involvement in those disputes, just as He (ﷻ) purified many other scholars and worshipers who were Companions.

8. Abu Rayyah then cited *al-Hilyah* by Abu Na'eem, alleging that Abu Hurayrah (ؓ) would say while circumambulating around the Ka'bah, "Woe unto me because of my stomach. If I fill it, it makes me lethargic; and if I keep it hungry, it curses me or weakens me."

To be certain, Abu Na‘eem was one of the major retainers of narrations during his period; however, in his book, *Hilyatul-Awliyâh*, he did not limit himself to mentioning only authentic narrations. In fact, many of the narrations mentioned in that book are fabrications, one example being the aforesaid narration from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). Farqad as-Subkhee related it, and he never even met Abu Hurayrah; moreover, he was not trustworthy in his narrations.

But again, we shall suppose the narration to be authentic — what is there in it? Did he not state what applies to all stomachs? When one’s stomach is full, one becomes lethargic; and if one stays hungry for a while, one becomes weak. Does not this apply to Abu Rayyah’s stomach as well? Or does he claim himself to be special in this regard: that he is active both when he is full and when he is hungry?

9. He also related another story from *al-Hilyah* about Abu Hurayrah. During one of his travels, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) and his traveling party stopped somewhere to eat. They called him but he was praying. He then told their messenger, “I am fasting.” As they were finishing their meal, he came and began to eat with them. The people began to stare at the messenger that they sent to him, and he said, “What are you looking at? By Allah, he informed us that he was fasting.” Abu Hurayrah said:

“He has spoken the truth. I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, ‘The fast of Ramadân and the fast of three days from every month is (like) the fast of an entire year.’ I have already fasted three days at the beginning of the month. I break my fast by Allah’s gentle and easy commands and I fast by Allah’s multiplication (of rewards).”

So eager is Abu Rayyah to follow up on anything that will harm Abu Hurayrah’s reputation that he does not perceive the intelligence of the witty reply in this narration. Does this narration indicate anything more than the fact that Abu Hurayrah was blessed with a light and playful spirit, which made him beloved in the hearts

of every believer? Nothing in this incident takes away from the honor or status of Abu Hurayrah. In his *Musnad*, Imam Aḥmad related the exact same incident except that it was about Abu Dharr (ؓ). If Abu Rayyah learns of this, I fear that he will censure Abu Dhar as he did Abu Hurayrah.

His playful joking

Next, Abu Rayyah declares that all historians are in agreement about Abu Hurayrah (ؓ) being talkative — the word used in Arabic is *mihdhâr*³¹ — and a constant joker. He then interpreted the word *mihdhâr* to mean one who uses a great deal of obscene and base talk. As for his claim about the consensus of the scholars regarding Abu Hurayrah being talkative, that is a lie before Allah (ؓ), about Abu Hurayrah, and about historians. Not a single person ever described Abu Hurayrah as being garrulous; we challenge, nay we demand, Abu Rayyah to bring forth a single authentic narration in this regard.

Referring to the incident of Abu Hurayrah's narration about washing one's hands upon awakening from sleep, which we have already discussed in a previous chapter, Abu Rayyah says that 'Ā'ishah (ؓ) described Abu Hurayrah using the word *mihdhâr*. As we previously clarified, 'Ā'ishah did not repudiate Abu Hurayrah in that incident, nor did she use the word *mihdhâr* when describing him. It was Qayn al-Ashja'ee, one of the companions of 'Abdullâh ibn Mas'ood (ؓ), who took issue with Abu Hurayrah, but still, even he did not use the word *mihdhâr* to describe him.

We will again suppose that the narration imputed to 'Ā'ishah (ؓ) is correct; it was an isolated incident, so how then can Abu Rayyah claim that all historians agree in describing him as garrulous? Does a single person, 'Ā'ishah (ؓ), represent all historians?

³¹ *Mihdhâr*: talkative.

Abu Rayyah, you were the one who said in your book, “The curse of Allah on the liars, regardless of whether they lied on purpose or whether they did so unintentionally.” If you cannot produce authentic proofs to support your claim, then you are one of the liars — and you have cursed yourself.

As for Abu Hurayrah’s joking, it was a characteristic he was known for and one that Allah (ﷻ) blessed him with, and through that characteristic, Allah made him beloved to all Muslims. In Allah’s Religion, joking is not disliked; otherwise, harshness and dullness would have been recommended qualities in Islam. And far above are Allah and his Messenger (ﷺ) from recommending those qualities. Allah (ﷻ) said to his Messenger (ﷺ):

﴿... وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ...﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٩)

(سورة آل عمران: ١٥٩)

﴿... And had you been severe and hard-hearted, they would have broken away from you...﴾ (Qur’an 3: 159)

Among honorable people, joking is not considered to be a base thing. Within sensible limits, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would joke with his Companions and they too would joke. Among them, there were those who were known for having the highest of characters, but they were also known for their playful mirth — and Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) is one such example. In the absence of Mirwân, he was left in charge over Madinah. In his humbleness, he would ride a donkey (and not a horse) and playfully say, “Make way for the governor!” He would carry a bundle of firewood over his shoulder and then enter the marketplace, saying, “Make way for the governor.” These incidents not only show us the side of his playful nature, but also the side of his humbleness.

One day, a young man went to him and said, “When I woke up, I (made the intention) to fast. Then I went to my father; he had

bread and meat, and I ate, forgetting that I was fasting.” Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, “There is nothing against you (in terms of sin), for it was Allah (ﷻ) who fed you.” The young man continued, “Then I entered the house of my family, where milk was brought to me, and I drank it, forgetting that I was fasting.” Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, “There is nothing against you (because you forgot).” He then continued, “Then I slept, and when I woke up, I drank water and had sexual intercourse, forgetting that I was fasting.” Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said in a playful tone, “O my cousin, you have not accustomed yourself to fasting.”

What kind of person would find disgrace in such an innocent statement? Historians agree with Abu Rayyah that Abu Hurayrah would joke often; however, Abu Rayyah neglects to mention the other matters that they agree upon regarding Abu Hurayrah — that he was pious, that he was trustworthy, that he was known for his constant worship, for his good deeds, and for his not being concerned about material possessions. After mentioning their consensus on one point, why did Abu Rayyah neglect to mention their consensus on all other points? Does he wish for the following verse to apply to him?

﴿وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِمْ وَسَاءَٰتُ مَصِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١١٥)

﴿And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger [Muhammad] after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers’ way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen and burn him in Hell — what an evil destination.﴾ (Qur’an 4: 115)

Similarly, other Companions were moderate in joking. Bukhari related that the Companions of the Prophet would play with each other by throwing around watermelons. And Bukhari related the following in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*:

“The Companions of the Messenger of Allah did not possess dull natures. In their gatherings, they would recite poetry to one another and they would discuss their history before Islam. But if something was wanted from one of them regarding Allah’s Religion, his eyes would flare up (in seriousness) as if he were mad.”

“People mocked him”

Abu Rayyah comments:

“They would ridicule his hadiths narrations simply because he related them in abundance. Abu Râfay’ reported that a man from the Quraysh went to Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), dressed in a robe, and he was strutting in it. He said, ‘O Abu Hurayrah! You indeed relate many hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); and have you heard anything about this robe of mine?’ He answered, ‘I heard Abu al-Qâsim³² say that a man from those who came before you was strutting in his robe, when suddenly, Allah (ﷻ) made the earth swallow him up. And he will rattle therein until the arrival of the Hour. By Allah, I do not know, perhaps he was from your people or from your tribe.’ (Abu Rayyah ascribed this narration to Ibn Katheer). It appears from the young man’s question that he was not seeking clarification, but rather he was ridiculing Abu Hurayrah. He did not say, ‘Indeed you have memorized the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).’ Instead, he said, ‘You indeed relate many hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).’ The context of the story shows that he was mocking Abu Hurayrah.”

First, the questioner was not one of the Companions, nor was he of the Tâbi’oon who took the Sharia and its manners from the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). He was simply a young, impudent

³² Abul-Qâsim: one of the names of the Prophet, after his son Al-Qâsim. (Translator)

man of the Quraysh, and it is not expected from the likes of him that he should acknowledge the status of Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ); so the true value of that distinguished Companion should not be assessed based on the attitude of one so brazen and impudent.

Second, he was a young wastrel, who was prancing around in an extravagant robe. His foolishness led him to say, “Have you memorized anything about this robe of mine?” And in some narrations it is reported that the young man said, “Is this how the young man walked before he was swallowed up by the earth?” He then stumbled and fell in a very hard way, and as a result almost broke several bones. Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) recited this verse:

(سورة الحجر : ٩٥)

﴿إِنَّا كَفَيْنَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ﴾

﴿Truly! We will suffice you against the scoffers.﴾ (Qur'an 15: 95)

In this incident, Allah (ﷻ) honored Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) when He exacted retribution from the young, impudent man.

Third, in every generation, there were the young and foolish who mocked the people of knowledge. This happened to the scholars, the pious, and even to the Prophets, as Allah (ﷻ) related to us in His Noble Book. But since when do the Prophets suffer in their ranking with Allah just because the foolish ones mock them?

Fourth, this was an isolated incident, and Abu Rayyah was not able to produce another example. He used the words, “And they used to mock him...” They used to indicates that this occurred often and repeatedly. Does the action of one young, impudent man prove that the Companions and the Tâbi'oon, the bearers of knowledge during that time, would ridicule Abu Hurayrah's narrations? Abu Rayyah's declarations are the ravings of a man who has a wish and then uses all means of falsehood to realize it; his claims did not emanate from a sincere scholar who was searching out for the truth. Every person is

responsible for establishing his status and character; in Abu Rayyah's case, he allied himself to the liars and fabricators — people who follow their desires, so his is the status that he has chosen. As for Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), Allah (ﷻ) has established his innocence regarding all of the attacks that have been leveled against him.

His many hadith narrations

Abu Rayyah criticized Abu Hurayrah for his many hadiths, which amounted, according to the *Musnad* of Baqee ibn Mukhallid, to 5374 hadith narrations. Even among those narrations, the scholars of hadith did not say that they are all authentically ascribed to him. Abu Rayyah showed wonder at those many narrations because Abu Hurayrah kept company with the Prophet (ﷺ) for only three years.

We have already explained how he was able to memorize and relate so much. We will add to that a narration related by Ibn Katheer. In it, Mirwân ibn al-Ḥakam became angry with Abu Hurayrah when the latter spoke his view about the issue of Al-Ḥasan being buried alongside the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Mirwân said, "Indeed the people have said that you relate much hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and that you do so, in spite of the fact that you emigrate only a short time before the death of the Prophet (ﷺ)." Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said:

"Yes, I came while the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was at Khaybar in the year 7 (H). At that time, I was more than 30 years of age. I remained with him until he died, following him and serving him in the houses of his wives... I would pray behind him, I made pilgrimage with him, and I participated with him in his battles. I was, by Allah, the most knowledgeable of the people regarding his hadith. By Allah, a group of people from the Quraysh and Anṣâr preceded me in becoming his Companions and in emigrating to be with him. Yet they knew my adherence to him, and they would ask me about his hadith.

Among them were ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, ‘Ali, Ṭalḥah, and Az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them)..”

Thereafter, Mirwân was always cautious and fearful of Abu Hurayrah’s answers.

In another narration, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said to Mirwân, “I accepted Islam and migrated by choice. I loved the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with a strong love. As for you, you are of his city and you are the ones who were first called. You expelled the caller from his land; you harmed him and his Companions, and you accepted Islam after me...” Mirwân recanted his words and was thereafter cautious with him.

Without a doubt, one who is dedicated to a single task is able to gather a great deal of knowledge in a short period of time. We know of students who studied for only a short time with their teachers, yet were able to learn more than students who had been with those teachers for much longer than they. If we know that they were hardworking, what is so unbelievable about that? What concerns us is truthfulness, and the truthfulness of Abu Hurayrah was not doubted by the Companions or by his students from the Tâbi‘oon. That is the true and authentic ruling of history. All narrations that Abu Rayyah mentions are lies taken from dubious sources or simply from his imagination. But let us take a closer look at the narrations he mentions:

1. He claimed that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) struck Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) with a shield, saying to him, “O Abu Hurayrah, you have related too many narrations and it is worthy of you to tell lies about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”

We challenge Abu Rayyah to prove that he took this narration from any authentic source of knowledge, as opposed to books of literature that relate all kinds fabricated narrations, or the books of the

Shi‘ah, for the Shi‘ah are known for their hatred of Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) and for their fabrications concerning him. Abu Rayyah would often quote from those sources, yet regarding this narration he does not impute it to any book — why?

2. He claimed that ‘Umar (ﷺ) threatened to banish Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) to his homeland or to a land that was inhabited by apes, and that he promised to execute that threat if he would continued to relate narrations from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Abu Rayyah says that he related this from Ibn ‘Asâkir and Ibn Katheer.

‘Umar’s prohibition on excessive transmissions of hadith narrations was not specific to Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ), and it is not authentically related that he threatened to banish him to his homeland; furthermore, during that period such a punishment was not even permissible. At any rate, we have already discussed ‘Umar’s view on narrating and writing down hadiths.

As for the saying, “I will continue to pursue you until the land of the apes,” Abu Rayyah was duplicitous in ascribing it to Ibn Katheer. In the narration of Ibn Katheer, ‘Umar (ﷺ) said to Ka‘b al-Aḥbâr, “You will abstain from hadith (about previous nations) or I will continue to pursue you until the land of the apes.” Here, ‘Umar (ﷺ) is threatening Ka‘b al-Aḥbâr and warning him not to relate narrations from the Children of Israel, and he is not, in spite of what Abu Rayyah said, warning Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) to abstain from relating narrations from Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

3. Abu Rayyah then claims that the Companions accused Abu Hurayrah of lying and that ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ) was among those who repudiated him. Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, and ‘Ali — Abu Rayyah claims that each one of them accused Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) of lying. He then ascribes these views to Ibn Qutaybah in *Ta’weel Mukhtalif al-Hadeeth*.

Abu Rayyah is the one who is lying here, for Ibn Qutaybah ascribed those claims to An-Nadhâm and those of his ilk, and then he went on to refute them and to defend Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) in a most honorable way. It is a good thing that Abu Rayyah is not the only one who owns a copy of *Ta'weel Mukhtalif al-Hadeeth*; the book is in print and is widely circulated among scholars. In truth, no one, not even the Orientalists, lied so brazenly as did Abu Rayyah.

We challenge him to bring forth one authentic narration in which Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Ali, 'Â'ishah, or any other Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) accused Abu Hurayrah of lying about the Prophet's Sunnah. Perhaps these narrations are found in the books of An-Nadhâm or Abul-Hadeed al-Iskâfee, but they are not scholars and their books are not reliable sources of knowledge.

'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) may have wondered at some of Abu Hurayrah's narrations, but he would sometimes answer her, saying that while she was in the house, occupied with adornment, he was following the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), keeping close to him, and listening to his hadith. She did not hesitate to then acknowledge the truth of what he said. So humble and sincere was the Mother of the Believers that she acknowledged the truthfulness and merit of one who deserved it.

As regards the hadith about fasting when waking up upon a major state of impurity, Abu Hurayrah acknowledged that 'Â'ishah was more knowledgeable regarding the Prophet's domestic affairs. This indicates the humility and sincerity of Abu Hurayrah, who also acknowledged virtue and merit to one who deserved it.

4. Abu Rayyah related from Ibn Katheer that when Zubayr heard some of Abu Hurayrah's hadiths, he said, "He spoke in truth, he lied."

What Abu Rayyah did in this instance is similar to what Allah (ﷻ) relates about the People of the Book: they believe in some of the

Book and they disbelieve in some of the Book. Ibn al-Atheer related the rest of the narration: that ‘Urwah (رضي الله عنه) said to his father Zubayr (رضي الله عنه), “My father, what about your saying, ‘He spoke the truth, he lied?’” Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) said, “O my son! As for him hearing these hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I have no doubts thereof. However, some of them he puts in their right place and some of them he does not put in the right place.” Do you understand from this narration that Zubayr was accusing Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) of lying or that he was acknowledging him to be truthful?

When Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) said, “And some of them he does not put in the right place,” he was saying that Abu Hurayrah had an incorrect understanding of the rulings of some hadiths. That does not take anything away from the honor of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), at least not in the mind of anyone who understands the Arabic language.

5. Abu Rayyah reported that Ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) refuted the following narration of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه): “Whoever washes the dead, then let him take a shower; and whoever carries the dead, then let him make ablution.” He reported this narration from *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, by Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr.

This also points to the lack of scholarly honesty in Abu Rayyah. In the aforementioned book, Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr dedicated a chapter to mentioning issues wherein some scholars disagreed with the views of other scholars. In that chapter, he mentioned how Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) scolded the Companions for disagreeing with him when he wanted to fight the apostates. He also mentioned that ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) refuted Ibn ‘Umar’s view that the deceased is punished when his family cries for him. She said in her refutation, “Abu ‘Abdur-Rahmân... made a mistake or forgot.” She also disagreed with him about the number of times that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) made the ‘umrah. And in yet another example, he related that Ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) refuted the opinion of Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه) and Salmân ibn

Rabee'ah (رضي الله عنه) in an inheritance issue. Among those issues, he also mentioned that Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) disagreed with Abu Hurayrah's statement, "Whoever washes the dead, then let him take a shower; and whoever carries the dead, then let him make ablution."

As you can plainly see, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was only issuing a ruling in the issue and Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) refuted his opinion and not his hadith. How does this imply that Ibn Mas'ood accused Abu Hurayrah of lying in his hadith? It is also important to note that many jurists have held the same opinion as Abu Hurayrah, with some of them deeming the ruling indicated by the opinion to be compulsory and others deeming it to be recommended.

6. Abu Rayyah ended his discussion on Abu Hurayrah by saying, "We cannot mention all instances wherein the Companions criticized him or doubted in his narrations because our book is too small for that..."

This too is a manifest lie, for it is clear that he searched extensively, even in books of no scholarly value, for anything with which he could attack Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), and then he mentioned all that he found.

If we discuss the Companions' criticism of Abu Hurayrah's rulings, we must take into consideration that Abu Hurayrah would rule based on the apparent meaning of hadiths, without resorting to interpretation. Some Companions differed with him in his understanding, and so they would refute his ruling, but never his hadith. And more generally, this type of disagreement occurred often among the Companions. We already pointed out that Ibn 'Abdul-Barr dedicated an entire chapter in *Jâmi' al-Bayân al-'Ilm* to issues wherein they differed. Throughout the centuries and until this day scholars disagree with one another in certain issues, but they do not attack the honor or religion of the one they disagree with. Another point to remember is that Ibn al-Qayyim repeatedly mentioned in his

books that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was among the choice Companions who were *muftis*³³.

7. After ending his discussion on the Companions and how, at least according to his claims, they doubted the truthfulness of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), Abu Rayyah moves on to mention an unauthentic narration, wherein it is claimed that Abu Ḥaneefah did not accept narrations that were related by Abu Hurayrah.

We can say with absolute certainty that the narration in question is not authentic. Ḥanafi jurisprudence that is related from Abu Ḥaneefah himself is replete with rulings that have no basis except for the hadiths related by Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). Concerning Abu Rayyah's claim that the Ḥanafi jurists do not consider Abu Hurayrah to be a faqeeh, we have already established in the chapter on Ahmad Ameen that the Ḥanafi jurists do indeed agree that he is a faqeeh; the only exception from the Ḥanafis was 'Eesa ibn Abbân and those who followed him, and their dissent is disregarded, even by the Ḥanafis.

8. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), like many other younger Companions, would relate narrations from the older Companions and then ascribe them directly to the Prophet (ﷺ). Abu Rayyah says that that was *tadlees*, a form of deception on the part of Abu Hurayrah. Yes, there is a term in hadith criticism that is called *tadlees*, but in no way do scholars of hadith describe narrations by Companions from other Companions to be a category of *tadlees*. By the consensus of the scholars, that form of narration is called a *mursal* of a Companion. Companions would only relate from other Companions, and as has been established earlier in this book, everyone from their generation was upright and trustworthy. It did not occur that a Companion would relate from a

³³ Mufti: a learned person qualified to issue a derived ruling from revealed sources.

tâbi'ee in the same way, ascribing the narration directly to the Prophet (ﷺ), for they knew that a *tâbi'ee* could not have directly heard it from him (ﷺ).

9. Abu Rayyah then says that Abu Hurayrah appeased his conscience by justifying his fabrications against the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): as long as the lawful is not made forbidden and the forbidden is not made lawful, then there is no harm in that. Abu Rayyah attempts to prove his claim by mentioning hadiths that are supposedly related through Abu Hurayrah. Here are two examples: "If you do not make lawful that which is forbidden and if you do not prohibit that which is lawful, then you are correct in principle, and there is no harm in that." And here is the second example: "Whoever relates a hadith, then that is pleasing to Allah, regardless of whether I said it or not."

The Imams of Hadith have scrutinized these narrations and then exposed those who fabricated them and those who falsely ascribed them to Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). Not a single one of them can authentically be attributed to Abu Hurayrah. What then, is his sin in that?

10. Abu Rayyah claimed that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) would take hadith narrations from Ka'b al-Aḥbâr and then impute them to the Prophet (ﷺ). This is a most vile claim, which points to the active imagination of Abu Rayyah and the distortions that he perpetrated. The scholars of hadith have mentioned that one of the categories of narration is when a more distinguished narrator is relating from one who is less distinguished; they exemplified this by the narrations of Abu Hurayrah, Al-'Ubâdalah (رضي الله عنه), Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه), Anas (رضي الله عنه), and others from Ka'b.

One might understand from Abu Rayyah's statement that Abu Hurayrah was relating hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from Ka'b. This is false, for Ka'b never even met the Messenger (ﷺ). The scholars pointed out that Companions would take from Ka'b — and

from others who accepted Islam, but were previously Jews or Christians — narrations about previous nations. It is authentically related that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, «Do not believe the people of the book or accuse them of telling lies.»³⁴ Therefore, their narrations are related for the benefit of wisdom and contemplation, not for the benefit of legislating rulings or judging what came in the Qur'an; legislations are taken from the Qur'an and not from previous books, for the Qur'an is a judge over those books.

Abu Rayyah mentioned that Ka'b praised Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) for having knowledge of the Torah even though he never read it. Even if this is authentic, there is nothing in it, for many people listened to narrations in gatherings without reading from books. But how does that have a negative impact on Abu Hurayrah's character?

In an attempt to establish his claim, Abu Rayyah mentioned a narration that is related by Muslim; in it, it is clear that the following happened: while people were listening to Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) relate narrations, they confused those narrations he related from the Messenger (ﷺ) and those he related from Ka'b. Thereafter Abu Hurayrah corrected their mistakes, exhorting them to be cautious when relating narrations and advising them to fear Allah (ﷻ). Abu Rayyah distorted the facts of this narration, claiming that Abu Hurayrah would take narrations from Ka'b and then attribute them the Messenger (ﷺ); however, what we mentioned is clearly the true meaning of the narration.

Similarly, Abu Rayyah distorted the facts in another instance. He reported that Bukhari and Ibn Katheer rejected Abu Hurayrah's narrations, but far above were those two scholars from falling, as did Abu Rayyah, into the dark depths of ignorance. In the incident he referred to, they merely said that the hadith they were discussing

³⁴ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 23, p. 76, hadith no. 6987.

cannot be authentically attributed to Abu Hurayrah; this only means that they were pointing out mistakes from other narrators, and what does that have to do with Abu Hurayrah?

“His favoring of Bani Umayyah”

In an attempt to discredit Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), Abu Rayyah gleaned all narrations that he could from the books of the Shi‘ah. Of course, the Shi‘ah are known for their hatred of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), and on a more general note, of many other eminent Companions. Abu Rayyah had another motive in that regard: in order to make his book marketable in Shi‘ah populated areas, he pretended to be Shi‘ah himself, by way of accusing the same Companions that the Shi‘ah accused. He is free to use such tactics, but what is most repugnant is his declaration that his book is a scholarly work, which he wrote based on the most stringent of scholarly principles. He repeatedly says in his book that no one before him had ever reached such high scholarly standards, nor, he says, had anyone discovered what he discovered through his research.

Abu Hurayrah loved the family members of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); in more than one narration he related the virtues of Al-Ḥasan (رضي الله عنه) and Al-Ḥusain (رضي الله عنه). On the day that the Muslims wanted to bury Al-Ḥasan beside his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), there occurred a difference of opinion between Abu Hurayrah and Mirwân (رضي الله عنه), which resulted in an estrangement that continued almost until the time that Abu Hurayrah died. On the day of the Dâr³⁵, Abu Hurayrah supported ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), just as ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) and his two sons, Al-Ḥasan and Al-Ḥusain, supported him. Yet his main preoccupation in life was to disseminate the Sunnah and to serve knowledge. He therefore refused to participate in the disputes

³⁵ This refers to the plot to assassinate ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with him). (Translator)

that occurred between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah. He was not alone, for a number of the more distinguished Companions also refused, simply because they did not want to take part in shedding the blood of Muslims. In their opinion, neutrality between the two groups was more pleasing to Allah (ﷻ) and safer for their consciences. That was the true stance of Abu Hurayrah; all other opinions about him were inspired by desire and partisanship in the past, and by ignorance and false beliefs in the present.

A general word about Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ)

Based on this and the previous chapter, the following facts about Abu Hurayrah become clear, facts that are based on authentic narrations from trustworthy historians and the Imams of Hadith:

First, he related more hadiths than anyone else from the Companions. From the day that he accepted Islam and onward, he remained in the close company of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), directing all of his energies to memorizing his hadith and to learning as much as he could about that part of the Prophet's life that had passed before Abu Hurayrah's emigration. After the Prophet's death, he continued to gather narrations from other Companions until he had with him a great treasury of hadith, which consisted of more hadiths than any other Companion had collected.

It is true that some of his narrations elicited wonder in some Companions who had not previously heard them. At first, they wondered because he had so many hadith narrations, but in the end they all acknowledged that he had memorized more hadiths than anyone else among them. And never did they doubt in his sincerity when he was relating hadiths. We will go over two examples to illustrate this point:

1. In *aṭ-Ṭabaqât*, Ibn Sa'd related from Al-Waleed ibn 'Abdur-Rahmân that Abu Hurayrah related this hadith from the Prophet (ﷺ):

“Whoever attends a funeral, then he has a *qeerâṭ* (in reward).” Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said, “Watch what you relate, O Abu Hurayrah! For indeed, you relate too many hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ).” Abu Hurayrah took him by his hand and went with him to ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها); he said to her, “Inform him of what you heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say.” She confirmed Abu Hurayrah’s narration, and he said to Ibn ‘Umar, “O Abu ‘Abdur-Rahmân! By Allah, neither planting... nor transactions in the marketplace distracted me from the Prophet (ﷺ).” Ibn ‘Umar said, “You know more than us, O Abu Hurayrah, about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and you have memorized more of his hadith than any of us.”

2. In his *Târeekh*, Ibn Katheer reported that Abu al-Yusr ibn Abi ‘Âmir said: “I was with Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydullâh when a man entered and said, ‘O Abu Muhammad! By Allah, we do not know — does this Yemeni (Abu Hurayrah) have more knowledge of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) than you? Or does he ascribe to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that which he did not hear or that which he (i.e. the Prophet) did not say?’ Ṭalḥah (رضي الله عنه) said, ‘By Allah, we do not doubt that he heard sayings from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) which we did not hear and that he knew that which we did not know. We were an affluent people, for we had homes and families. And we would go to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) at the beginning and that the end of the day, but then we would return. But he (Abu Hurayrah) was poor — he had neither wealth nor family. He went hand in hand with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), following him wherever he went. So we do not doubt that he knew that which we did not know and that he heard that which we had not heard.’” Ibn Katheer said, “Tirmidhi related it in a similar narration.”

These two examples are authentically related from the people of knowledge; both serve to silence those who would accuse Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) of any wrongdoing.

Second, he would continue to relate narrations until he died in the year 58 or 59 or 60 (there being three different reports). There were many of Companions still alive and the Muslims were vigilant in protecting the true and pristine teachings of Islam. During that period, the Muslim Nation was indeed vast and powerful. But we still find that the Muslims would gather in throngs around this distinguished Companion; each one would feel it to be a great honor just to meet Abu Hurayrah, never mind to actually hear narrations from him. Two great honors were bestowed on the most eminent scholar among the Tâbi'oon, Sa'eed ibn al-Musayib: he remained a close student of Abu Hurayrah until he died, and he married his daughter to him. Bukhari mentioned that 800 scholars from the Companions and the next generation related narrations from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه); no other Companion had even a tenth of 800 narrators who related from him. This alone should satisfy those who sincerely want the truth.

The Companions were vocal in correcting any misconduct in society, they prevented innovators from changing the Religion, and they were severe against those who deviated from the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ), regardless of whether that deviation was in speech or in action. Does it make sense, then, that they would remain quiet if they had the very least amount of doubt about Abu Hurayrah or about his narrations? He was not a chief or a ruler and he did not have a very high ranking in society; in fact he was poor — then what prevented them from forcing him to refrain from relating narrations from the Messenger (ﷺ), if indeed they had doubts about his truthfulness. They were the ones who proclaimed the truth even in the face of rulers and governors.

Third, you already have had a glimpse of how Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) voiced his disagreement with Mirwân, the governor of Madinah at the time. Concerning that incident, Abu Hurayrah became angry with

him and said, “You have entered into a matter that does not concern you!” And we know the rest of the story — how Abu Hurayrah gave a very candid and truthful answer, which perhaps can even be described as being severe. Is not that an indication that Abu Hurayrah was not biased in his support for Bani Umayyah. From that incident, we learn that he was a man who was confident about his Religion and about his narrations from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); afterwards, Mirwân regretted having provoked Abu Hurayrah into giving him such a forceful and cogent response.

Fourth, along with his knowledge and dedication to spreading the Sunnah, he was also known for his worship, his prayer, and in general, his piety. In his *Târeekh*, Ibn Katheer related from Abu ‘Uthmân of India that Abu Hurayrah would stand for prayer for one-third of the night, then his wife would stand for one-third of the night, and then his son would stand for one-third of the night. At the end of each interval, one of them would wake the next person up. Ibn Katheer also reported that Abu Hurayrah said, “I divide the night into three parts: one part for reciting the Qur’an, one part for sleeping, and one part for revising the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).” ‘Ikrimah related that Abu Hurayrah would say, *Subhâna Allâh* 12,000 times every night, and he would say, “I repeat the *tasbeeh* (saying, *Subhâna Allâh*) in proportion to my sins.” It is also related that people would frequently hear him seek refuge in Allah (ﷻ) from the Hell-fire.

More than one narrator related that during his prostration, Abu Hurayrah would seek refuge from the following — from fornicating, from stealing, from disbelieving, and from perpetrating a major sin. It was said to him, “And you fear perpetrating those (sins)?” He said, “And what makes me safe while *Iblees* (the Devil) is alive and changing hearts...” Abu ‘Uthmân of India said that he asked Abu Hurayrah, “How do you fast?” He said, “I fast three days at the

beginning of the month, and if something happens with me, I at least have a monthly reward.”

Abu Hurayrah had a female servant who would often vex him through her actions. He once raised a small stick to her and said, “Were it not for retribution on the Day of Judgment, I would have (struck) you with this. However, I will sell you to One Who will give me your price when I am in most need of it. Go forth, you are free for Allah (ﷻ).”

In Mina, during the days of the ‘Eid, Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) and Abu Hurayrah would lead the people in reciting the *takbeer*, which clearly points to Abu Hurayrah’s status among the people. Furthermore, he was the one who prayed over the Mother of the Believers, ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها);³⁶ and there is also a narration which states that he prayed over Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها), the Mother of the Believers.

And on his deathbed, Abu Hurayrah began to cry, and he was asked, “What makes you cry?” He said, “I am not crying over this world of yours, but rather I am crying because of the long distance of my travel and because of the few supplies I have (i.e. deeds).” To say that a man known for the above-mentioned qualities would lie upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is itself a grave and repugnant lie.

Fifth, Although he had very little in terms of worldly possessions, he would give charity whenever he acquired any wealth. The scribe Abu az-Zu‘ayza‘ah reported that Mirwân sent one hundred dinars to Abu Hurayrah; on the next day, he sent a message, saying, “I made a mistake, for I did not intend to give you that money; rather, I intended to give it to such and such person.” Abu Hurayrah said, “I have spent it, but when my stipend comes, then take it from me.” He had already given the money in charity; Mirwân was only testing him to see what he would do with the money.

³⁶ i.e., at her funeral. (Editor)

One must disregard Abu Rayyah's claim that Abu Hurayrah lived in a castle. In Ibn Atheer's narration, it is related that he died in his house, in 'Aqeeq.³⁷ The word house does not signify affluence or extravagance, for all other Companions had houses as well. But no one would be brazen enough to say, "They lived in castles!" And we seek refuge in Allah from those who distort and change facts.

Sixth, a few years after his death the Imams of Hadith paid special heed to Abu Hurayrah's narrations. They scrutinized all of his narrations, distinguishing them from those that were falsely ascribed to him. His narrations are found in all compilations of the Sunnah. It was An-Nidhâm, Al-Iskâfee, and the Shaykhs of the Mu'tazilah and the Shi'ah who first invented lies about him.

Seventh, Islamic jurists studied in depth all narrations that were authentically attributed to Abu Hurayrah. If a hadith were correctly imputed to him, no one would reject his narration. The only exceptions in that regard were Ibrâheem an-Nakha'ee and other scholars from Kufa who had specific and known conditions for accepting Ahâd narrations. Nonetheless, the majority of Islamic jurists did not agree with them; even Abu Haneefah, who was also in Kufa, is not reported to have taken the same stance as Ibrâheem an-Nakha'ee. Instead, he would apply Abu Hurayrah's narrations as long as it was authentically established that he related them.

Eighth, the first people to depict Abu Hurayrah in a negative light were An-Nidhâm and other Shaykhs of the Mu'tazilah; but they also took a similar stance vis-à-vis most Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ); therefore their hostile attitude was not specific to Abu Hurayrah. The Mu'tazilah are known to have rejected some authentic hadiths that are established to be correct by the majority of scholars. They were heavily influenced by Greek philosophy, which they set

³⁷ A section of Madinah. (Editor)

up as a standard to judge Islam. Had they not feared the masses of Muslims, they would have even criticized the Qur'an; since they were unable to do so, they were satisfied to interpret it based on their inclinations. They felt that Greek philosophy was truth unmixed with any falsehood. Today, any student from secondary school is able to answer and refute their laughable philosophy. Yet Abu Rayyah considers them to be the ones with sound minds.

As for the Shi'ah, they did not single out Abu Hurayrah with their criticisms, but rather their fulminations were against most of the Prophet's Companions. Most Shi'ah sects ruled that the majority of Companions were disbelievers, and this ruling of theirs applied to the likes of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Sa'd, Khâlid, & other eminent Companions.

They based their hatred on a general principle: anyone who did not prefer 'Ali to be the leader after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) must be hated. So because the Companions agreed to appoint Abu Bakr as Caliph, the Shi'ahs hated them all, considering them to be plotters in a huge conspiracy to prevent 'Ali from becoming Caliph. Whereas the Shi'ah generalize their hatred for most Companions, Abu Rayyah more or less singles out Abu Hurayrah. May Allah be pleased with Abu Hurayrah, and may He (ﷻ) give Abu Rayyah that which he deserves!

A general word about Abu Rayyah and his book

After an initial cursory reading of Abu Rayyah's book, I wrote a short criticism on it. But after a more lengthy perusal and upon further reflection, I have written a more detailed criticism. The following are some conclusions about Abu Rayyah that I can assert with absolute surety:

First, the man is not trustworthy when he quotes from sources; he often adds to the text or excerpt, sometimes with one word that is enough to change the entire meaning, so that the new meaning

corresponds to what he wants, and not to what the author of the text intended; and very often, he deletes a word, or words, from the text that he is quoting from. Often, he quotes a scholar, though that scholar never uttered the words he ascribed to him. For all of the above, we have mentioned a number of examples as we were discussing his ‘treatise’ on Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).

Second, when he tries to prove a point or an opinion that is not held by the majority of scholars, he quotes the scholars to prove his point, but in reality, those quotations often have nothing to do with the issue in question or with the point that he is trying to prove, and all the while he tells the reader that his views were championed by scholars from the early centuries.

For example, it is well known that Abu Hurayrah and other Companions would hear a hadith from a Companion, after which they would directly ascribe it to the Prophet (ﷺ); Abu Rayyah argues that the scholars call this kind of narration *tadlees*, which is a form of deception in hadith narration. However, he neglects to mention that the scholars agree that that action of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) and other Companions is not categorized as *tadlees*, but rather is called *mursal* of a Companion. Furthermore, they agreed that the *mursal* of a Companion is a valid proof in Islam.

Third, he twists and distorts the meanings of texts on purpose; his understanding of texts is often inspired by his desires and not by scholarly methods of research. His understanding of Abu Hurayrah’s statement, “enough to fill my stomach” is a clear instance of twisting and shaping the meaning of a text to suit his preconceived notions.

Fourth, in an attempt to establish his notions, he often rejects narrations, which, by the consensus of scholars, are authentic. Meanwhile, he relies heavily on fabricated narrations, which have been ruled by scholars to be lies. Whereas he has no scruples when it comes to disbelieving narrations from authentic sources of the

Sunnah, such as *Bukhari* and *Muslim*, he trusts fully books like *al-Hayawân*, by Ad-Dumayree; *Sharḥ ibn Abul-Hadeed*; *‘Uyoon al-Akhhâr*; and *Maqâmât Badee‘ az-Zamân al-Himdhâni*. As we have seen earlier, these were the same standards set up by the Orientalists.

Fifth, in all that concerned Abu Hurayrah, he relied on the works of these Orientalists: Goldziher, Springer, and Von Kramer; in terms of books, he was influenced by *Dâ‘iratul-Ma‘ârif al-Islâmiyah* (from Britain). Abu Rayyah proudly boasted that those are the “scholars” that he trusted and learned from. However, he has proved to be more corrupt than they were and more vicious in his attacks. Although Springer accused Abu Hurayrah of lying, he still praised him for his good manners and his overall piety. This is considered as praise when compared to Abu Rayyah’s description of Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ). Springer observed that many narrations were falsely ascribed to Abu Hurayrah, and in effect, he was directing the fault of those narrations to others. On the other hand, Abu Rayyah writes that Abu Hurayrah would lie, but would appease his conscience by saying that he was not forbidding lawful matters and that he was not making lawful forbidden matters. Thus we see how the student — Abu Rayyah — surpassed and excelled his teachers.

Sixth, he did not adhere to the dignified speech that scholarly research is known by; he used such vulgar language as is appropriate to men of no learning, or rather, to men of no character.

At the beginning of his book he affirmed that a lie in speech that does not correspond to reality, regardless of whether prevarication was intended or not. He then said, “Then the curse of Allah upon the liars, regardless of whether they lied intentionally or not.” He said this, fully understanding that the Companions, the scholars of hadith, and the eminent jurists of Islam all made mistakes. So in the mind of Abu Rayyah, they are all cursed by Allah! But by the infinite and divine justice of Allah (ﷻ), we have on more than

one occasion caught Abu Rayyah lying intentionally. Furthermore, he used the vilest of language in describing eminent Companions, such as Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) and Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ).

Seventh, throughout his work, he continually refers to his own genius, claiming that his research was a huge breakthrough and that he discovered the true character of Abu Hurayrah, which was hidden from 800 scholars from the Companions and Tâbi'oon — thus, in essence, he was attributing simplicity, naiveté, and neglectfulness to the Companions, among whom were 'Umar (ﷺ) and many other eminent Companions. He implied the same criticism to thousands of scholars from ensuing generations.

Eighth, the books he relied on to develop his opinions contain opinions that go against the views of the vast majority of Muslims. These are some the “reference books” Abu Rayyah took from:

- *Ḥayât al-Ḥayawân*, by Ad-Dumayree
- *Al-'Umdah*, by Ibn Rasheeq
- *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balâghah*, by Ibn Abil-Ḥadeed
- *Nihâyatul-Arib*, by An-Nuwayree
- *Al-Bayân wat-Tabyeen*, by Al-Jâḥidh
- *Al-Ḥayawân*, by Al-Jâḥidh
- *Mu'jam al-Ḥayawân*, by Ma'loof Pasha
- *Khâs al-Khâs*, by Ath-Tha'âlabee
- *Aş-Şadâqah waş-Şadeeq*, by At-Tawḥeedi
- *Al-Ḥadârat al-Islâmiyah*, by Kramer³⁸
- *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, by Goldziher

³⁸ The reference here is uncertain, but it may be to Samuel Kramer, a Russian Orientalist. (Editor)

He blindly accepted what he found in these books, while he rejected much from the authentic books of Sunnah — such as *Bukhari*, *Muslim*, *Musnad Imam Ahmad*, *al-Muwaṭṭāʾ*, *Tirmidhi*, and other authentic sources of the Sunnah.

Based on the above, we can say that Abu Rayyah's book is of no scholarly value whatsoever. And the following two points sum up the gist of our judgment regarding his work:

1. The book was not written based on accepted methods of scholarly research.
2. The author is void of scholarly qualities such as honesty and precision.

﴿... وَاللَّهُ يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٤)

﴿... But Allah says the truth, and He guides to the [Right] Way.﴾
(*Qur'an* 33: 4)

SECTION THREE

**The Ranking of the
Sunnah in
Islamic Legislation**

This Section Consists of Three Chapters

12. How the Sunnah Ranks with the Qur'an
13. How the Qur'an Encompasses the Sunnah
14. Abrogation of the Sunnah by the Qur'an,
and Abrogation of the Qur'an by the Sunnah

CHAPTER TWELVE

How the Sunnah Ranks with the Qur'an

Allah (ﷻ) revealed the Qur'an to His Messenger (ﷺ) as guidance for righteous people, as a constitution for Muslims, and as a remedy for the hearts of those whom Allah wills to cure. It comprises many of the aims for which Allah sent His Messenger (ﷺ) — in it are legislations, manners, exhortations, stories, (declarations of) tawhīd (Islamic Monotheism), promises of reward, and warnings of punishment. It is positively authentic as a whole as well as in its detailed verses. So whoever doubts in a verse or in a word or in a letter of the Qur'an, is not a Muslim. The most important duty of the Islamic scholar is to acquaint himself with Allah's laws and rulings that are found in His Book.

In the generation of the Companions, Muslims received the Qur'an orally from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and it was passed down to ensuing generations through mutawâtir transmission. Other than conveying Allah's Book to the people, the Messenger (ﷺ) had another duty as well: to explain the Book and its verses, by clarifying the details of a general command, by explaining general principles that are revealed in the Qur'an, and so on.

Just as Muslims need to know Allah's Book, they need to know what the Prophet (ﷺ) clarified regarding it. One cannot correctly understand the Qur'an or know what Allah (ﷻ) means in many verses except by referring to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), to whom Allah revealed His Book, so that he could explain to people that which was revealed to them from their Lord.

With the exception of deviant groups, Muslims from the past and present agree that the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) — comprising of his sayings, deeds, and approvals — is one of the binding sources of legislation in Islam, which every Muslim needs in order to know what is lawful and what is prohibited. In a previous chapter, we mentioned the proofs that establish the validity of the Sunnah as a source of Islamic legislation. What we want to discuss here is the ranking of the Sunnah in relation to the Qur'an. Is it equal in status to the Qur'an or is it second to the Qur'an in ranking?

First, we know the following about the Qur'an and the Sunnah:

1. We are absolutely sure about the authenticity of the text of the Qur'an. That much we know about its text. As for the meanings and rulings it conveys, some we are certain of and some we are less than positively sure about.
2. As for the Sunnah, we are absolutely sure about the authenticity of mutawâtir narrations and less than absolutely sure about narrations that are not mutawâtir, at least regarding each specific narration, for as a whole, or as a group, they represent absolute, sure knowledge. The text that is established by less than absolute, sure knowledge is second in ranking to that which is established through absolutely sure knowledge. Consequently then, the Sunnah ranks second to the Qur'an.

Furthermore, the Sunnah can either be a clarification of the Qur'an or an addition to it. In instances when it is a clarification, then

it is ranked second to that which is being clarified, for the primary text is the foundation and the explanation is built upon it. If it is an addition, then it is not taken into consideration unless no text in the issue is found in the Qur'an. This is another proof, showing that the Qur'an is of a higher ranking.

Thus far, we have arrived at our conclusions through reasoning, but those conclusions are also corroborated by a number of narrations. One example is the hadith of Mu'âdh (رضي الله عنه), which Abu Dâwood and Tirmidhi related. In it, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked: «“If an issue is presented before you, how would you judge?” Mu'âdh (رضي الله عنه) said, “By Allah's Book.” “And if you do not find (the ruling in Allah's Book)?” Mu'âdh said, “By the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).” Then the Prophet (ﷺ) asked, “And if you do not find (the ruling in the Sunnah)?” He said, “I will strive (to arrive at a judgment) through my opinion.”»

'Umar (رضي الله عنه) wrote to Shurayh al-Qâḍee: “If an issue comes before you, then judge by what is in Allah's Book, and if an issue comes to you whose ruling is not in Allah's Book, then judge based on the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)...” And in another narration, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said, “If you find something in Allah's Book, then judge by it and do not turn to anything else.” This statement is clarified through another saying of his: “Look to what seems clear to you from Allah's Book, and do not ask anyone about it. Regarding that which does not seem clear to you from Allah's Book, then follow the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”

The following is related from Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه): “If any of you is presented with an issue, then let him judge by what is in Allah's Book, and if something comes to him that is not in Allah's Book, but is (explained in the Sunnah) of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then he should speak (i.e. rule) by it.” And we mentioned earlier that both Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) would first seek judgment

in Allah's Book, and if they would not find a ruling for any given issue therein, they would then look in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). There are many narrations from the Companions, the Tâbi'oon, and the Imams and Mujtahidoon that convey a similar meaning.

What we have just mentioned might seemingly contradict the statement of some scholars, when they said that the Sunnah is a judge over the Qur'an, for it clarifies what is general in the Qur'an, it limits rulings of the Qur'an that are universal, and it clarifies exceptions to general rulings of the Qur'an. In these situations, one takes from the understanding of the Sunnah, forsaking the apparent meaning of the Qur'an. A verse from the Qur'an might have two possible meanings, and the Sunnah clarifies which of the two meanings is intended. So again, the ruling of the Sunnah is applied. Do you not see that the verse about stealing rules that the hand of every thief is cut off, yet the Sunnah establishes that there are exceptions: it establishes a minimum amount of property, which if stolen, leads to the hand of the thief being cut off. Furthermore, the stolen property must have been stored in a safe place, and if it was not, then the hand of the thief is not cut off. Furthermore, the verse suggests that the *yad* — Arabic for hand — should be cut off; and *yad* applies to the area from the tips of one's fingers all the way to one's elbows. But the Sunnah has specified that *yad* in this instance is referring to (what extends from) the two wrists. Similarly, the verses about zakât embrace all kinds of wealth, but the Sunnah clarifies that zakât is compulsory only on specific kinds of wealth. (Furthermore, in regard to marriageable women,) Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... وَأَحِلَّ لَكُمْ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ...﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٤)

﴿... All others are lawful...﴾

(Qur'an 4: 24)

The Sunnah limited the implications of this general ruling, legislating that a man cannot marry a woman and her aunt (whether from the

father's or the mother's side) at the same time. There are many more examples to establish this principle.

This might suggest that we give preference to the Sunnah over the Qur'an, or at least, give equal weight to both. But we answer this by saying that the application of the Sunnah in the aforementioned situations signifies a clarification of what Allah (ﷻ) intended in His Book. In the verse about stealing, for instance, the Sunnah clarifies that the intended meaning of the Qur'an is for the hands to be cut off at the wrists, and not at the elbows; and that the intended meaning of thief is that thief who steals at least the minimum amount for the punishment to be applicable to him and that thief who steals property that is stored in a safe and protected place. Therefore the Sunnah has not legislated a new ruling, but rather it has clarified and interpreted and explained that which is general or that which has more than one possible interpretation. And this is what is meant by those who say that the Sunnah is a judge over the Book: it clarifies the Book, but is not ranked above it.

One might also argue that the scholars disagree about the authenticity of the narration ascribed to Mu'âdh (رضي الله عنه). Tirmidhi said about that narration, "I do not know it except through this chain, and it is not connected." Al-Jawzjâni ruled that it is a fabrication, when he said, "This hadith is false; it contains a chain that cannot be depended upon to establish rulings that pertain to the principles of the Sharia." We answer this argument with the following: the practice of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ood, Ibn 'Abbâs, and others highly distinguished Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), as related through authentic narrations, as well as the practice of scholars who came after them, are enough to prove what we are saying.

Without a doubt, because Aḥâd narrations impart less than sure, absolute knowledge, they rank second to the Qur'an, at least in

terms of the authenticity of the text. As for understanding rulings of texts, one must refer to the Sunnah before one executes a command from the Qur'an because of the possibility that the Sunnah specifies or limits or clarifies a ruling in the Qur'an. From this perspective, the Sunnah is equivalent, or on an equal footing, with the Qur'an, equivalent in that one must compare and contrast verses of the Book with narrations from the Sunnah and then find harmony between both whenever there is an apparent contradiction. No two scholars, who recognize the authority of the Sunnah as a binding proof in Islam, would disagree about this.

Is the Sunnah an independent legislative authority?

Scholars are in agreement that texts from the Sunnah are of three categories:

1. A text that confirms a ruling of the Qur'an: it confirms a ruling of the Qur'an in the general sense as well as in the details of that ruling. In this category are those hadiths which inform us that Prayer, zakât, Hajj, and fasting are compulsory, without going into details about the conditions or requisites or pillars of those deeds. Such hadiths are in agreement with verses from the Qur'an that impart a similar meaning. So we have the hadith, "Islam is built upon five: to bear witness that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to establish the prayer, to give zakât, to fast Ramaḍân, and to make pilgrimage to the House (i.e. the Ka'bah), for whoever is able to do so." This hadith is in agreement with all of the following verses:

﴿... وَأَقِمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَعَاتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٨٣)

﴿... And perform the Prayer, and give zakât...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 83)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ ...﴾ ﴿١٨٣﴾
 (سورة البقرة: ١٨٣)

«O you who believe! Observing the fast is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you...» (Qur'an 2: 183)

﴿... وَللّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا ...﴾ ﴿٩٧﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٩٧)

«... And Hajj [pilgrimage to Makkah] to the House [Ka'bah] is the duty that humankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses [for one's conveyance, provision and residence]...»

(Qur'an 3: 97)

Another example is the hadith: «The wealth of any Muslim is not lawful (to another Muslim) except by his consent.»¹ This is in agreement with the verse:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالِكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ يَبْطِلُ إِلَّا أَن تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً عَن تَرَاضٍ مِّنْكُمْ ...﴾ ﴿٢٩﴾
 (سورة النساء: ٢٩)

«O you who believe! Do not consume each other's property unjustly, but let it be a trade amongst you, by mutual consent...» (Qur'an 4: 29)

2. A text that clarifies a ruling of the Qur'an, by limiting the applicability of a comprehensive ruling, by mentioning the details of a general ruling, or by mentioning an exception to a general ruling. In this category are those hadiths that mention in detail the rulings of Prayer, fasting, Hajj, business transactions, and dealings that are mentioned in a general way in the Qur'an. This category constitutes the greater portion of the Sunnah.

¹ Reported by At-Tirmidhi, vol. 5, p. 72, Ahmad and Ad-Dâraquṭnee. Tirmidhi said, it is a good and authentic hadith. See *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*, vol. 6, p. 53 and *Fatâwa ash-Shabakah al-Islamiyah*, vol. 1, p. 164.

3. A text that establishes a ruling that the Qur'an does not speak of, meaning that it neither confirms nor denies it. In this category are those hadiths that establish the prohibition of marrying a woman and her aunt (whether from the father's or the mother's side) at the same time. Another example is the stoning of an adulteress and the banishment of a fornicator; yet another example is the ruling that establishes a share of inheritance for a grandmother.

That the rulings of the first two categories are applicable and binding and that their examples are commonly found in the Sunnah is not an issue of contention among the scholars. It is only the third category — which establishes rulings that are neither rejected nor approved of in the Qur'an — that the scholars disagree about, a disagreement that is, as you will see, for the most part superficial. Are the rulings of the third category independently established? Or do they implicitly come under the texts of the Qur'an, even if that is by way of interpretation? The author of *Muwâfiqât* and others take the second opinion, while the majority of scholars take the first. First, we relate the following saying of Shâfi'ee, and then we will move on to explain how the two groups differ in this issue:

“Every scholar that I know of holds that the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) is of three kinds...

The first concerns rulings about which Allah (ﷻ) has revealed a text in the Qur'an, and then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mentions the exact same ruling. The second concerns issues about which Allah revealed verses in the Qur'an, and then the Prophet (ﷺ) clarifies what was intended by those verses... The third consists of hadiths wherein the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) legislates regarding issues that are not mentioned in the Qur'an.

There are four opinions regarding the third category:

1. Some say that Allah (ﷻ) granted this to the Prophet (ﷺ) when He made it obligatory upon His slaves to obey him. And in His prior

knowledge, Allah knew that He would guide the Prophet (ﷺ) to those actions that would please Him and to issue rulings that are not mentioned in any text of the Qur'an.

2. Some scholars say that no Sunnah has ever been established except that it has a basis in the Qur'an. In his Sunnah, the Prophet (ﷺ) clarified the number of prayers and the detailed rulings of the prayers based on the verses that establish the Prayer to be compulsory. The same can be said about business transactions as well as other legislations. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالِكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ ...﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٩)

(سورة النساء: ٢٩)

﴿O you who believe! Do not consume each other's property unjustly...﴾
(Qur'an 4: 29)

﴿... وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٧٥)

﴿... Whereas Allah has permitted trade and forbidden Riba [usury]...﴾
(Qur'an 2: 275)

The Prophet (ﷺ) clarified what is permitted and what is forbidden, just as he clarified the rulings that pertain to the Prayer.

3. Some say that ... through Allah's direct command to obey the Prophet (ﷺ), the Sunnah is established.

4. And others say that every Sunnah was inspired to him, so the Sunnah is the Wisdom that was inspired to the Prophet (ﷺ) from Allah (ﷻ)..."

When Shâfi'ee was discussing the different views regarding the third category, it is clear that the difference of opinion is not about the existence of the third category; rather, it is only in how we explain it. Does it consist of rulings that are legislated independently, as is held by the scholars of the first, third, and fourth opinions? Or are

those rulings based upon texts from the Qur'an, as is held by those who adopt the second opinion?

The Proofs of those who say that the rulings of the third category are independently legislated

First, logically speaking, as long as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is protected from erring, there is nothing to prevent the Sunnah from establishing an independent legislation or ruling, and Allah (ﷻ) may, according to what He wills, order His Messenger (ﷺ) to convey His rulings to the people in any manner whatsoever, regardless of whether it is through the Qur'an or through any other means. As long as the mind accepts it as being plausible and as long as it has indeed occurred by the consensus of all scholars, then why should we not accept that view?

Second, verses in the Qur'an which establish that it is compulsory to follow and obey the Messenger (ﷺ) in his commands and prohibitions are general — they do not differentiate between the clarifying Sunnah, the corroborating Sunnah, and the independent Sunnah. In fact, some verses of the Qur'an point to that independence; for example, Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ...﴾ (٥٩)

(سورة التيساء: ٥٩)

﴿O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger [Muhammad] and those of you [Muslims] who are in authority. [And] if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the last Day...﴾

(Qur'an 4: 59)

Referring a matter to Allah (ﷻ) means referring it to the Qur'an, and referring it to the Messenger (ﷺ) means referring it to his Sunnah (after his death). Allah (ﷻ) says:

(سورة المائدة: ٩٢) ﴿وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأَحْذَرُوا...﴾

﴿And obey Allah and the Messenger, and beware [of even coming near to drinking, gambling or other wicked deeds]...﴾ (Qur'an 5: 92)

This verse, as well as all other verses wherein obedience to the Messenger (ﷺ) and obedience to Allah (ﷻ) are coupled, indicates that it is compulsory to obey Allah in all that He commanded and forbade in the Qur'an. And obedience to the Messenger's commands and prohibitions refers to that which is not in the Qur'an; had it been in the Qur'an, it would have been part of obedience to Allah (i.e. from the first part of the above-mentioned verse). Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ...﴾

(سورة الثور: ٦٣)

﴿... And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment beware, lest some afflictions befall them...﴾ (Qur'an 24: 63)

This verse specifies the Messenger (ﷺ) with matters that he is to be obeyed in, and that is the Sunnah which has not been mentioned in the Qur'an. Allah (ﷻ) says:

(سورة النساء: ٨٠) ﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ...﴾

﴿He who obeys the Messenger, has indeed obeyed Allah...﴾

(Qur'an 4: 80)

﴿... وَمَا آتَاكُمْ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ...﴾

(سورة الحشر: ٧)

﴿... And whatsoever the Messenger [Muhammad] gives you, take it;

and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it]. And fear Allah...﴿

(*Qur'an* 59: 7)

﴿فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾ ﴿٦٥﴾

(سورة التيساء: ٦٥)

﴿But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you [Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept [them] with full submission.﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 65)

This verse was revealed regarding the Prophet's ruling in favor of Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) in a dispute he had with an Anṣārī, and that ruling is not in Allah's Book.

These are all proofs from the Book, showing that rulings from the Prophet (ﷺ) may in fact be additions to the rulings of the Qur'an.

Third, there are many hadiths that show the Sharia to be made up of two sources together: the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and there is in the Sunnah that which is not in the Book. Just as we are required to accept rulings from the Book, we must also accept rulings from the Sunnah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: «“The time draws near when one of you will say, ‘This is Allah's Book; what is in it that is permissible we will consider to be permissible; what is in it that is forbidden we will consider to be forbidden.’ Indeed, whoever receives a hadith from me and then disbelieves in it, then he has indeed refused to accept from Allah, His Messenger, and that which he (ﷺ) related.”»²

Fourth, in the hadith of Mu'adh (رضي الله عنه): «The Prophet (ﷺ) asked, “What will you rule by?” He said, “By Allah's Book.” The Prophet

² Related by Aṭ-Ṭabrānī in *al-Awsat*, from Jābir; and Ibn 'Abdul-Barr related it in *Jami' Bayān al-'Ilm*, 2/189.

(ﷺ) asked, “And if you do not find (the ruling in Allah’s Book)?” Mu‘adh said, “Then by the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah.”» This clearly shows that the Sunnah is that which is not in the Qur’an. This is represented by the saying of some scholars, “The Qur’an has left a place for the Sunnah, and the Sunnah has left a place for the Qur’an.”

Proofs of those who deny the independent status of the Sunnah in legislation

The following arguments of Ash-Shâṭibee represent the proofs of the second group.

In the meanings it conveys, the Sunnah has its source in the Qur’an — it details general commands, it clarifies commands that require clarification, and it expands on what is mentioned in aphoristic form, and that is because the Sunnah is an explanation of the Qur’an. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ ...﴾

(سورة التحل: ٤٤)

﴿... And We have also revealed unto you [O Muhammad] the reminder and the advice [i.e. the Qur’an], that you may explain clearly to people what is revealed to them...﴾ (Qur’an 16: 44)

You will not find a command in the Sunnah except that the Qur’an points to its meaning, either in a general way or in a detailed way.

Furthermore, everything which indicates that the Qur’an is... the source of the Sharia, also indicates what we are saying here. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَأَنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾

(سورة القلم: ٤)

«And verily, you [O Muhammad] are on an exalted [standard of] character.» (Qur'an 68: 4)

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) interpreted this to mean that the Prophet’s character is the (teachings of the) Qur’an; she did not need to say anything else to throw further light on his character. This shows that his speech, his action, and his approval all have their source in the Qur’an, because a person’s character is limited to those three aspects. Likewise, we know that Allah (ﷻ) made the Qur’an a clarification of all things...and this is similarly expressed in the following verses:

﴿... مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ...﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٣٨)

«... And We have neglected nothing in the Book...» (Qur'an 6: 38)

﴿... الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ...﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٣)

«... This day, I have perfected your religion for you...» (Qur'an 5: 3)

This last verse is referring to the revelation of the Qur’an. So to all intents and purposes, the Sunnah is a clarification of the contents of the Qur’an, and that is what we mean when we say that its source is the Qur’an.

In short, we say that the Sunnah is a clarification of the Book. Those of the other opinion mention verses that command us to obey the Messenger (ﷺ) along with our obedience to Allah (ﷻ). This is referring to our obeying the Messenger (ﷺ) in his clarification and explanation of the Qur’an. Therefore, whoever puts into practice the explanation of the Messenger (ﷺ), has indeed obeyed Allah and that which He intended by His speech. If one’s action is contrary to the Prophet’s explanation, then one has disobeyed Allah, because one acted in opposition to what Allah (ﷻ) intended by His speech... Regarding the ruling that involved Zubayr (رضي الله عنه), it came under the rulings and texts of the Qur’an, which we will shortly explain. We

acknowledge that there are additional rulings in the Sunnah, but those additions are in the form of an explanation of the Qur'an, and in reality, that is not an addition. As for the hadith: "The time draws near," Zayd ibn al-Ḥabbâb is in its chain, and Imam Aḥmad said about him, "He is truthful but he makes a lot of mistakes." Ibn Ḥibbân made a similar statement. For that reason Bukhari and Muslim abandoned his narrations.

The Difference of opinion in this issue is superficial, revolving simply on a choice of wording

In short, we see that both groups agree that there do exist rulings in the Sunnah that are not mentioned in the Qur'an. The first group says that such rulings point to independence in legislation, because such legislations involve the establishment of rulings that are not mentioned in the Qur'an. Although the second group acknowledges that such rulings are not specifically mentioned in the Qur'an, they hold that those rulings, one way or another, are derived from passages in the Qur'an. And as such, they say that there does not exist an authentic hadith which establishes a ruling that is not mentioned in the Qur'an, unless that ruling falls under a passage or a principle explained in the Qur'an. If one finds a hadith that does not fulfill this condition, then one should know that it points to the hadith being unauthentic, and consequently, one must not apply it.

As you can see, the dispute is superficial, for both groups acknowledge the existence of rulings in the Sunnah that are not established in the Qur'an; however, one group does not refer to those rulings as being independent, while the other group does — but the result is one and the same.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

How the Qur'an Encompasses the Sunnah

Granted, the Sunnah is a clarification of the Qur'an. But if the Qur'an indicates all that is in the Sunnah, both in general and in detail, as is the view of Ash-Shâṭibee and others — based on these verses:

(سورة التحل: ٨٩) ﴿... تَبَيَّنَا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ...﴾ (Qur'an 16: 89)
﴿... as an exposition of everything...﴾

(سورة الأنعام: ٣٨) ﴿... مَا قَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ...﴾ (Qur'an 6: 38)
﴿... We have neglected nothing in the Book...﴾

— then how do we explain the fact that we see many rulings that are not mentioned in the Qur'an?

Scholars answer this question in a number of ways:

First: The Qur'an indicates that it is obligatory to apply the Sunnah; therefore, every application of the Sunnah is also an application of the Qur'an. And this, as you can see, is a general way of understanding this issue. 'Abdullâh ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) is known to have had this understanding. It is related that a woman from Bani Sa'd went to him and said: "O Abu 'Abdur-Rahmân, it has reached me from you that you curse women who practice tattooing, women

who ask others to do that for them, women who remove hair from their upper faces or eyebrows, and women who use a tool to create a gap between their teeth in order to beautify themselves — those who change the creation of Allah.” He (ﷺ) said, “And why should I not curse those whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has cursed, and (are cursed) in Allah’s Book.” The woman said, “I have indeed read the Qur’an from cover to cover, and I have not found it.” He said, “If you had read it, you would have found it. Allah (ﷻ) says,

﴿... وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا...﴾ (سورة الحشر: ٧)

(سورة الحشر: ٧)

﴿... And whatsoever the Messenger [Muhammad] gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it]...﴾ (Qur'an 59: 7)

In another example, ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Yazeed saw a man wearing his regular garment despite the fact that he was making pilgrimage, being in an inviolable state. ‘Abdur-Raḥmân told him to remove his attire, but he responded, “Bring me a verse from Allah’s Book and you will have taken off my garment.” ‘Abdur-Raḥmân recited,

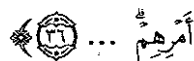
﴿... وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ...﴾ (سورة الحشر: ٧)

﴿... And whatsoever the Messenger [Muhammad] gives you, take it...﴾ (Qur'an 59: 7)

It has been related that Tâwoos would pray two units after ‘aṣr. Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said to him: “Abandon it.” He said, “They are only prohibited when they are taken as a Sunnah.” Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said, “Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade prayer after the ‘aṣr prayer. So I do not know, will you be punished for them or will you be rewarded for them? For indeed, Allah (ﷻ) says,

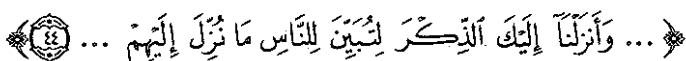
﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ

(سورة الأحزاب: ٣٦)



﴿It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision...﴾ (Qur'an 33: 36)"

Second: The explanation widely understood by the scholars is that the Book is general and the Sunnah is a detailed explanation of it. This is exemplified by those hadiths which clarify rulings that are mentioned in general, either by explaining how deeds are performed or by mentioning their prerequisites or by mentioning those actions that nullify one's deeds. The Sunnah, for instance, explains the timings, the prostration, the bowing, and all other rulings for the prayer. The Sunnah also clarifies the detailed rulings of zakât; likewise for fasting. In many other issues that relate to the jurisprudence of Ḥajj, marriage, business dealings, and so on, the Sunnah clarifies that which is mentioned in the Qur'an in general terms. Allah (ﷻ) says:



(سورة التحل: ٤٤)

﴿... And we have also revealed unto you [O Muhammad] the reminder and the advice [i.e. the Qur'an], that you may explain clearly to people what is revealed to them...﴾ (Qur'an 16: 44)

It was said to Miṭraf ibn 'Abdullâh ibn ash-Shukhayr: "Do not speak to us except with the Qur'an." Miṭraf said to him, "By Allah, we do not want a replacement for the Qur'an, but what we want is he who has more knowledge of the Qur'an than we do." And in this context, Al-Awzâ'i said, "The Book is in more need of the Sunnah than the Sunnah is of the Book." Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said, "What he meant is that the Sunnah judges it (i.e. its meaning) and clarifies what is meant by it."

When asked about the narration wherein it is said that the Sunnah judges the Book, Imam Aḥmad said, "I do not have the audacity to say that; indeed, the Sunnah explains and clarifies the Book."

Third: This third explanation involves looking at the overall meanings that are intended by Qur'anic legislation through the Qur'an's many verses and then understanding that rulings from the Sunnah do not overstep or surpass those meanings.

We can explain this by saying that the Qur'an came to bring happiness to people in this life and in their lives of the Hereafter, and comprehensive happiness is in three things:

1. Essentials: preserving one's Religion, one's life, one's progeny, one's wealth, and one's mind.
2. Wants or wishes: This includes anything that leads to more ease and to the lifting of hardship; for example, not fasting while one is traveling or when one is sick.
3. Self-improvement: This category has to do with noble manners and characteristics.

These three matters and everything that completes them are principles under which fall all rulings from the Qur'an; also, the Sunnah came with those three matters in its explanation and clarification of the Qur'an. Therefore, all texts of the Sunnah return, through examination, to those three matters.

Fourth: The Qur'an might mention two opposite rulings. If there is an issue which has characteristics that are appropriate to both rulings, the Sunnah then comes and makes it applicable to one of the two rulings or gives it a specific ruling which corresponds to it having qualities that are applicable to both. Or the Qur'an might mention the ruling for something along with the wisdom behind that ruling, and then the Messenger (ﷺ) gives the same ruling for another issue that contains the same wisdom, using the principles of analogy.

Examples of two opposite rulings:

1. Allah (ﷻ) permitted that which is good and forbade that which is impure. There remains matters that are unclear to us — are they from the first or the second category? In these instances, the Prophet (ﷺ) clarifies which category they belong to. For example, he (ﷺ) forbade the meat of predators that have fangs and he also forbade the meat of domesticated donkeys. On the other hand, he (ﷺ) ruled that the meat of the lizard and rabbit are from the first category — the pure and lawful.

2. Allah (ﷻ) permitted hunting and fishing in the sea and informed us that sea creatures are included in the good and pure things that are lawful for us; on the other hand, He (ﷻ) forbade animals that die of a natural cause, and not by Islamic slaughtering. So the ruling for sea animals that die of a natural cause remains unclear. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said about the sea, «Its water is pure and its dead creatures are lawful.»¹

3. Allah forbade the meat of animals that die of a natural cause, while He (ﷻ) permitted animals that are slaughtered according to Islamic principles. But when a female animal is slaughtered, there is the issue of the fetus that comes out of her womb. Do we consider it to be slaughtered or do we consider it to be of the other category? In a hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «“The slaughter of a fetus is (achieved through) the slaughter of its mother.”» In this ruling, more strength is given to the fact that it is a part of the mother than to the fact that it is an independent entity.

An example of what is given a specific ruling because it is somehow appropriate to two different rulings:

1. Allah (ﷻ) made marriage lawful and made fornication unlawful, but what about a marriage that is enacted outside the proper

¹ Related by Abu Dawood, Nisâ'i, Tirmidhi and Ibn Mâjah.

boundaries of the Sharia? It is not a complete marriage in the sense that there is something that mars it, yet it is not sheer fornication either, for there is the element of marriage in it. The following is related in the Sunnah: "Any woman that marries without the permission of her *Wali* (guardian), then her marriage is invalid, then her marriage is invalid, then her marriage is invalid. But if he has entered upon her (in other words, if the couple have had sexual relations), then she may keep the dowry because of what he deemed permissible from her."²

Examples of giving a similar ruling through the use of analogy:

1. Allah (ﷻ) forbade His slaves from marrying two sisters at the same time. He (ﷻ) said:

(سورة النساء: ٢٤) ... وَأَحِلَّ لَكُمْ مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ ... ﴿٢٤﴾

«... All others are lawful, provided you seek [them in marriage] with *mahr* [bridal gift given by the husband to his wife at the time of the marriage]...» (Qur'an 4: 24)

The Prophet (ﷺ) then forbade men from marrying a woman and her aunt (whether from the father's or the mother's side) at the same time, a ruling that is derived through the principles of analogy. The reason why it is not permissible to marry two sisters at the same time also applies to marrying a woman and her aunt at the same time. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, «Indeed, if you do that, then you will have broken off ties of kinship.»³ The reason given suggests the use of analogy.

Fifth: All detailed rulings in the Sunnah have their source in the detailed rulings of the Qur'an; here is an example:

² Related by Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi, and there is a slight difference in the various wordings of the hadith.

³ Reported by Muslim, vol. 2, p. 1029, hadith no. 1408 and Aṭ-Ṭabarānee.

1. Sabee'ah al-Aslamiyah gave birth approximately two weeks after her husband's death, and the Prophet (ﷺ) told her that her waiting period was over. The hadith tells us that the verse:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَتُوفَوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذُرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا ۗ﴾
 (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٤)

﴿And those of you who die and leave wives behind them, they [the wives] shall wait [as regards their marriage] for four months and ten days...﴾
 (Qur'an 2: 234)

— is specific for women who are not pregnant, while the verse,

﴿... وَأُولَاتُ الْأَحْمَالِ أَجَلُهُنَّ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ ۗ﴾ ... (سورة الطلاق: ٤)

﴿... And for those who are pregnant [whether they are divorced or their husbands are dead], their *iddah* [prescribed period] is until they lay down their burden...﴾
 (Qur'an 65: 4)

— is general for divorced woman and for others.

This pattern is frequently found in the Sunnah; however, the texts of the Qur'an are not detailed enough for the said purpose. What this means is that there is not a detailed ruling in the Qur'an for every single detailed ruling in the Sunnah. Ash-Shâṭibee mentioned that this explanation involves implications that are impossible to realize; he mentioned, for instance, that the Prayer, pilgrimage, and zakât are explained in detail in the Sunnah, though a detailed explanation of them is not given in the Qur'an.

These are the most important explanations given by the scholars to show how the Qur'an encompasses the Sunnah. As you have seen, some of these explanations are general in their implications, only pointing to the fact that the Qur'an orders us to apply the Sunnah. Some explanations fully embrace all examples from the Qur'an and Sunnah, while others do not.

It is best to say that all of those explanations complement one another; no doubt, when we put all of those explanations together, all rulings of the Sunnah — even ones that impart new rulings — are shown to have their source in passages from the Qur'an. In that sense, the explanation of the following verse is given a complete and satisfactory interpretation:

﴿... مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ...﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٣٨)
 ﴿... We have neglected nothing in the Book...﴾ (Qur'an 6: 38)

Stories from the Sunnah

What remains to be explained are the stories, parables, and admonitions found in the Sunnah. From this category are examples that explain what is in the Qur'an, such as those hadiths that explain this verse:

﴿... وَأَدْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٥٨)
 ﴿... And enter the gate in prostration [or bowing with humility]...﴾
 (Qur'an 2: 58)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “They entered, crawling on their...”

Some examples from this category do not serve the purpose of explaining verses of the Qur'an, nor do they make a belief or a practice obligatory upon us. It is not necessary that these examples have a source in the Qur'an. But they serve the same purpose as stories from the Qur'an serve — in terms of how we must contemplate them, in terms of the encouragement we are given in them to do good deeds, and in terms of the warning (explicit or implicit in them) against doing bad deeds. One example is the story of the bald man, the leper, and the blind man; another example is the story of Jurayj al-‘Âbid.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Abrogation of the Qur'an by the Sunnah and Abrogation of the Sunnah by the Qur'an

Abrogation in the Qur'an

With the exception of Abu Muslim al-Aṣḥāhāni, scholars agree that parts of the Book may abrogate other parts of the Book. However, here is not the place for a detailed discussion of this issue.

Scholars also agree that one Sunnah may abrogate another Sunnah; however, if the abrogated narration is *mutawātir*, then the abrogating narration must also be *mutawātir*. And of course, if the abrogated narration is *Aḥād*, then the abrogating narration can be either *Aḥād* or *mutawātir*. Scholars mention many hadiths to exemplify this kind of abrogation; one example is the hadith, «I used to forbid you from visiting graves; indeed, visit them.»

As regards to abrogation, scholars differ in two issues:

1. Whether the Qur'an can abrogate the Sunnah.
2. Whether the Sunnah can abrogate the Qur'an.

We will summarize the different views regarding these issues, leaving a more in-depth discussion for books on the fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence.

The Sunnah abrogated by the Qur'an

1. The majority of scholars agree that this is possible, and also, that it occurred in fact. They mention many examples, among which is the changing of the *Qiblah* from Bayt al-Maqdis to the Ka'bah. It is known that the Prophet (ﷺ) as well as the Muslims prayed for a number of months — when they first migrated to Madinah — facing Bayt al-Maqdis. There is no verse from the Qur'an to establish that ruling, but it was then abrogated by the verse:

﴿قَدْ رَأَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ
شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٤)

﴿Verily! We have seen the turning of your face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to the *Qiblah* [prayer direction] that shall please you, so turn your face in the direction of al-Masjid al-Harâm [at Makkah].﴾
(Qur'an 2: 144)

Let us consider another example. In the Hūdaybiyah treaty, it was agreed that Muslims who came from Makkah were to be returned to the Quraysh. This ruling was abrogated in relation to women. It became forbidden to force immigrant female believers to return to the disbelievers of the Quraysh because it was feared that they would be put to test in their religion and their honor. This new ruling was put into effect by dint of the verse:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمْ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مُهَاجِرَاتٍ فَامْتَحِنُوهُنَّ ۗ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ
فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ...﴾ (سورة الممتحنة: ١٠)

﴿O you who believe! When believing women come to you as emigrants, examine them; Allah knows best as to their Faith, then if

you ascertain that they are true believers do not send them back to the disbelievers. They are not lawful [wives] for the disbelievers, nor are the disbelievers lawful [husbands] for them...» (Qur'an 60: 10)

2. Imam Shâfi'ee said: "The Sunnah may not be abrogated by the Qur'an." Some have interpreted his statement as follows: The enemies of Islam might claim that Allah (ﷻ) was not pleased with the ruling of His Messenger (ﷺ), and so He changed it. However, this explanation of the Imam's statement is totally unsatisfactory, for its implications would never even come to the mind of a Muslim.

Imam Shâfi'ee himself gave the correct reason for his opinion. He said that if the Qur'an did indeed abrogate the Sunnah, then it would be permissible to say regarding those business transactions that the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade, that perhaps he (ﷺ) forbade them before this verse was revealed:

﴿... وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٧٥)

﴿... Whereas Allah has permitted trade and forbidden usury...﴾
(Qur'an 2: 275)

In another example we know that some people were stoned to death for having committed adultery. If it is possible that the Book abrogates the Sunnah, one might say that the ruling for stoning is abrogated by this verse:

﴿الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ...﴾ (سورة النور: ٢)

﴿The woman and the man guilty of illegal sexual intercourse, flog each of them with a hundred stripes...﴾
(Qur'an 24: 2)

This is the real reason behind Imam Shâfi'ee's opinion.

It is important to note, though, that many scholars from the Shâfi'iyah agreed with the majority in this issue, and they gave many explanations to excuse Shâfi'ee for his opinion.

Abrogation of the Qur'an by the Sunnah

There are two opinions in this issue:

1. The Hanafi opinion: The Book may be abrogated by the mutawâtir Sunnah and the widespread Sunnah (i.e. well known and accepted by the scholars), but it may not be abrogated by the Aḥād narration.

They argue that the mutawâtir narration, like the Qur'an, is established through absolute certainty of knowledge; and the widespread narration has achieved strength because it is widely accepted by the scholars, which is why it is given a similar status to the mutawâtir narration. Both the mutawâtir narration and the widespread narration are kinds of revelation that are not recited; therefore they may abrogate the Book.

One example they gave in this issue is the abrogation of a ruling from the Book by the narration that establishes the ruling for wiping over one's socks. That narration is widespread. Another example is the bequest mentioned in this verse:

﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةَ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٠)

«It is prescribed for you, when death approaches any of you, if he leaves wealth, that he makes a bequest to the parents and next of kin, according to reasonable manners...» (Qur'an 2: 180)

The following hadith abrogates the ruling in the verse (that the bequest is compulsory): «There is no bequest for an inheritor.» The hadith is widespread and is applied by the vast majority of scholars; furthermore, in *al-Umm*, Shâfi'ee said that it is mutawâtir (this is related from him by Ibn Ḥajr in *al-Fath*).

2. The opinion of the majority: It is not permissible for the Book to be abrogated by the Sunnah, regardless of whether it is a mutawâtir, widespread, or Aḥâd narration. Representing the view of the majority, Shâfi‘ee mentioned the following proof:

﴿ مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِمَّا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا ... ﴾ ﴿١٠٦﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٠٦)

﴿Whatever a verse [revelation] do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring a better one or similar to it...﴾ (Qur’an 2: 106)

The Sunnah is neither better than nor similar to the Qur’an. Furthermore, Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿ ... قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تَلْقَائِي نَفْسِي إِنْ أَتَيْتُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ... ﴾ ﴿١٥﴾

(سورة يونس: ١٥)

﴿... Say [O Muhammad]: ‘It is not for me to change it on my own accord; I only follow that which is revealed unto me.’...﴾

(Qur’an 10: 15)

This shows that he (ﷺ) followed all that was revealed to him and that he (ﷺ) did not change anything of his own accord — and abrogation is a form of change.

When we say that the Sunnah cannot abrogate the Book, we are closer to protecting the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from the attacks of those who show enmity to Islam. In an instance wherein the Sunnah seemed to abrogate the Book, one might say, “The Prophet (ﷺ) was the first to say and do the opposite of what he claims to have been revealed to him.” Based on the following verses, this argument does not apply to the abrogation of a part of the Book by another part of the Book:

﴿وَإِذَا بَدَّلْنَا آيَةً مَكَانَ آيَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُزِيلُ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ... ﴿١٠١﴾﴾
 (سورة التحل: ١٠١)

«And when We change a verse [of the Qur'an] in place of another — and Allah knows best what He sends down — they [the disbelievers] say, 'You [O Muhammad] are but a forger, a liar.'...»

(Qur'an 16: 101)

﴿قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ... ﴿١٠٢﴾﴾
 (سورة التحل: ١٠٢)

«Say O Muhammad: *Rooḥ al-Qudus* [Jibril (Gabriel)] has brought it [the Qur'an] down from your Lord with truth...» (Qur'an 16: 102)

Without a doubt, the opinion of the majority is closer to the truth, and there is no definite example of the Sunnah abrogating the Qur'an. The examples mentioned by the Ḥanafiyah are not applicable to the issue in question, for we do not agree that abrogation in those issues occurred by way of the Sunnah. The dispute, then — in my opinion — is not whether the Sunnah abrogated the Book in practice, but rather whether it is permissible or conceivable that it occurred.

Our discussion of the Sunnah in this work is complete, and all praise is for Allah. The gathering of the Sunnah, the efforts of the scholars to preserve the authentic Sunnah, a refutation of those who reject the validity of the Sunnah, and the status of the Sunnah in Islamic legislation as well as its relation to the Noble Qur'an — we have (and all praise is for Allah) discussed all of these issues, and now we move on to a short conclusion in which we discuss the Four Imams and the stance they took vis-à-vis the Sunnah. Thereafter, we mention a short biography of each of the compilers of the six books of Sunnah as well as a synopsis of each compilation.

When will we fill the Gap?

Anyone who has studied the history of Islam, from the lifetime of Muhammad (ﷺ) until this day, should have perceived a constant reality: Islam has always been the target of many attacks, the goals behind which are to distort its teachings, to turn Muslims away from the application of its laws, and to destroy it using any means necessary. The enemies of Islam who plan and perpetrate those attacks are prodigiously skillful and organized in laying their traps; on the other hand, Muslims deal innocently, and perhaps even naively, in their reactions to those plots. Their defense mechanism consists of forgiveness; they make neither prior preparations nor any retributive attacks. Had not Islam been Allah's Religion, which He (ﷻ) guaranteed to preserve, some of the plots carried out by the enemies of Islam would have been enough to destroy it and wipe out its traces.

It is also plain that those who conspire against Islam have varied in their methods and in the execution of those methods over the centuries. When Muslims were strong, their attacks took the form of intellectual and cultural invasion. When the Muslims were weak, their attacks took the form of military warfare, the goal of which was to annihilate all Muslims. If war did not produce fruitful results, they would resort to deception and to intellectual as well as cultural warfare. Within the boundaries of Islamic territory, they would infiltrate the ranks of Muslims, disseminating morals and ideas that were contrary to the basic tenets of Islam.

A prime example of how the enemy attempts to destroy Islam is to raise doubts about the authentic Prophetic Sunnah, which the vast majority of Muslims accept and follow, and which is the foundation of Islamic law, a law that is unparalleled among the nations for its vastness and comprehensiveness, but also for its

permanence as an applicable set of laws. The overall plot against Islam found ready and receptive minds among many Islamic sects from the past, as well as from many Muslim writers (such as Ahmad Ameen) in the present. That this plot existed and still exists is not conjured up by the imagination: it is, on the contrary, an established fact. Jewish Orientalists and others of their ilk evince many salient aspects of that plot in their writings. Directors of Islamic studies programs in many Western universities turn the attention of Muslim students to this issue; they refuse to allow any student to make the topic of his thesis a refutation of the lies that they themselves produce regarding the Sunnah and its narrators. Last summer, while I was in Germany for medical treatment, a young Muslim German girl, who is a student in the Islamic studies program at the University of Frankfurt, contacted me. She wanted me to guide her to some reference books that would help her in her thesis. The director of the program forced her to make her topic "Abu Hurayrah". He asked her to research the topic from various angles; for example, what is said about Abu Hurayrah, what are the lies that are ascribed to him, and what do some sects (and not the People of the Sunnah) have to say about him?

A few years ago, a conference took place in Lahore, Pakistan, the purpose of which was to study issues pertaining to Islam. Muslim scholars from different countries attended the conference, and a number of Orientalists attended it as well. The Muslim attendees quickly perceived that it was the Orientalists who originated the idea of the conference, for they invited many of their disciples from India and Pakistan to participate in it as well. The most fanatical and ignorant of those who attended was the Canadian Orientalist, Smith — who perhaps is a Jew. The main point that the Orientalists repeatedly brought up was that the Sunnah and revelation should be made subservient to principles of "knowledge", principles that are, of course, based on their values and standards. Many of their disciples

proclaimed their rejection of revelation as a source of Islamic legislation. They said that Islam is not a revealed religion, but is instead a set of reformist ideas, the author of which was Muhammad.

Last year, there was a great uproar in Pakistan because a group of intellectual Muslims propounded the belief that the Sunnah is not a source of Islamic legislation. Only later did it come out in the open that that group consisted mainly of disciples of the Canadian Orientalist, Smith.

When Ayub Khan wrote the Pakistani Constitution, he stipulated that a council of Muslim scholars be formed, whose function would be to oversee laws passed by the Parliament, in order to judge whether those laws are in harmony with the teachings of Islam. Obviously, the stipulation was written to please the general opinion of Muslims in Pakistan. However, when it came time to applying the Constitution and to applying that stipulation, the aforesaid council did nothing to promote Islamic Law, for it was made up of Smith's disciples, and not a single one of them was a Muslim scholar.

And recently, one who was as ignorant as he was malevolent in his intentions wrote a book on the Sunnah; the main purpose of the book was to raise doubts about the Sunnah and about its most prolific narrator from the Companions, Abu Hurayrah. Copies of the book were bought up quickly and were sent to all Western Universities; I learned of this from many Muslim students who study in Europe.

Anyone who follows these occurrences will not doubt that they are a sequence of events that constitute an overall plot against the Sunnah and against its most prolific narrator. Some writers from Muslim lands have become shameless enough to write similar books, which they fill with fabrications and lies against the eminent Companion, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه); this is what 'Abdul-Husain did in his book, *Abu Hurayrah*.

Another example of the vigilance and constant wakefulness of the enemies of Islam is shown in how they take advantage of the disputes that occurred between the Companions in the early days of Islam, particularly the disputes over the caliphate. They aggrandize differences among Muslims in an attempt to divide their ranks. Such disagreements occur in all generations and in all nations, but we do not see any other nation bearing grudges for internecine wars that took place over fourteen centuries ago!

In the first century of Islam it was the cunning Jew, 'Abdullâh ibn Saba, who plotted against Islam; thereafter his flag was taken up by the polytheists of Persia, whose people were freed from an oppressive ruler, but more importantly, from their polytheistic beliefs. Muslims opened the minds and eyes of the Persian people so that they could see the light of truth. When the Muslim army defeated them, some who did not welcome the change found no means of exacting revenge except by attacking the reputation and character of leaders from the conquering army.

All of this had a tremendous effect on dividing the Muslims and weakening their strength. It was hoped that sincere scholars and intellectuals from the Muslim world would learn from those painful lessons. However, it is now agonizing to see that many of them do not firmly grasp their pens in order to raise this nation from the depths of ignorance and to thrust it into the realms of knowledge and strength. Many Muslim intellectuals of today occupy themselves with writing and rewriting books about the disputes that took place fourteen centuries ago. But we must realize that it is Allah (ﷻ) who will judge among those who differed. We only help the enemies of Islam by dragging those differences into the spotlight and by maintaining the distances that separate us and prevent our unity.

These are some examples that show how vigilant our enemies are in planning and executing the plots they have contrived against

our nation, our religion, and our history. We must wake from our slumber and we must curb the emotions that our enemies know all too well how to inflame in order to suit their purpose.

History is replete with examples of this painful reality: the wakefulness of our enemies and their continual efforts to destroy the foundation of Islam, and the naiveté of Muslims, who do not sense the danger of those plots until they are already ensnared. Is the source of this reality the innocence of Islam and the wickedness of its enemies? Or does it stem from the nature of good and the nature of evil in every generation? Or is it just that, in past centuries, Muslims did not possess the means to discover the schemes of their enemies? Perhaps all of these had a part to play, but is it not time that we organize ourselves, that we study all plots against Islam, and that we learn how they are contrived and executed, so that we can then counteract them? Is that not practicable? Today, every Muslim country has agencies to detect and then foil any attempt of political or military uprising from its citizens. Why cannot similar agencies be used to detect and then foil attempts against Islam, both from without and from within?

For us to continue to remain in a state of heedlessness is a great crime. Were Muslim countries to allot ten percent of their yearly budget to exposing the aforesaid plots and defending against them, we could indeed achieve a great deal. We could turn the tables, annihilating the forces of evil that work to bring destruction and misery to humankind.

We call on all Muslim scholars, intellectuals, and writers to meet once again upon a united word, to bury all remnants of past disagreement, and to recognize and then defend against the dangers that constantly surround Muslims. Muslim scholars must work together sincerely in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and understanding. They should, in belief and in practice, take

Muhammad (ﷺ) to be their leader and role model. Their goal should be to free Muslims from the shackles that hold them back and to convey the message and guidance and light of Islam to all of humanity, so that there will be no corruption on earth and so that Religion in its entirety will be for Allah (ﷻ). O Allah, we have conveyed, so testify to that...

O Enemy of Allah! We will continue to proclaim the truth

As I was writing this work, I came across Abu Rayyah's book ¹, wherein he claimed that he had analyzed and researched the Sunnah in more detail than anyone else before him. When we discussed his work earlier, we established his lack of scholarship and we showed how he perverted known facts about the eminent Companion, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). He did not stop there, however, for he also attacked the honor of the most distinguished of Companions, such as Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmân, and also of the younger Companions, such as Anas, 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar, and 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amru (may Allah be pleased with them all). But most of his fulminations were against Abu Hurayrah. As I was reading his book, I became more and more certain that his work is like that of the enemies of Islam, those who continue in their efforts to demolish the foundation of the Sunnah and to stain the reputations of those Companions who conveyed to us the Prophet's knowledge and guidance.

Throughout Abu Rayyah's book it is clear that he was seeking fame, but more possibly, notoriety, just as a Beduoin did when he urinated in the well of Zamzam during the Hâjj season. When asked for the motive behind his crime, he explained that he perpetrated the foul deed so that people would speak about him, even if their speech

¹ *Aḍwâ' 'Alâs-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*, (1967).

were in the form of curses! I felt it my scholarly duty to point out Abu Rayyah's ignorance and to clarify and expose his many false statements about against Islam. I already explained that his book is of no scholarly value, for from cover to cover, it is filled with falsehood and fabrications. In spite of this, he claimed that his book was the first of its kind and that it should have been written one thousand years earlier.

When he found out that my book had been published, Abu Rayyah's plans were thwarted. At the time, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in Egypt was about to print one of his books. But when some authorities from the Ministry came across my refutations of Abu Rayyah, they told him that they had changed their minds, opting not to print his book. Despite his many efforts to convince them to change their decision, his wishes ended in failure. He tried to deceive the authorities in the Ministry just as he tried, through his book, to deceive the masses of the Muslims.

﴿يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٩-١٠)

﴿They [think to] deceive Allah and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and perceive [it] not! In their hearts is a disease [of doubt and hypocrisy] and Allah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies.﴾

(Qur'an 2: 9-10)

It seems that his malice and resentment were compounded, for he wrote another book in which he again repeatedly slandered the honorable and worthy Companion, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). A group of scholars and I tried to bring him to his senses with proofs and logic, but he persisted then and still continues to persist in falsehood. A more detailed and scholarly refutation of his new book I will leave for

the second edition of this book, which I hope to begin soon, as soon as Allah (ﷻ) blesses me with enough strength to oversee that project and to correct the many typographical errors that appeared in the first edition. But here, I will suffice by mentioning some of the ideas he expressed in the introduction to his second book.

In both his first and second books, he maliciously maligned the scholars of Azhar University, yet he was a man who wore the robe of Azhar scholars and gave himself the title, Shaykh. This is not strange to those from his city and those who know the history of his life. When he was young, he attended in the secondary school that was linked to Azhar University. However, his grades were so poor that he did not even complete high school. When he lost hope of continuing his studies, he took a job at a newspaper, assuming the responsibility of correcting typographical errors. He continued in that vocation for a number of years, after which he was given a small writing job in a municipal office. There he continued to work until retirement. When he left Azhar, he would stand at the side of the road, mocking students from Azhar. He derided them for their dedication to studying the Religion, which he saw as a proof of their foolish minds. This is Abu Rayyah, as we know him through the people of his city, from scholars and students alike. He did not graduate from high school and he never took his knowledge from a scholar. All that he learned was taken from newspapers, which is why he does not deserve to be described as a student of knowledge, and his opinions and ideas are certainly not worthy of any attention. These incidents early on in his life played a major role in increasing Abu Rayyah's prejudice against Muslim scholars; his early experiences also serve to show us why he is lacking in both scholarship and intellectual honesty.

In an attempt to refute my views, he derided me because I am from Syria and he continually asserted that my people (Syrians) are known for their stupidity. It does not bother me that he calls me

stupid, for it is the people and readers who can better judge that. But what concerns me is that I should clarify the reality of the beliefs that this man clings to. His ignorance led him not only to an extreme feeling of nationalistic pride, but also to hating people from other countries. If he were truly a Muslim, he would have known that Muslim countries constitute one nation. Scholarly research is not accepted only from the inhabitants of one country to the exclusion of inhabitants of other countries. Had he been a true seeker of knowledge, he would have known the great extent to which Egyptian scholars learned from Syrian scholars and the great extent to which Syrian scholars learned from Egyptian scholars; also, the great extent to which Egyptian and Syrian scholars gained knowledge from Iraqi scholars. What unites them all is that they are Muslim scholars. His book is replete with stories that portrayed the inhabitants of Syria as being foolish people with weak minds. On what basis, then, does this man claim to adhere to scholarly principles?

One constantly perceives from his book his great desire for fame, even if that fame is to be achieved through sin and wrongdoing. He said that his first book aroused a great controversy, which no other Arabic book has ever achieved, with the exemption of Taha Husein's book.² He boasts that books are written for the sole purpose of refuting his book, that magazines are filled with critical articles about his work. This is the reality of Abu Rayyah: without scholarship, he desires fame among the ranks of scholars, and lacking in honesty, he seeks fame by arousing the anger of the righteous. The most wretched of people are those deviants who seek notoriety through the perpetration of evil actions — actions that make them deserve the curse of Allah, of the angels, and of all people.

To be sure, this man has gained his notoriety. All copies of his first book were bought by a foreign embassy in Cairo, and then those

² Most likely, the author is referring to *On Pre-Islamic Poetry*, (1925). (Editor)

books were sent off to libraries in Western universities. His book, then, is in the hands of those who harbor a great deal of malice towards Islam, towards the Messenger (ﷺ), and towards his Companions. The second book cannot be found in the marketplace even though it has just recently been printed. We were not able to procure a copy for ourselves except through the intercession of some of our Shi'ah acquaintances. Let him enjoy his fame for now, but did he not write in his first book that he was only seeking the truth?

In his second book,³ Abu Rayyah continues his unfounded allegations against the Sunnah. Abu Rayyah, why should we desist from talking about you and exposing your views? You have waged war against the truth and you have deviated from guidance. You wrongly thought that it was in your power to destroy the foundation of the Sunnah — and because of that, you became an enemy of Allah and a helper to the enemies of Islam. Why then should we remain silent? Why then should we consider your feelings? No, by Allah, your actions are those of an enemy of Allah! We will continue to expose your falsehood. The more you persist in spreading falsehood, the more we will believe in the truth and the more fiercely we will defend it. Upon this, Allah (ﷻ) has taken a covenant from us, and upon this, we were promised Paradise. With Allah's help and guidance, we will not surrender to falsehood and we will not be derelict in our duties.

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ...﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٨٧)



﴿[And remember] when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Scripture [Jews and Christians] to make it known and clear to people, and not to hide it...﴾ (Qur'an 3: 187)

³ *Qissat al-Hadeeth al-Muhammadi*, (1969).

APPENDIX

The Four Imams and the Compilers of the Six Books

**This Section Consists of Four Imams
and Six compilers of the books**

1. Imam Abu Ḥaneefah
2. Imam Mâlik
3. Imam Ash-Shâfi'ee
4. Imam Aḥmad
5. Bukhari
6. Muslim
7. An-Nasâ'i
8. Abu Dâwood
9. At-Tirmidhi
10. Ibn Mâjah

Imam Abu Ḥaneefah

(80 H – 150 H)

His lineage, birth, and death

He was Abu Ḥaneefah, An-Nu‘mân ibn (son of) Thâbit ibn Zootâ, the first of the four Imams to be born and the one with the greatest following. It is known that he was born in Kufa, yet researchers disagree about the year of his birth — some say he was born in 63 H, others say 70 H, and yet others say 80 H. Based on certain narrations, some researchers uphold the second opinion, but the third view is more widely accepted. He died in Baghdad in the year 150 H; there his grave still lies, known to those who visit it, in an area known as *al-A‘dhamiyah*.

His formative years and school

He grew up in Kufa, one of the great Islamic centres of the time, which boasted the greatest number of scholars representing each school; the city was most famous for its scholars of the Arabic language and each of its branches, such as grammar, literature, and rhetoric.

He studied the rhetoric until he not only mastered it, but also achieved recognition for that mastery. He then joined the study circle of Ḥammâd, the Shaykh of Kufa jurists. The study circle of Ḥammâd was linked with the famous Companion ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه), for Ḥammâd had studied under Ibrâheem an-Nakha‘ee, who had studied under ‘Alqama ibn Qays, who in turn had studied under ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood. Abu Ḥaneefah continued to attend Ḥammâd’s circle until the latter died in the year 120 H. Ḥammâd’s students concurred that Abu Ḥaneefah should take his place, and thus he became the leader of the Kufa School, which was known as the School of Opinion. Furthermore, he became the undisputed Imam of jurists in Iraq. News of his scholarly reputation then spread to the different regions, and during his lifetime, he was able to meet with contemporary scholars in Basra, Makkah, and Madinah, and then later on in Baghdad, after Manṣoor built it. With those scholars Imam Abu Ḥaneefah discussed many issues, benefiting them and being benefited by them. His fame continued to grow until his circle became a great learning centre; in it gathered many eminent scholars of Hadith — such as ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak and Ḥafṣ ibn Ghiyâth — and scholars of fiqh (jurisprudence) — such as Abu Yoosuf, Muhammad, Zafar, and Al-Ḥasan ibn Ziyâd — as well as many famous self-denying worshippers — such as Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyâd and Dawood at-Ṭâ‘ee. In his lifetime, Abu Ḥaneefah not only carried with honor the trust of knowledge, but also strove to be upright in the realms of worship, everyday transactions, and renunciation of worldly things. Until the day he died, he continued to be sincere to Allah (ﷻ), to His Messenger (ﷺ), and to the Muslims.

The foundations upon which his school was established

Al-Bayhaqi related the following quote from Abu Ḥaneefah:

“I take from Allah’s Book, and if I do not find (the proof I am seeking), then from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). And

if I cannot find (the proof) in either Allah's Book or the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), I take the saying of any of his Companions that you wish over the saying of any of his other Companions that you wish, yet I do not abandon the saying of a Companion by taking the opinion of anyone else instead. However, if the matter ends at Ibrâheem, Ash-Sha'bee, Ibn Seereen, Al-Ḥasan, 'Aṭâ', Ibn Musayib — and he mentioned the names of others who were not Companions either — then they are a people who have exerted themselves to arrive at a ruling, and so, you too, exert yourself as they have done."

In another narration:

"What I do not find in it (i.e. the Qur'an), I take from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and those authentic narrations from him that are widespread among those who are trustworthy."

When he carried out his own *ijtihâd* (by exerting himself to analyze proofs in order to arrive at a ruling) in matters wherein there was no proof from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, or the saying of a Companion, he would resort to analogy (*Qiyâs*). *Al-Istihsân* was one of the kinds of *qiyâs* he would use, and he would interpret it to mean *qiyâs khafee'* as opposed to *qiyâs jalee'*.¹

The controversy surrounding him

Based on the preceding section, one knows the foundations upon which Imam Abu Ḥaneefah built his jurisprudence and *ijtihâd*, and one can plainly see that they are foundations that are in harmony

¹ *Qiyâs khafee'* and *qiyâs jalee'* are terms that pertain to analogy, the practice of giving a ruling on an issue for which is no clear text from the Qur'an and Sunnah based on an issue for which there is clear evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah. The two issues are likened to one another because of a common point, which is sometimes obvious — *qiyâs jalee'* — and which is sometimes subtle — *qiyâs khafee'*. As for *istihsân*, it is a form of analogy. (Translator)

with the schools of the other three Imams. Muslims know Imam Abu Ḥaneefah for his great service to Islam, for the foundations of jurisprudence that he had a hand in building, and for the many eminent scholars that graduated from his school. Yet we see that there was some turmoil surrounding him during his time, turmoil that continued even after his death. People are divided regarding Imam Abu Ḥaneefah: some acknowledge his virtues and recognize him as an Imam of great knowledge, and this group is the majority of Muslims. Then there are those who have malevolent feelings toward him, warning people away from him and from his jurisprudence. They are a people who also hold Imam Abu Ḥaneefah's companions in contempt. Why is that? And who are the ones who belong to this second category?

The reasons for the controversy

1. Imam Abu Ḥaneefah was the first to use deduction to derive new rulings for new issues, rulings that were based on known rulings for known issues: hence he would even derive verdicts for incidents that had not yet taken place during his time, a practice that the scholars before him disliked. They deemed it to be a waste of time because it occupied people's time with matters in which there was no benefit. If Zayd ibn Thâbit (رضي الله عنه) would be asked regarding an issue, he would first ask, "Has it occurred?" And if they answered no, he would say, "Then leave it until it occurs." Abu Ḥaneefah, on the other hand, saw things in a different light: he felt that the job of the mujtahid is to prepare people to accept a ruling in Islamic jurisprudence, for though a matter might not occur during the life of the mujtahid, it might occur afterwards. Al-Khaṭeeb al-Baghdâdi relates to us an incident that clearly shows Imam Abu Ḥaneefah's view in this issue:

"When Qatâdah came to Kufa, Abu Ḥaneefah met him and said, 'What do you say about a man who leaves his wife for so many years that his wife supposes him to be dead; she marries another, but her first

husband then returns to her; what do you say regarding her dowry?' Beforehand, when Abu Ḥaneefah's students were with him, he said to them, 'If he mentions a hadith, he lies, and if he gives his own view, he will be wrong.' In answer to the question, Qatādah said, 'Woe unto you! Has this matter occurred?' Abu Ḥaneefah said, 'No.' He said, 'Then why do you ask me about that which has not occurred?' Abu Ḥaneefah answered, 'Indeed we are preparing for the problem before it arrives, and when it does arrive, we know its ins and outs.'

Hence his school came to be known as 'the Supposers', or the school of those who hypothesized occurrences, saying, "Suppose that such and such were to happen or suppose that such and such occurred." On one occasion, when Imam Mâlik was asked about an issue, he gave the answer to his students. But then one of his students said, "Suppose that it occurred in this way." Imam Mâlik became very angry and said, "Are you one of the 'Supposers'? Did you come here from Iraq?" Imam Mâlik once said, "People used to give verdicts only for what they heard and knew, and the talk that is prevalent among people today did not exist." By this, he was referring to the many hypothetical issues that were being discussed.

The leader of his time, 'Abdul-Mâlik ibn Mirwân, asked Ibn Shihâb about a matter, and the latter asked, "Did this happen, O leader of the believers?" He said, "No," and so Shihâb answered, "Then leave it, for when it comes to pass, Allah (ﷻ) will give us a way out." When mentioning the way of the 'Supposers' in a very critical manner, Ash-Sha'bee, one of the Imams of hadith in Iraq, mentioned that Al-Ḥakam, Al-Ḥammâd, and their companions were from that group. And Ḥammâd was the Shaykh of Abu Ḥaneefah. It has also been related that Ash-Sha'bee said, "Nothing was more hated to me than 'suppose'."²

² *Jâmi' al-'Ilm al-Fadhlihi*, 2/146.

Through deductions and the study of hypothetical issues, the number of issues in the jurisprudence of Imam Abu Ḥaneefah are indeed many; the author of *al-'Inâyah Sharḥ al-Hidâyah* estimated those issues to approximately number 1 270 000. That is indeed a huge number, but were it to be said that that number is an exaggeration, then we can at least say that the number of established issues related from him are more than those related from any other Imam. Because of his many deductions, some spiteful critics have said, "He is the most ignorant of people regarding what has occurred, and the most knowledgeable regarding that which has not occurred."

2. Imam Abu Ḥaneefah stipulated strict conditions for a narration to be accepted — very difficult conditions indeed, but he only did so because fabrication in hadith became a widespread phenomenon. During his time, Iraq was the source of revolutionary and intellectual groups in the Islamic world, and as such, it was fertile soil for fabrications and fabricators to thrive. These factors impelled Imam Abu Ḥaneefah to be more circumspect when accepting the authenticity of a hadith, and so he only accepted those hadiths that were famous and widespread, and came from trustworthy people. In this regard, he was more careful and strict than even the scholars of hadith, which is why he deemed many hadiths to be weak, which in the view of scholars of hadith, were authentic and accepted.

3. Although he was strict in one aspect of judging the authenticity of hadiths, he was more lenient in another: he would consider disconnected (*mursal*) narrations to be acceptable, but only if the one who narrated it was trustworthy. *Mursal* narrations are narrations wherein one of the tâbi'een (companions of the Prophet's Companions) would narrate a hadith without mentioning the Companion from whom he took it. Imam Abu Ḥaneefah's view in this matter is contrary to the view of the majority of Hadith scholars, which led him to arguing issues based on hadiths that were considered to be weak and inapplicable by others.

4. Because Imam Abu Ḥaneefah limited the scope of hadiths that he accepted and felt comfortable with, he needed to rely more and more on analogy, reasoning, and opinion. Limited in one area, he found strength in another, for Allah (ﷻ) granted him unique and truly amazing powers of reasoning. Without a doubt, his use of analogy was vast, and not only was the distance great in this regard between him and the scholars of hadith, but also between him and the scholars of jurisprudence who limited the use of analogy to a very narrow sphere.

5. So strong were Imam Abu Ḥaneefah's powers of reasoning that he was able to give credence to opposing views in a single matter. Ibn Abul-'Awâm related the following from Muhammad ibn al-Ḥassan. As Abu Ḥaneefah was approaching Baghdad, his companions and best students gathered there, waiting to greet him. Among them were the likes of Abu Yoosuf, Zafar, and Asad ibn 'Amru. They agreed upon the ruling of an issue for which they had many supporting proofs. They said to one other, "We will ask Abu Ḥaneefah about it as soon as he arrives." When he arrived, it was the first question he was faced with; and much to their surprise, he gave them an answer different to the one they had agreed upon. There were many murmurs in the gathering, and he calmed them, saying, "Gently, gently, what is it that you say?" They said, "Yours is not our opinion." He asked, "Do you have proof or no proof?" They said, "We indeed have proof." He said, "Then show it." He argued with them and overcame them with proofs until finally they succumbed, admitting the mistake to be theirs. And so he said to them, "Do you know now?" They said, "Yes." He said, "What would you say to someone who said that your first view was correct and that this new view of yours is wrong?" They said, "That is not so, for we now have the correct view." And so he argued with them until they relented and said, "O Abu Ḥaneefah, you have wronged us, for we were in the right from the beginning."

He said, "What would you say to someone who said that both this view and the other view are wrong, but the truth lies in a third opinion?" They said, "That cannot be." He said, "Listen..." And he offered a third opinion, arguing with them until they relented and accepted it to be true. Then they said, "O Abu Ḥaneefah, teach us." He said, "The correct view is the first one that you answered, for such and such reason. And this issue can only have three sides, and each side has its source in jurisprudence, yet this view is correct, so take it and refuse all else."

One who can look at an issue from so many angles, being able to defend each one is indeed one who will be strongest in deducting rulings from texts. So that we will not be deemed as exaggerators in this matter, let us rely on what Imam Mâlik said: "Had this man (Abu Ḥaneefah) wished to establish proofs that this column is made from gold, he would be able to do so."

Then no wonder that his deductions are contrary to the view of other scholars and of the majority of scholars of hadith, who for the most part, go no further than the apparent meanings of texts, being reluctant to seek out reasons from them and to combine the meanings of several revealed texts. Walking among the crowd of hadith scholars were many commoners, about whom Yahya ibn Yamân said, "One of them writes down a hadith without understanding or contemplating its meaning. And if one of them were asked about an issue, he would sit down, as if he were merely one who copies down things." Some such commoners, who attached themselves to the scholars of hadith, were illiterate as far as ideas and culture go, and their illiteracy in that sense led them to make laughable errors in writing and in judgment. One of them prayed the *Witr* prayer after purifying himself from the washroom, but he didn't first perform ablution. He justified his action by referring to the Prophet's saying, "If one after relieving oneself, removes the impurity with pebbles or

the like, then let him do *witr*.”³ *Witr* literally means odd (as in an odd number), and the *witr* prayer is called the *witr* prayer because it consists of an odd number of units, but here the Prophet (ﷺ) is obviously ordering us to use an odd number of pebbles. Another example is of a man who for forty years refused to cut his hair on Friday; he did this based on the Prophet’s prohibition of *Hilaq* before the *Jumu‘ah* prayer. The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade *Hilaq* before the Friday prayer,⁴ and *Hilaq* means circles of knowledge; he forbade *Hilaq* before *Jumu‘ah* so that people would not feel confined to the mosque, because there is the Friday sermon on that day as well. The man in the example refused to cut his hair on Fridays because he read *Hilaq* as *Halq*, which means cutting hair.

For sure, people of that ilk — laypersons who were pseudo scholars of hadith — would find it indeed difficult to understand the precise and skillful way in which Imam Abu Ḥaneefah deduced rulings from revealed texts. And as such, they were the quickest to develop bad opinions about him, the quickest to speak badly of him, and the quickest to accuse him of taking the matter of hadith lightly.

6. Imam Abu Ḥaneefah was not the only scholar of his time; indeed, he had many contemporaries, and from the very nature of competition among humans is that their hearts find little sympathy with those who surpass them in understanding, in fame, or in acceptance. Few are those who are able to escape this weakness, even among scholars, except those whom Allah (ﷻ) favors and fills their hearts with wisdom, the guidance of the prophets, and the serenity of the truthful.

In *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr dedicated an entire

³ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 2, p. 59, hadith no. 518; Muslim and Al-Ḥâkim. Hadith status: *authentic* and *agreed upon* with the exclusion of the addition.

⁴ Reported by At-Tirmidhi, vol. 2, p. 118, hadith no. 1408 and Nisâ‘i. Tirmidhi said, it is *authentic*.

chapter to discussing competition among the scholars, and what resulted from that in terms of what some of them said about other scholars. At the beginning of that chapter, he referred to Ibn ‘Abbâs’s (رضي الله عنه) saying, “Listen to the knowledge of the scholars and do not believe some over others, for by the One Who has my soul in His hand, they are in conflict with one another more than he-goats are in their pen.”⁵ Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr then related what some scholars said disparagingly about other scholars — such as the saying of Mâlik about Muhammad ibn Is-hâq, of Yahyâ ibn Mu‘een about Shâfi‘ee, of Hammâd about the people of Makkah, and of Az-Zuhri about the people of Makkah.

The reputation of Abu Haneefah reached such a high level that some of his contemporaries said many inappropriate things about him in gatherings; some who were weak-hearted took news about him to the Caliph regarding matters of which he was totally innocent, to the extent that in his own defence, Abu Haneefah said about ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn Abi Laylâ, the judge of Kufa, “Indeed, Ibn Abi Laylâ deems permissible regarding me that which I do not deem permissible regarding animals.”

7. As a result of all of the previous factors combined, news of Abu Haneefah spread to the scholars of distant lands. They heard that his rulings were contrary to their own rulings without knowing why he differed with them, and they believed that the narrations of which they had knowledge were true and authentic. And so at times, even those who had never met Abu Haneefah may at some point have spoken ill of him. But how quickly they would acknowledge his superiority as a scholar when they finally met him, when they witnessed his piety, and when they had a taste of his understanding. The author of *al-Khayrât al-Ĥisân* relates that al-Awzâ‘ee thought ill of Abu Haneefah at first, without having met him until that point. Al-

⁵ *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, 2/151.

Awzâ'ee once said to 'Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak, "Who is the innovator who has come out of Kufa, the one who is called Abu Ḥaneefah?" Instead of answering him on that score, Ibn al-Mubâarak began mentioning some of the most difficult of issues in jurisprudence, relating how they should be understood and what ruling should be given to each matter. Al-Awzâ'ee said, "From whom did these rulings emanate?" 'Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak answered, "A shaykh I met in Iraq." He said, "He is a noble shaykh; go to him and take much (knowledge) from him." Ibn al-Mubâarak said, "He is Abu Ḥaneefah." Later on, Al-Awzâ'ee met Abu Ḥaneefah in Makkah, and they discussed many issues of jurisprudence. After the two separated ways, Al-Awzâ'ee said to Ibn al-Mubâarak, "I envy the man his vast knowledge and his abundant understanding, and I ask Allah (ﷻ) for forgiveness, for I was plainly wrong. Keep company with the man, for he is very different from the description of him that has reached me."⁶

What Mâlik and others said about Imam Abu Ḥaneefah

In light of the previous discussion, it is important to mention that which the great contemporaries of Abu Ḥaneefah had to say about him, for they made statements that seemingly contradict one another.

Mâlik, Ath-Thawree, Al-Awzâ'ee, Sufiyân ibn 'Uyainah, 'Abdullâh ibn al-Mubâarak — these and others have issued different opinions about Abu Ḥaneefah, and that at least is clear when we read narrations from Al-Khaṭeeb's *Târeekh*, narrations that often extol him and at times disparage him. I, like 'Eesa ibn Bakr al-Ayoobi as well as others before him, hold that those narrations that contain an attack on Abu Ḥaneefah by eminent Imams are fabricated.

⁶ *Al-Khayrât al-Ḥisân*, p. 33.

Nonetheless, I do not deny — nor find it strange — that some of those narrations are true, but true for the very reasons that we mentioned earlier, which were exemplified in the stance of Al-Awzâ‘ee before he met with Abu Ḥaneefah and his stance after having met him. Though some of Abu Ḥaneefah’s contemporary scholars might have had an ill opinion of him at first, we doubt not that that changed to praise and respect after having met him, for Abu Ḥaneefah made many travels to Makkah, Madinah, Basra, and Baghdad, and in those centres he met with many scholars. That is why there are many narrations in which eminent scholars extol Imam Abu Ḥaneefah’s understanding, in which they recognize his uprightness that was on a par with the uprightness of scholars who came before him. For example, Al-Qâḍee ‘Iyâḍ relates in *Madârik* that Imam Abu Ḥaneefah and Imam Mâlik gathered on one occasion in Madinah. Imam Mâlik left his company and was sweating profusely, and noticing that, Al-Layth ibn Sa‘d said, “I see that you are sweating?” Mâlik said, “I was sweating because I was Abu Ḥaneefah; O one from Egypt, he is indeed a *Faqeeh* (one who is an expert in Islamic jurisprudence).” It is also authentically related that Mâlik read Abu Ḥaneefah’s books — meaning those books that his students wrote about him — until he had gathered 60 000 of Abu Ḥaneefah’s issues, a fact that is related by many, such as Ibn Abi al-‘Awâm as-Sa‘dee, Abu ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Ali aṣ-Ṣaymaree, Al-Muwaffiq al-Khawârizmee and others.⁷

Many of Mâlik’s companions and the authors of his school admit that Mâlik praised Abu Ḥaneefah, and they give reasons for those narrations that speak harshly about Abu Ḥaneefah. For example, Abu Ja‘far ad-Dawoodee, author of *an-Nâmee ‘Alâ al-Muwattâ’*, explained that Mâlik said those words when he was in a state of anger, for even a scholar may say certain words when angry,

⁷ *Tâ’neeb al-Khaṭeeb*, p. 3.

words for which he may later seek forgiveness from Allah (ﷻ). Al-Ḥâfidh ibn ‘Abdul-Barr was of the view that the students of Mâlik who attacked Abu Ḥaneefah, were people of Hadith, as opposed to Mâlik’s students of fiqh, from whom no such remarks are related.

In Abu al-Waleed al-Bâjee’s commentary of *al-Muwatta’*, the author denies all such narrations from Mâlik, saying, “Mâlik never spoke ill of the *fuqahâ*⁸; he only spoke about narrators of hadith in terms of their ability to retain and relate hadiths.” Al-Bâjee further argues that Mâlik held ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Mubârak in high regard, and Ibn al-Mubârak was one of Abu Ḥaneefah’s closest companions.

As for Imam Shâfi‘ee, we do not doubt that all narrations in which he is said to disapprove of Abu Ḥaneefah are fabricated. Imam Shâfi‘ee never even met Imam Abu Ḥaneefah; he only met with his students, especially Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan. He studied Muhammad’s fiqh in Baghdad and then later said that he left Baghdad, carrying with him a camel-load of knowledge. Since Shâfi‘ee said that about one of Abu Ḥaneefah’s closest students, it makes no sense that he would speak ill of Abu Ḥaneefah. And it was Shâfi‘ee himself who said the famous line, “People are dependant in their fiqh upon Abu Ḥaneefah.”

Imam Aḥmad never met Abu Ḥaneefah either, though he did meet one of his closest students, Abu Yoosuf. In his early days of seeking knowledge, he attended Abu Yoosuf’s circle. He also studied the books of Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan. Once, when asked where he got his precise answers from, Imam Aḥmad answered, “From the books of Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan.”⁹

Yes, I do not doubt that Imam Aḥmad disagreed with Abu Ḥaneefah’s approach to fiqh, but he was not at odds with him as a

⁸ *Fuqahâ*: plural of *faqeeh*.

⁹ *Tâ’neeb al-Khateeb*, p. 180.

person. They both agreed upon the basic principles of taking from the Sunnah, yet their approach differed. Imam Aḥmad said, “For me, a weak hadith is better than people’s opinion,” whereas Imam Abu Ḥaneefah was very strict in accepting the authenticity of a hadith, only accepting those narrations that were widespread among trusted people. Such differences do not imply that one man attacked the other — to each is the road that he has taken.

The results of the controversy

The controversy surrounding Imam Abu Ḥaneefah led to many evil results: views were ascribed to him that he never upheld. Some claimed he was a *Murji’*¹⁰, others that he was a Qadaree¹¹, others that he rejected hadiths, and many others that he imparted his own opinions and desires about Allah’s Religion.

After Imam Abu Ḥaneefah died, and after his students and school (along with them) spread with the wind throughout the lands of Muslims, none of the accusations mentioned above survived; all that remained — and continues to remain — from such criticisms are two matters: one that issues from the stubborn partisanship of members of other schools and the other from ignorance in the ways of scholarly *ijtihâd*. Some of the enemies of the Sunnah have used one of these two matters to create doubt in the Sunnah, as you have seen earlier from the author of *Fajr al-Islâm*.

These are the two accusations:

1. That he did not have access to many hadiths and
2. That he gave preference to opinion and analogy over authentic hadiths.

¹⁰ A member of a deviant group.

¹¹ Another deviant group.

It is important to study these two accusations and the basis for each in history, judging their veracity based on the authentically related biography of Imam Abu Ḥaneefah — that which is related from his fiqh and his ijtihād.

Did Imam Abu Ḥaneefah have only a small collection of hadiths with him?

In this regard, Al-Khaṭeab al-Baghdâdi relates statements from a variety of scholars, statements that accuse Abu Ḥaneefah of being weak in the knowledge of Hadith and of having access to only a small number of hadiths. For example, he relates that Ibn Mubârak said, “Abu Ḥaneefah was an orphan in Hadith.” He relates that Yaḥyâ ibn Sa‘eed al-Qaṭṭân said, “He was not one of the people of Hadith.” He relates that Imam Aḥmad said, “Indeed, he has with him neither opinion nor hadith.” And he relates that Abu Bakr ibn Abu Dâwood said, “All of the hadiths that have been related from Abu Ḥaneefah do not exceed one hundred and fifty in number, and even in half of those he erred.”

I do not wish to scrutinize and refute these and other such narrations based on their chains (who related them and how), for many formidable researchers have disproved those narrations, explaining Al-Khaṭeab’s prejudice in relating them.¹² However, I do intend here to refute the claim that is still put forward by the enemies of both Abu Ḥaneefah and the Sunnah; many historians have had no qualms about presenting those claims, and they are exaggerated to the greatest degree by Ibn Khaldoon in his *Muqaddimah*, wherein he relates (although using expressions that hint that he did not give

¹² Refer to *Tâ’neeb al-Khaṭeab ‘Alâ Mâ Sâqa fee Tarjumat Abi Ḥaneefah min al-Akâdheeb*, written by Shaykh Muhammad Zâhid al-Kawthari. He discussed the different narrations, arguing that the statements cannot be correctly linked to those to whom they are ascribed.

credence to the sayings himself) that the narrations of Abu Ḥaneefah do not exceed seventeen hadiths in number.

To claim that his stock of hadiths does not exceed seventeen hadiths or even 150 hadiths is a precarious claim indeed, for Imam Abu Ḥaneefah was one of the greatest of Muslim Imams, and his school of thought is the most adept in the practice of delving into issues that are deduced; furthermore tens of millions of people adhere to the principles of his school. Then can that claim be true?

1. By the consensus of his followers and opponents, Abu Ḥaneefah is a mujtahid, one who is qualified to practice ijtihād, and one of the conditions of ijtihād is for the mujtahid to know those hadiths that have to do with rulings of jurisprudence, and those hadiths number in the thousands, or according to the most conservative estimate (which is held by some of the Ḥanbali scholars), in the hundreds. Then how can Imam Abu Ḥaneefah have practiced ijtihād if he did not, as it is claimed, fulfill the most important of conditions for practicing ijtihād? And why did the Imams acknowledge his ijtihād and why did they take so many pains to understanding his fiqh? Scholars in many countries have studied his fiqh; and whether they follow him or refute some of his views, they acknowledge him as a mujtahid. How could that be so if he were not standing on a firm foundation?

2. Anyone who studies Imam Abu Ḥaneefah's school will find that his view is in harmony with authentic hadiths on hundreds of issues. As-Sayyid Murtaḍā az-Zubaydī gathered Abu Ḥaneefah's store of hadiths and those hadiths in which his narrations agree with those narrations of the authors of the Six Books. Az-Zubaydī titled that compilation, *'Aqd al-Jawâhir al-Munayfi fee Adilati Abi Ḥaneefah*. One must now ask, how is it possible that Abu Ḥaneefah's ijtihād is in harmony with hundreds of authentic hadiths if he had had access to only seventeen hadiths, or fifty, or 150, out of which he erred regarding half of them?

3. In his *Muṣannif al-Kabeer*, Ibn Abi Shaybah dedicates an entire chapter to those issues in which Abu Ḥaneefah's view was contrary to authentic hadiths; those issues were 125 in number. Even if Ibn Abi Shaybah were correct in his criticism of Abu Ḥaneefah regarding those issues, Abu Ḥaneefah would be correct in every other issue about which a hadith is related. According to the most conservative of estimations, Abu Ḥaneefah ruled on 83 000 issues, and some relate that he ruled on 2 200 000 issues. The implication here is that Ibn Abi Shaybah admitted that on all other issues, Abu Ḥaneefah's rulings did not go against the Sunnah (other than the 125 he mentioned). Regarding the thousands of issues on which Abu Ḥaneefah ruled, at least many of them are based on a hadith, which means that Abu Ḥaneefah had with him at least hundreds or thousands of hadiths. The opposite conclusion is that the Sunnah consists of only 125 hadiths, a claim that no Imam or scholar makes.

4. Imam Abu Ḥaneefah's views are highly regarded in the science of Hadith. Considering that this science depends so much on one's knowledge of hadiths and its narrators, how can Abu Ḥaneefah have had access to only a very limited supply of hadiths?

5. Yaḥyâ ibn Naṣr, who related from Abu Ḥaneefah, said of him, "I entered his house, which was full of books, and I asked, 'What are these?' " He said, "These are hadiths, from which I have related only a small number, those that are beneficial."

6. Even though Imam Abu Ḥaneefah did not sit to relate hadith in the manner known to the scholars of hadith, and even though he did not author a book of compilation — as did Mâlik — his students gathered his hadiths in seventeen *masâneed*¹³.

¹³ *Masâneed*: pl. of *musnad*; books compiled by students who related from the Imam.

Kitâb al-Âthâr, by Abu Yoosuf; *Kitâb al-Âthâr al-Marfoo‘ah*, by Muhammad; *al-Âthâr al-Marfoo‘ah* and *al-Mawqoofah*; *Musnad al-Ḥasan ibn Ziyâd al-Lu‘lu‘ee*; *Musnad Ḥammâd ibn al-Imâm Abu Ḥaneefah* — these are some of the more famous of those books and compilations.

Qâdee al-Qudât, Abu al-Mua‘yyid Muhammad ibn Mahmood al-Khawârizmee (died in the year 665 H), gathered most of those collections in a huge volume called, *Jâmi‘ al-Masâneed*, which he arranged according to the chapters of fiqh. In that volume, Khawârizmee deleted repetitions and related the same chain for a single hadith only once. After compiling many different *Masâneed*, he once said in a sermon:

“I have heard of some ignorant people in Syria who belittle Abu Ḥaneefah, claiming that he had access to a very limited supply of hadiths. They claim that Abu Ḥaneefah had no book of hadith, while Shâfi‘ee had the *Musnad* and Imam Mâlik had *al-Muwattâ‘*. Overcome by religious zeal, I decided to glean fifteen of his *masâneed* that were compiled by the most eminent of Hadith scholars.”

His *Masâneed* have been related by the eminent hadith scholar of Syria, Al-Ḥâfidh Shams-ud-Deen ibn Ṭooloon in *al-Fahrasat al-Awsaṭ* and by the eminent hadith scholar of Egypt, Al-Ḥâfidh Muhammad ibn Yoosuf aṣ-Ṣâliḥânee, who said in his book *‘Uqood al-Jamân*, “Abu Ḥaneefah was one of the great and prominent scholars of hadith. Had he not paid such special attention to Hadith, he would not have been able to deduce so much in issues of fiqh. And Adh-Dhahabi was correct when he included Abu Ḥaneefah in his *Ṭabaqât al-Ḥuffâdh*¹⁴.” He writes in Chapter 23:

¹⁴ This title translates as: the levels of those who memorized and related hadiths.

“Despite his vast store of hadiths, so little has been related from him because he was mostly occupied in deducing issues of jurisprudence, and for the same reason little is related of the great number of hadiths heard by both Imam Mâlik and Imam Shâfi‘ee. Similarly, little is related from the likes of great Companions, such as Abu Bakr (ﷺ) and ‘Umar (ﷺ), even though their knowledge was vast while more is related from those Companions who are lower than them in ranking.”

In his *Târeekh al-Kabeer*, Al-Badr al-‘Ainee relates that the *Musnad* of Abu Ḥaneefah that was compiled by Ibn ‘Uqdah, alone comprises of 1000 hadiths, and this is not counting the other *Masâneed* that were compiled. In *at-Ta‘qeebât*, As-Suyootî attests to the trustworthiness of Ibn ‘Uqdah: “Ibn ‘Uqdah was one of the great memorizers of hadiths; he was the most trustworthy of people, and no one other than a prejudiced partisan would consider him to be weak.” Zafar also has a book of narrations (*âthâr*) in which he relates frequently from Abu Ḥaneefah.

The claim, then, that Imam Abu Ḥaneefah had a very limited collection of hadiths is false, just as the following claim is false: that Imam Abu Ḥaneefah authenticated only seventeen or so hadiths, and needless to say, this claim is not related in any trustworthy book; Ibn Khaldoon is the only one who related that claim¹⁵, and the words he used to relate that claim were ambiguous at their best, for he mentioned that seventeen was the number of his narrations, and even that meaning is incorrect. As we have mentioned earlier, the number

¹⁵ Perhaps Ibn Khaldoon related this claim because Muhammad related the *Muwatta’* from Mâlik, and he added 13 extra hadiths that he related from Abu Ḥaneefah and 4 extra hadiths that he related from Abu Yoosuf. One bereft of knowledge may then have concluded that the total number of hadiths that Imam Abu Ḥaneefah had authenticated was 17. Nonetheless, we must continue to search for the source from which Ibn Khaldoon related that claim.

of hadiths that Imam Abu Ḥaneefah authenticated reaches the hundreds at the very least, and that is based on the compilations of hadiths that his students related from him and from the hadiths that he actually applied in his school of jurisprudence. Those facts alone are enough to refute the claim related by Ibn Khaldoon.

There is another major error that many authors commit when they try to excuse Abu Ḥaneefah for having so few hadiths.¹⁶ They say that Abu Ḥaneefah was in Kufa, whose inhabitants knew very few hadiths, simply because it was not a centre for hadiths. Those who make this excuse do not heed the fact that Kufa was a center of knowledge during the time of Abu Ḥaneefah and that he made many knowledge-seeking journeys to the most renowned Islamic centres during his life.

From the day that it was established in the year 17 H, Kufa was the dwelling place of many great Companions. ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) sent ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه), known as Ibn Umm ‘Abd, to Kufa, and he was the sixth person to accept Islam. He was sent there to teach its inhabitants the Qur’an and the Religion. Ibn Mas‘ood’s status and knowledge with the Muslims was so high, that the Caliph could hardly do without him in the capital city, which is why ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) wrote to the people of Kufa, saying, “I have indeed preferred you to myself with ‘Abdullâh.” And the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «Whoever wishes to recite the Qur’an freshly (clearly, distinctly) as it was revealed, then let him read with the recitation of Ibn Umm ‘Abd.» ‘Umar referred to him as being a field full of knowledge. There are many more narrations that refer to the vast knowledge of ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood, and from the beginning of ‘Umar’s caliphate until the caliphate of ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), he was central and prominent educator of the people of Kufa. Many reciters and jurists graduated from his

¹⁶ Adh-Dhaylawi is one such author; he mentioned that excuse in *Ḥujjatullâhi al-Bâlighah*.

school in Kufa, so many so, that ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) was genuinely surprised at the great number of jurists in Kufa, and so he said to Ibn Mas‘ood, “You have filled this area with knowledge and fiqh.” His students and their students numbered 4000, and they were the lamps of Kufa.

Kufa received another boost when ‘Ali (ﷺ) and other knowledgeable Companions moved there; it became an unparalleled centre of learning, boasting scholars of fiqh, Hadith, the sciences of the Qur’an, and language. Were one to gather into one book the biographies of ‘Ali’s and Ibn Mas‘ood’s major students, one would have enough material for a very large volume. Not counting Iraq as a whole, Al-‘Ijlee estimated that 1500 of their Companions lived in Kufa.

To understand the implications of the fact that both ‘Ali and Ibn Mas‘ood lived in Kufa, one need only hear the words of Masrooq ibn al-Ajda‘, an eminent tâbi‘ee: “I found that the knowledge of the Prophet’s Companions was at its height in six (of them): ‘Ali, ‘Abdullâh (Ibn Mas‘ood), ‘Umar, Yazeed, Abi Dardâ’, and Ubay ibn Ka‘b, and then I found their knowledge to peak in ‘Ali and ‘Abdullâh (Ibn Mas‘ood).”

The travels of Abu Ḥaneefah are many. He visited both Basra and Madinah dozens of times and from the years 130 H until 136 H, he sojourned in Makkah. And it was in these two blessed cities that Abu Ḥaneefah met with many great scholars, such as Al-Awzâ‘ee. In Makkah, he learned from the students of Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ), and in Madinah, from the students of ‘Umar (ﷺ). There, he even learned from some of the scholars from the Prophet’s family — such as Zayd ibn ‘Ali Zayn al-‘Âbideen, Muhammad al-Bâqir, and Abu Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullâh ibn al-Ḥasan.

On one occasion, Abu Ḥaneefah was asked about the source of his knowledge. He said,

“From the companions of ‘Umar, who took their knowledge from ‘Umar; from the companions of ‘Ali, who took their knowledge from ‘Ali; from the companions of ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood, who took their knowledge from ‘Abdullâh; and in his time, there was none more knowledgeable on earth than Ibn ‘Abbâs (meaning that he took his knowledge from Ibn ‘Abbâs’s companions as well).”

And because Imam Abu Ḥaneefah gathered the knowledge of the most famous Companions, storing it in his memory, it is not right to claim that he was living in a region whose inhabitants knew very few hadiths. On the contrary, Kufa was replete with scholars, and moreover, with Companions, among whom were two of extra-special significance — ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood and ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib.

Did Abu Ḥaneefah give precedence to opinion over Hadith?

We have already explained that under no circumstances would Abu Ḥaneefah give precedence to opinion or analogy or *istihsân* over any authentic hadith that was widespread among trusted individuals. Ibn Abi al-‘Awwâm related that Abu Yoosuf, a prominent student of Abu Ḥaneefah, said:

“If an issue were to present itself to Abu Ḥaneefah, he would say, ‘What are the narrations that you have knowledge of?’ After we mentioned the narrations we had and he mentioned those that he had, he would study them, and if there were more narrations supporting one of two opinions, he would take that opinion. But if the number of narrations was equal for both views, he would study them and then choose.”

In *al-‘Âlim wal-Muta‘allim*, As-Samarqandi relates that Abu Ḥaneefah said:

“Everything that the Prophet (ﷺ) said — regardless of whether we heard the saying or not — then without any stipulation, we believe in

it and we bear witness that it (the verdict) is as Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) spoke."

In *al-Intiqâ'*, Ibn 'Abdul-Barr related that Abu Ḥaneefah said: "May Allah curse the one who goes against the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), for through him, Allah honored us, and through him, He saved us." Ibn 'Abdul-Mubâarak related that he heard Abu Ḥaneefah say: "If it comes from the Prophet (ﷺ), we unconditionally accept it; if it comes from a number of Companions, we choose one of their opinions; and if it comes from the Tâbi'een (the companions of the Prophet's Companions), we assert our opinion just as they did."¹⁷ In a similar narration, he said, "If it comes from other than the Companions, (we choose, for) they are men and we are men."¹⁸

Ash-Shay'râni, in *al-Meezân*, reported that Abu Ḥaneefah said: "By Allah, he invents a lie about us who says that we give precedence to analogy over a revealed text (i.e. a verse from the Qur'an or a hadith); and in the presence of a revealed text, is there any need for analogy?"

Ash-Shay'râni here relates another of his sayings:

"We only resort to analogy in cases of dire need. In any given issue, we first look for proof in the Qur'an, the Sunnah, or the rulings of the Companions. If we find no proof, then we compare (using methods of analogy) an issue for which there is no proof to an issue for which there is proof."

And in yet another narration from Ash-Shay'râni, he said,

"We first take from Allah's Book, then from the Sunnah, then from the rulings of the Companions, and so we apply that which they agreed upon. But if they differed among themselves, we compare the ruling of one issue to that of another, linking them to one another

¹⁷ *Al-Madkhal*, by Al-Bayhaqi.

¹⁸ *Al-Meezân*, Ash-Shay'râni.

through a factor that is present in both, so that the ruling becomes clear.”

Just from the few narrations mentioned above, it becomes clear that Abu Haneefah would never prefer opinion, regardless of what that opinion was, to an authentic hadith. Rather we find that the likes of Ibn Hāzīm relate a consensus from the scholars of Iraq that the *ḍa‘eef* hadith is given precedence over analogy. But here is an important point that Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned in *A‘alām al-Mu‘qi‘een*:

“The meaning of the term *ḍa‘eef* as used by the earlier generations of Muslims differs from its meaning according to the later generations. What the later generations might refer to as being *ḥasan* (acceptable) is sometimes called *ḍa‘eef* by the early generations.”

Before explaining this point, Ibn al-Qayyim said:

“The students of Abu Haneefah agree that in his school, the *ḍa‘eef* hadith is preferable to analogy and opinion. And upon that basis he established his school. For example he gave precedence to the hadith regarding laughing (during prayer) over analogy and opinion, even though that hadith is *ḍa‘eef*. Similarly, he gave precedence to the hadith regarding performing ablution with the nectar of dates over opinion and analogy, even though it is a *ḍa‘eef* hadith. He ruled that the thief’s hand is not cut if he stole less than 10 dirhams, and the hadith regarding that ruling is *ḍa‘eef*. He ruled that (for religious purposes) menstruation does not surpass ten days, and the hadith that indicates that ruling is *ḍa‘eef*. He also stipulated that one of the conditions for establishing the Friday Prayer is that it be performed in a populated area (as opposed to the desert, for example)... Therefore his school gives precedence to the *ḍa‘eef* hadith and to the sayings of the Companions over analogy and opinion, and that is also the opinion held by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.”

Regardless of the meaning of *ḍa'eef* — whether its meaning is according to what the early or later generations meant — that the scholars of hadith consider a hadith to be *ḍa'eef* does not necessarily mean that it is *ḍa'eef* according to Abu Ḥaneefah; rather, it must be authentic in his opinion based on his general principles. The viewpoints of scholars may differ in this regard, one ruling a hadith to be authentic, while another deeming it to be weak.

At any rate, based on what Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn al-Qayyim acknowledge — they were the most adamant of scholars in refuting (stance of the) Ḥanafī School — one can plainly see that Abu Ḥaneefah would give precedence to the *ḍa'eef* hadith over opinion and analogy. It is also interesting to note that Abu Ḥaneefah accepted the *mursal* hadith, preferring it over analogy, whereas Shāfi'ee accepted it only with conditions, and Hadith scholars on the whole rejected it. In light of Abu Ḥaneefah's view regarding the *mursal* hadith, it is plain to see that in his School, he would not resort to analogy unless he found nowhere else to go, meaning that he found no authentic narration that he could depend upon. What is the source, then, of the falsehood and lie that has him preferring opinion to hadith?

There are, however, a number of narrations in which some scholars of Hadith attack Abu Ḥaneefah for rejecting hadiths which they deem to be authentic. In his *Târeekh*, Al-Baghdâdī relates from Yoosuf ibn Asbâṭ that Abu Ḥaneefah rejected four hundred or more of the Prophet's hadiths, yet out of those four hundred, he only mentions four. He also relates that Wakee' said, "We have found that Abu Ḥaneefah has gone against two hundred hadiths." And then he relates that Ḥammâd ibn Salamah said, "Abu Ḥaneefah was presented with narrations and *Sunan* (the books of hadith), yet he rejected them, choosing to resort to opinion." Some of those who purportedly said such things about Abu Ḥaneefah were in fact his own companions, making those narrations doubtful. Other such

narrations, we outright reject as being false. Yet there is little doubt that there were some scholars of hadith during the time of Abu Ḥaneefah who found fault with him for having rejected narrations that they themselves authenticated.

For example, Ibn Abi Shaybah censured Abu Ḥaneefah for ruling contrary to hadiths in 125 issues — i.e., 125 different hadiths. How is that possible when Shâfi‘ee related a consensus in this matter: that it is not permissible for a Muslim to go against the ruling of any hadith that is authentically narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)? And how is that possible when Abu Ḥaneefah himself said, “Whatever comes from the Messenger of Allah, we accept it unconditionally”?

This question can be answered from different angles:

1. In regard to narrators of a hadith, scholars may differ, some deeming a specific narrator to be weak, others deeming him to be trustworthy in his transmissions. And for sure, Abu Ḥaneefah was more knowledgeable regarding the narrators that he related from, for his time was prior to that of those who attacked them. It often happened that there were only two narrators between him and the Companion who related the hadith. In such situations, it was easy for him to give a just ruling regarding those narrators, because they were close to his time, and because he was able to ask those who knew them about their character. As for those narrators that he did not know — such as those from the Ḥijâz¹⁹ and Syria — he would often abstain from ruling on them. And perhaps his view regarding those narrators was different from that of their students. And as such, he would abstain from applying certain hadiths that other scholars ruled to be authentic, just as others abstained from applying certain hadiths that according to him, were authentic.

¹⁹ The western region of the Arabian peninsula in which Makkah and Madinah are located. (Editor)

2. Even when presented with a hadith that he considers to be authentic, the mujtahid may have information about another proof that changes the apparent meaning of that hadith; he may even find a proof that is stronger altogether; he may believe that the hadith has been abrogated, or that its meaning imparts a general ruling, while another proof limits the scope of that ruling; and in all of the above situations, the mujtahid abstains from applying the hadith as opposed to others who do not have with them his proofs, and those others might censure him for not applying the hadith. In his letter to Mâlik, Al-Layth ibn Sa'd enumerated seventy authentic hadiths that Mâlik abstained from applying, and they were all hadiths that Mâlik himself related in *al-Muwattâ'*.

Rarely will you find an Imam who applied every single hadith that he deemed to be authentic, and that is because in certain instances, there are other proofs that will override the apparent meaning of a hadith. This is a point that the *muhaddith*²⁰ (hadith scholar) does not understand, and from that point the *muhaddith* and the faqeeh differ. Abu Haneefah said:

“The example of one who searches out for hadiths without understanding them is that of the chemist, who gathers medicines, not knowing which sickness each one is meant to cure — until the doctor arrives. And that is the state of the student of hadith: he doesn't know the meaning of the hadith until the faqeeh arrives.”²¹

In a narration related by Ibn 'Abdul Barr, Ya'qoob Abu Yoosuf, a student of Abu Haneefah, says:

“While I was alone with Al-A'mash, he asked me about an issue, and so I answered him. He said, ‘From where did you derive this answer,

²⁰ Hadith scholar.

²¹ *Al-Manâqib* by Al-Muwaffiq al-Makkee.

O Ya‘qoob?’ I told him, ‘From the hadith that you yourself related to me.’ I then informed him of the hadith, and he said, ‘O Ya‘qoob, I had indeed memorized this hadith before the time that your parents met, and I have not learned its true meaning until now.’

Ibn ‘Abdul Barr also relates the following narration from ‘Ubaydullâh ibn ‘Amru. ‘Ubaydullâh said,

“I was in the gathering of Al-‘Amash, when a man came and asked about an issue; Al-‘Amash did not answer, and when suddenly he saw that Abu Ḥaneefah was present, he asked, ‘O Nu‘mân (Abu Ḥaneefah) speak of this issue.’ Abu Ḥaneefah answered, and Al-‘Amash asked, ‘From where did you get that answer?’ He said, ‘From the hadith that you related to us,’ to which Al-‘Amash responded, ‘We are the chemists and you (fiqh scholars) are the doctors.’”²²

3. We do not deny that there were some hadiths that Abu Ḥaneefah did not know of; the Companions were dispersed throughout the lands of Islam, and in each region there may have been a hadith that was unknown to the inhabitants of other regions. No one ever claimed — not during the times of the Companions, the tâbi‘oon, or later times — that he had knowledge of the entire Sunnah. A young man once approached Ash-Sha‘bee and related a narration to him. Ash-Sha‘bee said, “We have not heard of this.” The young man said, “Knowledge in its entirety you have heard?” He said, “No.” The young man asked, “Half of it?” He said, “No.” The young man said, “Then consider this narration to be from the second half that you do not know of.”²³

In fact, there are hadiths that escaped many of the greatest of the Prophet’s Companions. ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) had not heard the hadith that

²² *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*, 2/131.

²³ *Tadreeb ar-Râwee*, p. 108.

gave a mandate for Jizyah to be taken from the Magians, nor the hadith about plague, at least not until ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn ‘Awf informed him. The hadith regarding seeking permission before entering another person’s home was also unknown to ‘Umar, until he was informed about it by Abu Moosa (ﷺ). Both ‘Umar and Ibn Mas‘ood were unaware of the hadith regarding dry ablution; meanwhile, ‘Ammâr (ﷺ) and others had knowledge of that hadith. While ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ), Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ), and Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) had not heard the hadith that makes it permissible to wipe over one’s socks during ablution, ‘Ali (ﷺ) and Hudhayfah (ﷺ) had heard it. Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ) was unaware about the prohibition on fixed-term (*muṭ’ah*) marriages until other Companions informed him. Similar situations occurred often among the Companions, yet no one found fault with them, nor did anyone accuse them of being ignorant of the Messenger of Allah’s hadiths. Many of them ruled opposite to what a hadith indicated before it reached them. And likewise, the same excuse should be made for Abu Haneefah.

4. Because fabrications became rampant during his time, Abu Haneefah stipulated very precise conditions for a narration to be accepted; he was strict in accepting narrations only because he wanted to be careful regarding his Religion. Here are some of those conditions (These conditions basically apply to Aḥâd narrations):

— Aḥâd narrations must not contradict those universal principles that he recognized after having studied many of the rulings in the Sharia. If an Aḥâd narration contradicted any of those principles, he would abandon that narration, applying the stronger of the two proofs.

— The narration must not contradict the apparent and general rulings of the Qur’an; in the case of such a contradiction, he would rule by the apparent meaning of the Qur’an, abandoning the narration, so as to apply the stronger of the two proofs. However, when the narration is explained that which needed clarification or when it legislated a new ruling altogether, he would apply it.

— The narration must not contradict a Sunnah that is well known — regardless of whether it is a saying or an action; here again, he applied the stronger of two proofs.

— The narration must not contradict another narration that is at the same level; if this occurred, he would choose one over the other by dint of extraneous proofs - for example, one of the Companions was more knowledgeable than the other, one of them was a faqeeh while the other was not, one of them was young and the other was old, and so on.

— The narrator's actions must not differ from what he himself narrated. For example, Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated the hadith about washing a container seven times after a dog licked it; however, his fatwâ²⁴ was different.

— If the narration imparts a verdict on an issue that affects many people, it must be a widespread narration or one that is narrated by so many people at each level of its narration that for it to be a fabrication is impossible.

— If it is by itself, the narration must not contain more information than other narrations, regardless of whether that occurs in the text or the chain. The narration that contained the basic and not the additional information is applied, so as to take caution with regard to Allah's Religion.

— As for rulings on punishments, the lesser punishment is applied when narrations differ.

— From the time the narrator heard the hadith until the time he conveyed it to another or to others, he must have retained the hadith in his memory without once forgetting any of it.

— The narrator must not need to depend upon his writing when he forgets his narration.

These are some of the more important conditions that Abu Haneefah stipulated for accepting and applying Aḥād narrations. The scholars

²⁴ Religious verdict.

of Hadith reject most, if not all, of these conditions, while other Imams differ with him in only some of them. Our purpose here is not to defend or uphold Abu Ḥaneefah's opinions; our goal is to convey the reasons for which Abu Ḥaneefah abandoned certain Aḥād narrations.

If you have followed the discussion until this point, you know that, using his *ijtihād*, Abu Ḥaneefah abandoned certain narrations from the Sunnah, opting to resort to his opinion instead — and there is no harm in that, for Imams before and after him did the same. However, the matter would have been different had he abandoned aspects of the Sunnah based on intransigence or desire — yet Abu Ḥaneefah is far above doing that, for his status as an Imam is established, and so is his piety, righteousness, and justness in seeking out and applying the truth from the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Examples of Abu Ḥaneefah's understanding of certain hadiths

1. When Sufiyân ibn 'Uyainah met with Abu Ḥaneefah, the former asked: "Is it true that the following is your fatwâ: that the sale is binding upon both buyer and seller as soon as they stop talking about the sale and move on to another topic, even though they remain together in one place?" Abu Ḥaneefah answered, "Yes." Sufiyân said, "How so when in an authentic hadith, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, 'The buyer and seller continue to have a choice (for one of them to revoke the transaction) as long as they do not separate from one another?'" Abu Ḥaneefah said, "What would you say if they were in a boat together, in prison together, or if they were traveling together? How would they separate from one another?"

It is clear that Abu Ḥaneefah did not reject the hadith; rather, his understanding of separation was separation of speech and not a

physical separation, and with that view, he took the overall purpose of contracts and transactions into consideration. The examples of people that Abu Ḥaneefah mentioned perhaps have to stay together in one place for months on end, and so, do we say that as long as they are together, the contract is not complete? And that any one of the two parties may revoke the contract whenever he pleases? The Arabic word for separation or parting, *Tafarruq*, is used elsewhere to mean a parting of words. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا...﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٠٣)

«And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah [i.e. this Qur'an], and be not divided among yourselves...» (*Qur'an 3: 103*)

And the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «The Jews have divided.» (Here it means into sects, and not into different physical locations.).

Now if one whose understanding of precise jurisprudential reasoning is weak, he will certainly rule, at least at first glance, that Abu Ḥaneefah went against a hadith, when that is not the case.

2. In this example, Ibn Abi Shaybah finds fault with Abu Ḥaneefah for ruling against the meaning of the following hadith. Ibn Abi Shaybah related from Muhammad ibn Nu'mân that his father, «Nu'mân, gave him a servant as a gift. Nu'mân then went to the Prophet (ﷺ), so that he could attest to what he did, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Did you give the same to each of your children?" He said, "No." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Then take (the servant) back."»²⁵ Ibn Abi Shaybah then mentioned the same hadith with two different chains and different wordings. After relating those narrations, he says that Abu Ḥaneefah sanctions such gifts (i.e. a father giving a gift to one, but not to all of his children).

²⁵ Reported by Bukhari, vol. 9, p. 344, Muslim, Abu Dâwood, An-Nisâ'i, At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mâjah. Hadith status: *authentic*.

First, the majority of scholars rule that it is not obligatory to give one's children equally, but that it is recommended. Among these scholars are Mâlik, Al-Layth, Ath-Thawri, Shâfi'ee, Abu Ḥaneefah, and his students. Though some of them considered it to be disliked, they overall agree that it is permissible for one to specifically give a gift to one of his children without giving to the others. All of these scholars, however, rule that it is recommended to give equally. On the other hand, there are some scholars — such as Ibn al-Mubârak, Aḥmad, and the *Dhâhiriyyâh* (Is-hâq was with them, but then he returned to the opinion of the majority) — who rule that it is compulsory to give equally in this regard, ruling according to the apparent meanings of certain narrations.

Al-Bayhaqi enumerated ten reasons why giving equally in this matter is recommended, and not compulsory, even though proponents of the other view argued against those reasons.

What is important here is to understand why the jurists differed in this matter. They differed because the hadith is related in different narrations, with different wordings. Some of those narrations indicate that giving equally is only recommended: “Make someone other than me bear witness to this (transaction),” and “Would it please you that all of your children should be equally dutiful to you?” Other narrations indicate that giving equally is compulsory: “I will not bear witness to injustice,” and “Take him back.” Regarding these different narrations, Al-Qâḍee 'Iyâḍ said, “Combining between these different narrations is better than forsaking some of them altogether ... and the way to combine them is to give the classification of ‘recommended’ to all of them.” In his explanation of *Ṣaḥeḥ Muslim*, Al-Qâḍee then goes on to explain why all of the narrations should be classified as recommended.

There is no need to delve further into this issue, especially when we consider that Abu Ḥaneefah was not alone — the majority

of Islamic jurists agreed with him. Shâfi‘ee related that Abu Bakr (ﷺ) favored ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ) and that ‘Umar (ﷺ) favored ‘Âsim in gifts. Other Companions did the same (with their own children), and their doing so is itself the clearest of proofs indicating that giving equally is recommended.

This is an example of those issues wherein Ibn Abi Shaybah holds that Abu Ḥaneefah did not apply an authentic hadith — he states that there are 125 such issues. And as we have seen, Abu Ḥaneefah did not abandon the apparent meaning of the hadith because he gave preference to opinion; rather, he did so because of his *ijtihâd*, and the likes of him (and all other Imams) are excused in that case. Also important to note is that, of the issues mentioned by Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abu Ḥaneefah was not alone in the opinion to which he was led by his *ijtihâd*; most of those opinions he shared with one or more of the other Imams.

The Study circle of Abu Ḥaneefah

Anyone who knows of the many eminent scholars who attended Abu Ḥaneefah’s circle and how he conducted that study circle with his students also knows that Abu Ḥaneefah does not deserve the harsh criticism that was leveled at him. Al-Mugheerah ibn Ḥamzah said, “Those companions of Abu Ḥaneefah who wrote with him were forty men, the most distinguished among the eminent ones.” In another narration, Al-Asad ibn al-Furât enumerates the most prominent from among those forty: Abu Yoosuf, Zafar ibn al-Hudhayl, Dâwood at-Ṭâ’ee, Asad ibn ‘Amru, Yoosuf ibn Khâlid as-Samtee, Yahyâ ibn Zakariyâ ibn Abu Zâ’y’dah.

Al-Asad here describes the way Abu Ḥaneefah’s circle was conducted:

“They (the students) would disagree about the answer to an issue; each one would come with his own answer, until finally, they would

raise the issue with him ... they would often spend three days on a single issue and then write it down in their records.”

Az-Zafar said,

“We would discuss our views with Abu Ḥaneefah, and among us were Abu Yoosuf and Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan. We would write what he said, but one day Abu Ḥaneefah said to Abu Yoosuf, ‘O Ya‘qoob, do not write all that you hear from me, for I might hold an opinion today that I will forsake tomorrow...’”

From here the statement of Al-Muwaffaq al-Makkee rings true: that Abu Ḥaneefah’s School was one of mutual counsel, and not a dictatorship in which he would impose his views; thus was his sincerity to Allah, to His Messenger (ﷺ), and to the believers.

And so we are led to comprehend Wakee’s statement when one day a man said to him, “Abu Ḥaneefah has erred.” Wakee’ said, “And how can he err when has with him Abu Yoosuf and Zafar, with their capacities for drawing analogies; the likes of Yaḥyâ ibn Abi Zâÿ’dah, Ḥafṣ ibn Ghiyâth, Ḥibbân, and Mandal, with their memorization of hadîth; Al-Qâsim ibn Ma‘an, with his knowledge of the Arabic language; Dawood aṭ-Ṭâ’ee and Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyâd, with their renunciation of material pleasures and their piety? If one has the likes of them as his companions, he will almost never err, because if he does err, they will bring him back (to the truth).

We do not agree with Wakee’, that Abu Ḥaneefah never erred. However, the following factors show that the harsh campaign against him was unjust and false — his companions, his environment, his lifespan being so close in time to the generation of the Companions, his penetrating understanding, and his sound judgments. The harsh campaign against him started during his lifetime — because of competition among contemporaries and because of the ignorance of certain narrators — and it continued and culminated during the time

of Imam Aḥmad. Many were those who vilified the Ḥanafi School because of the punishment and oppression that the Mu‘tazilah dealt to the people of Hadith. The Ḥanafi School was thus attacked because most of the Mu‘tazilah followed the Ḥanafi School in matters of jurisprudence, although not in matters concerning beliefs.

A Just Word

I was greatly impressed by the words of Al-Ḥâfidh ibn ‘Abdul-Barr, which he wrote in *Jâmi‘ al-Bayân al-‘Ilm*:

“The people of Hadith surpassed the proper bounds in finding fault with Abu Ḥaneefah. According to them, they blamed Abu Ḥaneefah because he gave credence to opinion and analogy even in the presence of revealed texts, while most of the people of knowledge say, ‘If the narration is authentic, then analogy and opinion are nullified.’ However, whenever he rejected what was related through an Aḥâd narration, he had a plausible explanation... I know of no one of the people of knowledge, who had not interpreted a verse or a hadith, whereby he rejects another Sunnah, either with a plausible explanation or with the claim of abrogation; Abu Ḥaneefah did this often, while other scholars did it only rarely. (This is the opinion of Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr)... It used to be said, the nobility of a man from the past is known from the disagreement among people regarding him. They would say, ‘Do you not see that two groups were destroyed because of their view of ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib — the ones who exaggerated in their love for him and the ones who despised him?’ That is the description of the people of noble nature and character, those who reached high levels of virtue in their Religion. And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.

Imam Mâlik (93 H – 179 H)

His life and status in knowledge

*I*mam and *muḥaddith* of Madinah, he is Abu ‘Abdullâh Mâlik ibn Anas al-Aṣḥabaḥee. He was born in the year 93 H, but according to Ibn ad-Dabee‘ ash-Shaybâni in his introduction of *Tayseer al-Wuṣool*, he was born in the year 95 H. Born in Madinah, he died there as well, in the year 179 H, at the age of 86. He gained knowledge from Rabee‘ah, from many of the great jurists among the tâbi‘een, and so extensive was his study under the instruction of Az-Zuhri, that he is considered to be one of his most famous students. He also heard much from Nâfay‘, the freed slave of Ibn ‘Umar; those narrations that he related from Nâfay‘ became well known, and according to the convention among some of the scholars of hadîth, that chain is called the golden chain: Mâlik from Nâfay‘ from Ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ). He continued to apply himself in the pursuit of knowledge until he became an Imam in the Ḥijâz — he was called the ‘Scholar of Madinah’ and the ‘Imam of Dâr-ul-Ḥijrah’²⁶. His fame

²⁶ Another name for Madinah; literally, ‘home of migration’. (Translator)

spread and scholars from different lands traveled to meet him and learn from him. He established a hadith gathering in the Prophet's Mosque; he conducted it with dignity and decorum — wearing perfume and his best garment, and he would not raise his voice, in veneration for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

The principles upon which his school is founded

Mâlik was known for his knowledge of both fiqh and Hadith, and like Abu Ḥaneefah, he was known to have accepted the validity of the mursal hadith. In his compilation of hadith, *al-Muwattâ'*, he related a number of mursal hadiths. The principles upon which his school is founded are the same as those of the other Imams: The Qur'an, the Sunnah, *ijmâ'* (consensus), and *qiyâs* (analogy); however, he added two more proofs that he recognized: the practice of the people of Madinah and *al-Maṣâliḥ al-Mursalah*.²⁷ As for the latter proof, most of the Imams held it as a proof, but as for the former, he held the practice of the people of Madinah to indicate the Prophet's Sunnah, whether in action or in situation. For their practice to be considered a proof, he stipulated that they would have to agree upon it and it would have to be a practice that they had inherited, from generation to generation, extending back to the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He believed that the inhabitants of Madinah would not agree to apply a practice unless that practice was legislated, applied by the Companions, approved by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and then inherited by ensuing generations.

²⁷ Actions introduced in order to safeguard the rights of the majority in a given community. (Editor)

According to Imam Mâlik, the practice of the inhabitants of Madinah is a stronger proof than the Aḥād hadith, so if the two were not in agreement, he would give preference to the former. And because of that, Al-Layth ibn Sa'd found fault with Imam Mâlik for having abandoned seventy Sunnah practices that he himself had related in *al-Muwattâ'*. The other Imams and scholars did not agree with Imam Mâlik in that view; scholars continued to argue with him regarding the validity of that proof, and among them was Imam Shâfi'ee. Ibn Ḥazm put forward perhaps the most famous argument against the practice of the inhabitants of Madinah (as a proof), in *al-Ihkâm fee Uṣool al-Aḥkâm*; he offered many cogent arguments. Ibn Ḥazm also refuted that proof in different parts of his book *al-Muhallâ*.

Imam Mâlik's School spread throughout the Muslim lands, but most noticeably in Western Africa and in Egypt.

***Al-Muwattâ'*: Its status, hadiths, and commentaries**

Perhaps Imam Mâlik is best known for his book, *al-Muwattâ'*, which (the Caliph) Al-Manṣoor requested him to compile. When Al-Manṣoor performed Ḥajj, he asked Imam Mâlik to write a comprehensive book of knowledge that would avoid both the strictest judgments of Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and the most lenient judgments of Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه).

When (the Caliph) Al-Mahdee performed Ḥajj, he heard *al-Muwattâ'*, and ordered for 5000 dinârs to be given to Imam Mâlik and 1000 to his students. Later on, (the Caliph Hâroon) Ar-Rasheed visited him during one of the many Ḥajj journeys he made; he heard *al-Muwattâ'*, desired to hang up the pages of the book on the Ka'bah and to force people to apply it. Imam Mâlik answered, "O leader of

the believers, do not do so, for indeed the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) differed in matters of jurisprudence; they became dispersed throughout the lands, and each one of them was in the right (meaning that each one of them ruled according to the proofs he had and according to the level of his understanding).” Then Ar-Rasheed desisted from carrying out his plans.²⁸

Allah (ﷻ) made people’s hearts to receive *al-Muwattâ’* with praise and acceptance. The most famous Imams who heard *al-Muwattâ’* from Imam Mâlik were Al-Awzâ‘ee, Shâfi‘ee, and Muhammad; Muhammad’s narration is more famous than the rest.

Imam Mâlik was careful to select only authentic hadiths, and it is said that he continued to refine and improve his compilation over a period of forty years. In his introduction on the commentary of *al-Muwattâ’*, As-Suyootî relates that Al-Awzâ‘ee said, “We studied *al-Muwattâ’* with Mâlik in forty days, and he said, ‘A book that I have authored in forty years, you have taken in forty days: how little it is that you understand from it.’”

He organized *al-Muwattâ’* into chapters based on subject matter; for each subject, he first related relevant hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ), and then he related relevant saying from the Companions and Tâbi‘oon. Those sayings were mostly from the inhabitants of Madinah, simply because Mâlik himself had never left Madinah. After relating a hadith, Mâlik would often explain the meanings of its vocabulary, and sometimes, of its phrases as well. When he related an Aĥâd narration that was not in agreement with the practice of the inhabitants of Madinah, he would point that out.

As for the status of *al-Muwattâ’* among the different compilations of hadith, the opinions of the scholars differ. Ibn al-

²⁸ This incident is related by Abu Na‘eem, in *al-Hilyah*.

‘Arabi, the majority of Mâlikee scholars and others — these hold that its status is above that of *Ṣaḥeeḥ* Bukhari and *Ṣaḥeeḥ* Muslim. Their preference is based on Imam Mâlik’s status as a scholar and on his efforts in seeking out authentic narrations, not to mention the forty years he spent in authoring the book.

Meanwhile, Adh-Dhaylawee, in *Hujjat Allâh il-Bâlighah*, places the two *Ṣaḥeeḥ* compilations and *al-Muwattâ’* together on the highest level.

But the majority of Hadith scholars rank *al-Muwattâ’* at a level lower than *Ṣaḥeeḥ* Bukhari and *Ṣaḥeeḥ* Muslim. Ibn Ḥajr explains why: “Mâlik’s book is authentic in his view and in the view of those who follow him based on his acceptance of the mursal and munqaṭi’ narrations...” And it is well known that the scholars of Hadith give no consideration to the mursal and munqaṭi’ narrations; no wonder, therefore, that they give *al-Muwattâ’* a ranking lower than that of *Ṣaḥeeḥ* Bukhari and *Ṣaḥeeḥ* Muslim.

Proponents of the first two views argue that all of those narrations that are *Mursal* or *Munqaṭi’* in *al-Muwattâ’*, have linked chains in other narrations; from that angle, then, it is authentic in its entirety.

Al-Ḥâfidh ibn ‘Abdul-Barr, as well as others, have found linked chains to those narrations that are disconnected in *al-Muwattâ’*. Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr wrote,

“On each occasion that he (Mâlik) did not link a chain — when he said, ‘It has reached me’ or ‘... from a trustworthy source’ — the hadith has a linked chain in a narration not related by Mâlik. This is true for the sixty-four times that that happened, except for four, which are unknown.”

And even regarding those four hadiths, Shaykh Ash-Shinqeṭi, in *Idâ’atil Ḥâlik*, relates that Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâḥ found linked chains for

them. As-Suyooṭī supported that, saying:

“*Al-Muwattâ’* is authentic in its entirety, without exception. The *Mursal* narration, according to Mâlik and other Imams, is a valid proof without condition. And according to us, it is a valid proof when it is strengthened by other narrations, and every *Mursal* narration found in *al-Muwattâ’* is strengthened by one or more narrations.”²⁹

Yet Ibn Ḥazm claimed that *al-Muwattâ’* contains weak hadiths; however, perhaps he claimed they were weak in relation to the chains that were linked for the same hadiths. As for the chains related by Mâlik, they are, in his view, authentic. And is it not better to take his view on those that he related from, since he knew them best?

There are approximately thirty different copies of *al-Muwattâ’*, based on those who narrated it from Imam Mâlik. Here are the most famous of those: *Muwattâ’ Yahyâ ibn Yahyâ al-Laythee*, *Muwattâ’ ibn Bukayr*, *Muwattâ’ Abu Muṣ‘ab*, *Muwattâ’ ibn Wahb*, *Muwattâ’ al-Imam Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan*. Each copy differs slightly in the order of hadiths, and some even contain additions, all depending on when each narrator related from Mâlik, since as we have seen earlier, he continually strove to improve the book. Hence it is not strange that he should have added hadiths at times, removed some hadiths at other times, depending on his view at the time.

Because of the different copies, scholars differ as to the number of hadiths found in *al-Muwattâ’*. Abu Bakr al-Abharee gave the following account:

— Narrations from the Prophet (ﷺ), the Companions, and the Tâbi‘oon: 1720

— Those that have linked chains: 600

²⁹ *Sharḥ al-Muwattâ’*, p. 8.

- *Mursal* narrations: 222
- *Mawqoof* narrations: 613
- Narrations specifically from the Tâbi'oon: 285

Of among the various copies of *al-Muwattâ'*, that of Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan is the most famous, especially in Makkah, Madinah, and India. Most of the hadiths in his version of *Muwattâ'* are taken from Imam Mâlik (1005); some are taken from Abu Ḥaneefah (13); some from Abu Yoosuf (4); and the rest from others.

Scholars of hadith continue to study and analyze *al-Muwattâ'*, yet Al-Ḥâfīdh ibn 'Abdul-Barr remains best-known for his two explanations — *at-Tamheed Lima fil-Muwattâ' min al-Ma'ânee wal-Asâneed* and *al-Istidhkâr fee Sharḥ Madhâhib 'Ulamâ' al-Amşâr*. Of the former explanation, Ibn Ḥazm said, "On the fiqh of Hadith, I know of nothing that is even similar to it, let alone better than it." The following is a list of some of the scholars who explained *al-Muwattâ'*: Al-Ḥâfīdh Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-'Arabi (543 H), Al-Jalâl as-Suyooṭi (911 H), Az-Zarqâni al-Mâlīkee (1122), Adh-Dhaylawee (1180 H), Ash-Shaykh 'Ali al-Qâri al-Makkee (1014 H), and Al-Laknawi (1304 H) in his book *at-Ta'leeq al-Mumajjad 'Ala Muwattâ' al-Imam Muhammad*.

Many scholars have also summarized *al-Muwattâ'*, among whom are Abu Sulaymân al-Khaṭṭâbi (388 H), Ibn 'Abdul Barr (463 H), and Ibn Rasheeq al-Qayrawâni (463 H). And many other books have been written to explain particular aspects of *al-Muwattâ'*, all of which points to the high regard in which the scholars held it.

Is *al-Muwattâ'* a book of Fiqh or a book of Hadith?

Scholars agree that Imam Mâlik's *Muwattâ'* is the earliest extant book of Hadith from the second century. Throughout the

centuries, if scholars of Hadith listed the various books of Hadith, they would always include *al-Muwattâ'* in that list, though they may have differed as to its ranking among the books of Hadith. Yet in recent times, Dr. 'Ali Ḥasan 'Abdul-Qâdir makes a claim in his book, *Nadhratun 'Aâmah fee Târeekh al-Fiqh al-Islâmi*, that Imam Mâlik's *Muwattâ'* is a book of fiqh, not Hadith.

Dr. 'Ali's reasoning

Dr. 'Ali claims that — with the exception of *al-Majmoo'*, by Zayd — *al-Muwattâ'* is the first book of fiqh that has reached us. He claims that it is not a book of Hadith, and other than those of West Africa (who follow the Mâlîkee School), no one gives it a ranking similar to that of the Six Books. He states that it was their piety that led scholars of recent times to include it in the list of other authentic compilations. He then stresses that it is not a book of Hadith in the true sense, because its author's purpose was not simply to gather authentic hadiths; rather, it was to discuss and study fiqh, customs, and actions according to the consensus of the people of Madinah; Imam Mâlik mentions rulings of the other Imams in a given issue as a lead in to mentioning his conforming view, yet were he to speak in the way of the Hadith scholars, he would mention a hadith, not an Islamic ruling. He then goes on to say,

“From here we see that Mâlik was not a scholar of Hadith and that the Hadith was not his only basis, otherwise he would not have taken the practice of the inhabitants of Madinah as a proof. Although he was not a true muḥaddith, he was able to benefit greatly the scholars of Hadith ... The chain of narrators was not an indispensable condition for him, and that can be seen in *al-Muwattâ'* itself, in the many mursal narrations.”

Dr. 'Ali's claims, which he mentioned at length, can be summarized in two points:

1. That Mâlik was not a *muḥaddith*.
2. That *al-Muwattâ'* is not a book of Hadith, but a book of fiqh.

Answering those claims:

1. That Mâlik was not a *muḥaddith*, a claim that is false and contrary to what scholars agree upon. Imam Mâlik was one of the great scholars of Hadith during his time; students and scholars alike would come to him from far-off lands to learn those hadiths that he had gathered.

But he was not only an Imam in Hadith: he was an Imam in fiqh as well. The fiqh scholars of the Tâbi'oon would, for the most part, combine fiqh and Hadith. The argument that he would practice *ijtihâd* when he found no revealed text is one that stems from ignorance, for Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه), one of the greatest narrators of Hadith, would make *ijtihâd* in the same situation. On the other hand, Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), also one of the great narrators of Hadith, was known for not going beyond revealed texts. At any rate, the point here is this: not all who use *ijtihâd* are deprived of having the ranking of a *muḥaddith*; likewise, not every *muḥaddith* abstains from using deduction for those narrations of which he has knowledge. From among the Tâbi'oon, one needs only look at Ath-Thawri and Al-Awzâ'ee, both of whom were scholars of Hadith and fiqh. Yes, there are those to whom Allah (ﷻ) gives both sound memory and understanding.

Dr. 'Ali argues that Imam Mâlik related *mursal* narrations, yet he only did so because his view is that *mursal* narrations are acceptable proofs, and not because he was heedless of chains of narrators. Imam Mâlik himself said, "Perhaps a Shaykh sits with us, narrating hadiths for the greater part of the day, yet we do not take from him a single hadith."

Furthermore, the contemporaries of Mâlik attest to his being an Imam in Hadith. Sufiyân ibn ‘Uyainah said, “Mâlik would convey only authentic narrations of Hadith, and he would only relate from trustworthy people.” Yahyâ ibn Sa‘eed al-Qaṭṭân said, “Mâlik was an Imam in Hadith.” And Ibn Qudâmah said, “In his time, Mâlik had memorized the most.”

2. That *al-Muwattâ’* is not a book of Hadith, a claim that is refuted by the scholars of the different schools, all of whom have held it in great regard over the centuries. Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan, best known for being a student of Abu Ḥaneefah, took great pains in relating *al-Muwattâ’*. Al-Awzâ‘ee, the Imam of a famous school, also related it from Imam Mâlik. And Imam Shâfi‘ee related it from Mâlik. Thus we see both Ḥanafî and Shâfi‘ee scholars alike explaining or summarizing *al-Muwattâ’*. And Mâlikee scholars obviously held it in even higher regard, for it is the book of their Imam.

Were *al-Muwattâ’* merely a book of fiqh, it would not have achieved acclaim from adherents of the different schools. That it is arranged in chapters according to topics of fiqh does not mean that it is not a book of Hadith, for Imam Bukhari did the same in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*. And the claim that Imam Mâlik mentioned the rulings of the Imams does not hold either, for Tirmidhi and Abu Dâwood did the same as well.

Imam Mâlik’s *al-Muwattâ’* does not achieve a ranking as high as that of the Six Books simply because of the many mursal narrations that he related: he ruled that they were acceptable proofs while other Hadith scholars did not agree. So that is what prevented his book from being included among the Six Books. But let us consider the *Musnad* of Imam Aḥmad: all agree that it is a book of Hadith, yet the scholars of Hadith did not rank it as highly as they did the Six Books.

Dr. ‘Ali then confuses the issue, saying that it was the piety of contemporary scholars that led them to include *al-Muwattâ’* in the

list of authentic books. Orientalists often phrase their arguments in this fashion, for what does piety mean in this context? Were not the scholars of the earlier centuries pious? And what does piety have to do with this issue in the first place? And how does that claim hold true when we know that Shâfi‘ee said, “I do not know of a book of knowledge that is more authentic than the book of Mâlik.” (This is not to put down Bukhari and Muslim, for Ibn Şalâh mentions that Shâfi‘ee had said that before Bukhari’s and Muslim’s books appeared.) Shâfi‘ee’s statement clearly shows the high opinion that the scholars of the early generations had for *al-Muwattâ’*.

Imam Ash-Shâfi'ee

(150 H – 204 H)

His life and status as a scholar

He is Abu 'Abdullâh Muhammad ibn Idrees ibn al-'Abbâs ibn Shâfai'; his lineage leads to Qusee and coincides with the Prophet (ﷺ) at 'Abd-Manâf. In the year 150 H, he was born in Gaza, a city in Palestine.

When he was only two years of age, his mother took him to Makkah, where he grew up and studied the Qur'an. He stayed with the tribe of Hudhayl for approximately ten years, studying language and poetry from them, until he eventually became one of the most knowledgeable of people regarding the poetry of Hudhayl. He first studied fiqh with Muslim ibn Khâlîd az-Zinjee, the *Mufti* of Makkah; he then traveled to Madinah, where he studied under Mâlik, reading *al-Muwattâ'* in its entirety under his tutelage. At a very early point, Mâlik developed an appreciation for Imam Shâfi'ee's intelligence and precocious understanding.

Thereafter Imam Shâfi'ee was appointed to work in one of the states in Yemen, and it was there that he was led to Hâroon ar-

Rasheed, accused of giving more than proper preference to the Prophet's family — this happened in 184 H. It was Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan who interceded for him, and finally, Ar-Rasheed was convinced of Imam Shâfi'ee's innocence. Here Imam Shâfi'ee had the opportunity of learning from Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan, so much did he learn from him that he later said, "I left Baghdad, carrying with me a camel-load of knowledge that I received from Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan." He then returned to Makkah, but continued to travel between Iraq and the Ḥijâz, until he finally settled in Egypt, in 199 H. In Egypt, he established his new school of thought, and continued to expand on it until he died in the year 204 H, after having filled the world with knowledge. He had a number of students in both Iraq and Egypt, and after his death, he was acknowledged as an Imam by the hearts of people, acknowledged because of his profound knowledge, intelligence, and understanding — especially regarding Allah's Book, the Prophet's Sunnah, and the sciences and arts of the Arabic language.

His role in defending the Sunnah

Other than his high standing in fiqh, Imam Shâfi'ee is also ranked high by the scholars of Hadith, for it was he who put together the principles and rules regarding the narration of hadiths. He also proclaimed an important view in which he differed with Mâlik and Abu Ḥaneefah: that whenever a hadith is authentic, its chain being linked until it reaches the Prophet (ﷺ), it is obligatory to apply it unconditionally, as opposed to the opinion of Mâlik, who stipulated that the hadith be in concordance with the practice of Madinah's inhabitants, and of Abu Ḥaneefah, who stipulated many conditions. That is why the people of Hadith gave him the title, *Nâṣir-us-Sunnah*, or 'Supporter of the Sunnah'. In all truth and fairness, his books, ar-

Risâlah and *al-Umm*, are among the most valuable of scholarly works written regarding the Sunnah and its role in Islamic legislation. His style was eloquent and forceful, while his proofs were irrefutable. All who write in the sciences of the Sunnah agree that they owe much to Imam Shâfi‘ee for what he wrote. Az-Za‘farâni said, “The people of Hadith were sleeping until Shâfi‘ee woke them up.” Hence the scholars of Hadith venerated Imam Shâfi‘ee, acknowledging his high status as a scholar. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, “Upon the neck of every person whose hand touches an inkstand or pen is the favor of Shâfi‘ee.” He also said, “We did not know ... the abrogating hadith from the abrogated hadith until Shâfi‘ee sat with us.” And ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Mahdee said, “When I saw *ar-Risâlah* by Shâfi‘ee, it amazed me, because I saw the speech of an understanding, eloquent, and sincere man, and so I supplicate for him frequently.”

The foundations of his school

His school is founded on the same proofs as those of the other Imams: applying the Qur’an, the Sunnah, consensus, and analogy, except that his application of the Sunnah was comprehensive of more hadiths than either Mâlik or Abu Ḥaneefah in regard to Aḥâd narrations, and was more restrictive in regard to applying mursal narrations; he rejected their validity as proofs, unless they were related by the greater Tâbi‘oon scholars — for instance, Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayib. Among his other proofs is *istishâb*³⁰.

There is no separate hadith compilation related from Imam Shâfi‘ee other than *Musnad Shâfi‘ee*, related by Abul-‘Abbâs al-

³⁰ It is a proof which involves a presumption of continuity. For instance, based on *istishâb*, once a contract of sale is concluded, it is presumed to remain in force until there is a change established by evidence.

Aṣamm, and *Sunan ash-Shâfi'ee*, related by Aṭ-Ṭaḥâwi. It appears that, as is the case with Abu Ḥaneefah, they are the compilations of his students (of what they learned) from him, and not his own compilations. Unlike scholars of Hadith, he did not sit to relate different narrations, nor did he spend all of his time gathering the different chains of narrations; rather, he was an 'Imam Mujtahid', who scrutinized the Sunnah, searching for anything that could serve as a basis for legislation. He studied Hadith not to fill books, but to serve as a basis for his ijtihâd and fiqh, and that is the difference between Hadith scholars who specialized in gathering hadiths and its chains and the Imams, who were concerned with fiqh and legislation.

Imam Aḥmad (164 H – 281 H)

His life and status as a scholar

*H*e is Abu ‘Abdullāh Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal ash-Shaybāni. He was born in Baghdad in the year 164 H, and it was in Baghdad that he grew up and spent his formative years. As a beginner student of knowledge, he attended the gathering of Abu Yoosuf, Abu Ḥaneefah’s student, and then he moved on to seek out the knowledge of Hadith, the field in which he continued to excel until his memorization of the Sunnah became truly remarkable, and until he became the undisputed Imam of the Sunnah during his time. Imam Aḥmad first studied fiqh from Shāfi‘ee, and then it was Shāfi‘ee who studied Hadith from Imam Aḥmad. Also, both Bukhari and Muslim were his students.

Trustworthiness, piety, the renunciation of material possessions and pleasures, and a steadfast devotion to the truth — Imam Aḥmad was known for all of those qualities. Because of his unwavering adherence to pure Islamic beliefs, he was persecuted by those in authority from the reign of the Caliph Al-Ma’moon until the

reign of Al-Mutawakkil; his noble stance served to inspire the masses during his time, and especially during the centuries that followed. Through Imam Aḥmad's trials, Muslims began to revere him even more and they acknowledged him as an Imam. There are many scholars that testified to Imam Aḥmad's knowledge and status, but the following saying of Shâfi'ee should perhaps suffice here: "I left Baghdad, leaving behind no man who was better, more knowledgeable, more pious, and more righteous than Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal." He died in Baghdad in the year 241 H, and a great number of people attended his funeral.

The principles upon which his school was built

The basic proofs that he recognized are the same as those that the other Imams recognized: The Qur'an, the Sunnah, consensus, and analogy. He would take a great deal from the Sunnah, and this is clear from his own saying: "With me, a *ḍa'eef* hadith is more preferable than the opinion of men." He would follow the views of the Companions to such a great degree that if they had two or three views in a given issue, he would also have two or three views regarding that same issue, and because of that, some scholars did not rank him among the faqeeh Imams — for example Ibn 'Abdul Barr, in *al-Intiqâ'*, and Ibn Jareer aṭ-Ṭabaree, in *Ikhtilâf al-Fuqahâ'*. But the truth about which there is no doubt is that Imam Aḥmad was an Imam, mujtahid, and faqeeh, even though he was best known for his knowledge of Hadith.

The *Musnad*: Its ranking and hadiths

The greatest and most beneficial remnant we have of Imam Aḥmad is his compilation, *al-Musnad*, in which he related

approximately 40,000 hadiths, among which 10,000 are repetitions. The hadiths in *al-Musnad* were chosen from the 750,000 hadiths that he had memorized.

His book was organized into chapters, each chapter consisting of those hadiths that were related by the same Companion. So for example, in spite of the different subjects of various hadiths, he brought together into one chapter all that he related from Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه).

Scholars differed regarding the status of *al-Musnad*. Some, such as Abu Moosa al-Madani, hold that every single hadith in it is authentic and valid as a proof. His view is based on what Imam Aḥmad said in *al-Musnad*: “As for that which you have differed about concerning the Messenger of Allah’s Hadith, resort to it (i.e., to *al-Musnad*); if you find it there, (then it is a valid proof); otherwise, it is not a valid proof.”

Other scholars hold that it consists of “the authentic, the weak, and the fabricated”. Ibn al-Jawzi is one such scholar, for he mentioned twenty-nine hadiths from *al-Musnad* that he ruled to be fabricated. Al-Ḥâfidh al-‘Irâqi added nine more hadiths to that list. When others said that Imam Aḥmad stipulated authenticity to include a hadith in his compilation, Al-Ḥâfidh al-‘Irâqi argued that Imam Aḥmad’s previously quoted saying had a different meaning: that whatever is not found in his compilation, is not an authentic proof, not that everything in it is an authentic proof.

There is a group of scholars — Adh-Dhahabi, Ibn Ḥajr, Ibn Taymiyah, and As-Suyooṭi — that have a view between the previous two: that *al-Musnad* contains authentic and weak narrations that, if anything, are close to being *ḥasan* (acceptable). They argued against the view of Ibn al-Jawzi and Al-‘Irâqi, mentioning supporting and strengthening narrations for those hadiths that are claimed to be

fabrications. They defended *al-Musnad* with a great deal of vigour, and many of their arguments seem like mere excuses: Ibn Ḥajr even had to admit in the end that there were perhaps three or four hadiths in *al-Musnad* that had no basis. Ibn Ḥajr excused Imam Aḥmad, saying that they were among those hadiths that Imam Aḥmad ordered to be expurgated shortly before he died; however, they were mistakenly kept in the compilation.

If one knows that Imam Aḥmad was lenient in hadiths that had to do with virtues and that his son (‘Abdullâh) and his main narrator (Abu Bakr al-Qaṭi‘ee) added weak narrations to *al-Musnad*, then one should know that the correct opinion in this issue has been stated by Ibn al-Jawzi and Al-‘Irâqi. They were from the most skilled of hadith critics, going beyond the chain in their criticism, delving into other fine details. Ibn Ḥajr and As-Suyooti’s defence of Imam Aḥmad seems more like religious partisanship than anything else, for they were trying to defend the Imam of the Sunnah (ﷺ). Either way, Imam Aḥmad’s status is not reduced in the least. In *Minhâj as-Sunnah*, Ibn Taymiyah said:

“Aḥmad’s position in *al-Musnad* was not to relate from those whom he knew to be liars, even though that consisted of the *ḍa‘eef*. Then ‘Abdullâh ibn Aḥmad added weak narrations to *al-Musnad*; Abu Bakr al-Qaṭi‘ee did the same. Many of those additions were fabricated hadiths, and so the uninitiated may think that these were the narrations of Aḥmad in his *Musnad*.”

Imam Bukhari

(194 H – 256 H)

*H*e is Abu ‘Abdullâh Muhammad ibn Ismâ‘eel ibn Ibrâheem ibn al-Mugheerah ibn Burdazbah al-Ja‘fee, the Imam of Hadith scholars and the undisputed Shaykh of Hadith scholars during his time. On Friday, the 13th of Shawâl, 194 H, he was born in Bukhara³¹. Still not ten years of age, he began to memorize hadiths, and he continued to pursue that line of study, traveling to the most famous of Islamic centres known for Hadith studies. He said about himself, “I went to Syria, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula two times each; to Basra four times; I stayed in the Ḥijâz for six years, and I cannot count the number of times I entered Baghdad and Kufa with the scholars of Hadith.”

Whenever Imam Bukhari heard of another Hadith scholar, he would travel to him, test his knowledge, and learn from him; his memory and piercing insight into the defects of chains and texts were remarkable. Maḥmood ibn an-Nâdhir ibn Sahl Shâfi‘ee said, “I met with the scholars of Basra, Syria, the Ḥijâz, and Kufa, and whenever Muhammad ibn Ismâ‘eel al-Bukhari was mentioned, they would raise his status above their own.”

³¹ In what is now known as Uzbekistan. (Editor)

Bukhari once heard his Shaykh Is-ḥâq ibn Râhawai say to his students, “Would that you compiled a summarized book containing the authentic Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).” Bukhari later said, “That appealed to my heart, and I began to gather the compilation of the authentic.” And he continued to compile and refine that book for sixteen labor-filled years — he would add a hadith that compilation only after taking a ritual shower, performing two units of prayer, then performing *Istikhârah*³². That the chain of narrators was linked, that the narrators were known for both their trustworthiness and their sound memory, and that each narrator is established to have met the one he related from (it was not enough for the two to have lived at the same time; their meeting had to be established) — all of these conditions had to be fulfilled. And as such, it became the first book of Sunnah to lay down so many precise and stringent conditions. Not only did he discard the weak hadith from his compilation, but the *ḥasan* (acceptable) one as well.

Imam Bukhari organized the chapters of his book according to subjects in fiqh; he would often break up a hadith into two sections, mentioning each section in the appropriate chapter. With repetitions, Ibn Ḥajr (*Fath al-Bâri*) counted 7398 hadiths. And without those hadiths that were *mu‘alliq*, *mutâbi‘*, *mawqoof*,³³ or repetitions, he counted 2602 hadiths. After having completed and refined his compilation, Imam al-Bukhari presented it to Aḥmad, Ibn Mu‘een, Ibn al-Madeeni, and other Imams of Hadith; with the exception of four hadiths (in it), they all bore witness to its authenticity. And even regarding those four hadiths, Al-‘Uqaylee said, “The opinion to be

³² Asking Allah to guide him in making the correct decision.

³³ *Mu‘alliqât*, *mutâbi‘ât*, and *mawqoofât*, are three kinds of narrations that are not always considered to be independent, integral entries of Imam Bukhari’s *Ṣaḥeeḥ*. A *mawqoof* narration, for instance, consists of a saying that is ascribed, not to the Prophet (bpuh), but to a Companion. (Translator)

taken in this matter is that of Bukhari.” When he allowed for the (compilation of the) book to be made known, it was instantly received with praise; as many as 100,000 people heard it from him, and so copies of it were distributed throughout Muslim lands. Scholars dedicated their time to studying it, explaining it, and summarizing it. Adh-Dhahabi said, “As for the authentic compilation of Bukhari, it is the noblest and best of Islamic books, coming second only to Allah’s Book...”

Al-Hâfidh ibn Hâjr criticized 110 of the hadiths in *Şaḥeeḥ* Bukhari; those criticisms, however, even if they were justified, do not in any way decrease those hadiths to a level lower than authentic (*şaḥeeḥ*). For example, some scholars say that one of Bukhari’s hadiths is mursal, when it is mursal in appearance only; in reality, the scholars of Hadith know it to be connected. This is an example of the kind of hadith from *Şaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari* that is criticized.

The scholars of hadith have ruled that approximately 80 of the narrators found in *Şaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari* are weak; yet they were Imam Bukhari’s teachers — he was the one who sat with them and knew their qualities as well as their hadiths. One realizes that any criticism of *Bukhari* — whether in the text or the chains — has no effect whatsoever on the value of the book, for consensus has been established — the scholars have received it with acceptance, the majority of them agreeing that it is the most authentic book after Allah’s Book.

Imam Bukhari died in the year 256 H. Scholars of Islam have paid attention to no book — except the Qur’an — as they have to *Şaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*. Commentaries, summaries, biographies of its narrators — countless such books have been written. As the author of *Kashf adh-Dhunoos* said, the number of commentaries alone is eighty two. The most famous of those commentaries are four: *At-Tanqeeḥ*, by Imam Badr-ud-Deen az-Zarkashee (794 H); the best,

most complete, and most famous of those commentaries, *Fath al-Bâri*, by Ibn Hajar (852 H); *Umdat ul-Qâree*, by Al-'Allâmah al-'Uyainee al-Hanafee (855 H); and *at-Tawsheeh*, by Jalâl-ud-Deen as-Suyooti (911 H).

Imam Muslim

(204 H – 261 H)

One of the most famous Imams of hadith, he is Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayri an-Naysâboori, born in 204 H, in Nishapur.³⁴ As is the custom with most great scholars, he began his studies when he was young and traveled to many lands to seek knowledge — Iraq, the Ḥijâz, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. He studied under the scholars of those lands, among whom were the teachers of Bukhari. He had a great love for Bukhari, holding him in high regard, which is perhaps why he emulated him in writing a compilation of authentic hadiths; however, there occurred an estrangement between the two in their final years. Imam Muslim died in Nishapur in 261 H.

He authored *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, which, along with *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*, ranks as the most authentic book — after the Qur'an. Yet most scholars give preference to the compilation of Bukhari, and for a number of reasons:

1. Bukhari stipulated that a narrator had to have met the one he narrated from; it was not enough that they merely be contemporaries, whereas that was enough for Muslim.

³⁴ A city in Khorasan, Persia (now Iran). (Editor)

2. The precision of Imam Bukhari, for his book contains many deductions in jurisprudence, deductions that are not found in Imam Muslim's compilation.

3. Bukhari's circumspection when it came to accepting narrators; the scholars of Hadith have criticized only eighty of his narrators, and even the ruling regarding them is open to argument. The scholars of hadith have criticized 160 of Muslim's narrators. Regarding the eighty narrators criticized in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*, Imam Bukhari did not relate hadiths from them often; furthermore, most of them were his teachers, about whom he knew more than did those that came after him.

4. Compared to Muslim, very few of Bukhari's hadiths were criticized for having hidden defects. In this regard, the former was criticized regarding 130 hadiths, while the latter was criticized regarding only seventy-eight.

For the above-mentioned reasons, most scholars rank *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari* above *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, and yet they all agree that Imam Bukhari holds a higher status than Imam Muslim in the science of Hadith — even Imam Muslim acknowledged that. Muslim related from Bukhari, while Bukhari did not relate anything from Muslim.

It is true, however, that Muslim's book is superior to that of Bukhari in certain aspects — aspects that have more to do with the design of the book than anything else. For example, Muslim would not separate a hadith into two parts, nor would he repeat the mention of a chain; rather, he mentioned all that was related about a hadith together in a single chapter, and that makes it an easier study for a student than *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*. Also, Imam Muslim wrote an invaluable introduction in which he explained both the reasons that prompted him to compile *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* and the methodology he followed in doing so.

Not counting repetitions, *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* contains 4000 hadiths; counting repetitions, it contains 7275 hadiths. Many notable scholars wrote commentaries on *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*. The author of *Kashf adh-Dhunoon* mentioned fifteen commentaries, the most famous of them having been authored by Imam Al-Ḥâfidh Abu Zakariyah Yahyâ ibn Sharaf an-Nawawi ash-Shâfi'ee (676 H). A number of scholars summarized *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, the most famous of those summaries are *Talkhees Kitâb Muslim wa-Sharḥihi*, by Aḥmad ibn 'Umar al-Qurtubee (656 H); and the summary of Al-Ḥâfidh Zaki ad-Deen 'Abdul-'Adheem al-Mundhree (656 H).³⁵

³⁵ *Tahdheeb al-Asmâ'*, by An-Nawawi, 2/89; and *Miftâḥ as-Sunnah*, p. 46.

Imam An-Nasâ'i and his *Sunan* (215 H — 303 H)

*H*e is Abu 'Abdur-Raḥmân Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Khurasâni, Al-Ḥâfidh. During his time, he was an Imam both in Hadith and in judging the character and reliability of narrators. In the year 215 H, he was born in Nasâ, a famous city in Khorasan. He studied under the scholars of hadith in Khorasan, the Ḥijâz, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Palestine and the Arabian Peninsula. He was not only skilled in the sciences of hadith, but he was also pious and dutiful in his own life. So knowledgeable was he in hadith, Adh-Dhahabi said that he had memorized more than even Imam Muslim. In 303 H, he died — may Allah have mercy upon him — in Ramlah, Palestine.

Nasâ'i first authored *Sunan al-Kubrah*, a book that consisted both of authentic and defective narrations. He then shortened its length (*Sunan aṣ-Ṣughrah*), calling it *al-Mujtabâh*, a compilation that has no superior in ranking other than *Ṣaḥeḥ al-Bukhari* and *Ṣaḥeḥ Muslim*. From among the different *Sunan* compilations, it contains the smallest number of weak narrations. In a short volume entitled *Zahr ar-Ribâ 'Alal-Mujtabâ*, Al-Jalâl as-Suyooṭi explained Nasâ'i's *Sunan*. A Ḥanafî scholar, Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Hâdi as-Sindee

(1138 H), also wrote a commentary, limiting himself to explaining only that which the reader and student needed in order to pronounce each word correctly and to understand difficult vocabulary.

Imam Abu Dâwood and his *Sunan* (202 H – 275 H)

*H*e is Sulaymân ibn al-Ash'ath ibn Is-hâq al-Asdee as-Sijjistâni.³⁶ He was born in 202 H and in order to seek out knowledge, he traveled to Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Khorasan. He wrote hadiths from the scholars of those regions, taking from the teachers of Bukhari and Muslim — for example, Imam Aḥmad, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Qutaybah ibn Sa'eed, and others. Among others, he also studied from An-Nasâ'i. The scholars praised him for his memory, knowledge, understanding, piety, and righteousness. Al-Ḥâkim Abu 'Abdullâh said of him, "Without a doubt, Abu Dâwood was the Imam of the people of Hadith in his time." In 275 H, he died in Basra — may Allah have mercy on him. He had to choose which hadiths to put in his *Sunan*, and from his stock of 500,000 hadiths, he ended up selecting 4800. He limited them to those hadiths that had to do with jurisprudence, thus making him the first compiler from the authors of the *Sunan* and the two *Ṣaḥeeḥ* collections to compile a book specifically for rulings in jurisprudence. His *Sunan* comprises of those hadiths upon which

³⁶ His name means that he came from Sagestan, in Afghanistan. (Editor)

jurists based their rulings, which is perhaps why Sulaymân al-Khaṭṭâbi said in *Ma'âlim as-Sunan*:

“Know — may Allah have mercy on you — that the *Sunan* of Abu Dâwood is a noble book — no book like it has been written regarding the knowledge of our Religion. It has been received with acceptance by the people and has become a judge, ruling between the different groups of scholars... Most of the people of Khorasan are attached to the book of Muhammad ibn Ismâ'eel (Bukhari) and that of Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjâj, and those who follow them, in terms of gathering the authentic based on their conditions ... except that the book of Abu Dâwood paves the way better (for students and scholars) and contains more fiqh. And the book of Abu 'Eesâ (Tirmidhi) is also a good book.”

Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâḥ related the following, in which Abu Dâwood himself explained the principles upon which he compiled his book:

“I mentioned in it that which is authentic, or similar to it, or close to it. Whenever my book contains something that is extremely weak, I have pointed that out. If I say nothing, then the hadith is acceptable, and some of the hadiths are more authentic than others.”

Ibn Mundah said, “If there was a chapter for which he could find nothing else, he would relate a narration that had a weak chain, because he considered that to be stronger than the opinions of people.”

Many scholars have explained his *Sunan*, such as Al-Khaṭṭâbi (388 H), Quṭb-ud-Deen al-Yamaneeh Shâfi'ee (752 H), Shihâb-ud-Deen ar-Ramlee (844 H). Al-Ḥâfidh al-Mundharee (656 H) summarized *Sunan Abu Dâwood*, and then Ibn al-Qayyim (751 H) refined that summary. Sharaf-ul-Ḥaqq al-'Adheem Âbâdi also explained the *Sunan*, calling his explanation, '*Awn al-Ma'bood*. A contemporary scholars, Maḥmood Khaṭṭâb as-Sabkee wrote an explanation of *Sunan* called *Sharḥ Mustafeed*.

Imam At-Tirmidhi and his *Jâmi'* (209 H — 270 H)

*H*e is Abu 'Eesâ Muhammad ibn 'Eesâ ibn Soorah ibn as-Salamee at-Tirmidhi. He was born in Termez³⁷ in the year 209 H. In *Muqaddimah Tayseer al-Wuṣool*, Ibn ad-Dabee' ash-Shaybâni stated that Tirmidhi was born in the year 200 H. He studied hadith from many scholars, among whom were the following: Qutaybah ibn Sa'eed, Is-hâq ibn Moosa, Sufiyân ibn Wakee', and Muhammad ibn Ismâ'eel al-Bukhari.

He traveled throughout the Muslim lands, learning from scholars in Khorasan, Iraq, and the Hijâz, until he became an Imam in Hadith; and in terms of his character, he was known for his piety, righteousness, and trustworthiness. Abu Ya'âlâ al-Khaleeli stated, "It is agreed upon that he is trustworthy, and enough to establish his trustworthiness is the fact that the Imam of the Hadith scholars, Muhammad ibn Ismâ'eel al-Bukhari, would depend on him and accept (hadiths) from him." In the year 279 H, he died — may Allah have mercy on him — in Termez.

³⁷ A city in Uzbekistan. (Editor)

Tirmidhi authored his compilation, *al-Jâmi'*, organizing it according to the different chapters of fiqh; it consists of the authentic, the acceptable, and weak (hadiths). Each hadith is graded, and if a hadith is weak, he explains why. In each issue for which he establishes a chapter, he clarifies the views of the Companions and the prominent scholars of different regions.

Many scholars have written commentaries on *al-Jâmi'*, such as Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi (543 H), Al-Jalâl as-Suyooti, Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbali (795 H), and 'Abdur-Raḥmân al-Mubâarakfoori al-Hindee (1353 H), who titled his commentary, *Tuḥfatul-Aḥwadhee*.

Imam Ibn Mâjah and his *Sunan* (207 H – 273 H)

*H*e is Al-Ḥâfīdh Abu ‘Abdullâh ibn Yazeed ibn Mâjah. He was born in 207 H. He continued to seek out the knowledge of hadith, learning from the companions of Mâlik and Layth ibn Sa’d. Many are those who related from him. Abu Ya’lâ al-Khaleeli al-Qizweeni said: “He was a scholar in this matter and the author of many books, such as *at-Târeekh* and *as-Sunan*. He traveled to the two Iraq’s, Egypt, Syria and Palestine.” Ibn Katheer said, “He is the author of the famous *Sunan*, a book that points to his knowledge, practice, depth, research, and to his following of the Sunnah, both in the foundations of Islam and in jurisprudence.” His compilation, *Sunan*, consists of 4000 hadiths; all of them, save a few, are acceptable. He died — may Allah have mercy on him — in the year 273 H.

The ranking of his Sunnah

Many of the earlier scholars, as well as some of the later ones, considered there to be five principal compilations of the Hadith: Bukhari, Muslim, Nasâ’i, Abu Dâwood, and Tirmidhi; however,

seeing the benefit of Ibn Mâjah's book (especially in fiqh), some of the later scholars added Ibn Mâjah to that list. The first to do so was Al-Ḥâfīdh Abu al-Faḍl Muhammad ibn Ṭâhir al-Maqdasee (507 H); some demurred, expressing their view that the sixth book should be that of ad-Dârimee. They argued that Ibn Mâjah related some hadiths that were narrated by men who had been accused of lying and stealing hadiths. Meanwhile, others held that the sixth book should be *al-Muwattâ'*, because of its authenticity and importance. Of the four *Sunan*, that of Ibn Mâjah is the lowest in status.

Many have explained his *Sunan*: two notable examples being Muhammad ibn ad-Dumayri (808 H), for example, and As-Suyooṭi in *Miṣbâḥ az-Zujâjah 'Alâ Sunan Ibn Mâjah*.

This is what Allah (ﷻ) helped me to write; to Him belongs all praise, in the beginning and at the end. O Allah, send prayers and salutations upon Muhammad, his family, and his Companions. And all praise is for Allah, Lord of all that exists.

Glossary of Islamic terms¹

<i>Âḥād</i>	آحاد	A category of hadith describing narrations that are related by one or two narrators who in turn related it from one or two narrators until the chain ends at the Prophet (ﷺ), or a narration that is related by a group of narrators who constitute a number that is still fewer than the minimum requirement for the mutawâtir narration
' <i>Ajwah</i>	عجوة	A specific variety of dates that come from Madinah
' <i>Aṣr</i>	عصر	Mid-afternoon; the obligatory prayer at that time
<i>Âthâr</i>	آثار	Lit. remains, traces, all narrations, regardless of whether they are related from the Prophet (ﷺ), from the Companions, or from the tâbi'oon

¹ This Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (i.e. is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

<i>Bait al-Maqdis</i>	بيت المقدس	The Islamic term for Jerusalem
<i>Bid'ah</i>	بدعة	Innovation
<i>Da'eef</i>	ضعيف	A grade of hadith: weak
<i>Da'wah</i>	دعوة	Calling people to accept and embrace Islam
<i>Dinar (deenâr)</i>	دينار	A gold coin; a unit of currency
<i>Dirham</i>	درهم	A silver coin; a unit of currency
<i>Eemân</i>	إيمان	Faith; belief in all the six pillars of the creed of Islam
<i>Faqeeh</i>	فقيه	Scholar of jurisprudence
<i>Fatwa</i>	فتوى	Religious decision or decree
<i>Fiqh</i>	فقه	Jurisprudence
<i>Ghareeb</i>	غريب	A grade of hadith: Lit. 'strange' or 'unusual'
<i>Hadith</i>	حديث	The collected sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law
<i>hadith (hadeeth)</i>	حديث	A saying or action of Prophet Muhammad that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
<i>Hâfidh</i>	حافظ	The one who has memorized (the Qur'an)': an honorific title
<i>Hajj (hajj)</i>	حج	The major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba at Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his/her lifetime
<i>Halal (halâl)</i>	حلال	Permitted according to Islamic law

<i>Harâm</i> (<i>ḥarâm</i>)	حرام	Forbidden according to Islamic law
<i>Ḥasan</i>	حسن	A grade of hadith: acceptable
<i>Ḥikmah</i>	حكمة	Lit. wisdom; here it refers to the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad
<i>Ijmâ'</i>	إجماع	Consensus: a method of deriving rulings in jurisprudence
<i>Inshâ' Allah</i>	إن شاء الله	Allah willing
<i>Ijtihâd</i>	إجتهد	To use one's knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to derive rulings on matters not specifically mentioned in either source of Islamic law
<i>Isnâd</i>	إسناد	The chain of narration through which a hadith can be traced back to the Prophet (ﷺ)
<i>Jayyid</i>	جيد	A grade of hadith: good
<i>Jibreel</i>	جبريل	The Angel Gabriel
<i>Jihad</i> (<i>jihâd</i>)	جهاد	Struggle or striving for the cause of Allah or His religion
<i>Jizyah</i>	جزية	A tax levied on the people of the Scriptures when they are under the protection of a Muslim government
<i>Kaaba</i> (<i>ka'bah</i>)	الکعبة	The House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel
<i>Khabr</i>	خبر	Lit. news, report: a narration of any kind
<i>Maghrib</i>	مغرب	Sunset; the obligatory prayer at that time

<i>Mahr</i>	مهر	Obligatory marriage gift presented by the groom to the bride, and a necessary stipulation of the marriage contract
<i>Ma'roof</i>	معروف	Lit. act(s) of kindness; in Islamic discourse it refers to all that Islam ordains
<i>Maṣāliḥ al-Mursalah</i>	مصالح المرسلة	Actions introduced in order to safeguard the rights of the majority of the people in a community
<i>Al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm</i>	المسجد الحرام	The Sacred Mosque in Makkah where the Kaaba is situated
<i>Mawqoof</i>	موقوف	Lit. 'restricted': a category of hadith that is actually not concerning a saying or action of the Prophet (ﷺ), but rather concerns sayings or actions of the Companions
<i>Mihrâs</i>	مهراس	Originally, a large rock hollowed out so as to form a basin to hold water
<i>Mu'adḍal</i>	معضّل	A category of hadith: a narration whose chain is missing two narrators or more
<i>Muḍtarib</i>	مضطرب	A category of hadith in which the different narrations of the same hadith differ, either in the text or the chain, without the possibility of preferring one narration to the others, simply because they are all equal in their authenticity and in the fact that they are related by trustworthy narrators

<i>Mufasssir</i>	مفسر	One who engages in tafseer, i.e., one who (pl: <i>mufasssiroon</i>) interprets the Qur'an
<i>Mufti</i>	مفتي	A learned person qualified to issue a derived ruling from revealed sources
<i>Muḥaddith</i>	محدث	One who memorizes and relates hadiths; one who studies hadiths
<i>Mujtahideen</i>	مجتهدين	Scholars who use their knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to derive rulings on matters not specifically mentioned in either source of Islamic law; i.e., they practice <i>ijtihād</i>
<i>Al-Munkar (1)</i>	المنكر	Lit. something disavowed; abominable act(s); in Islamic discourse it refers to all that Islam has forbidden
<i>Munkar (2)</i>	منكر	A category of hadith which is related by only one narrator, who is neither upright nor precise
<i>Munqaṭi'</i>	منقطع	A category of hadith: a narration in which one narrator — who is not a Companion — is missing, or if an obscure narrator is mentioned
<i>Mursal</i>	مرسل	A category of hadith: a narration that a <i>tābi'ee</i> ascribes to the Prophet (ﷺ) without mentioning the Companion that he took it from
<i>Musnad</i>	مسند	A compilation (made by his student) of the hadiths related by an Imam
<i>Mustalah ul-Hadeeth</i>	مصطلح الحديث	Hadith criticism

<i>Mutawâtir</i>	متواتر	A category of hadith describing narrations that are related by a group of upright and trustworthy narrators who also related from a group of upright and trustworthy narrators, and so on, until the narration ends at the Prophet (ﷺ)
<i>Qeerât</i>	قيراط	Lit., an amount of gold equal to three grains of wheat (i.e., a carat)
<i>Qiblah</i> (<i>qiblah</i>)	قبة	The bearing from the Kaaba to any point on Earth; the direction that all Muslims must face in prayer
<i>Qiyâs</i>	قياس	Analogy: a method of deriving rulings in jurisprudence
<i>Şâ'</i>	صاع	A measurement roughly equivalent to 3 kg
<i>Şaheeh</i>	صحيح	A grade of hadith: sound or authentic
<i>Shâdh</i>	شاذ	A category of hadith in which a trustworthy narrator contradicts the narration of one who is more trustworthy
<i>Shaykh</i>	شيخ	Teacher, mentor; scholar
<i>Sharia</i> (<i>shari'ah</i>)	شريعة	Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah
<i>Aş-Şuffah</i>	الصفحة	A section of the Prophet's Mosque made into a 'hostel' for poor, single Muslim men and youths
<i>Sunnah</i>	سنة	The practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad, that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law

<i>Tâbi'oon</i> (sing. <i>tâbi'ee</i>)	تابعون	Those who knew or met any of the Companions and transmitted hadiths from them
<i>Tadlees</i>	تدليس	Any form of deception, whether innocent or otherwise, when relating a narration
<i>Tafseer</i>	تفسير	Interpretation, explanation or exegesis (<i>usu.</i> of the Qur'an)
<i>Tahiyât</i>	تحيات	Lit. greeting: a formula recited in the sitting position of the prayer that contains words that indicate the glorification of Allah, His eternal existence, His perfection, and His sovereignty
<i>Tasbeeh</i>	تسبيح	The recitation of phrases glorifying Allah; saying <i>Subhân Allâh</i>
<i>Tashahhud</i>	تشهد	The testimony that states that there is none worthy of worship other than Allah, He has no partners, and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His Slave and His Messenger
<i>Tawheed</i>	توحيد	The Oneness of Allah: that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners
<i>'Umrah</i>	عمرة	A minor, non-obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah
<i>Uşool al-fiqh</i>	أصول الفقه	Principles of Islamic jurisprudence
<i>Zakât (zakâh or zakât)</i>	زكاة	Obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth payable by Muslims and to be distributed to other Muslims who qualify as recipients

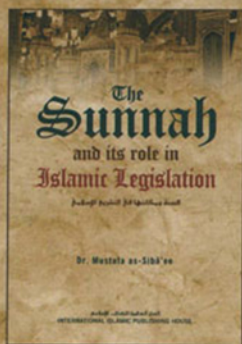
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The Sunnah and its Role in Islamic Legislation is a groundbreaking effort by Dr. Mustafa as-Sibá'ee, for it has a completeness to it in two regards: first, the author manages to cover all topics related to the Sunnah – its status, its legislative force, the stages that led to its recording, just to mention a few – in a comprehensive and organized manner. Second, he presents the views of those that have attacked the Sunnah throughout history, detailing their arguments and then refuting them. Among those groups from the past were the Shi'a and the Mu'tazilah; today, they are mainly the Orientalists and those Muslims that are influenced by them.

Shaykh as-Sibá'ee takes us through the historical development of the Sunnah, from the early stages of revelation to the recording of the Sunnah during the era of the great Imams of Hadith. Throughout that account, he highlights the contributions of the scholars in preserving the Sunnah and cleansing it from fabrications and lies. Shaykh as-Sibá'ee gives a clear account of the revolutionary methods and scholarly principles that were established in order to authenticate historical reports and narrations. The author shows us that the fruits of that endeavor were the preservation of the authentic Sunnah and the birth of the Hadith sciences.

This book has been a perennial source of knowledge for Arabic-speaking students of Islam, for its clarity, readability, and insightful research. Now English-speaking students too have available to them this authoritative treatise on the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).



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