

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE COMPASSIONATE

'MYTHS AND REALITIES OF HADITH -- a critical study'

Written by Akbarally Meherally

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REVIEW: I have read the book MYTHS AND REALITIES OF HADITH written by Brother Akbarally Meherally. I discovered it to be thought-provoking as a critical material in the field of sciences of Hadith and as such I found it to be worthy of reading.
Sd/- D. Fawad
Imam Fawad, Masjid-ul-Haqq, Vancouver, BC, Canada

**PLEASE READ THIS BOOK JUDICIOUSLY AND
WITH AN OPEN MIND TO KNOW THE TRUTH**

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INTRODUCTION

I begin in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful

I seek refuge in Allah from Satan the accursed

Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the last Day, and remembereth Allah much.

Qur'an 33: 21

For a Muslim, the prophetic Hadith is the secondary document after the Qur'an. In this era of technological advancement and communications by cyber space, the texts from various collections of Hadith 1, comprising varying classifications from Maudu (fabricated – forged) to Sahih (authentic – sound) are appearing on the Internet. Now, a non-Muslim can enter into dialogue with a Muslim, quoting the translated text from any hadith that has been published or posted on an Islamic website. After the "published identification number" and/or the "name of the compiler" are quoted, either party can easily assert a point of view or press an agenda, irrespective of the authenticity of the isnad (chain of narrators) of the identified hadith whose chain of transmission could be broken and not reach the Prophet. The majority of internet surfers have little or no background knowledge of the historical facts behind the compilation of the corpus of Hadith and will be more inclined to focus on the matn (content of narrative). It is not an easy task even for learned scholars to establish how reliable were these chains of narrators and/or compilers.

1. The capitalized word denotes the corpus of literature, and "hadith(s)" indicates specific narratives attributed to the Prophet.

The discussion of Hadith on the internet raises larger questions about their classifications and authenticity. Are the sometimes outrageous and bizarre narratives of the Hadith going to be considered normative of Islam by non-Muslims who read them at Islamic websites?

The intention of this in-depth critical study is to defend the True Islam from being maligned and distorted on the internet under the guise of "Prophet's Pronouncements and Acts", when these hadiths are not his but are falsely attributed to him. Readers should keep the intention of this study in mind while reading this work, prepared after years of research on this sensitive subject.

Qur'an and Hadith: Confusion in Cyberspace

Often the revealed verses of the Qur'an and the reported versions of hadiths are quoted on the internet concurrently or simultaneously. Internet surfers are not necessarily educated to know that these two separate "texts" are independent of one another. It is now essential and imperative that the correct terminologies rather than generalized terms are used by Muslim writers to identify hadith texts and the Qur'an. To define "hadith" as "the literal or precise verbatim of the factual sayings, deeds or approvals of the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon all Prophets and their true companions)", could be technically inaccurate and in some instances fundamentally wrong. The numerous and complex classifications of hadiths organize them into categories ranging from authentic to deliberate falsehood. These classifications are not only not apparent but also not available to internet users.

1. The Development of Hadith

The Place of Hadith – Past and Present

Today the corpus of Hadith is to be found far from its original home and context. Hadiths were originally part of the oral tradition of Islam, but after two hundred years of transmission and circulation, they were crystallized into written form. During the earliest periods when the prophet, and his companions and their families were alive, hadiths were contextualized by the orthodoxy of experience and recent memory. But after these generations and several more after them passed, the Hadith became a rigid corpus without the mitigating presence of the earliest believers. Now, several more hundreds of years have passed and the Hadith is still more distant from its origins and from the regional and social concerns that helped to shape many of them.

In the well-circulated book *A Study of the Qur'an*, Brother Mohammed Abdul Malik raises the following concerns:²

To understand the background to the development of Hadith literature one must sift through the history of Islam from about 250 years after the time of our Prophet... during the first century of the Prophet's era no hadiths were written down... Stories circulated by word of mouth but they were never written down because the view was well known that the Prophet and the companions did not want anything of the kind to be done, and so there was a very strong feeling against the writing of any sort of 'Hadith' literature. The so-called 'Science of isnad' -- touchstone of a hadith's authenticity -- has tremendous flaws in it. How, then, can we go on giving credence to something that was not written down and yet which, some 250 years after the fact, Bukhari supposedly managed to trace back to its source (i.e. the Prophet) by establishing all the links in a chain which cannot

² Brother Mohammed Abdul Malik. of 69 Prince of Wales Road, Sutton, Surrey, U.K.
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possibly have been genuinely reconstructed! How he (Bukhari) managed to do this without written records, bridging a gap of about eight generations, and simultaneously establishing not only biographical data but also a compelling analysis of the mental faculties of his subjects defies belief! One can quote several hundred hadiths that not only contradict the Qur'an but also clearly do damage to the Prophet's good name.

Defining Hadith

The word "hadith" literally means; "a saying", "a report", "an account". Within Islamic circles and literature, the term is used to identify a text that is related to a "re-narrated" saying or account of deeds or approval by the Prophet. However, if one was to review the physical process involved in the collection and compilation of these texts, one realizes that these "reported" texts have gone through a process of several "re-narrated" verbal transmissions involving a chain of narrators covering six or more generations. Some of these narrators were reliable and unflinching in their verbal reports and others were not. Often, if the narrator was known as "a man of faith", then it was believed that he could not utter a lie, and this was an essential criterion used by a compiler.

Did Prophet commend the writing of his “sayings”?

There was a lapse of nearly two centuries from the year of the death of the Prophet to the time when most of the hadiths were compiled. This time factor alone is enough to make one question the accuracy of the written hadiths. To say in retrospect that the memories of human beings did not or do not slip away in the course of time would be a hollow and speculative claim. Often it is theorized that Arabs living in the era of the Prophet had far greater capacity than ours today, for memorizing and then later repeating without error what the Prophet had narrated. Not only is this theory unsubstantiated, but also, how can one verify an unwritten text years later? Further, this lapse may in fact have been due to the reluctance of the companions and early followers to write down hadiths. These compilations were not made from the "recorded" documents, because reports in fact confirm that whatever was written by the companions of the prophet, other than the revealed verses of the Qur'an, was effaced during the lifetime of the prophet. The Prophet commanded this effacement, although there are diverse opinions as to why he did so. In the opinions of some scholars, the instructions to efface were of a transitory nature. Others argue that the instructions were never rescinded or withdrawn and that the expressed reasons held good for all times. For example, one hadith speaks of the concern that his ummah (community) may follow the path of the earlier prophets. This could be a reference to the association of the rabbinical teachings called Mishna or Talmud (a secondary document) with the Torah (the primary document) after the death of Prophet Moses, or the inclusion of the Letters (Epistles) with the Gospels in the New Testament after the death of Prophet Jesus. The added official texts might have a distorting or misleading effect on the original message. Indeed, the major schism of the ummah (Islamic brotherhood) that took place in the name of Hadhrat Ali, many years after Ali's departure from this world, had the needed support to uphold the Shia beliefs in the narrated reports, yet there was no such support in the Qur'an. Even the exact number of Imams (twelve) who would come on this earth was recorded. If the apprehensions

expressed by the Prophet had been taken conscientiously and seriously by the Ummah, the followers would not have been divided into sects but would have remained united as commanded by Allah.

And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves. And remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that you become as brothers by His grace...

Q. 3:103

Say: "Allah's guidance is the (only) guidance and we have been directed to submit ourselves to the Lord of the worlds."

Q. 6:71

It is also reported that the prophet permitted the recording of his Sermons (Khutbahs), and in some exceptional cases (e.g. when a person had a weak memory) permitted the writing of his sayings. However the Prophet's command to efface the texts of his sayings was reaffirmed and reenacted by Caliph Mu'awiyah, some thirty years or so after the death of the Prophet, when his attention to the Prophet's command was directed by Zayd ibn Thabit - the Prophet's closet scribe and secretary.

Here is the text that has been recorded in the Sunan of Abu-Dawood under Hadith No. 1635 (3640):

Al-Muttalib ibn Abdullah ibn Hantab said:

"Zayd ibn Thabit entered upon Mu'awiyah and asked him about a tradition. He ordered a man to write it. Zayd said: The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) ordered us not to write any of his traditions. So he erased it."

This narrated incident confirms that there were valid reasons for not recording traditions in addition to the need to keep the recorded texts of the Qur'an and the recorded text of hadiths separate. Caliph Uthman in 650 CE already completed the final compilation of the Qur'an and Mu'awiyah became Caliph in 658 CE. It also confirms that the Prophet forbade the writing of his hadiths. There is nothing to indicate that the command was abrogated or lifted later by the Prophet, as is often suggested and propagated.

In the magazine Al-Basheer of Sept.-Oct. 1994 a feature article appeared; "Recording, Traveling and Isnad of Hadith: From the early years". On page 12 of this magazine there appears a very important and thought provoking text:

Abu Saeed al-Khudri said,

We exerted our best to get the Messenger of Allah to allow us to write his hadith but he refused. (This was recorded by al-Baghdadi in Taqyid.)

There are explanations offered, more than three centuries after the above Hadith was narrated, by scholars like Ramhurmuzi (d. 360 A.H.). Ramhurmuzi writes:

Apparently the prohibition was in the beginning to make their attention to the Qur'an only and to distinguish the recording of the Qur'an from the sunnah (traditions) of the Prophet and to keep things safe from any kind of mixture or confusion.

However, these explanations are not supported by any sayings of the Prophet or by the verses of the Qur'an. The scholar's opening word "Apparently" conveys a kind of presumption and not an acknowledged reality or a historical fact.

“Conjecture can be of no avail against Truth.” (Q. 10:36).

Allah alone knows the Truth. May Allah forgive me if I have erred.

The Recording of the Qur'an – a Striking Contrast

In contrast to the uncertainty surrounding the recording of hadiths, the Prophet not only permitted the recording of the revealed verses of the Qur'an but also personally dictated the revealed texts to scribes who were good in the art of calligraphy. The "pre-recorded" verses of the Revealed Texts (the Qur'an) were collected by the first Caliph of Islam - Abu Bakr, who died within two years of the death of the Prophet. The final compilation of these pre-recorded verses and the making of a definitive canon was undertaken by a commission appointed by the third Caliph Uthman ibn 'Affan. A well-known scribe named Zayd ibn Thabit headed this formal commission. Within twenty-three years of the death of the Prophet, copies made from the definitive canon established by the Commission and approved by the Caliph were distributed to various Islamic centers. One such is preserved in the former Soviet Union. Allah Himself has undertaken to safeguard the revealed verses of the Glorious Qur'an.

**“Verily, We, it is We who have sent down the Qur'an and assuredly, We will guard it (from corruption).”
Q. 15:9**

The verses of hadiths have no such assurance, neither from Allah nor from the Prophet. In fact the Collection of Hadith has not been safeguarded.

2. The Chaos of Category and Classification

Intentional Fabrications

It is an undisputed fact that the compilers of the Hadith did reject a large majority of narrations (the figure runs in hundreds of thousands) as being invented, fabricated, faulty or too weak to be recorded. Here are a few of the major reasons or circumstances for these superfluities.

a) The fabrications were done in order to glorify the beloved Prophet, the elected successors to the Prophet, the chosen family members of the Prophet, and/or their progeny. The fabricators have been reported as saying "We did not speak lies against him (Prophet) but for him instead."³.

b) Various factions attempted to justify and/or propagate their own schools of philosophical thought in the name of the Prophet, e.g. Sufic Orders, Qadariyah, Jabariyah, Rawafid, Ikhwan-as-safa, Mu'tazila, etc. The latter had the support of the 'Abbasid rulers.

c) The ongoing rivalries between the supporters of; Hadhrat Ali, Hadhrat Mu'awiyah and Kharijites who opposed both. The latter also remained in constant conflict with the Umayyads.

d) To instill and indoctrinate strict piety (taqwa) among the believers. The preachers and local leaders who attributed extraordinary deeds and sayings to the Prophet probably believed that the end justified the means. In 'Criticism of Hadith among Muslims with reference to Sunan ibn Maja', (p.41) there are names of narrators who invented hadiths on "the merits of each Sura of the Qur'an" when they found people deserting the Qur'an and occupying themselves with Fiqh (jurisprudence) of Abu Hanifa and Maghazi (battles) of Ibn Ishaq.

e) In order to earn greater fame within the community. The higher the number of hadiths a scholar could memorize, the greater the honour and status he could obtain.

f) Scholars have also noted that the proverbs were attributed to the Prophet.

g) During the advent of Islam there were other tribes living side by side with Muslims whose enmity has been recorded in the Qur'an. Some of them knew from their own scriptures the coming of a Prophet in Arabia ("The Land of Kedar". See Isaiah 42:8-17)). Since the Prophet who had come in Arabia was not a descendant of Isaac, they rejected him. A few bitterly envied him and discredited the Prophet by implanting narrations. Non-Muslim dignitaries, Israelites, produced false documents in the name of Prophet before Caliph 'Umar bin al-Khattab, in order to obtain exemptions from the Jizyah tax that was levied on non-Muslims.⁴

h) In many cases the storytellers were the worst fabricators. They were often caught manufacturing enchanting, highly vivid and totally strange anecdotes (riwayat) of miraculous nature. The narrating storyteller (al-Qussas) would produce these to collect larger rewards from the audiences and earn greater fame in the country. They made an art

³ For details see pg. 41, 'Criticism of Hadith among Muslims with reference to Sunan ibn Maja' by Dr. Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar, published jointly by Ta-Ha Publishers and Al-Qur'an Society, London, England, quoting reference to the source document al-Baith al-Hathith by Ibn Kathir pg. 79

⁴ 'Introduction to the Science of Hadith' by Dr. Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar (page 50), published by Darussalam, Box 22743, Riyadh 11416, Saudi Arabia.

form of the fabrications, manufacturing texts (matn) and chains of narrators. (isnad). When caught in the act, more extravagant lies would often follow.⁵

i) The traditionalists knew that reporting lies in the name of the Prophet was a grave sin, and tried to conceal the real identity of those narrators who were known as the "big liars". They did this by omitting their fathers' names, their grandfathers' names or by mentioning them by their nicknames only. (see the complete details and examples on Ibid., pp. 197 to 202, with a long list of source documents). Scholars agree that calling someone a liar is not "backbiting" as long as it is done in the greater and genuine interest of the Prophet of Allah or to protect Islam.

j) Traditionalists would faithfully record the chain of narrators (isnad), but would deliberately hold back or abridge the actual text (matn) of the saying when the subject was controversial and the related texts were not consistent throughout. The text would then read: "This hadith has been transmitted on the authority of so and so with a slight variation of wording." The details of the variation and the actual spoken words are not mentioned. One would not find such suppression in any one of over 6200 verses of the Holy Qur'an.

The Classifications

One may argue that this wholesale rejection of countless hadiths demonstrates that the early compilers like Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari (d. 256/870), Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri (d. 261/875), Muhammad ibn Isa at-Tirmidhi (d. 279/892), Abu Da'ud as-Sijistani (d. 261/875), Ahmad ibn Shu'ayb an-Nasai (d. 303/915) and Muhammed ibn Majah (d. 273/886) had very strict standards and the majority of dubious or unreliable reports were weeded out. One may further argue that the likelihood of remaining hadiths escaping scrutiny increases as more and more narrations are rejected. The latter rationale is supported by the fact that compiled and published hadiths are "classified" into various categories, by the scholars who have spent years studying the science of Hadith. Within these classifications, dubious hadiths, which should have been rejected, are not removed but organized. Yet there is no consistent method of classification. Thus on the internet a particular narration classified by one Muslim student or writer under a certain category or class is strongly disputed by another. Even the recorded classifications completed by one learned scholar are revised by a subsequent scholar.

There are eighteen classifications within three basic categories of Hadith.

Oral Traditions - The oral statements of the Prophet.

Physical Traditions - The acts or deeds of the Prophet.

⁵ Please read 'Criticism of Hadith among Muslims with reference to Sunan ibn Maja' by Dr. Suhaib Hasan, pg. 106 for details, author's source document is Ikhtisar Ulum al-Hadith by Ibn Kathir, pg. 82.

Approved Traditions - The acts or deeds that were performed in presence of the Prophet. There is also a sub-category of oral statements made by the companions of the Prophet

Below is the list of common classifications used by scholars to identify the various categories of the compiled narrations:

1. Dhai'f (weak) A narration which is not accurate enough to be classified as "sound" or "fair" and hence cannot be used as a basis for the Islamic tradition. There are eight sub-categories of Dhai'f hadith.
2. Majhul (unknown) One of the narrators in the chain is unknown, meaning there is no (jarh or taadil) about him. In other words, he is so unknown that no compiler of the hadiths has passed a judgement about this narrator.
3. Gharib (unfamiliar - strange) The narration sounds unfamiliar and is not reported by others or differs from the versions narrated by others. Even a Sahih (sound) hadith could be Gharib (unfamiliar).
4. Mu'adal (faulty - perplexing) A narration that omits or misses two or more consecutive narrators in the chain, or the text is perplexing.
5. Maqtu (disconnected - severed) A chain that remains incomplete or ends with someone who claims to have met a Companion of the Prophet, or the text begins with the phrase such as "we used to do..."
6. Munqati (disconnected - broken) Similar to either number 2 or 5 above.
7. Mudtarib (confounding) There is a disagreement concerning the source or the narration itself.
8. Mauquf (untraceable - stopped) A narration which is related without transmitting the name of a Companion of the Prophet.
9. Mu'allaq (hanging - faulty) A narrator who omits the entire chain of narrators and quotes the Prophet directly.
10. Mursal (broken chain - hurried) The chain between the first narrator and the Prophet is missing e.g. the first narrator says; "The Prophet said..."
11. Munkar (denounced) A weak narrator whose report goes against another that seems more authentic.
12. Mudraj (interpolated) A narration that has additions to the text of the report by a narrator.

13. Maudu (fabricated - forged) A report that goes against the norms of the sayings of the Prophet, one of the reporters is a liar, or discrepancies are found in the dates of the incident.
14. Musnad (subjective - supported) The chain reaches the Prophet or the narrated report concurs with others.
15. Hasan (fair) A reliable chain but not considered as a totally sound narration.
16. Muttasil (connected) A connected chain that could go up to a Companion or to the Prophet.
17. Maruf (traceable) A traceable chain that could go up to a Companion of the Prophet.
18. Sahih (sound) A narration with an unbroken chain of narrators and the narrators are regarded as the reliable reporters.

After the death of the Prophet "even the decisions of the Shahaba (companions of the Prophet) were recorded as hadith", acknowledges Dr. Khalid Mahmood Shaikh in his book, A Study Of Hadith.⁶

The term As-Sihah As-Sittah (The Six authentic collections of Hadith), is used for the compilations done by Imams/Scholars named; al-Bukhari, Muslim, at-Tirmidhi, Nasai, 'Abu Da'ud and 'Ibn Majah. Today, Muslim scholars have found the collections by the latter scholar ('Ibn Majah) to have defective narrations. The majority of the Shiah reports are of even later date than the early compilations. For the most part they are from the Buyid period of around 454 Hijri.

Companions and Acquaintances

It is an accepted traditional norm to classify the narrators upon the basis of their direct and personal contact with the Prophet or upon the basis of their direct and personal contact with someone who had direct contact with the Prophet. Within the revealed verses of the Qur'an, 9:43-50, Allah has given us an eye-opening example from which we must learn two most important lessons:

A. The Prophet himself could not discern amongst his own people, amongst the people who were living in the same period in the history, or amongst those who had personally met and spoken with him, those who were sincere and those who were "the liars". A group of people who were given consent to stay back and not to join the expedition of Tabuk obtained their exemptions by lying before the Prophet. The Prophet could only detect their lies when the Truth was made manifest by Allah in the above verse. It is fundamentally wrong to place our faith in or to take for granted the prevalent theory that

⁶ Published by IQRA' International Education Foundation, Skokie, IL, 60077, USA (p. 29). One such hadith is quoted later on page 76.

each and everyone who lived contemporaneously with the Prophet was an honest and trustworthy companion.

B. There were limitations to the knowledge of the Prophet. Events that took place around him and in his own time were unknown to him. So, the Prophet cannot necessarily speak of the past, let alone of the future, unless Allah revealed it to him. Should each and every narration thrown at us be defended because it is allegedly identified as an authentic hadith? I do not think so. Many of these texts are based upon weak narrations or spurious reports, and others can be presented out of context or intentionally distorted as we shall see in the following chapters.

A Note on Qudsi (sacred) Hadith

The scholars of Hadith say that Qudsi hadiths are from Allah only as far as the meaning of the text is concerned and they are from the Prophet of Allah as to the actual wordings of these messages. It would be erroneous to attribute any of the Qudsi Hadith to Allah and claim e.g.; "Allah said..." Similarly, appropriately classified Hadith should or could be considered to be from the Prophet as to the meaning of the text, but the re-narrated wordings of the text are from the narrators or from Muslim scholars. It may be erroneous to attribute these hadiths to the Prophet and claim; "The Messenger of Allah said:..".

Since the process of compilation has been similar to the rest of the Hadith, the authenticity of this Qudsi group is also largely dependent upon the continuity of the chain of narrators and most importantly by the credibility and reliability of the narrators. It is a common misconception that the term Qudsi denotes that all the "re-narrated reports" classified under this Qudsi or sacred group, are one hundred percent authenticated. Scholars have recorded that they could be anything from Da'if (weak) to Sahih (sound). In this group the chain of narrations does not stop at the Prophet but goes to Allah. However, the primary narration is a paraphrased narrative.

Any hadith that disagrees or is opposed to what has been revealed in the Holy Qur'an should be discarded, even if it is a Sahih hadith or a Qudsi hadith. No text can supersede the verses of the Qur'an – period. Please read the following recorded Qudsi hadith.⁷ I have faithfully reproduced below the text of this dubious hadith number 8 with its commentary.

Allah's Messenger said:

On the Day of Resurrection, my Ummah (nation) will be gathered into three groups, one sort will enter Paradise without rendering an account (of their deeds). Another sort will be reckoned on easy account and admitted into Paradise. Yet another sort will come bearing on their backs heaps of sins like great mountains. Allah will ask the angels though He knows best about them: Who are these people? They will reply: They are humble

⁷ From '110 Hadith Qudsi'. Hadith No. 8 on page 19/20. Translated by Syed Masood-ul-Hasan, Revision and Commentaries by Ibrahim M. Kunna, published by Darussalam, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1996/1417H.

slaves of yours. He will say: Unload the sins from them and put the same over the Jews and Christians; then let the humble slaves get into Paradise by virtue of My Mercy.

The commentary to this hadith reads:

This Hadith is sound and mentioned in Mustadrak of Hakim.

Below are verses of the Holy Qur'an that speak of the final just and fair judgment by Allah.

We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of Judgment so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed We will bring it (to account): and enough are We to take account.
Q. 21:47

In his commentary, Abdullah Yusuf Ali writes:

Allah's knowledge is perfect, and therefore His justice will be perfect also; for He will not fail to take into account all the most intangible things that determine conduct and character.

Then on that Day not a soul will be wronged in the least and ye shall but be repaid the meeds of your past Deeds. Q. 36:54

Verily Allah will not deal unjustly with man in aught.
Q. 10:44.

But the judgment between them will be with justice, and no wrong will be done unto them.
Q. 10: 54

And fear the day when ye shall be brought back to Allah. Then shall every soul be paid what it earned and none shall be dealt with unjustly.
Q. 2:281

Those who believe (in the Qur'an) and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians, - any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.
Q. 2:62

Allah is the Most Merciful. He can forgive whomever, whenever and whatever He wishes. He does not need a scapegoat to carry mountainous heaps of sin. Allah is also the Most Just, and He does not deal unjustly with anyone of His own creation.

Those who ascribe false things to Allah, will never prosper. In such falsehood is but a paltry profit but they will have a most grievous Chastisement.

Q. 16:116/117

This last verse applies to those who used to manufacture "Hadith Qudsi" for earning rewards and/or glory. It may also apply to those today who knowingly propagate by mouth or publish the false narrations in the name of Allah.

3. The Ongoing Debate of Authenticity

An Authentic Hadith can be Defective

Because of the uncertainty surrounding the categorization of Hadith literature, debate has persisted throughout the centuries concerning the authenticity of many narrations.

A hadith recorded in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah is regarded as Ma'lul (defective), by more knowledgeable authorities than Imam Muslim, such as Imam Bukhari and Yahya bin Ma'in. The reported saying "is not of the Prophet (s.a.s.) but one of Ka'b al-Ahbar". This is recorded by Ibn Taimiyyah in Majmu' Fatawa. For the complete details of Ibn Taimiyyah's recorded version and the alternative opinion given by scholar Al-Albani read An Introduction to the Science of Hadith by Dr. Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar (p. 43). Below is the text of the above-mentioned Ma'lul (defective) hadith, downloaded from the web.⁸

Book No. 38, "Giving Description Of The Day Of Judgement, Paradise And Hell (Kitab Sifat Al-Qiyama Wa'L Janna Wa'N-Nar)". Hadith Number 6707: Narrated by Abu Hurayrah:

Allah's Messenger took hold of my hands and said: Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, created the clay on Saturday and He created the mountains on Sunday and He created the trees on Monday and He created the things entailing labour on Tuesday and created light on Wednesday and He caused the animals to spread on Thursday and created Adam (peace be upon him) after Asr on Friday; the last creation at the last hour of the hours of Friday, i.e. between afternoon and night.

This day-by-day description comes very close to the creation story in the Torah. Please see the Old Testament, Book of Genesis, Chapter 1. This information does not appear in the Holy Qur'an. The above Hadith is not a Qudsi hadith. Under the circumstances one may wonder how the Prophet could have narrated this descriptive information to Abu Hurayrah. If the Prophet did not relate this information to Abu Hurayrah, then who was this Ka'b al-Ahbar, whose saying is alleged to have been an authentic hadith? Ka'b was a Jewish scholar who had entered Islam. He was a Tabi (one who has met a companion of

⁸ No. 38:6707; 4:2149; 4:1462 of Sahih Muslim.

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah/muslim/038.smt.html#038.6707>

the Prophet) who was known for quoting verses from the Torah. We also know from hadith 5:17 of Al-Muwatta that Abu Hurayrah had gone to Mount Sinai to meet Ka'b al Ahbar. During their meeting Ka'b had quoted texts from the Torah to Abu Hurayrah and Abu Hurayrah had quoted the sayings of the Prophet to Ka'b. This information indirectly supports the earlier criticism by Imam Bukhari and Yahya bin Ma'in.

In the forward of his book, *An Introduction to the Science of Hadith*, Dr. Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar has listed twenty-six hadiths that are endlessly repeated by the Sunni and Shiah Alims as well as from members of both sects. Some of these hadiths even belong to the group called Qudsi. They provide just a few examples which show how we keep attributing statements to the Prophet not realizing or acknowledging that learned scholars who have studied the Science of Hadith have ruled that these hadiths "actually vary tremendously in their degree of authenticity from the Prophet." The author has also added a critical word of caution for those quoting these twenty-six hadiths; "(of) being in danger of contravening the Prophet's widely narrated stern warnings about attributing incorrect/unsound statements to him."

A saying erroneously attributed to the Prophet

The following 'Question and Answer' published in the October 1999 issue of a monthly Islamic Journal 'Renaissance'⁹ tells us that the "Symbols of Bad Luck" attributed erroneously to the Prophet are not his views.

Question: I read a Hadith which mentions that a house, horse and a woman are three things that could either prove good or bring bad luck for a man. Can you explain the meaning of this please? How can we label anything as a symbol of bad luck?

Answer: ...The Hadith you have mentioned has come in most of the major books of Hadith in the words near to the ones you have quoted. However, the following text of it contained in the sixth volume of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hambal's Musnad presents the true picture in this regard:

Abu-Hassan reports that two people came to A'ishah and said to her that Abu Hurayrah narrates that the Prophet used to say that bad luck is to be found only in women, horses and houses. At this A'ishah replied: By the God who revealed the Qur'an to the Prophet! The Prophet never said this; what he did say was that the People of the Jahilliyyah hold this opinion...

It is evident from this text of the Hadith that this saying has been erroneously attributed to the Prophet (sws). He had actually quoted the views held by the people of Jahilliyyah (age of ignorance).¹⁰

⁹ Published from Lahore, Pakistan, Vol. 9, No: 10, pp:48-49.
<http://www.renaissance.com.pk/>

¹⁰ The answer was given by the editor, Shehzad Saleem.

Abu Hurayrah the biggest contributor

Less than three years before the passing away of the Prophet, Abu Hurayrah joined Islam. He happens to be the biggest single contributor to the Hadith Literature. He has narrated 5374 narrations.¹¹ Many of his narrations are to be found in Sahih Al-Bukhari.

When Abu Hurayrah was questioned about him quoting so many sayings of the Prophet, his reply was:

The people say that Abu Huraira narrates too many narrations. In fact Allah knows whether I say the truth or not. They also ask, "Why do the emigrants and the Ansar not narrate as he does?" In fact, my emigrant brethren were busy trading in the markets, and my Ansar brethren were busy with their properties. I was a poor man keeping the company of Allah's Apostle and was satisfied with what filled my stomach. So, I used to be present while they (i.e. the emigrants and the Ansar) were absent, and I used to remember while they forgot (the Hadith).
(Sahih Bukhari 3: 540, also repeated in 3: 263)

Abu Hurayrah also admits that he had a bad memory and used to forget things. But after the under mentioned incident, which he has self-narrated, the situation had changed around. Abu Hurayrah records:

I said to Allah's Apostle "I hear many narrations (Hadiths) from you but I forget them." Allah's Apostle said, "Spread your Rida (garment)." I did accordingly and then he moved his hands as if filling them with something (and emptied them in my Rida) and then said, "Take and wrap this sheet over your body." I did it and after that I never forgot any thing.
(Sahih Al-Bukhari 1: 119, also repeated in 4: 841)

'Sahih Al-Bukhari' Commended and Criticized by Muslim Scholars

The Commendation:

"The most authentic book after the Book of Allah is Sahih Al-Bukhari"
A prominent Muslim scholar of our times, Dr. Muhammad Muhsin of the Islamic University, Al-Madina Al-Munawwara, Saudi Arabia writes:

It is said Imam Bukhari collected over 300,000 hadiths and he himself memorized 200,000 of which some were unreliable. He was born at a time when Hadith was being forged either to please rulers or kings or to corrupt the religion of Islam... So it was a great task for him to sift the forged hadiths from the authentic ones. He laboured day and night and although he had memorised such a large number he only chose approximately 7,275

¹¹ This is recorded in 'Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development and Special Feature' by Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqui.

with repetition and about 2,230 without repetition of which there is no doubt about their authenticity... Many religious scholars of Islam tried to find fault in the great remarkable collection, Sahih Al-Bukhari, but without success. It is for this reason, they unanimously agreed that the most authentic book after the Book of Allah is Sahih Al-Bukhari.¹²

My Comments:

The phrase to “corrupt the religion of Islam” confirms that within the Hadith literature there was deliberate input from non-Muslims.

The following text by another Muslim scholar questions the veracity of the last paragraph from the above commendation.

The Criticism:

A prominent Muslim scholar of our times, Dr. Muhammad Mustafa Azami, M.A., Ph.D. and Professor of Science of Hadith, University of Riyadh, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia writes:

Many scholars criticized Bukhari's work. The criticism concerns about 80 narrators and some 110 ahadith.¹³

The number of questionable narrators mentioned above is very high. Dr. Azami has in the footnote given references of the following two prominent works of the fourteenth century Muslim scholars, based upon which he has made the above statement:

1. 'Abdur Rahman b. Abu Bakr Suyuti's book 'Tadrib ar-Rawi', ed. by A. R. Latif, Cairo, 1379, vol. I, page 134.
2. Ibn Hajar's book 'Hadyal-Sari', Cairo 1383, vol. II, page 106.

Upon Which Verses Rests Your Faith (Imaan): Al-Qur'an or Al-Bukhari?

Here is what the Revealed Words of Allah tell us about the character of the Prophet:

**And thou [Muhammad] (standest) on an exalted standard of character.
Qur'an. 68:4**

¹² Sahih Al-Bukhari' Arabic-English translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, publishers Darussalam, Vol. 1, pp. 18/19.

¹³ Quoted from: 'Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature' by M. A. Azami, published by Islamic Book Trust, Kuala Lumpur, page 92.

Ye have indeed in the Apostle of Allah a beautiful pattern of (conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day and who engages much in the praise of Allah.

Q. 33:21

We sent thee not but as a mercy for all creatures.

Q.21:107

It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted they would have broken away from about thee; so pass over (their faults) and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then when thou hast taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).

Q 3:159

Here is what the recorded hadith by Imam Bukhari tells us about the character of the Prophet:

(Narrated by Anas bin Malik). A group of people from 'Ukl (or 'Uraina) tribe--but I think he said that they were from 'Ukl--came to Medina and (they became ill, so) the Prophet ordered them to go to the herd of (Milch) she-camels and told them to go out and drink the camels' urine and milk (as a medicine). So they went and drank it, and when they became healthy, they killed the shepherd and drove away the camels. This news reached the Prophet early in the morning, so he sent (some) men in their pursuit and they were captured and brought to the Prophet before midday. He ordered to cut off their hands and legs and their eyes to be branded with heated iron pieces and they were thrown at Al-Harra (a rocky place near Medina), and when they asked for water to drink, they were not given water... Al-Bukhari 8: 797.

The same narration is repeated in Al-Bukhari numbers 8: 794 and 1: 234.

This incident is not recorded within the published biographies of the Prophet. Allah has given us Wisdom (A'ql) to judge between Truth and Falsehood. May He guide us all to use it wisely and honestly. Ameen.

Futuristic Narrations

It is not uncommon to read narration after narrations that speak of what will happen in the future, after the death of the prophet. These do not belong to the group classified as Qudsi Hadith as such, the ultimate and final sources of these non-Qudsi narrations appear to terminate with the Prophet.

Say: "The Unseen is only for Allah (to know)..."

Qur'an 10:20

Below I have quoted a hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah that is not Qudsi and can be found on the internet at an Islamic website.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The Jews were split up into seventy-one or seventy-two sects; and the Christians were split up into seventy one or seventy-two sects; and my community will be split up into seventy-three sects.

(Sunan Abu-Da'ud, Book Number 40, Hadith Number 4579.)

Here are a couple of more narrations from Sunan of Abu-Da'ud that even mention the times when the predicted events will take place.

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Busr

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The time between the great war and the conquest of the city (Constantinople) will be six years, and the Dajjal (Antichrist) will come forth in the seventh. \

Hadith Number 4283

Narrated by Mu'adh ibn Jabal

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The greatest war, the conquest of Constantinople and the coming forth of the Dajjal (Antichrist) will take place within a period of seven months.

Hadith Number 4282

A hadith by Muslim (1372) predicts that the Sun will appear from West and that will be the first sign for the appearance of the Dajjal.

Some hadiths even predict what will happen to each group of mankind on the Day of Judgement; in Heaven and Hell, yet many of these re-narrated statements do not belong to the Qudsi Group, but belong to the Sahih Group. The following Revealed verses of the Qur'an raise serious questions about the futuristic hadiths belonging to the Sahih Group and the reliability of those who have narrated them.

**Say: "As to the knowledge of the time, it is with Allah alone:
I am but a plain warner."
Q. 67:26**

**Say: "I tell you not that with me are the treasures of Allah,
nor do I know what is hidden (unseen)...."
Q. 6:50**

**Say: "I am no new thing among the messengers (of Allah), nor know I what will be
done with me or with you."
Q.46:9**

Credible or Credulous?

The following hadith and attending commentary exemplify the logistical gymnastics believers must engage in to assert the credibility of certain narratives. One must ask, whose authenticity is in question here, the Prophet's or the compilers?

Under the Book Classification: 'The Beginning of Creation', Volume 4, Book 59, Chapter 17, Page 322, Hadith No. 3320 appears a Sahih (Authentic) Hadith Narrated by Abu Hurayrah. ¹⁴The text reads:

The Prophet said, "If a housefly falls in the drink of anyone of you, he should dip it (in the drink), for one of its wings has a disease and the other has the cure for the disease."

(Hadith No. 4: 537 in CD Alim)

The same Hadith is also repeated in Volume 7 – with this very interesting footnote:

(1) (H. 5782) Medically it is well-known now that a fly carries some pathogens on some parts of its body as mentioned by the Prophet (s.a.s.), [before 1400 years approx. when the humans knew very little of modern medicine]. Similarly Allah (S.W.T.), created organisms and other mechanisms which kill these pathogens, e.g., Penicillin Fungus kills pathogenic organisms like staphylococci and others etc. Recently experiments have been done under supervision which indicate that a fly carries the disease (pathogens) plus the antidote for those pathogenic organisms. Ordinarily when a fly touches a liquid food it infects the liquid with its pathogens, so it must be dipped in order to release also the antidote for those pathogens to act as a counter balance to the pathogens. Regarding this subject I also wrote through a friend of mine to Dr. Muhammad M. El-Samahy chief of Hadith Dept. in Al-Azhar University, Cairo (Egypt), who has written an article upon this Hadith, and as regards medical aspects, he has mentioned that the microbiologists have proved that there are longitudinal yeast cells living as parasites inside the belly of the fly and these yeast cells, in order to repeat their life cycle, protrude through respiratory tubules of the fly and if the fly is dipped in a liquid, these cells burst in the fluid and the content of those cells is an antidote for the pathogens which the fly carries.

The Prophet was an Ummi (unlettered) and there is no Revelation on this subject in the Qur'an. Could he have given such a Command "he should dip it" (in the drink) to his followers? If he really knew of these modern medical discoveries 1400 years ago, why was he inaccurate about the location of the antidote? Would the dipping of a fly in a cold

¹⁴ The Translation of the Meanings of SAHIH AL-BUKHARI Arabic - English' Translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, published by DARUSSALAM, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The text of the Hadith and the footnote appear in Volume 7, Book 76 Entitled 'The Book of Medicine', Chapter 58, Hadith Number 5782, Pg. 372.

drink or glass of drinking water burst open the contents of its belly? What about the bursting of other impurities, slimy materials and excretions those are normally stored in the belly of a fly?

Would those who profess to believe in this hadith and its attending medical evidence be willing to carry out its instructions?

And more importantly, can the faith of a Muslim be questioned if he or she thinks that the above narrations are either unsound or non-authentic and discards the fly or throws out the beverage instead of re-submerging the insect and drinking?

There are many Believers and Muslim scholars who very devoutly claim and strongly propagate that each and every hadith of Imam Bukhari is a Sahih hadith, meaning; "The Authentic Hadith".

To deny the authenticity of any one of Bukhari's Hadith means that his entire work is called into question. Anyone who has denied the work of Bukhari has at least undermined the rest of the entire literature of Hadith and as such his Imaan (Faith) as a believing Muslim can be questioned according to the traditionalists.

The Need for Caution

In effect, each and every "published" hadith that is identified and enumerated cannot be justly labeled "authoritative or sound". Also, the possibility of a "weak" or "faulty" hadith falling under the wrong criteria and/or regarded as "sound" by a compiler, cannot be ruled out with absolute surety. We need to be especially careful in referencing Hadith on the internet, for almost certainly, any text quoted will be taken out of its context and placed in another. Our use of incorrect terminology or classification may end up putting the credibility of the Messenger or the integrity of Islam on the line. Instead it would be preferable to reject the hadiths of a certain narrator or a compiler should the sayings contradict the teachings of the Qur'an.

There is a narration that is compiled by Imam Bukhari, whose dedicated, devoted and untiring efforts in the compilation of narrated reports has earned him the unique status, and this authoritative narration speaks of the severe penalty of Hell Fire for "attributing any falsehood to the Prophet". Hence, the need to observe caution should be felt most of all by those who devoutly propagate with uncritical confidence narrations by Bukhari or indeed any other compiler.

4. Sectarianism and Faulty Hadith

Two Self-contradictory hadiths

The above warning is also applicable to all those who knowingly propagate falsely attributed sectarian notions, attested to as sayings of the Prophet, especially concerning

what will happen after his death. Most of these are not recorded as " Qudsi Hadith". As observed earlier, and attest by the Qur'an, the knowledge of the future is with Allah Alone. Many of the present divisions within the Ummah would not have happened if the narrators and propagators, who want us to obey the Messenger of Allah, had been honest enough and obeyed the Messenger of Allah.

The following provides an example of the simultaneous propagation of two self-contradictory hadiths with an accompanying commentary by a Shi'ah Ithna-Ashri scholar and myself.

From the Shi'ah scholar:

Now consider this hadith report recorded by Mulla Ali Qari in his *Sharh-i-fiqh-i-Akbar*,¹⁵ "man mata wa lam y'arif Imam-i-zamanihi, faqad mata meetat-al-Jahiliyya." (One who dies without knowing the Imam of his time, dies the death of total ignorance).

My response:

How could the Prophet, have spoken the text of the above hadith, recorded by Mulla Ali Qari or by anyone for that matter, when the actual concepts of the "Imamah" and the "the Imam of his time" were not even known by the Ummah, who lived during the life of the Prophet? The Concepts of the Caliphate and the Imamate were developed after the death of the Prophet. Even at the Gadir-e-Khoom, in accordance with the Shi'ah Traditions and Riwayat, the Prophet did not declare Hadhrat Ali as the "Imaam" of the Ummah.

The Shi'ah scholar responded:

The hadith report from the Prophet about the Muslims having twelve Imams is so strongly vouched by Isnaad that it is really impossible to deny it. Consequently, Muslims had to invent at least twelve names to fit that hadith. However, in every century and every generation the list of names has been changing, depending upon who was running the government. It is only the Shi'ah Ithna Asharis who have maintained the list of the twelve Imams from day one and it has not changed.

My further response:

There is a serious problem of reconciliation within these two hadiths. In the earlier hadith, recorded by Mulla Ali Qari, the Prophet is supposed to have said "one who dies without knowing the Imam of his time dies the death of Jahiliyya". In the latter, so called strongly vouched hadith, the

¹⁵ Mulla Ali Qari is a Sunni Alim and this book is a commentary on Imam Abu Hanifa's book of Islamic laws *FIQH AKBAR*.

Prophet is supposed to have said “the Muslims having twelve Imams [only]”.

These two statements contradict each other. If the Prophet knew the future and he also knew certainly that there were not going to be any more Imams (Leaders) after the twelfth Imam, he could not have made the earlier statement to the Muslim Ummah that it was imperative to know the “Imams of their own times”. How could those that were to be born after the twelfth Imam, know the "Imams of their own times" when there were going to be none during their lifetime? The earlier statement in effect acknowledges the perpetuity of the Imams that the later statement negates. This demonstrates that the hadiths accepted by the Shiah Muslims also have self-contradictions.

Sunnah and Hadith

Sunnah means the prophetic ways, traditions and orders that have become models to follow by his followers. It is erroneous to interchange the word Hadith with Sunnah or vice versa. There are several hadiths that have nothing in the least to do with the traditions of the prophet.

It is not correct to contend that the Sunnah of the Prophet has been communicated to the Ummah by the Hadith literature alone. Historically, the Hadith literature that is in circulation, was non-existent for the first few centuries of Islam. The Prophet’s example has been mostly communicated through the practical examples of the living and practicing Muslim communities. A question asked over and over again by the traditionalists is: How else would I have known how to recite my ritual prayers and how many rakats to recite for each prayer, if not through the compiled Hadith literature, since the Qur’an is silent on these issues? The obvious response would be; In the same manner it was known to the Muslim community for more than two centuries before the compilation of the Hadith literature.

If one were to stand up before a congregation in any mosque and ask: “When and how did the worshippers learn to recite their ritual prayers?”. The majority of the Jamaati members would probably answer:

- i. At an early age when he or she had not or could not read the books of hadiths.
- ii. In their own homes from the family members or in the Madressahs (religious schools) from the teachers.

The reality is that the majority of the Sunnahs of the Prophet have been communicated to the society through the examples of living Muslims.

An Honest Proposition from Dr. J. Lang

Dr. Jeffery Lang was brought up as a Roman Catholic and educated in a Catholic School. He converted to Islam in the early 1980s. His book *Struggling to Surrender* -

Some Impressions of an American Convert to Islam has been a runaway success since its publication in 1994. ¹⁶The following excerpt from its third printing begins with his personal experience and concludes with an honest proposition.

Almost a year had passed since I said the Shahadah, and Mahmoud and I had become much more than friends; we were brothers in Islam. We drove together to Fairfield to hear a lecture sponsored by one of the Muslim student groups at the local masjid, which was a small house that had been converted into a place of prayer. We stood out in the large audience, not only because I was the sole American, but because we were practically the only ones wearing Western clothing. Not long after we had found a space to sit on the floor, the first speaker began. Seeking to remind his listeners of the impotence of their faith as compared to that of the Prophet's Companions, he told the following story.

The Prophet met a bedouin in the desert and invited him to Islam. The bedouin was resistive and demanded proof of his claims. Muhammad then asked if a witness would do. "We're in the middle of nowhere! There isn't another man for miles. Who could possibly serve as your witness?" The Prophet pointed to a nearby tree. "This will be my witness." At that moment the tree tore one side of its trunk out of the ground and took a step toward the two men; then it ripped the other side of its base from the ground and came another step closer. The bedouin watched in terror and then shouted, "I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah!"

Mahmoud saw the discomfort in my face and tried to redress the damage after the lecture. Of course, he was correct in saying that the audience was not representative of all Muslims and that the value of such a story lies not in its historicity but in its ability to inspire greater awe and consciousness of God. Indeed, many in the audience had listened transfixed to that and similar stories during the lecture, always following them with outbursts of praise. But I felt that Mahmoud's argument was more of a Western apology than an Islamic one. In my opinion, such stories violate the Qur'an's appeal to reason and its de-emphasis on the supernatural in favor of the wonders of nature and creation. However, Mahmoud, with his usual diplomacy, drove home a significant point: who are we to deny the legitimacy of another perspective simply because it disagrees with ours? I now knew that, for my own sake, I needed a better understanding of the place of hadith (the Prophetic traditions) in the life of my new community. I was about to enter a maze of confusion, distortion, suspicion, and dogma, a field to be explored only submissively and superficially, in which there is little room for misgiving. It is to this science that orientalism directs its most formidable criticism. Unfortunately, the literature written by Muslim scholars, whether originally in English or translated from other languages,

¹⁶ Amana Publications Beltsville, Maryland, USA.

to counteract this attack has been an entirely inadequate response. And the need for an effective response is urgent for Muslims living in the West, because this subject plays an important role in directing and binding the community, and in meeting the challenge of self-maintenance in a radically foreign environment. A convert to Islam quickly discovers the need to adopt a position on the role of the Sunnah and the hadith in his or her life. The problem is that the options presented are so extreme that many converts soon come to feel estranged from the community they have joined. In my opinion, this situation could be avoided if there were a real chance for honest and open discussion on this subject. (pp. 76-78)

Doubtless, both lifelong Muslims and the recently converted have had encounters similar to Dr. Lang's. Perhaps some have feared that open skepticism would ostracize them from their community.

At times I have attempted to have honest and open discussions with such speakers (in private) about the dubious narrations. Unfortunately, many would seem to prefer the sacrifice of the prestige of the Prophet (s.a.s.), rather than that of their esteemed narrators and/or compilers, as if they were the infallible ones!

Allah alone is Infallible and He alone Knows the Truth behind every "re-narrated report". In Islam, qualifying any one besides Allah as an infallible individual would be a Shirk (the unpardonable sin of associating some one as equal to Allah).

5 A Closer Look at Some Dubious Hadiths

The Prophet and Knowledge of the Unseen

In preparing to examine various narrations, let us consider the following two hadiths from Sahih al-Bukhari:

Hadith 9:477 quoted below tells us that the Prophet did not have the knowledge of the unseen. Narrated by Masruq:

Aisha said, `If anyone tells you that Muhammad has seen his Lord, he is a liar, for Allah says: **“No vision can grasp Him.” [Q.6:103]** And if anyone tells you that Muhammad has seen the Unseen, he is a liar, for Allah says: **“None has the knowledge of the Unseen but Allah.” [Q. 6:103]**

My Comments:

The above hadith has valid support from the verses of the Qur'an (10:20; 6:50). Hence, if there are narrations which directly and explicitly contradict the above statement made by Bibi 'Aisha and have no support from the verses of the Qur'an, then all such narrations need to be carefully re-examined if not rejected.

What could have prompted Bibi 'Aisha to make the above statement and denounce the narrators, calling the propagators liars? Obviously, there must have been false narrations circulating in the name of the Prophet, promoting the Prophet's knowledge of the unseen. Who could be the narrators of such lies? Clearly, some narrators who lived during the life of Bibi 'Aisha.

If for some reason, one is not ready to accept this logic because one has been conditioned to think otherwise, then one has to reject this hadith. And of course, if even one sound hadith is rejected, then all of the others are immediately suspect. We cannot pick and choose the hadiths to believe in as a matter of preference; rather the Qur'an must guide us. If all Muslims were to truly believe; Allah Alone has the knowledge of the unseen, some of the sub-Sects of Islam would lose their holds upon their followings.

Hadith 1:277 from Bukhari quoted below tells us otherwise and tells us that the Prophet had knowledge of, unseen, past events.

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah. The Prophet said,

'The (people of) Bani Israel used to take baths naked (all together) looking at each other. The Prophet Moses used to take a bath alone. They said, 'By Allah! Nothing prevents Moses from taking a bath with us except that he has a scrotal hernia.' So once Moses went out to take a bath and put his clothes over a stone and then that stone ran away with his clothes. Moses followed that stone saying, "My clothes, O stone! My clothes, O stone! till the people of Bani Israel saw him and said, 'By Allah, Moses has got no defect in his body. Moses took his clothes and began to beat the stone." Abu Hurayrah added, "By Allah! There are still six or seven marks present on the stone from that excessive beating." Abu Hurayrah Narrated: The Prophet said, "When the Prophet Job (Aiyub) was taking a bath naked, golden locusts began to fall on him. Job started collecting them in his clothes. His Lord addressed him, 'O Job! Haven't I given you enough so that you are not in need of them.' Job replied, 'Yes!' By Your Honor (power)! But I cannot dispense with Your Blessings.' "

My Comments:

The above is not Qudsi hadith, that is, its source of knowledge does not go beyond the Prophet. The Qur'an does not reveal the details of what is narrated in this hadith. Anyone who has read biographical material on the Prophet can understand that he was not in the habit of telling his companions the stories of the earlier Prophets and/or their intimate conversations with Allah, unless revealed to him by Allah. The earlier verified hadith tells us that the Prophet had no knowledge of the unseen (future or past). Could the Prophet have narrated these things?

How did the narrator Abu Hurayrah know which particular stone ran away, more than a thousand years ago in a distant land with the clothes of Prophet Moses? It is unlikely that Abu Hurayrah could have traveled to the distant land, located the place of Bath,

identified the stone and then actually seen the markings of the excessive beating on the stone "with his own eyes" to swear "By Allah"! (A Muslim is not likely to swear "By Allah" without first verifying the true facts with his own two eyes, especially when the story happens to be so unlikely.)

Dr. Jeffery Lang writes:

It is also hard not to question the authenticity of those accounts that seem incompatible with what one might expect of a prophet or that endorse something that seems to be extreme and unreasonable behavior. On top of all this, a Muslim is expected to accept the assertion that all the hadiths accepted by the majority of earlier and contemporary Muslim specialists are true and accurate reports of Prophet Muhammad's statements and actions.

This places many converts in the uncomfortable position of having to rationalize and then yield to a dogma that, because one is not supposed to question it, is very hard to believe in and often forces a compromise of one's commitment to the truth. (p. 81)
(From 'Struggling to Surrender - Some Impressions of an American Convert to Islam', p. 81).

6. Hadith Seen as the Weak Link by Non-Muslims

Rejected narrations inserted later in Al-Bukhari?

Finally, there are many non Muslim Scholars and critics on Internet who have studied the Qur'an and the Hadith. Some are genuine scholars who point out the inconsistencies in Hadith literature as a matter of scholarly concern. Yet there are others whose primary motive is to shake the foundations of Muslim Brothers and Sisters, especially in the younger generation. When these non-Muslims have a hard time finding facts from the Revealed Verses of the Qur'an that cannot be rebutted, they simply turn to the next document in line, the collections of Hadith.

Well-known Christian critic Andrew Vargo has recorded the following observation on the internet website titled <answering-islam>:

As a matter of scholarly concern, it is interesting to note that Bukhari wrote a book about the narrators ('Zuafa-us-sagher').

What is even more interesting is that Bukhari's book condemns several narrators including: Ata bin abi Maimoona, Ayyub bin Aiz, Ismail bin Aban, Zubair bin Muhammad, At-Tayyimi, Saeed bin Urwa, Abdullah bin Abi Labeed, Abdul Malik bin Ameen, Abdul waris bin Saeed, Ata bin As-Saib bin Yazeed, and Khamsan bin Minhal as unreliable.

However, the Hadith-collection of Bukhari in its modern form actually includes many traditions narrated by these very individuals! Obviously, these traditions, which Bukhari rejected, were inserted in his book following his death.

7. My Response to Six Passages Sent by a Critic

A Muslim critic emails six passages

Before the publication of this book, I had placed on my Internet website (<http://www.mostmerciful.com>) an article on the subject of Hadith. A Muslim critic from British Columbia, Canada emailed the following passages from al-Baa'ithul Hatheeth Sharh Ikhtisaar 'Uloomul Hadith. The writings are from the famous scholar : Al-Haafidh Ibn Katheer with commentary by: Shaykh Ahmad Muhammad Shaakir Al-Hamdulillah.

Passage Number One:

Al Haafidh Ibn Katheer said ¹⁷: Indeed it is mentioned in Saheeh Muslim from Abee Sa'eed al-Khudree in marfoo' form,

“Whoever writes from me something other than the Qur'an, then let him erase it.”

"Marfoo'" comes from the Arabic root word, 'rafa'a', which means: to be raised, or to raise. Marfoo' means something which is raised, in this case - a marfoo' narration is one that stops at a Companion in the chain of narration, but the text is such that none other than the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) could have spoken it. It is used when the Companion does not state that he heard the narration from the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam), as is the case here.

My Response:

This narration does not give the reason for "erasing" whatever was written. However, there is another narration asking the Companions to "erase whatever was written" and here the reason given by the Prophet was so as not to follow the path of the people of the earlier Prophets. History records that the writings of the Rabbinic literature -the Talmud, did overshadow the Torah, which was revealed to the earlier Prophet Moses. The writings of Paul - the Epistles, did overshadow the Injeel ¹⁸ that was revealed to Prophet Isa. In

¹⁷ The above is taken from al-Baa'ithul Hatheeth Sharh Ikhtisaar 'Uloomul Hadeeth p. 129-130.

¹⁸ The term "Injeel" used in the Qur'an may literally translate "Gospel". Specifically, it refers to the 'Gospel of the Kingdom of God' preached by Jesus Christ (see Mark 1:14), as opposed to the four gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

other words, the Prophet did not want his Ummah to repeat the same mistake of Creating a "Secondary Document" that would at a later date overshadow what was revealed to him.

Passage Number Two:

Al Bayhaqee and Ibnus Salaah and others have said:
Perhaps the prohibition of that was for when it was feared that it would get mixed in with the Qur'an, and then afterwards it was secured from that.
And Allah knows best.

My response:

The use of the word "Perhaps", and the phrase "Allah knows best" indicate that the above statement is based upon an assumption or a surmise. The statement has no supporting evidence that would qualify the passage as a definite statement of Truth and not a speculative conjecture.

Passage Number Three:

I say, that it has been established in the two Saheehs that the Messenger of Allah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said,

'Write for Abee Shaah.' And indeed we clarified this topic in the introductions of our first books. And for Allah is the praise.

My Response:

There are reports that when an individual had a weak memory, the Messenger of Allah gave such individual instructions. There are always exceptions to well-defined rules. Even within the Revealed Verses of the Qur'an, there are exceptions for certain groups of people for certain reasons. Such exceptions are not the norm and cannot be applied to everyone or to normal circumstances. This particular isolated incident concerned the writing of a Khutbah (the nature of which is different from that of the prophetic sayings or deeds). One cannot with all sincerity elevate an isolated instruction to a valid command from the Messenger, to repeal the earlier command; "Whoever writes from me something other than the Qur'an, then let him erase it."

Passage Number Four:

Indeed it was related that scholars of later times agreed upon the permissibility of writing the hadiths, and this matter is exhaustive, widespread, and well known, without disapproval.

My response:

The Statement speaks of “agreement(s)” by and between the scholars. Such agreement(s) may be “exhaustive, widespread, and well known and without disapproval”, yet if they are applied to annul, rescind or invalidate a maroof Command of the Prophet, they have to be based upon a similar maroof or explicit Command by the Prophet. The Statement does not speak of receiving such a directive. Indeed, if there was a valid maroof or explicit narration for the permissibility of writing the hadiths then the need for such agreement was un-called for, redundant and superfluous. The Statement speaks of the scholars of later times but does not specify the time period(s) of such accord(s). It does not mention the names of the scholars that had reached an agreement. This agreement seems to be a kind of verbal thing because there is no mention of any written document or the text having been recorded. In absence of these essential data the quoted statement appears to be lacking the necessary support to rescind the earlier Command of the Prophet; 'Whoever writes from me something other than the Qur'an, then let him erase it.'

Passage Number Five:

Ibnus Salaah said,
“And from what has been narrated to us about it is that it was disliked by:
'Umar, and Ibn Mas'ood, and Zayd Ibn Thaabit, and Abu Moosaa, and
Abu Sa'eed in a group of late comers from the Companions, and the
following generation.”

My Response:

The above statement tells us that those who dislike the act of the "writing" of the hadiths are in the company of: Umar ibn al-Khattab - the second Caliph and a very close companion of the Prophet; Abd Allah Ibn Mas'ood an early convert and close companion of the Prophet. He was a prominent Qari who was also knowledgeable on the Shariah and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Zayd Ibn Thaabit was personal secretary to the Messenger and took dictation from him. Zayd was also appointed the head of a Commission that collected the verses of the Qur'an for the final compilation, under the direction of Caliph 'Uthman. Abu Moosaa al-Ashari was a companion of the Prophet whose real name was Abdullah Ibn Qays Ibn Saleem. He was a reputable Faqih endowed with intelligence and could give sound judgement based upon the Qur'an, Sunnah and Hadith. He was also the Governor of Basra. Abee Sa'eed al Khudree was the one who narrated the above quoted maroof hadith about erasing the "sayings of the Prophet" that had been written by the companions.

Passage Number Six:

He (Ibnus Salaah) also said,
“And from what has been reported to us regarding the permissibility of
that or doing it: 'Alee, and his son al-Hasan, and Anas, and 'Abdullaah Ibn
'Umar Ibnul 'Aas in a group from amongst the Companions and the
following generation.”

My response:

The above Statement tells us that those who like the idea of the writing of hadiths are in the company of: 'Alee Ibn Abi Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. He was among the earliest to convert. His eloquent sermons and letters are well preserved. He was very knowledgeable in the Qur'an. Al-Hasan Ibn 'Alee Ibn Abi Talib was the senior grandson of the Prophet from his daughter Fatima. The Prophet used to play with him and loved him. Anas Ibn Malik Al-Ansari was the brother of the famous valiant companion of the Prophet, Al-Baraa Ibn Malik Al-Ansari. 'Abdullaah Ibn 'Umar was son of Caliph 'Umar and had joined the army of the prophet at very young age.

It is a natural response that these companions – perhaps those who were nearest him and loved him most – would want to preserve all that they could surrounding the life of their beloved Prophet. They could not have foreseen the chaos that would arise from these re-narrated reports.

From the Glorious Qur'an:

**Most of them follow naught but conjecture. Assuredly
conjecture can by no means take the place of truth.
Lo! Allah is Aware of what they do.
Q. 10:36**

8. The Qur'an on Ludicrous Hadiths

Hadiths that mislead from the Path of Allah

Allah's Command about Ludicrous Hadiths in the Qur'an:

But there are among men those who purchase idle tales without knowledge (or meaning) to mislead (men) from the Path of Allah and throw ridicule (on the Path): for such there will be a humiliating Penalty." Qur'an 31:6

The Arabic phrase translated by Yusuf Ali as "idle tales" is "lahw al-Hadeethi". In the Dictionary and Glossary of the Qur'an the word "lahw" is translated as "ludicrous (ridiculous)". The word "al-Hadeethi" is translated as "the narrative, the story, the tale, the event, the discourse, the saying, etc." In the literal sense this verse of the Qur'an tells us not to purchase (patronize) "ludicrous (ridiculous) hadiths" and mislead others from the Path of Allah, without knowledge of the real facts. Do not purchase (patronize) the "ludicrous (ridiculous) hadiths"... This is Allah's Command.

Here is the alternate literal translation of the verse 31: 6:

But there are among men those who patronize ridiculous hadiths without knowledge (thereby) misleading (men) from the Path of Allah and throwing a butt of mockery (on the Path): for such there will be a humiliating Penalty."

Ridiculous Hadiths that Undermine the Credibility of the Prophets

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah in Sahih Al-Bukhari ¹⁹.

Allah's Apostle said,

(The Prophet) Solomon once said, 'Tonight I will sleep with ninety women, each of whom will bring forth a (would-be) cavalier who will fight in Allah's Cause.' On this, his companion said to him, 'Say: Allah willing!' But he did not say Allah willing. Solomon then slept with all the women, but none of them became pregnant but one woman who later delivered a half-man. By Him in Whose Hand Muhammad's soul is, if he (Solomon) had said, 'Allah willing' (all his wives would have brought forth boys) and they would have fought in Allah's Cause as cavaliers.

My Comments:

Earlier we have observed that a hadith recorded in Sahih Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah was regarded as Ma'lul (defective) because the reported saying was not of the Prophet but of Abu Hurayrah's friend named Ka'b al-Ahbar. This is recorded by Ibn Taimiyyah in Majmu' Fatawa. Ka'b al-Ahbar was a former Jew. The story of 'The Creation' narrated by Abu Hurayrah, was very similar to the version found in the Book of Genesis. We have also observed that a hadith recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, in connection with the earlier Prophets Moses and Job, "both taking baths naked", is also a Ma'lul (defective) hadith. Such ludicrous tales of the earlier Prophets may also have been interpreted from the tales of the Jewish friends of Abu Hurayrah and not from the Prophet. The above preposterous and ludicrous narration in Sahih al-Bukhari, about the sexual exploits of the earlier Prophet Solomon on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, is also a Ma'lul hadith. One need not be a professor of mathematics to work out the probabilities of a person having "slept (had sex) with all the ninety women" in one night. Clearly, Abu Hurayrah has been influenced by stories from the Jews, although the hadith bears no resemblance to stories in the Hebrew Scriptures. Abu Hurayrah has repeated this ludicrous hadith six times, and they all are recorded in the Sahih al-Bukhari. Surprisingly, Abu Hurayrah has not been consistent in his narrations. He has given five different figures for the number of women Prophet Solomon "slept with in one night". In hadith 9: 561, there were sixty women; in hadith 4: 635, seventy women; in hadith 8: 634 and 711, ninety women; in hadiths 4: 74A and 7: 169, ninety-nine or one hundred women. The question is; which of the above narrations is authoritative and true? If you accept only one of the above listed narrations to be authoritative and true, then the rest of the recorded narrations have to be declared as non-authoritative and untrue. If one acknowledges all the recorded narrations to be authoritative and true then one has to accept not only this most unlikely story, but that the similar events were repeated on at least five different nights and narrated by the Prophet

¹⁹ Hadith no. 8:634 as per CD Alim.

at least five times with five different figures.²⁰ Imam Bukhari is said to have been extra meticulous in his collection. If so, could he have recorded all these self-contradicting narrations in his own work? If not, whose compilation is this and what other hadiths has this anonymous storyteller added to the collection?

The verses of the Glorious Qur'an revealed to the Prophet say:

**To David We gave Solomon (for a son) how excellent in Our service!
Ever did he turn (to Us)!
Q. 38:30**

Having known and preached the above verse, the Prophet could not have narrated such a ludicrous story about the Prophet Solomon. The Prophet would not narrate any tale that would throw ridicule in the Path of Allah, after having preached verse number 6 of Sura Luqman.

Do not turn away from Allah's Sign revealed in 31:6 and quoted above. In the subsequent verse Allah has described the fate of those who continue purchasing (patronizing) ludicrous hadiths and turn away in arrogance as if they did not hear the above quoted Message.

**When Our Signs are rehearsed to such a one he turns away in arrogance as if he
heard them not as if there were deafness in both his ears:
announce to him a grievous Penalty.
Qur'an. 31:7**

Please bring to your remembrance the above Command of Allah whenever you hear or read any ludicrous or ridiculous hadith. Try not to patronize these kind of narrations (Hadiths). It is incorrect to contend that there are no ludicrous or ridiculous narrations within the authentic hadiths. In volume one of Sahih Al-Bukhari under books number 5 entitled 'The Book Of Ghusl (Bath)' and number 6 entitled 'The Book Of Menses', there are several narrations that are sexually so intimate and implicit that neither the Prophet nor any of his wife could have reported such preposterous reports to any narrator. It is the duty of every Muslim to defend the reputation and character of the Prophet from such ludicrous re-narrated dubious reports.

**“The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves...”
(Qur'an 33: 6)**

The Vivid Stories of "Dajjal" and the "anti-Christ" in the Qur'an?

²⁰ The above-mentioned numberings for the hadiths are from the computer CD Alim. The numberings may vary in the printed volumes of Sahih al-Bukhari.

A short time ago, I was sent a complimentary copy of the recently published book entitled *American Muslims: the new generation* by Asma Gull Hasan.²¹

On page 58, I found the following passages on the subject 'Jesus – Islam's Messiah at the End of the World'.

The Qur'an describes the beginning of the end of the world: famine, storms, floods, vandalism, and rampant immorality prompting the arrival of Dajjal, the name of the anti-Christ in the Qur'an. Dajjal is described as a monster of God's creation, brought into existence by, and as an expression of, man's increasing savagery...

Dajjal's reign of terror lasts only forty days, however, because God sends Jesus down from Heaven on a white horse with a lance in his hand to save the world for the righteous people... Jesus' throne will also be lowered to Earth from Heaven... Jesus will lead an army of the righteous against Dajjal, who will be defeated by this army but will manage to escape. Nevertheless, Jesus finds Dajjal and kills him with God's lance.

Significantly, neither the terms "Dajjal" and "anti-Christ" nor the vividly described futuristic events associated with these personalities appear within the Glorious Qur'an. However, the above terms and the events similar to the ones mentioned by the author - a young educated Muslim student - appear within the Hadith literature. The confusion is obvious because the vividly described gripping stories of Dajjal and anti-Christ are narrated in nearly one hundred or so hadiths. They are often repeated in the sermons at the Mosques to warn the worshippers of the future calamities and foretell the eventual solution for the Islamic Ummah.

The author's contention that the quoted passage is or could be the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an is specious since the main characters and activities - the animal (white horse), the object (God's Lance) and the described durations of the events - are not to be found in the Qur'an.

Isra'iliyat Narrations within Hadiths and Commentaries

Earlier in this article we examined an "Isra'iliyat" (of Jewish or Judeo-Christian origin) narration that had been introduced within Sahih Muslim (Book 38:6707). The implanted material promotes the "Creation Story" from the Torah. The following "Isra'iliyat Narration" within Sahih Al-Bukhari that promotes the "Law of Moses" also asserts that the Qur'an is incomplete. Since this is a very serious allegation, I wish to direct your attention toward recorded evidence from the books written by Muslim scholars that confirm that some Jews used to manufacture hadiths and write tafseer of the Qur'an. Dr. Suhaib Hasan writes in his book, *An Introduction to the Science of Hadith*:

²¹ Hasan, Asma Gull. *The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, New York, NY 10017. ISBN 0-8264-1279-3, Year 2000.*

...[W]hen the second caliph, Umar bin al- Khattab decided to expel the Jews from Khaibar, some Jewish dignitaries brought a document to Umar apparently proving that the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) had intended that they stay there by exempting them from the jizyah (tax on non-Muslims under the rule of Muslims); the document carried the witness of two Companions, Sa'd bin Mu'adh and Mu'awiyah b. Abi Sufyan. Umar rejected the document outright, knowing that it was fabricated because the conquest of Khaibar took place in 6 AH, whereas Sa'd bin Mu'adh died in 3 AH just after the Battle of the Trench, and Mu'awiyah embraced Islam in 8 AH, after the conquest of Makkah! (pp 49-50)

Interestingly enough the footnote to this text speaks of the repeated attempts by Jews to deceive Muslims. Ibn al-Qayyim mentions more than ten clear indications of the forgery of the document, which the Jews repeatedly attempted to use to deceive the Muslims over the centuries, but each time a scholar of Hadith intervened to point out the forgery - such incidents occurred with Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310), al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463) and Ibn Taimiyyah (d. 728), who spat on the document as it was unfolded from beneath its silken covers.²²

Dr. Yusuf Qaradawi *Thaqafat al-Da'iah*, in his book, *Mu'saat al-Resalah*²³ observes:

Because the Jews were defeated militarily by the Muslims and wanting to resist by using another weapon --an intellectual one-- they slipped in the *Isra'iliyat* (narrations and tafseers) and, within a short period, the Muslim books were full of it.

Dr. Muhammad Husayn al-Dhahabi, in his book, *Al-Tafsir wal-Mufasssirun*, Volume 1,²⁴ has recorded the fact that Wahb ibn Munabbih ibn Kamil Sanani al-Yamani, his brother Hammam ibn Munabbih (who is reported to have written 138 Hadiths in his *Sahifa*), Ka'b ibn Mati al-Himyari, Abu Ishaq also known as Ka'b al-Ahbar, and other converts from the "People of the Book" introduced into the Muslim's creed the *Isra'iliyah* traditions from their own books. Similar evidence is also found in Muhammad Abd-el-Ghani Hasan's book *Attarikh 'end al-Musleman*. It is also known that Wahb ibn Munabbih and Ka'b al-Ahbar taught the *Tafseer* of the *Qur'an* to Muslims. Scholars like Abdullah ibn Ma'sud had warned people not to learn the *Tafseer* of the *Qur'an* from the "People of the Book," because they used to interpolate their own biblical beliefs, teachings and history with the Islamic creeds and preaching.

It is now time that we Muslims of this century try to distinguish the authentic material from the material that was implanted centuries ago.

Hadiths that assert the Qur'an is incomplete

²² See Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Manar al-Munif fi 'l- Sahih wa 'l-Dacif* (ed. A.F. Abû Ghuddah, Lahore, 1402/1982), pp. 102-105 for a fuller discussion.

²³ Published from Beirut, page 41.

²⁴ Published by Dar al-Qalam, Beirut.

The following text appears in Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 8, Book 86, The Book of Al-Hudud, Hadith No. 6829²⁵. Please note that the following narration is not the saying of the Prophet, but is claimed to be that of Umar ibn al-Khattab (r.a.). He is alleged to have spoken this passage after the death of the Prophet. Since the documents have been forged in the name of the Prophet then it would have been an easy matter for a forger to fabricate unrecorded spoken words of a companion of the Prophet as well as to forge the names of the narrators.

Hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbas. Caliph 'Umar said,

I am afraid that after a long time has passed, people may say, 'We do not find the Verses of the Rajam (stoning to death) in the Holy Book,' and consequently they may go astray by leaving an obligation that Allah has revealed. Lo! I confirm that the penalty of Rajam be inflicted on him who commits illegal sexual intercourse, if he is already married and the crime is proved by witnesses or pregnancy or confession." Sufyan added, "I have memorized this narration in this way." 'Umar added, "Surely Allah's Apostle carried out the penalty of Rajam, and so did we after him.

The extended text of the above report appears in the next hadith 86.6830 (8-817). It is also narrated by Ibn 'Abbas. The obvious questions that would arise after reading the above text are: What is the penalty prescribed in the Qur'an for those who commit illegal sexual intercourse? Is that a substituted penalty for the abrogated or caused to be forgotten, earlier penalty of "stoning to death"? Did the Prophet and his companions in fact carry out the penalty of "stoning to death" as narrated?

The Qur'an on adultery

The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication flog each of them with a hundred stripes: let not compassion move you in their case in a matter prescribed by Allah if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment. Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry any but a woman similarly guilty or an Unbeliever, nor let any but such a man or an Unbeliever marry such a woman: to the Believers such a thing is forbidden. Q.24:2-3 (Translation by Yusuf Ali)

My Comments:

1. The above Command does not state that the penalty prescribed is a substituted penalty for the earlier revealed penalty for the same crime (sin). Neither the quoted Hadith nor the commentaries to the Qur'an has recorded the text of the so called abrogated or caused to be forgotten Verses of "stoning to death".

2. The quoted verses of the Qur'an speak of "marriage" for the guilty parties. That fact conclusively proves that Allah has Himself granted the guilty parties an opportunity to live on within the society and have a family life. Also the fact that Allah has forbidden

²⁵ In the computer CD Alim the number is 8: 816.

the Believers from marrying the adulterer or adulteress clearly indicates that men and women who had committed these sins were not being killed but were spared and allowed to live on. In the translation by M. M. Pickthall the guilty man and guilty woman are called adulterer and adulteress. The punishment of flogging is commanded for both - man and woman. The punishment of flogging is commanded for fornication and adultery.

3. If one was to assert, based upon the recorded text of the hadith, that stoning to death was indeed the prevalent penalty even after the death of the Prophet, ("Surely Allah's Apostle carried out the penalty of Rajam, and so did we after him.") then one has but to admit that either Umar and his party ("we") had been knowingly disobeying the above command of flogging or they had never heard the verses of Sura An-Nur which were most probably revealed in the latter half of 6 A.H. These are most unlikely stories in either case. When a question was asked if Allah's Apostle carried out the penalty of Rajam, (stoning to death) before or after the revelation of Sura An-Nur, the answer given by 'Abdullah bin Abi Aufa was "I don't know". (see Sahih Al-Bukhari 8: 804 and 8: 824).

4. There are lengthy arguments presented by the upholders of the Hadith such as; Whenever Allah wants to abrogate His earlier Command He makes us forget it (verses 2:106 and 16:101 of the Qur'an) or the earlier text is expunged or removed from the Qur'an in some mysterious manner, as for an example; A goat ate up the page or leaf on which the missing Verses of stoning to death were written! (Note: The question is: what about the reciters who had memorized the entire Qur'an?). There is also a hadith in Sahih Al-Bukhari (5: 188), which records that the Prophet had joined a group of stoning monkeys and had personally stoned a she-monkey who had committed illegal sexual intercourse. {Note: Allah has forbidden the purchase of ludicrous hadith. Qur'an 31: 6}.

There are several narrations in Sahih Al-Bukhari stating that the Prophet had asked for the guilty Jewish individuals to be stoned to death, when he was informed of the fact that this was the prescribed punishment for them in Torah. However, none of these arguments and examples can or does change the undeniable fact that the penalty prescribed in Sura an-Nur is the final known Command on this subject. It is inconceivable that Umar who was known for his strict discipline could have personally disobeyed the final Command of Sura An-Nur and instead observed a hypothetical earlier Command that was not in the Book.

5. The text of the fabricated narration records that it was the wish and desire of Umar to re-insert the verses of the Rajam (stoning to death) in the Qur'an, so that the future generations might not go astray by leaving an obligation that Allah has revealed. If for some reason or reasons, one was adamant in his or her claim that whatever is compiled within Sahih Al-Bukhari has to be nothing but authentic then he or she must also believe that spoken words of Umar are hundred percent authentic and those who are reciting and reading the Qur'an compiled and circulated by Khalifa 'Uthman have certainly gone astray. I hope he or she knows what that in reality means!

6. This narration could have been inserted by interested parties who sought support from the Prophet for the Mosaic Law of Rajam.

7. Allah has undertaken to protect the Qur'an from corruption and He has done so. The hadith insinuates that the verses of Rajam are missing from the Qur'an.

Consider. (Allah wants the believers to think and then decide). Should one uphold anything that directly, indirectly or remotely give rise to a totally unsubstantiated assertion that the Qur'an is incomplete? It is now time that we Muslims of this century try to distinguish the authentic material from the fabricated material in the corpus of Hadith.

**We have without doubt sent down the Message;
and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)
Qur'an 15: 9**

**Praise be to Allah Who hath sent to His Servant the Book
and hath allowed therein no Crookedness.
Qur'an 18: 1**

9. Hadith and Qur'an in Contradiction

Eight major areas of contradiction between the Qur'an and Hadith literature

Below I have only given the headings of these topics and the list of narrations from Hadiths that contradict the verses of the Qur'an. Brother Mohammed Abdul Malik has published texts of these narrations and the Quranic verses they contradict and his comments.²⁶

Punishment for adultery:

Al-Bukhari: 8.816; 3.885
Al-Qur'an: 24:2; 24:5-9

Extremely adverse comments supposedly made by the Prophet against women:

Al-Bukhari: 1.301; 7.30; 1.490;
Muslim 1032, 1034;
Abu Da'ud 703
Al-Qur'an 2.223; 4.19; 16.97; 33.35; 48:5-6

To approach women during their menses, for sexual purposes:

Al-Bukhari: 1.298; 1.299
Al-Qur'an: 2.222

²⁶ 'A Study of the Qur'an' by Mohammed Abdul Malek. ISBN 0 9530907 2 8 For details please see pages 137 to 154.

Aspects of character ascribed to the Prophet:

Al-Bukhari: 7.590; 7:252/253/254; 9.130

The circumstances under which and when the parts of Qur'an were supposedly to have been revealed:

Al-Bukhari: 6.209; 6.203

Al-Qur'an: 11:114; 11:5

Celestial Science:

Al-Bukhari: 4.421

Al-Qur'an: 36:38

The companions of the Prophet:

Al-Bukhari: 5.546

Al-Qur'an: 48:29; 8:63

Can anyone intercede on our behalf:

Al-Bukhari: 8.567 & 571; 1.98; 1.331; 5.224; 6.242

Muslim 389, 747, 2071, 2516

Al-Qur'an: 39.44; 2.254/255; 25.30; 2.48 & 123; 6.51/70/94; 9.114; 7.188; 7.53; 21.100; 30.13; 34.23; 11.46; 46.9; 36.23; 40:18; 43.86; 74.48; 111.1/3; 35.14; 10.3; 19.87; 20.109; 21.28

10. Further Fascinating Facts and Observations from Muslim Scholars

Dr. Sayed Abdul Wadud:

In his book 'Conspiracies Against the Qur'an'²⁷ Dr. Wadud has made some interesting observations on the subject of Hadith. The author records:

Origin of the Above-said Conspiracy –

Now let us see how and when this conspiracy against the Quran started. There was no collection of Ahadis present during the time of Muhammad (s.a.s.), nor was it compiled during the Caliphate of the first four Caliphs. Such collections were rather strongly resisted at that time. Even during the

²⁷ Khalid Publishers, Lahore, Pakistan, 1990, pg. 53.

Caliphate of Bani Umayya no such thing ever existed. These collections made their first appearance during the Abbasid Caliphate.

Dr. Wadud finds it noteworthy that the Six Collections that are said to be the utterance of the Rasool (s.a.s.), but none of those who collected them was an Arab: they are all Persians. There was no written recorded of what was collected. The collections were made 250 years after the death of Rasool (s.a.s.) depending on what was verbally related by the people all around.

The chart below adapted from Dr. Wadud's work. (p. 53), shows that Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri, Muhammad ibn Isa at-Tirmidhi, Abu Da'ud as-Sijistani, Muhammed ibn Majah and Ahmad ibn Shu'ayb an-Nasai were all residents of Persia:

Name of Composer	Resident of	Died in Year	Hadiths Collected	Hadiths Published
Al-Bukhari	Bokhara	260 A.H	600,000	2,762
Muslim	Neshapur	261 A.H.	300,000	4,348
Tirmidhi	Tirmaz	279 A.H.	300,000	3,115
Abu Da'ud	Sistan	275 A.H.	500,000	4,800
Ibn Maja	Qazveen	273 A.H	400,000	4,000
Nasai	Village in Khurasan	303 A.H.	200,000	4,321

One more observation by Dr. Wadud:

[Hadiths] are supposed to be the collection of the sayings and deeds of the Rasool. But had the Rasool himself taken any step to make them a part of "Deen"? Did he try to preserve them as he did in the case of the Qur'an? The answer is that he did not take any step towards the preservation of anything except the Qur'an. He never asked the people to note down all that he said, he never asked them to learn his sayings by heart. He never tried to satisfy himself, whether they remembered all that he said correctly. In fact he never made any arrangement for the safe preservation of his own sayings for the future. (p.17)

Dr. Murad Wilfried Hofmann

Dr. Hofmann was born into a Roman Catholic family in Germany. In 1980, at the age of fifty, he embraced Islam. Since then he has written several books on Islam in English and German, some of which are also available in Arabic. In his book, Islam 2000²⁸ Dr. Hofmann has made a number of scholarly observations that give a clear message to the Muslim ummah:

²⁸ Amana Publications, Beltsville, MD, USA, 1996.

Any “modern” Muslim will be full of admiration for what our forefathers achieved in collecting, sifting, compiling, and classifying the traditions concerning what Muhammad said, did, or tolerated. Also, no Muslim may deny that the Prophet did not only transmit but explained the divine message received by him, even through his behavior. At the same time, it is a truism to state that Sunni, Shi’ite, and Ibadi Muslims do not honor the same compilations of ahadith, for each group holds onto its own set, which is not fully compatible with the others. And, of course, while we know how much pious scholars like al Bukhari and Muslim battled to weed out forged ahadith, who can be sure that they were entirely successful?

Doubts are justified, because the six orthodox hadith collections were all assembled by the same criteria. In particular, out of sheer veneration of the Companions of the Prophet, isnad (chain of transmission) and matn (text) critique did not go as far as it would have if modern linguistic and sociohistorical analysis had been applied.

Given the fact that tens of thousands of fabricated hadiths circulated within two centuries of the Prophet’s death, we simply have to admit that the Sunnah is not as reliable as we would all wish it to be. Let us be cruelly sober: Someone clever and ruthless enough to fabricate the matn of a hadith – be it for political or “pious” reasons – would he not be clever and ruthless enough to also fabricate its isnad?

And do we not all virtually smell that something is fishy with certain political ahadith, in particular those favoring ‘Ali, or Mu’awiyah, or men over women. Do we not feel more “comfortable” with the realism of traditions by A’isha and smile about some reported from the somewhat childish perspective of the lovable Abu Hurayrah? (pp.68-69)

Dr. Shabbir Ahmed, M. D.

In his book, 'The Criminals of Islam',²⁹ at the end of an opening chapter entitled: “Wrongs from the ‘Right’ Bukhari”, Dr. Ahmed writes the following after quoting numerous passages from Al-Bukhari that are either “disturbing” or “grave insult to aesthetics and common sense”:

This chapter was only a glimpse from the voluminous Bukhari. Can you believe that even today there are people on God’s Earth according to whom denying a single narrative of Bukhari and Muslim ahadith instantly renders a Muslim into a Kaafir (infidel)?

An Islamic Website:

²⁹ Galaxy Publications, Lauderhill. Florida, USA Year 2000, see pages 4 to 13
www.galaxydastak.com

A comprehensive detailed analysis of the twenty-five most commonly quoted hadiths by the believers that are in reality “weak, fabricated and baatil ahaadeeth”, along with the scrutiny of their narrators and the chains of narrations is placed on an Islamic website <www.allaahuakbar.net>. The primary interest of this website is “Correcting Misconceptions about Islaam and Refuting the Lies and Distortions of Enemies within and outside Islaam”. The entire list of these hadiths with the analysis is to be found under the URL:

http://www.allaahuakbar.net/ahaadeeth/weak_fabricated_&_baatil_ahaadeeth.htm

My Personal Observations:

In 1989, I published the book: 'Understanding the Bible – through Koranic messages'. In the concluding chapter, the following passage appears. It is as true and relevant today as it was then.

The history of Judaism tells us that about seventeen centuries after the death of Moses the professional scribes (soferim) and rabbis constituted the heart of rabbinic Judaism. They introduced the Mishna – the corpus of legal and other matters. These rabbinical teachings became the basis for the Talmud. The Jerusalem Talmud was based upon Galilean Gemara (commentaries, traditions, history and folklore) and the Babylonian Talmud was based upon Iraqi Gemara. The combination of these two Aramaic commentaries along with the authoritative teachings of rabbi Judah ha-Nasi became a document of growing authority over the Torah (the “Law”). The respect these rabbinic works gained, during the second and third century C.E. has guided Judaism since then. The religious courts of Jews have since then recognized them as unrivalled documents. The Koran tells us that Jews have imposed upon themselves several customs and practices that God never intended. They are self-imposed hardships.

From an Islamic point of view, if at any date in the future any categorized document of the reported Hadith was to become a document of growing authority over the Koran, like the Talmud, then Islam would also be deviating from the path of true Islam. At times Muslims do impose upon themselves additional hardships and burdens that the Koran had never dictated. One does notice, on rare occasions, incidents of such improprieties and imposed hardships, but one has to think twice before raising one’s voice against deeply rooted national customs and traditional practices and being labeled as a heretic.

11. The Future of Hadith

The Crisis

Each and every believing Muslim would no doubt agree that if there is a conflict, the Qur'an should always take precedence over the Hadith. So, why are these contradictory narrations yet published and circulated?

This study has conclusively demonstrated that the Hadith literature in circulation today has major flaws. The resultant effects are:

The Muslim Ummah is being misled into believing or practicing things that they should not.

The opponents of Islam and the enemies of the Prophet, have material with which to tarnish the images of Islam and the Prophet and thereby confuse a young pious generation of Muslims by quoting narration after narration on the Internet.

These ridiculous hadiths can seriously challenge the minds of new converts and also of those who are about to join the 'Deen of Allah'.

Muslims doing the work of Daw'ah or Public Debate may have considerable difficulty defending the quoted weak, faulty or implanted narrations.

The Corrective

The best action to resolve this dilemma would be to withdraw all the narrations that are in circulation and replace them with authentic and approved reprinted hadiths. Today, the Ummah is divided. There is no leadership that can enforce what is good for the Ummah and eradicate what needs to be eradicated. In other words the essential task of revision may be a distant possibility and not for our generation, as I envisage.

The next best thing that concerned (overwhelmed) Muslims, young and old, men and women can do is to propagate widely and loudly the true facts concerning the Hadith literature without fear of being outcast or labeled as apostate. The majority of ordinary Muslims who read or hear these Narrations must be made aware of the fact that each and every narration published and circulated today cannot be accepted at its face value. The names and reputations of the compilers do not necessarily legitimize their narrations. To think or propagate otherwise would be to say that these compilers were the infallible individuals. Allah alone is Infallible. Anything that is in conflict with or contradicts the Revealed Verses should be immediately discarded irrespective of who is the preacher, narrator or compiler. If one is unwilling or hesitant to discard such narrations then in

reality one has inadvertently disregarded the revealed text that reads; "Allah's guidance is the (only) guidance..." (Qur'an 6: 71). Readers should be encouraged to develop the critical tools necessary to look for faulty hadiths and remove them from oral circulation. Muslim scholars need to address this most pressing issue that undermines all facets of Islamic life and experience.

12. Conclusion

This study of Hadith literature is critical, as the title suggests. Yet one can hardly overlook the fact that it is primarily based upon the research of Muslim scholars of our era. These most recent Islamic works collectively suggest that there are many "re-narrated" reports attributed to the Prophet that leave us with unanswered questions. In this era of cyberspace communications, global exchanges of views, and sophisticated textual analysis, the excuse of insufficient data is no longer true or acceptable. The traditional attitude that only scholars are competent to interpret dubious narrations merely evades the serious issues facing the Ummah.

Islam takes pride in being a lucid, rational and above all easy to understand faith. Consequently, attempts by the traditionalist or Ulemas to either suppress or criticize thinking Muslims who have reservations about these dubious narratives so closely related to the Prophet's life run contrary to our tradition. It would be a judicious decision to face the uncertainties and doubts as they were faced in the third and fifth centuries Hijri and re-examine the unreliable narrations. These should be weeded out and no longer promoted as authentic reports. The dialogue has already begun – in cyberspace.

Akbarally Meherally

**May Allah Guide the Ummah to HIS DEEN
based upon HIS REVEALED WORDS. Ameen.**

<http://www.mostmerciful.com/>