HADITH

What, Why, and When....

Alan Paton

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Preface

Hadiths are very important. Alongside the Quran they play for most Muslims the major part in determining Islamic law and behaviour.

This book explains what they are and how they originated and developed in the early years and centuries of Islam. It does this mainly for non-Muslims but many Muslims may also be interested especially in the historical aspects.

It is for readers who want more than an overview and who want to have some depth on key topics, but don't have the time to do all the reading. It covers all the important aspects of the subject including complex but vital matters professional scholars cover and popular works often ignore.

The author is not a scholar nor does he speak Arabic. His contribution and expertise is bringing the information together in a particular way for the well informed and interested citizen. Nearly all the knowledge, information, and analysis the book provides comes from the works of professional scholars, academics, and researchers especially those listed in Sources and Further Reading.

The Contents page listing may appear intimidating. It is long but this is the result of the frequent use of sub-headings to help and guide the reader. In fact, all the Chapters are short and to the point.

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The contents of the book are, of course, entirely the responsibility of the author.

Conventions

Dates

All dates are AH, “After Hijra”, the number of Islamic lunar years after Muhammad and his followers migrated from Mecca to Yathrib (now Medina), except for dates for modern scholars and their works which are CE “Current Era”.

The Hijra occurred in 622 CE. An Islamic lunar year is 354 or 355 days.

The section Timeline and AH-CE Dates gives information on AH-CE date conversions.

Names

Most readers of this book are unlikely to speak Arabic therefore the transliteration of Arabic names and words has been kept simple and generally follows the practice of quality newspapers or magazines. There is minimal use of the Arabic "ayn" (‘) and "hamza" (’).

Hadith

The word "hadith" is also a collective noun, meaning all hadiths. It is used in this way in the title of the book. In the body of the book the word "hadiths" is used when referring to all hadiths or multiple hadiths.

Sources in Text

All Research Papers, Studies, and Books mentioned or quoted in the text are listed in the Bibliography, and ANNEX 5 - ICMA Research, with date and publisher information.

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PART 1

THE BASICS

Chapter 1 - What Are Hadiths?

A hadith is a report of a statement or action of the Prophet Muhammad or a report of something said or done in his presence such that he gave it tacit approval.

Hadiths have two parts: the *matn*, the words of the report itself; and the *isnad*, a chain of transmitters who passed it verbally from the original witness of what the Prophet said or did to the scholar teaching it or who finally wrote it down in a hadith collection. For nearly 200 years from the time of the Prophet hadiths were mainly transmitted orally. The degree to which written recording and transmission took place is a contentious subject and covered in more detail below.

An *isnad* may take the following form, for example; the compiler of a hadith collection writes in his collection that he heard from person A who heard from B, who heard from C, who heard from D, who heard from E, who heard F, a Companion of the Prophet, narrate that he heard the Prophet say such and such or saw him do so and so. A, B, C, D, E, F, are the transmitters (*muhaddiths*). By the time written collections were established *isnads* typically had a chain of six or seven transmitters.

The *Sunna* of the Prophet

Hadiths provide the *Sunna* of the Prophet; his example of righteous behaviour and his guidance on how to behave. This information is of the utmost importance to Muslims. The Quran calls upon Muslims to follow the example and instructions of the Prophet:

O you who believe! Obey God and obey the Messenger and those among you with authority; but if you have a dispute concerning some matter, refer it to God and the Messenger if you are (truly) believers in God and the Day of Judgment. [Q4:59] and

In God's messenger you have a fine model for anyone whose hope is in God and the Last Day. [Q33:21].

Muslims believe God was guiding Muhammad in acting the way he did. For Muslims it is vital to know how the Prophet behaved and what he approved. The Quran does not give this information.

The Quran's guidance on what to do, how to behave, what rules to follow, is a very small part of the Quran. There are only a few hundred verses about Islamic prayer and ritual and even fewer dealing with crime and punishment. The Quran talks about prayer but it is the Prophet's example that provides the details such as the five times a day ritual prayer. Thus hadiths reporting what Muhammad said and did became the foundation and source of Islamic law along with the Quran.

Understanding the Quran and the Life of Muhammad

The Quran also in many parts is difficult to understand. The meaning is not clear and there are contradictions. As a consequence, Muslim scholars from early times have produced commentaries (*tafsirs*) to explain the meaning. Hadiths were an invaluable source, the only source, to provide the background to Quranic revelations - what was the Prophet doing or saying when the revelation was given, what were the circumstances, for example - and to enable scholars to say what was meant and to resolve contradictions. Hadiths have been equally important in the writing of biographies of Muhammad as again they are the major source.

The Canonical Collections

Amongst the earliest written collections of hadiths there are six that achieved canonical status among Sunni Muslims. The two most famous are *Sahih* al-Bukhari and *Sahih* Muslim and they are regarded as genuine Islamic sacred books by Sunni Muslims. The six are discussed in greater detail below.

Scope and Terminology

As well as reports of what the Prophet said or did there are reports of the sayings and doings of his Companions and even of Successors to the Companions. These are also counted as hadiths and included in hadith collections. Some scholars take the view the words and deeds of the Companions must have been modelled on those of the Prophet.

Also, the hadith format, a report and a chain of transmitters, is found in the material of the Prophet's biography, known as the *sira*, and Islam's early military history, known as the *maghazi*, concerning the battles and campaigns that spread Islam throughout the Middle East, though the chain might not go

back to the Prophet himself.

The term "tradition" is often used instead of "hadith" and "hadith" may be used to refer to material from the *sira* or *maghazi*. There is also content overlap between hadiths and *sira/maghazi* as there are hadiths of a biographical nature or concern military events.

Prophetic hadiths (the *Sunna* of the Prophet) are by far the largest part of Islamic sacred texts. See Table 1.

Table 1 - Relative Sizes of Islamic Sacred Texts

Sacred Text	Words	% of Words
Prophetic Hadiths (The *Sunna* of the Prophet)	Very approx. 940,000	66
Sira and *maghazi*	Very approx. 409,000	29
The Quran	77,430	5
		100

Size estimates for the *Sunna* and the *sira* differ widely. These are rough estimates to provide some perspective.[1]

Hadith Topics and Examples

Hadiths cover all aspects of life in the Middle East in late antiquity. They touch on everything from fundamental questions concerning human existence, the afterlife, and how to pray, to how to put on your shoes and what to do when you sneeze. Table 2 gives a list of typical hadith topics found in the well-known collections.[2]

Table 2 - Topics Covered by Hadiths

Ritual purity	Special crimes

Prayer	Adjudication
Funerals	Lost and found
Alms	Warfare
Fasting	Governance
Pilgrimage	Hunting
Marriage	Animal sacrifice
Divorce	Beverages
Releasing slaves	Clothing
Buying and selling	Morals and good manners
Inheritance	Religious knowledge
Wills/Testaments	The end of the world
Oaths and pledges	Military expeditions
Blood money	Virtues of the Prophet

ANNEX 1 lists all 97 topics with the number of hadiths in each topic covered in *Sahih* al-Bukhari, one the most famous hadith collections. If closely related topics in this collection are added together the largest broader categories are:

Religious Instruction and Knowledge (24% of all hadiths)
Prayer (12%)
Military Campaigns and Jihad (12%)
Family Life and Law (7%)
Pilgrimage and Festivals (6%)
Others (39%)

Such a range of subjects and a very large number of hadiths (10,000 plus),

makes it difficult to select a sample, but it is done here at the beginning, otherwise everything will sound theoretical without examples. Only the text of the report (the *matn*) is given.

This is what the Prophet said, did, or approved. The information in brackets gives the collection in which the hadith is found and two further references to locate it. The first reference is used in printed publications and sometimes on the web. The second is widely used on the web.

Prayer, Belief, Signs

Whoever establishes prayers during the nights of Ramadan faithfully out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not for showing off), all his past sins will be forgiven.
[al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 30 / Book 2, Hadith 36]

While the people were offering the Fajr prayer at Quba (near Medina), someone came to them and said: "It has been revealed to Allah's Messenger tonight, and he has been ordered to pray facing the Kaba." So turn your faces to the Kaba. Those people were facing Sham (Jerusalem) so they turned their faces towards the Kaba (at Mecca).
[al-Bukhari, Book 8, Hadith 55 / Book 8, Hadith 397]

Allah's Messenger said, "If anyone of you enters a mosque, he should pray two rakat before sitting."
[al-Bukhari, Book 8, Hadith 93 / Book 8, Hadith 435]

al-Islam is raised on five (pillars), testifying (the fact) that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad is His bondsman and messenger, and the establishment of prayer, payment of Zakat, Pilgrimage to the House (Kaba) and the fast of Ramadan.
[Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 21 / Book 1, Hadith 20]

Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah, and whoever obeys the ruler I appoint, obeys me, and whoever disobeys him, disobeys me.
[al-Bukhari, Book 93, Hadith 1 / Book 89, Hadith 251]

If somebody sees his Muslim ruler doing something he disapproves of, he

should be patient, for whoever becomes separate from the Muslim group even for a span and then dies, he will die as those who died in the Pre-lslamic period of ignorance (as rebellious sinners).
[al-Bukhari, Book 93, Hadith 7 / Book 89, Hadith 257]

Near the establishment of the Hour there will be days during which Religious ignorance will spread, knowledge will be taken away (vanish) and there will be much Al-Harj, and Al-Harj means killing.
[al-Bukhari, Book 92, Hadith 14 / Book 88, Hadith 184]

Doing Good
The one who looks after and works for a widow and for a poor person, is like a warrior fighting for Allah's Cause or like a person who fasts during the day and prays all the night.
[al-Bukhari, Book 78, Hadith 37 / Book 73, Hadith 35]

By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I inform you about a matter which if you do it, then you will love one another? Spread the Salam among each other.
[al-Tirmidhi, Book 42, Hadith 1]

Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the gravest lie in talk and do not be inquisitive about one another and do not spy upon one another and do not feel envy with the other, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. And be fellow-brothers and servants of Allah.
[Muslim, Book 45, Hadith 35 / Book 32, Hadith 6214]

None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.
[al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 6 / Book 2, Hadith 13]

Concerning Women
The Prophet said: "I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful." It was asked, "Do they disbelieve in Allah?" (or are they ungrateful to Allah?) He replied, "They are ungrateful to their husbands and are ungrateful for the favors and the good

(charitable deeds) done to them. If you have always been good (benevolent) to one of them and then she sees something in you (not of her liking), she will say, 'I have never received any good from you'".
[al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 22 / Book 2, Hadith 28]

I have not left after me any (chance) of turmoil more injurious to men than the harm done to the men because of women.
[Muslim, Book 49, Hadith 9 / Book 36, Hadith 6603]

During the battle of Al-Jamal, Allah benefited me with a Word (I heard from the Prophet). When the Prophet heard the news that the people of the Persia had made the daughter of Khosrau their Queen (ruler), he said, "Never will succeed such a nation as makes a woman their ruler".
[al-Bukhari, Book 92, Hadith 50 / Book 88, Hadith 219]

Jihad
I have been commanded to fight against people, till they testify to the fact that there is no god but Allah, and believe in me (that) I am the messenger (from the Lord) and in all that I have brought. And when they do it, their blood and riches are guaranteed protection on my behalf except where it is justified by law, and their affairs rest with Allah.
[Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 34 / Book 1, Hadith 31]

Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords.
[al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 34 / Book 52, Hadith 73]

The Hour will not be established until you fight with the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say. "O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him".
[al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 139 / Book 52, Hadith 177]

Apostasy
A man embraced Islam and then reverted back to Judaism. Muadh bin Jabal came and saw the man with Abu Musa. Muadh asked, "What is wrong with this (man)?" Abu Musa replied, "He embraced Islam and then reverted back to Judaism." Muadh said, "I will not sit down unless you kill him (as it is) the verdict of Allah and His Apostle".

[al-Bukhari, Book 93, Hadith 21 / Book 89, Hadith 271]

Some Zanadiqa (atheists) were brought to Ali and he burnt them. The news of this event, reached Ibn Abbas who said, "If I had been in his place, I would not have burnt them, as Allah's Messenger forbade it, saying, 'Do not punish anybody with Allah's punishment (fire).' I would have killed them according to the statement of Allah's Messenger, 'Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him'".
[al-Bukhari, Book 88, Hadith 5 / Book 84, Hadith 57]

Punishment
Whomever you find doing the actions of the people of Lut then kill the one doing it, and the one it is done to.
[al-Tirmidhi, Book 17, Hadith 40 / Book 15, Hadith 1456]

The Prophet said, "O Unais! Go to the wife of this (man) and if she confesses (that she has committed illegal sexual intercourse), then stone her to death".
[al-Bukhari, Book 40, Hadith 14 / Book 38, Hadith 508]

There was a man who looked after the family and the belongings of the Prophet and he was called Karkara. The man died and Allah's Messenger said, "He is in the (Hell) Fire." The people then went to look at him and found in his place, a cloak he had stolen from the war booty.
[al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 280 / Book 52, Hadith 308]

Personal Behaviour
If you want to put on your shoes, put on the right shoe first; and if you want to take them off, take the left one first. Let the right shoe be the first to be put on and the last to be taken off.
[al-Bukhari, Book 77, Hadith 72 / Book 72, Hadith 747]

None of you should drink while standing; and if anyone forgets, he must vomit.
[Muslim, Book 36, Hadith 153 / Book 23, Hadith 5022]

Allah likes sneezing and dislikes yawning, so if someone sneezes and then praises Allah, then it is obligatory on every Muslim who heard him, to say:

May Allah be merciful to you. But as regards yawning, it is from Satan, so one must try one's best to stop it, if one says 'Ha' when yawning, Satan will laugh at him.
[al-Bukhari, Book 78, Hadith 247 / Book 73, Hadith 242]

Size of Hadiths

The above hadiths are short having only 44 words per hadith. Hadiths in general have an average size of about 94 words per hadith, over double that shown above.[3] There are many hadiths that have a thousand words or so, that is about two pages of A4, and are like short stories.

[ANNEX 2 gives a larger selection of hadiths on the above topics and links to websites that provide access to the well known hadith collections]

Chapter 2 - Origins, Transmission, and Recording of Hadiths - What and How

The Companions

Hadiths start with the Prophet's Companions. The persons who witnessed what Muhammad said or did. Sunni Muslims believed any faithful Muslim who stayed a Muslim for life and only saw the Prophet, perhaps for just a second or two, qualified as a Companion and they may have numbered as many as 100,000.

The number originating hadiths was a very small proportion. An analysis of various hadith collections shows 960 or so Companions originated hadiths. Some originated very many more than others. See Table 3.[1]

Table 3 - Top Companion Hadith Narrators	
Companion	**Times given as source**
Abu Hurayra	5374
Abd Allah ibn Umar	2630
Anas ibn Malik	2286
Aisha Umm al-Muminin	2210
Abd Allah ibn Abbas	1660
Jabir ibn Abd Allah	1540
Abu Sa'id al-Khudri	1170

The Companion Abu Hurayra (d. 58 AH),[2] who knew the Prophet for less than three years is given as the source of a hadith 5374 times in a later compilation of collections.[3] This counts repetitions of the same report, the same *matn*, by different *isnads*. Recent research suggests there are between

1200 and 2200 different Abu Hurayra *matn* reports.[4]

Aisha, the Prophet's favourite wife, is the source for 2210 hadiths and a household servant, Anas ibn Malik for 2286. [See next Chapter for explanation of hadith numbers]

Several other Companions account for voluminous numbers of hadith reports but after them the reports ascribed to individual Companions drops steeply. There are only 3 Companions who are the source for between 500 and 1000 hadith reports, 27 between 100 and 500, 18 between 50 and 100, the vast majority of the 960 Companion narrators being responsible for only one or two or a handful of hadiths.

The next generation that learnt hadiths from the Companions are known as the Successors, and they in their turn passed on hadiths to the following generation, the Successors to the Successors.

Primacy of Oral Transmission

Oral transmission played the greatest part in this transmission from one generation to the next. Arab society had a strong tradition of oral poetry and story telling and a dependence on oral transmission was perfectly natural. Islamic jurists much preferred direct oral testimony over documentary evidence.

Paper had not yet been introduced to the region and Arabic writing was still primitive. It lacked vowels and different letters were written the same way. To understand a written word correctly it was necessary to know the context. "Mnd the bg drp" could mean "mind the bag drop" or "mend the big drip".

Small notebooks, known as *sahifas*, made of expensive materials such as papyrus or parchment, or very crude materials, such as palm leaves, were used by some individuals to record hadiths. These *sahifas* were not for circulation. They served as memory aids for their owners and an owner would pass on the contents by reciting them.

Hadith transmission was very much word of mouth, person to person or teacher to pupil in the first century following the Prophet's death. Storytellers also played an important part in building up and circulating the body of hadiths in the first century.

Contradictory Accounts of what the Prophet Permitted

There are hadiths that report what the Prophet himself thought of the recording of his deeds and decisions and of what he allowed but they are contradictory. In a hadith Muhammad tells his Companions not to record his words because they might be confused with the words of the Quran.

Do not take down anything from me, and he who took down anything from me except the Quran, he should efface that and narrate from me, for there is no harm in it and he who attributed any falsehood to me - and Hammam said: I think he also said:" deliberately" - he should in fact find his abode in the Hell-Fire.

[Muslim, Book 55, Hadith 92 / Book 42, Hadith 7147]

Other reports say recording was encouraged and Muhammad allowed Muslims who visited Medina to make records to take away. Muslim scholars explain this clash by claiming the hadiths forbidding their recording in writing for fear of confusion with the Quran came early in the Prophet's career, and reports encouraging their writing down came later when the Quran was much better known throughout the Muslim community.

The concern over hadiths being confused with the Quran continued under the first four caliphs. One report tells of the first caliph, Abu Bakr, burning his collection of 500 hadiths and another says he forbade Companions collecting hadiths because they argued over them.

It became an issue again during the time of the second caliph, Umar I (d. 23). He consulted the Companions over the formal collection and writing of hadiths and was told it was a good idea. Yet, he had second thoughts and after much prayer decided not to allow it as it might especially lead to the neglect of the Quran. The neglect and corruption of their sacred books is one of Islam's major accusations against Christianity and Judaism.

A hadith in *Sunan* Abu Dawud reports the first Umayyad caliph Mu'awiya asked for a hadith to be recorded and written down and was reminded by Zayd ibn Thabit who had been a scribe to the Prophet that the Prophet had forbidden the writing down of hadiths, his words and deeds.

Chapter 16 discusses what the Prophet said and the roles of oral and written hadith communication.

Formal Collection and Writing of Hadiths

It was nearly a century after the Prophet's death before the official collection

and writing down of hadiths finally happened. It was ordered by the Umayyad caliph Umar II (63-101). His motives are variously given as a desire to preserve hadiths so they might not be lost and the desire to support government with the collection of hadiths concerning administrative and tax matters.[5] There are no surviving copies of what resulted from his initiative.

Musannafs

The earliest surviving documents involving the organised recording of hadiths are in the form of scholarly *musannafs*. *Musannafs* are reference books created by Muslim scholars that answered a range of Islamic legal and ritual questions, such as how to pray and how to divide inheritances.

They are organised by topic and include mainly reports of the actions and beliefs of Companions and Successors, the opinions of Muslim scholars, and the views of the *musannaf* author himself. Prophetic reports are in the minority. They provide a record of Islamic legal practice and thinking as it had developed over the first hundred years or so of Islam.

One of the earliest surviving *musannafs* is the *Muwatta'* of Malik ibn Anas (93-179) which contains 1720 reports of which 527 are Prophetic hadiths. *Muwatta'* means "well trodden, agreed path". Other surviving *musannafs* are the works of Abd al-Razzaq (126-211), Abu Yusuf (d. 182), and Ibn Abi Shayba (156-235).

Musnads

Another early type of hadith collection book is the *musnad*. These collections concentrate on Prophetic hadiths listing those narrated by individual Companions, and can cover all Companions, a number, or just one. Companions with their hadiths are sometimes listed alphabetically but mostly according to the status and prestige of the Companion. This organisation by narrators is useful for analysis but not for locating hadiths on particular topics.

Musnads were part of a trend that made Prophetic hadiths supreme. A leading scholar driving this trend was al-Shafi'i (150-204). He had been a student of Malik ibn Anas and believed only hadiths of the Prophet himself could serve as the source of law alongside the Quran, and they should replace ancient community *sunan* (the plural of *sunna*), still followed in the different parts of the expanding Islamic empire, and the opinions of scholars in the developing regional schools of legal practice.

Hadiths of the Prophet himself now became the overriding focus of hadith research and collections. Collectors concentrated on gathering all the hadiths they could find. They didn't pay particular attention to the strength or weakness of the transmission chains from the Companion, though the interest in *isnads* that went back to the Prophet represented the first steps in the standard transmitter evaluation and *isnad* criticism that later became so important.

The best known *musnad* was produced by Ibn Hanbal (164-241). It contains about 27,000 hadiths including repetitions. He admitted his collection included weak hadiths - the reported words or actions might not be those of the Prophet himself - but he is reported to have said regarding the Prophet's *Sunna* all hadiths deserved consideration. The earliest known surviving *musnad* is by Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi (133-204).

Sunans

Another form of hadith collection soon emerged, the *sunan*. *Sunans* were similar to *musannafs*, designed to be used as legal references and organised by topic, but they used only Prophetic hadiths with complete *isnads*. The authors of such books also sought to use what they believed to be authentic hadiths, those with convincing *isnads*, or because they had wide support amongst scholars. Two known and very early *sunans* are those of al-Khurasani (d. 227) and al-Darimi (181-255).

The methods developed by early hadith scholars to determine hadith authenticity - was a hadith genuinely from the Prophet or was it fabricated in some way - are discussed in Chapter 4.

The Canonical Collections

The increased interest in Prophetic hadiths and in knowing if they were genuine finally led to the six canonical collections. The first two listed in Table 4, al-Bukhari and Muslim, were the first hadith collections in which all the hadiths included met certain authenticity requirements.

These two collections also became the most famous and are know as the *Sahihan*, "the two *Sahihs*" (*sahih* means authentic). Of the two, al-Bukhari is considered the most authoritative and it provides legal commentary whereas Muslim is considered better organised and easier to use. *Sahih* al-Bukhari is considered the second most important Islamic text after the Quran.

Table 4 - The Six Canonical Collections	
The Six Canonical Collections	**Lifetime AH**
Sahih al-Bukhari	194-256
Sahih Muslim	204-261
Sunan Abu Dawud	202-275
Jami‘ al-Tirmidhi	209-279
Sunan al-Nasa’i	224-303
Sunan Ibn Majah	209-273

The other canonical collections also concentrated on hadiths believed to be reliable because of the quality of their *isnads*, but hadiths were included if they were already widely accepted by jurists or if they were on topics where no fully authenticated hadith could be found. [The next Chapter gives more information on all these collections]

Based on the lifetimes of the collectors all the canonical collections were put together most likely in the period 220-270 AH, with al-Bukhari and Muslim, the *Sahihan*, becoming available in 245-255 AH, over 200 years after the death of the Prophet. It was nearly another 200 years before they achieved canonical status.

Chapter 3 - Hadith Numbers and Collections

How many hadiths are there? A simple question but there is no simple answer. There is no agreed convention on how to count hadiths. There are several problems.

A particular Prophetic action or statement can have different transmission chains (*isnads*). This can be counted as one hadith or as separate hadiths for each *isnad*. The text (*matn*) of a Prophetic action or statement can have minor or major variations in the text and can be counted as a single hadith or as separate hadiths for each text version. There is also scope for disagreement over whether a text difference makes a new hadith or not.

Hadiths also have an authenticity classification based on the soundness of the *isnad*, indicating if the words and deeds are likely to really go back to the Prophet: *sahih* (sound); *hasan* (fair); and *da'if* (weak), and whether or not a count includes all categories is not always clear. Hadith collectors also differed in their judgements of what made an *isnad* sound.

Reports of the sayings and actions of Companions and even Successors are part of many hadith collections and are included in the numbers making hadith counting even more confusing.

If all types of hadiths and all the different chains and text versions are counted the number of hadiths runs into hundreds of thousands. If the variations are ignored the total number of distinct Prophetic hadiths is believed to be nearly 10,000. Some sources give lower numbers, 4000 to 5000.[1]

The Canonical Collections

Though overall counting is difficult, examining the number of hadiths in each of these collections helps give an idea of the size of the hadith corpus.

In addition to the counting problems mentioned above, the publishing and editing process over the years introduced differences, different editions of the same work having different numbers.

Table 5 below shows the most frequently quoted hadith counts for the canonical collections found in the literature and on the web.

Table 5 - Estimates of the Number of Hadiths in the Canonical Collections		
Collection	**Number of Hadiths**	**Less Repetitions**
al-Bukhari	7563 or 7397 or 7275	3397 or 2602 or 2230 or 2134
Muslim	12000 or 9200 or 7190	4000 or 3033 or 2200
Abu Dawud	5274 or 4800	
al-Tirmidhi	3956	
al-Nasa'i	5769 or 5750 or 5270	
Ibn Majah	4485 or 4397	

Ignoring repetitions and allowing for overlap there are about 9500 different hadiths in the six books.

Sahih al-Bukhari (194-256)

Al-Bukhari spent 16 years and travelled widely in compiling his collection. He says he drew on some 600,000 hadiths he discovered in circulation at the time he worked. Unfortunately there are no figures that break down this huge number into those that were hadith repetitions and those he choose not to use because he thought them unreliable or for some other reason. Al-Bukhari himself said he omitted some sound hadiths so as not to make his collection too big. This very large number raises questions which are discussed in the last section of Chapter 6.

Though al-Bukhari is said to have applied strict criteria in selecting hadiths he does not give an explanation of his methods or say what he decided and took into account for particular hadiths. It is believed by other experts that he required some proof that a transmitter had transmitted material to the next transmitter in person at least once. Like other scholars of his time al-Bukhari concentrated on transmission chains and gave less attention to the content of the report being transmitted.

At the beginning of chapters al-Bukhari also provides quotes from the

Quran or the Prophet or a Companion or scholar to help understand the coverage and purpose of the chapter. These don't have *isnads* and are not hadiths, but they are sometimes counted as hadiths which misleadingly boosts the quoted number of hadiths in al-Bukhari's collection including repetitions to 9000 or so.

In the early days al-Bukhari's collection was not free of criticism. His assessments of some narrators were shown to be at fault and one scholar, al-Daraqutni (306-385) claimed some 200 traditions contained in the book were weak.

Referencing al-Bukhari

Sahih al-Bukhari is published in two formats. One is divided into 97 books (chapters) and is by far the most widely used for printed publications. Each book deals with a particular topic. [ANNEX 1 gives list of book topics.] It has 7563 hadiths according to the most widely used numbering system and hadiths often appear in more than one book.

The other format originally used by the USC-MSA (University of Southern California-Muslim Students Association) is divided into 93 books and is the form most often found on the web though experts think it should be phased out. The difference is caused by different combinations of topics rather than hadiths being omitted but it means there are two different reference systems for identifying hadiths in *Sahih* al-Bukhari.

***Sahih* Muslim (204-261)**

Sahih Muslim is considered the second most authentic collection after *Sahih* al-Bukhari. It has significantly more hadiths but does not have the commentary on legal matters given by al-Bukhari and it is considered to be the better organised. Muslim keeps all the narrations of particular hadith in the same section.

Muslim produced his collection to counter what he saw as the lax standards of other collectors who collected as many hadiths as possible without any concern for their authenticity in order to impress others. He also believed it was important ordinary people should be given only trustworthy traditions.

In explaining his methodology Muslim says he does not require absolute proof two transmitters met. He requires they were contemporaries and there is no definite evidence they did not meet.

Comparison of *Sahih* al-Bukhari and *Sahih* Muslim

There are about 2300 hadiths common to both al-Bukhari and Muslim and if the two works are combined they produce about 4100 hadiths without repetition. They also collected from much the same set of narrators. Counting all those mentioned about 70% are referenced by both collectors, 12% by only Muslim, and 18% by only al-Bukhari.[2]

Al-Bukhari is also considered by scholars to have applied stricter criteria than Muslim in deciding the authenticity of hadiths. For example, al-Bukhari required the people in a chain, the transmitters, were known to have met in person for a report to be passed between them, as opposed to Muslim's requirements two transmitters had lived in the same period and had had the possibility of meeting.

Other Canonical Collections

Abu Dawud (202-275) was a student of Ibn Hanbal and he concentrated on hadiths used for making Islamic law. He notes hadiths he thinks have serious flaws in their *isnads*.[3]

al-Tirmidhi (209-279) was a student of al-Bukhari and he also concentrated on hadiths used as legal proofs. He is the only collector to provide detailed comments on the authenticity of individual hadiths and notes weak hadiths where they are included.

al-Nasa'i (224-303) was also a student of al-Bukhari and concentrated on authentic hadiths.

Ibn Majah (209-273) tried to concentrate on authentic hadiths but later hadith scholars estimated one quarter were weak. In the early days Ibn Majah's *sunan* was not always counted as one of the canonised.

Canonisation

These canonical collections did not immediately achieve canonical status. Initially they were seen as just more hadith collections that were open to various criticisms and it wasn't until the early part of the fifth century (400+), near on 200 years after their creation that al-Bukhari and Muslim were recognised as canonical works, and perhaps another hundred years or more before there was general agreement on the six.[4]

Surprisingly, even keen hadith supporters had criticisms of hadith collections, such as the *Sahihan*, that claimed to be authentic. Authentic

collections, especially if assigned official status of any kind set limits to hadiths that could be used in arguments with those who opposed hadiths. Any hadith not in the authentic collections could more easily be challenged. In response to this criticism both al-Bukhari and Muslim made clear they did not claim to have included all sound hadiths.

There was also widespread use of weak hadiths in popular preaching to encourage good behaviour and the existence of official authentic collections would undermine this use of weak hadiths which did no harm and did a lot of good.

Eventually by the middle of the fourth century (350) the value of a selection of authoritative and authentic hadith books was recognised. There were many works in circulation and the community needed to have a manageable set of hadith books that scholars and students could concentrate on to study the Prophet's *Sunna*. Initially four books were most favoured including al-Bukhari and Muslim, the *Sahihan*, which had special status containing only authentic hadiths, and *Sunan* Abu Dawud and *Sunan* al-Nasa'i.

By the early 400s AH, the Hanbali and the al-Shafi'i law schools that formed out of the supporters of hadiths agreed the *Sahihan* contained totally authentic hadiths. The Maliki school soon followed and by the 700s AH, the Hanafi school that had been doubtful gave its support.

Also during these early times, notwithstanding the status of the collections, scholars would still criticise individual hadiths that they disagreed with. It was only later in modern times that any criticism was controversial and rejected.

Musannafs - Famous Surviving Early Collections

Malik ibn Anas (93-179) Malik's *Muwatta'* contains 1716 reports. 285 (17%) are from Successors, 613 (36%) from Companions, 291 (17%) are Malik's own opinion, and 527 (31%) are Prophetic hadiths.[5] Malik choose reports according to their legal topic and relevance rather than any formal criticism standard. The hadiths and reports sometimes give only the *matn* not the *isnad*, the chain of transmitters.

This neglect of *isnads* and extensive use of non-Prophetic reports is in striking contrast to the later concern with hadith authenticity and demand for Prophetic hadiths.

Abd al-Razzaq (126-211) Another surviving *musannaf* was produced by Abd

al-Razzaq a student of Malik and it is significantly larger with eleven volumes compared to Malik's single volume *Muwatta'*. Abd al-Razzaq's immediate sources for most of the hadiths in his *musannaf* are three transmitters who are contemporaries of Malik: Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161), Ma'mar Ibn Rashid (d. 153), and Ibn Jurayj (d. 150). Like Malik, Abd al-Razzaq gives reports from Companions and Successors much more often than Prophetic hadiths, and even when quoting the Prophet he does not show concern for the existence of sound *isnads*.

Ibn Abi Shayba (156-235). Ibn Abi Shayba's *musannaf* contains the huge number of 39,000 reports which again are mainly from Companions and Successors. It comprises 39 books covering all hadith subjects. In the books concerning Alms Tax, Divorce, and Quranic punishments comprising 3628 narrations only 9% of the reports are from the Prophet which gives some indication of the position of Prophetic hadiths in Islamic law in the early part of the 200s AH.[6]

Musnads - Famous Surviving Early Collections

Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi (133-204) Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi produced the earliest known surviving *musnad* containing 2767 reports narrated by 281 Companions.

Ibn Hanbal (164-241) Ibn Hanbal's *musnad* contains about 27,000 hadiths, the exact number depending on the edition or estimator. This very high number includes repetitions, counting the same *matn* with different *isnads* as separate hadiths. Ignoring these *isnad* variations the number of distinct *matns* is estimated to be about 5200.

Hanbali tradition has it that all the hadiths are sound but Ibn Hanbal himself criticised some of the hadiths as weak and another scholar estimated only 57% are *sahih* (sound), 19% are *hasan* (acceptable) and 24% are *da'if* (weak). The weak hadiths include the tradition that a goat ate part of an early copy of the Quran that was never recovered.[7]

About half the hadiths, 52%, concern legal matters, laws Muslims must obey, 17% concern encouragements or incentives for pious behaviour, and the rest cover prayers and various religious beliefs. The content is similar to that of the canonical six sharing many of the same hadith originators.[8]

Other Collections

During the third century and well after, in light of the growing importance of Prophetic hadiths, other types of hadith collections were created in addition to the types mentioned above. Sunni hadith scholars compiled collections on specific topics, such as asceticism and piety, perfect manners, and heavenly punishments and rewards.

A very popular subject was the importance of relying entirely on the Quran and the *Sunna* of the Prophet and not using any other source or human reason. There were also collections covering the virtues of the Companions partly in response to the Shi‘i criticism of Companions who had not supported Ali in his claim to the caliphship. Like the compilers of early *musnads* these compilers were not particularly concerned with the authenticity of the hadiths they included.

During the 200 years or so before the *Sahihan* achieved canonical status hadith collection continued and reached its peak around the middle of the fourth century. Various other *musnad* and *sahih* works were produced and scholars continued to search for new hadiths and certainly did not believe all had been identified. One scholar, al-Hakim al-Naysaburi (d. 405), produced a compilation of nearly 9000 hadiths demonstrating the number of Prophetic hadiths that had not been included in the *Sahihan*.[9]

Huge *musnads* were also compiled one of the most famous being that of al-Tabarani (d. 360) that included about 25,000 traditions. It is also known as a *mu‘jam*, a type of collection that lists its contents alphabetically. Al-Tabarani like many of the others was content to include weak hadiths and many of the *isnads* he gives stretch credibility having only three or four transmitters going back over three hundred years to the time of the Prophet.

The process of gathering hadiths and compiling new collections eventually faded out by the early-mid fifth century when it was generally recognised all hadiths had been collected; there were no more to be discovered.

ANNEX 3 gives more information on hadith collections including a Table listing the better-known early *musannafs*, *musnads*, and other types.

Chapter 4 - Hadith Authenticity

Scale of Fabrication and the Reasons for It

Hadith fabrication occurred during the Prophet's lifetime. There is even a hadith *"Whoever lies about me intentionally, let him prepare for himself a seat in Hellfire"*[1] and after his death the problem grew. By the end of the second century (150-200) the number of hadith reports had mushroomed and fabricated and authentic hadiths were thoroughly mixed together. There were several major causes for the enormous growth of fabrications.

Civil Wars and Conflicts

The first Muslim civil war (36-41) that saw Ali, the fourth and last of the rightly-guided caliphs, deposed and the governor of Syria, Mu'awiya, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, become caliph was one of them. Both sides invented hadiths to bolster their position or win support.

Ali's supporters fabricated a hadith claiming the Prophet said *"If you see Mu'awiya ascend my pulpit, then kill him."*[2] Mu'awiya's followers produced hadiths supporting him and against Ali. Hadiths appeared praising the first three caliphs seen as usurpers by Ali's supporters. The Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik who came to power during the second Muslim civil war (60-72) arranged a hadith that made Jerusalem, which was in the area he controlled, as important for pilgrimage as Mecca, which was in an area controlled by a rival. Fabrication increased even once the Umayyads were established and was continued by the Abbasids to support their rule when they supplanted the Umayyads. Hadiths report the Prophet's favourable treatment and support of Abbasid ancestors.

Hadiths also appeared that clearly have the purpose of suppressing dissent and protecting those in power. Two good examples are found in al-Bukhari. *"If somebody sees his Muslim ruler doing something he disapproves of, he should be patient, for whoever becomes separate from the Muslim group even for a span and then dies, he will die as those who died in the Pre-Islamic period of ignorance (as rebellious sinners)."*, and in Abu Dawud as well as al-Bukhari, *"Every emir is to be followed into war whether he be just or not, and the salat must be performed behind any Muslim be he just or*

wicked".[3]

Religious Reasons - Good and Bad

Theological difference such as that concerning the nature of the Quran were another cause of fabricated hadiths. In 212 AH the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun adopted the doctrine of createdness. The Quran was God's created word in contrast to the views of traditionist such as the hadith scholar Ibn Hanbal that it was co-eternal with God and hence, uncreated. Ibn Hanbal was imprisoned and tortured and hadiths soon appeared reporting the Prophet had said *"The Quran is eternal, uncreated, and he who says otherwise is a disbeliever"*. Ibn Hanbal was eventually released and another caliph adopted the uncreated belief.

Fabricated hadiths appeared supporting or undermining the different Islamic legal schools then emerging. *"There will be in my community a man named Abu Hanifa, and he will be its lamp ... and there will be in my community a man named Muhammad b. Idris [al-Shafi'i] whose strife is more harmful than that of Satan."*

A very large number of hadiths were fabricated for the best of reasons. The need to motivate and teach was always great, and guidance expressed in the terms *"The Prophet said .... "* was likely to be the most effective. Consequently, pious Muslims didn't think twice about fabricating Prophetic hadiths if they believed the cause was just.

The Increasing Importance of the *Sunna* of the Prophet

Islamic law itself took time to evolve and as the *Sunna* of the Prophet replaced the ancient practices of the community as the main source of law alongside the Quran, and as Islam was established in new centres in the Middle East, Prophetic hadiths became more and more important and with that, the incentive to discover or invent new Prophetic hadiths grew stronger. Fabricated Prophetic hadiths were often based on what Companions or Successors had done or how scholars genuinely believed the Prophet would have behaved.

***Isnad* Fabrication**

As *isnads* became more important, these too were fabricated and *isnad* fabrication may have been as common as *matn* fabrication.[4] In discussions amongst hadith scholars a participant would not get attention for any hadith he

wished to discuss or present unless it had an *isnad*. Also new *isnads* might be fabricated to enhance the authority of existing hadiths.

Authentication - The Leading Role of the *Isnad*

In response to the growing number of fabricated hadiths Sunni hadith scholars developed methods to determine hadith authenticity. This didn't happen quickly and it took 100 years or so until hadith authentication become a widely practiced discipline during the first half of the third century (200-250)

The first and most important requirement was for the hadith report to have an *isnad*. There is an early indication of the importance of *isnads* in the comments of a Successor, Ibn Sirin (d. 110), who said:

In the early period no one would ask about the isnad. But when the strife began they would say 'Name for us your sources' so that the People of the Sunna could be looked at and their hadiths accepted, and the People of Heresy could be looked at and their hadiths ignored.

The strife referred to is probably the second Muslim civil war (60-72), when the grandson of Ali tried to overthrow the successor of the first Umayyad caliph.[5]

The date at which *isnads* became a more formal requirement is debated by scholars. The first generations of Muslim scholars did not bother with *isnads* for all reports all of the time. They were in wide use from 80 AH onwards but they probably achieved their status as an essential element of a hadith in the time of al-Shafi'i (150-204) who was a major influence in establishing the practice that only hadiths traced back to the Prophet himself could be accepted as a source of Islamic law. The statements of other famous scholars illustrate the leading role of *isnads*: *"The Isnad is part of the religion. If it were not for the Isnad, then any person could say (about Islam) whatever he wished"*, Ibn al-Mubarak (118-181); and *"[the] Isnad is the weapon of a believer so if he does not have a weapon with what will he fight with?"*, Sufyan al-Thawri (97-161).

The essential role of the *isnad* led to a second requirement; what was known about the *isnad*? Were all the individual transmitters identified? Were all the individuals in a chain of transmission reliable and trustworthy? Was the chain continuous and contiguous? Consequently great efforts were made to gather information about *isnads* and transmitters.

Transmitter Evaluation

There were in principle three main aspects to transmitter evaluation.

It was necessary to identify and correctly name individuals who transmitted hadiths. It was of no use to say a hadith came from "Umar" or "someone" in Medina. A convention developed that a transmitter needed to be identified by at least two established transmitters who, for example, narrated hadiths from him, before it could be said the transmitter really existed.[6] Knowing where and when a transmitter lived was also important.

Hadith critics sought information regarding a transmitters qualities and moral character. People who were liars or forgetful could not be reliable transmitters. Those who held correct Islamic beliefs, were free of guilt from major sins, were upright and had good memories could be taken as reliable transmitters. Critics developed broad classifications of acceptable transmitters from those who were completely trustworthy to those who were sometimes careless but otherwise honest.

Obtaining this kind of information on persons, most of whom would have been dead, in different cities in the Middle East of late antiquity would have encountered enormous difficulties, if it was simply not impossible, and it really represents an ideal. It is very likely early hadith critics were fairly flexible in their methods and in making all these judgements. Chapter 14 discusses modern research throwing some light on what was achieved in practice.

Last but not least, as it probably played the greatest part in transmitter evaluation, it was important a transmitter's reports were corroborated.[7] Fellow students made reports that confirmed what the transmitter reported from a particular teacher. A transmitter's reliability was greater if contemporaries transmitted similar hadiths from the same source and a hadith was more convincing if there were independent but similar versions of it.

Transmitter Biographical Dictionaries

The results of the work that went into transmitter evaluation was set down in biographical dictionaries of hadith transmitters providing their correct and full names and other useful information regarding where they lived, the date they died, and their personal qualities. The earliest of these dictionaries, the Book of Generations by Ibn Sa'd (d. 230), covers some 4300 transmitters. Al-Bukhari (194-256), the author of the most famous hadith canonical collection

also produced a biographical dictionary with over 12,300 entries.

Other early dictionaries include those compiled by Ibn al-Juzjani (d. 259), Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi (240-327) covering more than 18,000 transmitters, and Ibn Hibban (d. 354). Also in the early stages of hadith scholarship, individual scholars were both collectors and critics of hadiths. The contents of biographical dictionaries are subject to questions concerning authenticity just like the *isnads* and hadiths themselves.

Isnad Completeness, Contiguity of Transmitters, and Form of Transmission

The completeness and contiguity of a transmitter chain was as crucial as the identification and reliability of the individual transmitters. There could not be any gaps in a chain. All the transmitters had to be identified and where transmitter A was said to have received a hadith from transmitter B, hadith critics would check if A and B had lived at the same time and had the opportunity to meet. Hence, the significance of transmitters' death dates.

The form in which reports were communicated also had to be acceptable though what this meant in practice varied. Hadith critics studied the phrasing of reports and took various positions on whether the wording meant the transmitter had heard something in person from his source or was simply reporting what he believed or had been told the source had said.

The transmitter may say of the person who transmitted to him, "he related to me" or "he reported to me" which mean, or at least imply, he heard directly from his informant. However, imprecise terms are often found especially in older parts of the *isnad*, such as the term "*an*" simply meaning "on the authority of", and "he said", "it was reported to me", "I was told", terms which may or may not involve direct contact.

The Status of the Companions

In stark contrast to the efforts taken to examine *isnads* and their chains of transmitters is the treatment of the Companions, the first generation of transmitters. It was the Companions who initiated Prophetic hadiths, who witnessed what the Prophet said or did and passed reports to the next generation but Companions were not subject to the tests of reliability and moral character applied to the hadith transmitters who came after them. From about 200 AH their trustworthiness and moral uprightness were taken for

granted. They were above the act of fabrication.[8]

There are several reasons for this attitude including verses in the Quran such as the one saying of the Companions *"You are the best community brought out from humanity"* [Q3:110] and the doctrine of Prophetic infallibility. The Companions must be upright by virtue of their direct association with the Prophet and are therefore above reproach. And, the Prophet himself said *"God will not let my community agree on an error"*.

Authentication - Content Criticism

Another striking feature of hadith authentication practice is the apparent lesser interest in the hadith content, that is, the evaluation of what the hadith report itself said or conveyed. Hadiths were not rejected because they suggested behaviour or beliefs the community at that time might have found unusual or unacceptable.

Early hadith critics such as al-Bukhari and Muslim did reject hadiths that were counter to known facts. For example, al-Bukhari rejected a hadith that predicted the signs of the Day of Judgement would come after the year 200 AH, because the year had already passed and no signs had appeared. He rejected another hadith that said the Prophet forbade the breaking of Muslim coins. Muslims did not mint coins until the time of the Umayyad caliphs.[9]

Recent research shows there was a degree of content criticism even if it was not as strict as that a modern practitioner of the historical critical method might employ. Critics like al-Bukhari were sensitive to such issues as anachronisms and logical impossibilities but in the examples in the research the criticism was disguised as *isnad* criticism; it would appear a hadith was rejected because of its *isnad* not because of its content.[10] Criticising a *matn* could lead to the rejection of a hadith with a sound *isnad* and cast a huge question mark over the reliance on *isnads*.

Muslim scholars who considered hadiths of the utmost importance and made great efforts at establishing their authenticity also had to contend with different views regarding the status and role of hadiths. For example, the *Mu'tazilites* believed the only proper sources of Islamic law were the Quran, hadiths so widely reported from the beginning they could not be fabricated, and most importantly, human reason. According to them the idea an *isnad* could guarantee the validity of a hadith report was wrong. For a Prophetic hadith to

be authentic it had to agree with the Quran and human reason.

Those who considered hadiths of the utmost importance, the *ahl al-hadith* (partisans of hadith) as they called themselves, believed Muslims had to submit completely to the ways of the Prophet as given in the hadiths and communicated via their *isnads*. Human reason was flawed and could be used arbitrarily. The correct path for Muslims to obey God and his Messenger was to follow the revealed religion as shown in the example of the Prophet.

For the *ahl al-hadith* it was difficult to admit a hadith with an *isnad* meeting all the necessary tests and transmitted by impeccable authorities could still be questioned because of what it said as this suggested the rationalist approach might be correct and it undermined the whole basis of *ahl al-hadith* authentication methodology. And, most importantly, allowing content criticism risked the danger of using human reason as the judge of religious truth, the very situation they wished to avoid.

Classification of Hadiths and Authentication Standards

The most reliable hadiths were classified as sound (*sahih*). That is, they had *isnads* of the highest quality. The rest that were not obviously fabricated, were classified as weak but they covered such a wide range of major and minor flaws that around the end of the third century it was divided into hadiths considered fair (*hasan*) and those with serious defects, considered weak (*da'if*).

Sahih and *hasan* hadiths were accepted by all Sunni scholars as a basis for Islamic law and deciding legal questions. *Hasan* hadiths were especially suited if supported by other traditions or practice.

Little is known about how in practice hadith scholars allocated hadiths to the *sahih* and *hasan* categories. Their collections do not provide much detail. There was no information beyond hadiths were counted as *sahih* if they had a continuous chain entirely composed of upright transmitters free of any charges against them back to the Prophet. A *hasan* hadith was described as one that did not have any transmitter in its chain accused of lying or fabrication and was narrated by more than one chain of transmitters.

Standard of Hadith Authentication Depended on Topic

The hadith collectors made it clear that the time and effort given to examining the authenticity of a hadith depended on its topic. Hadiths concerning the key

areas of Sharia law, what was permitted and what was forbidden, and Islamic theology received the most attention.[11]

Hadiths concerning exhortation and warning, the Endtime, the virtues of famous believers, good manners and behaviour, temptations and the Apocalypse were given only lax treatment. Stories about the Prophet's military campaigns and the Islamic conquests, and the interpretation of Quranic words and events by Companions and Successors also received less attention. Scholars believed stories about the community's early days and campaigns were unlikely to be very reliable.

If a hadith critic could not find information to authenticate a hadith that promoted some virtuous behaviour, especially if that behaviour or similar behaviour was practiced in the early Muslim community or mentioned in the Quran, he would not think twice about including it in a hadith collection for public consumption. These hadiths could promote established good practice and beliefs and provide helpful but not essential religious guidance.

In the single example of a hadith collector showing how he rated individual hadiths, al-Tirmidhi, one of the canonical six collectors, gives very few poor ratings to hadiths concerning Sharia matters. For example, in his collection of hadiths concerning the very important subject of inheritance law only 7% are rated as poor. Yet in the areas of etiquette and manners it is 27% and 35% respectively, rated as poor.[12]

What People Believed

At a high scholarly level many recognised the authentication of hadiths was open to errors and the accuracy of *sahih* hadiths was not guaranteed. They were not an absolute source of truth but they could with a high degree of probability report what the Prophet said and did.

Throughout the wider community the methods developed to authenticate hadiths by the end of the second century were accepted as reliable and *sahih* hadiths really did give the words and deeds of the Prophet. The great majority believed.

Other Hadith Classifications

Sahih, *hasan* and *da'if* indicating the quality of a hadith's *isnad* are not the only way of classifying hadiths. There are more than a dozen labels used to

identify various characteristics and weaknesses of hadiths and *isnads*. There are classifications for the origin of a narration. Narrations by the Prophet himself are know as *marfu'* (elevated), those from a Companion as *mawquf* (stopped), and from a Successor as *maqtu'* (severed).[13] There are also classifications relating to the number of narrators involved in transmitting a hadith.

Mutawatir Hadiths

In parallel with the work of the *ahl al-hadith*, other Islamic jurists of Hanafi and *Mu'tazilite* schools introduced another method to determine hadith authenticity.

They looked for individual hadiths that were so widely reported and transmitted simultaneously by different transmitters they could hardly be fabricated or mistaken. They came to be called *mutawatir* (massively transmitted) hadiths. *Mutawatir* hadiths were certain to represent what the Prophet had said. There had to be numerous transmitters at every link in the chain of transmitters from the Companions who reported the hadith to the transmitters who gave it to the collector.

There was no general agreement on the numbers required and scholars differed widely on what made a hadith massively transmitted. Numbers varied from four to 70.[14] The degree to which variations in the text of a report were allowed was another factor.

The Number of *Mutawatir* Hadiths

There are very few hadiths that have numerous transmitters at each transmission stage. There may be no more than a handful with exact wording and tens of transmitters. Some scholars have even said there are none. With smaller numbers, three or four transmitters, and variations in wording the number of *mutawatir* hadiths is just over 300 in well known collections. A website published by the Saudi Arabia Ministry of Islamic Affairs lists 324 *mutawatir* hadiths.[15]

Ahad Hadiths

Ahad hadiths are all hadiths that are not *mutawatir*. *Ahad* hadiths are divided into further classes. *Fard* hadiths are those where only one Companion has narrated the hadith even if the hadith has many transmitters later on. *Gharib*

hadiths are those where there is only one transmitter at any level in the *isnad* chain. If at there are only two transmitters at any stage the hadith is known as *aziz*. A hadith that has no less than three narrators at all levels is a *mashhur* hadith and might be considered semi-*mutawatir*. The exact meaning and application of these terms varied; for example, some scholars defined a hadith narrated by only one person at the beginning but by more later as *mashhur*.

Use of Weak Hadiths

In spite of being classified as weak and omitted from the canonical collections weak hadiths were used extensively. The canonical six did not immediately achieve their canonical status and from the 200s AH onwards there were lots of other hadith collections that did not attempt to assess the reliability of their hadiths and these were used extensively by Muslim jurists.

Use of Weak Hadiths in General

Two factors were especially important. Sunni scholars made a distinction between the areas of Islam that required strict adherence such as what Sharia made obligatory or forbidden concerning, for example, prayer, ritual, fasting, marriage, and inheritance laws, and generally leading a pious and religious life. They also saw it as their role generally to persuade the common people to be pious and religious and to benefit from righteous behaviour and avoid harm.

Topics for which Weak Hadiths Could be Used

Hadiths concerning exhortations and warnings were a big category that scholars could use in this way. They described the wonderful rewards believers would receive in heaven for performing good deeds or the terrible punishments they would suffer for bad deeds. Hadiths concerning good manners and morals were other categories where the weakness of a hadith might be ignored.

Scholars avoided hadiths recognised as fabrications or involving known disreputable transmitters but otherwise they were very willing to use weak hadiths supporting values already found in authentic hadiths or found in the Quran that did not undermine Islamic law.[16]

Use of Weak Hadiths in Law

Weak hadiths were also used in law. If Islamic jurists could not find a suitable

sahih hadith they would make use of a hadith with weaknesses in its *isnad*. It might not have the same level of reliability as a *sahih* hadith but it was not necessarily unreliable. Ibn Hanbal is quoted as stating, *"A weak hadith is dearer to me than the use of independent reason."*[17]

The degree to which a hadith was backed up by general good practice, the views of Muslim scholars, and similar hadiths were important factors. A fault in the chain of transmitters that prevented it being classified as *sahih* might be ignored, the text of the *matn* was likely to be a good indication of the Prophet's behaviour or thoughts.[18]

The Power of the Prophet's Name

Any guidance, instruction, or advice, carried far more weight if it could be given in the form "the Prophet said .... ". Consequently, this played a big part in motivating scholars and imams to use hadiths that otherwise did not meet all the authentication criteria. Hadiths were sometimes traced back to Muhammad with the best of intentions. It might also help those who had run short of ideas and things to say. They were simply being more effective in their role to persuade the common people to be pious and religious.

Chapter 5 - Hadith Authority

The other big question about hadiths, in addition to the question of authenticity, concerns their authority, their status and role as a source of Islamic law. The purpose of this section is to highlight its importance and some of the major ideas for and against accepting the authority of hadiths. The two questions are, of course, closely related. It would be difficult to argue for the authority of hadiths that were known to be fabrications.

Brief references concerning hadith authority have been made above; Umar I (d. 23), the second caliph's reluctance to record hadiths, the role of the scholar al-Shafi'i in establishing Prophetic hadiths as the main source of law alongside the Quran, and the *Mu'tazilites* and the use of human reason.

Very Early Opposition

Umar I is a very significant figure. Apart from becoming caliph and ruler of the Islamic world he was one of the Prophet's closest companions who played a major part in establishing Islam and Islamic rule throughout the ancient Middle East. He must have had intimate knowledge of how Muhammad thought and behaved.

Islamic literature from the third century has various reports concerning his views on hadiths such as his decision against writing hadiths for fear such writing would create a second book and second books created by other religions had led to the corruption of those faiths and the neglect of their true teachings. Another report says during his caliphate (12-23) hadiths multiplied and he ordered all written collections of hadiths should be brought to him to be burnt. He wanted to avoid the creation of a book that would compete with the "Book of God". [See Chapter 16 for more on the reasons for and against writing hadiths]

A story about Umar I in one of the great biographical dictionaries shows he was not only against the writing of hadiths but also against their oral transmission. In instructions he issued to a delegation of administrators being sent to Kufa, one of the new Islamic settlements and centres of power in what is now Iraq, he tells them not to transmit hadiths to the people there as it will distract them from the Quran. He is reported as saying *"Do not distract them*

with the Hadiths, and thus engage them! Bare the Quran and spare the narration from God's Messenger". To bare the Quran means not to cover the Quran with anything.[1]

Another sign of opposition to the authority of hadiths is a letter said to have been sent to the caliph Abd al-Malik. It criticises the people of Kufa in Iraq, saying:

They abandoned the judgment of their Lord and took hadiths for their religion; and they claim that they have obtained knowledge other than from the Quran . . . They believed in a book which was not from God, written by the hands of men; they then attributed it to the Messenger of God.

Modern scholars believe even if the letter was not addressed to the caliph it was from the end of the first century or first part of the second.[2]

Different Schools of Thought

More than 150 years after Umar's rule, arguments over the status of hadiths continued as strongly as ever, helped by the increasing number of scholars and growing interest in hadiths in the centres of the now well established Islamic empire. Various schools of thought concerning Islamic law, theology and hadiths emerged in parallel with the *ahl al-hadith*, the partisans of hadith. They could be divided into the *ahl al-ra'y*, the partisans of reason, as they were called by the *ahl al-hadith*, and the *ahl al-kalam*, speculative theologians, a broad grouping including the *Mu'tazilites*.

The *ahl al-ra'y* agreed hadiths could be authoritative and serve as a basis for Islamic law. They accepted the authority of the Prophet in the form of hadiths but believed many hadiths were open to dispute, sometimes contradictory, and unreliable, and it was necessary to be much more selective in the use of hadiths and also to use other ways of deciding law, such as the existing practice of the community and independent legal reasoning.

The term *ra'y* means "considered opinion" and though originally neutral in meaning was a term of criticism when used by the *ahl al-hadith*. *"Kalam"* corresponds to the equivalent of *ra'y* in the field of theology and means "speculative theology".

The *ahl al-kalam* included both groups that rejected all hadiths and those willing to accept some hadiths. For example, the *Mu'tazilites* had a much more critical view of hadiths and of their authority believing nearly all were

unreliable, depending far too much on human memory and transmission. They did not reject the words of the Prophet but doubted that hadiths accurately reported what he said and they had little or no confidence in the *ahl al-hadith* reliance on *isnad* analysis. Content criticism based on reference to the Quran and human reason was the best way to establish the truth of hadiths and their part in Islamic law and dogma. The *Mu'tazilites* also took account of massively transmitted hadiths which could not be fabricated but there were very few of these.

The *ahl al-hadith* strongly opposed the use of human reason which they believed would lead to heresy and the community straying from the true path revealed by the Quran and the example of the Prophet. They had the greatest faith in hadiths and in the methods they were developing to establish hadith authenticity. Hadith content criticism would make human reason the ultimate religious authority rather than revelation. It was far better to depend on a Prophetic hadith even if there might be some doubt about it than to depend on frail and manipulable human reason. Leading *ahl al-hadith* scholars also stressed the use human reason led inevitably to different and competing views.

Dependence on Prophetic hadiths was also a means of unifying Islamic law which was tending to develop in separate ways in the main centres of the Islamic Empire, especially the Hijaz and Kufa in Iraq.

A very good indication of the arguments for and against the authority of hadiths, what was being said and why, can be gleaned from the extant works of the famous hadith scholar al-Shafi'i (150-204), the *Risala* and *Kitab Jima'al-Ilm*. He presents the arguments in the form of debates between himself and imaginary *ahl al-kalam* opponents, firstly one who is against the use of all hadiths and who would rely on the Quran alone, and then one who would use some hadiths but reject those the community found unacceptable.[3]

Al-Shafi'i and the Importance of His Arguments

Al-Shafi'i has his first opponent of hadiths state that in the text of the Quran, in which all believers have complete faith, God himself declares the Quran explains everything.

And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims. [Q16:89]

The Quran is complete and sufficient. There is no need for another source.

Furthermore, there is no doubt over anything written in the Quran yet there are doubts and errors and consequent uncertainty concerning hadiths.

As the debate progresses al-Shafi‘i quotes the Quranic verse Q62:2:

It is He who has sent amongst the unlettered a Messenger from among them, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in the Book and Wisdom, although they had previously been in manifest error.

By quoting this verse al-Shafi‘i has introduced the idea that there is a source of divine revelation other than the Quran. The Book is clearly the Book of God but what is the “Wisdom”?

Al-Shafi‘i explains it is the *Sunna* of the Prophet, God’s Messenger. It is what he preaches and the example he sets. It is a second form of revelation. The Quran commands believers to pray, to fast, and to donate, but it gives no details, no rules are provided. These are provided by the Prophet and al-Shafi‘i quotes Quranic verses that order believers to follow the Prophet’s example.

Al-Shafi‘i addresses the objection that hadiths are subject to doubts and errors and are thus uncertain by comparing this uncertainty to the uncertainty jurists deal with in accepting testimony of eye-witnesses in the trial of a person accused of murder, a very serious example. He implies those who object to hadiths because they might not be certain are exhibiting double standards. In any case there are extremely demanding and exceptional standards for accepting the reliability of hadith transmitters superior to those involved in accepting trial eye-witnesses.

Al-Shafi‘i turns his attention to Muslims who accept the authority of Prophetic hadiths but only those hadiths consensus determines to be valid and reasonable. They are willing to reject individual hadiths not approved by consensus. Al-Shafi‘i’s response is to undermine the idea of consensus by a series of questions to his theoretical opponent that demonstrate those who hold this view have different ideas of what constitutes consensus and if there is no agreement on what forms a consensus, how can such a criterion be used for making decisions about which Prophetic reports to accept and which to reject?

In response to his opponent asking him the minimum requirement for accepting an isolated hadith, that is, one involving a single transmitter, he explains each person in the chain must be assessed to show they are pious, of good memory, and they report accurately what they have been told giving no scope for confusion.

At another point in his argument he mentions a Prophetic hadith that supports those who oppose hadith authority. It says *"Let the people not cling to anything on my authority ... "* and he explains the hadith has a faulty *isnad*, there is a missing link in the chain back to the Prophet. He cites another hadith *"Let me not find any one of you who receives a command or prohibition from me reclining on his couch and saying, 'We do not know about this. We follow what we find in the Book of God, Almighty and Exalted'"* which has a complete chain of transmitters and couldn't be better suited to denying those who argue the Quran explains everything and nothing else is needed.

Al-Shafi'i also puts forward some of the arguments that became important in explaining or reconciling hadiths some found contradictory or doubtful; for example, some hadiths apply only to the Prophet himself and not to the community of believers, such as taking more than four wives, and there are both general situations and specific cases with particular circumstances that need to be taken into account. More on hadith explanation and reconciliation of conflicting hadiths is given below.

Al-Shafi'i's main objective is the acceptance of hadiths as a second source of divine revelation and source of law for Muslims, and this is by far greatest impact of his work. He justifies and establishes the use of non-Quranic materials.

The words and deeds of the Prophet must be divine and free from error. Once this idea was accepted it would easily follow that believers would obey the Prophet as revealed in Prophetic hadiths and this is what happened. For most Muslims the hadiths came to have authority in making Islamic law alongside the Quran.

Though it took some time the views of the *ahl al-hadith* and the arguments of al-Shafi'i eventually prevailed and became the basis of Sunni Islam. [See Chapter 15 for more on al-Shafi'i and the development of Islamic law]

Continuing Opposition

Criticism of hadiths and a challenge to the authority of specific hadiths was still a big factor a generation after al-Shafi'i when the major collections that became the canonical six had been compiled. The extant work of another scholar from that time, *The Interpretation of Conflicting Narrations (Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Hadith)* by Ibn Qutayba (213-276) provides insights into the

continuing arguments.

Ibn Qutayba complements al-Shafi‘i. Whereas al-Shafi‘i focuses on doctrine, Ibn Qutayba defends the contents of specific Prophetic hadiths, even if the content seems contradictory or irrational.[4] He gives a highly critical description of the beliefs of a wide range of different factions, such as the *Mu‘tazilites*, who have objections to specific hadiths because the content contradicts other hadiths, or contradicts the Quran, or whose content clashes with what is reasonable. His criticism of these factions serves to turn attention away from the hadiths.

He says *“whoever calls something that God’s messenger brought a lie is like one who calls everything he brought a lie”*, a belief that springs from the acceptance of the Prophet’s *Sunna* as a second source of divine revelation, and like the Quran free from error. There is no scope for judging the content of hadiths by means of human reason. Revelation is the final authority.

To justify apparently conflicting hadiths and hadiths some still found unreasonable he uses the following explanations:[5]

- figures of speech have been misunderstood;
- words and phrases have been mis-interpreted;
- a hadith abrogates an earlier hadith, even the Quran;
- circumstances can change the meaning;
- rules may be revealed in stages and do not become clear until seen together;

and:

- what is right in a special case may differ from what a general rule indicates.

For example, Ibn Qutayba explains the clash between the Quran saying the punishment for adultery is flogging and the hadith in which Muhammad declares he will impose the punishment of stoning "on the basis of God's Book" by saying "God's Book" in this instance refers not to the Quran, but rather to God's ruling or imposition of an obligation.

[ANNEX 4 gives examples of conflicting hadiths defended by Ibn Qutayba]

Abrogation

The doctrine of abrogation is a vital element of Islamic thought. It is also a complex subject and this is a very brief introduction. The Quran contains contradictory verses and in these cases the later verse overrules, abrogates, the

earlier verse. The Quran can abrogate the Quran. The Quran itself says:

Such of Our Revelation as We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring [in place of it] one better or the like thereof. [Q2:106]

Abrogation also applies to hadiths and there are many contradictory hadiths. Hadiths can abrogate hadiths. Early scholars developed various ways of dealing with this and would take into account the standing of the transmitters involved, for example, but what was and is especially difficult is what happens when a hadith contradicts the Quran.

As explained above, hadiths, the *Sunna* of the Prophet, came to be recognised as a second form of revelation on a par with the Quran. The Quran can only be fully understood and applied with the help of the *Sunna*. For example, the Quran orders Muslims to pray and fast but the details of what should be done are provided by the *Sunna*. Many Muslims would agree with the maxim *"…. the Quran has greater need of the sunna than the sunna of the Quran."*[6]

Al-Shafi'i said the purpose of hadiths was to explain, modify, and add to the Quran. He also argued the Quran could not abrogate the *Sunna* because the *Sunna* makes specific the general instructions of the Quran, and it was illogical for a general case to override a specific case.

Deciding the way hadiths interact with the Quran plays an important part in defining differences between the four main Sunni schools of law.[7] The al-Shafi'i school of jurisprudence takes the position hadiths cannot abrogate the Quran but they provide guidance on what to do in specific cases. For example, the Quran stipulates amputation is the penalty for theft, and it makes no qualification, whereas a hadith stipulates amputation does not apply if the value of the stolen property is below a certain amount, *"ten silver coins"*. There is also a hadith in which the Prophet says *"There is no amputation for stealing the fruits (of a palm tree) or its heart."*

Hadiths could effectively overrule the Quran not by abrogation but by explaining what was really intended.

The Hanafi school defined three possibilities; hadiths reinforce Quranic rulings, add explanatory information or replace and restrict a Quranic ruling, thus abrogating it. The school is also very strict about which hadiths might perform these functions, making use of only widespread hadiths accepted by jurists.

The Quran specifies flogging as the punishment for adultery. It does not mention stoning but the four traditional schools of law all follow the hadiths that say or report adultery by a married person is punished by stoning, if certain standards of evidence or confession are met. [See this section in ANNEX 4 for examples of these hadiths]

Chapter 6 - Doubts and Uncertainties

Modern Muslims as well as modern Western scholars have questioned the authenticity of the hadith corpus and the assumptions of early hadith critics. Though they often address the same issues, Muslim discussions have in the main been separate from Western scholarship.

Modern Muslim interest has concentrated on four issues:[1]

- The veracity of the Companions
- The quality of hadith transmission
- The efficacy of *isnad* evaluation
- Content evaluation [The next Chapter, Chapter 7 covers this]

Veracity of the Companions

That the Companions were all truthful in reporting the words and actions of the Prophet and beyond reproach became a vital assumption of hadith criticism based on what the Quran and the Prophet said about his generation and those who knew him.

It is, in fact, the Prophet's words in a hadith, that also pose a question about this assumption. In a widely transmitted *mutawatir* hadith[2] the Prophet says *"Let whoever tells lies about me deliberately take his place in hell."* This implies false stories about the Prophet from those in contact with him, his Companions, were created even in his lifetime.

There are also reports of Companions criticising one another and of disagreements and conflicts between them. They were not all of the habit of doing and saying the right thing all of the time. They were human.

Prolific Hadith Narrators

A handful of Companions originated an enormous number of hadiths. [See Table 3 in Chapter 2] Abu Hurayra, the most prolific, who was with the Prophet for less than three years is given as the originator of a hadith 5374 times as recorded in a later compilation of collections.

This is in striking contrast to the numbers of hadiths from famous Companions who were associated with the Prophet for much longer including Umar ibn al-Khattab, the close advisor who became the second caliph, 537

hadiths; Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin, 536 hadiths; and Abu Bakr, the Prophet's successor, 142 hadiths. Abu Bakr was with the Prophet for about 23 years.

The 5374 figure includes repetitions of the same report with different *isnads* and recent research suggests there are between 1200 and 2200 different Abu Hurayra reports,[3] still an amazing number. If he was with the Prophet for less than three years it implies he was recording at least one hadith each and every day over those three years wherever the Prophet was and whatever he was doing.

Very large numbers of hadiths from particular Companions attracted attention even in the early days. There are reports Aisha criticised Abu Hurayra for telling so many stories and for stories about the Prophet she didn't think were correct. Another report has the second caliph, Umar I, calling Abu Hurayra a liar and reprimanded him for his behaviour. He is also supposed to have lived in the palace in Damascus during the time of the first Umayyad caliph, and he thus may have been subject to political pressure to produce hadiths. A large number of his narrations concern Prophetic sayings or deeds he was the only one to witness.[4] In his later years he was said to have boxes of *sahifas*.

There are also several reports of Abu Hurayra himself explaining why he narrated so many hadiths; he said, for example, he spent all his time with the Prophet and the Prophet blessed him with a perfect memory. It is a sign of the difficulties in this subject that hadith reports are quoted to explain or criticise hadith reports!

Early and modern Muslim scholarship shows there are examples of Prophetic hadiths said to have been narrated by Abu Hurayra that are most likely later false ascriptions to him.[5] A later hadith partisan might have taken his own opinion or a popular opinion of the community at that time and to give it credibility ascribed it to the Prophet via Abu Hurayra, a well-know Companion. [False ascription - backward projection - is discussed in Chapter 10 and Chapter 14]

Another modern line of explanation notes that many of Abu Hurayra's hadith narrations are of the form *"The Prophet said... "* rather than *"I heard the Prophet say..."* which implies he was reporting what he heard other Companions say about the Prophet.[6] He joined the Prophet when he was a

young man and lived to his late seventies giving him the time to gather many such reports and pass them on.

Other prolific narrators include Aisha, the Prophet's youngest wife, with 2210 hadiths ascribed to her, Anas ibn Malik, a household servant with 2286, and Ibn Abbas the source for 1660 hadiths.

Ibn Abbas is another Companion who gives rise to questions. Hadiths from him in the early collections are reports of his own opinions, not those of the Prophet, but in later collections such as the canonical six his hadiths are narrations of what the Prophet said, suggesting his hadiths have been projected backwards onto the Prophet. Early sources also give his age as only 13 when the Prophet died, which if true makes it very unlikely he could have witnessed and absorbed so many Prophetic hadiths. [Recent research concerning Ibn Abbas is discussed in Chapter 14]

Reports of Dubious Actions

Other reports show Companions acting with less than complete rectitude or bending the truth to fit their purpose. An infamous story concerns Aisha who was falsely accused of misbehaviour with a man who rescued her after she lost her way in the desert. At first the Prophet took seriously the rumours that were being spread by some of his Companions but a revelation came declaring her innocent.

Hadith Criticism Was Just Starting

Hadith criticism and the appearance of hadith scholars didn't get started until the time of the Successors and after, so there was little or no first hand contact with or information gathering on the Companions that could be used for transmitter evaluation. Interestingly, some of the very early works of hadith criticism listing weak hadiths include hadiths from lesser Companions, which indicates the blanket righteousness ascribed to Companions came later as hadith criticism developed.[7]

Quality of Hadith Transmission

This is a fundamental point. Could reports be passed accurately from one generation to the next over a period of 100 years and longer, involving possibly six or more transmitters, from the death of Muhammad to the creation of the first written collections and the canonical works?

In effect this is two further questions:
How reliable was oral transmission?
What was the role of written records?

Reliability of Oral Tradition

Classical sources are clear. Hadith transmission throughout the first century after the Prophet's death was first and foremost oral. Where written records were made they were primarily memory aids for further recitation.

A major potential cause of changes to reports as they were passed along was the widespread practice of transmitting the sense of a report rather than the exact words. Some hadiths are also very long, more like short stories. The hadith examples given in Chapter 1 have an average of 44 words each. The average for all hadiths in al-Bukhari is 94 words each and there are occasionally "mega" hadiths with over 1000 words, that's about two pages of typed A4. (This paragraph has 90 words.) To have such hadiths transmitted orally with complete or even great accuracy over several generations seems very unlikely.

Expert analysis has shown word and other text differences in hadiths covering the same event or report do produce different meanings.[8] Everyday practical experience certainly suggests reports passed verbally from one person to another often change significantly and not through any deliberate ill-will, and this can only get worse if there are several stages of transmission.

Thus by the time writing did become the norm the body of hadiths was widely corrupted beyond hope of recovering what had really been said or what had really happened.

Champions of hadith accuracy respond to this by claiming oral transmission is reliable. It is not uncommon for illiterate peoples to memorise very large numbers of stories, tales and other information.

The Role of Written Records

The extent of written hadith transmission is important because it is likely such transmission would have avoided or lessened the types of problems associated with oral transmission.

Muslim opinion and traditional reports regarding the role of writing are contradictory. As stated above there are hadiths in which Muhammad tells his Companions not to record his words because they might be confused with the

Quran while other reports say he allowed recording. This is sometimes explained by scholars claiming the prohibition came early in the Prophet's ministry but was later permitted once knowledge of the Quran was well established.

Official Written Recording Hadith scholars tend to agree that the first official collection and written recording of hadiths was initiated by the Umayyad caliph Umar II (63-101) who ordered the scholar Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (d. 124) to undertake such work. This is 80 or so years after the time of the Prophet. This ties in with the various reports the early caliphs were against the written recording of hadiths.

There is, however disagreement over the motives for Umar's project; was it to preserve hadiths in general or to support the government with the collection of hadiths concerning administrative and tax matters? There are no extant copies of what was produced by his initiative and the earliest systematic hadith collection surviving to modern times is the *Muwatta'* of Malik ibn Anas (93-179). This was produced about 130 years after the time of the Prophet.

How Important was Unofficial Writing? Though there is some consensus on what happened at the official level regarding the writing of hadiths there is a range of views about what happened privately.

There are reports individuals wrote down hadiths or had written collections in their possession even though written recording was not officially approved and even discouraged. A leading modern Muslim scholar, Muhammad Mustafa al-Azami, identified 50 Companions who reportedly communicated hadiths in writing and there are hundreds of examples of individuals who are thought to have made written recordings of hadiths or to have had written records in their possession.[9]

On the other hand, if written recording of hadiths had been significant, it might be expected examples had survived. Such private notebooks, known as *sahifas*, were usually made of expensive materials such as papyrus or parchment, or very crude materials, such as palm leaves. They served as memory aids for their owners.

Unofficial written records would have played a part in ensuring hadiths passed from one generation to the next accurately but don't solve the problem of identifying genuine hadiths in the famous collections today.

Efficacy of *Isnad* Evaluation

That the evaluation of the *isnad*, the chain of transmitters, of a hadith was a reliable method of establishing whether the hadith was genuine or not, was another vital assumption of early hadith scholarship. A sound *isnad* meant a hadith was accepted as authentic.

Objectionable Hadiths with Good *Isnads*

One reason for challenging hadiths even though they had been accepted by early hadith critics because their *isnads* were sound, sprung from the reports of the hadiths themselves, the *matn*, the message they conveyed. Even Muslims found some hadiths hard to believe or to want to believe. There were hadiths in the canonical collections that were strange, repellent, rude, and even immoral; surely they couldn't be true. It took a lot of explanation and contorted reasoning to see them in a better light.

Reliability of the *Isnad* Evaluation Method

The fact that hadiths might be questioned because of their message even when they had sound *isnads* poses a huge question about the reliability of the method used to evaluate *isnads*. Hadith scholars who might be willing to question a hadith, even one from a canonical collection, would still fully support the method developed to evaluate transmission chains and the principle that the *isnad* was the essential test.

But it was still very worrying that if al-Bukhari and Muslim the most famous hadith collectors, known especially for the attention they gave to collecting only genuine hadiths, included outrageous and questionable traditions there must be something wrong with their method. They were sincere but their method didn't work. They were too far from the time of the Prophet and couldn't cope with the huge volume of hadiths and the number of fabrications.

Reliability of Transmitter Assessment Hadith critics couldn't interview transmitters, most of them would have been dead for decades, even centuries, and they would have had to make extensive use of other sources, assuming sources existed and could be found, and the opinions of others.

The sources themselves were unlikely to be completely sound also depending on oral transmission which in its turn needed checking. Some may

have been deliberately false, as a clever hadith fabricator would take care to make his information appear credible. And, even for well-known transmitters there was likely to have been conflicting information about them given the rivalries which sometimes existed between different Muslim scholars and schools. The biographical dictionaries that resulted from all this work contain serious contradictions and gaps, and make note of "unknown" transmitters.

This transmitter fact gathering and evaluation had to be done for tens of thousands of individuals in different cities and areas across the early Islamic Empire going back generations. Doing this well in modern times would be a major achievement, but in late antiquity it stretches the imagination.

Experts Disagree A great number of scholars were involved in transmitter evaluation and there was huge scope for disagreement over the assessments of individual transmitters and in the application of the assessment criteria. Serious contradictions over the reliability of individual transmitters are found in the various dictionaries of transmitters compiled by early hadith critics.[10]

The author of the earliest biography of the Prophet, Ibn Ishaq (d. 150), used material from hadiths that famous hadith collectors such as Ibn Hanbal considered unreliable.

It is also notable that al-Bukhari, the compiler of the best known canonical collection, avoids using a transmitter highly regarded by other compilers. There is also an example of al-Bukhari rejecting a hadith from a particular narrator because the hadith content clashes with the content of that hadith from a reliable source, yet al-Bukhari makes extensive use of other hadiths from that narrator.[11]

The fact that all these transmitter assessment difficulties could not be overcome is shown by the existence of *majhuls* ("unknowns") or transmitters with little information given about them in the biographical dictionaries some of whom had unusually long lives.

Fabrication of *Isnads*

As well as *matns*, the contents of hadiths, *isnads* were fabricated and a good fabricator would be careful to produce a convincing chain of transmitters. It is even possible *isnad* fabrication was on as large a scale as *matn* fabrication. This seems to have been ignored by early hadith supporters.

As hadiths became more important there was increasing motivation for

scholars to enhance the *isnads* of hadiths they were particularly interested in; an unknown transmitter would be replaced by someone famous or well-known. The more prominent the transmitters of a hadith the more likely it would get attention and be discussed.[12]

Scale of the Task

As already noted the scale of fabrication was vast and this was recognised by the traditional scholars themselves. It is a huge assumption that the methods of the hadith critics were up to the gigantic task of correctly identifying a core of authentic hadiths, and even with the best of efforts there was vast scope for error.

Al-Bukhari said he discovered 600,000 hadiths in his 16 years of study and from this he selected a little over 7000 for his collection. This figure is often quoted in discussions about the authenticity of hadiths. Large initial numbers are also given for some of the other collectors; Muslim worked with 300,000 and Abu Dawud with 500,000.

Unfortunately, very little is known about these big numbers. At one extreme some modern critics assume the hadiths al-Bukhari didn't use were all ones he thought were fabrications and this proves the scale of fabrication. The response to this by hadith supporters is that the big number is the result of hadith repetitions especially the same *matn* having different *isnads*. Al-Bukhari himself said he omitted some sound hadiths so as not to make his collection too big.

Another calculation made by both Muslim and non-Muslim hadith critics concerns the time taken to study 600,000 hadiths. For example, al-Bukhari would have had to have studied, read, or had recited to him, 103 hadiths each and every day, no breaks or weekends, for 16 years. Assuming 12 hours work a day, that's seven minutes per hadith. Many of these hadiths would have been like short stories or news articles, not just one or two sentence statements. Even if a hadith was a repetition it had to be read or heard to establish it was a repetition.

There is something seriously wrong with the figure of 600,000 or al-Bukhari's methods or both. Or, 600,000 is just a figure of speech for a very large number!

Chapter 7 - Modern Muslim Views

For Muslims who seek a modern understanding of Islam free of hadith related issues there are, broadly speaking, two main avenues. The first is to discard the hadith altogether and rely totally on the Quran. This is very much a minority position. The second is to criticise hadith content - that is, what hadiths say - on the basis of human reason and knowledge, and to be far more discerning in accepting hadiths.

These two approaches strongly reflect the attitudes to hadiths found among some Muslims during the first three centuries of Islam. Modernity has reignited doubts from long ago.

Content Criticism

Isnad evaluation was the mainstay of early hadith criticism. The contents of hadiths - what they conveyed - were secondary but opinions on exactly how they were treated differ. Some modern critics say hadith scholars completely ignored hadith *matns* because so much effort went into evaluating *isnads*. Another view is they choose to work around the problem by doing all they could to find ways of interpreting problematic hadiths and those that seemed to clash with the Quran, that made them acceptable.

The fact is, to modern minds even the most famous canonical collections contain many hadiths that are downright objectionable or peculiar by modern standards.[1] Muslims believe the failures of early hadith criticism can be made good and hadiths that should not have been accepted identified and rejected.

Muslim reformers at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries sought to free Islam from the grip of the past and to introduce modern human reasoning. There was no doubt that hadiths were important. The common people believed them and they were used by politicians and religious leaders to promote political agendas and extreme views.

More recent times have seen increasing conflicts within the Muslim world and between Muslims and non-Muslims and friction between Muslim minorities and non-Muslim majorities in non-Muslim countries. This has created widespread suspicion of Islam reflected in the media across the world and hadiths are quoted to demonstrate the inherent backwardness and violence

of Islam. Islamic scholars must identify and reject hadiths used to make unfounded accusations and absurd or even outrageous content that makes the religion a potential object of ridicule.[2]

Hadith topics and hadiths identified as questionable by modern minded Muslims and discussed in recent publications and on the web include:[3]

Hadiths that Contradict Science, Strange Hadiths and Problematic Hadiths

There are hadiths that make claims or statements of a scientific or medical nature that are clearly wrong and many hadiths that portray or suggest behaviour and events the great majority of mankind would find odd or objectionable. Examples include:

- Black cumin is a cure for all diseases;
- When there is more than enough water to fill two pitchers it bears no impurity;
- A child will resemble the parent who discharges first;
- Nobody should drink while standing, if anyone forgets, he must vomit;
- A date-palm cried because Muhammad moved away from it;
- Playing chess is like dyeing your hand with the flesh and blood of swine.

There are women demeaning hadiths:

- The majority of the inhabitants of hell are women because women are ungrateful to men;
- Women are not fit to lead;
- Women are intellectually deficient; and
- Women, dogs, asses, and pigs passing too close nullify prayer.

More anti-women hadiths are discussed below. The relevant hadiths are found in the canonical collections, even the most famous. Al-Bukhari and Muslim are not short of hadiths modern people find strange or outrageous.

Hadiths that Contradict the Quran

Even though Islamic scholarship and jurisprudence found ways of explaining and accommodating hadiths that contradicted or appeared to contradict the Quran [See Chapter 5, section on Abrogation] it is still a source of concern for some modern Muslims. For them, there really is a clear cut clash.

Predestination In the following hadith found in al-Bukhari the Prophet clearly states a man's destiny is decided for him.

.... a human being is put together in the womb of the mother in forty days, and then he becomes a clot of thick blood for a similar period, and then a piece of flesh for a similar period. Then Allah sends an angel who is ordered to write four things. He is ordered to write down his (i.e. the new creature's) deeds, his livelihood, his (date of) death, and whether he will be blessed or wretched (in religion). Then the soul is breathed into him. So, a man amongst you may do (good deeds till there is only a cubit between him and Paradise and then what has been written for him decides his behaviour and he starts doing (evil) deeds characteristic of the people of the (Hell) Fire. ....
[al-Bukhari, Book 59, Hadith 19 / Book 54, Hadith 430]

This contrasts with several Quranic verses that state man is being tested in various ways. He has the free will to do the right or the wrong thing.

Behold, we have willed that all beauty on earth be a means by which We put men to a test, to see as to which of them are best in conduct. [Q18:7]

He who created death and life, that He might test you, as to which of you is best in deed. [Q67:2]

The hadith clearly contradicts the Quran.

Coercion in Conversion to Islam This hadith in Muslim unambiguously reports the Prophet's statement that he is ordered to fight non-believers until they accept Islam.

I have been commanded to fight against people, till they testify to the fact that there is no god but Allah, and believe in me (that) I am the messenger (from the Lord) and in all that I have brought. And when they do it, their blood and riches are guaranteed protection on my behalf except where it is justified by law, and their affairs rest with Allah.
[Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 34 / Book 1, Hadith 31]

It is notable the reference *"their blood and riches are guaranteed"* makes it

clear the hadith countenances violence. Jihad is a military affair.

The hadith contrasts with these Quranic injunctions:

There shall be no coercion in matters of faith. Distinct has now become the right way from [the way of] error. [Q2:256]

If they turn away, we have not sent you as a guard over them: you are not bound to do more than deliver the message. [Q42:48]

And so, [O Prophet,] exhort them; your task is only to exhort: you cannot compel them [to believe]. [Q88:21 - 22]

These verses are clearly against the use of force to compel people to believe the Prophet's message or to make them believers.

The Punishment for Adultery On the subject of adultery the Quran lays down the punishment as follows:

The adulteress and adulterer should be flogged a hundred lashes each, and no pity for them should deter you from the law of God, if you believe in God and the last day; and the punishment should be witnessed by a body of believers. [Q24:2]

The following hadith makes a distinction between married and unmarried people and for a married person the punishment is stoning to death. The Quran makes no distinction between married and unmarried.

They informed me that my son deserved one hundred lashes and exile for one year. and this woman deserved stoning (as she was married). Thereupon Allah's Messenger (may peace he upon him) said: By Him in Whose Hand is my life. I will decide between you according to the Book of Allah. The slave-girl and the goats should be given back, and your son is to be punished with one hundred lashes and exile for one year. And, O Unais, go to this woman in the morning, and if she makes a confession, then stone her. He (the narrator) said: He went to her in the morning and she made a confession. And Allah's Messenger made pronouncement about her and she was stoned to death.

[Muslim, Book 29, Hadith 38 / Book 17, Hadith 4209]

ANNEX 2 gives a representative sample of hadiths in general including some indicated as contradictory, unscientific or strange. ANNEX 4 gives a sample of hadiths challenged by hadith opponents in the second Islamic century.

Status of the *Sahihan*

All the hadiths in *Sahih* al-Bukhari and *Sahih* Muslim are authentic is the official position amongst Islamic scholars. Though all scholars wouldn't claim the system was absolutely foolproof *sahih* hadiths can be taken as the deeds and words of the Prophet. Indeed, *Sahih* al-Bukhari is the second most important Islamic text after the Quran.

Questions Asked

Notwithstanding this position over the years questions have been asked concerning problematic hadiths in al-Bukhari and Muslim such as those that say:

I'll not leave behind me among you a source of strife more harmful to men than women, and another:

The Day of Judgment will not come before 'You [Muslims] fight the Jews, to the point that a Jew will hide behind a boulder, but that rock will say, "O servant of God, there is a Jew behind me, come kill him!"

Scholars have also had queries and noted flaws in both collections since they became famous. A modern scholar noted than in al-Bukhari criticism concerned 80 or so narrators and about 110 hadiths.[4] And, it is recognised al-Bukhari gave little attention to what hadiths said, and whether they were likely to be correct, and concentrated on the reliability of the transmitters and transmission chains, and even in that regard his judgement was not always sound.

There is an account of the medieval Muslim scholar Ghazali (d. 505) facing a question from a student about a hadith the student found difficult to believe.[5] How could Moses knock out the eye of the Angel of Death? Ghazali told the student his question was a distraction. The hadith didn't touch on any important Islamic belief and he should be more concerned about those who attacked Islam. Ghazali dodged the question because the hadith came from the *Sahihan* and to agree a hadith was absurd cast doubt on all the others that had been

selected by the same methods. Later, Ghazali explained the hadith to his followers saying the angel had appeared in human form and Moses naturally took him for real person.

Avoid Criticism at All Costs

In modern times Muslim scholars, like Ghazali long ago, have been asked about hadiths that don't conform to common sense or modern attitudes, though now the confrontation between Islam and the modern West gives them all the more reason to duck or reject any criticism of a hadith. If it is in *Sahih* al-Bukhari it must be authentic. To admit otherwise risked undermining the methods of the early hadith critics such as al-Bukhari. It is a big problem. The attitude of mind amongst such Muslim scholars is that if they cast doubt on a single hadith in al-Bukhari and Muslim, the entire collections become suspect.[6]

The methods used by al-Bukhari and Muslim to examine hadith transmission chains and evaluate transmitters had become the gold standard of hadith verification. The *Sahihan* were proof that Sunni hadith criticism had produced a hadith corpus that truly provided the Prophet's example. To admit the collections could contain faulty hadiths was to undermine the foundations of Sunni Islam which depends on hadiths for regulating daily life more than it does on the Quran.

Another Approach

Unfortunately this "defend the *Sahihan* at all costs" attitude fails to recognise how al-Bukhari, Muslim and other hadith critics worked in practice. As already noted, the time and effort hadith collectors, including al-Bukhari and Muslim, gave to examining the authenticity of a hadith depended on its topic.

Hadiths concerning Sharia law, what was permitted and what was forbidden, and Islamic theology received the most attention. Hadiths concerning exhortation and warning, the Endtime, the virtues of famous believers, good manners and behaviour, temptations and the Apocalypse were given far less time.

Jonathan Brown, a well know modern Muslim scholar and historian says *"Judging Hadiths not solely by the reputation of the books that include them but also according to whether their subject matter would have merited rigorous versus lax criticism from classical Hadith scholars could provide enormous benefit today."* [*Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and*

Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy]

He believes a good many of the hadiths in the canonical collections that are strange, repellent, rude, and even immoral, were of the kind that received only lax criticism. They could be challenged without undermining the value of the canonical collections.

Though this would be a step in the right direction there are bound to be objectionable hadiths that have received the full traditional treatment to establish their authenticity.

Quran Only Movement

Prophetic hadiths have not always been a prime source of law. It was some 200 years after the death of the Prophet before they were completely accepted as divine revelation along with the Quran and replaced other non-Quranic methods of deciding law.

Those who wish to drop hadiths altogether are not seeking to "Westernise" Islam. This is important because a popular and fierce criticism of modern opponents of hadith authority is that it is really a Western inspired attack on Islam.

In fact, the modern arguments for and against hadiths are a striking reflection of the arguments put forward by Muslims in the first three centuries of Islam. Modern criticism of hadiths is not an Orientalist plot, it is Muslim response to the status of hadiths as divine revelation. The time it took and the arguments used by the hadith scholar al-Shafi'i (150-204) and other hadith supporters, to prevail over the opposition to hadiths in the second century demonstrates the scale of such opposition. [See Chapter 5 and Chapter 15 concerning the changing status of hadiths and their use in Islamic law]

Starting towards the end of the nineteenth century (Current Era) a small number of Muslim modernists, intellectuals rather then scholars, introduced and promoted a new school of thought know as the "Quran Only Movement" or the "Quranists". Many of them came from the Punjab region of Northern India and had attended missionary schools. One of the most famous was Ghulam Ahmad Parvez (1903-1985).[7]

Quranists believe Islam can be understood through the Quran alone. The requirements for prayer and the basis of Islamic law could all be found in the Quran. The difficult and ambiguous parts could be understood by reference to

other parts of the Quran. There was no need for any external references.

There was no need for hadiths. In any case the hadith corpus was fabricated, and most of it had been produced 200 years or more after the death of the Prophet.

A major reason for rejecting hadiths is the claim by Quranists that hadiths are not mentioned in the Quran, and what might appear to be references to hadiths refer to something else. They also note some hadiths contradict the Quran such as those concerning the punishment for adultery and they frequently contain repugnant material.

Parvez argued that according to the Quran Muhammad was an ordinary man and subject to human error and Muhammad himself had said *"Do not write down anything from me except the Quran"*. He pointed out that hadiths often contain details that need not be fixed. For example, the Quran commands believers to make charitable donations (*zakat*) and establishes the duty of giving to the poor and disadvantaged but it does not specify an amount whereas a hadith specifies the *zakat* rate should be 2½ percent.[8]

He also believed that after the ideal time of Muhammad with his absolute leadership before God, and the first four rightly-guided caliphs, Islam had been corrupted by foreign influences especially from the former Byzantine and Persian lands that had become part of the Caliphate. It is a fact that all the collectors of the canonical hadith collections came from places that had once been part of the Persian Empire or under its influence.

Most Muslims would view Quranists in much the same way Christians look on Jehovah's Witnesses, a small and eccentric sect. It is difficult to estimate the number of Quranists and their organisations. There is a tendency to keep a low profile as they are considered apostates by many traditional Islamic scholars and not accepted as Muslims.

The Challenge for the Quranists

The Five Pillars of Islam:

- Shahadah: sincerely reciting the Muslim profession of faith;
- Salat: performing ritual prayers in the proper way five times each day;
- Zakat: paying an alms (or charity) tax to benefit the poor and the needy;
- Sawm: fasting during the month of Ramadan;
- Hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca.

.... are accepted throughout the Muslim world. For most Muslims they are a cornerstone of their faith but the idea of "Five Pillars" is not specified or mentioned in the Quran and four of the pillars only make sense in light of hadiths.

This illustrates the challenge facing Quranists. The Quran is very clear in commanding believers to obey the Prophet and follow his example. The Quran itself doesn't say what the Prophet orders or give guidance on his example. The only source for this is the hadith and rejecting hadiths is like rejecting Islam itself.

The Quran also contains many contradictory verses and Muslim scholars from early times have produced commentaries (*tafsirs*) to explain the meaning. The hadiths provided the background to Quranic revelations - what was the Prophet doing or saying when the revelation was given, what were the circumstances, for example - and enabled scholars to say what was meant and to resolve contradictions. Hadiths were equally important in the writing of biographies of Muhammad as again they are the major source, if not the only source, of material.

To reject hadiths entirely and depend on the Quran alone takes a good deal of conviction. Despite all the effort that has gone into interpreting the Quran and still goes into interpreting it, it is easy to find on the web and in different parts of the world starkly different versions of Islam based on different selections and interpretations of verses.

Redefining the *Sunna* and Rethinking the Hadith

In addition to the rejection of all hadiths or hadiths deemed unreasonable there is a third way. Some Muslims take the view it is not reform that is needed but Islam as it is really meant to be. A good example of this are the ideas of Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988), a Pakistani who was Professor of Islamic Thought at the University of Chicago.[9]

Rahman agreed with the conclusions reached by Western scholars applying historical critical methods, that hadiths are not historically sound and a great many are fabricated. Nevertheless, in his view they represent something important, their content or the gist of the content showed what Muslims did and believed at that time, and in that sense they are Prophetic, because the Muslim community was following or trying to follow the example of the Prophet.[10]

In Rahman's view the Muslim community during Muhammad's lifetime informally and naturally followed his example and after his death those that had never known him and new Muslims generated the need for guidance and this encouraged the use of hadiths.

The *Sunna* of the Prophet simply did not have enough in it to cover the great variety of needs of the community of believers which was undergoing widescale expansion in centres throughout the Middle East.

Prophetic Sunna, outside the fundamental matters touching the religious and the social and moral life of the Community, could not have been very large, let alone being of such titanic inclusiveness of all the details of daily life as medieval law and Ḥadīth literature make out.[11]

In any case the *Sunna* of the Prophet was not meant to be a set of detailed laws, it was rather an *"umbrella of behavioural norms and an interpretive process by which Muslims could adapt their law to changing circumstances"*.

As a consequence of this the Muslim community put its views and practices, especially those of the Companions and Successors, which was in any case inspired by the Prophet, into the mouth of the Prophet. As time passed, hadith creation became excessive and inappropriate and sometimes competing additions were made. Hadith fabrication was not deliberate deception but the scale and increasing formality of hadith scholarship gave the whole system a rigidity not intended by Muhammad.

Muslims were meant to continually apply the lessons of the Quran - social and economic justice and human equality - to the current time and circumstances as the Prophet had done during his lifetime. The Prophetic *Sunna* was not meant to provide a set of unchanging rules. Muslims should critically re-examine the hadith corpus. Hadiths were still vital for Muslims as they were the only link with Muhammad and the Quran but they have to be seen in their true light.

Other modern Muslim intellectuals, Javed Ghamidi (b. 1951) and Muhammad Shahrur (b. 1938), for example, have articulated understandings of the *Sunna* they believe match the true nature of Islam. Shahrur believes Muhammad's *Sunna* is not part of his role as a prophet; his sayings and actions are akin to *fatwas* and relate to specific circumstances. Ghamidi thinks the *Sunna* is limited to religious and certain practical matters. He also says

hadiths depend on the particular circumstances in which they were made and to whom they were addressed. A more careful reading of all relevant hadiths on a particular question is important. He claims a proper consideration of the various hadiths prohibiting pictures and portraits shows the prohibition applies to only those made for worshipping.[12]

Woman's Identity

Nimat Hafez Barazangi of Cornell University describes a similar modern vision in her book *Woman's Identity and Rethinking the Hadith.* The book *"…. affirms the necessity to shift the discourse in understanding Islam from that of a dogmatic religious law to a religio-moral rational worldview."*

Male domination of hadith scholarship and the misunderstanding of the role of hadiths have belittled the position of woman in the Islamic world. They are seen as minors perpetually dependent on a male household. A prime example of this inferior positioning is the belief a woman's testimony is worth less than a man's; women are not good witnesses because they are feeble minded. For example, one hadith states:

The Prophet said, *"Isn't the witness of a woman equal to half of that of a man?" The women said, "Yes." He said, "This is because of the deficiency of a woman's mind."*

[al-Bukhari, Book 52, Hadith 22 / Book 48, Hadith 826]

And, another:

…. The women asked, "O Allah's Messenger! What is deficient in our intelligence and religion?" He said, "Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness of one man?" They replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her intelligence. Isn't it true that a woman can neither pray nor fast during her menses?" The women replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her religion."

[al-Bukhari, Book 6, Hadith 9 / Book 6, Hadith 301]

Barazangi believes this attitude, here presumably put into the mouth of the Prophet, springs from the wrong understanding of the Quranic verse most quoted on this issue:

O you who believe! When you deal with each other, in transactions to a certain time, reduce them to writing … And get two witnesses, out of your own men, and if there are not two men, then a man and two women, such as you choose [for witnesses], so that if one of them errs, the other can remind

her ... [al Baqara 2: 282].

The verse concerns a special case, a loan for a particular period of time. This requires documentation that women in general in late antiquity would not be familiar with, so an extra woman is necessary.

She gives numerous examples from the Quran of the testimony of a woman having the same importance and status as that of a man and provides much material to give scope for rethinking other hadiths including those dealing with women's attire, the veil and the head scarf.

Key beliefs at the centre of the Islamic worldview she describes are the Quran makes it clear that men and women share equal status and responsibilities - spiritually, intellectually, socially, in trusteeship, witnessing, and leadership - and hadiths must be corroborated by relevant and correct interpretations of the Quran.

The variations of early interpretations of hadiths is evidence that hadiths are not meant to be static authoritarian dogma but examples of practice subject to time and place. This is also shown by the Prophet's declarations against putting hadiths in written form. It was the written recording of hadiths some 200 years after the Prophet's lifetime that introduced inappropriate rigidity.

Chapter 8 - Shi‘i Hadiths

Between 10 and 15 percent of Muslims are Shi‘a. They believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad’s cousin and the husband of his daughter, Fatima, should have become the leader of the Muslim community after the Prophet’s death. They believe Muhammad passed his knowledge and authority to Ali and through Ali this knowledge and authority passed to the Prophet’s descendants. Ali became the first Imam, the infallible holder of Prophetic knowledge and authority, and after him his son became the Imam. Each Imam appointed one of his sons or sometimes a brother as his successor.

This contrasts with Sunnis who believe the knowledge and authority to interpret the Quran and shape and decide Islamic affairs after Muhammad passed to the community as a whole represented by its scholars.

The great majority of Shi‘i Muslims are “twelvers”. The eleventh Imam died in captivity under the Abbasids in 260 AH and the twelvers believe he had a son, the twelfth Imam, who was hidden away in a state of supernatural seclusion and the son will one day return and bring justice to the world.

The first two-three centuries were a formative period for Shi‘a just as they were for Sunnis. Rather than the branches of Islam that we see today there were various factions competing for power and influence one of which became the Shi‘a. Important factors included opposition to the Umayyads (41-132) and regional rivalries. Ali had especially strong support in Kufa in Iraq.

Divisions were often blurred because Sunnis in general had great respect for the Prophet’s family even if they did not agree Ali should have been his successor. Al-Shafi’i who played such a big part in establishing the importance of hadiths as understood by Sunnis, was once charged with being an extreme Shi‘ite. He said if loving the family of the Prophet was heretical then he would admit to the charge.[1]

The Shi‘a interest in hadiths and in their organised collection developed at much the same time as such interest did for Sunnis though the Shi‘i canonical collections came a little later than the six Sunni canonical collections.

The Shi‘a party solidified especially in the early Abbasid period (132+) partly as response to the Abbasid’s failure to live up to the promise they represented the family of the Prophet and the disappearance of the twelfth

Imam in 260 AH also motivated Shi‘a to do more to establish their own body of traditions.

The Nature of Shi‘i Hadiths

Like the Sunnis discussed in previous chapters Shi‘i oriented scholars gathered hadiths but with a very big difference. The great majority of Shi‘i hadiths depend on Imams, Imams reporting what the Prophet said or did, or the sayings and deeds of Imams themselves, who are able to originate hadiths because of their status as descendants of the Prophet.

Most *isnads* take one of three forms:

(1) A saying or deed of the Prophet transmitted via an *isnad* of Imams
(2) A saying or deed of an Imam transmitted by an *isnad* of successor Imams
(3) A saying or deed of an Imam transmitted by an *isnad* of his followers

Only a small proportion of Shi‘i hadiths come from Companions. Shi‘a believe all the Companions and any transmitters who didn’t support Ali cannot be trusted.[2] This is in stark contrast to the Sunni dependence on Companions and the Sunni belief all Companions were reliable. For example, Shi‘a rule out all the hadiths narrated by Aisha and Abu Hurayra, who, as Table 3 in Chapter 2 shows, are responsible for a very large proportion of Sunni Prophetic hadiths and are quoted as hadith narrators some 7500 times.

The Shi‘a have four collections by three collectors as their equivalent of the Sunni canonical six.[3] See Table 6 below.

Table 6 - The Shi‘a Canonical Collections

Collection	Collector	Lifetime AH	Number in Collection
Kitab al-Kafi (The Sufficient Book in the Knowledge of Religion)	Al-Kulayni	250-329	16,199
Man la yahduruhu al-Faqih (He Who Has No Legal Scholar at Hand)	Ibn Babawayh	310-380	9,044

Tahdhib al-Ahkam	Al-Tusi	385-460	13,590
Al-Istibsar	Al-Tusi	385-460	5,511

Authenticity

The early Shi‘i collectors like their Sunni counterparts examined *isnads* when working to establish the validity of a hadith and they also classified them according to their soundness but no collection achieved the status of being totally sound in the way Sunnis considered al-Bukhari and Muslim totally sound (*sahih*).

These canonical collections were simply the most authoritative, most widely used and useful. The first two collections are similar in structure to the Sunni collections providing comprehensive references. In his preface al-Kulayni says he collected only hadiths he thought were important and he left verification to later scholars. He also added in another sign of sensitivity regarding content *"whatever (hadith) agrees with the Book of God (the Quran), accept it. And whatever contradicts it, reject it"*. Ibn Babawayh doesn’t give *isnads* and says his hadiths are authentic.

The later work by al-Tusi provides comment and analysis on hadiths, discussing, for example, those that seemed to clash. Criticism of hadiths was not unusual as it became to be accepted hadiths depended on vulnerable human transmission.

Coverage

Imam hadiths are not found in Sunni collections but in terms of their themes and content would fit easily into Sunni collections. The Shi‘i collections also contain hadiths found in Sunni collections that are favourable to Ali and the Prophets family and versions of such hadiths. For example, the Shi‘i hadith that says Ali was the first Muslim and was named by Muhammad to be his successor and the first Imam is also found in Sunni collections noting that Ali was the first Muslim but without the reference to Ali being Muhammad’s successor and the first Imam.

PART 2

MODERN WESTERN SCHOLARSHIP

Chapter 9 - Goldziher

Introduction

The Hungarian Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921) was not the first modern Western scholar to question the authenticity of hadiths. As early as 1848 Gustav Weil (1808-1889) suggested at least half of al-Bukhari's famous collection should be rejected.[1] William Muir (1819-1905) believed half of hadith material was fabricated and *isnads* were of doubtful validity, though he thought once fabricated hadiths were identified and removed there would remain *"ample and trustworthy materials for a biography of the Prophet"* but by the end of the nineteenth century most western scholars were highly sceptical even this was likely.

Goldziher was the first to set out at length and examine the questions raised in a major academic work, *Muslim Studies*, published in two volumes in 1889-90 which became the starting point for much of later Western scholarship concerning hadiths.

Goldziher's Reasons for Doubting Hadiths

A number of observations lay at the heart of Goldziher's suspicion of hadiths. There were no documents about the Prophet written in his lifetime and what was known about him had been transmitted for at least 100 years primarily by oral communication, a process vulnerable to accidental and deliberate distortion.

There were anachronistic hadiths concerning conflicts and matters that only emerged after the Prophet's death that could not be his words. For example, Goldziher reports this comment of an Islamic theologian in modern times.

One of the strangest things has ever happened to me was this: when I recited the traditional sayings according to which scholars are told not to mingle with the sultans, one of my listeners said: "How could the Prophet have said this, since there were no sultans in his days?'" This poor man did not know of the tradition that the apostle of God had predicted with prophetical insight everything that is going to happen until the hour of resurrection. [*Muslim Studies* v2, p143]

There were contradictory hadiths with respectable *isnads*. Later hadith

collections contained many hadiths that were not to be found in earlier collections. It was odd that younger Companions transmitted many more hadiths than older Companions who had known the Prophet for much longer.

Goldziher also followed an important principle of the modern Historical Critical Method, that historical communities even with striking cultural differences were subject to human factors that we see today; individuals and groups look after their own interests as they did in ancient Greece, Rome or Egypt. The early Muslim community was not uniquely upright and idealistic. The belief adopted by later hadith scholars that the Prophet's Companions never lied was unreal. People looked after their own interests which could mean exploiting the reputation of the Prophet.

One might add the civil wars over who should lead the Islamic community that soon followed the Prophet's death leave no doubt human factors shaped events.

Goldziher accepted that many of the Prophet's Companions must have been keen to remember what he said and did and some of them made written records in *sahifas*, and after his death transmitted what they knew to their Successors which is when the use of *isnads* began. To this extent Goldziher is in agreement with the traditional story but he also believed the fabrication of hadiths began early for a number of reasons.

The Motives and Circumstances of Hadith Fabrication

Goldziher identified four main reasons for the fabrication of hadiths; sectarian struggles, community propaganda, legal, and political reasons. He believed politics especially was an early powerful reason and this was shown in the part played by hadith fabrication in the rivalry over who should be caliph and in the time of the Umayyads.

Sectarian Rivalry and Propaganda

Regarding the succession to Muhammad and those who believed the caliph should be a member of the Prophet's family and supported Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, Goldziher drew attention to a tradition that says:

Once we travelled in the Prophet's company. When we rested near Ghadir Khumm we were called to prayer. In the shade of two trees we prepared a place for the Prophet and he performed his midday prayer there. Afterwards he took Ali's hand and said 'Do you know that I have greater power over the

Muslims than they have themselves?' 'Yes', we answered and when he repeated this question several times we gave the same reply each time. 'So know then that whose master I am, their master is Ali also. O God, protect him who recognizes Ali and be an enemy to all who oppose Ali." When the Prophet finished this speech the future caliph Umar stepped towards Ali and said: 'I wish you luck, son of Abu Talib, from this hour you are appointed the master of all Muslim men and women. [*MS* v2, p113]

The Sunnis who opposed Ali soon found identical hadiths that had Abu Bakr or Umar mentioned in place of Ali. They also found reports that the Prophet had left no will and had not assigned a successor.

At the outbreak of the first civil war between Ali, when he was the fourth caliph, and Mu‘awiya, the governor of Syria, and the man who founded the Umayyad dynasty, Ali’s supporters produced a hadith in which the Prophet said *“If you see Mu‘awiya ascend my pulpit, then kill him.”* This was soon countered by a hadith from Mu‘awiya’s side saying *“It is as if Mu‘awiya were sent as a prophet because of his forbearance and his having been entrusted with God’s word”*. The last point related to the fact that Mu‘awiya had been a scribe to the Prophet. A very early Muslim historian al-Mada’ini (d. 225) reports Mu‘awiya encouraged the circulation of fabricated hadiths extolling the qualities of other caliphs and followers of the Prophet to show up Ali’s shortcomings.

Goldziher noted many hadiths displayed all too obvious chauvinistic motivations, the Prophet praising or lauding specific cities, tribes, and law schools.

It is not astonishing that the pious of Basra, in their jealousy of rival schools, let their home town be glorified by the Prophet in many extravagant sayings. 'Ali, on his withdrawal to Basra after the 'battle of the camel', is made to address the inhabitants with a speech in which he referred to the following saying of the Prophet: 'An area named Basra will be conquered. This place amongst all places on earth possesses the most regular qibla; the best readers of the Koran are to be found there as well as men most distinguished in the fear of God, the scholars of Basra are the most learned of men and the inhabitants are the foremost in charity. [*MS* v2, 124]

There were also idealistic motivations for fabricating hadiths. That the Prophet was supposed to have said or done something added tremendous authority to that idea or action, and some Muslims felt fully justified in using

his name to promote what they believed to be the correct Islamic way in line with his teachings. There was even a hadith in circulation that said:

What .... is told to you as a saying of mine you will have to compare with the Book of God (the Koran), and what is in accordance with it is by me, whether I have in fact said it myself or not. Goldziher said of this:

It would have been impossible to state more openly that the important thing was not so much the actual authenticity of a saying but its religious correctness, and that it is permissible to hand down sayings and teachings in the name of the Prophet which in fact he had never uttered. [*MS* v2, p56]

Hadith fabricators also took advantage of the belief the Prophet knew the future to come up with hadiths concerning issues that only arose after his lifetime.

The Umayyads

Goldziher believed the Umayyads, the dynasty that came to power after the first Muslim civil war (36-41) and the overthrow and murder of Ali, the last of the four rightly-guided caliphs, and ruled from Damascus in Syria, used hadith fabrication to legitimise its rule and its political policies.

This new situation brought out hadiths supporting rebellion against unjust rulers and the dynastic system, and to counter this, hadiths against rebellion and for tolerance even of bad rulers. There is a hadith in al-Bukhari that says:

If somebody sees his Muslim ruler doing something he disapproves of, he should be patient, for whoever becomes separate from the Muslim group even for a span and then dies, he will die as those who died in the Pre-Islamic period of ignorance (as rebellious sinners). [al-Bukhari, Book 92, Hadith 7 / Book 88, Hadith 177]

When the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik faced opposition from a rival who controlled Mecca and the pilgrimage routes he feared that the rival would force Muslims making their annual pilgrimage and visiting the holy places in the Hijaz to swear allegiance to him so he issued a decree that the obligatory circumambulation (*tawaf*) could be performed at the sacred place in Jerusalem with the same validity as that around the Kaba in Mecca ordained in Islamic law.[2]

He then had the Islamic legal scholar and hadith expert al-Zuhri, who later served in caliph Hisham's court and tutored Umayyad princes, fabricate and circulate a hadith which told Muslims that pilgrimages to the main mosque in

Mecca, in Medina and in Jerusalem were all of the same status. In this way he was establishing an alternative pilgrimage centre in Jerusalem in Umayyad territory.

Another hadith was produced that said the Prophet gave sermons while seated and this enabled the caliph to do likewise and thus emphasise his superiority over the his listeners at Friday prayers. The Umayyads use of hadiths for propaganda purposes even encouraged the study of hadiths.

The Abbasids

The Abbasids also came to power through military force supplanting the Umayyads in 132 AH and like the Umayyads resorted to the fabrication of hadiths to support and legitimise their rule with the difference that religion itself played a much bigger part in government. The Abbasid state was built on the message that it represented the return to rule by the Prophet's family.

A notable example of a hadith legitimising Abbasid rule has the Prophet sharing war booty with the Banu Hashim's, the clan the Abbasids claimed descent from, but not with the Banu Abd Shams, the Umayyad clan. This has great significance because according to Sura 8:42 a fifth of war booty has to go to the Prophet himself, his close relatives, as well as to the poor and orphaned.[3]

Along with the increased role for religion in government and public life came a much greater interest in the *Sunna* of the Prophet.

What Really Happened - Islamic Law and the Legal Role of Hadiths

Sunna, in the sense of established good practice and good example, as the basis for law existed before the time of Muhammad.

Goldziher explains: *There was no need for Muslims to invent this concept and its practical significance; they were already current among the old pagans of the Jahiliyya. For them sunna was all that corresponded to the traditions of the Arabs and the customs and habits of their ancestors, and in this sense the word was still used in Islamic times by those Arab communities which had been only very little affected by Muslim religion.*

Under Islam the content of the old concept and the meaning of the word that corresponded to it underwent a change. To the pious followers of

Muhammad .... sunna meant all that could be shown to have been the practices of the Prophet and his earliest followers. The Muslim community was supposed to honour and obey the new sunna in the same way as the pagan Arabs revered the sunna of their ancestors. [*MS* v2, p25]

There was strong motivation to apply the traditions of the Prophet throughout the newly conquered territories, and to ensure the example of the Prophet, his *Sunna*, extended to all aspects of life but there were simply not enough traditions that went back to Muhammad. Even though it was of paramount importance the Quran was of limited use as it had little legal content dealing with only a few matters with little detail or context.

Some scholars believed scholarly reasoning could produce the necessary guidance on questions and topics not covered by traditional sources but this was strongly opposed by the *ahl al-hadith* (supporters of hadith) who insisted all legal questions not covered by the Quran had to be decided by reference to what the Prophet said or did.

As a result hadith supporters had to fabricate a great number of hadiths or adapt existing traditions to meet the huge requirement of building a comprehensive legal system based solely on the Quran and the Prophet's *Sunna*. Inevitably rival hadiths were produced to back different beliefs and schools of thought, and existing customs and practices. Legal schools produced hadiths to support their positions. The more religious environment brought about by the Abbasids encouraged these activities and there was huge scope for fabrication.

Goldziher believed the beliefs and deeds of Companions and Successors, non-Prophetic hadiths, had their *isnads* extended back to the Prophet so they became Prophetic hadiths. Hadith creation also produced hadiths with *isnads* of improbably long-lived transmitters. So that someone could be said to have known the Prophet his age might be extended to well over 100 years.

Opposing groups of Muslim scholars such as *ahl al-ra'y* (those who used reason and opinion) and *ahl al-hadith* fabricated hadiths to support their position. Similarly, rivalry between regional centres of religious law, personal disputes, tribal affiliations, and factional rivalries, gave rise to fabricated hadiths.

The hadith supporters overcame the influence and ideas of those who believed reason should play an important part and they were completely successful in making hadiths the source of Islamic law after the Quran.

Hadith Collections and Criticism

Goldziher concluded the organised collection of hadiths really got underway in the second half of the second century, the *Muwatta'* of Malik ibn Anas (93-179) being a good example of the start of the process. The increasing number of hadiths and their growing use in legal matters meant it was necessary to have well-organised collections.

The increased interest in and reliance on hadiths and the widespread fabrication of hadiths also gave rise to the system of hadith criticism. Hadiths even appeared quoting the Prophet condemning anyone who fabricated a hadith about him! Goldziher suggested an early form of criticism was operational about 150 AH. The supporters of hadiths and the different legal schools saw a system of hadith criticism as a tool for countering hadiths from their opponents. The method developed to identify genuine hadiths concentrated on the transmitters and transmission chain (the *isnad*) rather than what the hadith reported (the *matn*).

Goldziher's Conclusions and Their Impact

Goldziher saw a good part of the hadiths as *"a battlefield of the political and dynastic conflicts of the first few centuries of Islam"*. [*MS* v2, p115] He wrote:

Abd Allah b. Lahi'a (d. 174) tells of a converted heretic who pointed out to him that he must be careful when taking over hadiths because 'when we advanced one of our opinions, we used to give it the form of a hadith.'

.... this confession corresponds to the truth. Every stream and counter-stream of thought in Islam has found its expression in the form of a hadith, and there is no difference in this respect between the various contrasting opinions in whatever field. What we learnt about political parties holds true too for differences regarding religious law, dogmatic points of difference etc. Every ra'y or hawa, every sunna and bid'a has sought and found expression in the form of a hadith. [*MS* v2, p126]

Although Goldziher accepted there was a genuine effort to gather authentic hadiths and such hadiths existed, he firmly believed that:

In the absence of authentic evidence it would indeed be rash to attempt to express the most tentative opinion as to which parts of the hadith are the oldest original material, or even as to which of them date back to the

generations immediately following the Prophet's death. Closer acquaintance with the vast stock of hadiths induces sceptical caution rather than optimistic trust regarding the material brought together in the carefully compiled collections. [*MS* v2, p18]

As Goldziher saw matters only a very small proportion, indeed, of the canonical collections including the famous *Sahihan*, al-Bukhari and Muslim, could be authentically from the Prophet, the great majority were of later origin.

He felt the huge number of hadiths in the canonical collections created *"sceptical caution rather than optimistic trust"*. Goldziher concluded:

[hadiths could] .... *not serve as a document for the history of the infancy of Islam, but (served) rather as a reflection of the tendencies which appeared in the community during the maturer stages of its development. It contains invaluable evidence for the evolution of Islam during the years when it was forming itself into an organized whole from powerful mutually opposed forces.* [*MS* v2, p19]

This enormous degree of scepticism advocated by Goldziher was his major contribution to Western hadith scholarship. He did not provide any methods for analysing or determining the origins of specific hadiths. His findings on dating were of a general nature; later stages of development or first centuries of Islam.[4] But he set the scene for later modern Western scholars.

Chapter 10 - Schacht

Schacht's Role

The next major contribution to modern Western hadith scholarship came from Joseph Schacht (1902-1969), a British German-born scholar who taught at Oxford University, the University of Leiden, and Columbia University, where he became professor of Arabic and Islamic studies. His groundbreaking study, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, was published in 1950.

In contrast to Goldziher who drew attention to the political and sectarian aspects of hadiths, Schacht concentrated on the use of hadiths in Islamic law and paid particular attention to the way Islamic law developed over the first two centuries of Islam. He was the first European scholar to offer a comprehensive history of Islamic law in this vital early period.[1]

Some 60 years after Goldziher Schacht reinforced and refined the scepticism towards hadiths. He went so far as to argue it was possible no hadiths supposedly from the Prophet were genuine. He claimed:

We must... abandon the gratuitous assumptions that there existed originally an authentic core of information going back to the time of the Prophet. [*A Revaluation of Islamic Traditions*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1949]

Schacht also went further than Goldziher and did more than just formulate general views on the authenticity of hadiths. He developed methods for determining the date at which a hadith had been created and put into circulation.

Schacht's Observations

Two important observations underlie Schacht's conclusion that Prophetic hadiths were fabrications created after the time of the Prophet.

Hadiths Not Used When They Might Have been

Schacht believed: *[t]he best way of proving that a tradition did not exist at a certain time is to show that it is not used as a legal argument in a discussion which would have made reference to it imperative, if it had existed.* [*The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, p140]

In fact, early documents concerning Islamic legal affairs hardly ever mentioned Prophetic traditions. A prime example quoted by Schacht concerns advice given to Abd al-Malik (d. 86), the second Umayyad caliph. An advisor told him not to support belief in predestination and backed up this advice with quotes from the Quran and earlier prophets. There are hadiths that cover this question but the advisor makes no reference at all to these hadiths and that is most likely because they did not exist at that time.

Historians call this kind of reasoning an argument from silence, *e-silentio*. One objection to the *e-silentio* argument is that the individuals concerned may simply have not known of the hadiths, though in this case, given the central and well connected positions of the persons involved, the caliph and his advisor (and possibly their close colleagues) it would be most surprising if they hadn't and especially so if Prophetic hadiths were important. Important hadiths would not be forgotten or missed. Even at this stage of the Islamic Caliphate the centres of learning were well connected. It is also possible they knew the hadiths but for various reasons chose not to use them.

Schacht's argument carries considerable weight. There are hundreds of early cases that don't correspond with later ones and the jurists involved in these early cases were pious men of great learning. They would have used relevant hadiths if they had existed.[2]

The Contrast Between Early and Later Hadith Collections

Another fact of great significance for Schacht was the relatively small number of Prophetic hadiths found in extant early hadith collections. Far more of the doctrines of the early Islamic law schools originated with Successors or Companions than with the Prophet. The hadiths in a famous version of Malik's *Muwatta'* (93-179) breakdown as follows:[3]

Table 7 - Origins of Hadiths in Malik's Muwatta'

Hadith/Report traced back to:	Number	Percentage %
Successors	285	17
Companions	613	36
Malik himself	291	17

The Prophet	527	31
Total	1716	100%

Another early work by Abu Yusuf (d. 182) shows the same pattern.

Table 8 - Origins of Hadiths in Kitab al-Athar		
Hadith/Report traced back to:	**Number**	**Percentage %**
Successors	549	49
Companions	372	34
The Prophet	189	17
Total	1110	100%

In contrast to the above after the time of al-Shafi'i (150-204) the canonical six collections (created over the period 220-270) contained almost exclusively Prophetic hadiths. It is also striking that some of the reports traced back to the Prophet in the later collections can be found in the early collections traced back only to a Successor or Companion.

Reports attributed to Companions in Malik's *Muwatta'* could be found a generation later, attributed to the Prophet by al-Shafi'i via defective *isnads* with gaps between the Prophet and the first narrator, and after another generation found in a canonical collection, such as al-Bukhari, with a complete *isnad*. Schacht believed if a hadith had been from the Prophet, scholars like Malik would have made that clear in their collections as a Prophetic hadith would have far more authority than a report from a Companion or Successor.

It cannot be doubted that the stage of referring to the teaching and the example of the Prophet was preceded by, and grew out of, an earlier stage in which reference was made to Companions (and Successors) only. [*A Revaluation of Islamic Traditions*. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1949]

A recent study by Scott C. Lucas published in 2008, *Where are the Legal Hadith? A Study of the Musannaf of Ibn Abi Shayba* shows most of the 39,000 reports in Ibn Abi Shayba's (156-235) *Musannaf* are from Companions and

Successors. Only 9% of the legal rules cite a hadith from the Prophet.[4]

What Really Happened

Schacht argued that contrary to traditional belief, the Prophet's *Sunna* was not at the beginning a basis for Islamic law.[5] Islamic law and its sources developed over time and were the result of historical processes.

The First Stage

The original sources for Islamic law as developed by the early law schools in major regional centres such as Medina and Kufa during the time of the first four caliphs and the early Umayyad empire were the opinions of Muslim religious leaders, who would also apply human reason, and the *sunna* or "living tradition" of the local community itself which had been the basis of law before Islam.

The early caliphs had a very important role. They were also law makers who devised and promulgated regulations for the administration of the newly conquered territories of the growing Islamic Empire, and they allowed the new provinces to complement the regulations with those based on long established local customs. They even permitted practices that did not conform to the Quran; alcohol was consumed and flogging was used as punishment for theft rather than amputation.[6]

In these early years the phrase "*sunna* of the Prophet" referred to theological matters or it was used to underpin the authority of the caliphs to make laws and issue regulations. It didn't mean rules as laid down by the Prophet himself.

The Law Schools, the Traditionists and the Second Stage

Throughout the early part of the Umayyad period the regional law schools gradually replaced old local customs and the Umayyad caliphate regulations with their own evolving and growing traditions, a new contemporary *sunna*, and the use of reason and consensus. The process was helped by the schools themselves exchanging legal ideas.

To add force and authority to their opinions scholars involved in legal discussions and arguments would quote what Successors were reported to have said or done, and this in turn led to references to the Prophet's Companions. Eventually, to increase its authority or to win an argument,

Successor or Companion reports would be falsely accredited to the Prophet himself.

Also during this period religious reformers came forward and gained considerable influence. They were partly a reaction to the secular rule of the Umayyads. They strongly opposed the use of reason or consensus practiced in the law schools and sought to have all legislation and regulation based only on the Quran and the example of the Prophet. As a consequence of this approach they became known as "traditionists". (In previous chapters they are also referred to as *ahl al-hadith*, the name they used to describe themselves.)

The dependence on the example of the Prophet gave them a strong motivation to find more Prophetic hadiths and they did not hesitate to fabricate Prophetic traditions to support their efforts to have all law based on the Quran and Muhammad's example. A tradition appeared in which the Prophet said *".... sayings attributed to me which agree with the Qur'an go back to me, whether I actually said them or not."*[7]

The jurists of the law schools resisted the traditionists' efforts, but they themselves were very religious men and began to find and make use of hadiths themselves that supported their opinions and in this way they reinforced the approach of the traditionists and the importance of the *Sunna* of the Prophet.

Thus, by the second quarter of the second century and the replacement of the Umayyad dynasty by the Abbasids in 132 AH Prophetic hadiths were becoming an important source of Islamic law. Schacht believed this was demonstrated by the presence and number of Prophetic hadiths in early *musannafs* such as Malik's *Muwatta'* (discussed above).

Al-Shafi'i and the Third Stage

Schacht concluded the supreme position of Prophetic hadiths as a source of law alongside the Quran and the unification of Islamic legal thinking was finally brought about during the time of al-Shafi'i (150-204) and largely by his works and teachings. As discussed in Chapter 5 al-Shafi'i dismissed the arguments of those who opposed or criticised the use of hadiths and made out the case for using and relying on hadiths. He took the view that even an isolated Prophetic hadith from single authority and with a reliable *isnad* took precedence over any reports from Successors, Companions or other sources. Hadiths also determined how the Quran had to be interpreted; it was not the other way around.

Al-Shafi‘i’s ideas brought about such a great change to the established practice in the legal schools based on the living tradition that Schacht called it a “ruthless innovation.” The schools did however differ on which hadiths should apply and on the use or otherwise of other sources of law. Al-Shafi‘i’s pupil Ibn Hanbal formed a new school which was even more insistent on applying only the *Sunna* of the Prophet.

The old schools of law had made use of the *sunna*, the living tradition and ideal practice of the community, the *sunna* was now exclusively the *Sunna* of the Prophet. It had taken the best part of two centuries for Prophetic hadiths to achieve this superior status and to replace other ways of making Islamic law.

Based on the successive stages of legal discussions and the growth of the number of traditions and the way they were refined, Schacht was sure the greater part of the hadiths supposedly originating with the Prophet were in fact created during al-Shafi’i’s time and later.

Isnad Backward Growth and Other Fabrication

Schacht suggested the selection of only Prophetic hadiths as the basis of Islamic law provided an incentive for the fabrication of even more Prophetic hadiths. He noted the famous canonical six hadith collections such as al-Bukhari and Muslim were composed almost exclusively of Prophetic traditions and believed a large proportion of these hadiths must have first been circulated after al-Shafi’i in the early third century. He concluded that hadith *isnads* that went back to the Prophet indicated the likelihood of later fabrication.

Schacht believed *isnad* backward growth took place on a massive scale. Reports of the beliefs and deeds of Successors and Companions were falsely ascribed to the Prophet. His name, and the names of other transmitters to reach back to him where needed, were added to the *isnad.*

He said:

Two generations before Shafi‘i reference to traditions from Companions and Successors was the rule, to traditions from the Prophet himself the exception, and it was left to Shafi’i to make the exception the principle. We shall have to conclude that, generally and broadly speaking, traditions from Companions and Successors are earlier than those from the Prophet. [*Origins*, p3]

He believed: *The more perfect the isnad, the later the tradition*.

Complete *isnads* were also fabricated. Individual hadiths were provided

with additional *isnads,* the so-called "spread of *isnads*," to counter the criticism especially from the *Mu'tazilites* that a hadith was isolated, it was reported by only one person, and had no independent confirmation. This spread of *isnads* undermines the claim that widely reported hadiths, *mutawatir* hadiths, must be genuine as they were independently reported by more than one person.

Even though Schacht considered *isnads* highly suspect he still believed they might be used in some cases in the dating of hadiths. This is discussed below.

Schacht's Unsettling Conclusions

To sum it up, Schacht was telling the world that hadiths, the *Sunna* of the Prophet, what Muslims considered the foundation of their laws along with the Quran, was a later development. Not only was it an innovation but very few hadiths were genuine or genuinely from the Prophet. It was largely fabrication. He forcefully summed it up as follows:

... every legal tradition from the Prophet, until the contrary is proved, must be taken not as an authentic or essentially authentic, even if slightly obscured, statement valid for his time or of the time of the Companions, but is the fictitious expression of a legal doctrine formulated at a later date. [*Origins*, p149]

Schacht's Methods - Dating Hadiths

It is also with regard to dating hadiths that Schacht went beyond the issues addressed by Goldziher. Schacht proposed several rules or methods to determine when a hadith was created or falsely attributed to the Prophet. The first two methods concerned the content of the hadith, what it said or reported.

e-Silentio

Schacht noted in regard to documented legal arguments that if a hadith that would have been important in that argument had not been quoted, the hadith could not have existed at that time and therefore originated after the time of that argument.

Hadiths and Counter Hadiths

Hadiths were often fabricated to help win debates over contemporary issues. A hadith would be introduced by one side in an argument against a particular

idea or practice and that in turn would provoke those who supported the idea or practice to come up with a hadith in their favour. This could lead to further hadiths for and against. A comparison of all these hadiths could produce a timeline for their originations.

As noted above, to increase the authority of the act or belief of a successor, the act or belief would be ascribed to a Companion, and to increase it even further, ascribed to the Prophet, and Schacht concluded:

Whenever we find, as frequently happens, alleged opinions of Successors, alleged decisions of the Companions, and alleged traditions from the Prophet side by side, we must, as a rule and until the contrary is proved, consider the opinions of the Successors as the starting point, and the traditions from the Companions and from the Prophet as secondary developments, intended to provide higher authority for the doctrine in question. [*Origins*, p156]

The Initial Single Strand and the Common Link

Schacht's third method concerns the *isnad*. He noticed a striking pattern.

Most hadiths exist in a number of versions each with its own *isnad*. Typically an *isnad* contains five to seven names from the informer of the collector who first wrote it down in a collection back to the Companion who witnessed and narrated what the Prophet said or did.

By putting all the *isnads* for the different versions of a particular hadith *matn* together in a bundle Schacht found a striking pattern: The first three or four persons who transmit the hadith are identical. Almost all versions have the lower part of the *isnad* in common. They do not begin to divide immediately after the Prophet. In the majority of cases there is a single strand of three to four transmitters before the hadith story begins to spread to more than one person. See Diagram 1.

In the six books, this pattern is found for nearly all hadiths and their variations. Most hadiths are apparently originated by a single Companion. It is a stunning fact.

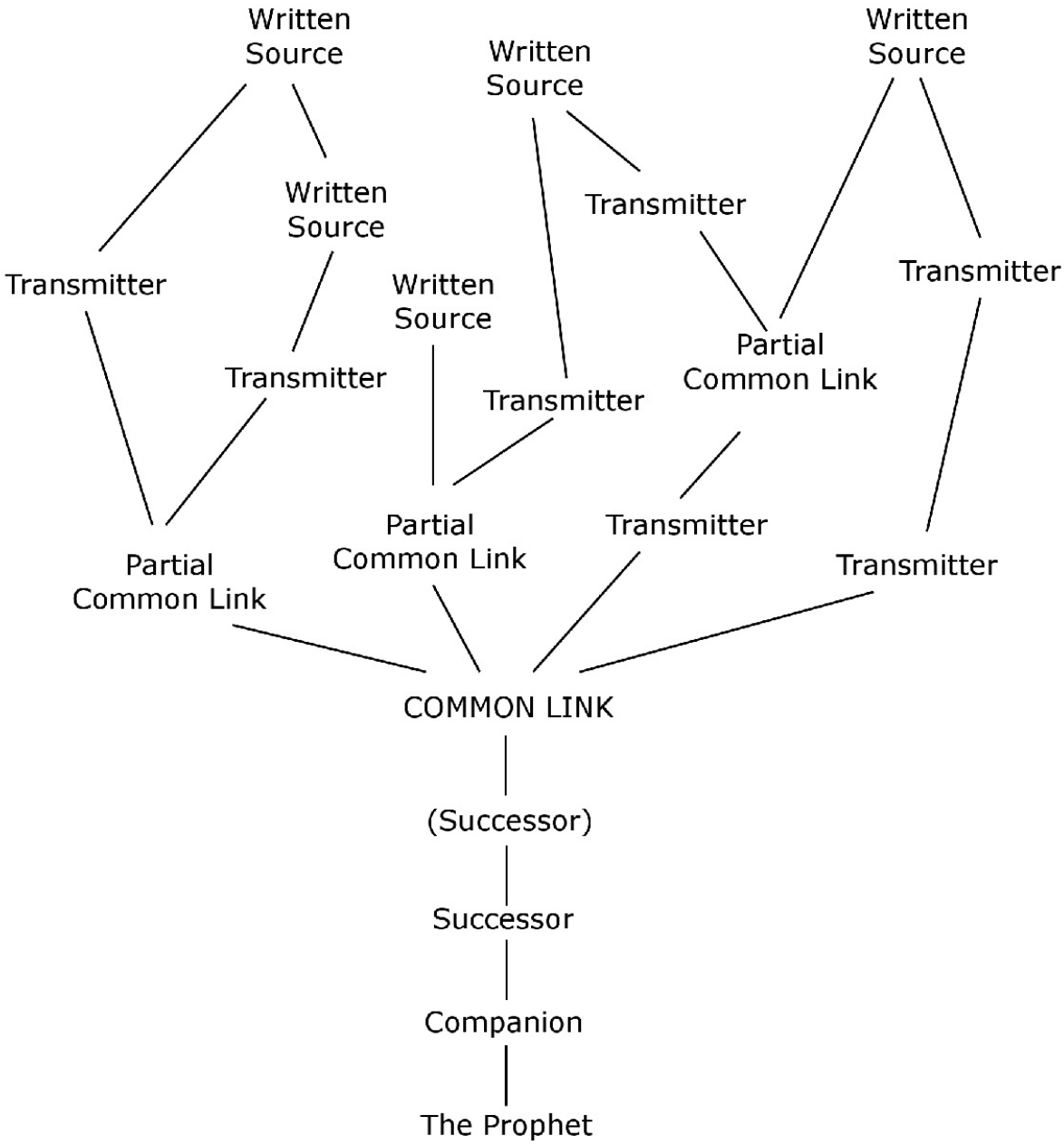


Diagram 1 - The Initial Single Strand and the Common Link

Schacht found this incredible. Is it believable a given Prophetic act or saying was witnessed by only a single Companion and this Companion told only one person who in turn told only one person? And, why is this feature so widespread?

Schacht named the transmitter from whom the hadith first starts to spread

out, the "common link", and argued this common link, was, in fact, the fabricator of the hadith and marked the date of its origin. Although he considered common links as hadith fabricators, Schacht believed the *isnads* up from common links to collectors mainly recorded what really happened and thus gave some genuine historical information.

Criticism of Schacht's Work

Schacht's meticulous and original work with its far reaching conclusions attracted a lot of attention and scholarly criticism at the time it was produced and has ever since. It is remarkable that even today Schacht's work attracts so many attempted refutations.[8]

There are two aspects to it; his views of how Islamic law evolved including the role of hadiths in that process, and his conclusions regarding hadith authenticity. [See Chapter 15 for further discussion of the evolution of Islamic law] Regarding hadith authenticity some of the main points are as follows.

Can his findings be generalised? Schacht concentrated exclusively on legal hadiths and it is not necessarily true that what applies to such hadiths can be applied to all hadiths or other categories of hadiths such as exegetical, historical, doctrinal, and exhortatory hadiths involving different circumstances and motivations and with different transmission histories. Legal hadiths account for about 20% of the hadiths in al-Bukhari, one of the most famous hadith collections. [See ANNEX 1]

Another criticism of Schacht was that he concentrated on the form of hadiths which may well have only developed in the second century, and neglected the meaning of the content which may have gone back much earlier.

The backward growth of *isnads*, that a hadith in a later source going back to the Prophet, in an earlier source goes back only to a Companion or Successor, was known to early Muslim hadith scholars, they called it *raf'* meaning "raising higher", and that sometimes defective or incomplete *isnads* were improved. The existence of such hadiths does not justify the conclusion that all Prophetic hadiths that also have a version stopping at a Companion or Successor had the Prophet added later. [See section in Chapter 14 for recent research on *isnad* backward growth]

Chapter 11 - Juynboll

Juynboll's Role

Gautier Juynboll (1935-2010), a Dutch scholar, extended and refined Schacht's ideas concerning the nature of *isnads* and the fabrication of hadiths.

His two best known works are: *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Hadith* (1983) and the *Encyclopedia of Canonical Hadith* (2007)

Though Juynboll built on Schacht's work demonstrating its usefulness and how some historical information can be gleaned from *isnads*, he did not go as far as Schacht in assuming all hadiths suspect and likely to be fabrications. He took the view that to some degree they tell us what the Prophet said and how he behaved.

[I]t seems likely that at least part of the prophetic tradition listed in one or more canonical—or even non-canonical—collections deserves to be considered as a fair representation of what the prophet of Islam did or said, or might have done or said. [*Muslim Tradition*, p71]

He also places the date for the appearance of hadiths with *isnads* to the end of the first century, several decades earlier than Schacht places it.

What Really Happened - The Origin, Transmission and Role of Hadiths

Like Schacht, Juynboll describes how he believes hadiths came to have their role and how they developed over the first two centuries of Islam with special attention to hadiths and *isnads* themselves rather than the legal system.

From Story Telling to Hadith Transmission

Juynboll believed a large number of religious stories, some truthful accounts concerning Muhammad, some of very vague origin and dubious nature, some even from pre-Islamic times, were in circulation in the first decades of Islam. These stories were spread by professional storytellers (*qussas*) many of whom were keen to tell stories extolling the virtues, character, and deeds of Muhammad and his Companions, the first Muslims. There were no *isnads*. Juynboll based this belief on the *awa'il* sources, literature about who first did

something and the establishment of certain institutions.[1]

The stories evolved into the hadith format that today we regard as normative. There was a transition from the telling of informal stories shaped and worded as the speaker wanted to the use of formal quotations and the use of *isnads* starting in the last decades of the first century, the 70s and 80s. It was the third generation of Muslims, the Successors or Successors to the Successors who started to use *isnads* and according to Juynboll this transition took a half century to complete and for the formal hadith style and format to fully emerge.

.... the earliest origins of standardized hadith cannot be traced back earlier than, at most, to the seventies or eighties of the first century. What had preceded this was, as we have seen above, still unstructured and still unstandardized material of edifying contents or with a political slant. [*MT*, p23]

This tallies with the statement of the Successor, Ibn Sirin (d. 110) [See Chapter 4] *".... when the strife began they would say 'Name for us your sources' so that the People of the Sunna could be looked at and their hadiths accepted.... "*. For Juynboll the strife referred to is the second Muslim civil war (60-72).

The Prophet's *Sunna*

Juynboll also saw an evolutionary process at work with the *Sunna* of the Prophet. He noted that the first caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar I and Uthman, hardly ever relied on a report concerning Muhammad to make decisions and used mainly their own judgement.[2]

Juynboll believed there was first a more general type of *sunna* involving both Muhammad and his Companions and the idea of the *Sunna* of the Prophet as the only non-Quranic source of guidance for the Islamic community emerged out of this, also towards the end of the first century. He believed Umar II (63-101) was the first to officially promulgate the *Sunna* of the Prophet.

In this early period as interest in hadiths grew in the Hijaz, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt the *isnads* were local, transmitters known in that region's centre, and became mixed only in the first decades of the second century.

Fabrication

The early storytelling and the transition period gave rise to very large numbers

of fabricated accounts and reports concerning Muhammad. Some were based on real memories of what he said and did and some on a wish to promote good Islamic practices but by the time the *isnad* system was well established, a generation or two later, it was very difficult to investigate the origins of these accounts and reports, and *isnads* themselves could be fabricated. It should not be assumed an intention to deceive always lay behind the fabrication of hadiths and *isnads*, over time some came about by good faith additions or alterations to existing stories.

Based on the work of early hadith scholars and collectors, Juynboll provided evidence for the spectacular growth and widespread fabrication of hadiths that followed. A Companion such as Ibn Abbas is given in the very early sources as narrating only nine Prophetic hadiths, yet later in the huge *musnad* compiled by Ibn Hanbal (164-241) he is given as the source for 1710 narrations (counting repetitions).

Juynboll felt Muslim hadith criticism was unable to detect fabricated hadiths and the techniques that were developed came too late to be effective in judging what really happened in the early decades of hadith transmission towards the end of the first century and in the early second century. Hadith critics also ignored the fact that *isnads* themselves could be fabricated which undermined the value of *isnad* corroboration an important technique in authenticating hadiths. And, he agreed with Goldziher that the early hadith critics largely ignored the contents of hadiths.

Juynboll noted various ways *isnad* fabrication happened. Hadith critics themselves identified the practice of *tadlis*, a fabricator would simply attribute a hadith to an early and well-known scholar and Juynboll claimed *tadlis* was rarely detected. What a Companion might have said was ascribed to the Prophet. Transmitters were added to *isnads* to give them greater prestige and transmitters appeared with improbably long lives and some were outright inventions. These showed up in the biographical works as entries with hardly any information and as “unknowns”.

Juynboll concluded: .... *surely it is unlikely that we will ever find even a moderately successful method of proving with incontrovertible certainty the historicity of the ascription of such to the prophet but in a few isolated instances.*

And he added: *Too many Companions, especially Anas, Abu Hurayra, Ibn 'Abbas and Jabir b. 'Abd Allah to name but a few of the most important*

alleged hadith transmitters among them, were 'credited' with such colossal numbers of obviously fabricated traditions that it is no longer feasible to conceive of a foolproof method to sift authentic from falsely ascribed material. [*MT*, p71]

Like Schacht, Juynboll believed there were no legal hadiths in the first century. In his opinion they were the work of Successors during the second century and were not directly connected with the Prophet.

Even with all these critical views Juynboll still believed hadiths later ascribed to the Prophet or Companions could not be dismissed as having no historical basis.[3] He also thought *isnads* could still provide useful information about the history and origin of hadiths.

Juynboll's Analysis

Juynboll believed Schacht's common link theory was of the utmost importance. It was highly significant that different *isnads* for a particular *matn* all had the same strand of transmitters from the time of the Prophet up to a common link where they split into two or more transmitter strands sometimes with further splits following. [See Diagram 1 in Chapter 10 about Schacht]

Juynboll looked more closely at the patterns created by the *isnads* of a *matn* and introduced terminology to describe various features that could be seen in the patterns and rules to determine if an *isnad* and its *matn* were possibly genuine or fabricated.

Like Schacht, Juynboll concentrated on *isnads* giving relatively little attention to the details of *matns*, but unlike Schacht who had considered the transmissions above the common link to be the believable part of the *isnad*, Juynboll was far more sceptical.[4]

One-to-Many

Juynboll's one-to-many principle is central to his explanation of what can be gleaned from *isnads* and how we can identify who most likely first put a tradition or its wording into circulation.

He states: *The more strands of one particular bundle come together in one transmitter, either converging in him and/or blossoming forth from him, the more that moment of transmission, which can be seen as a 'knot', deserves to be considered historically tenable.* [*Encyclopedia*, pxix]

The more people who pass on a hadith from a particular transmitter the more likely it is that particular transmitter really did transmit that hadith at that time. He took the view each transmitter was most likely to pass on a tradition to more than one person and this would be the natural pattern for *isnads*. If this pattern did not show when the *isnads* of a tradition were compared, it was unlikely the *isnad* was genuine.

Isnad Patterns, Single Strands, Spiders, Bundles and Partial Common Links

Diagram 2 illustrates a typical *isnad*, a strand of transmitters from the informer of the collector who finally recorded the hadith in a collection back to the person at the time of the Prophet who witnessed what the Prophet said or did.

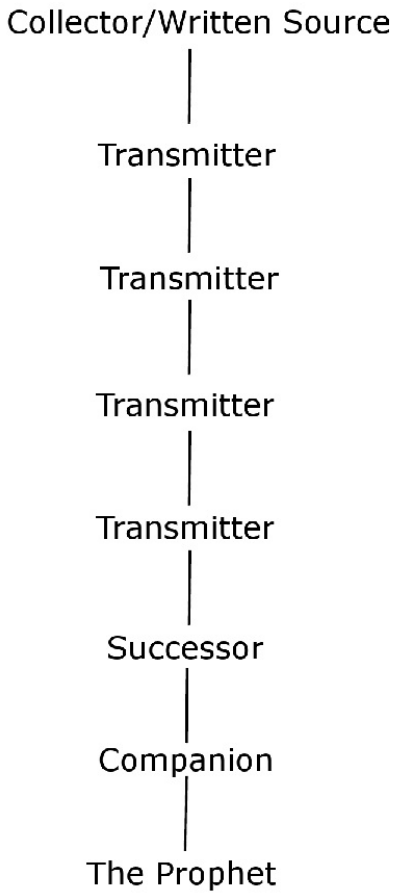


Diagram 2 - An *Isnad* Strand of Transmitters

Spiders

When the different *isnad* strands for a particular *matn* and its variations are shown together patterns emerge. For some *matns* the strands partly overlap producing a spider like pattern. See Diagram 3. After a single strand from the Prophet to a common link (CL) fanning out takes place mainly in further single strands.

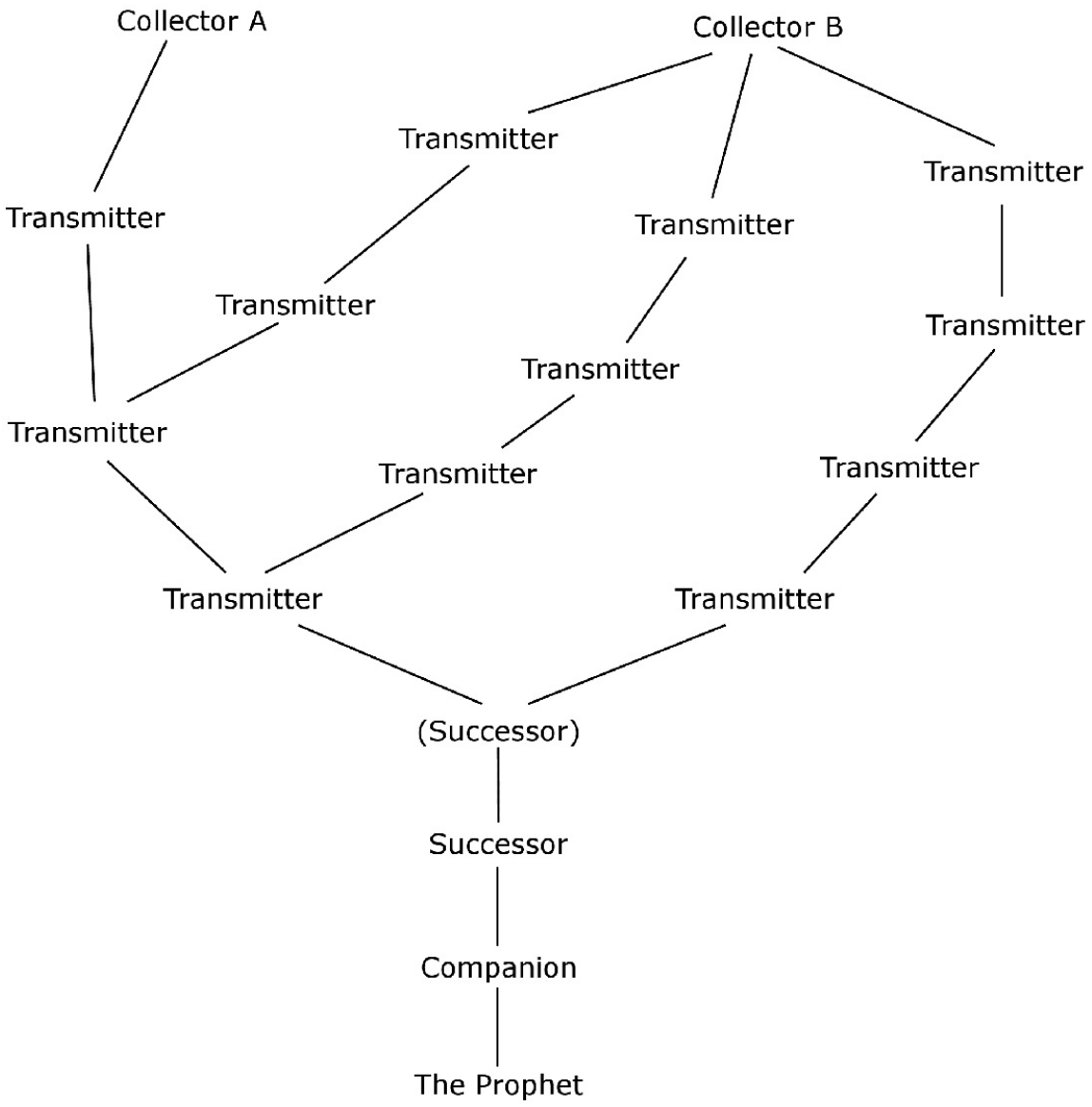


Diagram 3 - The Spider Pattern

Juynboll believes these single strands up from the common link (CL) are not

genuine transmission paths. According to his one-to-many principle the genuineness of transmission is indicated by successive transmitters transmitting to more than one person. The single strands of a spider pattern are the inventions of the collectors to cover the gap between themselves and an earlier fictitious or historical person.

Bundles and Partial Common Links

When there are more strands and greater overlap for a particular *matn* the pattern looks like a bundle. See Diagram 4. In the case of a bundle pattern those who hear from the common link in turn pass on the report to more than one other recipient. Juynboll termed these transmitters partial common links (PCLs).

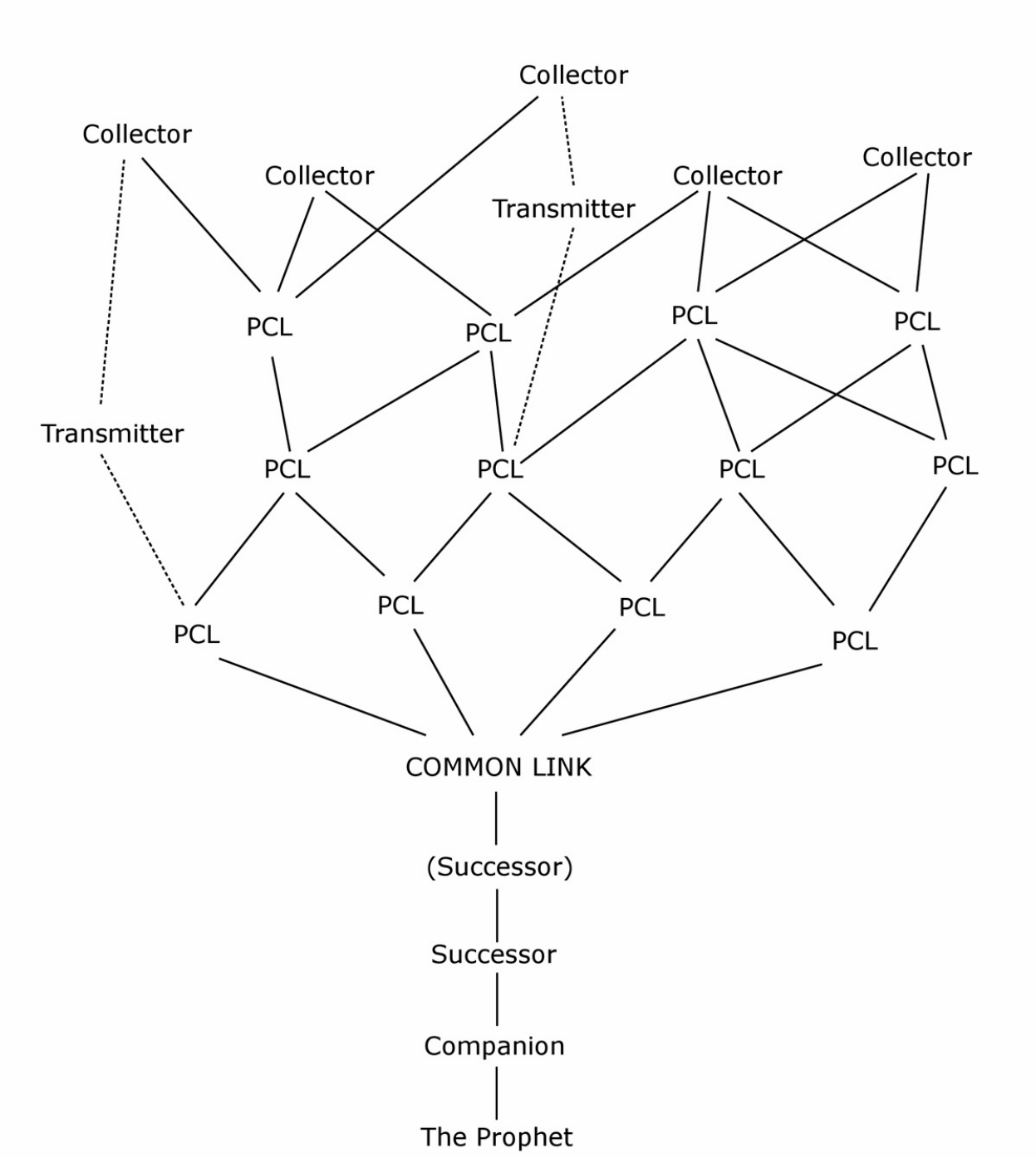


Diagram 4 - The Bundle Pattern of Partial Common Links (with some single strands)

Both spider and bundle patterns have a single strand below the common link back to the Prophet. In most cases they divide only after a succession of three to four transmitters. [See previous Chapter concerning Schacht for more

on this phenomena]

Significance of Partial Common Links

From a partial common link (PCL) after a common link (CL) there may be another single strand directly to the written collection (some are shown in Diagram 4) or there may be further partial common links.

According to Juynboll the likelihood of a CL being a genuine transmitter of a hadith increases with the number of PCL at each level up to the written collection. By genuine Juynboll means the CL might have "genuinely" fabricated it or he might have received it from an earlier transmitter or he might have been the source of its wording.

He believed the sustained multiplication after the CL rules out fabrication. An *isnad* is reliable only if it passes through enough PCLs up to the written collection. A single strand from a CL (or a PCL) to a written source is likely to be a fabrication as is a single strand up to a CL.

In Juynboll's words: .... *the more favourable the ratio CL/PCLs in a certain bundle appears to be, the more credible is the position of that CL in that bundle.* [*Encyclopedia*, pxx]

Identifying and Grading Common Links

In practice *isnad* bundles and patterns are not as clear cut as shown in the diagrams. Most real examples are a mixture of patterns and the identification of genuine CLs is difficult.

Juynboll noted: *There are quite a few of such tangled isnad constellations .... which, at first sight, suggest that we have a bundle, but which, upon closer scrutiny, turn out to be no more than spiders. In fact, they easily outnumber veritable bundles.*

.... we often find two or more of these spiders superimposed upon one another, supporting exactly the same or one or more closely resembling matn wording(s), resulting in isnad constellations which, at first sight, leave us with the (false) impression that we have a veritable bundle in front of us. [*Encyclopedia*, pxxii]

Juynboll devised a grading scheme to help hadith researchers deal with this problem. He specified three categories of key transmitting common links.

1. CLs. The CL/PCL ratio is convincing
2. (seeming) CLs or (S)CLs. The CL/PCL ratio in a bundle is not

convincing. There are no more than two believable PCLs in the currently available hadith collections fanning out from the CL and further only SSs.

3. seeming CLs or SCLs. There is only one PCL in addition to a few SSs.

Juynboll noted many of the doubtful CLs in the canonical collections

.... could on good grounds also be qualified as fictitious, or to use the Arabic term majhul, (unknown), since there are no data found on them in the sources at all, or the data are scant, contradictory or otherwise unsubstantial, failing to result in the identification of a believable or otherwise plausible hadith figure. [*Encyclopedia*, pxxiii]

Dives

Another feature for which Juynboll introduced new terminology and an explanation is the dive. Juynboll saw single strands as the creation of the collector or in some cases the latest transmitter who passed the hadith to the collector. For example, in Diagram 5, Collector B has created *isnads* by linking to the *isnad* of Collector A.

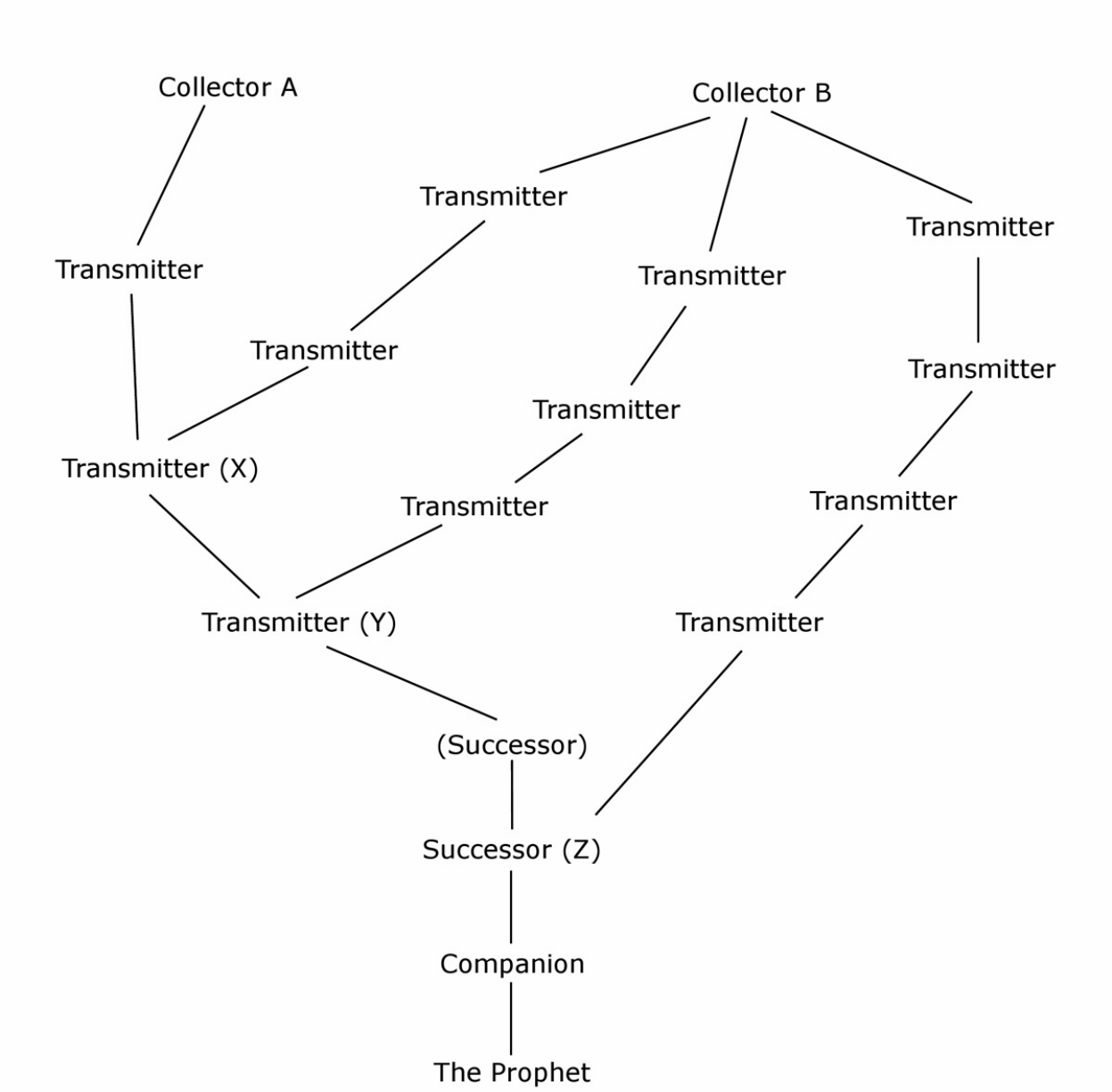


Diagram 5 - Spider Pattern and Diving Strands

Collector B has a *matn* of unknown origin, it could be a fabrication, but he is not willing to admit this so he falsely ascribes it to a well-known transmitter, transmitter X, in one of collector A's *isnads*. To give his *matn* even more credibility he invents a further transmission path from transmitter Y in A's *isnads*. Diving strands may even target Successors (Z) or Companions and dive under the Common Link.

This interpretation of diving strands led Juynboll to dismiss the additional dive-like *isnads* of hadiths that early Muslim hadith scholars offered as

corroboration of a hadith. Because the transmission chains are independent they cannot be verified and they are most likely fabrications to make a hadith appear reliable.

Significance of Juynboll's Analysis

Although Juynboll, as stated above, believes at least part of the Prophetic tradition deserves to be considered as fair representation of the Prophet's words or deeds, his analysis of *isnads* casts a huge question mark over the authenticity of hadiths; was such and such as reported really said or done by the Prophet.

If the part of a hadith's *isnads* after the common link form bundles when shown together, with partial common links followed by further partial common links up to the collector, then the *isnads* from the common link, at least, are genuine. The hadith *matn* really did originate or come from that common link. If however the *isnads* between the common link and the collector are single strands giving a spider pattern then they are most likely fabricated by the collector or the collector's informant. They are back projections from a present time to an earlier time.

This, of course, invites the question, how prevalent are bundles and spider patterns in the hadith collections? Juynboll himself notes in al-Mizzi's (d. 742) later compilation of the hadith *isnads* in the canonical collections, spiders occur in their thousands, whereas the true *isnad* bundles, with a historically tenable common link, are at most a few hundred. He also explains the frequency of genuine common links must have been much higher during the early stages of hadith evolution.

It is because of insertions, interpolations, deletions and simplifications in matns that additional isnads supporting these alterations became so complex and variegated that the initial isnad or proto-isnad, clearly showing up a common link, supporting the hadith without accretions was no longer separately discernible. The common link phenomenon, in other words, was buried under the accretions. [*MT*, p216]

The common link for most hadiths has been obscured by the scale and complexity of *isnad* fabrication.

Chapter 12 - Common Links and Single Strands

A Striking Phenomenon - The Initial Single Strand

The majority of hadiths that are repeated in several collections but with different *isnads* back to the Prophet have the same three or four initial transmitters. [See discussion above in Chapter 11] In other words, the chain of transmission from the Prophet's time only begins to spread out after the third or fourth generation.

Schacht and many others found this incredible. Is it believable a given Prophetic act or saying was witnessed by a single Companion and this Companion told only one person who in turn told only one person? Schacht named the transmitter from whom the hadith first starts to spread out, the "common link", and argued this common link, was, in fact, the fabricator of the hadith and marked the date of its origin. And, as a rule, there is only one common link for a given hadith.

What Does the Common Link Represent?

Notwithstanding Schacht's and Juynboll's assessment of the common link as the fabricator of the hadith, other modern scholars argue common links are genuine transmitters.

Most common links belong to the generations living in the early or mid-part of the second century (roughly 100 to 175) which was the time when the interest in hadith collection and dissemination really became significant. Thus, common links can be viewed as the first systematic hadith collectors who professionally passed on their knowledge to students in teaching or scholarly circles.[1]

That common links are mostly genuine collectors doesn't exclude the possibility traditions were sometimes fabricated or collectors simply made mistakes or were misled over the content of a tradition and where it came from. The common link may also have summarised or combined content - differently worded stories said the same thing - and thus become the originator of the wording of a particular hadith; the gist of the report is authentic but the

words are those of the common link collector.

There is a third possibility.[2] The person named as the common link did not transmit the tradition said to have been transmitted by him. He has nothing whatsoever to do with it. The transmission path from him to the collection in which the tradition is recorded may be the backward ascription of the collector or his informer.

Whether or not the single strand below the common link itself makes sense or withstands close scrutiny throws some light on the nature of the common link. Is the common link a fabricator or a transmitter?

The Initial Single Strand is Genuine - The Common Link is a First Early Collector

According to Harald Motzki, one of the world's foremost specialists in early Islamic history and law, initial single strands are not a surprise.[3] The requirement to give a source in the form of an *isnad* became widespread only towards the end of the first century and beginning of the second century and when relating traditions to their students the first systematic collectors, the common links, usually gave only one source for the tradition even if they knew other sources. Unlike later collectors they felt no need to give more than one source. This explains why there are so many single strands from common links back to earlier transmitters.

A single strand does not mean at earlier time there was only one path of transmission for a tradition. Other paths for a tradition might simply have died out because teachers did not use them enough.

The Initial Single Strand is False - The Common Link is a Fabricator

The fact that the requirement to give *isnads* became widespread only towards the end of the first century and beginning of the second century creates another possibility. If sources of reports were not named during the early period, then the single strands later given by common links naming early transmitters must have been fabricated or guessed at. Where did they get the names? There may have been false, or exaggerated or misleading stories in circulation which took on the appearance of authenticity when given an impressive *isnad*.

Juynboll examined many single strands and found various signs of inventiveness and fabrication. He noted what he called "age stretching".[4] In the creation of *isnads* back to the Prophet strands were peopled with transmitters

whose age at death was advanced enough to make contacts between each pair of transmitters believable. Juynboll observed:

Living conditions in seventh and eighth century [CE] .... cannot have been easy and simply do not admit of the supposition that the vast majority of tradition transmitters died at an age considerably more advanced than the average age reached by males living in the twentieth century [CE] in, for example, the West. [*Muslim Tradition*, p46]

He also noted the common link himself projected his year of birth back into the past so as to make himself a believable transmitter of his informer. Eminent examples of this are Malik ibn Anas (93-179) and Sufyan ibn Uyayna (d. 198), who both emphasised they were just about old enough to have received traditions from Nafi‘ (d. 117). If one assumes they must have been at least 10 to 15 years old at the time of death of Nafi‘, to have learnt something from him, then Malik ibn Anas lived at least 72 to 77 years and Sufyan ibn Uyayna 91 to 96 years.

Juynboll’s analysis also identified fictitious characters and Companions invented to produce additional *isnads* to support or corroborate hadiths. Next to that he found cases where the births of historical persons had been extended back into the past to qualify them as Companions. Another practice identified by Juynboll was the invention of hadith centres by *isnad* strands being traced to a particular city so it became well-known and famous as a hadith centre.

Single Strands Above the Common Link

Based on his one-to-many principle Juynboll also dismissed single strands above the common link, between the common link and the collector or between a later transmitter and the collector. It is unbelievable a tradition is passed to only one person, who passes it to only one person who also passes it to only one person. The hadith is a fabrication of the collector or his informer, not the common link. It is a false backward ascription. [See Chapter 11 and Juynboll’s description and explanations of spider patterns and dives]

Motzki has produced a quantitative model that shows single strands above the common link would show up naturally and are not necessarily the result of false backward ascription.[5]

Motzki’s Model and How to Read *Isnad* Bundles

Motzki uses the assumption that the common link passes a tradition to five persons, who each passes it to five more persons, each of whom in their turn passes it to five persons. Thus at the first level after the common link there are available five sources for the tradition, at the second level 25 sources and at the third level, three generations later, 125 sources.

Motzki has in mind a real case examined by Juynboll in which there are six collectors at the fourth level. Guided by this he further assumes if six collectors independently of one another learn the tradition and earlier links from three persons at the third level, it is very unlikely the persons the collectors learn from overlap. All six of them will have learnt from a total of only 18 (3x6) out of a possible 125.

Coming back down towards the common link at the second level above the common link there are 25 sources, so the likelihood of the 18 strands joining up is much greater, that is, 18 strands being mapped onto 25 sources. And next, at the first level above the common link the likelihood is very high, 18 strands being mapped onto only 5 sources.

This picture is confirmed by numerous real *isnad* bundles. Partial common links are found at the level immediately above the common link. There are fewer at higher levels up to the collector and single strands show up.

The assumption each collector obtains the tradition from three sources reflects Juynboll's condition that a genuine partial common link is someone who is referred to by at least three transmitters from the next layer.

Motzki's analysis shows how important it is to read *isnad* strands downwards from the later collector to the source, in contrast to reading upwards, from source to later collector. Reading a single strand downwards simply means a collector names a chain, those are the names he gives, that does not cross the strands of other collectors. The chain can be genuine or false but it is not ambiguous.

Reading upwards where a transmitter is shown transmitting to only one transmitter doesn't rule out the possibility that the transmitter, in fact, may have transmitted to more than one person, his other transmission or transmissions simply going unrecorded or forgotten.

However, Motzki's assumption each transmitter transmits to five other people is a critical assumption. A different figure gives the opposite result as is shown by Pavel Pavlovitch in a recent book.[6]

If Motzki had assumed transmission to three, the number he assumed for downward transmission, then the sources available at the third level for the fourth level collectors would number only 27 sources, not 125. The likelihood of the 18 strands given by the six collectors overlapping amongst this 27 is very great and overlapping becomes a certainty at the lower second and first levels where there are nine and three sources respectively; there would be plenty of partial common links at the higher levels. Single strands would be an exception.

Explanations of Single Strands Above the Common Link

Whatever the correct figures for quantitative modelling there are possible explanations why a tradition should be transmitted from one person to one other person for a period rather than continually spreading out, and single strands appear in *isnad* bundles.

Motzki makes the point it is unreasonable to believe all the students of a hadith teacher would go on to become teachers themselves who would then pass on the hadith and it is possible only one did.[7] Though, to set against this it seems equally unreasonable to expect there would be many cases of only one student becoming a teacher or passing on the hadith.

The extant hadith collections are only a proportion, possibly a small proportion, of the huge amount of hadith material that once existed. Not all *isnads* or hadith collections have survived and the compilers of those we do have, only a dozen or so, may have selected for their collections a small part of the material available and what we see is only a sub-set of the many hadith variations and transmission lines which must have existed. Some of these transmissions would have been rediscovered later and appeared as what Juynboll calls “dives”.

Motzki also suggests well-know transmitters who taught large numbers of students are behind the *isnad* bundles with many partial common links, transmitters transmitting to three or more people, found in the canonical collections and contrasting with single strands. Less well-know transmitters with few students and collectors did not get the same degree of attention from the compilers of the canonical and other extant collections.

Geography may have been a factor. Single strands could be the result of transmitters of a hadith living for a while well away from scholarly circles, thus limiting the scope for transmission though this effect could be ameliorated

by the Islamic practice of travelling in the pursuit of knowledge which contributed to the spread of traditions over many population centres.

Current Thinking

Academic opinion on single strands has evolved. It is not simply a case of those who would rule them out altogether versus those who would accept them. The current view is one of caution. Single strands are to be treated as possible cases of backward ascription. Their historical truth is less certain than that of *isnad* bundles with linked-up strands. More evidence is needed.

Chapter 13 - Latest Research - ICMA (*isnad-cum-matn* analysis)

Introduction

The works of Schacht and Juynboll and the methods they developed, especially Juynboll's *isnad* analysis, reinforced and spread the sceptical view that nearly all hadiths were likely to be fabrications. They were not the genuine words or deeds of the Prophet.

Other Western scholars developed new methods to investigate the origins and authenticity of hadiths, starting as far back as the 1950s but coming into most prominence in the 1990s and recent decades.[1] The best known methods are *isnad-cum-matn* analysis [ICMA] and historical source analysis and they concentrate on trying to date the origin of individual hadiths or to be precise what scholars call the *terminus ante quem*, the latest date at which something happened (it happened at that date or before), in contrast to thinking in terms of a *terminus post quem*, the earliest date at which something happened (it happened at that date or after).

They are said to take a sanguine view of hadiths.[2] They neither assume hadiths are most likely to be fabrications nor that they are likely to be authentic. Only after relevant analysis can any judgements be made whether a hadith is geniune or false. Another feature of recent research has been to make greater use of all available hadith collections not just the canonical six. Of course, most scholars fall somewhere between two extremes of complete scepticism and acceptance of hadiths.

The principles of ICMA were first formally outlined in works published in 1996 by Gregor Schoeler and Harald Motzki.[3] They both highlighted the need to examine *matns* together with their *isnads* and how they related to one another.

ICMA - Method

The variations in the different versions of a hadith *matn* coming via different *isnad* chains from a common link are most likely the result of how each *matn* was handled by the transmitters in the *isnad* chain going back to the common

link. Variations can take many forms; items added, items omitted, and textual features, for example.

If there is a common core - common archetype - for all the versions of that hadith that can be traced back to and identified with a common link, then that common link is very likely to be the genuine source of that common archetype. He really did transmit that hadith.

If there is still only a lone single strand below the ICMA confirmed common link back to the time of the Prophet methods other than ICMA are needed to evaluate that single strand and determine the origin of the hadith.

This approach makes use of all the *isnad* strands, including the single strands, between a hadith in a collection and a common link. Juynboll considered single strands in which a single transmitter narrates to a single transmitter who narrates to a single transmitter etc., to be unreliable and that they should be ignored. Single strand *isnads* sometimes show up an earlier common link than would be identified following Juynboll's rule. Also, the greater use of hadith collections outside the canonical six has produced *isnad* chains that identify earlier common links than found by relying mainly on the canonical collections.

It is noteworthy that if the ICMA method was rejected on the grounds it did not identify genuine common links, it would still be necessary to explain the observed correlations between hadith *matns* and *isnads*. *Isnad* growth or mass fabrication are unlikely to produce such correlations.[4]

ICMA - Purpose

The main purpose of ICMA is to date traditions, to establish the date a tradition was first transmitted, or before which it was first transmitted and put into circulation, but because it seemed to undermine the sceptical approach so firmly established by Goldziher, Schacht and Juynboll, it was looked on by hadith supporters as demonstrating hadith authenticity and they and some of Motzki's critics also assumed Motzki believed hadiths are mostly authentic.

Motzki made his position clear saying:

I only assume that many traditions found in the extant compilations were not invented by the compilers but have a history (including forgeries) which can be retraced to a certain point in time. The main aim of my approach is dating traditions. The fact that, for example, a hadith of the Prophet can be

dated to the second half of the first/seventh century does not mean that it is authentic in the sense that it really goes back to him in the form preserved or that it reflects accurately what really happened. [*Analysing Muslim Traditions - Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith*, pp234-235]

Establishing a date which is closer to the time of the Prophet is significant. It seems a reasonable argument that the closer a report is to the time of the event it covers, the greater the likelihood of it being historically truthful.

Of course, closeness does not guarantee the reliability of a report. Yet the chance is greater that, to give an extreme example, an eyewitness report of an event transmitted some decades later is less affected by later developments than a description of the same event given two centuries later by someone who, although perhaps basing himself on traditions about the event, tries to make sense of it for his time. [*AMT*, p288]

In this respect it is worth considering other historical examples with extant sources closer to events, especially the origins of Christianity as described in the Gospels written 30 to 60 years after the crucifixion of Jesus and where the authors may have learnt from eye-witnesses. There is a large body of modern scholarship of well reasoned analysis showing these accounts are not accurate records of what happened and contain later religious ideas, they are "salvation history", what people imagined or hoped had happened to fit their present beliefs.

In addition to dating ICMA can also show how a tradition developed or changed during the transmission process and sometimes it is possible to say something about the transmitters and how they transmitted the tradition.

ICMA Research - Nafi‘

The famous article that drew attention to the ICMA method is Motzki's *Quo vadis, Hadit-Forschung? Eine kritische Untersuchung von G.H.A. Juynboll: "Nafi‘ the Mawla of Ibn ‘Umar, and his position in Muslim Hadith Literature". (Whither Hadith Studies?)* A *mawla* is a non-Arab captured during the expansion of Islam throughout the Near East who converted to Islam.

It is a rebuttal of Juynboll's paper published in 1993 concerning Nafi‘ (d. 117), a Successor, in which Juynboll concluded hadiths said to come from Nafi‘ in which Nafi‘ claimed his source was the Companion, Umar, did not come from Nafi‘; most were fabricated by Malik ibn Anas a supposed pupil of

Nafi‘ and others were fabricated by the collectors or their informants. Juynboll based his conclusion on the analysis of the *isnads* of a hadith - *zakat al-fitr* - concerning the amount of the charitable donation, and who should donate, that believers are obliged to make at the end of fasting during Ramadan.

Juynboll also suggested Nafi‘ might be a fictional character because the early biographical directories of hadith transmitters, such as the Tabaqat of Ibn Sa‘d, had very little information about him.

In addition to the hadith collection al-Mizzi’s *Tuhfat al-Ashraf*, a combination of the canonical six, Juynboll made use of two pre-canonical collections, but in Motzki’s view he didn’t use this information effectively and combined with the failure to use other such collections this made his findings dependent on the canonical six. Motzki used all extant pre-canonical hadith collections which provided further *matns* and *isnads* for the *zakat* hadith, such as Malik’s *Muwatta’*, the *Musannafs* of Ibn Abi Shayba and Abd al-Razzaq, and the *Musnads* of Ibn Hanbal, al-Tayalisi and al-Humaydi.

Using ICMA Motzki showed that of the 11 transmitters identified as transmitting the hadith from Nafi‘, eight were most probably genuine transmitters. Various versions of the *matn* did originate with them. The *isnads* of the hadiths in later collections traced back to them were real *isnads* even if they appeared to fall into the dubious category defined by Juynboll’s single strands and spiders.

Further analysis of the texts transmitted by these eight showed, notwithstanding significant differences, there were striking content similarities which indicated they most probably came from a common source, namely, Nafi‘ himself, a Successor, of the generation after the Prophet. Motzki also pointed out the lack of biographical information for Nafi‘ did not prove he was fictional as the lack of such information was common for non-Arab *mawali* of the early period.

Motzki agrees with Juynboll’s belief that the likely authenticity of a tradition increases the more dense and connected its network of *isnads* but it is a mistake to assume all traditions supported by fewer *isnads* or single strands are fabrications unless the opposite can be shown.

ICMA Research - The *Sira*

This book concerns mainly hadiths as covered by the various hadith

collections (e.g. al-Bukhari and Muslim). Some of these hadiths give biographical information about the Prophet and his military campaigns. The greater part of the Prophet's biography and his military activities are covered in two other types of work, *sira* and *maghazi*, which also depend on information in the hadith format - a report or tradition with a chain of transmitters back to the Prophet's lifetime - and is the field in which most ICMA work has been done to date. ANNEX 3 provides information on early *sira* and *maghazi* works. Biographical and historical reports are often like short stories running to a 1000 words or more.

This section describes four examples of this ICMA work. It is not an appraisal or judgement of the work. Its objective is to give the reader an insight to the nature of the research and what it achieves paying particular attention to the difficulties encountered and the disagreements it generates.

It is important for the reader to keep in mind what the method sets out to achieve. It does not set out to prove a particular report is an accurate account of what really happened. It sets out to determine who first put a report into circulation and when.

The first three examples are part of a number of studies between 1996 and 2008 aimed at reconstructing original biographical information about Muhammad by examining the thousands of reports and *isnads* going back to Urwa ibn al-Zubayr (23-94), the first collector and transmitter of such biographical material about Muhammad, found in the extant sources written and compiled 150 to 250 years after the Prophet's lifetime such as Ibn Hisham's version of Ibn Ishaq's biography of Muhammad, the *Musannafs* of Ibn Abi Shayba and Abd al-Razzaq, Malik's *Muwatta'*, the *Sahihs* of al-Bukhari and Muslim, and al-Tabari's commentary on the Quran.

Urwa lived in the late first century, one generation (or one and a half generations) after Muhammad and was a nephew of Aisha, Muhammad's third and youngest wife. He was in a position to question contemporaries of the Prophet and eye-witnesses of events 35 to 70 years after the Prophet's death.

The researchers note that though Urwa's reports show what was circulating about the biography of Muhammad in the second half of the first century they are still only transmissions not contemporary accounts and the process of transmission very probably introduced changes, and glorifications and elevations of the Prophet's image occasionally occurred. It is also clear not all traditions ascribed to Urwa are genuine and *isnads* back to him were

fabricated.

The first two examples are the work of Gregor Schoeler reported in his monograph *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds (The Biography of Muhammad: Nature and Authenticity)* published in 1996.

Example 1 - Muhammad's First Revelation Experience

This is the account of Muhammad's first encounter with the angel during one of his spiritual retreats to the cave of Hira. The angel commands him to "recite". Muhammad at first protests he does not have the ability to do this but then he recites the beginning of sura 96. The experience terrifies him and on returning to his wife, Khadija, he begs her to *"wrap me up, wrap me up"*. Khadija comforts him and takes him to see her cousin Waraqa, who also calms his fears, saying he is receiving a revelation just as Moses received one.

Schoeler establishes convincingly versions of this story go back to al-Zuhri (d. 124), a student of Urwa. This does not prove Urwa is the source for al-Zuhri but Schoeler also establishes a version can be traced independently of al-Zuhri back to Urwa via Hisham b. Urwa, Urwa's son, indicating Urwa is most likely the original source for both al-Zuhri and Hisham.

Schoeler also notes the existence of short versions of the story also coming from al-Zuhri, that speak only of Muhammad having visions of very bright lights that made him seek solitude. There are no references to an angel or recitation or other Quranic elements. Schoeler explains these as versions deliberately abbreviated by the authors of the works in which they are found. The works also contain the long versions and the authors were avoiding repetition.

A recent critic, Stephen J. Shoemaker of University of Oregon, published a paper in 2011 taking the view the short versions tell the original story and all the Quranic elements were added later some by al-Zuhri who may have taught the two different versions at different times.[5] The version Schoeler highlights coming from Hisham b. Urwa is also of an abbreviated form. If Urwa was the source of the tradition it is the basic non-Quranic version. This is not a remarkable finding as Muslims from a very early time must have believed Muhammad had some kind of divine experience and visions and voices are often reported and found in biblical stories.

A response to Shoemaker by Goerke, Motzki and Schoeler points out there

are results from studies published since Shoemaker wrote his paper and traditions transmitted by Hisham have been identified that do contain Quranic elements.[6]

Schoeler also investigated Urwa's source for the tradition. Was it Aisha, Muhammad's youngest wife and Urwa's aunt? Schoeler noted only al-Zuhri's versions have *isnads* going back to Aisha, and this was possibly the result of al-Zuhri assuming in good faith Aisha was Urwa's source. Hisham's versions all end with his father. Schoeler concluded the original story came from a storyteller who built the story out of various components while with the Zubayrid court of Urwa's brother and Urwa reworked it into the hadith format.

Example 2 - The Aisha Scandal

In this narrative Aisha is accused of adultery. She goes searching for a necklace and is accidently left behind by the caravan she was travelling with, eventually returning to Medina in the company of an unrelated man. Rumours about her alleged infidelity are finally stopped by Muhammad accusing the slanderers and a Quranic revelation.

Using the analytical method used in the investigation of the first Revelation - tracing traditions that independently go back to al-Zuhri and Hisham and then to a common source - Schoeler shows this tradition goes back to Urwa.

In contrast to the revelation story the traditions traced to Hisham this time have *isnads* going back to Urwa and then to Aisha, in the same way those traced to al-Zuhri go back to Urwa and then to Aisha, giving grounds for believing Aisha is the probable source.

The antiquity of the tradition is also supported by an argument unrelated to ICMA. The story puts Muhammad in an embarrassing position and is therefore unlikely to have been invented by his followers. It also portrays Aisha in a poor light which goes against the later picture of her as mother of the believers. It seems unlikely such stories would be spread about someone so revered. These considerations suggest the story is very old even if it did not take place as described.

This yardstick is sometimes called the "dissimilarity criterion" but even if it is valid it can be applied to only a handful of traditions at the most.

Example 3 - al-Hudaybiya

The third example is the work of Andreas Goerke, who also worked with

Schoeler, *The Historical Tradition about al-Hudaybiya: A Study of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr's Account* published in 2000.

This tradition is about Muhammad's agreement with the Meccans after he was refused entry to Mecca as a pilgrim. It established a ten-year truce and allowed for pilgrimage in future years. Goerke convincingly links this tradition back to al-Zuhri, and like Schoeler identifies independent links back to Hisham, thus indicating Urwa as the common source.

Here, Shoemaker agrees with the link to al-Zuhri but questions the validity of the Hisham transmission. He makes two observations. There are few links back to Hisham which according to Juynboll cast suspicion over Hisham as the source. It's possible someone composed a tradition based on al-Zuhri's version and put it into circulation naming Hisham as the source.

It is also possible Hisham composed a version based on al-Zuhri's account and falsely named his father as the source. Given the average expected lifespan, 50 years, and the dates for the deaths of Hisham and his father, Hisham was a young boy when his father died and not able to learn so much from his father. Hisham's knowledge of the tradition is most likely to be based on what he learnt from al-Zuhri, his father's student.

In his response to these criticisms Goerke says Hisham's version is significantly different in a number of ways from what al-Zuhri taught, and though the average lifespan may have been short, there is plenty of evidence of individuals in late antiquity living into their seventies and eighties.

Example 4 - al-Zuhri's Biographical Material

In *Between History and Legend: The Biography of the Prophet Muhammad by Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri*, a PhD thesis (2012), Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort applies ICMA to 270 variants found in numerous hadith collections of three traditions showing al-Zuhri as the common link.

The material includes 36 variants from 21 collections of the report of the Hudhayl (a hostile clan) raid on a party of Muslims sent out by Muhammad; 43 variants from 19 collections of the story of Muhammad's miraculous night journey to Jerusalem, when he ascended to heaven and met previous prophets; and 191 variants from 42 collections of the story of the three men who a failed to join a raid on Tabuk organised by the Prophet. Individual reports can be well over 1000 words.

Boekhoff-van der Voort chooses traditions involving al-Zuhri because he is

one of the first systematic collectors and teachers of traditions concerning Muhammad and his name occurs frequently in the *isnads* of such traditions.

ICMA shows the numerous variants of all three traditions have a common source. The *matn* variations and peculiarities have been introduced by the transmitters in the various transmission chains that go back to al-Zuhri. Al-Zuhri is a genuine common link. Thus, the three traditions found in extant collections of the third and later centuries go back at least to the first quarter of the second century, the later part of al-Zuhri's lifetime. He died in 124 AH.

Boekhoff-van der Voort also examines versions of the three traditions that do not have al-Zuhri in the chain of transmission. This shows al-Zuhri did not invent the traditions and he probably drew on the same sources as these other transmitters that go back to the turn of the century or the last quarter of the first century.

Patterns and differences in the initial transmissions of the students who learnt directly from al-Zuhri himself are another important discovery. It's possible they are caused by a transition in al-Zuhri's teaching style from oral to written transmission. Oral teaching would tend to produce the greatest variation whereas teaching from notes is likely to produce greater coherence of what a particular group of students passes on.

This does not explain all the differences and it seems al-Zuhri edited his material with the insertion of embellishments, names of persons, as well as explanatory words and elements. Teaching priorities could also have changed with a greater interest at the beginning of the second century in Prophetic *sunna* and links with the Quran both topics appearing in some of the later variants of the traditions examined. Al-Zuhri may have had this material from his original informant but not previously used it.

ICMA applied to *sira* material shows the *"biography of the Prophet Muhammad .... bears the imprint of the person who transmitted the story"*.

ICMA - Applicability, Limitations and Results

As well as the usefulness described above ICMA has a number of limitations. The method can be used to investigate the origins of a hadith only if there are many versions of its *matn* in extant sources. This substantially limits the scope for the research. Then there is a considerable challenge in how to analyse variations; what really constitutes a similarity that can be traced to a common

source?

Up to a point it helps to have a good amount of text to work with and this is the case for historical traditions found in the *sira*. Narratives of historical events have a lot more information than typical legal hadiths that are mostly like pronouncements tending to be brief with little context. This explains the extent of the ICMA focussed on *sira* traditions.

Another factor in the limitation of the use of ICMA is the scale of the work involved in examining a single tradition for what might sometimes produce only a limited result.

There have been some 20 or so ICMA or ICMA related studies over the last 20 years. ANNEX 5 lists these studies.

There are solid results, some of which are briefly summarised above. Traditions found in the extant written sources of the third century, 200 years or more after the Prophet, can be traced to earlier times, to the end of the first or beginning of the second century, some possibly to 30 or 50 years after the time of the Prophet.

More sceptical experts point out the "reconstructed" earlier versions of traditions give only elementary and basic information.[7] The kernel of possible historical truth doesn't say very much; there was a treaty, there was a scandal involving Muhammad's wife, he did have a vision. And the results of examining the very early history before the common link have not been convincing.

Most importantly, there is still a gap between the ICMA verified date of the transmission of the tradition and the event it is describing and studies in other fields especially the origins of Christianity show even a small gap between an account and the event it concerns can produce great uncertainty and conflicting interpretations.

Chapter 14 - Latest Research - More Methods

Beyond ICMA 1

As noted above ICMA applies best where there is an *isnad* bundle of some form giving different versions of a *matn* traced by various *isnad* strands back to a common link. The single strand below the common link back to the given source requires other methods to investigate the authenticity of that source and the *matn's* origin.

An example of the use of both ICMA work and other methods is given in the research paper *"A Bequest May Not Exceed One-Third": An isnad-cum-matn Analysis and Beyond*, by Pavel Pavlovitch and David S. Powers, published in 2015.

The Quran has two sets of verses concerning inheritance, one dealing with bequests, the other with inheritance shares. The relationship between them is defined by a tradition in which the Prophet advises the Companion, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, that he may leave a bequest of no more than one-third of his wealth. The one-third upper limit ensures two-thirds of an estate will be divided according to the inheritance shares specified in the Quran. Also a bequest may not be made to an heir.

Using ICMA Pavlovitch and Powers show a body of traditions concerning the one-third stipulation and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas can be traced to common links who died in 136 to 144 AH and 150 AH respectively, thus tracing tradition to the early part of the second century.

To go back further they examine the word *"kalala"* used in the traditions. *Kalala* is a word found in the Quran but early Quran commentators did not know what it meant. There are a number of such mystery words and phrases in the Quran. Through previous work Pavlovitch and Powers had shown that eventually two competing definitions of the word emerged, Pavlovitch concluding they emerged in the Hijaz and Kufa, respectively, in the first half of the second century. The versions are *"urathu kalalatan"* ("I will die in a state of leaving neither parent nor child") and *"yarithuni kalalatun"* ("persons other than a parent or child will inherit from me").

The word is used in these two ways in the body of traditions examined by Pavlovitch and Powers and this points clearly to the tradition originating after

the Prophet's lifetime. Muhammad did not tell Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas he could bequeath only one third of his estate. The tradition was very likely put into circulation during the late Umayyad caliphate to improve existing legislation and as was the habit, given the authority of the Prophet himself.

Beyond ICMA 2

Another recent paper *"Pray with Your Leader": A Proto-Sunni Quietist Tradition* by Stijn Aerts published in 2016 investigates a hadith previously studied by Juynboll and further illustrates the scope and challenges of modern dating methods. It also gives support to the view that hadiths were fabricated for political reasons.

There are four main versions of the hadith which all have the central message that the Prophet said believers should perform the *salat* (the obligatory Muslim prayer performed five times each day) at the appointed time and repeat it if it was delayed to a later time by the ruler. Using his *isnad* and common link methods [see Chapter 11] Juynboll determined the hadith originated with Shu'ba ibn al-Hajjaj (d. 160).

Also using the common link method but more hadith sources than Juynboll, Aerts identifies two earlier partial common links, Abu l-Aliya al-Barra (d. 90) and Abu Imran al-Jawni (d. 128) as transmitters of versions of the hadith. Aerts uses the canonical six and six other collections, whereas Juynboll used the canonical six and two *musnads*.

Aerts employs ICMA to substantiate these partial common links are genuine transmitters but the method cannot be used to establish the validity of the source they both give. To go earlier into the hadith's origins Aerts notes the wording of the versions *"suggest that the background against which the tradition emerged is that of the postponement of prayer of one or more Umayyad governors in Iraq"*.

He explains the historical circumstances at that time. There are accounts of religious disputes playing a part in a revolt and references to "killing of the prayer" and "... the *Sunna* of the Prophet" meaning neglect of the prayer and the *Sunna*. Two of the regime's representatives in Iraq, the governors Ibn Ziyad and al-Hajjaj, were publicly accused of delaying the salat at the time the tradition was circulated. Aerts concludes the tradition was invented by the authorities in reaction to activists who disapproved of Umayyad religious

practice, especially the postponement of the salat. The tradition strongly denies such neglect and in effect says one must obey the ruler as well as follow the *Sunna* of the Prophet.

Historical Source Analysis

Another famous work from Motzki is *The Musannaf of ʻAbd al-Razzaq al-San'ani as a Source of Authentic Ahadith of the First Islamic Century* published in 1991 in which he uses historical source analysis to determine the authenticity and origins of hadiths in Abd al-Razzaq's *Musannaf*.

Motzki assumes if a collector such as Abd al-Razzaq (126-211) fabricated large numbers of hadiths the forgeries would tend to show uniform characteristics, they would lack individuality or would not show unusual patterns.

Abd al-Razzaq's *Musannaf* has more than 21,000 traditions and Motzki examines several thousand of these. He finds the distribution of material between the transmitters Abd al-Razzaq gives as his sources is very uneven. More than 83% of the material comes from only three persons Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161), Ma'mar ibn Rashid (d. 153), and Ibn Jurayj (d. 150), 4% from a fourth, and the rest from a hundred names. See Diagram 6.

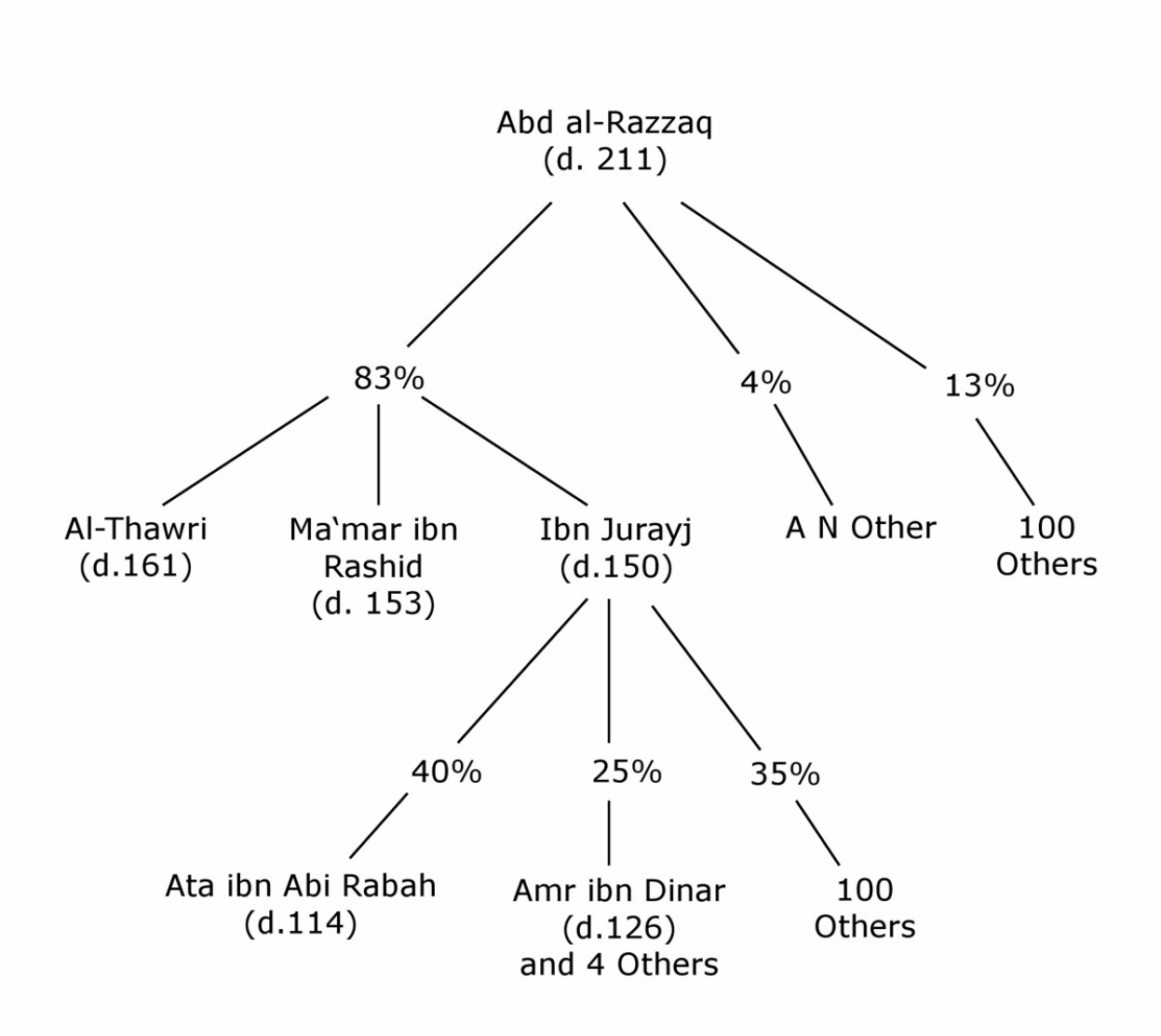


Diagram 6 - Analysis of Sources in Musannaf of Abd al-Razzaq

The distribution could mean either Abd al-Razzaq deliberately ascribed texts available to him to only a few persons or he really received the bulk of his material from only three persons. If he falsely ascribed his material to his informants it is odd so many traditions were ascribed to only three persons, a minor part to only one person and very few texts to so many others.

To decide whether ascription or transmission is the most likely process Motzki examines the material ascribed to the four major sources. He finds the materials Abd al-Razzaq ascribed to each of the four major sources show characteristics and *isnads* that give each source an individual profile; for example: different numbers of major and minor transmitters, different amounts

of anonymous material, and different amounts of the sources' own opinions.

Motzki believes this individuality is very unlikely the result of deliberate fabrication. Other characteristics of Abd al-Razzaq's transmissions from his four major sources corroborate this judgment. Abd al-Razzaq sometimes himself expressed doubt about his informant for a text, or about an indirectly received transmission. Motzki concludes Abd al-Razzaq's main informants must be considered his real sources.

Motzki analyses the material of the four sources themselves in much the same way, particularly the body of reports of Ibn Jurayj (d. 150) who transmits from over 100 informants but mostly from two Meccan legal scholars, Ata ibn Abi Rabah (d. 114) and Amr ibn Dinar (d. 126).

Again this produces individuality suggesting Ibn Jurayj transmitted what he genuinely learnt from these two scholars. Motzki also uses information from the biographical sources to show Ibn Jurayj studied for a long time under these scholars and he concludes Ibn Jurayj's transmissions from them provide an accurate picture of Islamic law in Mecca as it was at the start of the second century.

The analysis also reveals the Prophet is given as the source for only a small proportion of these traditions. In Ata's references only 6% are from the Prophet. This finding is supported by the more recent work of Scott C. Lucas who examined the recently discovered *Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba (156-235) and found only 9% of the legal rules are based on a Prophetic hadith.[1]

Motzki's important assumption that the fabrication of large numbers of hadiths would tend to produce uniform characteristics and a body of fabricated hadiths would lack individuality or would not show unusual patterns is challenged by some scholars who say fabricators could work in such a way as to produce variation. It also needs to be demonstrated there are cases of uniformity and these are fabrications.[2]

Source Reconstruction and ICMA

Results from Motzki's examination of Abd al-Razzaq's *Musannaf* play an important part in his recent book *Reconstruction of a Source of Ibn Ishaq's Life of the Prophet and Early Qur'an Exegesis - A Study of early Ibn 'Abbas Traditions* published in 2017.

Ata ibn Abi Rabah (d. 114) who is identified in the *Musannaf* as a genuine

transmitter by Motzki [See Diagram 6] gives Ibn Abbas as the original source for nearly all his hadith transmissions, and all these Ibn Abbas hadiths are Ibn Abbas's own opinion. They are not Prophetic hadiths.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 Ibn Abbas is amongst the most prolific hadith narrators quoted as the source for 1660 Prophetic hadiths in later hadith collections produced in the first half of the third century (200-250). The fact that Ata (d. 114), a much earlier transmitter, gives no Prophetic hadiths from Ibn Abbas, transmitting only hadiths of Ibn Abbas's own opinion, suggests the later ascriptions of Prophetic hadiths to Ibn Abbas are false. Later collectors or transmitters have simply ascribed Prophetic hadiths to him because he was one of the most well-know very early scholars.

Having posed this question about Ibn Abbas, Motzki presents the results of his recent examination of traditions found in Ibn Ishaq's (d. 150/159) *Life of the Prophet*. This biography exists today only in the form of a reworking by Ibn Hisham (d. 218). Motzki notes Ibn Hisham deleted *isnads* and the identities of narrators but fortunately versions of the texts Motzki is interested in are found in later sources with this missing information and these are the texts he examines.

The texts concern the interpretation of certain Quranic verses, that is, the events and circumstances at the time of their revelation. They concern, for example, very early opposition to the Prophet and his clashes with the Jewish tribes. Ibn Ishaq gives one transmitter as the source for these texts, Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad, who ascribes all his reports to Ibn Abbas. By means of text analysis Motzki shows Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad is a genuine transmitter and has thus taken the accounts to at least as early as the end of the first century and that closer to the time of the Prophet. However, Motzki is not prepared to go any closer; there are still many doubts and questions.

The wording and details of the texts are such that Motzki believes they may not be accounts of genuine historical events but are more likely to be later attempts to explain the Quranic verses. Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad's standard *isnad*, which for all of his transmissions names Ibn Abbas as the ultimate authority, inspires little confidence because it is employed stereotypically and Ibn Abbas was not even born at the time of the events he is supposed to be reporting. Motzki says:

.... these examples show that as a source for a historical biography of Muhammad, Ibn Ishaq's tradition from Muhammad b. Abi Muhammad is only

to be used, if at all, with utmost caution. It reflects ideas entertained in the second half of the 1st century on the possible historical background of individual verses. To what extent real historical memories come to bear cannot be determined on the basis of this source alone.

Transmitter Evaluation in Practice

Chapter 4, Hadith Authenticity, explains the leading role of *isnads* in deciding if a hadith was authentic and what was or what could be involved in examining the reliability of *isnads* themselves. The evaluation of transmitters was at the heart of this process as shown by the compilation of biographical dictionaries by early hadith collectors and critics.

Modern scholarly research throws light on what happened in practice. Leading examples of this are two papers by Christopher Melchert, *Bukhari and Early Hadith Criticism*, published in 2001, and *The Life and Works of al Nasa'i*, in 2014.

Al-Nasa'i (224-303) is the collector of one of the canonical six hadith collections. He was also a student of al-Bukhari and concentrated on authentic hadiths. Analysis of his transmitter evaluation work shows al-Nasa'i depended heavily on corroboration as evidence a transmitter was reliable. Like many others of his time, his work mainly involved *isnad* comparison. If hadiths from a transmitter were independently transmitted by others then that transmitter was reliable. If a transmitter gave an isolated report not paralleled by anyone else but his hadiths and links were usually corroborated he would be given the benefit of the doubt, otherwise he would be classified as weak, and his hadiths doubtful. This approach has aspects to it similar to aspects of the analysis and methods used by Juynboll and Schacht in modern times.

Deciding what constituted satisfactory corroboration involved a degree of judgement and intuition. It was not an objective method and sometimes it led to contradictory conclusions. In a sample from al-Nasa'i's work he contradicts himself in 4% of the cases.

In his transmitter assessments there is no evidence that al-Nasa'i made any use of factors such as dates of birth or death to help establish contiguity - could transmitters have met - or the personal qualities of transmitters, often mentioned in modern explanations of transmitter evaluation.

The limited information hadith critics used and their likely dependence on

judgement is illustrated by Table 9 which shows the statistics for the information in some of the biographical dictionaries Melchert examined in his studies of the works of various hadith collectors. For example, al-Bukhari's largest work mainly concerns names, and would not have been of much use in establishing the reliability of transmitters without more information. There is very little lifetime data and collectors and critics must have mostly assumed from the *isnad* itself that transmitters were alive at the same time and able to meet.

Table 9 - Information in Transmitter Biographical Dictionaries

Dictionary Source	Number of Transmitters	% Date of Death Given	% Personal Evaluation Given
Bukhari, Al-Tarikh Al-Kabir	12,300	6	6
Bukhari, Al-Tarikh Al-Awsat	2000+	42	16
Bukhari, Al-Du'afa	418	7	Usually
Ibn Hanbal's dictionary		2	25

Isnad Backward Growth

Modern Western scholars such as Schacht (See Chapter 10) took great notice of the backward growth of *isnads*. It was very clear there are Prophetic hadiths in later sources that in earlier sources go back only to a Companion or Successor. Schacht saw this as large-scale fabrication driven by the choice of Prophetic hadiths as the main source of Islamic law alongside the Quran. The opinions of Companions or Successors that before might have decided legal questions were now falsely ascribed to the Prophet.

The third century saw the compilation of hadith collections, such as the canonical six, focussing almost entirely on Prophetic hadiths but non-Prophetic

versions of many of these hadiths were found in earlier, contemporary, and later collections into the fifth century. Hadith scholars of this early period were well aware of this and knew hadith *isnads* were falsely extended backward to the Prophet.

A modern paper *Critical Rigor vs. Juridical Pragmatism: How Legal Theorists and Hadith Scholars Approached the Backgrowth of Isnads in the Genre of 'Ilal al-Hadith* by Jonathan Brown, published in 2007, explains how early hadith scholars dealt with the problem. Brown examines the extant published works of early hadith critics and the reactions of jurists and Islamic legal experts to their findings and views.

Where modern Western scholars such as Schacht have taken the view a Prophetic hadith with a version that went back to only a Companion or Successor must be a fabrication, the early hadith critics would examine both versions applying the usual yardsticks, the reputations of the transmitters involved and the degree to which their hadiths were corroborated.

This created cases where it was difficult to dismiss either of the versions, the one going back to the Prophet or the one going back to a Companion or Successor and it was sometimes accepted both were genuine. The Companion or Successor had been simply giving an opinion without saying it originated with the Prophet. Other cases where the Prophetic version appeared contrived or where the Companion/Successor version was well corroborated were taken as cases of false backward growth.

Scale of the Problem

Brown's paper gives some pointers but no overall picture of the scale of the problem, except by implication it was not trivial.

He notes in one collection of flawed hadiths containing "thousands" of narrations backward growth "appears as a common problem". Another work by an early hadith scholar of the late third century identifies 36 flawed narrations in *Sahih* Muslim, one of the canonical six, and three of these are examples of *isnad* backward growth.

Al-Daraqutni (306-385), a particularly famous scholar, refused to accept the Prophetic version of a hadith unless it was corroborated by the majority of that hadith's narrations or widely supported by master hadith critics. Al-Daraqutni is also famous for his critiques of the *Sahihan*. In one such critique he finds fault with 217 narrations of which 15 are backward projections. In

another he finds fault with over 2300 narrations and notes certain Prophetic narrations are really the sayings of Companions.

Influence of the Legal Profession

In contrast to those early scholars who weighed up all the evidence they thought relevant there were other early scholars who would accept the Prophetic version of a hadith on minimal evidence. If the narrator who linked to the Prophet was thought to be an "upstanding" person the Prophetic version of the hadith was deemed authentic whatever other information might suggest. In effect, this meant accepting all cases of possible backward growth except where fabrication was beyond doubt.

This less stringent acceptance of the Prophetic versions of hadiths had great appeal to the hadith scholars of the emerging Islamic law schools. For the jurists and legal experts of these schools it was far more important to have a report that came from the Prophet than from a lesser person. It dramatically increased the force of a ruling or opinion if it was in the words of the Prophet himself. Consequently, the approach of the more stringent hadith critics was undermined and from the fifth century historical accuracy took second place to the pragmatic concerns of the Islamic legal profession.

Chapter 15 - The Development of Islamic Law

Islamic law given by God through the Quran and the *Sunna* of the Prophet was all there at the beginning and known at the death of Muhammad is the classical view. Islamic jurists simply confirmed this divine guidance and used it accordingly.[1]

In contrast to this modern scholarship shows Islamic law went through a long period of development, some 300 years or so, before Prophetic hadiths (the *Sunna* of the Prophet) replaced other sources to become the main source of law alongside the Quran.

What exactly happened over this long period leaves room for debate and further scholarship. What were the stages, when did one finish and the next begin, what were the sources of law and what was their relative importance, who were the key players, groups and individuals, what accounted for the growth in importance of Prophetic hadiths, and the growth in their numbers? The following is a distillation of recent modern scholarship.[2]

Pre-Hadith

A good idea of the nature of Islamic law during the first century can be obtained from reports concerning the first Muslim judicial authorities, known as *qadis* and *proto-qadis*. They covered only the garrison towns of the new Islamic empire and acted as arbitrators and administrators as well as judges. Arbitration was a well established tribal practice and *qadis* were respected and experienced individuals, not necessarily knowledgeable in what might be called legal matters but in tribal ways and some of them were also storytellers.

Their rulings were based on several sources of law:

(1) Quranic injunctions;
(2) caliphal decrees;
(3) *sunan*, customary Arab practices; and
(4) their own discretionary opinion (*ra'y*).

Sunan, is the plural of *sunna*, which means an established continuous practice, that is a model to follow and for Arabs of late antiquity any person of exemplary behaviour could provide a *sunna* for others in his family or much

wider community to follow. The idea of *sunan* existed well before the arrival of Islam.

During the fifty years following Muhammad's death, his *sunna* was only one of the *sunan* that *qadis* used as a source of legal authority and there was no indication it stood out above other *sunan*. Companions and Successors were very important, and historical information on individual *qadis* shows Prophetic *sunna* was used relatively infrequently, not more than the *sunan* of famous Companions such as Abu Bakr and Umar I.

Other signs of the formative and inchoate nature of legal practice during the first century included a less than complete enforcement of Quranic prohibitions such as drinking alcohol. It was openly permitted in some important centres and even a well-known *qadi* was noted for drinking in public.[3] The early caliphs took the title "God's Deputy on Earth" seeing themselves as able to directly implement laws. They held courts and acted as judges and it is a remarkable fact that throughout the whole of the first century they did not invoke Prophetic authority in the majority of the decisions they took.[4]

Transition 1 - Increasing Interest in Prophetic *Sunna*

The second half of the first century, from the 60s onwards, saw an increasing interest in the Prophet's *sunna* and in his biography. Most of the Prophet's Companions had died out by this time and *qadis*, storytellers, and members of the second and third generations of Muslims, began to pay more attention to the Prophet's *sunna* and to relate stories in what became the hadith form, in such a way as to clearly distinguish it from the Companion's *sunan* and mark it out as a special field of knowledge even though it was along with caliphal authority, non-Prophetic *sunan*, and discretionary opinion, still one of a number of sources of law. It was becoming the first amongst equals. The increasing interest in Prophetic material was also reflected in writings found in papyri, inscriptions and elsewhere.

Transition 2 - Emergence of The Traditionists

By the closing decade of the first century the job of *qadis* as judges required greater specialisation and a more extensive legal knowledge. Consequently, *qadis* began to make use of and depend on legal specialists. This coincided with another major development that took place over the four decades 80-120

AH.

A growing number of private individuals sometimes in specialist circles of learning emerging in Mecca, Medina, Kufa, Basra, Damascus, Fustat, the Yemen, and Khurasan, out of piety, choose to study Islamic law and its related religious narratives giving more attention to the Prophet's *sunna*. They became know as the "traditionists" and also described themselves as the *ahl al-hadith* (partisans of hadith). They became the source of the expert knowledge required by the *qadis* which emphasised the distinction between judges and legal specialists who would later be called *muftis*. By 120 AH Prophetic *sunna* was very much on the rise.

Rise of Prophetic Hadiths and Its Consequences

The Forces at Work - Need for More Hadiths

The rise of the importance of the Prophet's *sunna* exposed a great problem. There were simply not anywhere near enough Prophetic hadiths available to meet the needs of a comprehensive and detailed legal system.[5] An indication of their numerical presence at this time is given by the work of al-Zuhri (d. 124), the chief scholar working for the Umayyad caliph Umar II (63-101). A study of the traditions he transmitted shows the majority go back to the Companions, not to the Prophet. Al-Zuhri's work for the caliph also shows there was now an interest in gathering and recording Prophetic hadiths.

The Consequences of the Shortfall - Hadith Fabrication

The greatly increased importance of Prophetic hadiths meant they attracted the enhanced attention of many groups of people including storytellers who were already involved in circulating legendary and factual stories about Muhammad, and combined with the efforts of the traditionists, this produced an enormous growth in false stories attributed to the Prophet. Both the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs also took advantage of the higher status of Prophetic hadiths and recruited traditionists and legal experts who would gather and promote any hadiths whether true or false that supported their rule and this further encouraged the fabrication of Prophetic hadiths.

The fact that the later hadith compilers working in the third century applying their authentication methods selected only some 5000 to 10,000 hadiths out of hundreds of thousands then in circulation gives some indication of the scale of

false and doubtful hadiths that must have been produced.

Projection Back onto the Prophet

Fabrication often took place by simply projecting back onto Muhammad the *sunan* and legal practices that had emerged in the towns and cities of the newly conquered lands of the Islamic empire, much of which was believed to embody Islamic practices. What Companions and the early caliphs had said or done was well established as a basis of law in the garrison towns and the chain of authority back to a Companion would simply be extended to the Prophet.

It can be argued that calling what happened "fabrication" might be considered unreasonable. The *sunan* of the Companions and the early caliphs were believed to be based on first-hand knowledge of what the Prophet had actually said or done or what he would have done to solve a particular problem. If a Companion did something he was copying what the Prophet did. To this extent it was genuinely Prophetic.[6]

Transition 3 - Prophetic Hadiths Replace Other Sources

It took some 150 years from the period at the close of the first and beginning of the second century which saw the increased importance of Prophetic hadiths and a great surge in their number, to Prophetic hadiths becoming the main other source of Islamic law alongside the Quran. Malik's (93-179) *Muwatta'* provides a marker and represents the law in Medina as it was around the year 150. It contains 1716 reports: 285 (17%) are from Successors; 613 (36%) from Companions; 291 (17%) are Malik's own opinion; and, 527 (31%) are Prophetic hadiths.

By the second half of the second century the traditionists through their gathering and promotion of Prophetic hadiths especially in a formal literary format, were in a very strong position to have Prophetic hadiths replace existing local *sunnaic* practices and earlier ideas of Prophetic *sunna*. The formal and near universal idea of Prophetic hadiths that the widely travelled traditionists created had strong appeal. The development of hadith criticism especially methods to establish sound hadiths with chains of transmitters going back to the Prophet also played a part in establishing the superior status of Prophetic hadiths compared with traditional *sunan*.

Another factor favouring the acceptance of Prophetic hadiths was the growth of Muslim communities in the non-Arab regions of the vast Islamic

empire, especially the Iranian eastern part of the old Sassanid empire where there had been no *sunan* of the traditional Arab kind as had been practiced in the Hijaz, Iraq and Syria. Prophetic hadiths gave them a ready made source for Islamic based law.[7]

The scholar al-Shafi'i (150-204) provides an excellent example of what was involved in the transition to full acceptance of Prophetic hadiths as a replacement for all other sources of Islamic law other than the Quran itself. He was one of the most active hadith protagonists of his time and he argued strongly against the existing *sunnaic* practice as inconsistent and inferior and made out the case for total reliance on Prophetic *sunna* as exemplified by formal hadiths. His works and his pro-hadith arguments illustrate the nature of the opposition to hadiths nearly 200 years after the life of the Prophet that still had to be overcome. [See Chapter 5]

Al-Shafi'i also mounted the first major critique of *ra'y*, sound and considered opinion or "discretionary reasoning", which led eventually to its rejection as a recognised approach in determining Islamic legal matters. It was a form of reasoning that depended on arbitrary human discretion and the divine authority of hadiths gave no room for such human judgement.

Though al-Shafi'i's arguments eventually triumphed it was more than half a century after his death towards the end of the third century before Prophetic hadiths finally replaced old *sunnaic* practices and other sources to become the main source of Islamic law alongside the Quran.

Sunna Revisited

Further evidence for an evolutionary process and earlier, and to some extent different, understandings of Islam is provided by recent scholarly work on the use of the word *sunna* and related words in early extant works.[8] Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort examines how the concept of *sunna* developed within the formative period of Islam; was it derived from the exemplary behaviour of the Prophet or is it a mixture of different concepts of *sunna*? Her analysis of several *sira* and historical works from the first three centuries of Islam shows there were at least eight different kinds of *sunna*; *sunna* from God, a non-Islamic group, a group of Muslims, hajj, a pre-Islamic individual, a companion, the Prophet Muhammad, and undefined *sunna*, and the word *sunan* is used more frequently in the (later) historical works than in the (earlier) *sira*

works.

Aisha Musa examines the use of the words in the canonical and several other famous hadith collections. She notes in addition to the Prophet, the rightly guided caliphs are often designated as the originator of *sunna*. However, a greater ambiguity is introduced by a Prophetic declaration "whoever establishes a *sunna*" in a hadith found in both canonical and non-canonical collections. For example, a hadith in the *Musnad* of al-Tayalisi and other later collections reports the Prophet saying:

One who introduces a good sunna in Islam which is done after him will have a reward like those who did it, without their rewards being diminished in any way, and one who introduced an evil sunna in Islam which is done after him will bear the burden like that those who did it without theirs being diminished in any way.

The prophet himself is saying *sunna* is more than his own sayings and actions or those of his companions.

Conclusion

This modern understanding of the early development of Islamic law bears a strong correspondence with what Schacht said 65 years ago. There is disagreement in places. This account has a degree of Prophetic *sunna* present from the very beginning but only beginning to rise to pre-eminence in the form of hadiths from 60-70 AH. Schacht puts the emergence of Prophetic hadiths later at the beginning of the second century. Both agree on the scale of fabrication if not always on its nature. Schacht's description of the eventual role of Prophetic hadiths as an "innovation" is not wide of the mark.[9]

Chapter 16 - Oral vs Written Transmission

Characteristics of Oral Transmission

The degree to which hadiths depended on human memory and oral transmission in the early days of Islam has a considerable bearing on the question of their historical reliability.

Human memory and oral transmission are much more vulnerable to change, distortion and error than written information especially as the length of time such transmission is used increases. Older communities relied on it more than we do now and may have been better than we are today at using it but modern examples[1] of how memory and oral transmission produce highly inaccurate accounts of what happened in the past, even the very recent past, are a stark warning not to assume oral information is reliable.

Such a system also gives greater scope to extraneous factors, such as the way the Muslim community developed, influencing how transmitters understood what they heard and passed it on. Religious and political strife have a far greater impact possibly leading to distortion and falsification.

Early Modern Scholarship

The Western View

Early modern Western scholars took the view hadiths during the first century were nearly always memorised and transmitted orally. Early Muslim tradition itself says this was the case. There was fierce opposition to writing hadiths, indicated by hadiths against any written recording and historical accounts of hadith writing being discouraged or suppressed. Some Western scholars took all this to mean oral transmission dominated well into the second century.

A dependence on oral transmission also explains the striking variations, even contradictions, in the hadiths emanating from a particular initial narrator found in the later written collections.

The very first written hadith collections later used to compile the earliest extant and well-know collections were made only in the first half of the second century.

The Eastern View

In reaction to the Western view several Muslim and Middle Eastern scholars, especially Nabia Abbott,[2] published research claiming most hadiths were transmitted both in oral and written mode from the very beginning even during the lifetime of the Prophet, until they were compiled in the collections of the second century and the famous canonical collections of the mid-third century.

They depended mainly on evidence from the biographical sources which provide reports about the writing of hadiths in the first century and the written compilations of the second century, and disputes over such activities. The problem with this is the biographical sources themselves were produced much later, between the third and ninth centuries, and it is a major assumption they are correct about much earlier events.

There is also a striking lack of any surviving manuscripts from the early period. Abbott blames the second caliph, Umar I (d. 23), for this. He ordered the destruction of hadith manuscripts because he feared written hadiths would compete with the Quran and undermine its authority especially in the newly conquered territories. Following his death and the Uthman distribution of the official Quran hadiths were once again widely available in written form.

Reasons Against Writing

Whatever happened in daily practice in the early decades and first century of Islam there were undoubtedly strong feelings amongst Muslims regarding the writing of hadiths. The latest Western scholarship concerning the arguments is well represented by the work of Gregor Schoeler *Oral Torah and Hadith: Transmission, Prohibition of Writing, Redaction*.

According to the Muslim texts themselves, the primary reason against writing hadiths was the fear of creating a book that would rival the Quran. Written hadiths would distract the attention of believers from the Quran. There was a danger too, that the Quran and hadiths would get mixed up. Jews and Christians had allowed themselves to be influenced by books that led them from the true path and Muslims must not make the same terrible mistake.

Another important reason was the belief if people memorised words they would be taken much more to heart and easily come to mind. Written material could be put aside and might not be available when needed.

A practical factor Western scholars identified in favour of oral transmission

is the nature of Arabic written text itself which in the first Islamic century had no vowels and, causing greater confusion, even some consonants were written in the same way (e.g. b, t, th, and, in addition, n and y, unless they stood at the end of a word). Written text could be ambiguous whereas if material was recited the exact meaning of all the words was clear.

Schoeler also suggests oral hadiths were preferred because they allowed a degree of flexibility not found with written material. This is not openly expressed by any Muslim but might have played a part in the rivalry between different regions and centres.

Hadiths About Writing Hadiths

There are hadiths against writing and there are hadiths in favour. It is a very mixed picture.[3]

Prophetic Hadiths - Against

Do not take down anything from me, and he who took down anything from me except the Quran, he should efface that and narrate from me ....
[Muslim, Book 55, Hadith 92 / Book 42, Hadith 7147]

We sought permission from the Messenger of Allah for writing but he did not permit us.
[at-Tirmidhi, Book 41, Hadith 21 / Vol. 5, Book 39, Hadith 2665]

Do you wish for a book besides the Book of God? The books that led astray the peoples before you have been those very books they wrote down besides the Book of God!
[Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Taqyid al-ilm]

Zayd ibn Thabit entered upon Mu'awiyah and asked him about a tradition. He ordered a man to write it. Zayd said: The Messenger of Allah ordered us not to write any of his traditions. So he erased it.
[Abi Dawud 3647, Book 26, Hadith 7 / Book 25, Hadith 3640]

Companion and Successor Hadiths - Against

Are you intending to create copies of the Quran from this? Your Prophet used to narrate things to us; thus you should [also] keep in your memory what

you hear from us, just as we kept what we heard from your Prophet.
[Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Taqyid al-ilm]

I wrote down many 'books' (by dictation) from my father but he erased them all ....
[Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Taqyid al-ilm]

Do not keep for eternity any of my words that you have written down!
[Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Taqyid al-ilm]

Prophetic Hadiths - For
I used to write everything which I heard from the Messenger of Allah. I intended (by it) to memorise it. The Quraysh prohibited me saying: Do you write everything that you hear from him while the Messenger of Allah is a human being: he speaks in anger and pleasure? So I stopped writing, and mentioned it to the Messenger of Allah. He signalled with his finger to his mouth and said: Write, by Him in Whose hand my soul lies, only right comes out from it.
[Abu Dawud 3646, Book 26, Hadith 6 / Book 25, Hadith 3639]

Bind the knowledge!
[Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Taqyid al-ilm and Ibn Abi Shayba] [There are five hadiths saying "bind the knowledge" meaning write it down]

Help your memory with your right hand.
[Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Taqyid al-ilm]

.... the Messenger of Allah gave an address. So he mentioned a story in the Hadith, and Abu Shah said: 'Have it written for me O Messenger of Allah! So the Messenger of Allah said: 'Write it for Abu Shah.'
[al-Tirmidhi 2667, Book 41, Hadith 23 / Vol. 5, Book 39, Hadith 2667]

Companion and Successor Hadiths - For
Abd Allah ibn Amr was wont to write...
[Abd al-Razzaq]

This is the sadiqa [the truthful one]; it is what I have heard from the

Prophet...
[Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Taqyid al-ilm]

Learn the knowledge, but if any of you is not able to narrate it [from memory], then he should write it down and keep it in his house.
[Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Taqyid al-ilm]

What Happened and Geographical Factors

Schoeler examined the *isnads* of most of the above hadiths following the method of Schacht and Juynboll to identify the common link, that is, the transmitter who first put the hadith into circulation. Schoeler notes the existence of such an single early transmitter does not necessarily mean he invented the hadith.

His examination shows the strongest interest in and debate about writing hadiths began around the turn of the first century (about the year of Umar II's death, 101) and continued for some decades. This does not rule out discussion and argument during earlier periods.

Schoeler summarises what most likely happened as follows:

(1) Successors attribute hadiths in favour of written tradition to Companions (first quarter of the eighth century CE [80-107 AH]; in particular Mecca, Yemen). At first this was most likely a reaction to the widespread (theoretical) consensus that tradition should not be written down (for public use). Soon there developed dispute with 2.

(2) At the same time, different Successors attribute hadiths against written tradition to Companions (Basra, Kufa; also Mecca). At first this was probably a reaction to the practice of writing traditions down in order to support one's memory, later in the dispute that developed with 1, and - especially - a reaction against the endeavours of the Umayyads to have hadith codified.

(3) Prophetic hadiths in favour of written tradition (in the first and second quarters of the eighth century CE [80-107 AH][107-133 AH], especially in Mecca) appear in reaction to 2.

(4) Prophetic hadiths against written tradition (in the first and second quarters of the eighth century CE, especially in Medina and Basra) appear in reaction to 3, but in particular to the public use of written collections of traditions by traditionists in Damascus, Mecca and Sana. [*Oral Torah and*

Hadith: Transmission, Prohibition of Writing, Redaction, 2004]

Mixed Mode and Note Taking

Schoeler argues for a better understanding of what happened in the teaching of Islam at a practical level during the first century. Modern scholarship has tended to over emphasise the distinction between written and oral transmission when they are really complimentary processes. First and foremost writing was undertaken as a memory aid.

The material used by Islamic scholars was akin to lecture notes not to books. They would "publish" by reading or reciting to their students who would write down what they heard using tablets, for example, that served as memory aids, *hypomnemata*.

These personal notes and memory aids were not meant to become permanent and sometimes students were told to erase their notes once they knew the material by heart. There are also cases of scholars stating in their wills that after they died their notes should be destroyed.

The way scholars presented material over time could change. A scholar might repeat the same material in exactly the same way lecture after lecture or he might vary it substantially sometimes providing his own comments and elaboration. Students might take notes while they listened or make notes from memory after a lecture. They also might copy from fellow students or abbreviate, combine or change material. These different ways material was handled account for the variations in specific hadiths and traditions from the same authority.

Practice With Early Collections

What was said and done concerning the first collections, the *musannafs* and *musnads*, compiled in the second century that became the basis of the canonical collections one hundred years later, gives further indication of the extent and nature of the oral versus written transmission argument. Some of the extant collections are:

Malik ibn Anas (93-179) *Musannaf*. Malik's *Muwatta'* contains 1716 reports.

Abd al-Razzaq (126-211) *Musannaf*. Significantly larger with eleven volumes compared to Malik's single volume *Muwatta'*. The hadiths in the *Musannaf* come mainly from three people: Ma'mar Ibn Rashid, Ibn Jurayj, and

Sufyan al-Thawri.
Ibn Abi Shayba (156-235) *Musannaf*. 39,000 reports mainly from Companions and Successors.
Ibn Hanbal (164-241) *Musnad*. About 27,000 hadiths including repetitions. The number of distinct *matns* is estimated to be about 5200.

It is said of Sa'id ibn Abi Aruba (d. 156) a scholar from Basra, who is named as one of the first to compile a *musannaf*, though it is not extant, *"He did not have a book, as he used to keep things in his memory"*. In noting this Schoeler goes on to say he thinks it very improbable this degree of dependence on memorisation was the case, as by this period the extant *musannafs* of Abd al-Razzaq and Ibn Abi Shayba show such collections were very large indeed. And, furthermore it is also said of Sa'id ibn Abi Aruba that he had his own scribe.

According to various reports the practice and preference in Basra and Kufa the two initial centres of Islamic scholarship in Iraq, and in Medina, in the *musannaf* period was for material to be recited from memory without notes or *hypomnemata*. Ibn Abi Shayba was from Kufa and he begins some of the chapters in his massive work with the phrase *"This is what I know by heart from the Prophet"* showing how important human memory and oral transmission remained even when collections were very large.

As Baghdad took over from Basra and Kufa as the main centre of Islamic scholarship in Iraq the practice of reciting by heart was gradually replaced by the use of written materials, as had happened in other centres. The famous *musnad* compiler Ibn Hanbal, made clear his preference for written material and making greater use of it complaining of the mistakes those who relied on memory kept making. Schoeler notes of Ibn Hanbal:

When a pupil said to him: "If the knowledge (i.e. the tradition) had not been written down, it would have disappeared", he is said to have replied: "Yes, indeed. And if there were no writing down of traditions, what would we (i.e. the traditionists) be?

The material scholars now had, had grown so much that relying on human memory and oral transmission was no longer practical.

First Official Written Collection

Another major indicator of how the oral versus written argument developed

was the production of the first official written collection of hadiths which according to tradition was ordered by the caliph Umar II (63-101) for religious reasons. He was noted as a pious man, though it would also have been in the interests of the Umayyad dynasty to have a collection compiled under their auspices and by Umar II's time there were few if any Companions still alive who could have produced hadiths inimical to the Umayyads.

The task was carried by the scholar al-Zuhri (d. 124) who despite his successful implementation of such a demanding and prestigious task is reported to have expressed uncertainty about doing it. Although al-Zuhri was a supporter of the Umayyads he followed the early consensus the only written Islamic doctrine should be the Quran and was against an official publication of hadiths. For example, he is often quoted as saying:

We were reluctant to set the knowledge down in writing, until these rulers forced us to do so. Now we are of the opinion that no Muslim should be forbidden to do it (putting tradition in writing). [This is from Ma'mar ibn Rashid in Abd al-Razzaq's *Musannaf*]

As noted, the information about Umar II's initiative comes itself from tradition and Goldziher took the view it was false. It was fabricated by later scholars who wished to associate the religious caliph with the body of hadith material. Schoeler addresses this question. The report of al-Zuhri's comment is most probably correct and it is certainly old. It is quoted in exactly the same words by Ma'mar ibn Rashid a student of al-Zuhri and it is utterly improbable Mamar invented the tradition and in his work Mamar quotes hadiths both for and against writing traditions.

On a private level al-Zuhri started writing hadiths at an early stage for his own use and to help in his teaching and he composed a book or notebook for the library of the Umayyad court.[4] He became tutor to the princes under the caliph Hisham, Umar's successor, and made available in written form some of the material he gathered in that work. His views regarding writing hadiths for a larger public changed. Another tradition has him saying:

The rulers made me write [the tradition down]. Then I made them (i.e. the rulers' princes) copy it. Now that the rulers have written it (i.e. the tradition), I am ashamed that I do not write it for anyone else but them.

Though it might not be widespread writing hadiths for public circulation was becoming acceptable in Umayyad Syria at least near the caliphal court in

Damascus. Schoeler gives a quote from a student of that era:

We were not intending to write down from al-Zuhri, until Hisham forced him. Then he wrote for his sons. And now people write hadith.

In addition to the pressure the rulers exerted al-Zuhri gave another reason for his involvement in the official writing and transmission of hadiths. There were hadiths coming from the East, Iraq, which those in the West, in Syria, rejected; putting what the West considered valid into writing was a response.

Regional and Theological Rivalry

The rise to power of the Umayyads was not well received throughout the Islamic empire and Iraq in the East was anti-Umayyad. The East/West split was shown up by Schoeler's analysis of the *isnads* of hadiths for and against hadith writing (discussed above). Those hadiths that spoke against writing were mainly first put into circulation by transmitters from Basra and Kufa (and Medina) and the most active discussions began around the time of Umar II's death in 101 AH lasting for several decades. The opposition to the Umayyads official hadith publication also emphasised the importance of transmitting hadiths by heart.

People beyond Syria and opponents of the Umayyads were not prepared to accept hadiths gathered and circulated on the orders of a Umayyad ruler who was in a position to influence what was published, and there were allegations al-Zuhri had been persuaded into finding hadiths that favoured Umayyad rule.

During this period there were various rival Muslim sects and theological groups and the act of putting hadiths into fixed written form was likely to generate even more contention and thus to be avoided. An oral doctrine gave less scope for confrontation if people could not easily see the details and believed it was harmonious. Many of the hadith scholars in Basra were theologians used to using oral doctrine. Oral material gave flexibility that fixed written material wouldn't allow and this was useful when arguing for a position or criticising an opposing view. This was probably also the attitude of the scholars in Kufa who were strongly Shi'a. A doctrine that was exclusively oral could be easily modified through additions, omissions and even changes.

Chapter 17 - More Questions and Some Answers

This chapter covers two important hadith topics only touched on above that warrant dedicated discussion.

Was There a Conspiracy?

A major challenge to the views of hadith sceptics such as Juynboll and Schacht that the hadith corpus is largely a work of fabrication, is fabrication on that scale, requires widespread conspiracy, and such conspiracy is highly unlikely, if not impossible. It certainly wouldn't go undetected. This is forcefully summarised by Jonathan Brown in his review of Juynboll's *Encyclopedia of Canonical Hadith* published in 2009.

Juynboll carries scepticism towards the Muslim hadith tradition to such an extreme that the reader is asked to believe in the existence of a web of lies, forgeries and conspiracy so elaborate that it is easier to believe that—from time to time—the Prophet might actually have said some of the hadiths attributed to him.

While one can certainly question some of the credulity and naiveté of Muslim hadith critics, it is unreasonable to entertain that the preponderance of pages filling the thousands of volumes lining any hadith library, not to mention the pervasive critical ethos that motivated their production, could have been stuffed there speciously by the continentally-separated, internally-diverse and virulently divided community of pre-modern Muslim hadith scholars.

And, Kees Versteegh [quoted in *Method And Theory In The Study Of Islamic Origins*, edited by Herbert Berg, 2003]

It may be true that sometimes an opinion becomes fashionable for religious, political or even social reasons, and is then taken over by most people. But the point here is that if one particular interpretation or point of view prevails, there are bound to be some dissenters and in important issues .... it is inconceivable that tradition could manage to suppress all dissenting views.

Regarding one of the methods of creating false hadiths, Juynboll suggests later hadith scholars were aware of the kind of fabrication he associated with

single strand *isnads*. He believed they used the terms *mutabi'at* and *shawahid* to describe what he called dives, false *isnads* for hadiths, invented by hadith collectors going back to an early transmitter who in reality had not been involved in transmitting that hadith on that path. Motzki says this is questionable as the terms are more likely to signify similarities between particular hadiths.[1] They were not viewing the hadiths with diving *isnads* as false copies.

Conspiracy is Not Needed, Nothing Has to Be Suppressed

The existence of a false or misguided body of knowledge and the apparent disappearance, or lack of dissenting views does not require a conspiracy. Natural processes and bias can bring this about.

When Muslims began seriously to collect and record traditions in the second century they took what they found in circulation and any bias or fault there might have been in that huge body of community beliefs and traditions built up and held by individuals over several generations was simply carried over to the body of traditions found in the more organised later collections. There was no conscious suppression of truth or deliberate dissemination of falsehoods and where selections were made they simply reflected contemporary Muslim attitudes and scholarly consensus.

Brown's impossible "continentally-separated" collusion implies what we might understand by intercontinental today, but in the key periods, the second and third centuries, that saw the foundation of the written hadith corpus, the work was done in a small number of centres of scholarship across the early much smaller Islamic empire in Iraq, Syria, the Hijaz and Egypt, that were in touch with one another.

You don't have to look beyond Islam for examples of community beliefs or bodies of knowledge that are questionable or might be mistaken that have come about naturally, without any conspiracy.

Fred Donner in his book *Muhammad and the Believers*, 2010, argues that at the very beginning the religion propagated by the Prophet was open to Jews and Christians as fellow monotheists. There is a lot to be said for this case and Donner offers plenty of evidence. Islam the religion that soon followed rejects and criticises Jews and Christians and there is no record of how this came about, no deliberate conspiracy to exclude them.

A good example of an undisputed or dominant consensus that simply comes

about is the belief the Prophet's Companions were always truthful and accurate in what they had to say about Muhammad. The assumption they could not lie or mislead became a principle of scholarly hadith authentication which got underway in the third century. Brown himself, says:

That the collective impunity of the Companions was a later construct of the Sunni worldview is evident when one finds occasional minor Companions listed in early books of weak hadith transmitters. [In *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*]

He doesn't suggest or even hint a conspiracy must have been behind this *"later construct of the Sunni worldview"*.

Another example is the patriarchal nature of the *Sunna*. There can be little doubt that men and women are treated differently. Men are in charge of women, whatever "rights" women might have. There are modern Muslim female scholars who argue the original Islamic message is for female empowerment but it has been subverted by these patriarchal attitudes and even the fabrication of hadiths favouring men.

Nimat Hafez Barazangi's book *Woman's Identity and Rethinking the Hadith* discussed in Chapter 7 gives examples of hadiths that clearly state women are inferior to men, which in her opinion, and she gives plenty of arguments and evidence, contradict Quranic teachings. The men who circulated these objectionable anti-feminine hadiths and created the traditional male-oriented Islamic worldview were not part of any conspiracy.

Despite his forceful condemnation of the hadith sceptics Brown himself in other works describes processes that can lead to false consensus without any conspiracy.[2] He recognises fabrication took place on a grand scale. He mentions how hadith scholars in deciding what was authentic would tend to ignore hadiths from scholars narrating unfamiliar hadiths if they failed too often to be corroborated by hadiths from other scholars. Thus, hadiths that did not conform with existing beliefs would die out.

There Was Dissent and Criticism Regarding Hadiths

The argument is made that falsification on a large scale could not have been successful because *"it is inconceivable that tradition could manage to suppress all dissenting views"*. There are dissenting views. Brown says:

The works of al-Shafi'i record his disputations with .... scholars .... who could not accept the idea of taking their religion and its laws from reports

transmitted merely 'from so-and-so, from so-and-so.' .... This extreme skepticism towards hadiths, however, died out in classical Sunni and Shiite Islam. [In Brown's *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*]

It is not an explicit accusation of fabrication on a grand scale but the "so-and-so"s referred to might have exaggerated, misheard, or got carried away and with the best of intentions made up stories. The scale and nature of al-Shafi'i's works discussed above in Chapter 5 make it clear during that early period a very significant number of Muslims lacked confidence in the soundness of hadiths in general.

The history of early Islam, the first 300 years or so, reveals various scholarly and judicial persuasions - the *ahl al-ra'y*, the *Mu'tazilites*, the *ahl al-kalam* - that either rejected hadiths or believed them to be unreliable and would use only a very small number that were widely reported by numerous Companions and transmitters in each following generation. The cause of the unreliability is not always made clear; it could be fabrication for good or bad reasons or simply the likely errors and distortions of oral transmission. In any event, dissention was out in the open and though it was not successful it was not suppressed.

Significance of Narrowing the Gap

Western scholars have shown, in some cases where particular research methods can be applied, extant hadith material dated from 150-200 years or more after the life of the Prophet can be traced to dates much closer to the Prophet's lifetime.

Some of the examples of this work are discussed above in Chapter 13 including the work of Gregor Schoeler and Andreas Goerke which forms part of a series of projects concerning the biography of Muhammad, the *sira*.

This is distinct from the hadiths this book is concerned with, the words and deeds of the Prophet exemplified by the canonical six hadith collections, but the longer accounts that make up the *sira* providing an account of Muhammad's life, the major events, and how he established Islam are like hadiths, numerous short stories, traditions, passed from one transmitter to another.

Goerke and Schoeler set out to recreate the original body of traditions recounted by Urwa ibn al-Zubayr (23-94) out of the thousands of traditions

ascribed to him in the later extant sources. Urwa ibn al-Zubayr was the first Muslim to collect biographical material about Muhammad. Urwa's accounts include:

(1) the beginning of Muhammad's revelations, [Covered in Chapter 13];
(2) the reaction of the Meccans - the emigration of some Muslims to Abyssinia, the meetings of al-Aqaba, and the hijra to Medina;
(3) the battle of Badr;
(4) the battle of Uhud;
(5) the battle of the Ditch;
(6) the treaty of al-Hudaybiya;
(7) the slander about Aisha [also covered in Chapter 13], and
(8) the conquest of Mecca.

Goerke and Schoeler conclude:

.... the material that can be securely ascribed to 'Urwa was collected some 30 to 60 years after Muhammad's death. It would therefore go back to eye-witnesses and to persons in very close contact to Muhammad. It may therefore assumed that these reports reflect the general outline of the events correctly.

The work is summarised in their book *Die Altesten Berichte uber das Leben Muhammads: Das Korpus 'Urwa ibn az-Zubair (The Earliest Reports About the Life of Muhammad: The Corpus of 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr).*

Herbert Berg challenges the assumption chronological proximity provides historical accuracy. He says *"Christian origins tells a cautionary tale"*. The works of St Paul, the Gospels of Mark and John, produced also within a range of 30 to 60 years of the death of their religion's founder, give startlingly different ideas about Christ's nature and work. Their works do not throw light on an historical person.

It is quite possible earlier accounts are simply earlier versions of what are essentially theological texts. *".... just as the Gospel of Mark is full of angels, spirits, demons, etc, so the [text] of 'Urwa as reconstructed by Goerke and Schoeler has its god, prophet, angels and miracles"*. [Berg in *The Needle in the Haystack: Islamic Origins and the Nature of the Early Sources*]

Jesus is variously seen in different ways including, as an itinerant preacher, an apocalyptic prophet, a Jewish messiah, and a divine being. In Paul's work, the earliest Christian writer of these three, Jesus himself is hardly mentioned,

and there are no miracles apart from the resurrection. Yet in John, just 30 to 40 years later, Jesus is the great miracle worker and cosmic lord. Christian origins show how possible it is for movements and ideas to undergo great change and to take different forms in just one or two generations.

Reconstructed earlier accounts also leave room for doubts and different interpretations. Schoeler suggests the reports about Muhammad's first revelation were the result of stories Urwa heard from a storyteller at the Zubayr court which formed a rival caliphate during the period 62-72 AH.[3] Urwa removed the storyteller aspects and represented the combined stories in a hadith format. Berg says this shows Urwa was not acting as an historian but as a believer. He was interested in the Prophet, Muhammad, not the historical person.

ANNEX 1 - Hadith Topics in al-Bukhari

The following Table lists all the books (chapters) of *Sahih* al-Bukhari and the number of hadiths found in each book. *Sahih* al-Bukhari is published in two formats. This is the one that divides into 97 books and is by far the most widely used for printed publications. Each book deals with a particular topic. There are 7563 hadiths in total according to the most widely used numbering system.

Contents of Sahih al-Bukhari		
Book	**The Book of:**	**Number of hadiths**
1	The Beginning of Revelation	7
2	Belief	51
3	Knowledge	76
4	Ablutions	113
5	Ritual Bathing	46
6	Menstruation	40
7	Dry Ablution, Rubbing with Dust	15
8	Prayers (Salat)	172
9	Prayer Times	82
10	Call to Prayers (Adhan)	273
11	Friday Prayer	66
12	Fear Prayer	6

13	Two Eid Festivals	42
14	Witr Prayer	15
15	Prayer for Rain	35
16	Prayer During Eclipses	26
17	Prostration During Recital of Quran	14
18	Shortening the Prayers	40
19	Night Prayer	68
20	Virtue of Praying in Mecca and Medina	10
21	Actions while Praying	26
22	Forgetfulness During Prayer	13
23	Funerals	158
24	Obligatory Charity Tax (Zakat)	118
25	Pilgrimage (Hajj)	250
26	Lesser Pilgrimage (Umrah)	34
27	Pilgrims Prevented from Completing the Pilgrimage	15
28	Penalty for Hunting while on Pilgrimage	46
29	Virtues of Medina	24
30	Fasting (Sawm)	117
31	Prayer at Night in Ramadan	6

32	Virtues of the Night of Power	11
33	Seclusion in the Mosque	22
34	Sales, Trade and Transactions	192
35	Sales Pre-Payment	18
36	Pre-Emption	3
37	Renting, Hiring	26
38	Transference of Debt	4
39	Suretyship	9
40	Acting by Proxy	21
41	Agriculture	31
42	Watering	33
43	Loans, Paying Debts, the Freezing of Assets, and Bankruptcy	26
44	Litigation	16
45	Lost Property	14
46	Oppression and Coercion	44
47	Partnership	24
48	Mortgaging, Secured Loans	8
49	Freeing Slaves, Manumission	44
50	Contracts of Manumission	6

51	Gifts, the Virtue of Giving Them, and the Encouragement to Give	71
52	Witnesses, Testimonies	53
53	Peacemaking	21
54	Conditions	27
55	Bequests, Wills and Testaments	44
56	Fighting for the Cause of Allah (Jihad) and Military Expeditions	309
57	Obligation of Surrendering a Fifth of the War Booty	65
58	Tax on non-Muslims living under Islamic rule (Jizya)	34
59	Beginning of Creation	136
60	Stories of the Prophets	163
61	Virtues and Merits of the Prophet and his Companions	160
62	Companions of the Prophet	127
63	Virtues of the Helpers in Medina (Ansar)	173
64	Military Expeditions led by the Prophet	525
65	Interpretation of the Quran	504
66	Virtues of the Quran	85
67	Marriage (Nikah)	188

68	Divorce	100
69	Expenditure on the Family	22
70	Food	94
71	Sacrifice on the Occasion of Birth	8
72	Hunting, Slaughtering Animals	70
73	Eid Sacrifices	30
74	Drinks	65
75	Sick People	38
76	Medicine	105
77	Clothing	187
78	Good Manners	257
79	Asking Permission	77
80	Supplications	108
81	Making the Heart Tender	182
82	Divine Decree	27
83	Oaths and Vows	87
84	Expiation for Oaths	16
85	Laws of Inheritance	48
86	Prescribed Penalties	88
87	Blood Money	58

88	Apostates and Renegades, and Fighting Against Them	22
89	Compulsion	13
90	Deception, Tricks	29
91	Interpretation of Dreams	66
92	Afflictions, Tribulations and the End of the World	89
93	Judgements	89
94	Wishing, Longing	20
95	Accepting Information	22
96	Holding Fast to the Quran and the Sunna	103
97	Oneness of Allah (Tawhid)	193

The next Table adds together hadiths on closely related topics, e.g. *Interpretation of the Quran* and *Virtues of the Quran*, and puts them under an appropriate broader heading. The categories are listed according to the number of hadiths each has.

The largest category is *Religious Instruction and Knowledge* (24% of all hadiths in al-Bukhari), followed by *Military Campaigns and Jihad* (12%), *Prayer* (12%), *Family Life and Law* (7%) and *Pilgrimage and Festivals* (6%).

Size of Different Topic Categories of Hadiths in Sahih al-Bukhari	
Topic Category	**Number of hadiths**

Religious Instruction and Knowledge: The Beginning of Revelation; Belief; Virtues of the Night of Power; Beginning of Creation; Stories of the Prophets; Virtues and Merits of the Prophet and his Companions; Companions of the Prophet; Virtues of the Helpers in Medina (Ansar); Interpretation of the Quran; Virtues of the Quran; Divine Decree; Afflictions, Tribulations and the End of the World; Holding Fast to the Quran and the Sunna; Oneness of Allah (Tawhid)	1829 (24.2%)
Military, Jihad: Fighting for the Cause of Allah (Jihad) and Military Expeditions; Obligation of Surrendering a Fifth of the War Booty; Military Expeditions led by the Prophet	899 (11.9%)
Prayer: Prayers (Salat); Prayer Times; Call to Prayers (Adhan); Friday Prayer; Fear Prayer; Witr Prayer; Prayer for Rain; Prayer During Eclipses; Prostration During Recital of Quran; Shortening the Prayers; Night Prayer; Virtue of Praying in Mecca and Medina; Actions while Praying; Forgetfulness During Prayer; Prayer at Night in Ramadan; Seclusion in the Mosque	874 (11.6%)
Family, Ceremonies, Related Law: Funerals; Bequests, Wills and Testaments; Marriage (Nikah); Divorce; Expenditure on the Family; Sacrifice on the Occasion of Birth; Laws of Inheritance.	568 (7.5%)
Pilgrimage, Festivals: Two Eid Festivals; Hajj (Pilgrimage); Umrah (Lesser Pilgrimage); Pilgrims Prevented from Completing the Pilgrimage; Penalty for Hunting while on Pilgrimage; Eid Sacrifices	417 (5.5%)
Trade, Business, Agriculture: Sales, Trade and Transactions; Sales Pre-Payment; Pre-Emption; Renting; Hiring; Transference of Debt; Suretyship; Acting by Proxy; Agriculture; Watering; Loans, Paying Debts, the Freezing of Assets, and Bankruptcy; Partnership; Mortgaging, Secured Loans	395 (5.2%)

Law: Litigation; Lost Property; Witnesses, Testimonies; Oaths and Vows; Expiation for Oaths; Prescribed Penalties, Blood Money	332 (4.3%)
Good Manners	257
Clothing	187
Making the Heart Tender	182
Ablution and Bathing: Ablutions; Ritual Bathing; Dry Ablution, Rubbing with Dust	174
Food and Drink: Food; Drinks	159
Tax: Obligatory Charity Tax (Zakat); Jizya (tax on non-Muslims living under Islamic rule)	152
Sickness and Medicine: Sick People; Medicine	143
Fasting	117
Supplications	108
Judgements	89
Asking Permission	77
Knowledge	76
Gifts, the Virtue of Giving Them, and the Encouragement to Give	71
Hunting, Slaughtering Animals	70
Interpretation of Dreams	66
Slaves: Freeing Slaves, Manumission; Contracts of	

Manumission	50
Oppression and Coercion	44
Menstruation	40
Deception, Tricks	29
Conditions	27
Virtues of Medina	24
Apostates and Renegades, and Fighting Against Them	22
Accepting Information	22
Peacemaking	21
Wishing, Longing	20
Compulsion	13

ANNEX 2 - Hadith Examples

Topics Covered

Prayer, Belief, Signs
Doing Good and Good Behaviour
Concerning Woman
Jihad
Apostasy
Punishment
Personal Behaviour
Art and Games
Miscellaneous Reports
Unscientific and Strange

There are 119 hadiths in total in this ANNEX; 84 from al-Bukhari, 26 from Muslim, 8 from other canonical collections and one other. All except two are classified as *sahih*. They have *isnads* of the highest quality and are considered sound, that is, authentic.

NOTES

(1) The hadiths below are both quotes, repeating what the Prophet said, and reports, describing an event involving the Prophet (which may contain Prophetic quotes). Which is which is usually obvious but it is also made clear by the reference to the narrator given at the end of the *matn*. E.g. [Narrated so-and-so: Allah's Messenger said:] or simply [Narrated so-and-so:]

(2) Further information in brackets gives the collection in which the hadith is found and two further references to locate it. The first is used in printed publications and sometimes on the web. The second is widely used on the web.

(3) See Sources below for links to comprehensive and well know hadith collections.

Prayer, Belief, Signs

Whoever establishes prayers during the nights of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not for showing off), then all his past sins will be forgiven.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 30 / Book 2, Hadith 36*]

While the people were offering the Fajr prayer at Quba (near Medina), someone came to them and said: "It has been revealed to Allah's Messenger tonight, and he has been ordered to pray facing the Kaba." So turn your faces to the Kaba. Those people were facing Sham (Jerusalem) so they turned their faces towards the Kaba (at Mecca).
[*Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 8, Hadith 55 / Book 8, Hadith 397*]

If anyone of you enters a mosque, he should pray two rakat before sitting.
[*Narrated Abu Qatada Al-Aslami: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 8, Hadith 93 / Book 8, Hadith 435*]

The reward of the prayer offered by a person in congregation is twenty five times greater than that of the prayer offered in one's house or alone. And this is because if he performs ablution and does it perfectly and then proceeds to the mosque with the sole intention of praying, then for every step he takes towards the mosque, he is upgraded one degree in reward and his one sin is taken off from his accounts of deeds. When he offers his prayer, the angels keep on asking Allah's blessings and Allah's forgiveness for him as long as he is (staying) at his Musalla. They say, "O Allah! Bestow Your blessings upon him, be Merciful and kind to him." And one is regarded in prayer as long as one is waiting for the prayer.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Apostle said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 10, Hadith 44 / Book 11, Hadith 620*]

A faithful believer while in prayer is speaking in private to his Lord, so he should neither spit in front of him nor to his right side but he could spit either on his left or under his foot.
[*Narrated Anas ibn Malik: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 8, Hadith*

63 / Book 8, Hadith 405]

I asked Ibn Umar, "Can a person who has performed the Tawaf around the Kaba for Umra but has not performed the (Sai) Tawaf of Safa and Marwa, have a sexual relation with his wife?" Ibn Umar replied "When the Prophet reached Mecca he performed the Tawaf around the Kaba (circumambulated it seven times) and offered a two-rakat prayer (at the place) behind the station (of Abraham) and then performed the Tawaf (Sai) of Safa and Marwa, and verily in Allah's Messenger you have a good example." Then we put the same question to Jabir ibn Abdullah and he too replied, "He should not go near his wife (for sexual relation) till he has finished the Tawaf of Safa and Marwa."
[*Narrated Amr ibn Dinar:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 8, Hadith 47 / Book 8, Hadith 389*]

Our Lord descends each night to the earth's sky when there remains the final third of the night, and He says: Who is saying a prayer to Me that I may answer it? Who is asking something of Me that I may give it him? Who is asking forgiveness of Me that I may forgive him?
[*On the authority of Abu Hurayra, who said that the Messenger of Allah said:*] [*Hadith Qudsi, Hadith 35*] [*Qudsi hadiths give Allah's words as reported by Muhammad*]

al-Islam is raised on five (pillars), testifying (the fact) that there is no god but Allah, that Muhammad is His bondsman and messenger, and the establishment of prayer, payment of Zakat, Pilgrimage to the House (Kaba) and the fast of Ramadan.
[*It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah son of Umar that the Messenger of Allah said:*] [*Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 21 / Book 1, Hadith 20*]

Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah, and whoever obeys the ruler I appoint, obeys me, and whoever disobeys him, disobeys me.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 93, Hadith 1 / Book 89, Hadith 251*]

If somebody sees his Muslim ruler doing something he disapproves of, he

should be patient, for whoever becomes separate from the Muslim group even for a span and then dies, he will die as those who died in the Pre-lslamic period of ignorance (as rebellious sinners).
[*Narrated Ibn Abbas: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 93, Hadith 7 / Book 89, Hadith 257*]

As regards your creation, every one of you is collected in the womb of his mother for the first forty days, and then he becomes a clot for another forty days, and then a piece of flesh for another forty days. Then Allah sends an angel to write four words: He writes his deeds, time of his death, means of his livelihood, and whether he will be wretched or blessed (in religion). Then the soul is breathed into his body. So a man may do deeds characteristic of the people of the (Hell) Fire, so much so that there is only the distance of a cubit between him and it, and then what has been written (by the angel) surpasses, and so he starts doing deeds characteristic of the people of Paradise and enters Paradise. Similarly, a person may do deeds characteristic of the people of Paradise, so much so that there is only the distance of a cubit between him and it, and then what has been written (by the angel) surpasses, and he starts doing deeds of the people of the (Hell) Fire and enters the (Hell) Fire.
[*Narrated Abdullah: Allah's Messenger, the true and truly inspired said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 60, Hadith 7 / Book 55, Hadith 549*]

Near the establishment of the Hour there will be days during which Religious ignorance will spread, knowledge will be taken away (vanish) and there will be much Al-Harj, and Al-Harj means killing.
[*Narrated Abdullah and Abu Musa: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 92, Hadith 14 / Book 88, Hadith 184*]

The Last Hour would not come until the Romans would land at al-Amaq or in Dabiq. An army consisting of the best (soldiers) of the people of the earth at that time will come from Medina (to counteract them) ....
[*Abu Hurayra reported Allah's Messenger as saying:*] [*Muslim, Book 54, Hadith 44 / Book 41, Hadith 6924*] [Part of a longer text]

A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. So he should neither oppress him nor hand him over to an oppressor. And whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother,

Allah will fulfill his needs.
[*Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 89, Hadith 12 / Book 85, Hadith 83*]

He who makes peace between the people by inventing good information or saying good things, is not a liar.
[*Narrated Umm Kulthum bint Uqba: That she heard Allah's Messenger saying:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 53, Hadith 3 / Book 49, Hadith 857*]

Abu Juhaifa said, "I asked Ali, 'Have you got any book (which has been revealed to the Prophet apart from the Quran)?' Ali replied, 'No, except Allah's Book or the power of understanding which has been bestowed (by Allah) upon a Muslim or what is (written) in this sheet of paper (with me).' Abu Juhaifa said, "I asked, 'What is (written) in this sheet of paper?' Ali replied, 'it deals with The Diyya (compensation (blood money) paid by the killer to the relatives of the victim), the ransom for the releasing of the captives from the hands of the enemies, and the law that no Muslim should be killed in Qisas (equality in punishment) for the killing of (a disbeliever)'."
[*Narrated Ash-Shabi:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 3, Hadith 53 / Book 3, Hadith 111*]

There are six things with Allah for the martyr. He is forgiven with the first flow of blood he suffers, he is shown his place in Paradise, he is protected from punishment in the grave, secured from the greatest terror, the crown of dignity is placed upon his head - and its gems are better than the world and what is in it - he is married to seventy two wives along Al-Huril-Ayn of Paradise, and he may intercede for seventy of his close relatives.
[*Narrated Al-Miqdam ibn Madiykarib: That the Messenger of Allah said:*] [*al-Tirmidhi, Book 22, Hadith 46 / Book 20, Hadith 1663*] [Classified as *Hasan*]

In his Khutbah the Messenger of Allah used to praise Allah as He deserves to be praised, then he would say: 'Whomsoever Allah guides, none can lead him astray, and whomsoever Allah sends astray, none can guide. The truest of word is the Book of Allah and best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. The worst of things are those that are newly invented; every newly-invented thing is an innovation and every innovation is going astray, and every going astray is in

the Fire.'
[*It was narrated that Jabir bin 'Abdullah said:*] [*al-Nasa'i, Book 19, Hadith 23 / Book 19, Hadith 1579*] [Part of a longer text]

Every day two angels come down from Heaven and one of them says, "O Allah! Compensate every person who spends in Your Cause," and the other (angel) says, "O Allah! Destroy every miser."
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 24, Hadith 45 / Book 24, Hadith 522*]

By Him in Whose hand is the life of Muhammad, he who amongst the community of Jews or Christians hears about me, but does not affirm his belief in that with which I have been sent and dies in this state (of disbelief), he shall be but one of the denizens of Hell-Fire.
[*It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah observed:*] [*Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 293 / Book 1, Hadith 284*]

Doing Good and Good Behaviour

The one who looks after and works for a widow and for a poor person, is like a warrior fighting for Allah's Cause or like a person who fasts during the day and prays all the night.
[*Narrated Safwan ibn Salim: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 78, Hadith 37 / Book 73, Hadith 35*]

By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I inform you about a matter which if you do it, then you will love one another? Spread the Salam among each other.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: that the Messenger of Allah said:*] [*al-Tirmidhi, Book 42, Hadith 1 / Book 40, Hadith 2688*]

Avoid suspicion, for suspicion is the gravest lie in talk and do not be inquisitive about one another and do not spy upon one another and do not feel envy with the other, and nurse no malice, and nurse no aversion and hostility against one another. And be fellow-brothers and servants of Allah.
[*Abu Hurayra reported Allah's Messenger as saying:*] [*Muslim, Book 45,*

Hadith 35 / Book 32, Hadith 6214]

None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.
[*Narrated Anas: The Prophet said;*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 6 / Book 2, Hadith 12*]

A person came to Allah's Messenger and said: Who among the people is most deserving of a fine treatment from my hand? He said: Your mother. He again said: Then who (is the next one)? He said: Again it is your mother (who deserves the best treatment from you). He said: Then who (is the next one)? He (the Holy Prophet) said: Again, it is your mother. He (again) said: Then who? Thereupon he said: Then it is your father.
[*Abu Hurayra reported:*] [*Muslim, Book 45, Hadith 1 / Book 32, Hadith 6180*]

While a man was walking he felt thirsty and went down a well and drank water from it. On coming out of it, he saw a dog panting and eating mud because of excessive thirst. The man said, “This (dog) is suffering from the same problem as that of mine. So he (went down the well), filled his shoe with water, caught hold of it with his teeth and climbed up and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for his (good) deed and forgave him." The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving (the) animals?" He replied, "Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate."
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Apostle said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 42, Hadith 11 / Book 40, Hadith 551*]

The Prophet said thrice, "Should I inform you out the greatest of the great sins?" They said, "Yes, O Allah's Apostle!" He said, "To join others in worship with Allah and to be undutiful to one's parents." The Prophet then sat up after he had been reclining (on a pillow) and said, "And I warn you against giving a false witness”, and he kept on saying that warning till we thought he would not stop.
[*Narrated Abu Bakr:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 52, Hadith 18 / Book 48, Hadith 822*]

I asked the Prophet "Which deed is the dearest to Allah?" He replied, "To offer the prayers at their early stated fixed times." I asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, "To be good and dutiful to your parents" I again asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, "To participate in Jihad in Allah's cause." Abdullah added, "I asked only that much and if I had asked more, the Prophet would have told me more."
[*Narrated Abdullah:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 9, Hadith 6 / Book 10, Hadith 505*]

There is a Sadaqa (a charitable gift) to be given for every joint of the human body; and for every day on which the sun rises there is a reward of a Sadaqa for the one who establishes justice among people.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 53, Hadith 17 / Book 49, Hadith 870*]

Concerning Women

I was shown the Hell-fire and that the majority of its dwellers were women who were ungrateful. It was asked, "Do they disbelieve in Allah?" (or are they ungrateful to Allah?) He replied, "They are ungrateful to their husbands and are ungrateful for the favors and the good (charitable deeds) done to them. If you have always been good (benevolent) to one of them and then she sees something in you (not of her liking), she will say, 'I have never received any good from you'".
[*Narrated Ibn Abbas: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 22 / Book 2, Hadith 28*]

I have not left after me any (chance) of turmoil more injurious to men than the harm done to the men because of women.
[*Usama b. Zaid reported Allah's Messenger as saying:*] [*Muslim, Book 49, Hadith 9 / Book 36, Hadith 6603*]

During the battle of Al-Jamal, Allah benefited me with a Word (I heard from the Prophet). When the Prophet heard the news that the people of the Persia had made the daughter of Khosrau their Queen (ruler), he said, "Never will succeed such a nation as makes a woman their ruler."
[*Narrated Abu Bakr:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 92, Hadith 50 / Book 88, Hadith 219*]

The Prophet married her when she was six years old and he consummated his marriage when she was nine years old, and then she remained with him for nine years (i.e., till his death).
[*Narrated Aisha:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 67, Hadith 69 / Book 62, Hadith 64*]

That he heard the Prophet saying, "It is not permissible for a man to be alone with a woman, and no lady should travel except with a Muhram (i.e. her husband or a person whom she cannot marry in any case for ever; e.g. her father, brother, etc.)." Then a man got up and said, "O Allah's Messenger! I have enlisted in the army for such-and-such Ghazwa and my wife is proceeding for Hajj." Allah's Messenger said, "Go, and perform the Hajj with your wife."
[*Narrated Ibn Abbas:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 215 / Book 52, Hadith 250*]

A woman should not travel for more than three days except with a Dhi-Mahram (i.e. a male whom she cannot marry at all, e.g. her brother, father, grandfather, etc.) or her own husband.)
[*Narrated Ibn Umar: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 18, Hadith 7 / Book 20, Hadith 192*]

Once Allah's Messenger went out to the Musalla (to offer the prayer) of Id-al-Adha or Al-Fitr prayer. Then he passed by the women and said, "O women! Give alms, as I have seen that the majority of the dwellers of Hell-fire were you (women)." They asked, "Why is it so, O Allah's Messenger?" He replied, "You curse frequently and are ungrateful to your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence and religion than you. A cautious sensible man could be led astray by some of you." The women asked, "O Allah's Messenger! What is deficient in our intelligence and religion?" He said, "Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness of one man?" They replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her intelligence. Isn't it true that a woman can neither pray nor fast during her menses?" The women replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her religion."
[*Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 6, Hadith 9 / Book 6, Hadith 301*]

The Prophet said, "Isn't the witness of a woman equal to half of that of a man?"

The women said, "Yes." He said, "This is because of the deficiency of a woman's mind."
[*Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 52, Hadith 22 / Book 48, Hadith 826*]

There are many persons amongst men who are quite perfect but there are none perfect amongst women except Mary, daughter of Imran, Asiya wife of Pharaoh, and the excellence of Aisha as compared to women is that of Tharid over all other foods.
[*Abu Musa reported Allah's Messenger as saying:*] [*Muslim, Book 44, Hadith 102 / Book 31, Hadith 5966*]

Isn't it true that a woman does not pray and does not fast on menstruating? And that is the defect (a loss) in her religion.
[*Narrated Abu Sa'id: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 30, Hadith 58 / Book 31, Hadith 172*]

Indeed the woman is like a rib, if you try to straighten her you will break her, and if you leave her, what you enjoy from her will be with the crookedness.
[*Abu Hurayra narrated that: The Messenger of Allah said:*] [*al-Tirmidhi, Book 13, Hadith 15 / Book 8, Hadith 1188*]

If a husband calls his wife to his bed (i.e. to have sexual relation) and she refuses and causes him to sleep in anger, the angels will curse her till morning.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 59, Hadith 48 / Book 54, Hadith 460*]

By Him in Whose Hand is my life, when a man calls his wife to his bed, and she does not respond, the One Who is in the heaven is displeased with her until he (her husband) is pleased with her.
[*Abu Hurayra reported Allah's Messenger as saying:*] [*Muslim, Book 16, Hadith 143 / Book 8, Hadith 3367*]

A woman, an ass and a dog disrupt the prayer, but something like the back of a saddle guards against that.
[*Abu Hurayra reported: The Messenger of Allah said:*] [*Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 301 / Book 4, Hadith 1034*]

Allah has cursed those women who practise tattooing or get it done for themselves, and those who remove hair from their faces, and those who create spaces between their teeth artificially to look beautiful, such ladies as change the features created by Allah. Why then shall I not curse those whom Allah's Messenger has cursed and who are cursed in Allah's Book too?
[*Narrated Ibn Masud:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 77, Hadith 158 / Book 72, Hadith 826*]

An Ansari woman gave her daughter in marriage and the hair of the latter started falling out. The Ansari women came to the Prophet and mentioned that to him and said, "Her (my daughter's) husband suggested that I should let her wear false hair." The Prophet said, "No, (don't do that) for Allah sends His curses upon such ladies who lengthen their hair artificially."
[*Narrated Aisha:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 67, Hadith 139 / Book 62, Hadith 133*]

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "For a nail of iron to be driven in the head of one of you would be better for him than to touch a woman who is not lawful for him."
[*Ma'qil ibn Yasar reported:*] [*al-Tabarani, Mu'jam Al-Kabeer 16910*] [*Sahih* according to al-Haythami]

When believing women came to the Prophet as emigrants, he used to test them in accordance with the order of Allah. .... When they agreed on those conditions and confessed that with their tongues, Allah's Messenger would say to them, "Go, I have accepted your oath of allegiance" (for Islam). By Allah, and hand of Allah's Messenger never touched the hand of any woman, but he only used to take their pledge of allegiance orally.
[*Narrated Aisha:*] [*al-Bukhari Book 68, Hadith 37 / Book 63, Hadith 211*]

Jihad

I have been commanded to fight against people, till they testify to the fact that there is no god but Allah, and believe in me (that) I am the messenger (from the Lord) and in all that I have brought. And when they do it, their blood and riches are guaranteed protection on my behalf except where it is justified by law, and their affairs rest with Allah.

[*It is reported on the authority of Abu Hurayra that he heard the Messenger of Allah say:*] [*Muslim, Book 1, Hadith 34 / Book 1, Hadith 31*]

I have been ordered to fight with the people till they say, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,' and whoever says, 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah,' his life and property will be saved by me except for Islamic law, and his accounts will be with Allah, (either to punish him or to forgive him.)
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Apostle said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 158 / Book 52, Hadith 196*]

I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Apostle, and offer the prayers perfectly and give the obligatory charity, so if they perform that, then they save their lives and property from me except for Islamic laws and then their reckoning (accounts) will be done by Allah.
[*Narrated Ibn Umar: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 18 / Book 2, Hadith 25*]

Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords.
[*Narrated Abdullah ibn Abi Aufa: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 34 / Book 52, Hadith 73*]

The Hour will not be established until you fight with the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say. "O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him".
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 139 / Book 52, Hadith 177*]

A woman was found killed in one of the battles fought by the Messenger of Allah. He disapproved of the killing of women and children.
[*It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah that:*] [*Muslim, Book 32, Hadith 28 / Book 19, Hadith 4319*]

It is reported on the authority of Sa'b b. Jaththama that the Prophet of Allah, when asked about the women and children of the polytheists being killed during the night raid, said: They are from them.

[*Muslim, Book 32, Hadith 30 / Book 19, Hadith 4321*]

The Prophet passed by me at a place called Al-Abwa or Waddan, and was asked whether it was permissible to attack the pagan warriors at night with the probability of exposing their women and children to danger. The Prophet replied, "They (the women and children) are from them (the pagans)."
[*Narrated As-Sab ibn Jaththama:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 221 / Book 52, Hadith 256*]

It has been reported from Sulaiman b. Buraid through his father that when the Messenger of Allah appointed anyone as leader of an army or detachment he would especially exhort him to fear Allah and to be good to the Muslims who were with him. He would say: Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war, do not embezzle the spoils; do not break your pledge; and do not mutilate (the dead) bodies; do not kill the children. When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action. If they respond to any one of these, you also accept it and withhold yourself from doing them any harm. Invite them to (accept) Islam; if they respond to you, accept it from them and desist from fighting against them. Then invite them to migrate from their lands to the land of Muhajireen and inform them that, if they do so, they shall have all the privileges and obligations of the Muhajireen. If they refuse to migrate, tell them that they will have the status of Bedouin Muslims and will be subjected to the Commands of Allah like other Muslims, but they will not get any share from the spoils of war or Fai except when they actually fight with the Muslims (against the disbelievers). If they refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the Jizya. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and hold off your hands. If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah's help and fight them. When you lay siege to a fort and the besieged appeal to you for protection in the name of Allah and His Prophet, do not accord to them the guarantee of Allah and His Prophet, but accord to them your own guarantee and the guarantee of your companions for it is a lesser sin that the security given by you or your companions be disregarded than that the security granted in the name of Allah and His Prophet be violated When you besiege a fort and the besieged want you to let them out in accordance with Allah's Command, do not let them come out in accordance with His Command, but do so at your (own) command, for you do not know

whether or not you will be able to carry out Allah's behest with regard to them.
[*Muslim, Book 32, Hadith 3 / Book 19, Hadith 4294*]

I have been given five things which were not given to any one else before me. (1) Allah made me victorious by awe, (by His frightening my enemies) for a distance of one month's journey. (2) The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform Tayammum, therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due. (3) The booty has been made Halal (lawful) for me yet it was not lawful for anyone else before me. (4) I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection). (5) Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only but I have been sent to all mankind.
[*Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari: Book 7, Hadith 2 / Book 7, Hadith 331*]

Allah's Apostle was asked, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah and His Apostle (Muhammad)". The questioner then asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, "To participate in Jihad in Allah's Cause." The questioner again asked, "What is the next (in goodness)?" He replied, "To perform Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca) Mubrur, (which is accepted by Allah and is performed with the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure only and not to show off and without committing a sin and in accordance with the traditions of the Prophet)."
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra:*] [*al-Bukhari: Book 2, Hadith 19 / Book 2, Hadith 25*]

One who died but did not fight in the way of Allah nor did he express any desire (or determination) for Jihad died the death of a hypocrite.
[*It has been narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah said:*] [*Muslim: Book 33, Hadith 226 / Book 20, Hadith 4696*]

Lands shall be thrown open to you and Allah will suffice you (against your enemies), but none of you should give up playing with his arrows.
[*It has been narrated on the authority of Uqba b. Amir who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah say:*] [*Muslim, Book 33, Hadith 242 / Book 20, Hadith 4712*]

Nobody who enters Paradise likes to go back to the world even if he got everything on the earth, except a Mujahid who wishes to return to the world so that he may be martyred ten times because of the dignity he receives (from Allah).
[*Narrated Anas ibn Malik: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 33 / Book 52, Hadith 72*]

A man came to the Prophet and asked, "O Allah's Messenger! What kind of fighting is in Allah's cause? (I ask this), for some of us fight because of being enraged and angry and some for the sake of his pride and haughtiness." The Prophet raised his head (as the questioner was standing) and said, "He who fights so that Allah's Word (Islam) should be superior, then he fights in Allah's cause."
[*Narrated Abu Musa:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 3, Hadith 65 / Book 3, Hadith 125*]

The tradition has been narrated on the authority of Abdullah b. Qais. He heard it from his father who, while facing the enemy, reported that the Messenger of Allah said: Surely, the gates of Paradise are under the shadows of the swords. A man in a shabby condition got up and said; Abu Musa, did you hear the Messenger of Allah say this? He said: Yes. (The narrator said): He returned to his friends and said: I greet you (a farewell greeting). Then he broke the sheath of his sword, threw it away, advanced with his (naked) sword towards the enemy and fought (them) with it until he was slain.
[*Muslim, Book 33, Hadith 211 / Book 20, Hadith 4681*]

Allah guarantees to the person who carries out Jihad for His Cause and nothing compelled him to go out but the Jihad in His Cause, and belief in His Words, that He will either admit him into Paradise or return him with his reward or the booty he has earned to his residence from where he went out.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 97, Hadith 83 / Book 93, Hadith 549*]

The person who participates in (Holy battles) in Allah's cause and nothing compels him to do so except belief in Allah and His Apostles, will be recompensed by Allah either with a reward, or booty (if he survives) or will be admitted to Paradise (if he is killed in the battle as a martyr). Had I not

found it difficult for my followers, then I would not remain behind any sariya going for Jihad and I would have loved to be martyred in Allah's cause and then made alive, and then martyred and then made alive, and then again martyred in His cause.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 29 / Book 2, Hadith 36*]

Apostasy

A man embraced Islam and then reverted back to Judaism. Muadh ibn Jabal came and saw the man with Abu Musa. Muadh asked, "What is wrong with this (man)?" Abu Musa replied, "He embraced Islam and then reverted back to Judaism." Muadh said, "I will not sit down unless you kill him (as it is) the verdict of Allah and His Apostle".
[*Narrated Abu Musa:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 93, Hadith 21 / Book 89, Hadith 271*]

Some Zanadiqa (atheists) were brought to Ali and he burnt them. The news of this event, reached Ibn Abbas who said, "If I had been in his place, I would not have burnt them, as Allah's Messenger forbade it, saying, 'Do not punish anybody with Allah's punishment (fire).' I would have killed them according to the statement of Allah's Messenger, 'Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him'".
[*Narrated Ikrima:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 88, Hadith 5 / Book 84, Hadith 57*]

The blood of a Muslim who confesses that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three cases: In Qisas for murder, a married person who commits illegal sexual intercourse and the one who reverts from Islam (apostate) and leaves the Muslims.
[*Narrated Abdullah: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 87, Hadith 17 / Book 83, Hadith 17*]

During the last days there will appear some young foolish people who will say the best words but their faith will not go beyond their throats (i.e. they will have no faith) and will go out from (leave) their religion as an arrow goes out of the game. So, where-ever you find them, kill them, for whoever kills them shall have reward on the Day of Resurrection.

[*Narrated Ali: No doubt I heard Allah's Apostle saying:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 88, Hadith 12 / Book 84, Hadith 64*]

Punishment

Whomever you find doing the actions of the people of Lut then kill the one doing it, and the one it is done to.
[*Narrated Ibn Abbas: That the Messenger of Allah said:*] [*al-Tirmidhi, Book 17, Hadith 40 / Book 15, Hadith 1456*] [Classified as *Hasan*]

Verily Allah has ordained a way for them (the women who commit fornication), (When) a married man (commits adultery) with a married woman, and an unmarried male with an unmarried woman, then in case of married (persons) there is (a punishment) of one hundred lashes and then stoning (to death). And in case of unmarried persons, (the punishment) is one hundred lashes and exile for one year.
[*Ubada b. as-Samit reported that .... Allah's Apostle .... said:*] [*Muslim, Book 29, Hadith 19 / Book 17, Hadith 4192*]

A man came to the Prophet and said, "I beseech you to judge us according to Allah's Laws." Then his opponent who was wiser than he, got up and said, "He has spoken the truth. So judge us according to Allah's Laws and please allow me (to speak), O Allah's Messenger." The Prophet said, "Speak." He said, "My son was a laborer for the family of this man and he committed illegal sexual intercourse with his wife, and I gave one-hundred sheep and a slave as a ransom (for my son), but I asked the religious learned people (regarding this case), and they informed me that my son should be flogged one hundred stripes, and be exiled for one year, and the wife of this man should be stoned (to death)." The Prophet said, "By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, I will Judge you (in this case) according to Allah's Laws. The one-hundred (sheep) and the slave shall be returned to you and your son shall be flogged one-hundred stripes and be exiled for one year. And O Unais! Go in the morning to the wife of this man and ask her, and if she confesses, stone her to death." She confessed and he stoned her to death.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra and Zaid ibn Khalid Al-Juhani:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 86, Hadith 82 / Book 82, Hadith 842*]

A bedouin came and said, "O Allah's Messenger! Judge between us according to Allah's Laws." His opponent got up and said, "He is right. Judge between us according to Allah's Laws." The bedouin said, "My son was a laborer working for this man, and he committed illegal sexual intercourse with his wife. The people told me that my son should be stoned to death; so, in lieu of that, I paid a ransom of one hundred sheep and a slave girl to save my son. Then I asked the learned scholars who said, "Your son has to be lashed one-hundred lashes and has to be exiled for one year." The Prophet said, "No doubt I will judge between you according to Allah's Laws. The slave-girl and the sheep are to go back to you, and your son will get a hundred lashes and one year exile." He then addressed somebody, "O Unais! go to the wife of this (man) and stone her to death" So, Unais went and stoned her to death.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra and Zaid ibn Khalid Al-Juhani:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 53, Hadith 6 / Book 49, Hadith 860*]

There was a man who looked after the family and the belongings of the Prophet and he was called Karkara. The man died and Allah's Apostle said, "He is in the (Hell) Fire." The people then went to look at him and found in his place, a cloak he had stolen from the war booty.
[*Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 56, Hadith 280 / Book 52, Hadith 308*]

Whoever drinks alcoholic drinks in the world and does not repent (before dying), will be deprived of it in the Hereafter.
[*Narrated Ibn Umar: Allah's Apostle said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 74, Hadith 1 / Book 69, Hadith 481*]

The hand should be cut off for stealing something that is worth a quarter of a Dinar or more.
[*Narrated Aisha: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 86, Hadith 18 / Book 81, Hadith 780*]

Personal Behaviour

If you want to put on your shoes, put on the right shoe first; and if you want to take them off, take the left one first. Let the right shoe be the first to be put on and the last to be taken off.

[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 77, Hadith 72 / Book 72, Hadith 747*]

None of you should drink while standing; and if anyone forgets, he must vomit.
[*Abu Hurayra reported Allah's Messenger as saying:*] [*Muslim, Book 36, Hadith 153 / Book 23, Hadith 5022*]

I served (water of) Zamzam to Allah's Messenger, and he drank it while standing.
[*Ibn Abbas reported:*] [*Muslim, Book 36, Hadith 154 / Book 23, Hadith 5023*]

Allah likes sneezing and dislikes yawning, so if someone sneezes and then praises Allah, then it is obligatory on every Muslim who heard him, to say: May Allah be merciful to you. But as regards yawning, it is from Satan, so one must try one's best to stop it, if one says "Ha" when yawning, Satan will laugh at him.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 78, Hadith 247 / Book 73, Hadith 242*]

If anyone of you rouses from sleep and performs the ablution, he should wash his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out thrice, because Satan has stayed in the upper part of his nose all the night.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 59, Hadith 104 / Book 54, Hadith 516*]

My uncle asked Allah's Messenger about a person who imagined to have passed wind during the prayer. Allah' Apostle replied: "He should not leave his prayers unless he hears sound or smells something."
[*Narrated Abbad ibn Tamim:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 4, Hadith 3 / Book 4, Hadith 139*]

A good dream that comes true is from Allah, and a bad dream is from Satan, so if anyone of you sees a bad dream, he should seek refuge with Allah from Satan and should spit on the left, for the bad dream will not harm him.
[*Narrated Abu Qatada: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 91, Hadith 5 / Book 87, Hadith 115*]

None of you should offer prayer in a single garment that does not cover the shoulders.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 8, Hadith 11 / Book 8, Hadith 355*]

If anyone of you goes to an open space for answering the call of nature he should neither face nor turn his back towards the Qibla; he should either face the east or the west.
[*Narrated Abu Aiyub Al-Ansari: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 4, Hadith 10 / Book 4, Hadith 146*]

The Prophet said, "While defecating, neither face nor turn your back to the Qibla but face either east or west." Abu Aiyub added. "When we arrived in Sham we came across some lavatories facing the Qibla; therefore we turned ourselves while using them and asked for Allah's forgiveness."
[*Narrated Abu Aiyub Al-Ansari:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 8, Hadith 46 / Book 8, Hadith 388*]

People say, "Whenever you sit for answering the call of nature, you should not face the Qibla or Baitul-Maqdis (Jerusalem)." I told them. "Once I went up the roof of our house and I saw Allah's Apostle answering the call of nature while sitting on two bricks facing Baitul-Maqdis (Jerusalem) but there was a screen covering him."
[*Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 4, Hadith 11 / Book 4, Hadith 147*]

Whenever anyone of you makes water he should not hold his penis or clean his private parts with his right hand. (And while drinking) one should not breathe in the drinking utensil.
[*Narrated Abu Qatada: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 4, Hadith 20 / Book 4, Hadith 156*]

None of you should spit in front or on his right but he could spit either on his left or under his foot.
[*Narrated Anas: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 8, Hadith 62 / Book 8, Hadith 404*]

Allah's Apostle forbade that a person should drink while standing. Qatada reported: We said to him: What about eating? Thereupon he (Anas) said: That is even worse and more detestable (abominable).
[*Anas reported that:*] [*Muslim, Book 36, Hadith 149 / Book 23, Hadith 5018*]

Art and Games

He who played Nardashir (a game similar to backgammon) is like one who dyed his hand with the flesh and blood of swine.
[*Buraida reported on the authority of his father that Allah's Apostle said:*] [*Muslim, Book 41, Hadith 11 / Book 28, Hadith 5612*]

We were going with Allah's Messenger. As we reached the place (known as) Arj there met (us) a poet who had been reciting poetry. Thereupon Allah's Messanger said: Catch the satan or detain the satan, for filling the belly of a man with pus is betting than stuffing his brain with poetry.
[*Abu Sa'id Khudri reported:*] [*Muslim, Book 41, Hadith 10 / Book 28, Hadith 5611*]

It is better for a man to fill the inside of his body with pus than to fill it with poetry.
[*Narrated Ibn Umar: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 78, Hadith 180 / Book 73, Hadith 175*]

Some poetry contains wisdom.
[*Narrated Ubai ibn Kab: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 78, Hadith 171 / Book 73, Hadith 166*]

The bell is the musical instrument of the Satan.
[*Abu Hurayra reported Allah's Messenger as saying:*] [*Muslim, Book 37, Hadith 159 / Book 24, Hadith 5279*]

The Prophet entered upon me while there was a curtain having pictures (of animals) in the house. His face got red with anger, and then he got hold of the curtain and tore it into pieces. The Prophet said, "Such people as paint these pictures will receive the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection".

[*Narrated Aisha:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 78, Hadith 136 / Book 73, Hadith 130*]

I stuffed for the Prophet a pillow decorated with pictures (of animals) which looked like a Namruqa (a small cushion). He came and stood among the people with excitement apparent on his face. I said, "O Allah's Messenger! What is wrong?" He said, "What is this pillow?" I said, "I have prepared this pillow for you, so that you may recline on it." He said, "Don't you know that angels do not enter a house wherein there are pictures; and whoever makes a picture will be punished on the Day of Resurrection and will be asked to give life to (what he has created)?"
[*Narrated Aisha:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 59, Hadith 35 / Book 54, Hadith 447*]

While I was with Ibn Abbas a man came and said, "O father of Abbas! My sustenance is from my manual profession and I make these pictures." Ibn Abbas said, "I will tell you only what I heard from Allah's Messenger. I heard him saying, 'Whoever makes a picture will be punished by Allah till he puts life in it, and he will never be able to put life in it.'" Hearing this, that man heaved a sigh and his face turned pale. Ibn Abbas said to him, "What a pity! If you insist on making pictures I advise you to make pictures of trees and any other unanimated objects."
[*Narrated Sa'id ibn Abu Al-Hasan:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 34, Hadith 172 / Book 34, Hadith 428*]

Miscellaneous Reports

When the Adhan is pronounced Satan takes to his heels and passes wind with noise during his flight in order not to hear the Adhan. When the Adhan is completed he comes back and again takes to his heels when the Iqama is pronounced and after its completion he returns again till he whispers into the heart of the person (to divert his attention from his prayer) and makes him remember things which he does not recall to his mind before the prayer and that causes him to forget how much he has prayed.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Apostle said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 10, Hadith 6 / Book 11, Hadith 582*]

If a house fly falls in the drink of anyone of you, he should dip it (in the drink) and take it out, for one of its wings has a disease and the other has the cure for

the disease.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 59, Hadith 126 / Book 54, Hadith 537*]

It was mentioned before the Prophet that there was a man who slept the night till morning (after sunrise). The Prophet said, "He is a man in whose ears (or ear) Satan had urinated."
[*Narrated Abdullah:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 59, Hadith 80 / Book 54, Hadith 492*]

If a dog drinks from the utensil of anyone of you it is essential to wash it seven times.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: Allah's Messenger said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 4, Hadith 38 / Book 4, Hadith 173*]

Whoever keeps a (pet) dog which is neither a watch dog nor a hunting dog, will get a daily deduction of two Qirat from his good deeds.
[*Narrated Ibn Umar: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 72, Hadith 6 / Book 67, Hadith 389*]

The Messenger of Allah said: When any one of you stands for prayer and there is a thing before him equal to the back of the saddle that covers him and in case there is not before him (a thing) equal to the back of the saddle, his prayer would be cut off by (passing of an) ass, woman, and black Dog. I said: O Abu Dharr, what feature is there in a black dog which distinguish it from the red dog and the yellow dog? He said: O, son of my brother, I asked the Messenger of Allah as you are asking me, and he said: The black dog is a devil.
[*Abu Dharr reported:*] [*Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 299 / Book 4, Hadith 1032*]

The Prophet used to like to start from the right side on wearing shoes, combing his hair and cleaning or washing himself and on doing anything else.
[*Narrated Aisha:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 4, Hadith 34 / Book 4, Hadith 169*]

Once the Prophet entered a lavatory and I placed water for his ablution. He asked, "Who placed it?" He was informed accordingly and so he said, "O Allah! Make him (Ibn Abbas) a learned scholar in religion (Islam).
[*Narrated Ibn Abbas:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 4, Hadith 9 / Book 4, Hadith 145*]

Unscientific and Strange Hadiths

There is healing in black cumin for all diseases except death.
[*Narrated Abu Hurayra: I heard Allah's Apostle saying:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 76, Hadith 11 / Book 71, Hadith 592*]

When you eat, do not wipe your hands till you have licked it, or had it licked by somebody else.
[*Narrated Ibn Abbas: The Prophet said:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 70, Hadith 85 / Book 65, Hadith 366*]

As for the resemblance of the child to its parents: If a man has sexual intercourse with his wife and gets discharge first, the child will resemble the father, and if the woman gets discharge first, the child will resemble her.
[*Narrated Anas:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 60, Hadith 4 / Book 55, Hadith 546*] [Part of a longer text]

The Prophet used to stand by a tree or a date-palm on Friday. Then an Ansari woman or man said. "O Allah's Messenger! Shall we make a pulpit for you?" He replied, "If you wish." So they made a pulpit for him and when it was Friday, he proceeded towards the pulpit (for delivering the sermon). The datepalm cried like a child! The Prophet descended (the pulpit) and embraced it while it continued moaning like a child being quietened. The Prophet said, "It was crying for (missing) what it used to hear of religious knowledge given near to it."
[*Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 61, Hadith 93 / Book 56, Hadith 784*]

A man came to the prophet and said, “My brother has got loose motions”. The Prophet said, “Let him drink honey." The man again (came) and said, “I made him drink (honey) but that made him worse.” The Prophet said, “Allah has said the Truth, and the abdomen of your brother has told a lie."
[*Narrated Abu Sa‘id:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 76, Hadith 33 / Book 71, Hadith 614*]

The Prophet, was asked about water (in desert country) and what is frequented

by animals and wild beasts. He replied: When there is enough water to fill two pitchers, it bears no impurity.
[*Narrated Abdullah ibn Umar:*] [*Abu Dawud, Book 1, Hadith 63 / Book 1, Hadith 63*]

The people asked the Messenger of Allah: Can we perform ablution out of the well of Budaah, which is a well into which menstrual clothes, dead dogs and stinking things were thrown? He replied: Water is pure and is not defiled by anything.
[*Narrated Abu Sa'id al-Khudri:*] [*Abu Dawud, Book 1, Hadith 66 / Book 1, Hadith 66*]

From among my followers there will be some people who will consider illegal sexual intercourse, the wearing of silk, the drinking of alcoholic drinks and the use of musical instruments, as lawful. And there will be some people who will stay near the side of a mountain and in the evening their shepherd will come to them with their sheep and ask them for something, but they will say to him, 'Return to us tomorrow.' Allah will destroy them during the night and will let the mountain fall on them, and He will transform the rest of them into monkeys and pigs and they will remain so till the Day of Resurrection.
[*Narrated Abu Amir or Abu Malik Al-Ashari: that he heard the Prophet saying:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 74, Hadith 16 / Book 69, Hadith 494*]

My aunt took me to Allah's Messenger and said, "O Allah's Messenger! My nephew is ill." The Prophet touched my head with his hand and invoked Allah to bless me. He then performed ablution and I drank of the remaining water of his ablution and then stood behind his back and saw "Khatam An-Nubuwwa" (The Seal of Prophethood) between his shoulders like a button of a tent.
[*Narrated As-Saib:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 75, Hadith 31 / Book 70, Hadith 574*]

This hadith has been transmitted on the authority of Abdullah b. Masud (who said):
We were along with Allah's Messenger at Mina, that moon was split up into two. One of its parts was behind the mountain and the other one was on this side of the mountain. Allah's Messenger said to us: Bear witness to this.
[*Muslim, Book 52, Hadith 28 / Book 39, Hadith 6725*]

That the Meccan people requested Allah's Apostle to show them a miracle, and so he showed them the splitting of the moon.
[*Narrated Anas:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 61, Hadith 141 / Book 56, Hadith 831*]

I was with the Prophet and the time for the Asr prayer became due. We had no water with us except a little which was put in a vessel and was brought to the Prophet. He put his hand into it and spread out his fingers and then said, "Come along! Hurry up! All those who want to perform ablution. The blessing is from Allah." I saw the water gushing out from his fingers. So the people performed the ablution and drank, and I tried to drink more of that water (beyond my thirst and capacity), for I knew that it was a blessing. The sub-narrator said: I asked Jabir, "How many persons were you then?" He replied, "We were one-thousand four hundred men." Salim said: Jabir said, 1500.
[*Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah:*] [*al-Bukhari, Book 74, Hadith 65 / Book 69, Hadith 543*]

Aisha reported that Salim, the freed slave of Abu Hadhaifa, lived with him and his family in their house. She (the daughter of Suhail came to Allah's Apostle and said:
Salim has attained (purbety) as men attain, and he understands what they understand, and he enters our house freely, I, however, perceive that something (rankles) in the heart of Abu Hudhaifa, whereupon Allah's Apostle said to her: Suckle him and you would become unlawful for him, and (the rankling) which Abu Hudhaifa feels in his heart will disappear. She returned and said: So I suckled him, and what (was there) in the heart of Abu Hudhaifa disappeared.
[*Muslim, Book 17, Hadith 34 / Book 8, Hadith 3425*]

Sources

There are numerous websites that provide access to the well known hadith collections. Here are several readers will find useful if they wish to study more hadiths.

Sites Using the Printed Publication In Book Reference System

- QuranX.com
- sunnah.com

Sites Using Popular Web Reference System

- Hadith Collection
- SearchTruth.com
- QuranX.com
- Alim.org

Site Providing Detailed Subject Index

- Alim.org

ANNEX 3 - Early Hadith Collections

The *Sunna* of the Prophet - Legal Hadiths

This Table gives an idea of the scale and timing of early hadith collection work. It is not a complete survey. It includes extant works such as those discussed in Chapter 3 and works preserved only in other collections or known by references to them in later publications.

The canonical six collections are highlighted in bold.

Early Hadith Collections (up to 500 AH)			
Type	**Collector**	**Lifetime**	**Notes / Titles**
Second Century AH			
Musannaf	Ibn Jurayj	d. 150	
Musannaf	Ma‘mar b. Rashid	d. 154	
Musnads	Abu Hanifa	d. 156	Compiled by students
Musannaf	Sufyan al-Thawri	d. 161	
Musannaf	Malik ibn Anas	93-179	Al-Muwatta’
Musannaf	Abu Yusuf	d. 182	
Musnad	al-Tayalisi	133-204	
Musnad	al-Shafi‘i	150-204	Compiled by students
Musannaf	Abd al-Razzaq	126-211	

Third Century AH			
Musnad	al-Humaydi	d. 219	
Sunan	Sa‘id b. Mansur al-Khurasani	d. 227	
Musnad	al-Musaddad	d. 228	
Musannaf	Ibn Abi Shayba	156-235	
Musnad	Ishaq b. Rahawayh	d. 238	
Musnad	Ahmad ibn Hanbal	164-241	
Musnad	Abu Muhammad Abd al-Hamid ibn Humayd	d. 249	
Sunan	al-Darimi	181-255	
Sahih	**al-Bukhari**	**194-256**	
Sahih	**Muslim**	**204-261**	
Musnad	Ibn al-Najjar	d. 262	
Sunan	**Ibn Majah**	**209-273**	
Sunan	**Abu Dawud**	**202-275**	
	Baqi b.		

Musnad	Makhlad	201-276	
Jami‘	**al-Tirmidhi**	**209-279**	
Musnad	al-Harith b. Abi Usama	d. 282	
Sunan	Abu Muslim al-Kashshi	d. 282	
Musnad	Abu Bakr al-Bazzar	d. 292	
Sunan	**al-Nasa’i**	**224-303**	
Fourth Century AH			
Musnad	Abu Ya‘la al-Mawsili	d. 307	
Musnad	al-Tabari	224-310	Tahdhib al-Athar
Sahih	Ibn Khuzaymah	d. 312	
Mu‘jam	Abu al-Qasim al-Baghawi	d. 317	Mu‘jam al-sahaba
Musnad	Abu Awana	d. 317	
Musnad	Ali b. Hamshadh al-Nishapuri	d. 338	
Sahih	Ibn Hibban	d. 354	
Mu‘jam	al-Tabarani	d. 360	Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabeer

Musnad	al-Hasan al-Masarjisi al-Nishapuri	d. 365	
Mu‘jam	Abu Bakr al-Isma‘ili	d. 371	Mu‘jam al-shuyukh
Sunan	al-Daraqutni	306-385	
Fifth Century AH			
Ilzamat work	al-Hakim al-Nishapuri	d. 405	Al-Mustadrak. Ilzamat (addendum) works identify hadiths not in the Sahihan but of the same high authenticity standard
Ilzamat work	Abu Dharr al-Harawi	356-434	
Sunan	al-Bayhaqi	d. 460	Sunan al-Kubra

Sira and *Maghazi* Works

Chapter 1 (What are Hadiths?) and Chapter 13 (Latest Research) refer to the *sira* (biographies of the Prophet) and *maghazi* (military history) works, the other major categories of early Islamic texts which also depend on information in the hadith format.

Sira and *maghazi* hadith reports (sometimes called *khabars*) are generally much longer than the hadiths covered in this book concerning the *Sunna* of the Prophet; many are like short stories, over 1000 words, even sometimes more than 2000 words, and may not always be about the Prophet or only indirectly concern the Prophet.

There is also significant overlap. Hadith collections concerning the *Sunna* of the Prophet contain biographical information about him and information about raids and military campaigns that he initiated or was involved in. For example, 12% of the hadiths in the famous *Sahih* al-Bukhari concern military

matters including raids and battles and *musannafs* such as those Abd al-Razzaq and Ibn Abi Shayba provide biographical and military hadiths. And the *sira* and *maghazi* works listed below contain *sunna*, reports of the Prophet's sayings and deeds.

The *sira* works are not entirely dedicated to the Prophet's biography and also provide historical background. The first third of Ibn Ishaq's work was a history of the world up till the time of Muhammad's prophethood

Major Early *Sira* and *Maghazi* Works

Work	Collector	Lifetime	Notes
Sirat Rasul Allah (Life of the Messenger of God)	Ibn Ishaq	d. 150	No longer extant. See Ibn Hisham
Kitab al-Tarikh wa al-Maghazi (Book of History and Campaigns)	al-Waqidi	130-207	
Sirat Sayyidina Muhammad Rasul Allah (The life of Muhammad the Messenger of God)	Ibn Hisham	d. 218	Contains an edited version of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah
Kitab Tabaqat Al-Kubra (Book of the Major Classes)	Ibn Sa‘d	168-230	Also contains biographies of Companions
Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk (History of the Prophets and Kings)	al-Tabari	224-310	Contains edited part of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah



ANNEX 4 - Contradictory Hadiths - Examples

Hadiths and Quran verses may not be quoted in full but references are given for complete versions.

Hadiths Contradicting the Quran

Adultery

Hadiths A number of hadiths make clear the punishment for adultery is stoning. For Example:

.... I will decide between you according to the Book of Allah. .... And, O Unais, go to this woman in the morning, and if she makes a confession, then stone her. He (the narrator) said: He went to her in the morning and she made a confession. And Allah's Messenger made pronouncement about her and she was stoned to death.
[*Muslim, Book 29, Hadith 38 / Book 17, Hadith 4209*]

.... He (the Holy Prophet) entrusted [her] child to one of the Muslims and then pronounced punishment. And she was put in a ditch up to her chest and he commanded people and they stoned her.
[*Muslim, Book 29, Hadith 35 / Book 17, Hadith 4206*]

.... He (again) came round facing him and said to him: Allah's Messenger, I have committed adultery. He (the Holy Prophet) turned away until he did that four times, and as he testified four times against his own self, Allah's Messenger called him and said: Are you mad? He said: No. He (again) said: Are you married? He said: Yes. Thereupon Allah's Messenger said: Take him and stone him.
[*Muslim, Book 29, Hadith 23 / Book 17, Hadith 4196*]

.... So the Prophet ordered the two adulterers to be stoned to death, and they were stoned to death near the place where biers used to be placed near the Mosque. I saw her companion (i.e. the adulterer) bowing over her so as to protect her from the stones.

[*al-Bukhari, Book 65, Hadith 4556 / Book 60, Hadith 79*]

.... By Allah, Allah's Apostle never killed anyone except in one of the following three situations: (1) A person who killed somebody unjustly, was killed (in Qisas,) (2) a married person who committed illegal sexual intercourse and (3) a man who fought against Allah and His Apostle and deserted Islam and became an apostate.
[*al-Bukhari, Book 87, Hadith 38 / Book 83, Hadith 37*]

In addition to hadiths concerning Muslims there is a hadith in which Muhammad orders stoning for adultery on two Jews.

A Jew and a Jewess were brought to Allah's Messenger on a charge of committing an illegal sexual intercourse. The Prophet asked them. "What is the legal punishment (for this sin) in your Book (Torah)?" .... The Torah was brought, and then one of the Jews put his hand over the Divine Verse of the Rajam (stoning to death) .... So Allah's Apostle ordered that the two (sinners) be stoned to death, and so they were stoned.
[*al-Bukhari, Book 86, Hadith 48 / Book 82, Hadith 809*]

Quran The Quran says the punishment is flogging and makes no mention of stoning.

[Q24:2] The adulteress and adulterer should be flogged a hundred lashes each, and no pity for them should deter you from the law of God, if you believe in God and the last day; and the punishment should be witnessed by a body of believers.

Another verse concerning married slave girls says:

[Q4:25] [Make them] married women, not adulteresses or lovers. If they commit adultery when they are married, their punishment will be half that of free women.

Comment If the punishment for free women was stoning to death you could hardly have “half” of such a punishment for married slaves.

Ibn Qutayba in his *The Interpretation of Conflicting Narrations (Tawil*

Mukhtalif al-Hadith) argues "The Book of Allah" mentioned in the first hadith above refers not to the Quran but to God's ruling or imposition of an obligation.

A Bequest

Hadith The hadith is clear in saying no statutory heir may receive a bequest.

I heard the Messenger of Allah say: Allah has appointed for everyone who has a right what is due to him, and no bequest must be made to an heir.
[*Abu Dawud, Book 18, Hadith 9 / Book 17, Hadith 2864*]

Quran The Quran says close relatives (who would be heirs) can and should receive bequests

[Q2:180] When death approaches one of you who leaves wealth, it is prescribed that he should make a proper bequest to parents and close relatives — a duty incumbent on those who are mindful of God.

Ibn Qutayba argues Q2:180 was abrogated by Q4:11-12, which provide detailed schemes of fixed inheritance shares.

[Q4:11] Concerning your children, God commands you that a son should have the equivalent share of two daughters. If there are only daughters, two or more should share two-thirds of the inheritance, if one, she should have half. Parents inherit a sixth each if the deceased leaves children; if he leaves no children and his parents are his sole heirs, his mother has a third, unless he has brothers, in which case she has a sixth. [In all cases, the distribution comes] after payment of any bequests or debts. You cannot know which of your parents or your children is more beneficial to you: this is a law from God, and He is all knowing, all wise.

And:

[Q4:12] You inherit half of what your wives leave, if they have no children; if they have children, you inherit a quarter. [In all cases, the distribution comes] after payment of any bequests or debts. If you have no children, your wives' share is a quarter; if you have children, your wives get an eighth. [In all cases,

the distribution comes] after payment of any bequests or debts. If a man or a woman dies leaving no children or parents, b but a single brother or sister, he or she should take one-sixth of the inheritance; if there are more siblings, they share one-third between them. [In all cases, the distribution comes] after payment of any bequests or debts, with no harm done to anyone: this is a commandment from God: God is all knowing and benign to all.

Whom One May Marry

Quran The Quran specifies the women whom one may not marry and explicitly states that all other women not mentioned may lawfully be married.

[Q4:22-24] .... Other women are lawful to you, so long as you seek them in marriage, with gifts from your property, looking for wedlock rather than fornication.

Hadith The hadith states that a man may not marry a woman and her aunt at the same time thus adding in effect to those specified in the Quran, and negating the Quran's permission to marry any who are not specifically mentioned in the Quran.

The Prophet prohibited marrying a woman along with her paternal aunt or along with her maternal aunt.
[*al-Tirmidhi, Book 11, Hadith 47 / Book 6, Hadith 1125*]

Comment In this case Ibn Qutayba says the hadith abrogates the Quran. Another explanation is the hadith is simply adding to the Quran providing the true meaning and intention.

Becoming Lame During Pilgrimage

Hadith The hadith says if you become lame or break a bone during pilgrimage you exit the state of ritual purity and are obliged to perform the pilgrimage at another time.

The Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever suffers a fracture or becomes lame them he (leaves the state of Ihram) and is required to perform another Hajj." I (Ikrimah) mentioned that to Abu Hurayra and Ibn Abbas and they said: "He

told the truth."
[*al-Tirmidhi, Book 9, Hadith 133 / Book 4, Hadith 940*]

Quran The Quran says one should complete the pilgrimage and if there are difficulties, do ones best.

[Q2:196] Complete the pilgrimages, major and minor, for the sake of God. If you are prevented [from doing so], then [send] whatever offering for sacrifice you can afford, and do not shave your heads until the offering has reached the place of sacrifice. If any of you is ill, or has an ailment of the scalp, he should compensate by fasting, or feeding the poor, or offering sacrifice. When you are in safety, anyone wishing to take a break between the minor pilgrimage and the major one must make whatever offering he can afford. If he lacks the means, he should fast for three days during the pilgrimage, and seven days on his return, making ten days in all. This applies to those whose household is not near the Sacred Mosque. Always be mindful of God, and be aware that He is stern in His retribution.

Comment Ibn Qutayba argues that the hadith and the Quran apply in different circumstances. The hadith applies in Mecca itself and the Quran before the pilgrim enters Mecca. That different circumstances apply when hadith and the Quran appear to clash is a popular argument.

Amputation for Theft

Quran The Quran is clear, the punishment for theft is amputation. There are no qualifications or conditions.

[Q5:38] Cut off the hands of thieves, whether they are man or woman, as punishment for what they have done - a deterrent from God: God is almighty and wise.

Hadiths A number of hadiths are equally clear or imply that amputation applies only if the stolen property is above a certain value.

The Prophet said, "The hand should be cut off for stealing something that is worth a quarter of a Dinar or more."

[*al-Bukhari, Book 86, Hadith 18 / Book 81, Hadith 780*]

The hand of a thief was not cut off during the lifetime of the Prophet except for stealing something equal to a shield in value.
[*al-Bukhari, Book 86, Hadith 21 / Book 81, Hadith 783*]

Allah's Messenger cut off the hand of a thief for stealing a shield that was worth three Dirhams.
[*al-Bukhari, Book 86, Hadith 25 / Book 81, Hadith 787*]

And another hadith that says amputation does not apply for the theft of fruit or the pith of the palm-tree.

.... Rafi said to him: I heard the Messenger of Allah say: The hand is not to be cut off for taking fruit or the pith of the palm-tree. So Marwan gave orders to release the slave and then he was released. Abu Dawud said: Kathar means pith of the palm-tree.
[*Abu Dawud, Hadith 4388 / Book 38, Hadith 4375*]

And, to set against this a hadith apparently in line with the Quran.

Allah's Apostle said, "Allah curses the thief who steals an egg (or a helmet) for which his hand is to be cut off, or steals a rope, for which his hand is to be cut off."
[*al-Bukhari, Book 86, Hadith 29 / Book 81, Hadith 791*]

Comment The explanation given here by Ibn Qutayba is Allah sometimes reveals laws in stages.

A Believer is Not Killed

Hadith A hadith says no Muslim is to be killed as punishment for killing a non-believer.

.... Ali replied, it deals with The Diyya (compensation (blood money) paid by the killer to the relatives of the victim), the ransom for the releasing of the captives from the hands of the enemies, and the law that no Muslim should be killed in Qisas (equality in punishment) for the killing of (a disbeliever).

[*al-Bukhari, Book 3, Hadith 53 / Book 3, Hadith 111*]

Quran This goes against the Quran which ordains punishment should be “a life for a life”.

[Q5:45] And We ordained for them therein a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds is legal retribution. But whoever gives [up his right as] charity, it is an expiation for him. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.

Predestination

Hadith In the following hadith found in al-Bukhari the Prophet clearly states that a man’s destiny is decided for him.

.... a human being is put together in the womb of the mother in forty days, and then he becomes a clot of thick blood for a similar period, and then a piece of flesh for a similar period. Then Allah sends an angel who is ordered to write four things. He is ordered to write down his (i.e. the new creature's) deeds, his livelihood, his (date of) death, and whether he will be blessed or wretched (in religion). Then the soul is breathed into him. So, a man amongst you may do (good deeds till there is only a cubit between him and Paradise and then what has been written for him decides his behaviour and he starts doing (evil) deeds characteristic of the people of the (Hell) Fire. ....
[*al-Bukhari, Book 59, Hadith 19 / Book 54, Hadith 430*]

Quran This contrasts with several Quranic verses that state man is being tested in various ways. He has the free will to do the right or the wrong thing.

[Q18:7] Behold, we have willed that all beauty on earth be a means by which We put men to a test, to see as to which of them are best in conduct.

And:

[Q67:2] .... who created death and life to test you [people] and reveal which of you does best - He is the Mighty, the Forgiving;

Coercion in Conversion to Islam

Hadith This hadith in Muslim unambiguously reports the Prophet's statement that he is ordered to fight non-believers until they accept Islam.

I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Apostle, and offer the prayers perfectly and give the obligatory charity, so if they perform that, then they save their lives and property from me except for Islamic laws and then their reckoning (accounts) will be done by Allah.
[*al-Bukhari, Book 2, Hadith 18 / Book 2, Hadith 25*]

It is notable the reference "they save their lives and property" makes it clear the hadith countenances violence. Jihad is a military affair.

Quran The hadith contrasts with these Quranic injunctions. These verses are clearly against the use of force to compel people to believe the Prophet's message or to make them believers.

[Q2:256] There is no compulsion in religion: true guidance has become distinct from error, so whoever rejects false gods and believes in God has grasped the firmest hand-hold, one that will never break. God is all hearing and all knowing.

And:

[Q42:48] We have not sent you [Prophet] to be their guardian: your only duty is to deliver the message. When We give man a taste of Our mercy, he rejoices in it, but if some harm befalls him on account of what he has done with his own hands, then he is ungrateful.

And:

[Q88:21-22] So [Prophet] warn them: your only task is to give warning, you are not there to control them.

Hadiths Contradicting Hadiths

Water Defilement

Water Cannot be Defiled The people asked the Messenger of Allah: Can we perform ablution out of the well of Budaah, which is a well into which menstrual clothes, dead dogs and stinking things were thrown? He replied: Water is pure and is not defiled by anything.
[*Abu Dawud, Book 1, Hadith 66 / Book 1, Hadith 66*]

Water Can be Defiled The Prophet, was asked about water (in desert country) and what is frequented by animals and wild beasts. He replied: When there is enough water to fill two pitchers, it bears no impurity.
[*Abu Dawud, Book 1, Hadith 63 / Book 1, Hadith 63*]

Comment The second hadith means water can be impure, defiled. Ibn Qutayba argues the hadiths are not contradictory because the first hadith refers to large amounts of water, and in that sense it is true; you cannot defile large amounts of water. [This is late antiquity well before modern science.] It's like saying "nothing can withstand fire". It depends on the scale of the phenomenon.

Enemy Women and Children

Can Be Killed It is reported on the authority of Sa'b b. Jaththama that the Prophet of Allah, when asked about the women and children of the polytheists being killed during the night raid, said: They are from them.
[*Muslim, Book 32, Hadith 30 / Book 19, Hadith 4321*]

Wrong to Kill Them It is narrated on the authority of Abdullah that a woman was found killed in one of the battles fought by the Messenger of Allah. He disapproved of the killing of women and children.
[*Muslim, Book 32, Hadith 28 / Book 19, Hadith 4319*]

Comment Ibn Qutayba says enemy women and children strictly speaking have the same legal status as enemy combatants which explains the first hadith, but killing them is bad, which accounts for the second hadith.

Disruption of Prayers

A Woman Disrupts Prayers The Messenger of Allah said: When any one of you stands for prayer and there is a thing before him equal to the back of the

saddle that covers him and in case there is not before him (a thing) equal to the back of the saddle, his prayer would be cut off by (passing of an) ass, woman, and black Dog. ....
[*Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 299 / Book 4, Hadith 1032*]

A woman, an ass and a dog disrupt the prayer, but something like the back of a saddle guards against that.
[*Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 301 / Book 4, Hadith 1034*]

A Woman Does Not Disrupt Prayers There are several reports from Aisha that contradict the above.

Aisha asked: What disrupts the prayer? We said: The woman and the ass. Upon this she remarked: Is the woman an ugly animal? I lay in front of the Messenger of Allah like the bier of a corpse and he said prayer.
[*Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 304 / Book 4, Hadith 1037*]

It was mentioned before Aisha that prayer is invalidated (in case of passing) of a dog, an ass and a woman (before the worshipper, when he is not screened). Upon this Aisha said: You likened us to the asses and the dogs. By Allah I saw the Messenger of Allah saying prayer while I lay on the bedstead interposing between him and the Qibla. When I felt the need, I did not like to wit to front (of the Holy Prophet) and perturb the Messenger of Allah and quietly moved out from under its (the bedstead) legs.
[*Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 305 / Book 4, Hadith 1038*]

You have made us equal to the dogs and the asses, whereas I lay on the bedstead and the Messenger of Allah came there and stood in the middle of the bedstead and said prayer. I did not like to take off the quilt from me (in that state), so I moved away quietly from the front legs of the bedstead and thus came out of the quilt.
[*Muslim, Book 4, Hadith 306 / Book 4, Hadith 1039*]

How to Drink

Sitting Down None of you should drink while standing; and if anyone forgets, he must vomit.

[*Muslim, Book 36, Hadith 153 / Book 23, Hadith 5022*]

Standing Up I served (water of) Zamzam to Allah's Messenger, and he drank it while standing.
[*Muslim, Book 36, Hadith 154 / Book 23, Hadith 5023*]

Poetry

Poetry is Bad The Prophet said, "It is better for a man to fill the inside of his body with pus than to fill it with poetry."
[*al-Bukhari, Book 78, Hadith 180 / Book 73, Hadith 175*]

Poetry is Good Allah's Messenger said, "Some poetry contains wisdom."
[*al-Bukhari, Book 78, Hadith 171 / Book 73, Hadith 166*]

ANNEX 5 - ICMA Research

This is not a complete survey. It probably covers about three quarters or so of published ICMA work.

Harald Motzki
2017 - *Reconstruction of a Source of Ibn Ishaq's Life of the Prophet and Early Quran Exegesis: A Study of Early Ibn 'Abbas Traditions.* Gorgias Press

Stijn Aerts
2016 - *"Pray with Your Leader": A Proto-Sunni Quietist Tradition.* Journal of the American Oriental Society. Vol 136. No. 1

Pavel Pavlovitch and David S Powers
2015 - *A Bequest May Not Exceed One-Third: An Isnad-cum-Matn Analysis and Beyond*
[In *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone.* Brill]

Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort
2012 - *Between History and Legend: The Biography of the Prophet Muhammad by Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri.* PhD thesis. To be published

Luke Yarbrough
2012 - *Upholding God's Rule: Early Muslim Juristic Opposition to the State Employment of non-Muslims.* Islamic Law and Society 19 (2012) 11-85

Jens Scheiner
2011 - *The Conquest of Damascus According to the Oldest Datable Sources*
[In *The Transmission and Dynamics of the Textual Sources of Islam. Essays in Honour of Harald Motzki.* Brill]

Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort
2011 - *The Kitab al-maghazi of 'Abd al-Razzaq b. Hammam al-San'ani: Searching for Earlier Source-Material*

[In *The Transmission and Dynamics of the Textual Sources of Islam. Essays in Honour of Harald Motzki*. Brill]

Ulrike Mitter
2011 - *"The Majority of the Dwellers of Hell-Fire are Women": A Short Analysis and Reception of a Much-Discussed Hadith*
[In *The Transmission and Dynamics of the Textual Sources of Islam. Essays in Honour of Harald Motzki*. Brill]

Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort
2010 - *The Raid of the Hudhayl: Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri's Version of the Event.*
[In *Analysing Muslim Traditions - Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith.* Brill]

Sean Anthony
2010 - *Crime and Punishment in Early Medina: The Origins of a Maghazi Tradition*
[In *Analysing Muslim Traditions - Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith.* Brill]

Behnam Sadeghi
2010 - *The Travelling Tradition Test: A Method for Dating Traditions.* Der Islam 85(1) (2010) 203-242

Goerke and Schoeler
2008 - *Die Ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muhammads: Das Korpus 'Urwa ibn az-Zubair / The Earliest Reports About the Life of Muhammad: The Corpus of 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr.* The Darwin Press

Goerke and Schoeler
2005 - *Reconstructing the Earliest sira Texts: The Hijra in the Corpus of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr.* Der Islam 82(2) (2005) 209-220

Ulrike Mitter
2001 - *Unconditional Manumission of Slaves in Early Islamic Law - A Hadith Analysis.* Der Islam 78 (2001) 35-72

Andreas Goerke
2000 - *The Historical Tradition about al-Hudaybiya: A Study of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr's Account*
[In *The Biography of Muhammad. The Issue of the Sources.* Brill]

Harald Motzki
2000 - *The Prophet and the Debtors. A Hadith Analysis Under Scrutiny*
Translation of *Der Prophet und die Schuldner. Eine hadit Untersuchung auf dem Prüfstand.* Der Islam 77 (2000) 1-83

Harald Motzki
2000 - *The Murder of Ibn Abi l-Huqayq: On the Origin and Reliability of Some Maghazi-Reports.*
[In *The Biography of Muhammad. The Issue of the Sources.* Brill]

Irene Schneider
1999 - *Kinderverkauf und Schuldknechtschaft. Untersuchungen zur fruhen Phase des islamischen Rechts*. Kommissionsverlag Franz Steiner. [Examines a Prophetic hadith concerning slavery]

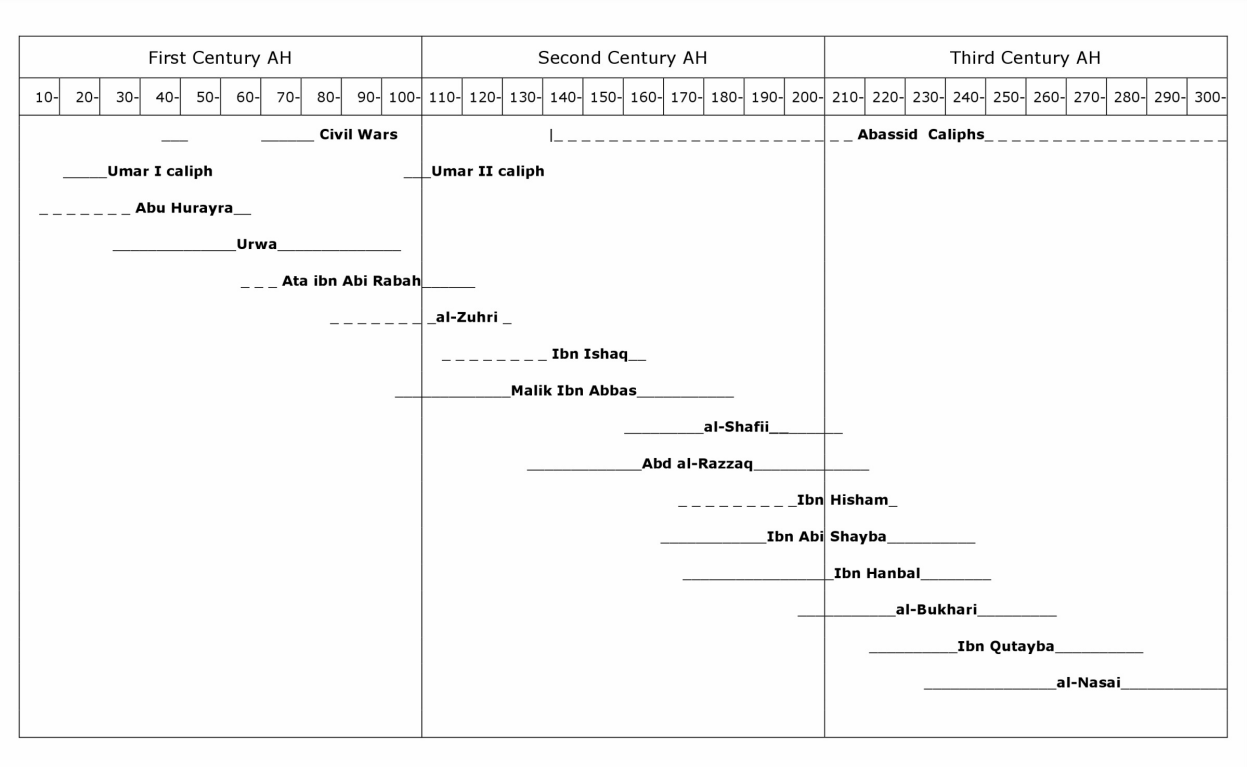
Harald Motzki
1998 - *The Prophet and the Cat: On Dating Malik's Muwatta' and Legal Traditions*. Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam, 22, (1998): 18-83

Harald Motzki
1996 - *Quo vadis, Hadit-Forschung? Eine kritische Untersuchung von G.H.A. Juynboll: "Nafi' the Mawla of Ibn 'Umar, and his position in Muslim Hadith Literature"* . Der Islam 73 (1) (1996) 40-80
[Translation: *Whither Hadith Studies?* In *Analysing Muslim Traditions - Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith*. Brill, 2010]

Gregor Schoeler
1996 - *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds.* Walter de Gruyter, 1996
[Translation: *The Biography of Muhammad: Nature and Authenticity*. Routledge, 2011]

Timeline

If you are using a handheld device with a small screen turn it to landscape view and swipe right to see larger Timeline image



AH-CE Dates

A year by year conversion from AH ("After Hijra", the number of Islamic lunar years after Muhammad and his followers migrated from Mecca) to CE ("Current Era") is given here.

For an overview the following table shows conversion from AH to CE at 50 AH year intervals over the first five centuries AH. An Islamic lunar year is 354 or 355 days and thus does not exactly equate to a CE solar year of 365 days.

Year AH to Year CE Conversion	
AH	**CE**
0	621 - 622

50	670 - 671
100	718 - 719
150	767 - 768
200	815 - 816
250	864 - 865
300	912 - 913
350	961 - 962
400	1009 - 1010
450	1058 - 1059
500	1106 - 1107

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Estimates for the English word size of the Quran are easily found on the web and are generally in close agreement. The figure of 940,000 words for Prophetic hadiths is based on the author's estimate of 94 words for the average size of a hadith *matn* and the estimate of 10,000 for the number of Prophetic hadiths [See Chapter 3, Note1]. If repetitons (same *matn* different *isnad*), Companion hadiths, and very weak or questionable hadiths are included the hadith corpus is considerably larger than this.

   The figure of 94 words per hadith *matn* is based on a random sample of 20 books of the 97 in al-Bukhari and all the 1885 hadiths found in those 20 books. Various web sources give estimates for the relative sizes of the Prophetic Hadiths and the *sira*. A middle estimate is used here.

2. Scott C. Lucas, *Major Topics of the Hadith*, Religion Compass 2/2 (2008): 226-239, provides an analysis.

3. The estimate of an average of 94 words per hadith *matn* is made by the author using a random sample of 20 books of the 97 in al-Bukhari and all the 1885 hadiths found in those 20 books.

Chapter 2

1. A listing of Companions and the number of times they are given as the narrator of a hadith is given in Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi's book, *Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development and Special Features*, The Islamic Texts Society, 1993, p15

2. All dates unless otherwise indicated are AH, "After Hijra", the number of Islamic lunar years after Muhammad and his followers migrated from Mecca to Yathrib (now Medina). To minimise repetition the AH letters are not repeated for lifetime information and other frequent references.

3. The figure of 5374 is quoted by various early and late sources for the total

number of Abu Hurayra hadith narrations given in the *Musnad* of Baqi b. Makhalad (d. 276) which was a collection made from other collections available at that time, but it no longer exists.

4. M. M. Azami in his book *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, 1992, p26, quotes a figure of 1236 for the number of different hadiths (*matns*) narrated by Abu Hurayra. This figure is taken from his M.A. thesis at the Shari'ah College, Mecca. Another thesis by Usman Ghani, University of Exeter, July 2011, *Abu Hurayra a Narrator of Hadith Revisited: An Examination into the Dichotomous Representations of an Important Figure in Hadith with special reference to Classical modes of criticism*, gives a figure of 1579 for the different hadith (*matn*) narrations by Abu Hurayra out of a total of 3838 mentions in the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal (164-241). The author has applied the ratio 1579/3838 to the Baqi b. Makhalad figure of 5374 which suggests 2203 different hadith (*matn*) Abu Hurayra narrations in that source.

5. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period*, RoutledgeCurzon, 2000, Chapter 2, and Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, Oneworld Publications, 2009, p24

Chapter 3

1. Christopher Melchert, *The Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal: How It Was Composed and What Distinguishes It from the Six Books,* Der Islam 82 (2005) 32-5, quotes a source that indicates *"the total number of known, distinct prophetic hadith reports is scarcely 10,000"*. M. M. Azami, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature (1967),* American Trust Publications, 1978, quotes early scholars who estimated there were only 4000 authentic traditions, though another scholar says *"How can it be said that this [Prophet] traditions do not reach 10,000 traditions when 4,000 Companions… have transmitted traditions from him, who associated with him for more than twenty years…"*. Various modern websites that appear serious and sensible mention this range of figures. E.g., Islamic Sciences and Islamic Center for Research And Academics

2. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, Oneworld Publications, 2009, p32, L318

3. Ibid., p33, L722

4. Ibid., pp38-39, L833-854

5. Ibid., p25, L564

6. Scott C. Lucas, *Where are the Legal Hadith? A Study of the Musannaf of Ibn Abi Shayba,* Islamic Law and Society 15 (2008) 283-314

7. This hadith is found in the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal (164-241), Volume 6, p269

8. Christopher Melchert, *The Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal: How It Was Composed and What Distinguishes It from the Six Books,* Der Islam 82 (2005) 32-51

9. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, Oneworld Publications, 2009, p42, L912

Chapter 4

1. There are various versions of this hadith. For example: *Narrated Abdallah bin Al-Zubayr: I said to my father, "I do not hear from you any narration (Hadith) of Allah's Apostle as I hear (his narration) from so and so?" Al-Zubayr replied. l was always with him (the Prophet) and I heard him saying "Whoever tells a lie against me (intentionally) then (surely) let him occupy, his seat in Hellfire".* [al-Bukhari, Book 3, Hadith 49 / Book 3, Hadith 107]

2. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, Oneworld Publications, 2009, p69, L1516

3. Adis Duderija, *Ahadith and Politics in Early Muslim Community*, New Age Islam

4. Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p98, L1501, and Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* Oneworld Publications, 2009, p74, L1620

5. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* Oneworld Publications, 2009, p79, L1677

6. Ibid., p81, L1721

7. Ibid., p81, L1721

8. Ibid., p87, L1838

9. Ibid., p96, L2029

10. Jonathan Brown, *How We Know Early Hadith Critics Did Matn Criticism and Why It's So Hard to Find*, Islamic Law and Society 15 (2008) 143-184

11. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* Oneworld Publications, 2009, p102, L2144

12. Ibid., p235, L4972

13. In the case where a Successor reports what the Prophet said or did but drops the Companion who was the actual witness, the hadith is classified as *mursal*. A detailed description of hadith classifications is given on the Islamic Awareness website

14. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* Oneworld Publications, 2009, p104, L2181

15. Saudi Arabia Ministry of Islamic Affairs website for mutawatir hadith.

16. Jonathan Brown, *Did the Prophet Say It or Not. The Literal, Historical, and Effective Truth of Hadiths in Early Sunnism,* Journal of the American Oriental Society, 129.2, 2009, p284

17. Ibid., p276

18. Ibid., p278

Chapter 5

1. Aisha Musa, *Hadith As Scripture: Discussions on the Authority of Prophetic Traditions in Islam,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p24

2. Ibid., p37

3. Ibid., p35

4. Ibid., p62

5. Author's analysis of information given in Joseph Lowry, *The Legal Hermeneutics of al-Shafi'i and Ibn Qutayba: A Reconsideration,* Islamic Law and Society 11(1) (2004) 1-41

6. Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought,* Cambridge University Press, 1996, p17, L291

7. Jonathan Brown, *Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy,* Oneworld Publications, 2014, p25, L706, and Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* Oneworld Publications, 2009, p151, L3224

Chapter 6

1. Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought,* Cambridge University Press, 1996, p85, L1307

2. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, Oneworld Publications, 2009, p105, L2213

3. M. M. Azami in his book *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, 1992, p26, quotes a figure of 1236 for the number of different hadiths (*matns*) narrated by Abu Hurayra. This is taken from his M.A. thesis at the

Shari'ah College, Mecca. Another thesis by Usman Ghani, University of Exeter, July 2011, *Abu Hurayra a Narrator of Hadith Revisited: An Examination into the Dichotomous Representations of an Important Figure in Hadith with special reference to Classical modes of criticism*, gives a figure of 1579 for the different hadith (*matn*) narrations by Abu Hurayra out of a total of 3838 mentions in the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal (164-241). The author has applied the ratio 1579/3838 to the Baqi b. Makhalad figure of 5374 which suggests 2203 different hadith (*matn*) Abu Hurayra narrations in that source.

4. Several non-academic "Quran only" websites claim most of Abu Hurayra's hadiths concern events which only he witnessed. E.g. True Islam. The author found one academic paper that provides figures but it is not clear how they should be interpreted. Usman Ghani's thesis, University of Exeter, July 2011, *Abu Hurayra a Narrator of Hadith Revisited: An Examination into the Dichotomous Representations of an Important Figure in Hadith with special reference to Classical modes of criticism*, provides various figures, one set showing 64% of Abu Hurayra's hadiths in the *Muwatta'* are corroborated and another, that only 37% are corroborated in the total count of Abu Hurayra's hadiths including repetitions in the canonical six plus three other famous collections.

5. G.H.A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Hadith*, Brill, 2007, pp45-47

6. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* Oneworld Publications, 2009, p19, L465

7. Ibid., p88, L1865

8. Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought,* Cambridge University Press, 1996, p88, L1357

9. M. M. Azami, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature (1967)*, American Trust Publications, 1978, 34-60

10. Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought,* Cambridge University Press, 1996, p98, L1505

11. Muhammad Ali, *A Manual of Hadith*, Library of Alexandria, 2009, L277

12. Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought,* Cambridge University Press, 1996, p98, L1503

Chapter 7

1. Munir M. Hasan, *A Critical Analysis of Sahih Bukhari*, 2016

2. Aisha Musa, *Hadith As Scripture: Discussions on the Authority of Prophetic Traditions in Islam,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p2-3, p84

3. A good example can be found here: Review of *Authentication of Hadith – Redefining the Criteria"* by Israr Ahmad Khan

4. M. M. Azami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature,* Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1977, p92

5. Jonathan Brown, *Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting the Prophet's Legacy,* Oneworld Publications, 2014, p256, L5444

6. Ibid., p257, L5463

7. Ibid., p199, L4278

8. Andrew Rippin, Teresa Bernheimer, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices,* Routledge, 2011, p226

9. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* Oneworld Publications, 2009, p249, L5334

10. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period,* RoutledgeCurzon, 2000, p32, L1137

11. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, University of Chicago Press, 1979, p51

12. Summaries of the views of leading modern Muslim intellectuals are given by Adis Duderija, *The Relative Status of Ḥadith and Sunna as Sources of Legal Authority vis-à-vis the Quran in Muslim Modernist Thought* [In *The Sunna and its Status in Islamic Law - The Search for a Sound Hadith.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2015]

Chapter 8

1. Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* Oneworld Publications, 2009, p138, L2900

2. Ibid., p125, L2651

3. M.J. Mahmud, *The Four Books or the Shia Books of Hadith*

Chapter 9

1. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period,* RoutledgeCurzon, 2000, p9, L402

2. Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies,* 2 vols. George Allen and Unwin, 1971, Vol. 2 pp44-45

3. Ibid., Vol. 2, p99

4. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period,* RoutledgeCurzon, 2000, p12, L539

Chapter 10

1. Christopher Melchert, *The Early History Of Islamic Law* [In *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins.* Brill, 2003]

2. David F. Forte, *Islamic Law: The Impact of Joseph Schacht,* Loyola of Los Angeles International & Comparative Law Review, 1978

3. To be consistent the figures in Table 7 are those quoted in Chapter 3 from

Jonathan Brown's *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World,* p25, L564. Schacht quotes different figures but they give the same picture. See Schacht's *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence,* Oxford University Press, 1975, 1950, p22, which is the source for the figures in Table 8.

4. Scott C. Lucas, *Where are the Legal Hadith? A Study of the Musannaf of Ibn Abi Shayba,* Islamic Law and Society 15 (2008) 283-314

5. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period,* RoutledgeCurzon, 2000, p13, L545

6. David F. Forte, *Islamic Law: The Impact of Joseph Schacht,* Loyola of Los Angeles International & Comparative Law Review, 1978

7. Ibid.

8. Christopher Melchert, *The Early History Of Islamic Law* [In *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*. Brill, 2003]

Chapter 11

1. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period,* RoutledgeCurzon, 2000, p27, L1003

2. Ibid., p28, L1039

3. Harald Motzki, *Hadith: Origins and Developments*, Routledge, 2004 and 2016, pxxvii, L461

4. Pavel Pavlovitch, *The Formation of the Islamic Understanding of Kalala in the Second Century AH (718-816 CE): Between Scripture and Canon,* Brill, 2015, p23

Chapter 12

1. Harald Motzki, *Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey,* Arabica, 52, no. 2,

2005, pp204-253, p239

2. A concise summary of the common link possibilities is given in Andreas Goerke, *Eschatology, History and the Common Link: A Study in Methodology* [In *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins.* Brill, 2003]

3. Harald Motzki, *Dating Muslim Traditions: A Survey*, Arabica, 52, no. 2, 2005, pp204-253, p240

4. G.H.A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Hadith,* Brill, 2007, pxviii

5. Harald Motzki, *Whither Hadith Studies?* [In *Analysing Muslim Traditions - Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith.* Brill, 2010] p55

6. Pavel Pavlovitch, *The Formation of the Islamic Understanding of Kalala in the Second Century AH (718-816 CE): Between Scripture and Canon,* Brill, 2015, p30

7. Harald Motzki, *Whither Hadith Studies?* [In *Analysing Muslim Traditions - Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith.* Brill, 2010] p58

Chapter 13

1. Pavel Pavlovitch, *The Formation of the Islamic Understanding of Kalala in the Second Century AH (718-816 CE): Between Scripture and Canon,* Brill, 2015, p24

2. Herbert Berg, *Competing Paradigms in Islamic Origins: Qur'an 15:89-91 and the Value of Isnads* [In *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins.* Brill, 2003] p260

3. Gregor Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds,* Walter de Gruyter, 1996. Translated as *The Biography of Muhammad: Nature and Authenticity,* Routledge, 2011. Harald Motzki, *Quo vadis, Hadit-Forschung? Eine kritische Untersuchung von G.H.A. Juynboll: "Nafi' the Mawla of Ibn 'Umar, and his position in Muslim Hadith Literature",* Der Islam 73 (1)

(1996) 40-80. Translated as *Whither Hadith Studies?* in *Analysing Muslim Traditions - Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith,* Brill, 2010

4. Herbert Berg, *The Divine Sources* [In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Islamic Law.* 2014] p37

5. Stephen J. Shoemaker, *In Search of 'Urwa's Sira: Some Methodological Issues in the Quest for "Authenticity" in the Life of Muhammad,* Der Islam 85 (2011) 257-344, pp303-321

6. Andreas Goerke, Harald Motzki, Gregor Schoeler, *First-Century Sources for the Life of Muhammad? A Debate*, Der Islam 89(2) (2012) 2-59, pp25-27

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