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The Efforts of the Hadith Scholars in Circumventing of the Hadith Fabrication and Factors That Led to It: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract: Scholars have developed rules and methodologies to identify fabricated Hadiths and to scrutinize the text and chain of narrators of Hadiths. In this paper, some of these efforts are highlighted. This study was made using library research and content descriptive analysis methods for the information obtained from published books and papers. The study has shown that tremendous efforts were made to resist fabrications and to expose fabricators since the third century AH. Furthermore, the paper discusses a lot of factors and reasons that lead to the fabrication of Hadith such as fabricating for the purpose of supporting one sect, race, tribe among others. The paper also highlights some principles in tracking the genuine and fabricated Ahadith. Furthermore, the paper brought some examples of fabricated Ahadith and concluded. The analytical method was used when conducting the research.

Keywords: Hadih, fabrications, Prophetic traditions, scholars' Factors, effort, Ahadith.

INTRODUCTION

The fabrication of Hadith started in the first century AH after the murder of 'Uthman', but spread widely in the second century, after the era of the Companions (Şaḥabah) and the first generation of Followers (Tābi'in). Any fabrication during the first century could be easily detected due to the large number of the memorizers and the scholars of Hadith during that time. Reasons for fabrication included attempts to harm the Islamic faith, political disputes, disputes between the different schools of Islamic creed ('Aqidah), disputes between the different schools of Islamic jurisprudence (Figh), bias and fanaticism towards a race, tribe, language, or a city; attempts to please Caliphs and rulers of states, telling stories and exhortations especially for providing incentives $(Targh\bar{\imath}b)$ and apprehension $(Tarh\bar{\imath}b)$, and for personal motives.

Due to the aforementioned reasons, the field of Hadith criticism was developed by early scholars to distinguish authentic from unauthentic and forged Hadiths. The term authentic means a Hadith that is attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (May Peace and Blessings be upon him), and hence, it can be used in all aspects of Sharī'ah. Duderija²

Edition. 1999, pp, 22

discussed the concept of an authentic Hadith and

presented a chronological analysis of the

development of Hadith literature. If the Hadith is

unauthentic, scholars debated on the extent of

from Weak and Fabricated Hadith

Scholars of Hadith exerted great efforts in resisting the fabrication of Hadith. Fallatah³ and Hafiz⁴ classified these efforts into two types: preventive

and curative efforts. Protective efforts include Authentic Ḥadīth During the Formative Period of Islamic ought as Based on Recent Western Scholarship. Arab Law Quarterly, 23(4), 389-415., 2009, p, 34

¹ A. Al-Maț anī. Al-shubuhāt ath-thalāthūn almuthārah li inkār al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah, 'ard wa tafnīd wa naqd. [The thirty suspicions triggered for denying the Prophetic traditions, presentation and refutation]. Maktabet Wahbah, Cairo. First

² A. Duderija,, Evolution in the Canonical Sunni Hadīth Body of Literature and the Concept of an

using such Hadiths. In that perspective, Brown (2011) studied the opinions of Hadith scholars on the use of unauthentic and fabricated Hadiths from the third century (AH) to the contemporary era. This paper discusses further important signs of fabrication in matn and isnad and provides an analytical discourse and descriptive analysis of the efforts made by scholars in protecting the Sunnah from the forged Hadiths through secondary research. **Efforts of the Scholars in Protecting the Sunnah**

³ Fallātah, O. (1981). Al-wad' fi al-hadīth. [Fabrication in Hadīth]. Maktabit Al-Ghazālī, Damascus.

⁴ M. Ḥāfiz Al-waḍʻ fī al-Sunnah wa juhūd al-'ulamā' fī muqāwamatuh. [The fabrication in Sunnah and the efforts of scholars in resisting it]. Studies of the International Islamic University Chittagong, 4, 33-44. Bangladesh. 2007, p, 43

questioning about sanad and criticizing narrators. The curative efforts include compilation of the fabricated Hadiths and criticizing their sanad and matn; exposing the fabricators; compilation of the liars and fabricators in books; and compilation of Hadiths in general. Al-Ghaūrī summarized the efforts as follows: verifying the narration of Hadith and investigating about its narrators; travelling to seek knowledge of Hadith; gathering the fabricated Hadiths and conducting a critical appraisal of their sanad and matn; exposing the fabricators and their behaviour; compiling the Hadiths; and developing the sciences of Hadith. Furthermore, scholars put precise conditions and guidelines to detect the fabricated Hadiths, even by barely looking at the sanad without the matn.5 . The following list include the main efforts:

- 1- Scholars studied the narrators of Hadith, analysed and conducted critical appraisals of them, and developed 'ilmu al-Jarḥi wa al-ta'dīl (the science of criticism of Hadith narrators). Examples of the books written in this field include: Tahdhīb al-Kamāl Fī Asmā' al-Rijāl by AlḤāfiz Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī (d. 742 AH) and Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852 AH).
- 2- The traditionalists paid particular attention to *Isnad*. They would not accept a Hadith unless the entire chain of narration was clean and free of a single untrustworthy narrator.

Before the occurrence the cord strikes then was no need to pay much attention to their chain with which a particular Hadith was transmitted because the people did not date each other integrity. However, after the cord strife, many people began to forge hadith to suit their interest. It was narrated from Muhammad Ibn Sirin when he said:

يسألون عن الإسناد حتى وقعت الفتنة فقالوا سموا لنا رجالكم فينظر إلى أهل السنة فيأخذ بحديثهم وينظر إلى أهل البدعة ولا يأخذ بحديثهم

Meaning:

They did not use to ask about Isnad until the civil strife broke out, they said: mention to us your men (reporters)" they look to the Ahl Al-Sunnah and accept their tradition and they

look to Ahl Al-Bidi'ah (The custodians of Bidi'ah) and reject their tradition⁶

The quest for Isnad became part of the Religion. It was from the time of Al-mukhtar (a self-acclaimed Prophet) (May Allah curse him) which was a time when the Shi'ites told so much he against Ali⁷. Abdullahi Ibn Al-Mubarak a leading scholar of Hadith said:

الاسناد من الدبن فلو لا الاسناد لقال من شاء ما شاء

Meaning

The Isnad is part of the religion, if it were not for the Isnad, anyone who wished could have said what he wanted.⁸

He also said:

بيننا وبين القوم القوئم

Meaning:

Between us and the people (of fabricators) stand the pillars (The chain of transmitters)⁹.

- 3- Scholars of Hadith also paid a lot of attention regarding transmitting the Hadith and memorizing it. They would track any minor issues, count them, and discuss them in detail.
- 4- They developed rules and conditions for the acceptance of Hadith in 'Ilmu ar-Riwāyah and 'Ilmu ad-Dirāyah. An example of the former is the long travels made by the scholars of Hadith to check the authenticity of Hadith. Examples for 'Ilmu ad-Dirāyah include the development of 'Ilmu at-Tārīkh (e.g., books about the history of narrators like: Tārīkh alBukhārī by al-Bukhārī, Tārīkh Baghdād by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī); the development of 'Ilmu al-Jarḥi wat-Ta 'dīl; and the development of the conditions of transmission and narration of Hadith to check the continuity and authenticity of narrations.

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⁵ A. Mazīd. Juhūd al-'ulamā' fī al-difā' 'an al-Sunnah wal-kashf 'an al-riwāyāt al-wāhyah. [The scholars' efforts in defending the Prophet's tradition and in detecting the fabricated narrations]. Proceedings of the danger of fabricated narrations on Islam, Islamic University of Gaza, Palestine, (2011), pp, 21-69.

⁶ Said, Q.A. Mabahith bi Ibn Al-Jarh Wa At-Ta'dil Lebanon: (Beirut), Dar al-Bashar al-Islamiyyah, first edition, 1408 A.H (1988 C.E), P, 13.

⁷ Ibn Rajal, cited in ibid, p. 13

⁸ Nawawi, Imam, Sahih Muslim Bi Shuruh Al-Nawawi, Lebanon: (Beirut) Dar Al-Fikr, (N.d.), Vol.1, p. 87.

⁹ Ibid, p. 88

5- Scholars also exerted huge efforts in *Matn* criticism. They compared Hadiths with Qur'an, authentic Sunnah, deduction analogy (qiyās), and by checking their rationality.¹⁰

Efforts of the Scholars in Identifying or Detecting the Fabricated Hadith

The scholars further analysed the fabricated Hadiths and tracked them in different ways. These efforts resulted in the development of signs and indicators of fabrication in Hadith. These signs can be classified as signs in *Matn* and signs in *Sanad*. The signs of fabrication in *Sanad* includes:

- 1- A fabricator acknowledges that he fabricated Hadith(s).
- 2- A narrator is commonly known as a liar to the scholars of 'Ilm al-Jarhi wa al-Ta'dīl.
- 3- A narrator narrates from a shaykh that he did not meet, or was born after his death using explicit forms of hearing such as haddathanā, akhbaranā, sami 'tu...etc. 11
- 4- A narrator mentions a Hadith from a shaykh; however, this Hadith is not mentioned in any of the books of the shaykh, or narrated by any of his trustworthy students.

A fabrication is evident due to his circumstance or due to a certain incident that happened to him¹².

Fabrication can also be detected in the *matn*. The signs of fabrication in *matn* are either related to the style or the meaning. With respect to the style, the most important sign is the weak wording of a Hadith. The signs concerning the meaning of the *Matn* include:

- 1- An explicit disagreement with Qur'an, authentic Sunnah, or consensus of scholars (ijmā').
- 2- A disagreement with realities and rationalities.
- 3- A disagreement with historical facts.
- 4- A great reward for a simple deed or huge threat for a simple mistake or heedlessness.
- 5- A narration of an important story that took place in front of a great number of Sahabah;

However, their action was against it, as if all of them had decided to conceal it.

- 6- A narration that is full of fantasies or silly information.
- 7- Having grammatical errors in wording or Poorness of meaning (*Rakakatul*-Ma'na)

11 ibid

8- A narration that does not sound like the speech of Prophets, or sounds like a physician's prescription rather than a Hadith¹³.

Scholars Mentioned Some Factors that Led to the Fabrication of Hadith

The first factor that led to fabrication of hadith,

Therefore, (*Rawafid*) extreme Shi'ites started manufacture of hadith to support their points of view. They were mostly concentrated in Iraq to the extent that Hijaz (Makkah and Madinah) scholars considered it (Iraq) as the home of fabrication of hadith. Their part of Al-hadith where false fabrications was provided. Al-Imam al-Zuhri, a famous Madinan scholar and one of the teachers of Imam Malik (May Allah have mercy on both) expressed this when he said: The hadith comes to us a span's length and it returns to us from "Iraq a cubit length".

Examples

People started fabricating hadith to support their movements and sects especially, the Shi'ites and the ignorant ones from the Ahl al-sunnah (The custodians of the sunnah).

One of the worst traditions which the Shi'ites fabricated as the purported report of Ghadirkhum were they claimed that after returning from the farewell pilgrimage, the Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him) stayed in the place (GhadirKhum) and in front of the multitude of the Sahabah May Allah be pleased with them) declared while pointing to Ali ibn Abi Talib. Despite being the Khutbah of Ghadirkhum as authentic, however, the following narrations were fabricated:

Meaning:

This is my testate and brother and caliph after me listen to him and obey him.¹⁵

If this hadith was true as they were claiming, all the companions would not have unanimously hide it even if it was not on a sensitive issue like leadership. They would not initially argue about who was to succeed as the Caliph of the Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him)

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹² A. Al-Maţʿanī. Al-shubuhāt ath-thalāthūn almuthārah li inkār al-Sunnah al-nabawiyyah, ʿard wa tafnīd wa naqd. See also Mazīd, Op. Cit, 26 and 42

¹³ ibid

¹⁴ Al-Siba'i, M.H, Ibid, p 82 and see also p, 79

¹⁵ Ibid, pp 79 - 80

They also fabricated so many hadith in favour of the Ahl Al-bait like Ali, Fatimah, etc. and in discrediting the first three rightly guided and guiding caliphs and Muawiyyah May Allah be please upon them). Among the Shi'ites fabricating reports are the following:

ii. Meaning

O Ali, I choose you extensively for Prophethood, except that these will not be a Prophet after me. ¹⁶

iii. Meaning

"Whoever did not say that Ali is the best of people has indeed become an infidel (unbeliever)¹⁷

iv. Meaning

I and Ali were created from light and we were since (before creation) on the light side of the throne',18

v. Meaning:

If you see Mu'awuyyah on my Pulpit, then, kill him¹⁹

As the Rawafid started fabricating hadith, the ignorant ones from the Ahl Al-sunnah retaliated by forging many traditions in favour of the other three guided and guiding caliphs and Mu'awiyyah A popular fabricated report in this regard as the hadith:

ما في الجنة شجرة إلا مكتوب على ورقة لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله ، أبوبكر الصديق وعمر الفاروق وعثمان ذوالنورين

Meaning:

There is no tree in paradise except that on each leaf the following is inscribed: there is no deity

worthy of being worshipper except Allah and Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah, Abubakar the truthful fellows, "Umar the criterion between right and wrong and Uthman the husband of the two light (daughters of the Prophet (May the peace and blessing be upon him)²⁰

Second factor that led to the fabrication of false tradition are the Zanadiqah who entered into Islam with malevolent intention in order settle scores with it. Most of them were originally jews or Persians e.t.c who professed Islam with the intention of ridiculing it and confusing the Muslim about the levels of their faith Abdullahi Ibn Saba the leader of the Shi'ites was a clear example other renowned fabricators in this category were: Bayan Ibn Samar who Caliph Khalid Ibn Abdullahi ordered for his execution. Muhammad Ibn said Almaslub was put to pathic execution by Caliph Abu Ja'far Al-Mansur.²¹

There was also Abdul-karim Ibn Abi Al-Auja' who confessed to have Hadith in favour of Ali and the Ahl Al-bait. He Fabricated four thousand hadith legalizing the prohibition forbidding the legalized. Hammad Ibn Yazid (not Hammad Ibn Zaid or Hammad Ibn Salamah who are prestigious reporters of hadith, had also fabricated fourteen thousand hadith even among the people. There are so many of these forged traditions but three examples will suffice Allah willing. These are:

a. Meaning

"Verily, the Ark of Nuh had circumambulated seven circuits and prayed a two raka'at prayer at the station (of Ibrahim May Allah's peace be upon him)²².

b. Meaning:

Oh Lord comes down every Arafat evening on a whole camel with black shedding, shaking hands when the riders and entrancing the foot bakers²³ there is certainly no Muslim will doubt the fabrication of this hadith.

"إن الله اشتكى عبناه فعادته الملائكة

¹⁶ Ibn Qayyum, Imam A.A, Al-Manar Al-munif Fi Al-sahih Wa Al-Da'if, edited by Alu Ghuddah, A, Egypt, (Hall) maktaba al-mattu ad Al-Islamiyyah, 1390 A.h (1970 C.E), p, 1117.

¹⁷ Al-shawkani, M.A. Al-Sawa'id Al-Majmu'ah Fi Al-Ahadu Al-Maudu'ah, pp 347 and 342.

¹⁸ Al-siba'i, M.H, op, cit, p. 81.

¹⁹ Al-Dhahabi, Imam Mizah Al-I'tiqad pi Naqd Al-Rijal, Egypt (lord) Al Hal 6i, Vol-2, p 625 see also Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, Lebanon (Beirut) Dar Sabir,

²⁰ Al-Siba'i, M.H, Op, Cit, pp 80-84

²¹ Ibid, P, 323

²² Ibid, p, 323

²³ Ibid,

c. Meaning:

"Verily, Allah's eyes went ill and the angels visited him" there is no gain saying here that whoever said this could not be a Muslim"

A great contribution in this regard was made by Caliph Mahdi who was known for executing the fabricators in this category such that he kept a register for the fabricators and ordered for their execution one after the other.

The third factor is tribalism or Fanatism. Al-Ta'assub li Al Qabilah Au li mahdhab Al-Imam

This was also a senator to be enumerated in terms of fabrication of hadith. After the conquest and conversion of many non-Arabs into Islam, some ignorant Arab Muslim took this as a proof of their superiority over the new converts (the Maurah) and started maltreating them.

This led the ignorant among the Maurah to start fabricating a hadith to support themselves and discredit the Arab Muslims, among these forged traditions were the following:

Meaning:

"Verily, if Allah manifests his displeasure, he revealed the revelation in Arabic medium and if he manifests his pleasure, he revealed the revelation in the Persian medium²⁴

The ignorant ones among the Arabs retaliated by reversing the above hadith to their faral. They also added:

Meaning:

Don't bother me about the block people for the black man cares for nothing except for his stomach and his private organs. 25 they also fabricate that: four cities one among the cities of paradise existing in this world: Makkah, Madinah, Bait Al-Maqdis and Damascus"

About fanaticism for the leaders of four well known scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence, many hadith were fabricated each in support of their own Imam. It is very significance here to understand For example, with respect to Imam Abu Hanifah (May Allah have mercy upon him) some of his supporters fabricated a hadith that:

Meaning:

"There will be a man in my Ummah who is called Abu Hanifah, he shall be the guiding light of my Ummah (Community)²⁶. They also fabricated a hadith to discredit Imam shafi'i (May Allah have mercy on him).

Meaning:

There will a man in my ummah wo is called Muhammad Bn Idris Al-Shafi'i. He is more dangerous to my ummah than the devil (Iblis) Hadith was also fabricated to support certain points of law e.g.

Meaning:

Jibril led me in prayer at the Ka'bah and he recited the Basmallah loudly²⁷.

Those who wanted to make a living or fame (Al-Takathur wa Talab Al-Shuhrah).

The story tellers (Al-Qussas) are included in this category. They are normally partially literal people who paraded themselves as scholars and wanted to make a living out of the ignorant people. They go about telling fantastic stories and inventing a hadith in order to appeal to people sentiment, to make them either happy or frightened about religious aspects especially, about the last day.

It was established historically that story telling in the masjid did not start in the first century until after fitnah broke out²⁸. These people called Qussas had a sub tongue and were always ready to defend themselves with fancy excuses whenever they are challenged to do so. According to Abu Ayyul Al-Salihtayani (May Allah have mercy on him) there were no single set of people who killed the spirit of knowledge and spoil the hadith of the

that the ignorant ones among their followers were those who were responsible for such corrections.

²⁴ Ibid, P, 85. See also, Ibn Qayyim, M,a, opat, p 89 no 85

²⁵ Ibn Qayyin, Ibid, p 101, no .187

²⁶ Al-Saba'I, Op. Cit. P, 85

²⁷ Ibid, p, 87.

²⁸ Al-Maqdisy, Kitab Al-Ilm, p, 82.

people like story tellers. An example of their fabrication is the hadith about the virtue of Kalimat Al-Tauhid that whoever soul La'ilaha-Illa Allah (There is no god except Allah) Allah will create from every letter a bird whose peak shall be of gold and its feather shall be from corals'

Other factor which led to fabrication were

- The act of seeking to phase authorities or to gain fame or popularity.
- Differences in the school of thought.
- In sincere friends like what happened to Hammad Ibn Salamah where his friends narrated forge traditions and attributed them to him.

The ignorant worshippers they were mostly devout people who are apparently pious but are not soundly learned and they fabricated hadith in favour of the religion as they claim where such people were challenged by the scholars they said:)

Meaning:

We used to tell lies for him (the Prophet May Allah peace and blessing be upon him) and not against him)²⁹. They used to fabricate hadith for the encouragement of doing good and making people to abstain from evil. This is never an excuse because the messenger of Allah (May Allah's peace and blessing be upon him) had said.

Meaning:

Whoever intentionally lied against me should find his abode in the Hell-fire.³⁰

The most famous among them was Nuh Abi Maryam who confessed to have invented hadith concerning the virtues of the whole Qur'an surah by surah. Since he saw people turned their attention to Al-Maghazi (War narrations) written by Ibn Ishaq and the Fiqh of Abu Hanifah he said:

Meaning:

²⁹ Al-Saba'i, Op, Cit, p, 87.

These Ahadith we have fabricated them to soften the hearts of the common people"

Despite the piety of this man which led the whole people of Baghdad to close their shops mourning for his death, yet, he was not free from the traps of the Devil by making them to fabricate a hadith against the Prophet (May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him and Islam and he was thinking that he was doing a service for Islam.³¹

CONCLUSION

This paper discusses the efforts of Hadith scholars in facing the circumventing fabrication of Hadith. Fabrication rules were mentioned, and the reasons for fabrication are briefly presented. Scholars exerted huge efforts in protecting the Sunnah and classifying the Hadiths. Many of these efforts are summarized. Moreover, scholars developed rules and guidelines to help in identifying the fabricated and invented narrations. A few of these guidelines are listed. This paper focused on some of the early works of Hadith scholars; in the future, the works of the contemporary scholars in defending the Sunnah and facing the claims of the modernists and Orientalists need to be discussed. In this paper also, the factors which led to the fabrication of hadith were enunciated with some explanation concerning each point except where the discussion was not lengthy. This will lead us to discuss in another paper the efforts of the hadith scholars to enumerate this movement of fabrication by giving the criteria for identifying forged traditions from the genuine ones both concerning the Sanad chain of transmission and also the textual consideration to show that the hadith scholars did not leave any stone unturned in order to expose forged reports and separate from the genuine ones.

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A unanimous (Mutawatir) hadith that was transmitted by all the transmitters of hadith reported by not less than scarcity companions (May Allah be pleased with them).

³¹ Al-Saba'I, Op, Cit, p, 87

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