Chapter I

Hadith Literature
A Brief Study
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Hadith Literature is the richest source for the investigation of early Islamic History. It provides material for the reconstruction of the legal, cultural and religious ideas of those early centuries. Hadith is also the repository of the Sunnah of the Prophet, which is the second principal source of Islamic legislation.¹

(Dr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al Aʿzamī)

Hadith literature is the only authentic source after the Qurʾan—also known as al wahy al jallī or al wahy al matlū—which provides the Divine foundation for the development of Islamic worldview. The divine revelation (wahy) was not limited to the Qurʾān only but the sayings, actions etc of the Prophet were also directly supervised by the Divine revelation and termed as al wahy al khaṭī or al wahy ghayr matlū. Therefore, these two are the touchstones in the interaction and exchange of Islamic Civilization with other civilizations of the world. The authority of hadith remained undisputed in the Ummah from the beginning and thus played a significant role in shaping the Muslim Ummah.

¹ Dr. Mohammad Mustafa Azmi, Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature, Beirut, al Maktab al Islāmī, 1968, p. xvii.
The Word Ḥadīth and its Meaning

The Arabic word ḥadīth literally means communication, story, and conversation—religious or secular, historical or recent. Whenever used as adjective it means 'new'. It is used as opposed to qadīm which means 'old'. It has been used in the Qur'ān 23 times. However, according to muḥaddithūn it stands for what was transmitted on the authority of the Prophet, his deeds, sayings, taqārīr (tacit approval), or description of his sīfāt (features) meaning his physical appearance. On the other hand, physical appearance of the Prophet is not included in the definition used by the jurists.

According to Muḥammad Taqī Amīnī, whatever is attributed to the Prophet in the matters of religion (Dīn) and law (Sharī‘ah) is known as Ḥadīth. Ḥadīth may enunciate doctrine or provide a commentary upon it. They deal with the contents of the Qur’ān,

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social and religious life, and every day conduct, down to the tying of sandals. Mawlānā Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Gujrānwālah succinctly establishes that all authentic ahādīth attain the same position as that of the holy Qur'ān. He further insists that if someone denies it, it will affect his Imān and integrity in the same way as that of the denial of the holy Qur'ān.

Sometimes some other words like khabar and athar were used as the synonymous to hadīth. However, some scholars mostly of Khurāsān region used to differentiate between khabar and athar. They used the khabar in the sense of hadīth, and the term athar restricted to the sayings and decisions of the Companions.

Similarly, word al Sunnah is also used as the synonymous to the hadīth. Sunnah (pl. sunan) means 'a way, course, rule, mode, or manner, of acting or conduct of life', and the sunnah of the Prophet means the mode of the life of the Prophet and is mostly prefixed with Arabic definite article, al. The two terms—hadīth and al Sunnah—were used almost interchangeable though there is

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9 Studies in Hadīth Methodology and Literature, p. 3.
a slight difference between them.\textsuperscript{10} Ahmad Von Denffer is of the view that the *Sunnah* is the established practice of the Prophet, i.e. his path or his way of doing things.\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{Hadith Literature: Origin, Development and Compilation}

Thus, *hadith* literature means the literature, which consists of the sayings and doings of the Prophet and the things approved by him. However, the term was used sometimes in much broader meaning in the sense to cover the sayings about the Companions and the Followers (\textit{Tābi‘ī}) as well.\textsuperscript{12}

Thus, the *hadith* originated in the early life of the Prophet of Islam, developed largely throughout his life, and spread simultaneously with the spread of Islam throughout the vast of Muslim dominions.\textsuperscript{13}

*Hadīth* which thus developed had been preserved for about a century partly in writings (in the form of laws and letters dictated by the Prophet Muḥammad himself, and in the form of various treatises ascribed to many of his Companions), and partly in the memory of those who had associated with him and watched

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{13} Siddīqī, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 8.
carefully his words and deeds. Therefore, the beginning of *hadīth* literature must be traced back to the letters, laws and treaties that were dictated by the Prophet of Islam himself, and were preserved in his time. In like manner, it must be traced to the numerous *sahā'if* (sing. *sahifah*) which were compiled by the Companions and the Followers.\(^{14}\) According to Dr. Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, Goldziher has mentioned several of these *sahā'if.*\(^{15}\) Horovitz is uncertain about the genuineness of the *sahā'if* ascribed to the Companions; but he has no doubt about the genuineness of those compiled by the Followers.\(^{16}\)

After the death of Muḥammad, ‘Umar I intended to collect the *aḥādīth*. He gave the matter his careful consideration for one whole month, invoking the help of Allāh in his decision, and seeking the advice of his friends. However, it is said that he had to give up the great project for the fear of the Qur'ān being neglected by the Muslims.\(^{17}\) All these traditions and others which purport to


\(^{15}\) Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, Halle, 1889, ii, 8-11 quoted in *Hadith Literature—its Origin, Development, Special Features and Criticism* by Dr. Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, p.71.


give the idea that the compilation of hadith in the period of the Prophet, or in the later periods of Islam was prohibited by the Prophet or abandoned by the Sahābah simply because the text of the Qur’ān might be intermixed with hadith or anything else are totally false or tenable to put in their real perspective. Abū Ayyūb al Anṣārī (d. 52/672), Abū Bakr al Šiddīq (d. 13/635), Abū Bakarah al Thaqafi (d. 51/671), Abū Hurayrah (d. 59/679), Abū Mūsā al Ash’arī (d. 42/663), Abū Rāfi’ (d. 36/657), Abū Sa‘īd al Khudrī (d. 74/694), Abū Umāmah Șudai ibn ‘Ajlān (d. 81/700), ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/688), ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abū Awfā (d. 86/705), ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar (d. 63/683), ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd (d. 32/653) etc. are some of the great Companions who wrote down the aḥādīth of the Prophet. Dr. Muḥammad Muṣṭaфа Aʿzamī has given the names of 50 Sahābah who wrote down the aḥādīth of the Prophet.18


18 Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature, pp. 34-60.
98/717), Abū Salamah ibn ‘Abd al Raḥmān (d. 104/723) etc. are some of the prominent Followers who used to collect and write down the *ahādīth* of the Prophet. Dr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Aẓamī has given the names of more than 100 *tabi‘ī* who were engaged in this work.19

**Categorization of Hadīth Literature on the Basis of Methodologies Adopted in Compilation**

Books dealing with the *ahādīth* are designed in different methods. Based on the methodologies adopted by the compilers of these great compilations, these can be classified into following categories:

1. **Ṣaḥīfah**

   The *ṣaḥā‘if* (sing. *ṣaḥīfah*) are those collections of the sayings of the Prophet which were penned down in the lifetime of the Messenger by some of his pious Companions or were compiled by the Followers in the next generation. These were the small treatises and the most famous of them was the treatise of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, who gave it the title of *al Ṣādiqah*.

   The discovery of the *Ṣaḥīfah* of Ḥammām ibn Munabbih which has been published by Dr. Ḥāmid Allāh shows the nature and the character of these *ṣaḥā‘if*. It proves that they were not mere memoranda as Goldziher suggests, but were complete records of

some of the sayings of Prophet Muḥammad just like those found in the later collections of ḥadīth.\footnote{Ibid., p.71.}

2. \textit{Juz'}

The \textit{Ajzā}' (sing. \textit{Juz'}) are those collections in which a compiler collects all the \textit{ahādīth} of the Prophet related to a particular subject like the \textit{Juz' al Rafa‘ al Yadayn fi al Šalāh} by Imām al Bukhārī.

3. \textit{Risālah}

The \textit{Rasā'il} (sing. \textit{Risālah}) are such collections of \textit{ahādīth} which deal with one particular topic out of eight topics into which the contents of the \textit{Jāmi'} books of \textit{ḥadīth} may be generally classified. These eight topics are:

i. Belief

ii. Laws or \textit{Aḥkām}

iii. \textit{Riqāq} i.e. Piety

iv. Etiquette in eating, drinking, traveling, etc.

v. \textit{Tafsīr} i.e. Commentary on the Qur'ān.

vi. \textit{Tārīkh} and \textit{Siyar} i.e. History and biographies.

vii. \textit{Fitan} i.e. Crises

viii. \textit{Manāqib} and \textit{Mathālib} i.e. Appreciation and denunciation of persons, places etc.
The Rasā'īl are also called Books, Kutub (sing. Kitāb). Many of the works of Ibn Ḥajar, al Suyūṭī and others belong to this category.\(^\text{21}\)

4. **Musannaf**

This category comprises all the topics mentioned above and is the large collection of the hadīth. It distributes the ahādīth into the different chapters, which covers almost various topics. Its chapters are mainly based on the jurisprudential topics and contain Marfū' and Mawqūf ahādīth. Musannaf of ‘Abd al Razzāq and Mu'aṭṭā of Imām Mālik are the best examples of the Musannaf books.

5. **Musnad**

It is that type of collection of ahādīth, which bases its chapters on the name of the final narrators and collects the possible number of the ahādīth narrated by that narrator in a single chapter. There is no subject binding and the chapters are mostly arranged by the alphabetical order of the names of the narrators. Other criteria are also followed i.e. the order of the chapters is based on the chronology of acceptance of Islam of the final narrators, their tribe's affinity to the Prophet etc. Musnad of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad of Muḥammad ibn Abū Shaybah, Musnad of Abū Dā’ūd Ṭayālisī etc are famous masānīd.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., pp.15-16.
6. **Mu’jam**

These are the ḥadīth collections in which the aḥādīth are arranged according to the alphabetical order based on the names of the narrators or Shayūkh (Teachers), or the Shayūkh or Muḥaddithūn of any particular place or tribe. The Mu’jam of Ṭabrānī is one of the well-known ma’ājīm (sing. Mu’jam) in ḥadīth literature.

7. **Jāmi’**

These are the ḥadīth collections which contain aḥādīth relating to all the subjects mentioned under the Rasā’il which include actions along with faith, creeds, commentary etc. Therefore, the Ṣahīḥ al Bukhārī is the best example of it.

8. **Sunan**

These are the ḥadīth collections which contain only those aḥādīth which deal only with the legal matters of Islam and do not include the aḥādīth dealing with histories, biographies, battles, creeds, commentaries, virtues etc. The collections made by Abū Dā’ūd and Nasāʾī are the most famous examples of the Sunan works.

9. **Mustadrak**

Those aḥādīth, which fulfill the conditions laid down by a particular compiler but are not collected by him in his book, if
collected by someone else in a separate book form is called as *Mustadrak*. Abū ‘Abd Allāh al Ḥākim collected those *ahādīth* which were not included by Imām Bukhārī and Imām Muslim in their *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections. These two scholars selected a small number of *ahādīth* from huge collections in their two books. This does not mean that the *ahādīth* left by them are not *ṣaḥīḥ*; it was only because they wanted to be selective in their works. Imām al Ḥakim’s collection is, therefore, called *Mustadrak ‘alā al Ṣaḥīḥayn*.

10. **Mustakhraj**

If a person recollects some *ahādīth* of a particular *ḥadīth* collection in a separate book with different chains as given by the first collection, the new collection is called *Mustakhraj*. Abū Nu‘aym Aṣbahānī is famous for his *Mustakhraj*, who recollected some of the *ahādīth* of *Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* with new fresh chains.

11. **Arba‘īnīyāt**

As is evident from the name itself, it is the collection of forty *ahādīth* of a particular or different narrators or on a single or various subjects. *Al Arba‘ūn* of Imām al Nawawī and Shāh Walī Allāh are most famous.
There are other categories of hadith collections, some of which are Zawā'id, Aṭrāf, etc. Of all these categories of collections of ahadīth the Sahīfah were the earliest in origin. The Mu'jam and the Mustadrak, the Mustakhraj and the Arba'niyāt must have been the latest. The Juz' and the Risālah in their technical sense also must have been later in origin and development than the Musannaf and the Musnad works. The Sunan and the Jāmi' being only subdivisions of the Musannaf works, the problem of the priority of origin of the remaining categories of the hadīth works rests between the Musannaf and the Musnad which is difficult to decide.22

**Categorization of Hadīth literature on the Basis of Authenticity**

The works of hadīth literature have been classified by the muhaddithūn into four categories according to their reliability and importance.23 This categorization is based on the authenticity, agreeability and weakness of these books.24

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First Category

The books belonging to this category are considered as most reliable. These books contain Mutawātir, Ṣaḥīḥ and Ḥasan aḥādīth. These are:

i. Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī
ii. Ṣaḥīḥ al Muslim
iii. Mu’attā of Imām Mālik

Second Category

To this category belong the four sunan works which together with the saḥīḥ of Imām Bukhārī and Imām Muslim are known as al Kutb al Sittah. These four sunan are:

i. Sunan Abū Dā’ūd
ii. Sunan al Nasā’ī
iii. Sunan al Tirmidhī
iv. Sunan Ibn Mājah

The two saḥīḥān of Imām al Bukhārī and Imām Muslim with the first three sunan works were given the distinguished title of al Uṣūl al Khamsah.

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25 Siddīqi, loc. cit.
26 Šālih, loc. cit.
27 Siddīqi, op. cit., pp.122-123.
Third Category

This category contains those books which include all kinds of *Da‘if* narrations like *Shādh*, *Munkar* and *Muḍṭarab*. The skilled scholars who have dedicated their lives to the study of *ḥadīth* and its science can use these books. Some of these books are:

i. *Musnad Ibn Abū Shaybah*

ii. *Musnad al Tayālisī*

iii. *Musnad ‘Abd ibn Ḥumayd*

iv. *Musannaf ‘Abd al Razzāq*

v. *Al Bayhaqī*

vi. *Al Ṭabrānī*

vii. *Al Ṭahāwī* etc.\(^\text{29}\)

Fourth Category

This is the category of those books, which has been compiled on the authority of the fabulist orators, Sufis, historians, unjust innovators. These books are not reliable and are the sources of *bid‘ah* (deviations). Some of these books are:

i. *Ibn Mardawayah*

ii. *Ibn Shāhīn*

iii. The works of *Abū al Shaykh* etc.\(^\text{30}\)

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\(^{28}\) *Idem.*

\(^{29}\) Ṣāliḥ, *op. cit.*, pp.138-139.
Forgery in Hadīth

It has been accepted by all the traditionists that there had been a great deal of forgery committed in recoding ḥadīth. Imām Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal said that in no other branch of literature there had been committed so much forgery as in ḥadīth and tafsīr. The very existence of a large literature on al mawḍūʿāt (forged traditions) is a sure proof of extensive forgery committed in ḥadīth literature. Because of these forgeries several orientalist have branded the whole of ḥadīth literature as unreliable and unauthentic.\(^\text{11}\) The attribution of false statements to the Prophet may be divided into two categories:

1. Intentional fabrication of ḥadīth. That is usually called *Mawḍūʿ*.

2. Unintentional attribution of a false ḥadīth to the Prophet by mistake despite due care or due to carelessness. That is usually called *Bāṭil*.\(^\text{32}\)

   The result in both the conditions is same and there is no difference between the intentional lie and unintentional mistake. Both of them are unreliable and false attribution to the Prophet; and that is why the scholars of ḥadīth put them together and do


\(^{32}\) Siddiqi, *op. cit.*, p.127.
not put them in separate books of these two types.\textsuperscript{33} This is the reason why Shaykh al Albānī puts all kinds of weak and forged 
\textit{aḥādīth} in a single series called \textit{Silsilah al Aḥādīth al Da`ifah wa al Mawḍū`ah}.

Orientalists have often affirmed that \textit{ḥadīth} have been forged in order to justify some legal opinion or school of thought; this is undoubtedly true and even the early compilers rejected large number of \textit{aḥādīth} as fabricated. However, the skeptical tendency among Western scholars at one time went so far as to reject \textit{ipso facto} any \textit{ḥadīth}, which appeared to support a particular school or tendency. One orientalist was thus led to maintain that the Sufis had forged the saying: “Remember Me [Allāh] I will remember you”, since it so evidently fitted their teachings. In fact, this is not a \textit{ḥadīth} at all, but a quotation from the Qur’ān.\textsuperscript{34} Even if, from a historical point of view, a particular \textit{ḥadīth} is false, it does not necessarily follow that the opinions, practices, or doctrines linked with it are to suspect. A \textit{ḥadīth} may be false in the sense that the Prophet never spoke the words, but nevertheless true in that it is wholly consistent with his message.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Studies in Hadīth Methodology and Literature}, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{33} Idem.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Al Qur’an}, 2:152.
\textsuperscript{35} “Hadīth”. Cyril Glasse, \textit{loc. cit.}
According to Dr. Muḥammad Zubayr Şiddīqī, the forgery in hadīth originated during the lifetime of the Prophet himself. His opponents could not have failed to forge and attribute to him words and deeds for which he was not responsible. It was their purpose in thus misrepresenting him to arouse public opinion against him.\(^{36}\) Dr. Şiddīqī quotes Ibn Ḥazm in his support who cites an incident which took place during the life-time of the Prophet. He says, after the Prophet's Hijrah, a man went to a suburb of Madīnah, and told a tribe living there that the Prophet had given him authority over them. He had restored to this fraud because he wanted to marry a girl who was a member of the tribe, to whom he had proposed marriage before the Hijrah, but who had never been given in marriage to him. The tribe sent a messenger to the Prophet denounced the pretender, and ordered that he be put to death—if he was still alive.\(^{37}\)

**Causes of Forgery in Hadīth**

The hypocrites (Munāfiqūn) must have forged a good many aḥādīth and attributed them to the Prophet. During the caliphate of Abū Bakr also, when apostasy had raised its head, it is not

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\(^{36}\) Şiddīqī, *op. cit.*, p.127.

unlikely that some of the apostates should have forged such ahādīth as might suit their purpose. It may be due to this forgery that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar ibn al Khattāb were extremely strict in accepting ahādīth which were reported to them.\textsuperscript{38}

Now it is the proven fact that the organized forgery of ḥadīth started after forty years of the Prophet's migration. Political upheavals in the fourth decade gave birth to the forgery of ahādīth in the political sphere, to credit or discredit certain parties. Consequently, scholars became more cautious and began to scrutinize, criticize and search for the sources of information. The use of isnād, therefore, became more and more important.\textsuperscript{39} This is the period, which has been pointed out by Ibn Sirīn and recorded by Imām Muslim in his Ṣaḥīḥ.\textsuperscript{40}

This was the time when Islam was winning reverts from all around the world. It was expanding in the boundaries of Rome, Iran and other Asian countries and was introducing itself as the Universal Civilization.\textsuperscript{41} This expansion also won many rivals to

\begin{footnotesize}
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  \item\textsuperscript{38} Siddiqi, \textit{op. cit.} p.128.
  \item\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Studies in Early Hadith Literature}, p. 246.
  \item\textsuperscript{40} Muslim ibn al Ḥajjāj, \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim maʿ Mukhtaṣar Sharah Nawawī}, tr. ʿAllāmah Wahīd al Zamān, Bombay, Dār al Maʿārif, 1984, vol. i, p.33.
  \item\textsuperscript{41} Muḥammad Saʿūd ʿĀlam Qāsmī, \textit{Fitnah e Wada' e Ḥadīth aur Mawdūʿ Ahādīth kī paḥchān}, Delhi, Markazī Maktabah Islāmī, 1990, p. 53.
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the new and fast growing civilization who ogle to ambush it and destroy its sources of vitality. Among the basic and fundamental sources of Islam, Qur'ān and Hadīth, the first one was already compiled and put to the memory while as the second source, due to its huge size, was not memorized completely by a single hāfīz. It was also scattered in the vast caliphate of Islam. Therefore, these two reasons made it open for the blitz of the conspirators.

However, at the same time the elderly and older followers of Islam were giving way to the new entrants. The people who directly received guidance and instructions from the Prophet were the standards and exemplars of the truthfulness, piety, taqwā, endurance, selflessness, dedication, passion and other qualities. With the decrease in the number of the Companions, these qualities were seen relatively less in the new entrants. This decrease in the qualities of the adherents of the Islam made it vulnerable to the conspiracies and forgeries, some from outside and few from within.

The first organized conspiracy was carried out by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sabā, who worked on his heinous plans to sabotage the Muslim Ummah and destroyed the unity of the Muslim caliphate. During the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, the third caliph of Muslims, the forgery of ahādīth became more common. The various political parties, the heretics, the professional preachers, and even some of
the sincere muttaqi Muslims, all made their contributions to the increasing stock of riwāyāt falsely attributed to the Prophet. It was due to the wicked plans of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sabā that later on ‘Uthmān got martyred and the Muslims got divided into two camps.

One of the camps supported ‘Ali, the forth caliph of Muslims. The second group supported the governor of Syria, Mu‘āwiyah and demanded ‘Ali that the assassins of the third caliph should be brought to the law. Both the camps were influenced and penetrated by the followers of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sabā. Many of the pious Muslims felt into the trap and the first civil war among Muslims broke out. In 35/656 the Battle of the Camel (Jamal) was fought between ‘Ali and ‘Ā’ishah (the wife of the Prophet) and in 36/657 the Battle of Siffin was fought among ‘Ali and Mu‘āwiyah. These civil wars led to the creation of different political rival groups among Muslims, which later on turned into various religious sects, and all of them tried to prove their viewpoint and substantiated them by the verses of the holy Qur‘ān and the saying of the Prophet. In the absence of the befitting verses or the authentic hadīth they forged a hadīth which endorsed their views. Some of the main reasons of hadīth fabrication are:

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42 Siddiqi, op. cit., p.128.
1. **Rawāfiḍ and Khawārij**

Rawāfiḍ (Sing. Rāfiḍiyah) is an extremist group among Shī'ah while as Khawārij (Sing. Khārijiyah) are those people who abandoned ‘Ali’s army when they learnt that ‘Ali has accepted to negotiate with Mu‘āwiyyah. Rawāfiḍ were the topping the list of forgers. It is recorded that one of the Rawāfiḍ, Hamād ibn Salmah once said, "When we liked any statement we made, it a hadīth." When Imām Mālik was asked about the Rawāfiḍ he said, "Do not talk to them and do not narrate on their authority because they lie." It is said that Rawāfiḍ had forged almost three lack aḥādīth in the praise of ‘Alī and his house hold (Ahl al Bayt). Like Rawāfiḍ Khawārij were also skillful in forging the aḥādīth and whenever they liked any saying, they dub it as a hadīth.

2. **Shī‘ah and Forgery of Ḥadīth**

The common Shī‘ah were also involved in forging hadīth in the praise of ‘Alī and his house hold. They were also fabricating the

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ahādīth so that they can show the dominance of their a'immah on other Companions. They fabricated ahādīth to malign the character of first three caliphs and Muʿāwiyah in particular and the other Companions in general. In its response, Ahl al Sunnah also tried to forge ahādīth in the praise of the other Companions especially in the praise of first three caliphs. Ibn Abū al Ḥadīd has admitted in the commentary of Nahj al Balāghah that the forgery in the ahādīth dealing with the praises of the few Companions was started by the Shiʿah sect, and the ignorant people among Ahl al Sunnah also fabricated the ahādīth in its response. It is worthwhile to mention here that Shiʿah does not accept the ahādīth collected in the books of Ahl al Sunnah. They only accept those narrations which have been reported by their a'immah.

3. Ahl al Sunnah and Forgery of Hadīth

In reaction to the fabrication by Shīʿah sect and the onslaught of the fabricators on the clear character of first three caliphs and Muʿāwiyah, the ignorant people among Ahl al Sunnah fabricated the ahādīth in the glorification of these great Companions. For example in the praise of first three caliphs, one ignorant attributed to the Prophet, "In the paradise, Lā ʾIlāha Ilā Allāh Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh along with Abū Bakr al Ṣiddīq, ʿUmar al Fārūq and

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"Uthmān al Dhū al Nūrayn, will be written on every leaf of the tree."\(^{48}\)

4. **Exaggeration in the Glorification of the Prophet**

It is a human tendency to glorify his beloved one. If the glorification is based on the facts then it is not objectionable but if it crosses the limits and becomes exaggeration and hyperbole, the Prophet and the scholars of Islam do not permit this act of making someone super human. No doubt, it is a part of the Muslim faith to love the Prophet more than his father, his children and all humankind\(^{49}\) but at the same time the Prophet has himself prohibited to make exaggeration in his praising.\(^{50}\) Instead of this prohibition and many others like it, people made exaggerations in praising the prophetic status of the Prophet. This gave rise to the forgery in the *hadīth* literature and many false statements were fabricated in the praise of the Prophet e.g.

If you [O, Prophet] were not there, I would have not created the orbits [afīdō].\(^{51}\)

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\(^{48}\) *Al Lālī al Maṣnū‘ah, op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 165.

\(^{49}\) *Al Bukhārī, op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 193, ḥ. 15.

The Prophet said, "None of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father, his children and all mankind."  

\(^{50}\) *Al Bukhārī, op. cit.*, vol. iv, p. 717, ḥ. 3445.

The Prophet said, "Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a slave. So, call me the Slave of Allah and His Apostle."

\(^{51}\) Muhammad Nāṣir al Dīn al Albānī, *Silsilah al Ahādīth al Da‘ifah wa al Mawdū‘ah wa Aθaruḥā al Say‘u fī al Ummah*, ed. II, Riyadh,
5. **Difference of School of Thought**

In the beginning, rather till second century there was no sect based on the jurisprudential issues. When any one had to sort the answer to his questions or jurisprudential problems he used to ask any of the jurists whom he could approach.\(^52\) When in a single problem, there were different views of different scholars; and with the passage of time, people took different scholars as the founders of the different schools of thought. To glorify their favourite *a'imma* (sing. *Imām*) and value his view as the most authentic one people fabricated many *ahādīth* in the praise of their *a'imma* or in the support of their views e.g.

Jibrīl led me [in *ṣalāḥ*] near the Ka‘bah, he recited *bismi* Allah al Raḥmān al Raḥīm loudly.\(^53\)

That is why Qāḍī Majd al Dīn al Shīrāzī says:

The *ahādīth* which are said in praise or refutation of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah or Imām Shāfi‘ī, in this respect particularly the attribution of any *hadīth* to the Prophet is not correct.\(^54\)


6. **For Fortunes in Royal Court**

To be among the preferred ones of the kings and rulers some of the greedy or opportunists used to visit the courts of the rulers and to get their favour they used to forge a *hadith*. It is reported that once Ghayath visited the court of Abbaśi Caliph, Mahdī who was playing with a pigeon. Ghayath at once forged a *hadith* and said:

> There is no antecedence except in archery or camel riding or horse riding or bird flying.\(^{55}\)

Mahdī gave him the handsome prize but slaughtered the pigeon and told that it became the cause of a false *hadith*.\(^{56}\)

7. **Targhib and Tarhib**

*Targhib wa Tarhib* (arousal of an interest in good and fear of evil) became one more factor of fabricating *hadith* in the name of the Prophet. This included mainly those *aḥādīth*, which stressed on good and restrained the Muslims from the bad actions. People used to fabricate these *aḥādīth* so that the Muslims may get attracted towards the pious actions and may not go astray. Some of them had good intentions while as most of them tried to pretend to be the great scholars. An episode is related to the period of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Imām Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn

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\(^{55}\) Ibn Ḥajr al Ḥaqqī, *Nuzhah al Naẓr fī Nukhbaḥ al Fikr*, Delhi, Maṭṭbaʿ Mujtabāʾī, 1902, p. 15.

when one of the story-tellers was fabricating and narrating *ahādīth* on the authority of these two scholars, strangely enough in the presence of the two Imāms that the Prophet has said whosoever will say *la ilāha illā Allāh* (there is no god but Allāh), Allāh will create a sparrow for each word whose beak will be golden and whose wings will be made of coral.\(^{57}\)

Many of them have good intentions and used to fabricate the *ahādīth* in the name of the Prophet. Like Abū ‘Īsmaḥ Nūḥ ibn Abū Maryam, when he saw the people were more interested in the jurisprudential issues of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and in the war stories *(maghāzī)* of Ibn Ishāq than the Qur'ān he started to fabricate *ahādīth* with regards to the virtues *(fadā'il)* of the Qur'ān.\(^{58}\)

8. *Taṣawwuf*

*Taṣawwuf* is a big problem for the scholars dealing with the authenticity of *ḥadīth* literature. Usually the Muslims who were linked with the *taṣawwuf* used to be weak in the field of *ḥadīth*. Many of the Sufis quoted the *ahādīth* without any criticism and even some of them fabricated a good number of *ahādīth* and believed to be rewarded for it in the life hereafter e.g.


Respect the teachers [Mashā'ikh] because the respect of teachers is the respect of Allah.  

The safety lies in the seclusion.

All the various groups of forgers and also those who are not discussed here, created havoc in hadith literature. However, in order to meet this great menace of forgery, and to sift the forged aḥādīth from the true ones, the sincere and honest traditionist made the system of isnād compulsory and integral part of the hadith authenticating principles. In this way, with the passage of time a special branch of hadith literature was developed, which exclusively discussed the fabricated aḥādīth. Some of the famous books along with their authors are as under:

1. Kitāb al Mawdū‘at by Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr al ‘Aqīlī (d. 322/934)
2. Tazkirah al Mawdū‘at by Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir Maqdasī (d. 507/1114)
3. Al Abāṭīl wa al Manākīr by Ḥusayn ibn Ibrāhīm al Jawzqānī (d. 543/1149)

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5. *Al Mughnī ‘an al Ḥifẓ wa al Kitāb* by ‘Umar ibn Badr Mawslī (d. 623/1226)


7. *Al Kashaf al Khabīth ‘amman Ramā bi Wad’ al Ḥadīth* by Ḥāfiz Ibrāhīm al Ḥalabi (d. 841/1438)

8. *Al Maqāṣid al Ḥasanah* by ‘Abd al Raḥmān Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497)


10. *Al Dhayl ‘alā al Mawdū‘āt* by Jalāl al Dīn al Suyūṭī (d. 911/1506)

11. *Tahdīr al Khawās min Akādhīb al Qaṣāṣ* by Jalāl al Dīn al Suyūṭī (d. 911/1506)

12. *Al Ghamāz ‘ala al Lamāz* by Nūr al Dīn Abū al Ḥasan Samhūḍī (d. 911/1506)

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15. *Mawdū‘āt Kabīr* by ‘Alī ibn Sulṭan al Qārī (d. 1014/1605)

16. *Al Mawdū‘ fī Ahādīth al Mawdū‘* by ‘Alī ibn Sulṭan al Qārī (d. 1014/1605)

17. *Al Farā‘īd al Mawdū‘ah fī al Ahādīth Mawdū‘ah* by Mar‘ī ibn Yūsuf al Karmī (d. 1033/1624)

18. *Kashf al Iltibās fīmā Khafiyy ‘alā Kathīr min al Nas* by Ghars al Dīn Khalīlī (d. 1057/1647)


21. *Al Āthār al Marfū‘ah fī al Akhbār al Mawdū‘ah* by ‘Abd al Ḥayy al Lakhnawī (d. 1304/1887)

23. *Silsilah al Ahādīth al Daʿīfah wa al Mawdūʿah* by
Muḥammad Nāṣir al Dīn al Albānī (d. 1420/1999)

**The System of Iṣnād**
(Chain of Transmitters)

Every ḥadīth consists of two parts:
1. Chain (*al Iṣnād*)
2. Text (*al Matn*)

The first ḥadīth of *Ṣaḥīh al Bukhārī* can explain this construction of a ḥadīth:

Imām al Bukhārī said that al Ḥumaydī ʿAbd Allāh ibn Zubayr informed him [about this ḥadīth] saying that Sufyān narrated him that Yahyā ibn Saʿīd al Anṣārī informed him that Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al Taymī communicated to him that he heard ʿAlqamah ibn Waqqās al Laythī saying that he heard ʿUmar ibn al Khaṭṭāb saying on pulpit, "I heard Allāh's Apostle saying, "The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly benefits or for a

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woman to marry, his emigration was for what he emigrated for."

A cursory glance on this hadīth reveals that it contains a series of names of the narrators, and after this series the statement of the Prophet is put forward. The first portion i.e. the chain of the names of the transmitters is called al Isnād or authority while the statement, which forms the second portion of the narration, is called Matn or text. Each hadīth in every collection of aḥādīth (till the end of the third century of the Hijrah) contains the chain of its transmitters—from the Prophet or from a Companion or from a Follower down to the last reporter or the compiler.

Isnād, according to Arabic lexicography means the thing on which another relies. As we rely on the narrators for the knowledge of the statement of the Prophet, this chain is called Isnād. Its plural is asānīd. Sometimes the term tariq is used instead of isnād, and sometimes the term wajh is used for the same purpose.

Muhaddithūn attached a great importance to it, and considered it as an indispensable part of a hadīth. They tried to determine the relative value of the reliability of the various asānīd and their different classes. They produced a vast literature on the biographies of the transmitters for its sake, and developed a

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73 Siddqi, op. cit., p.129.
74 Idem.
75 Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature, p. 32.
system into a science. Since the compilation of the collections of ahādīth and the composition of the works on the various connected subjects, they have applied the method of Isnād to those works as well as their manuscripts. In this system of Isnād the Muslims have taken great pride.66

Dr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḍāzamī says that it appears that isnād was used casually in some literatures in pre-Islamic period, in a vague manner, without attaching any importance to it. The isnād system was also used—to some extent—in transmitting pre-Islamic poetry. However, it was in the hadīth literature that its importance culminated to such a height that it became a part of religion.67 The same view is held by Imām Muslim, who in the preface of his hadīth compilation frames the sub-heading (bāb) as, "chain (al Isnād) is a part of the religion [al Dīn]."68

Imām Muslim in the preface of his Ṣaḥīḥ quotes two saying of Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/729) which also serve as the two important and early statements about the significance and beginning of the isnād.

Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn says, "al Isnād is Dīn [religion] so see from whom you are receiving your Dīn."69

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66  Ṣiddiqī, op. cit., p.129.
67  Studies in Early Hadīth Literature, p. 212.
68  Muslim, op. cit., vol. i, p.33.
69  Idem.
Ibn Sīrīn says, "They did not ask about al Isnād, but when civil war—al Fitnah—arouse they said 'name to us your men'; those who belong to the people of Sunnah, their aḥādīth were accepted and those who were innovators their aḥādīth were not accepted."\(^70\)

The first statement of Ibn Sīrīn brings to the fore the importance of the Isnād in the early times soon after the death of the Prophet. The second statement gives a clear impression that the asānīd were used in early times prior to al Fitnah and Ibn Sīrīn, but there was no stress on its application and it was only after the first civil war (between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyah) that made the Muslims meticulous about al Isnād. It also points to the fact that the asānīd served as the litmus paper for a hadīth and the narrations were accepted or rejected on the basis of transmitters in their chains.

According to Dr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā ʿAẓāmī, the isnād system began in the lifetime of the Prophet and was used by the Companions in transmitting the aḥādīth of the Prophet.\(^71\) It was the common practice among the Companions—even in the life of the Prophet—to transmit the aḥādīth of the Prophet, when they saw each other. Some of them had even made special arrangements to attend the Prophet's circle in shifts and to inform...

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\(^{70}\) Idem.

\(^{71}\) Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature, p. 246.
each other of what they had heard and seen in the presence of the Prophet.^^

Now there is no doubt that the Muslims came to consider the Isnād as an indispensable part of ahādīth, developed it a great deal, gave it a firm foundation—by introducing to it the chronological method and collecting the biographies of the transmitters (which served as the basis of the criticism of their ahādīth), and by establishing various principles for determining the value of its different classes.^^

Muslims not only gave a scientific form and basis to the system of isnād, but also tried to make a comprehensive study of the various asānīd used in hadīth literature with a view of establishing their relative value. It is said that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Ma‘īn and Ibn al Madīnī once assembled together with some other traditionists and discussed the most reliable isnād. One of them said that the best isnād was Shu‘bah : Qatadah : Sa‘īd : ‘Āmir : Umm Salmah. ‘Alī ibn al Madīnī held that the best one was Ibn ‘Aun : Muḥammad : ‘Ubaydah : ‘Alī. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was of the opinion that the best isnād was al Zuhrī : Sālim : ‘Abd

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^^ Siddīqi, op. cit., p. 135.

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Studies in Hadīth Methodology and Literature, p. 33.
Allāh ibn ‘Umar.\textsuperscript{74} Imām Mālik and Imām al Bukhārī, however, were of the opinion that the best isnād was Mālik : Nāfi' : Ibn ‘Umar. To this isnād the later traditionists have added the names of al Shāfi‘ī and Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, making it one long chain from Ahmad upto Ibn ‘Umar. They gave it the title of 'the golden chain',\textsuperscript{75} \textit{al Silsilah al Dhaḥh}. This chain, however, is rare in hadīth literature. In the whole of the \textit{Musnad} of Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, in spite of its large size, according to Jalāl al Dīn al Suyūṭī, there are not to be found more than four aḥādīth with this isnād.\textsuperscript{76}

Having been introduced into hadīth, the system of isnād was not only continued for more than four centuries in the narration of every individual hadīth, but was also applied to the books on aḥādīth and on the connected subjects since the time of their compilation. Every teacher of every book on hadīth or on a subject connected with it at every period in the history of hadīth literature gave (in order to guard against forgery of the books or


parts of the books) his students the names of the teachers through whom he had received it from its original author, each of them stating that he read the whole or a part of it (which had to be specified) with his own teacher. The certificates of competence of students to teach a book on *hadith* granted them by their teachers contain not only the statement of the fact that they read it with him, but also the name of their own teachers of the book, and of the teachers of their teachers upto its author.\(^7\)

\textbf{Impact of Isnād on the classification of Ahādīth}

Naturally, with the passage of time there was the increase in the number of the transmitters in a single *hadith*. In case of a *tābi‘ī* there was only one transmitter between him and the Messenger of Allāh and when the narrator was a *taba‘ī tābi‘ī* (Successor) the number of transmitters raised upto two. Similarly, with the passage of time the number of transmitters was swelled. Same results were seen with the expansion of the Islamic Caliphate. With the extension of Islamic state lakhs of transmitters were involved in the transmitting of a *hadith*. This increase of transmitters in the isnād made the *ahādīth* vulnerable to forgery.\(^8\)

This also increased the number of channels of a single *hadith*. That is why we see that some *ahādīth* were transmitted by many

\(^7\) Šiddīqī, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

Companions and many Followers while some others were related by a single Companion only from whom it was narrated by a single Follower, who in turn had a single student who transmitted this particular hadith. Therefore, the ahadith were graded according to the number of narrators and were judged on the basis of the biographies (Asmā' al Rijāl) of the transmitters, e.g. al Mutawātir, al Ahād, al Mashhūr, al ‘Azīz, al Gharīb etc. Thus with the introduction of isnād, unique sciences ‘Ilm Asmā' al Rijāl and 'Ilm al Jaraḥ wa al Ta’dīl came into existence for the evaluation of isnād and ahadith.

Science of Asmā' al Rijāl

To develop the science of Isnād further the science of Asmā' al Rijāl came into existence. For this purpose, the muhaddithūn penned down the biographies of thousands of the narrators, all the information about their knowledge (‘ilm) and quest of hadith and also the distinction between the trustworthy and the weak one was recorded. By grading the narrators of hadith into different grades, they provided the bases and standards for declaring the opinion about the hadith with respect to the chain of the narrators.

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79 Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature, p. 42.
80 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
81 Mu'jam Iṣīlāḥāt-i-Ḥadīth, pp. 36-37.
In it are included all the various works which deal with (i) the chronology; (ii) the biography; and (iii) the criticism of the narrators of *ahādīth* or of any class of the narrators, or with any such aspect of their life as may be helpful in determining their identity, veracity and reliability.\(^\text{82}\) This pertains actually with the biographies of the narrators of the *hadīth* and encompass their life accounts. By this science, the researchers are enable to know who transmits the *ahādīth*? What is his genetic lineage? Where did he lived? When he was born? What was his age? Does his memory remained unchanged upto his old age? From whom he heard the *ahādīth*? How was his memory? What was his degree in case of religiosity and piety? What was his faith and creed? Was he the propagator of a certain sect? Was he relied in truth and honesty in his ordinary social life? What were the observations of his contemporaries and those who met him about his persona? In short, all the information about the narrator is collected by which he can be declared truthful, authentic and reliable.\(^\text{83}\)

The *muhaddithūn*, however having realized the importance of chronology, biography and criticism, compiled independent works dealing with the narrators of *ahādīth* in chronological order

\(^\text{82}\) Siddīqī, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

\(^\text{83}\) Adarwī, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
before the end of the second century. As all the early works on this subject have been lost, it is impossible to determine their general plan and the nature of their contents. But from the later works which are based on them and which we have received, and from the general tendencies of the traditionists of the time, it may be inferred that their contents mainly consisted of:

- Short descriptions of the genealogies and the dates of their birth and death.
- Some biographical matters relating to the narrators.
- A short criticism (jarah) of their reliability together with the opinions of the important authorities about them.

The compilation of the biographies of the narrators of ahādīth, begun in the second century of the Hijrah, was continued with zeal and vigour in the following centuries. In the third century, not only various specialists in the subject—e.g. Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844), Khalifah ibn al Khayyat, Ibn Abī Khaythamah (d. 297/892) and others—but also almost every muhaddith of reputation compiled simultaneously with his collections of ahādīth, some biographies of their narrators also.

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84 Şiddiqī, op. cit., p.168.
85 Ibid., p.169.
86 Idem.
During the fourth and the succeeding centuries, the compilation of the biographies by the muḥaddithūn appears to have become a fashion of the time throughout the vast Islamic dominions.  

The works on the Asmāʾ al Rijāl helped the growth of general biographical literature in the Arabic language and it became the unparallel glory of the Muslims. It is this huge literature, which not only in the beginning but also in the present times is providing the unshakable foundation for the scholars to check the authenticity of a hadith.

**The Science of al Jaraḥ wa al Taʿdīl**  
*Character Examination*

Side by side the hadith literature, there also developed the methods of criticism and the techniques of hadith evaluation. It is quite natural, when a muḥaddith receives a hadith he first checks its authenticity and tries to find out its reliability. The biographical notes of the narrators and the views expressed by the earlier scholars about them serve as the chief means of the verification. The study of the presence or absence of conditions in a narrator which makes him or her either acceptable or rejected is called 'Ilm al Jaraḥ wa al Taʿdīl. By this science one discusses

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the particular terminologies of Jarah and Ta‘dil about narrators and their degrees.89

In Arabic literature, the word naqd is used for criticism. Early scholars of hadīth used this word in the second century,90 but it did not gain currency in their circle.91 A third century scholar, Īmām Muslim, named his book al Tamyīz, whose subject is methodology of hadīth criticism.92 Later on they named the science which deals with criticism of hadīth, al Jarah wa al Ta‘dil (the knowledge of invalidating and declaring reliable in hadīth).93

Jarah

It refers to such a criticism on the Fairness (‘adālah) or the Accuracy (daḥt) of the narrator that makes his position doubtful94 and results in the rejection of his hadīth.95 Jarah is only to fulfill the basic practical need of the religion. It aims only to safeguard the law and does not aim to defame the people. If someone criticizes the narrator only to defame him, his criticism will not be accepted. There are ten reasons for a narrator to be rejected and

89 Dr Iqbal Ahmad Ishraq Biskukharī, Jarah wa Ta‘dil, N. Delhi, al Kitāb International, 2003, p. 179.
90 Studies in Hadīth Methodology and Literature, p. 47.
91 Ibid., p. 48.
92 Idem.
93 Idem.
94 Al As‘ādī, op. cit., p. 217.
95 Mu‘jam Īṣṭilāḥāt-i-Ḥadīth, p. 157.
five of these reasons invalidate the fairness of the narrator while as the other five nullify his accuracy.

**Reasons Invalidating the Fairness of a Narrator**

'Adālah (fairness) is a natural ability of a person which provokes him to adhere to the piety (taqwā) and kindness (murawah). Taqwā means to do well and be away from evil practices while murawah signifies the inherent ability of a man, which stimulates in him the passion for praised things, and inculcate in him the spirit of shunning evil. If the narrator's fairness is made doubtful, he is labeled as Fāsiq (Immoral). The 'adālah of a narrator gets invalid by five reasons. These five reasons are:

1. To lie in the sayings of the Prophet.
2. To be accused of lying.
3. To get indulged in capital sin or become adamant on evils.
4. To be anonymous or unknown (majhūl).
5. To be indulged in deviations (bid'ah).

**Reasons Invalidating the Ḍabīf of a Narrator**

The practice of a narrator to remember the narrated statements with sound memory is called ḍabīf. A narrator is termed as a ḍābit when he memorizes his ahādīth with utmost care and if he

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narrates a hadith as per the meaning he must have the ability to understand it. If his accuracy is libeled he is called as Mughaffal (dullard). There are five reasons that invalidate the accuracy of a narrator. These five reasons are:

1. To err more frequently.
2. To be more careless.
3. To be more suspicious.
4. Opposition of the trustworthy narrators.
5. Poor memory.

Ta‘dīl

It refers to confirm the presence of fairness and accuracy in a narrator. There should be two positive conditions for a narrator to be acceptable (‘Ādīl) and like Jaraḥ these two conditions are Fairness and Accuracy. However, according to Ibn Ḥībbān a person whose Jaraḥ is not known will be taken as acceptable unless his Jaraḥ is established. However, some of the scholars say that the ‘adālah is proved by the justification (ta‘dīl) of the two knowledgeable persons and by the fame of the fairness of a narrator.

97 Mu‘jam Istilāḥāt-i-Hadīth, p. 158.
98 Biskūhari, op. cit., pp. 176-177.
99 Mu‘jam Istilāḥāt-i-Hadīth, p. 158.
100 Al As‘ādī, op. cit., p. 217.
101 Al Thiqāt, vol. i, p 12.
In addition to it, there are some agreed conditions for the fairness of a narrator, which are to be fulfilled to elevate a hadith to the standard of an authentic hadith. As per these conditions a narrator must be:

1. Muslim
2. Adult
3. Mentally sound
4. Safe from capital sins and not shows persistence on evils.
5. Safe from all dispraised actions.

**Origin and Development of Jarah and Ta‘dil**

To safeguard the religion from the internal and external conspiracies and remissness respectively, the scholars of Islam developed a complete science in the shape of Jarah and Ta‘dil. They used different terms for the people and declared their merits and demerits so that people can either benefit from them or shun their reports. Its validity and permissibility have been indicated in the holy Qur'an and authentic hadith where different terms like Fasiq, Kadhdhab Evil Brother, and Evil Son etc are

103 *Al Qur‘ān*, 49:6

O ye who believe! if a Fasiq [wicked person] comes to you with any news ascertain the truth lest ye harm people unwittingly and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done.


The Prophet said, "Whosoever reports from me a hadith and knows it is a lie, is one among the two liars."
'A'ishah narrated, "a man asked permission to enter upon the Prophet. When the Prophet saw him, he said, 'What an evil brother of his tribe! and what an evil son of his tribe!' When that man sat down, the Prophet behaved with him in a nice and polite manner and was completely at ease with him. When that person had left, 'A'ishah said (to the Prophet). 'O Allah's Rasūl! When you saw that man, you said so-and-so about him, then you showed him a kind and polite behavior, and you enjoyed his company?' Allah's Rasūl said, "O 'A'ishah! Have you ever seen me speaking a bad and dirty language? (Remember that) the worst people in Allah's sight on the Day of Resurrection will be those whom the people leave (undisturbed) to be away from their evil (deeds)."
used by Allāh and His Messenger for different de-meritorious persons.

After the demise of the Prophet, the criticism of the narrators gradually developed in the time of the Companions, the Followers and the Successors of the Followers. As this was the era of the narrators and the muḥaddithūn, ‘ulamā’, and other people related with the hadīth literature were either related to each other in one way or the other or at least were contemporaries. Therefore, the scholars and the students had not to toil more to be acquainted with the remarks of the other scholars on the narrators.

Up to the beginning of third century after Hijrā these remarks of jarah and ta‘dīl were memorized which were either heard by the students of this science from their teachers or were their own observations about their contemporary narrators.

In these two centuries the terminology and the principles of the jarah and ta‘dīl were founded and these were prominent in the circles of students and scholars. Now these needed to be penned down so that it may not be lost and there could be more coherence in analyzing them comparatively. Therefore, the compilation of these remarks about the narrators and terminologies of this newly

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those whom the people leave (undisturbed) to be away from their evil (deeds)."
developed science could give a vent to the finest judgments on the controversial narrators.\textsuperscript{107}

It was the great \textit{Muḥaddith} Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd (d. 198/814) who was the first scholar to pen down the information about the narrators of \textit{ḥadīth}.\textsuperscript{108} After his death his students and others followed this methodology and many of the scholars like Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn (d. 233/848), ‘Alî ibn Mađīnī (d. 234/849), Imām Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/856), ‘Amr ibn ‘Alî al Fallās (d. 249/863), Abū Khythamah etc. came to the fore.\textsuperscript{109} Some of the famous scholars of \textit{al Jaraḥ} and \textit{al Ta‘dīl} with the chronological order\textsuperscript{110} are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Companions</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Umar ibn al Khattāb</td>
<td>23/644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Alî ibn Abî Ṭālib</td>
<td>40/660</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘ Ubādah ibn Ṣāmit</td>
<td>34/655</td>
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<td>‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās</td>
<td>68/688</td>
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<td>Ɂ'î'shah bint Abû Bakr</td>
<td>58/679</td>
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<td>Ans ibn Mālik</td>
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<td><strong>Followers</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sa‘īd ibn Musayyib</td>
<td>94/713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Āmir ibn Sharjīl</td>
<td>103/722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Mizān al I’tidāl}, vol. i, p.1.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{110} Biskūhārī \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 254-257.
Second Century

- Muḥammad ibn Sirīn 110/729
- Ḥasan Baṣarī 110/729
- Ibn Shahāb al Zuhrī 124/742

Third Century

- Awaẓīʾ 'Abd al Raḥmān ibn 'Amr 157/774
- Sha'bāh ibn Ḥajjāj 160/777
- Suťfīn Thawrī 161/778
- Mālik ibn Ḍars 179/796
- 'Abd Allāh ibn Mubāraḳ 181/797
- Wakīʾ ibn Jarāḥ 197/813
- Suťfīn ibn 'Aayyīnīn 198/814
- Yahyā ibn Saʿīd Qatṭān 198/814
- 'Abd al Raḥman ibn Mahdī 198/814

In this century the writing of the books about Jarah and Taʿdīl was started. The end of this century is marked as the distinguishing line between the earlier and the later scholars of Jarah and Taʿdīl. Some of the prominent scholars of this century are:

- Muḥammad ibn Saʿd 230/845
- Yahyā ibn Maʿīn 233/848
- 'Alī ibn Madīnī 234/849
- Ṣuḥāma ibn Ḍanbal 241/860
- 'Al-Al Raḥmān ibn Duḥīm 245/860
- Imām Dārmī Abū Muḥammad 255/869
- Imām Abū 'Abd Allāh al Bukhārī 256/870
- Ahmād ibn 'Abd Allāh al 'Ijlī 261/875
- Muslim ibn al Ḥajjāj 261/875
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Chronology</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Century</td>
<td>Abū Zar'ah 'Abd al Karīm al Rāzī</td>
<td>264/878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al Rāzī</td>
<td>277/891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abū 'Abd al Raḥmān al Nasāʾī</td>
<td>303/916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muḥammad ibn Khuzaymah</td>
<td>311/924</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abū Jaʿfar 'Aqīlī</td>
<td>322/934</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ibn Abū Ḥātim Rāzī</td>
<td>327/939</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abū Ḥātim ibn Ḥibbān al Bastī</td>
<td>354/965</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Abū Ahmad ibn 'Adī</td>
<td>365/976</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Abū al Fataḥ Azdī</td>
<td>374/985</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Abū al Ḥasan Dār Qūṭnī</td>
<td>385/995</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ibn Shāhīn</td>
<td>384/994</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifth Century</td>
<td>Abū ‘Abd Allah Ḥākim</td>
<td>405/1015</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abū Naʿīm al Aṣbahānī</td>
<td>430/1039</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Abū Dharhrwī</td>
<td>434/1043</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abū Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm</td>
<td>456/1064</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Abū Bakr al Bayhaqī</td>
<td>458/1066</td>
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<td>Khāṭīf al Baghdādī</td>
<td>463/1071</td>
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<td>Ibn ‘Abd al Barr</td>
<td>463/1071</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Abū al Wālīd Bāʾīr</td>
<td>474/1082</td>
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<td>Ibn Mākūlā</td>
<td>475/1083</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sixth Century</td>
<td>Abū al Qāsim Ibn ‘Asākīr</td>
<td>571/1176</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abū Mūsā al Madīnī</td>
<td>581/1185</td>
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<td>'Abd al Ḥaqq al Ashbīlī</td>
<td>581/1185</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abū Bakr Ḥāzmī</td>
<td>584/1188</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ibn Jawzī</td>
<td>597/1201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Abd al Ghanī Maqdīsī</td>
<td>600/1204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Seventh Century**

- Abū al Ḥasan ibn Qaṭān al Fāṣī
- Ibn Nuqtah
- Ṣarīfīnī
- Ibn Najjār al Baghdādī
- Abū ‘Amr banal Ṣalāḥ
- Zakī al Dīn Mundhirī

**Eighth Century**

- Ibn Daqlq al ‘Īd
- Ibn Sayyid al Nās
- Ibn Taymiyyah
- Abū al Ḥajjāj Mazīn
- Abū ‘Abd Allāh al Dhaḥabī
- Abū Sa‘īd ‘Īlā‘ī
- Abū ‘Abd Allāh Mughlātā‘ī
- Şafdī
- ハウスīnī

**Ninth Century**

- Zayn al Dīn Abū al Faṣl ‘Irāqī
- Walī al Dīn Abū Zar‘ah ‘Irāqī
- Burhān al Dīn Ḥalābī
- Ibn Ḥajar al ‘Asqalānī
- Badr al Dīn al ‘Aynī
- Najm ibn Fahd

**Grades of Jarāḥ and Ta‘dīl Literature**

These scholars wrote the voluminous books in the science of jarāḥ and ta‘dīl. These books are complete and satisfying to such
an extent that they serve as a primary source for the critics of *hadîth*. Still after the hundreds of years of death of a narrator one can find out his or her life sketch and can evaluate his or her authenticity, no matter how far his library is from this narrator's birth or death place. These books can chiefly be divided into three groups:

1. Small books, which contain only names of the narrators and remarks about them by the writer of the book or by any other master of the science e.g. *Kitâb al Duʿafâʾ al Şaghîr* of Imâm Bukhârî.

2. Medium sized books, which contain relatively long biographical notes on the narrators, their genealogy, teachers, students, few *ahâdîth* reported by him and the remarks of the masters of the science. The notable feature of these books is that they report the remarks of the great scholars of this science with chains e.g. *Târîkh al Duʿafâʾ* of Ibn Ḥibbân.

3. After these small and medium books, the scholars wrote huge and voluminous books containing long biographical notes about the narrators. These books contain all the possible information about narrators and there is more stress on the collection of the remarks of the scholars about the
narrators. Chains of the remarks were omitted but the earlier books were accepted as the chains for these remarks. *Tahdhib al Tahdhib* of Ibn Ḥajar al ‘Asqalānī is the best example of this group.

There are also other finer divisions of the *jaraḥ* and *taʿdīl* books. These groups are:

1. **General Books**
   - Books based on question answers
     E.g., *Suwālāt Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān ibn Abū Shībah* by ʿAlī ibn al Madīnī, *Suwālāt al Burqānī* by Dār al Qūṭnī etc.
   - Books discussing grades (*al Tabaqāt*)
     E.g., *Ṭabaqāt al Kubrā* by Muḥammad ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* by Muslim ibn al Ḥajjāj etc.
   - Biography and History Books (*al Tārīkh*)

2. **Special Books**

These books were written on a particular aspect of the narrators and the narrators were mostly evaluated with respect to that particular aspect. Some of the most famous groups of these special books along with some examples are:
• Books containing only weak and controversial narrators, e.g. *al Du'afā’ al Saghir* by Imam al Bukhārī, *al Majrūhīn min al Muḥaddithīn* by Ibn Hibbān etc.

• Books containing only authentic narrators e.g. *Ma‘rifah al Thiqāt* by Ḥāfiz ‘Ijlī, *al Thiqāt* by Ibn Hibbān etc.

• Books containing local history—these books incidentally contain descriptions about the *muḥaddithūn* and ‘ulamā’ of that area—e.g. *Tārīkh Baghdad* by Khaṭṭāb al Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Dimishiq* by Ibn ‘Asākir etc.

• Books containing the narrators of a particular hadith compilation among six canonical ones e.g. *Rijāl Ṣaḥīh al Bukhārī* by Abū Naṣr Kalābādhi, *Rijal Ṣaḥīh Muslim* by Ibn Manjūyah etc.

• Books containing only those narrators that possess surnames (*Kuniyyah*) e.g. *al Kunā* by Imam al Bukhārī, *al Kunā wa al Asmā’* by Imam Muslim etc.

• Books containing only those narrators that possess epithet (*laqab*) e.g. *Nuzhah al Alqāb fī al Alqāb* by Ibn Ḥajar al ‘Asqalānī, *al Alqāb wa al Kunā* by Abū Bakr al Shīrāzī etc.

• Books containing the genealogy and pedigree of the narrators e.g. *Ansāb al Ashrāf* by Abū al Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn
Yahyā al Baladhurī, *al Faysal fī Mushtabah al Nisbah* by Imām Ḥāzmi Ḥāfīz Muḥammad ibn Mūsā etc.

- Books based on the dates of Birth and death of the narrators e.g. *al Wafiyyāt* by Abū al Ḥusayn al Bāqī, *Tārīkh Muwālid al Ruwāh wa Wafiyāthim* by Ḥāfīz Abū Sulaymān Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh etc.
- Geography books e.g. *Mu‘jam al Buldān* by Yāqūt al Ḥamawī etc.

**Ḥadīth Criticism and Muṭṭalah al Ḥadīth**

To describe any particular thing and the consensus of a particular group on the diction for it is called as Muṭṭalah. For every science and art, its scholars develop terminologies for it. Based on the *Isnād* System, *Asmā‘ al Rijāl, Jarah* and *Ta‘dil* scholars of *ḥadīth* literature also developed a system of terminologies for the different grades of *ḥadīth*, which is known as Muṭṭalah al Ḥadīth. It is actually a science that deals with the devising of the rules and principles for accepting or rejecting a *ḥadīth*.\(^1\) It was fourth century *Ḥijrī* when the religious sciences started to establish, and the terminology for *ahādīth* were

\(^1\) *Mu‘jam Iṣṭilāḥāt-i-Ḥadīth*, p. 37.
developed. It was Qāḍī Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd al Raḥmān ibn Khalād al Ramhurmuzī (c. 260/874-360/971) who wrote the first book, \textit{al Muḥaddith al Fāṣil Bayn al Rāwī wa al Wāʾī}, exclusively on this subject.\footnote{Dr. Mahmūd al Ṭabīb, \textit{Taysīr Muṣṭalah al Ḥadīth}, Delhi, Kutb Khānah Isha'at al Islām, n.d., pp. 10-11.} The science of Muṣṭalah is also called \textit{Uṣūl al Ḥadīth} or \textit{Ulūm al Ḥadīth}.\footnote{\textit{Mu’jam Iṣṭilāḥāt-i-Ḥadīth}, p. 85.}

The critics were able to grade the literary accuracy and personal character of the scholars. This grading resulted in the grading of \textit{ahādīth}. As per the rules of this science, \textit{ahādīth} can be graded into two categories,\footnote{\textit{Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature}, p. 61.} which are further subdivided into a number of sub-types. The two categories and their some of the most important types are:

1. Acceptable (\textit{Maqūl})
   i. \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ} (authentic)
      - \textit{Ṣaḥīḥ li Dhātihī} (authentic by itself)

\footnote{In recent past, \textit{al Muḥaddith al Fāṣil} was edited and compared with four different manuscripts by the Head of Department of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, lecturer in \textit{Ḥadīth} and its Sciences Damascus University, Dr. Muḥammad ‘Ajāj al Khatīb. Dar al Fikr published its third edition in 1404/1983. The book is having footnotes by the editor and is based on 678 pages.}
• *Sahih* li Ghayrihi (authentic owing to presence of others)

ii. *Hasan* (agreeable)

  • *Hasan* li Dhätihī (agreeable by itself)
  
  • *Hasan* li Ghayrihi (agreeable owing to the existence of others)

2. Rejected (*Mardūd*)

i. Rejection owing to defects in narrator

  • *Al Mawdūʿ*
  
  • *Al Matruk*
  
  • *Al Munkar*
  
  • *Al Maʿrūf*
  
  • *Al Muʿallāl*
  
  • *Al Muʿallaq*

ii. Weakness owing to discontinuity of *Isnād*

  • *Al Muʿallaq*
  
  • *Al Mursal*
  
  • *Al Muʿḍal*
  
  • *Al Munqatūʿ*
  
  • *Al Mudallis*
  
  • *Al Muʿanʿan*

iii. Weakness owing to some incidental reasons

  • *Al Maqlūb*
Rational Approach in Ḥadīth Criticism

‘Ulūm al Ḥadīth can be divided into two types:

1. Riwāyah al Ḥadīth
2. Dirāyah al Ḥadīth

As for as the Riwāyah is concerned, it is based on the transmission and the relation of the aḥādīth, and also on the accuracy and writing of the saying ascribed to the Prophet; while Dirāyah is the discourse dealing with the narrated text of the hadīth from the accepting or rejecting point of view.¹¹⁵

Rational approach in Ḥadīth criticism is generally known as Dirāyah. The literal meaning of Dirāyah is "knowledge."¹¹⁶ It refers to the discourses dealing with the meaning and purpose of the words of a Ḥadīth based on Arabic rules and is in perfection with the law (shari'ah) and is corresponding with the status of the Prophet.¹¹⁷ This science is based on two parts:

1. Understanding of a Ḥadīth.
2. Criticism of the Ḥadīth.

¹¹⁵ Mu'jam Iṣṭilāḥāt-i-Ḥadīth, pp. 182-183.
¹¹⁶ Amīnī, op. cit., p. 15.
¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 17.
Dirāyah deals particularly with the text of the ḥadīth. It needs a great expertise to declare a ḥadīth forged or authentic just by having the text of the ḥadīth in consideration. According to Ibn Ṣalāḥ, sometime the forgery of a ḥadīth is known by the state of the chain or the text only. Words and meaning of many long ahādīth point towards its forgery because of their superficiality (rakākah). But to check a ḥadīth purely on the basis of the ‘Aql (Reason) is not welcomed in the circles of muḥaddithūn. Reason is limited and one cannot exclusively depend on it.

**Hadīth Literature in Twentieth Century**

Born in c. 1334/1916, Shaykh Nasir al Dīn al Albānī inclined towards the research in ḥadīth when he was only twenty. This comes around 1936 A.D. when he took the study of ḥadīth literature as his career. It was the time, when the Institution of Khilāfah was recently abolished by Muṣṭafā Kamāl Atā Turk in 1924. As is evident from the various books of the Shaykh he was much influenced by the changing political scenario of the then world. Therefore, it seems necessary to have a cursory

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118 Ibn Ṣalāḥ, *Muqaddimah*, quoted in *Ḥadīth kā Dirāyātī Mi’yār* by Muḥammad Taqī Amīnī, p. 179.


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glance at the world of his times with a special reference to *hadith* and its sciences.

The books and other literature of this period which are in defense of *hadith* and refute the arguments of *hadith* deniers, strongly echo the circumstances of the world in the field of *hadith* when Shaykh al Albānī was emerging as the future *muḥaddith* of Muslim Ummah. For example, we can feel the worst conditions of Muslim Ummah in the field of *hadith* literature in a chapter "*Hadīth and Sunnah*" of a famous book, *Islam at the Crossroads* authored by a great writer, traveler and explorer—Muḥammad Asad (Leopold Weiss: 1900-1992) spanning three continents and two civilizations—written in 1934. He writes:

> The slogan we so often hear in our days, "Let us go back to the Qur'an, but let us not be slavish followers of the Sunnah," merely betrays an ignorance of Islam. Those who speak so resemble a man who wishes to enter a place but does not wish to employ the genuine key which alone is fit to open the door....It has become a matter of fashion in our days to deny, in principle, the authenticity of *hadīth* and, therefore, of the whole structure of the Sunnah.¹²¹

He further says:

> In these days, when the influence of Western civilization makes itself more and more felt in Muslim Countries, one motive more is added to the strange attitude of the so-called "Muslim intelligentsia" in this matter. It is impossible to live

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¹²¹ Asad, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119.
according to the Sunnah of our Prophet and to follow the Western mode of life at one and the same time.\footnote{Ibid., p. 129.}

These two quotes from the book authored in 1934—it is two years before the inclination of Shaykh al Albānī towards the \textit{hadīth} literature—gives an awful picture of the Muslim "intellectuals" and the position of \textit{hadīth} in Islamic religious sciences in those times.

In 1954 A.D. 'The Academy of Islamic Studies', Hyderabad-Dn., India published "a critical resume of views advanced by scholars of the world on the memorandum of the Academy suggesting the need for a fresh examination of the \textit{Hadith} literature." this critical resume was later published under the title \textit{Towards Reorientation of Islamic Thought: A Fresh Examination of the Hadith Literature}. The main countries that reacted to the note of the Academy are Canada, Egypt, England, France, India, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon (Beirut), Pakistan, Scotland, Singapore, Sudan, Turkey, U.S.A. etc.

The Academy moved a note adopted by the Council of the Academy of Islamic Studies among the "leading Muslim scholars, publicist, legislators and administrators in the different parts of the world suggesting the need for a fresh approach on scientific lines to the study of the \textit{hadīth} literature and the codification by a
body of competent scholars, representative of the entire Islamic world, of a single authorized corpus of the authentic ahādīth of the Prophet as an aid to the study of the Qur'ānic Muḥkamāt" in the context of the then world. Among six main issues suggested, the following two were the most significant:

- The need for enquiry and research in the hadīth literature and the codification of a single authorized corpus of the ahādīth of the Prophet;
- The method of approach.

The views of these different scholars from various countries can be listed into five groups, which point towards five major undercurrents in the then world with respect to hadīth and its authoritative nature:

1. Those who favored the status quo, "the out-and-out traditionists, who ever prefer a return to a stricter form of traditional Islam."  

2. Those who rejected the entire gamut of hadīth as apocryphal and of no consequence to Islam. The Qurān was enough for them.

3. There was a school of thought which was out to discard the entire framework of the "traditional Islam as built in the

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124 Idem.
125 Ibid., p. 2.
course of history by the inter-action of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, and rest content with 'the spirit or essence' of Islam." This was by no means a negligible trend. It had already taken a concrete form in Turkey and began to extend its influence in other parts of the Muslim world. It was a part of a wider "intellectual" movement, which aimed to separate law from the religion and secularize social life and Islamic Law.  

4. Those who favored the proposal of the Academy. They considered that it "is a body of thought which oscillates between its sentimental regard for the traditional Islam and its intellectual fascination for Westernization. Those who find themselves in this uncomfortable position wish to 'combine modernity with maintenance of internal tradition.'"  

5. Christian scholars who had evidenced a sympathetic interest in the proposal.  

These were the different trends and movements going in the world regarding the ṣaḥāḥāt and its allied branches. When the Academy of Islamic Studies of Hyderabad-Dn., India was working on this "critical Resume" at the same time Shaykh al

\[^{126}\] Idem.  
\[^{127}\] Ibid., pp. 2-3.  
\[^{128}\] Ibid., p. 30.  
\[^{129}\] Ibid., p. 3.  
\[^{130}\] Ibid., p. 32.  

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Albānī was busy in giving two weekly classes which were attended by highly educated persons, university teachers and students in which he taught various books on ‘Aqīdah, fiqh, ‘Ulūm al Ḥadīth etc. These lectures were started before 1373/1954. These lectures expanded the da‘wah circle of the Shaykh and bore good results. He reacted to the different views and wrote articles, treatises and books to defend the Ḥadīth literature.

In addition to above, it is very interesting that the orientalists showed much passion towards discussing and writing on the oriental sciences and issues. Islam was no exception to them. They wrote on almost all the arts and the religious sciences of the Muslims but they came closer to science of Ḥadīth very late. The first book on Ḥadīth from the orientalists was written by Ignas Goldziher (1850-1921) and was titled as Muslim Studies. This book was published in 1890. After him, Professor Schacht (b. 1902) published two more books The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence and An Introduction of Islamic Laws. In this period, A. Guillaume wrote The Traditions of Islam. Professor Robson translated Mishkāh al Maṣābiḥ. A.J. Wensinck compiled eight volumes of Ḥadīth Concordance under the title Concordance et

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 Indices de la Tradition Musulmane. Similarly, the trend gained the momentum but Ignas Goldziher and Professor Schacht's works became the basic sources.

They wrote a lot about the hadīth literature but did not treat it as a source of Divine Law. Misinterpreted the definitions, and took many of the aḥādīth literally to malign and tear the fiber of Islam in general and that of ḥadīth literature in particular. Unfortunately, this was the time when no Muslim scholar wrote on this topic in western languages and the West regarded these orientalists as the unchallengeable authorities on the subject. This created chaos and confusion in the minds of the readers.

Therefore, it is clear that all these above-mentioned persons stand for different characters and represent various trends, which were going on in the Muslim Ummah with respect to Islamic theology in general, and hadīth and Sunnah in particular. In these awful circumstances a Syrian hadīth scholar, Shaykh Muḥammad Nāṣir al Dīn al Albānī, came to the fore and distinguished the chaff from the wheat.