Methodology in Islamic History

Transliteration key

ء - ' أ إ

آ - ā

ب - b

ت - t

ث - th

ج - j

ح - ḥ

خ - kh

د - d

ذ - dh

ر - r

ز - z

س - s

ش - sh

ص - ṣ

ض - ḍ

ط - ṭ

ظ - ẓ

ع - ʿ

غ - gh

ف - f

ق - q

ك - k

ل - l

م - m

ن - n

و - w, ū

ه - h

ي - y, ī

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Methodology in Islamic History

The Causes of Interpolation in Islamic History

I. Reasons that led to fabrications in narrations

Various early attempts to cloud Islamic history resulted in hesitation in accepting all historical narrations on face value. This further resulted in the non-acceptance of some narrations of our early historians which were contaminated by falsities.

Ibn al-ʿArabī, motivated by this, opted for a methodology of scrutiny in his book *al-ʿAwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim* in studying an important era of Islamic history; the era of the Rightly Guided Khulafāʾ and early stages of the Umayyad dynasty. He uncovered some of the untrue perceptions that had become synonymous with that time period and exposed many of the lies that were directed against the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, specifically against ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.[1]

Ibn Taymiyyah has mentioned the following causes for these lies and fabrications in narrations:

1. Hereticism and apostasy in the faith of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى.
2. Justification of desires and factions.
3. Advices and admonitions.
4. Worldly objectives and materialistic ambitions.
5. Love for positions by narrating obscure aḥādīth.[2]

Ibn Khaldūn had authored his *Muqaddimah* primarily to develop a criterion upon which the historian can rely on in addressing the certainties of history. A criterion to assist in realising what holds probabilities of truth and possibilities of acceptance, and what doesn't; thereby rejecting lies and fabrications.

Ibn Khaldūn had mentioned the following reasons that led to fabrications and lies in narrations:

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1 Ibn al-ʿArabī: *Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim,* pgs. 61-108

2 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā,* vol. 18 pg. 46.

1. *Confirmation bias*[1], i.e. the tendency to favour information in a way that confirms one's pre-existing beliefs; a type of cognitive bias and a systematic error of inductive reasoning. If one is neutral and impartial in accepting narrations, he will give each narration its due right of scrutiny and study to conclude its acceptance or dismissal. On the other hand, if one is biased to accept a particular narration or is overtaken by prejudice due to his pre-existing notions, he will lean towards such narrations that conform to his view. This becomes a breeding ground for accepting and narrating lies.

2. *Blindly relying on narrators.*[2] This is caused by not carrying out due diligence in investigating the character of the narrator and blindly accepting what he narrates.

3. *Being oblivious of intent*[3]. This is due to the narrator not being aware of the objective behind what he has heard or narrated whilst under the impression of the veracity of what he narrates.

4. *Ignorance in applying conditions to occurrences due to the deceit and exaggerations introduced. The narrator thus recalls and incident using hyperbole.*[4] Some of the story tellers would take advantage of the ignorance of people with regards to the laws natural phenomena are subject to. They would then distort facts and create delusions to achieve their purposes. The historian that would come across such exaggerated or made up incidents would fall for it and narrate it without meaning to spread lies.

5. *Hoping to gain proximity to people of influence and status.*[5] A sycophant would attempt to get close to the people of power, influence, and wealth by spreading fabricated narrations in order to appease them.

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1 Ibn Khaldūn: *Muqaddimah*, pg. 35.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., pg. 35.

People of scant piety have done this to further their own agendas or fulfil their purposes. Ghayyāth ibn Ibrāhīm is an example of such sycophancy. He came to Muḥammad al-Mahdī ibn Abī Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr, the ʿAbbāsī khalīfah, who had a pigeon. In order to garner a reward, he narrated the following ḥadīth:

> Prize money is allowed only for racing camels, shooting arrows, or racing horses.[1]

He added on the words *Aw Janāḥ*, i.e. 'or birds'. Upon hearing this al-Mahdī fixed a sum of reward for him. When he left, al-Mahdī stated his lie and ordered the pigeon be slaughtered.[2]

Another example of this is when Hārūn al-Rashīd came to Madīnah Munawwarah. He found it disrespectful to ascend the pulpit of Rasūlullāh ﷺ whilst wearing a coat and a waist tie. Qāḍī Abū al-Bakhtarī stated a ḥadīth at this juncture wherein there is mention of Rasūlullāh ﷺ wearing the same. Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn, who was present, belied him in front of everyone.[3]

6. *The ignorance of the historians regarding the nature of civilizations.* Ibn Khaldūn was of the opinion that every phenomenon that occurred be it in relation to individuals or society, were ruled by certain laws. Individual phenomena were governed by the laws of physics and more specifically by its relevance to the human, animal, and plant condition. Ibn Khaldūn has criticized the historians who had no knowledge of these sciences. The result would be relating incidents that were scientifically impossible. An example of this is what Masʿūdī has recorded of the building of the city of *Nuḥās* (copper) with material from the dessert of Sijilmassa.[4]

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1 *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī*: Ḥadīth: 1700.

2 Ibn Ḥibbān: *Al-Majrūḥīn min al-Muḥaddithīn wa al- Ḍuʿafā' wa al-Matrūkīn*, vol.1 pg. 33; Ibn al-Jawzī: *Al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍuʿah.* vol. 1 pg. 42.

3 Ibn Ḥibbān: *Al-Majrūḥīn*, vol. 1 pg. 23; Ibn al-Jawzī: *Al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍuʿah*, pg. 5.

4 Ibn Khaldūn: *Muqaddimah*, pg. 37.

As for societal phenomena, he refers to the norms, customs, wealth, poverty, knowledge, ignorance, population growth, and state values.

Ibn Khaldūn critiques those historians who erred in happenings connected to numerical values such as the amount of military troops or taxed wealth. Some people have a penchant for inflating numbers, enumerating accounts that simply does not make any sense and goes against the laws of population growth, as done by al-Masʿūdī in putting the army of the Banū Isrāʾīl at 60 000 when Mūsa عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامْ counted them in the Tīh valley. This was done knowing well that there were only four generations between Mūsa عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامْ and Yāqūb عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامْ, i.e. it would not have been possible for the Banū Isrāʾīl to grow from a few individuals to such a large number in just four generations. Ibn Khaldūn has proposed to consider the nature of civilization in attesting to historical records as a primary measure with scrutinising narrators a secondary measure. He writes:

> This is the best and most authentic manner in which traditions can be scrutinised and the true differentiated from the false. Screening the narrators will not be done until the possibility of the account is established. If the occurrence of such is not possible it will be futile to then look at the strengths or ills of the narrators.[1]

Though this approach is broadly acceptable, some exceptions ought to be made as there are many traditions that have been narrated by authentic and reliable narrators that go against the norm. With the accepted conditions, such occurrences will be regarded as *karāmāt* (supernatural wonders performed by the pious). The safest, would be to accept such narrations and not place them beyond the realm of possibility.

The importance of the approach of Ibn Khaldūn cannot be overstated; however, it should be emphasised that the methodology adopted by the muḥaddithīn in narrating incidents is better and far more accurate.

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1 Ibid.

Bringing together these methodologies and making them work concurrently by creating a unique gauge that inculcates the logical and societal approach of Ibn Khaldūn, the methodology of the muḥaddithīn, and that of the historians which conform to Islamic principles will result in a monumental service to the field of Islamic history. It will eliminate the mistakes found in historical narrations and expose the reasons of fabrications therein. It will further assist the historian in adopting regulations that will limit falling into errors that are caused by blindly accepting all historical accounts.

II. Cause of fabrications in the early Islamic years

It is imperative for one studying Islamic history—especially the early era—to understand the need to remove the debris of delusions, innovations, and prejudice—that stems from internal bias and aligning to a school of thought—from the pristine history of Islam. All the above and other factors led the liars and fabricators to attempt spoiling the untainted accounts of history. Looking at fabrications in the aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, one will understand the need to sift and scrutinise. There were so many liars implicated, that the erudite scholars were forced to write voluminous books on the weak and rejected narrators.[1]

Furthermore, historical accounts and narrations were codified only after the emergence of different schools of thought and after the rise of innovators and heretics. This had an undeniable effect on historical records, as one of the causes of fabrications is the fervent desire of innovators and heretics to call others to their cause. Many of those with political aspirations were part and parcel of this with the intent of furthering their goals.

The Islamic Empire spread to cover vast amounts of land during the era of the Rightly Guided Khulafā' with the Muslims conquering territory after territory. This outraged the disbelievers who plotted against the Muslims. In the beginning

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1 Books such as *Al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa al-Matrūkīn* of al-Nasaʾī, *Al-Ḍuʿafāʾ* of al-ʿUqaylī, *Al-Majrūḥīn* of Ibn Ḥibbān, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Ḍuʿafāʾ* of Ibn ʿAdī, and *Al-Mīzān* of al-Dhahabī.

they confronted the Muslims on the battlefield seeking to destroy them. This proved fruitless, suffering defeats in major campaigns such as Qādisiyyah, Nahāwand, Tustar, and others. They then infiltrated the Muslims, outwardly accepting the Islamic faith with the sole purpose of causing divisions amongst the Muslims and destroying the Muslims from inside out. Ibn Ḥazm says:

> The Persians were a superpower having the upper hand over other nations, holding themselves as sublime and royal. They would call themselves 'the liberated' and 'the sons' considering all others their slaves. When their kingdom was taken away by the Arabs, they were astounded and bewildered at this great loss. They attempted to wage war against the Muslims on various occasions, without much luck. They then infiltrated the Muslims with a group, outwardly accepting the Islamic faith, whilst joining the ranks of the Shīʿah. They made a show of love for the Ahl al-Bayt and raised a hue and cry about the oppression of ʿAlī ﷺ. They then walked the treacherous path misguiding others, taking them out of the fold of Islam.[1]

Amongst their schemes, aimed at Islam, was introducing false narrations and spreading false rumours that was designed to distort and tarnish the lives of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ. Questioning their integrity and reliability would lead to questioning the legitimacy of the Islamic faith. Furthermore, tarnishing the life and character of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ was in turn an avenue to tarnish Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Imām Mālik says:

> These people—the Rawāfiḍ and the heretics of their persuasion—disparage the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ so that one might say, 'An evil man with evil Companions. If he was pious his Companions would have been pious.'[2]

It is important to note that hands of the deviants in the past had attempted to make Islamic history a play thing for themselves. The Jews, Christians, Shīʿah, and Majūs who had characterized Islam whilst remaining on disbelief made efforts to

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1 Ibn Ḥazm: *Al-Faṣl fī al-Milal wa al-Ahwāʾ wa al-Niḥal*, vol. 2 pg. 115.

2 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 4 pg. 429.

skew Islamic history. Some of the Persians joined the ranks of the Shīʿah, assumed their school of thought, and made a show of love for the Ahl al-Bayt with the goal of spreading falsehood and views that clashed with Islam. Their pretence of standing by the Ahl al-Bayt was a guise to continue their efforts in undermining the Islamic cause.

Their ideologies and slogans leave no doubt that this group merely posed as Muslims in order to cause damage to the faith and spread mischief within it. At their inception, proclaiming their ideologies was problematic due to which they enclosed it within the pretence of love for the Ahl al-Bayt. They attributed false statements to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the Ahl al-Bayt to this end. Such acts were carried out by the likes of Mughīrah ibn Saʿīd and Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Muḥammad ibn Abī Zaynab.

Another group of Persian heretics joined the Muslim ranks going along with others who had done so. They pretended to enter the faith of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى whilst their hearts were bereft of faith. One reason for this is that they were well respected individuals before the Muslim conquests of their lands. With the fall of their lands and the abolishment of the master-slave society they became a forgotten bunch. This led to hate against Islam being deeply ingrained within them which fuelled the fire of malice and they attempted to widen the gap of differences amongst the Muslims whenever the chance arose. They pushed their false beliefs and fabricated narrations which they presumed was sufficient to tarnish the lives of the foregone pious individuals. Amongst this group was the likes of ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Abī al-ʿAwjāʾ who admitted to fabricating four thousand aḥādīth[1] before being put to death by Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī.

Another cause of fabrications was the immense discord and difference of opinion that followed the fitnah—after the murder of ʿUthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ—which triggered a break in Islamic civilization, the effects of which we feel to this day. Out of this fitnah hatred and hostility grew. Lies and fabrications spread. These happenings

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1 See, Ibn al-Jawzī: *Al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍuʿah*, vol. 1 pg. 37; Al-ʿIrāqī: *Al-Fatḥ al-Mugīth fī sharḥ alfiyah al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 127.

were exacerbated by the political climate that was a result of the conflicts between the Muslims at Jamal, Ṣiffīn, and Naharwān; as these were the starting point of the emergence of many political parties such as the Shīʿah and the Khawārij. The texts of the Qurʾān and Aḥādīth did not provide any assistance for their cause which led them to lying. Thus, some of the Shīʿah fabricated aḥādīth on the virtue of ʿAlī رَضِيَﷲَﻋَﻨﻪ and criticism of Muʿāwiyah رَضِيَﷲَﻋَﻨﻪ.[1] Similarly, those opposed to them fabricated aḥādīth on the virtue of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and Muʿāwiyah رَضِيَﷲَﻋَﻨﻬﻢ; an effort to refute those who criticized them.[2] These fabrications—citing the virtue of some or a number of Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَﷲَﻋَﻨﻬﻢ—which were resorted to when vilifying the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَﷲَﻋَﻨﻬﻢ had become widespread.[3]

It should be borne in mind that most of the false narrations were fabricated in the 2nd and 3rd century AH. However, these fabricated narrations largely dealt with matters that occurred in the first half of the 1st century of Islam. It ought to be noted that Iraq, especially Kūfah, was a hub for creating and narrating fabricated aḥādīth as it was the city that bore the brunt of war with the Syrians, a result of ʿAlī رَضِيَﷲَﻋَﻨﻪ taking it as his capital. It further remained a centre of opposition for the Umayyad dynasty.

It is common that fabrications of ḥadīth and reports are a reflection of the ideological and political struggles between different groups. The focal point of the debate (at that time) between the opposing groups was the matter of khilāfah. This was the reason that some of these groups resorted to fabricating narrations in an atmosphere fraught with political hatred.

The multitude of fabricated narrations stemming from Kūfah, the centre of the Shīʿah, gave way to a bad portrayal of Iraq which was a hub of knowledge and

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1 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Muntaqā fī Minhāj al-Iʿtidāl*, pg. 313; Al-Ṣuyūṭī: *Al-Laʾālī al-Maṣnūʿah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍuʿah*, vol. 1 pg. 343.

2 Al-Ṣuyūṭī: *Al-Laʾālī al-Maṣnūʿah*, vol. 1 pg. 286/315; Ibn ʿIrāq: *Tanzīh al-Sharīʿah al-Marfūʿah ʿan al-Akhbār al-Shanīʿah al-Mawḍuʿah*, vol. 1 pg. 371.

3 Al-Ṣuyūṭī: *Al-Laʾālī al-Maṣnūʿah*, vol. 1 pg. 428; Al-Karmī: *Al-Fawāʾid al-Mawḍuʿah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍuʿah*, pg. 92.

ḥadīth at the time. This resulted in the waning of their academic reputation in the Islamic world. Ponder over the following proclamation of Sayyidah ʿĀ'ishah رَضِيَاللَّهعَنْهَا:

يا أهل العراق أهل الشام خير منكم . خرج إليهم نفر من أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كثير ،
فحدثونا ما نعرف ، وخرج إليكم نفر من أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قليل ، فحدثتمونا بما
نعرف وما لا نعرف

O people of Iraq! The people of Shām are better than you. Many of the Companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ went to them and they narrated to us what we are aware of. And very few of the Companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to you, yet you narrate to us what we are aware of and what we are unaware of.[1]

A group of Iraqis came to ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ رَضِيَاللَّهعَنْهُ in Makkah asking him to narrate to them. He said to them:

إن من أهل العراق قوما يكذبون ويكذبون ويسخرون

There are people in Iraq who lie and belie, and mock.[2]

Al-Zuhrī says:

إذا سمعت بالحديث العراقي فاردد به ثم اردد به

When you hear of an Iraqi ḥadīth reject it, then reject it (again).[3]

Imām Mālik too, warns just as the other scholars warned of the narrations originating from Iraq. He has classified their status the same as the narrations from the Ahl al-Kitāb; their narrations are neither ratified nor rejected.[4] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī once commented to him that he hears more ḥadīth in Iraq in a single day than what he hears in Madīnah Munawwarah in forty. The Imām replied:

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1 Al-Fasawī: *Al-Maʿrifah wa al-Tārīkh*, vol. 2 pg. 756.

2 Ibn Saʿd: *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā'*, vol. 4 pg. 267.

3 Al-Fasawī: *Al-Maʿrifah wa al-Tārīkh*, vol. 2 pg. 757.

4 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Muntaqā fī Minhāj al-Iʿtidāl*, pg. 88.

<div dir="rtl">
من أين لنا دار الضرب السكة التي عندكم تضربون بالليل وتنفقون بالنهار
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We do not have a mint—as you people have—minting by night and spending by day.[1]

Ibn Taymiyyah says with regards to this:

> Most of the partisans of personal opinion were from Kūfah together with them subscribing, deeply, to the Shīʿah movement and fabricating numerous narrations.[2] No other city had the amount of liars they had. There were many therein who were famed as liars during the era of the Tābiʿīn. This rings especially true to the Shīʿah who hold the title for the most amount of liars by the consensus of the men of knowledge. It is for this reason that Imām Mālik and others of Madinah would not cite proofs from the general aḥādīth originating from Iraq.[3]

Based on what has previously been mentioned, it could be said that the popularity of fabricating narrations gained traction owing to the political climate present in Iraq at the time. The rift between the different groups ran much deeper after the incident of Ṣiffīn. The separation of the Shīʿah and the Khawārij from the general populous had become distinct from then on. The Shīʿah played the greatest role in undertaking the effort to spread fabrications as lying had become entrenched in them; more so than any other group of the faith. Furthermore, Iraq had become home to bloody rebellions that continued to breakout throughout the Umayyad reign. Thus, emerged their predilection for fabricated narrations to further political goals.

Another reason for fabricating narrations was the adoption of the Shīʿah faith by Arabs who lied, championing the—false and unsolicited—cause of the Imām's of the Ahl al-Bayt with the purpose of gaining seats of leadership. Keeping this goal in front of them, they justified fabricating narrations and incidents to support the opposing view to undermine and damage the Umayyad khilāfah.

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1 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Muntaqā*, pg. 88.

2 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Majmūʿ Fatāwā*, vol. 10 pg. 358.

3 Ibid., vol. 20 pg. 316.

This can be understood from the following proposition of al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī to a man of ḥadīth:

ضع لي حديثا عن النبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أني كائن بعده خليفة وطالب ثأر ولده يقصد الحسين وهذه عشرة آلاف درهم وخلعة ومركوب وخادم فقال الرجل أما عن النبي صلى الله عيله و سلم فلا و لكن اختر من شئت من الصحابة و أحطك من الثمن ما شئت قال عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم أوكد قال و العذاب أشد

Mukhtār said, "Fabricate for me a ḥadīth from Rasūlullāh ﷺ that states I will emerge after him as a khalīfah seeking to avenge his son—meaning Ḥusayn رضى الله عنه—in lieu of ten thousand dirhams, a robe, a conveyance, and a servant."

The man said, "As for fabricating it from the Nabī ﷺ then this I cannot do. However, choose whoever you want from the Ṣaḥābah, and lessen from the fee whatever you wish ."

Mukhtār replied, "A narration from the Nabī ﷺ holds more weight."

The man responded, "The punishment is far worse."[1]

Whereas the following narration is authentically established from Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

In Thaqīf there will be a great liar and destroyer.[2]

And the liar was Mukhtār.[3]

Another reason for fabricating narrations was the spread of lies with the purpose of discrediting the third khalīfah of Islam and the third of the Ṣaḥābah رضى الله عنه in status, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān رضى الله عنه.[4] This plan was hatched by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saba', the Jew, and his co-conspirators.

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1 Ibn al-Jawzī: *Al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍuʿah*, vol. 1 pg. 39.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (with the commentary of Al-Nawawī), vol. 16 pg. 100.

3 Al-Nawawī: *Sharḥ Muslim*, vol. 16 pg. 100

4 Al-Ṭabarī: *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk*, vol. 4 pg. 340.

Ibn Saba' was instrumental in conjuring lies against ʿUthmān ﷺ and inciting people against him. The Shīʿah narrators gobbled up his lies with historians relating them to this day. He was the one who established the principles of the Shīʿah; *al-Rajʿah, Al-Waṣiyyah, al-Ghaybah*, and cursing the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ.[1] He used these concepts to reach his goal, exploiting the love of the Ahl al-Bayt that every believer has and their position which every believer attests to. He created the—untrue—impressions of loving, assisting, and gaining closeness to them. He thus claimed such false things in their favour which the Ahl al-Bayt were the first to reject.

Another reason that led to fabrications was the delay of codification of history. Not much thought was given to it by the Muslims until the ʿAbbāsīd khilāfah. The distant time-line between the occurrence of incidents its codification had a profound effect in skewing historical incidents which narrators were charged with bearing. This was especially problematic as the time period before codification was one of dark trials that led to many factions within the Muslims. There were the Bakriyyah, ʿUmariyyah, ʿUthmāniyyah, ʿAlawiyyah, ʿAbbāsiyyah, and others. Each convinced of their own truth and the falsehood, oppression, and illegitimacy of all others.[2]

This problem was compounded due to the fact the ʿAbbāsīd dynasty did not look favourably to those that narrated the good of the Banū Umayyah. Thus, codifying Islamic history was taken up by three groups. Firstly, there were those who sought luxury and riches by gaining closeness to those who resented the Banū Umayyah through their writings. Secondly, there were those who considered the codification of history as incomplete and of no reward without distorting the image of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān ﷺ, and the Banū ʿAbd al-Shams. Thirdly and lastly, there were historians who were unbiased and men of true faith such as al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ʿAsākir, and Ibn Kathīr. They were of the opinion that impartiality would dictate gathering the narrations of all schools of thought even the

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1 See, Al-Qummī: *Al-Maqālāt wa al-Firaq*, pg. 20; Al-Ashʿarī: *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, vol. 1 pg. 85; Al-Sharastanī: *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, vol. 1 pg. 15; Al-Kirmānī: *Al-Firaq al-Islāmiyyah*, pg. 34.

2 Ibn al-ʿArabī: *Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim*, pg. 246.

narrations of narrators such as Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā—the Shīʿah extremist—and Sayf ibn ʿUmar al-ʿIrāqī—the abuser. Perhaps some were forced to be inclusive to appease avenues of power and status.[1]

These scholars included the chain of transmission for every narration so that the one studying their works would have the ability to ascertain the authenticity of each narrator. They thus left us a legacy. Not a compilation of our history. Rather a legacy through which we can extract our history by studying and reviewing its material. This is possible and simple for one who understands the weak and strong in these sources by using the yardstick afforded to us by the Sharīʿah. Through this one will extract historical actualities leaving behind fictitious accounts of the past. This will result in relying on the authentic narrations free from interpolations and fabrications. Referring to the books of ḥadīth and the observations of the scholars will make this task easy.

III. The effects of the Shīʿah in fabricating and twisting narrations

The scholars of al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl are unanimous that lying and fabricating is found to a much higher degree amongst the Shīʿah than any other. One studying the books of al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl dealing with the narrators' names and conditions such as the books of al-Bukhārī, Ibn Maʿīn, Ibn ʿAdī, al-Dāraquṭnī, and other such masters of this science will soon come to the realisation that there is consensus on the following: Amongst all the different sects, lying is found to a much greater degree amongst the Shīʿah. It is said that they are greater liars than the Khawārij. Hereunder are some quotations from the erudite scholars of ḥadīth and fiqh who clearly state that lying and fabricating goes hand in hand with the Shīʿah.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī narrates with his chain of narration to Ibn al-Mubārak:

> Abū ʿIsmah asked Abū Ḥanīfah, "Whom do you command me to listen to?" He replied, 'From every impartial person except the Shīʿah as their main goal is to discredit the Companions of Muḥammad ﷺ."[2]

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1 Muḥib al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb: Footnotes of Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-Qawāṣim, pg. 177.

2 Al-Khaṭīb: Al-Kifāyah fī ʿilm al-Riwāyah, pg. 303.

Ḥammād ibn Salamah says that a Shaykh of the Shīʿah narrated to him:

> When we would gather and consider something good, we would make it a ḥadīth.[1]

Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd al-Aṣfahānī says, I heard Sharīk saying:

> Take knowledge from everyone you meet except the Rawāfiḍ as they fabricate ḥadīth and adopt it as religion.[2]

Yūnus ibn ʿAbd al- Aʿlā says, Ashhab said:

> Mālik was asked regarding the Rawāfiḍ. He said, "Do not speak to them and do not narrate from them as they are liars."[3]

ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mubarak says:

> Religion is for the people of ḥadīth. Loopholes and theology is for the people of opinions and lying is for the Rawāfiḍ.[4]

Ḥarmalah says, I heard al-Shafiʿī saying:

> I have not seen anyone lying more than the Rawāfiḍ.[5]

The Shīʿah made lying their salient feature and gave it a religious wrapping calling it Taqiyyah. They say:

> The one who does not do Taqiyyah has no faith.

They then falsely attribute this narration to Muḥammad al-Bāqir; a slander no less.[6] ʿAlī ﷺ and the Ahl al-Bayt complained much of them and their lies as they would attribute lies to them.

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1 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 1 pg. 66.

2 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Muntaqā*, pg. 22.

3 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Muntaqā*, pg. 21.

4 Ibid., pg. 480.

5 Al-Khaṭīb: *Al-Kifāyah fī ʿilm al-Riwāyah*, pg. 202.

6 Al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfī fī al-Uṣūl*, chapter of Taqiyyah, vol. 2 pg. 19.

Abū ʿAmr al-Kashshī records that Abū ʿAbd Allāh Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq said:

قال أبو عبد الله جعفر الصادق إنا أهل بيت صادقون لا نخلو من كذاب يكذب علينا فيسقط صدقنا بكذبه علينا عند الناس كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أصدق البرية لهجة وكان مسيلمة يكذب عليه وكان أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب أصدق من برأ الله من بعد رسول الله وكان الذي يكذب عليه عبد الله بن سبأ لعنه الله وكان أبو عبد الله الحسين بن علي قد ابتلي بالمختار الثقفي ثم ذكر علي بن الحسين فقال كان يكذب عليه أبو عبد الله بن الحارث الشامي وبنان ثم ذكر المغيرة بن سعيد والسري وأبا الخطاب فقال لعنهم الله إنا لا نخلو من كذاب يكذب علينا كفانا الله مؤنة كل كذاب وأذاقهم الله حر الحديد ...

We the Ahl al-Bayt are truthful. We are not protected from liars who will attribute lies to us and tarnish our honesty with their falsehood. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was the most truthful and Musaylamah attributed lies to him. Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib was most truthful after Rasūlullāh ﷺ and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sabaʾ—may the curse of Allah be upon him—attributed lies to him. Similarly, Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī was tested by the falsities of Mukhtār al-Thaqafī. (Then mentioning ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn he said,) "Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥārith al-Shāmī and Bunān attributed lies to him. So did Mughīrah ibn Saʿīd, Sarī, Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, and others." He then said, "May Allah's curse be upon them, we are not protected from liars who will attribute lies to us; however, Allah ﷾ spared us the ill of every liar and punished them."[1]

The Shīʿah transgressed the bounds in fabricating aḥādīth and incidents that were conducive to their desires. Just as they fabricated aḥādīth on the virtue of the Ahl al-Bayt, they fabricated aḥādīth to vilify the Ṣaḥābah ﷢, especially Abū Bakr and ʿUmar ﷠. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd says in this regard:

Part of the abhorrent incidents recounted by the Shīʿah is the sending of Qunfudh to the home of Fāṭimah ﵍ and his hitting her with a whip which formed a welt around her upper arm. They also say that ʿUmar ﵁ pushed her between the door and wall upon which she cried, "O my father!" He then put a rope around the neck of ʿAlī ﵁ and dragged him with Fāṭimah ﵍ behind him screaming and his two children Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ﵄ crying. (Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd after mentioning many such abhorrent incidents

1 Al-Kashshī: *Al-Rijāl*, pg. 257.

says,) "All of these have no origin according to our scholars. They do not recognise its authenticity nor do the Ahl al-Ḥadīth narrate such. It is incidents that are solely narrated amongst the Shīʿah.[1]

Similarly, they fabricated narrations vilifying Muʿāwiyah رَضِيَاللهُعَنْهُ. An example of this is the narration attributed to Rasūlullāh صَلَّاللهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ:

When you see Muʿāwiyah on my pulpit then kill him.[2]

They narrated many other such fabrications with regards to the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللهُعَنْهُ.[3] This was done knowing full well that attributing lies to Rasūlullāh صَلَّاللهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ is greater in severity than attributing lies to anyone else.

Ibn Taymiyyah says regarding this:

The scholars have formed a consensus that the Rawāfiḍ are the greatest liars amongst the sects. Lying has been part of them since their inception. It is for this reason that they were renowned to the scholars by their great amount of lies. [4]

Concerning his refutation of ʿAlī ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī al-Rāfiḍī and his statement that all the Shīʿah narrators are reliable as in *Minhāj al-Karāmah*, Ibn Taymiyyah in *Minhāj al-Sunnah* states:

We heavily critique the narrators of the Ahl al-Sunnah and people of ḥadīth. We have many books dedicated to establishing their reliability, weakness, mistakes, and lies. We do not favour them at all, even though their lives are imbued with piety and worship. We discontinue using their narrations as proofs due to their weak memory and many mistakes, even

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1 Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd: *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgah*, vol. 1 pg. 135.

2 Al-Ṣuyūtī: *Al-Laʾālī al-Maṣnūʿah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍuʿah*, vol. 1 pg. 323.

3 Refer to the books authored in the field of fabricated narrations such as, *Al-Āthār al-Marfūʿah fī al-Akhbār al-Mawḍuʿah* of Al-Laknawī, *Al-Asrār al-Marfūʿah fī al-Akhbār al-Mawḍuʿah* of Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī, *Tanzīh al-Sharīʿah al-Marfūʿah ʿan al- Akhbār al-Shanīʿah al-Mawḍuʿah* of Ibn ʿIrāq, *Al-Fawāʾid al-Mawḍuʿah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍuʿah* of al-Karmī, and *Tadhkirah al-Mawḍūʿāt* of al-Fatnī.

4 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 1 pg. 66.

if they are illustrious pious men. You on the other hand, gauge reliability based on a narrator being an Imāmī not bothering if they had made mistakes, lied, or were correct and truthful. Most of what is in your scrolls and on your tongues are either lies or its authenticity unknown—like the tales of the Jews and Christians. Furthermore, the lies of the Rawāfiḍ are so considerable that it is used as a precedent. We know that the Khawārij are worse than you; yet we cannot accuse them of lying as we studied them and found them to be truthful in matters that conform to them and go against them. As for you people, truthfulness amongst you is a smear! The Ahl al-Sunnah and people of ḥadīth do not approve of lies even of it conforms to their desires. How much hasn't been narrated on the virtues of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and even Muʿāwiyah ﷺ amongst others with chains of narrations from the likes of Al-Naqqāsh, Al-Qaṭīʿī, Al-Thaʿlabī, Al-Ahwāzī, Abū Nuʿaym, Al-Khaṭīb, and Ibn ʿAsākir. The scholars of ḥadīth have not accepted any of these if they recognise a lie in it. The scholars went to the extent that if the chain of transmission had a single unknown narrator, they halted in accepting the ḥadīth. You though, determine the status of a ḥadīth based on its conformity to your ideas, be it strong or weak.[1]

It is important to note that a great majority of the narrators who have displayed hostility and related ill of khilāfah of ʿUthmān ﷺ are of the Shīʿah. Furthermore, none of those who witnessed these incidents reported anything of it, it is mere hearsay and lies upon lies. Many a time, such narrations will have been reported by one who is decades apart from its occurrence. These narrators together with their lies and being inviters towards their cause, are party to those incidents as they follow the group who lit the flames of the fitnah. They are furthering the Saba'ī cause by their speech and literary works just as their predecessors had done with body and spirit.

Hereunder are the comments of scholars of al-Jarḥ and al-Taʿdīl regarding some of the Shīʿah narrators. Narrators who are the primary source for historians and story tellers in relating incidents that occurred during the reign of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī ﷺ. Narrators that have skewed, dyed, and stretched incidents to spread

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1 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Muntaqā*, pg. 480.

the Shīʿī creed after having deceived people in the name of faith and love for the Ahl al-Bayt.

Three such narrators—narrators of *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* no less—are discussed below as an insight to the twisted version of history they have presented. It will also serve as a beginning point of those wishing to further delve into this topic as the books of al-Jarḥ and al-Taʿdīl are filled with the profiles of the Shīʿah. These Shīʿah narrators and their profiles have been gathered in a book called *Rijāl al- Shīʿah fi al-Mīzān*[1].

1. Abū Mihknaf Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā

» Abū Ḥātim says, "He is *Matrūk* (suspected of forgery)."[2]
» Al-Dāraquṭnī says, "*Ḍaʿīf* (weak)."[3]
» Ibn Maʿīn says, "*Laysa bi Thiqah* (not reliable)."
» Murrah says, "*Laysa bi Shayʾ* (He doesn't amount to much.)"[4]
» Ibn ʿAdī says, "A staunch Shīʿī who relates their incidents."[5]
» Abū ʿUbayd al-Ājurrī says, "I asked Abū Ḥātim regarding him in reply to which he dusted his hands and said, 'Can someone ask about such a man?'"[6]
» ʿUqaylī has included him in *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ*.[7]
» Al-Dhahabī says, "A foul story teller. Not to be relied upon."[8]

2. Hishām ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sāʾib al-Kalbī

» Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal says, "He was just a story teller. I don't think anyone would narrate from him."[9]

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1 A work of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd Allāh al-Zarʿī, published by Dār al-Arqam, Kuwait.

2 Ibn Abī Ḥātim: *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*, vol. 7 pg. 182.

3 Al-Dāraquṭnī: *Al-Ḍuʿafāʾ*, pg. 333.

4 Ibn Maʿin: *Al-Tārīkh*, vol. 2 pg. 500.

5 Ibn ʿAdī: *Al-Kamil fi Ḍuʿafāʾ al-Rijāl*, vol. 6 pg. 2110.

6 Ibn Ḥajar: *Lisān al-Mīzān*, vol. 4 pg. 492.

7 Al-ʿUqaylī: *Al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-Kabīr*, vol. 4 pg. 18.

8 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Mīzān*, vol. 3 pg. 419.

9 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: *Al-ʿIlal*, vol. 1 pg. 219.

- » Al-Dāraquṭnī says, "He is *Matrūk* (suspected of forgery)."[1]
- » Ibn ʿAsākir says, "A Rāfiḍī, not reliable."[2]
- » ʿUqaylī says, "He has weakness."[3]
- » Ibn al-Jārūd, Ibn al-Sakan, and others have included him amongst the weak narrators.
- » Al-Aṣmaʿī has accused him of lying.
- » Ibn Ḥibbān says, "He narrated from his father, Maʿrūf mawlā Sulaymān, and the people of Iraq strange incidents and stories that are baseless. He was a Shīʿī. His falsities are far more notorious than need to be dissected."[4]
- » Ibn ʿAdī says, Hishām al-Kalbī is known for storytelling, I do not know of any linked narration of his. His father was a great liar as well."[5]
- » Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn says, "He does not amount to much, a great liar."[6]
- » Al-Dhahabī says, "Hishām is not to be relied upon."[7]

3. Jābir ibn Yazīd al-Juʿfī

- » Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn says, "Jābir was a great liar." In another place he says, "His narrations are not to be written."[8]
- » Zāʾidah says, "As for al-Juʿfī, he was, by Allah, a great liar who believed in the doctrine of Rajʿah."[9]
- » Abū Ḥanīfah says, "I have not met anyone, ever, who lied more than Jābir al-Juʿfī. I did not present anything to him of my opinion except that he brought fought a narration in that regard."[10]

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1 Al-Dāraquṭnī: *Al-Ḍuʿafāʾ*, pg. 387.

2 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*, vol. 10 pg. 101.

3 Al-ʿUqaylī: *Al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-Kabīr*, vol. 4 pg. 339.

4 Ibn Ḥibbān: *Al-Majrūḥīn*, vol. 3 pg. 91.

5 Ibn ʿAdī: *Al-Kamil fi Ḍuʿafāʾ al-Rijāl*, vol. 6 pg. 2568.

6 Ibn Ḥajar from Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn: *Lisān al-Mīzān*, vol. 6 pg. 197.

7 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Mīzān*, vol. 4 pg. 305.

8 Ibn Ma 'in: *Al-Tārīkh*, vol. 3 pg. 364.

9 Ibn Maʿīn: *Al-Tārīkh*, vol. 3 pg. 281.

10 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Mīzān*, vol. 1 pg. 380.

» Al-Nasa'ī says, "He is *Matrūk* (suspected of forgery)."[1]

» Abū Dāwūd says, "I do not deem him as strong in his ḥadīth."[2]

» Al-Shafi'ī says, "I heard Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah saying, 'I heard the speech of Jābir al-Juʿfī and hastened out, fearing the roof would fall on us.'"[3]

» Yaḥyā ibn Yaʿlā says, "I heard Zā'idah saying, 'Jābir al-Juʿfī is a Rāfiḍī who vilifies the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ.'"[4]

» Ibn Ḥibbān says, "He was a Saba'ī from the companions of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saba'. He would say, 'ʿAlī will return to the world.'"[5]

» Al-Jūzajānī says, "A great liar."[6]

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1 Al-Nasa'ī: *Kitāb al-Ḍuʿafā' wa al-Matrūkīn*, pg. 71.

2 Al-Ājurrī: *Al-Su'ālāt*, pg. 180.

3 Ibn Ḥajar: *Al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 2 pg. 49.

4 Al-Dhahabī: *Al-Mīzān*, vol. 1 pg. 383.

5 Ibn Ḥibbān: *Al-Majrūḥīn*, vol. 1 pg. 208.

6 Al-Jūzajānī: *Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, pg. 50.

Methodology in Studying Islamic History

I. Methodology of authentication and ways of establishing the truth

A. Studying the *Sanad* (Chain of Narration)

Lexical meaning: Isnād literally means that which is relied upon,[1] it is so named because the *matn* (wording) of the ḥadīth relies upon it.[2]

Technical meaning: The chain of narrators who have transmitted a saying sequentially till they, by narration, reach its source of origin.[3]

The isnād is considered to be the backbone in Islamic methodology. It is the means to critiquing narrations. By identifying the narrators one will come to know the authenticity of the narration. The unbroken authentic chain of narration is one of the specialities of the Muslim Ummah which gives the advantage of reliability and confidence of what has been narrated in this manner. This advantage is understood as the chain of narrators reflect the witness of a group who are reliable, accurate, and upright which gives emphasis to the authenticity and accuracy of the narration.

Another advantage of the sanad is that narrations that have a sanad are far better than those that do not. A sanad will establish its source which lends us the ability to authenticate and verify it in a much superior manner than one would be able to do with narrations that have no sanad.[4] Thus, the objective of the sanad is authenticating texts and narrations together with sifting out fabrications and lies from them.

Due to the importance of isnād, its use is not restricted to the aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. It carries over to other sciences as well such as tafsīr, history, and

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1 Al-Fayruzābādī: *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥiṭ*.

2 Maḥmūd al-Ṭaḥḥān: *Uṣūl al-Takhrīj wa Dirāsah al-Asānīd*, pg. 157.

3 Fārūq al-Ḥamādah: *Al-Manhaj al-Islāmī fī al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*, pg. 231.

4 Akram Ḍiyā al-ʿUmrī: *Dirāsāt Tārikhiyyah*, pg. 26.

linguistics; which reveals a common attribute in the methodology of codification in the various Islamic fields of knowledge.

With regards to the subject of history, due to the isnād helping in establishing authentic narrations and critiquing others, the eminent scholars have expanded their efforts in gathering and codifying history with the chain of narrations. This applies to historical accounts as well as the Prophetic Sīrah. Abān ibn ʿUthmān, ʿUrwah ibn Zubayr, al-Zuhrī, Khalīfah ibn Khayyāṭ, Yaʿqūb ibn Sufyān al-Fasawī, Abū Zurʿah al-Dimashqī, al-Ṭabarī and others have adopted this methodology.

Focus on the isnād had taken hold early on, right after the fitnah in the era of ʿUthmān ﷜ and the emergence of various sects that had ulterior motives, both political and doctrinal. This was the cause for fabrications and lies, making use of such narrations, albeit false, to further their own objectives. This impelled the scholars to determine the source of narrations and querying the men who narrate them. This was in effect an extension of the commands of the Qurʾān and Aḥādīth in investigating information coming from the wayward—not the reliable—lest one causes harm or regrets. Allah ﷾ says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ أْمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ ۢ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا ۢ بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.[1]

In the same vain, Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

إياكم والظن فإن الظن أكذب الحديث

Beware of suspicion, for it is the worst of false tales.[2]

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1 Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt: 6.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Adab vol. 7 pg. 288; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Barr wa al-Ṣilah vol. 16 pg. 118.

<div dir="rtl">كفى بالمرء كذبا أن يحدث بكل ما سمع</div>

> It is enough for a man to prove himself a liar when he goes on narrating whatever he hears.[1]

Ibn Sīrīn says regarding the isnād:

> They would not ask about the isnād. But when the fitnah happened, they said, "Name to us your men." So the narrations of the Ahl al-Sunnah would be accepted, while those of the *Ahl al-Bidʿah* (adherents to innovation) would not be accepted.[2]

We see here, Ibn Sīrīn establishes the fitnah as the beginning point of investigating the isnād to authenticate aḥādīth and accounts. Prior to this they would not persist in asking regarding the chain of narrations; narrations were accepted on face value even though it be mursal by a reliable narrator.

This is also understood from the following statement of Ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ:

> Indeed, we used to narrate from Rasūlullāh ﷺ when no one would attribute lies to him. But when people began narrating all sorts without discernment we left narrating from him.[3]

Ibn ʿAbbās refers to this fitnah by saying people would just narrate everything that came to them. Therefore, what would not be known would not be accepted.

Ibn al-Mubārak says:

> Isnād is from the faith. If it was not for the isnād, anyone would have said whatever they wanted to.[4]

Al-Ḥākim commenting on this says,

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1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1 pg. 72.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1 pg. 84; Al-Jūzajānī: *Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, pgs. 35-36.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

If it wasn't for the isnād and this group querying it together with emphasising its importance by memorizing it, the symbols of Islam would have been obliterated and the innovators and heretics would have succeeded in the fabrication of narrations. Narrations without proper chains of transmission are defective.[1]

The efforts of the Muslim scholars in facing off against the fabrication of narrations was two sided: An approach of methodology and an approach of practice. The former was by adopting principles that revealed lies and the latter by expounding on the profiles of those who were accused of lying and mentioning it to people so that one may exercise caution.

Approach of Methodology

The principles in the methodology of critiquing narrations as laid down by the Muslim scholars had reached the pinnacle of human accuracy in ascertaining authenticity. This accuracy in methodology can be understood by studying the books that deal with the principles of criticizing and praising the narrators (*al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*), the meaning of terms used, the grade of each term from the highest levels of praise to the lowest level of criticism, and the conditions of accepting narrations. The scholars have stipulated two fundamental conditions:

1. Al- ʿAdālah: The narrator to be Muslim, mature, sane, truthful, free from immorality, and free from those attributes that are contrary to honour.

2. Al-Ḍabṭ: The narrator ought to have proficiency in what he narrates, have committed to memory the narration if he is narrating from memory, to have total confidence on his book if narrating from there, understanding the subject matter of what he is narrating, vigilant in what he narrates not oblivious of it.

Principles of Narration:

» The aversion of narrating from weak narrators, rather opting to narrate from trustworthy sources.

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1 *Maʿrifah ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 6.

- » The condition of truthfulness.
- » Weak-mindedness and lying will result in the loss of ʿadālah.
- » Similarly, not narrating from one who has become weak or unreliable.
- » One whose narrations mostly consist of obscurities, will not be deemed worthy of citing for proofs.
- » Not citing proofs from one whose narrations are riddled with mistakes.
- » Rejecting the narrations of the oblivious who are lax in what they narrate.
- » The aversion of narrating from immoral people.[1]

Approach of Practice

The principles of practice are manifest in profiling the narrators. The expert scholars have authored a great amount of books that deal with this. Some deal specifically with the reliable narrators whilst others deal with the weak ones. Some have elected to write on both categories in a single book. These books include the terms of praise or criticism that apply to each narrator. Hereunder are some of the books that are of this genre:

A. Books on the reliable narrators

- » *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* of Abū Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh Al- ʿIjlī.
- » *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* of ʿUmar ibn Aḥmad ibn Shāhīn.

B. Books on weak narrators

- » *Kitāb al-Ḍuʿafā al-Ṣaghīr wa al-Ḍuʿafā al-Kabīr* of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʾīl al-Bukhārī.
- » *Kitāb al-Ḍuʿafā wa al-Matrūkīn* of Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī.

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1 On the conditions and principles of narration refer to: Al-Khaṭīb: *Al-Kifāyah fī ʿilm al-Riwāyah*; Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ: *Al-Ilmāʿ ilā Maʿrifah Uṣūl al-Riwāyah wa Taqyīd al-Simāʿ*; Ibn Ṣalāḥ: *Maʿrifah ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth* more commonly known as *Muqaddimah Ibn Ṣalāḥ*; Ibn Ḥajar: *Nukhbah al-Fikr fī Muṣṭalaḥ ahl al-Athar*; Al-Subkī: *Qāʿidah fī al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*; Ẓafar Aḥmad al-Thānwī: *Qawāʿid fī ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*; Al-Qāsimī: *Qawāʿid al-Taḥdīth*.

C. Books on reliable and weak narrators

> » *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl* of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Ḥātim al- Rāzī.
> » *Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, *al-Awsat*, and *al-Ṣaghīr* of Imām al-Bukhārī.

There is no doubt that the books authored on the subjects of the Principles of Narration and the Narrators are a great service to the field aḥādīth. It is possible to benefit from these books, to an extent, in the field of Islamic history as well, as it reveals the principles of narration as well as the profiles of the narrators. This helps to differentiate the weak from the strong and the truthful from the liars. The researcher or historian can, by token of this, evaluate the strength of each narration resulting in relegating the weak and fabricated narrations together with making others aware, so that people may refrain from quoting such. As the goal in studying history is to become aware of the realities of the past, the researcher or historian will then expound on the authentic found therein.

B. Studying the *Matn* (Wording/Text of the Narration)

Lexical meaning: Matn: An elevation on the earth's surface.[1]

Technical meaning: The objective at which the sanad arrives at, consisting of speech.

Studying the matn means studying the text from different angles. This assists in authenticating the text by making sure:

- » It does not contravene any of the established principles of the sharīʿah.
- » It is not at odds with the nature of the era under discussion; the customs and practices of the people.
- » It is not contrary to the nature of things that are undeniable by successive historical accounts.
- » It does not consist of impossibilities, and so on.

Studying the matn is also aimed at understanding the text and its jurisprudic

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1 Al-Fayruzābādī: *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥit.*

angle; understanding its injunctions, implications, language, and wording.

It should be noted that the efforts of the scholars were not solely focused on critiquing the sanad, they were just as focused on the matn as the ʿillah[1] can be found in the matn just as it can be found in the sanad. A point of note, a weak sanad does not necessitate a weak matn, similarly, an authentic sanad does not necessitate an authentic matn. At times, there might be a weak sanad with an authentic matn due to the same matn being narrated through other chains which attest to its authenticity. On the other hand, one might find a sanad that is authentic; however, due to the obscurity or an ʿillah, the matn it is not authentic.[2]

The scholars have therefore, laid down a precise academic methodology in this field. They do not deem every narration weak wherein there is a weak narrator. Perhaps the weak narrator is correct on this occasion, and rejecting it would be rejecting the truth. The weak is at times correct and the truthful at times, makes mistakes.

Consequently, the scholars of ḥadīth, at times, cite narrations of a weak sanad when establishing the matn of a narration from another chain of transmission. This is done only if the narrators are not accused of lying or fabricating.

The above mentioned explanation is what is meant by the fact that the scholars look into the matn just as they look into the sanad. Accepting a matn that has some weakness of sanad is a clear indication to the deep insight of the scholars in critiquing the texts of the aḥādīth. A weak narration does not inhibit them from accepting an authentic matn or one well known from another chain.[3]

Looking at critiquing of *mutūn* (plural of matn) by the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ, the jurists, and the muḥaddithīn, one finds that they abide by a certain yardstick in order to critique a text.

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1 An indistinct, hidden defect that affects the authenticity of the ḥadīth, even though it apparently seems sound. See, Ibn al-Madīnī: *ʿIlal al-Ḥadīth wa Maʿrifah al-Rijāl*, pg. 10.

2 Ibid.

3 Misfir al-Dumaynī: *Maqāyīs Naqd Mutūn al-Sunnah*, pg. 113.

They consider the matn in the light of the Qur'ān. If it contradicts the Qur'ān in a manner that is impossible to reconcile they reject it if interpreting becomes problematic.

They then consider the matn in light of the other aḥādīth. The scholars of ḥadīth would consider the narrations of one topic in relation to each other. This would result in many findings that would play a role in authenticating a text; by way of citing additions, comments of the narrators, or their errors.

This yardstick would similarly, reject a matn that contradicted the established principles of the sharīʿah and the known laws of the creed. In a similar fashion they would use logical conclusions and historical actualities in critiquing some of the mutūn.[1]

An example of this is an incident mentioned hereunder that occurred in the year 447 A.H./1055 A.D.

Some Jews produced a document wherein there was an order of Rasūlullāh ﷺ to abolish tax from the people of Khaybar. There was mention of some Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in there, as witnesses as well. When this document was brought before the vizier of the Khalīfah al-Qāʾim al-ʿAbbāsī, he gave it over to the great historian and ḥāfiẓ, Abū Bakr al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. He pondered over it and then said, "It is a fabrication." When asked how he had come to this conclusion he said, "In it is the witness of Muʿāwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who accepted Islam in the 8th year AH, whereas Khaybar was conquered in the 7th year. Similarly, in it is the witness of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who passed away in the 5th year; two years before Khaybar."[2]

In this manner al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdadi, assisted by his accurate historical knowledge, was able to reject the lies of the text found in the document. The vizier accepted the conclusion of the historian and did not allow the Jews to follow through with the contents of the document.

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1 Misfir al-Dumaynī: *Maqāyīs Naqd Mutūn al-Sunnah*, pgs. 95 – 183 – 207.

2 Ibn al-Jawzī: *Al-Muntaẓam*, vol. 8 pg. 256; Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 18 pg. 280; Ibn al-Qayyim: *Al-Manār al-Munīf*, pgs. 37 – 39.

The following statement of Sufyān al-Thawrī applies to this and other similar incidents that have been mentioned:

> When the narrators began lying, we exposed them with history.[1]

It should be noted that even though the principles adopted by the Muslim scholars in attaining the authenticity of texts were specifically determined for the aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, they are suited to be applied to other Islamic sciences as well, especially Islamic history. This is due to the fact that the early historians were modelled along the same lines as the muḥaddithīn in their manner of presenting and narrating *with* the chain of transmission. Similarly, the statements, incidents, and texts of history cannot be verified except through implementing these principles of methodology. Many of the contemporary historians have understood the advantages of this methodology and principles of critique. They have thus adopted this approach in their own books and have quoted chapters from the scholars of muṣṭalaḥ like al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Ibn Ṣalāḥ, and others. To the extent that one of the Christian historians has entitled a chapter in his book, 'The terms used by the scholars of ḥadīth'[2].

C. Conditions of Accepted Narrations

It is difficult to fully implement the methodology of critiquing as is by the scholars of ḥadīth upon every historical account, even though the scholars have placed the same conditions on the historian as they do on the narrator of ḥadīth; sanity, reliability, Islam, and moral integrity[3]. This is because historical accounts do not

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1 Ibn Ṣalāḥ: *Al-Muqaddimah*, pg. 577; Al-Sakhāwī: *Al-Iʿlān bi tawbīkh li man dhamm al-Tārīkh*, pg. 390.

2 This is as done by Asad Rustum in his book *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Tārīkh.* He has taken and benefitted from *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* placing the former on the style of the latter thus gaining much in adopting the principles of critiquing ḥadīth in history.

3 Al-Kāfījī: *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī ʿIlm al-Tārīkh* pg. 336. Al-Subkī says, "It is necessary for the historian to be a scholar, impartial, know well the life of whom he profiles, whilst having nothing against him that would render him biased nor have animosity towards him." *Qāʿidah fī al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl* and *Qāʿidah fī al-Muarrikhīn*, pg. 71.

reach the level of the aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in terms of the reliability of its narrators, unbroken chains of transmission, and substantiation. The exceptions to this are those historical accounts that deal with the sīrah and the lives of Rightly Guided Khulafā'; the authenticity of such historical accounts have been established through the books of ḥadīth. Most other accounts though, fall upon the words of story tellers with chains of transmission that are incomplete. Chains wherein there are many unknown, weak, and rejected narrators.

The scholars have therefore differentiated between the narrations that ought to be authenticated stringently and those wherein laxity is acceptable based on the nature of the narration. Implementing the principles of critiquing ḥadīth in the field of history is relative to the nature of the narration.

If the narration has to do with Rasūlullāh ﷺ or any of the Ṣaḥābah ﵁, stringently assessing the narrators is necessary. This will also be the case if it contains criticism of any of the great scholars and leaders whose moral integrity has been established. The law is, **criticism is not accepted in the right of someone whose moral integrity has already been established until it becomes so clear that no other possibility exists.**[1]

Similarly, if the narration deals with matters of doctrine, sharʿī law, or ascertaining permissibility or impermissibility, it will be necessary to establish and review the profile of the narrators. In all of the above, only those narrations will be accepted which have been related by narrators, reliable and who moral integrity. Dr Akram Ḍiyā' al-ʿUmrī says:

> Similarly, applying the laws of al-muṣṭalaḥ in critiquing the historical narrations will be necessary in the case of particularly volatile incidents that could have been influenced by the bias of the narrator. If a narration has a bearing on one's belief, for example, that of the fitnah that occurred amongst the Ṣaḥābah ﵁, or it plays a role in the laws of the sharīʿah and its legal precedents, scrutiny by way of ḥadīth critiquing methods will be accepted. On the other hand, if it does not affect the laws of sharīʿah—

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1 Ibn Ḥajar: *Al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 7 pg. 273.

though authentication in every narration is necessary—laxity will be permitted based upon the maxim outlined by the scholars of ḥadīth, 'Scrutiny in the narrations that pertain to injunctions and laxity in the narrations that pertain to virtues of actions.'[1]

It should be noted that laxity in these instances does not mean narrating from those who are known liars and whose moral integrity has been long gone, as they are not fit to narrate from at all. Exercising laxity by the scholars is by accepting the narration of one who has some weakness in accuracy, due to making many mistakes, having changed owing to external implications, or the sanad not being complete as is in the case of *mursal*[2] and *munqaṭiʿ*[3] narrations. Based on this maxim, some of the jurists have permitted acting upon weak narrations that pertain to virtues of actions or warnings and inspirations.

Therefore, if the historical narration has nothing to do with establishing or rejecting a sharʿī matter—be it regarding ḥalāl and ḥarām, or personalities (Ṣaḥābah ﷺ)—the narration will be accepted even though it would not have been accepted in other instances. It will be cited and its details used as proof. These narrations will share common details with other authentic narrations that deal with the same account and attempts will be made to reconcile between any differences.

II. Methodology of interpreting history: Sources and principles of judging incidents

Interpreting history, in this context, means, understanding the association that links different incidents and events so that one may realise the motives, premises, consequences, and norms inferred.

The methodology of interpreting history lies upon a set of ideas and values; if these ideas and values are in order than the methodology will be in order. On the

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1 Dr Akram Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿUmrī: *Buḥūth fi tārīkh al-Sunnah al-Mushrifah*, pg. 211.

2 The muḥaddith narrates with a complete sanad back to the Tābiʿī, and the Tābiʿī says, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said..."

3 A break somewhere in the chain of narrators.

other hand, if these ideas are distorted and misrepresented the methodology will be distorted and misleading as well. The fact that every nation has their own set of ideas that define humans, life, and the universe is quite clear. In the light of these ideas their political, social, and economic lives are formed. It is from this perspective that things, incidents, and people are looked at.

The cultural and academic pillars in the life of a nation form as a result of its ideas. Upon these ideas are its perceptions and balances are erected. These ideas are an outcome of the creed that the nation believes in and adheres to. Changes and variations in the above results in differences of perspective. [When the ideas change so too will the actions, and ultimately the methodology of the historian must change in order to pass an accurate judgment in relation to incidents and events.] Similarly, the less difference in ideologies of societies, the closer their perceptions and consequently judgments that are alike will be passed.[1]

Due to this—vast amounts of ideologies—there remains a great amount OF difference in interpreting history; though the methodology of writing *Islamic history* and interpreting the events therein relies in principle upon an Islamic perception. It lays the Islamic creed and its requisites as the foundation to the methodological premises, the interpretation of events, and the judgments passed thereon. Therefore, the sources that dictate the writing of Islamic history are the sources of the sharīʿah; the Qurʾān and the Sunnah with the possibility of seeking assistance from Consensus and Analogical reasoning. The latter two a means to assist the researcher in understanding Islamic history and establishing the accounts found therein.

Owing to the fact that the Islamic interpretation of history originates from an Islamic perspective of man, life, and the universe; it is with good reason that it is based upon belief in Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى, His books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and predestination, good and bad. Thus, it does not exceed the bounds of Islamic beliefs. Moreover, it is based upon the behavioural motivations present in the early Islamic society. All this has resulted in Islamic history being distinct in

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1 Muḥammad ibn Ṣāmil al-Sulamī: *Manhaj Kitābah al-Tārīkh al-Islāmiyyah*, pg. 112.

nature compared to other histories of the world as it has the element of divine revelation in it.[1]

The Islamic interpretation of history rests upon the principle that the extent of man in this world is that of being a successive authority:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

And [mention, O Muḥammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority."[2]

Thereafter, Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى placed certain conditions for this authority:

قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا ۖ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۖ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى ۝ وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى

[Allah] said, "Descend from Paradise - all, [your descendants] being enemies to one another. And if there should come to you guidance from Me - then whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in the world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter]. And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind."[3]

Human history from an Islamic perspective is the study of the Divine Will in respect to the role of mankind on earth according to the decree of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى; and according to the fixed traditions through which Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى makes his decree manifest in the worldly life.

History, from a different perspective, is studying the pursuit of man in attainting complete self-realization. Not merely delving into the aspect of sustenance as is the materialistic interpretation of history or solely delving into the discussions of wealth, control, and possessions as is the liberal interpretation of history. It is the study of the potentials, capabilities, aspirations, and desires of human kind

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1 Dr Akram Ḍiyā al-ʿUmrī: *Al-Mujtamaʿ al-Mudanī fi ʿahd al-Nubuwwah*, pg. 15.

2 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 30.

3 Sūrah Ṭāhā: 123, 124.

alongside their crucial needs and impulses. This is together with outlining the principles that mankind embrace and the beliefs they adhere to and practically follow. The attitudes, character and dealings of men cover the earth which people see and recognise as Islamic. **Comprehending the above is the safety net in understanding the history of personalities and groups as understood in their era while simultaneously saving one from incessantly entangling the two and spiralling them to no end.**[1]

It is therefore imperative to refer to the sources of sharīʿah in interpreting Islamic history to fully comprehend the behaviour and character of a society that was built upon and infused with Islamic teachings through and through. Teachings, commands, and prohibitions that permeated every facet of such a society.

Referring to the sources of the sharīʿah, gaining an understanding of the Islamic creed, and comprehending the effects of such on its adherents is a necessary condition for the one who busies themselves with writing and interpreting Islamic history. If any of the above is omitted, the result of the work would be lacking and incomplete. Such work would be affected by the condition of the authors ideology, a social parasite no less, forcing the reader to wade through many pages of extraneous material resulting in an affront to the Islamic legacy.

Considering the above, many contemporary researchers have made many errors due to either falling short in referring to sources of the sharīʿah or due to murky perceptions that clouded their judgments. Some others have committed grave errors by conforming to western ideologies and interpreting Islamic events through western, secular ideals. If this is the condition of the studies conducted by those who are considered Muslims, then what would the results of the material produced by the enemies of Islam; Orientalists and the like thereof be like? Men who, from the get go, disregard the explicit texts of the sharīʿah, and promote weak and fabricated incidents that conform to their views thereby inculcating within their youth enmity for Islamic history.

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1 Muḥammad Quṭub: *Ḥawl al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī li al-Tārīkh*, pg. 13.

The Islamic methodology in compiling history relies greatly on Islamic principles and sources. This is the differentiating factor between it and between other methodologies that seek to interpret history through the lens of ethnicity, geographical location, economic values, or psychological prevalence. These methodologies do not consider other factors that influenced the period of history under discussion. They rely on a single contributing factor which they blow out of proportion and by which they interpret the history of humanity.

The Islamic methodology is a methodology that seeks to be inclusive off all factors and behaviours, not simply relying on the apparent and perceptual. Rather, it provides an opportunity to an in-depth study by which the historian is able to assess incidents coherently in a light that is true and genuine. A result of truly understanding the human spirit and life; both body and mind. Not disregarding any part of the puzzle.

It is a methodology that clarifies the role and responsibilities of humans in social and historic change within the framework of the Divine decree.[1] It takes into account the impact of internal and external factors mankind must deal with, without blowing any single one of them out of proportion. These factors are then subjected to the decree of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ. There is no one and nothing that can go against His will and decree.

All the above factors need to be considered to accurately comprehend any historical event. The researcher should have a clear and coherent perspective in evaluating the factors, the weight they carry together with figuring out the proper connection between each one. Over and above this, having sharʿī knowledge is relevant to the highest degree in order to fully understand the fundamentals of man; soul, body, and mind.

The conditions outlined above cannot be found in a non-believer. A true perspective on the issues that have influenced historical events can only be understood through divine revelation; sources free from error: the Qurʾān and the Sunnah.

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1 Dr Akram Ḍiyā al-ʿUmrī: *Al-Mujtamaʿ al-Mudanī fī ʿahd al-Nubuwwah*, pg. 15

Through revelation, a Muslim will understand these factors, the weight each factor and cause carry, and its impact in interpretation. This is because the divine revelation is from a being Most Wise, All Aware. He possesses knowledge of the recesses of the soul and not absent from His knowledge is an atom's weight within the heavens or within the earth. When He intends a thing that He says to it, "Be," and it is. The methodology of a Being Whose Knowledge, Power, and Justice is beyond the constraints of time and space will, with no doubt, be the best and most complete methodology. A methodology free from any weakness, error, fault, or desires that are fused with humanity.

As our sources are thus the finest, most complete, most just, and are free from errors and discrepancies it is nothing short of oppressing ourselves and our history to take on foreign values, understandings, and methodologies in interpreting our history. Methodologies that are products of men who were prejudiced, hankered to fulfil their carnal desires, and adopted ideas that were littered with discrepancies and blunders.

Hereunder are some principles related to 'sources' that ought to be considered by the one writing Islamic history. They should be taken into account when penning down history, especially the history of the early Islamic era. It is not possible to study Islam by removing the subject of Islamic history. It is an inseparable part of studying Islam. The history of a nation that faithfully adhered to a creed that drove its inclinations and activities.

A. Relying on shar'ī sources and placing them above all other sources when regarding, inter alia, incidents, laws, and injunctions.

This is due to the following two reasons:

1. It is more truthful than any historical document that heralds incidents of the past. This is because of the truthfulness of its source; His knowledge and dominance. Together with this it has reached us through incontestable and genuine academic methodology. The Qur'ān has reached us through succession that is undoubtable (mutawātir). The authentic aḥādīth has

reached us through a precise academic methodology wherein the scholars of ḥadīth critiqued every narration that came before them whilst codifying the aḥādīth as has already been explained.

2. It outlines historical principles, Divine mannerisms, and a holistic view of humankind; past, present, and future. This affords the researcher a wide and holistic vision into history together with a deep understanding in analysing incidents and identifying ills and solutions to it.

The Qur'ān and the Sunnah afford the researcher insights, concepts, and ideals which enable correct interpretation and judgments of historical incidents. Moreover, it gives details of what the Islamic Ummah will face; divisions, efforts of reconciliations, and indications to many incidents, trials, and stances. The scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah have made efforts in gathering such material and have included it in their books, entitling specific chapters for such details.[1]

In the light of Islamic principles and concepts; measures which are suited to favour, study, and interpret events when studying Islamic history, the historian cannot do without the knowledge of *muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth* (terminologies of ḥadīth principles) which would make him aware of the principles of *takhrīj* (the science of citation and extraction of ḥadīth) and study of asānīd.

Furthermore, the one studying Islamic history ought to be aware of the common injunctions of the sharīʿah, the beliefs of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah, and the beliefs of the opposing groups. Additionally, he should rely on the narrations of the muḥaddithīn as an unsullied source and as a deciding factor when weighing the incidents of the early Islamic years.

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1 Imām al-Bukhārī has a specific chapter in his book *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* entitled Kitāb al-Fitan. Similarly, Imām Muslim has in his *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* Kitāb al-Fitan wa ashrāṭ al-Sāʿah. Imām Abū Dāwūd has Al-Fitan wa al-Malāḥim in his *Sunan*. And so have other Ahl al-Sunnah scholars in their books.

Even though the amount of historical material found in the books of ḥadīth is not as much as those found in the books of history, it still holds a critical position due to many factors, the key one being: Most of those that codified and authored the major books of ḥadīth, lived in the early era; majority of them living of the second and third century Hijrī and thus their sources are distinguished as being of the earliest times. Another exceptional quality of the muḥaddithīn is that they were particularly cautious in relating narrations. An element that drives the researcher to their narrations more than the traditions of the historians.

Add to this the fact that the muḥaddith holds higher status and is given greater prominence, by the Muslims, in comparison to the historian. This is due to the vigilance and cautiousness of the muḥaddith, whilst the historian would, generally, relate all sorts of obscurities and fabrications.

B. Truly understanding the role of īmān.

If the one studying Islamic history does not understand the role īmān played in the lives of the Muslims, he will not be able to accurately and academically assess events in Islamic history.

For example, the migration of the Muslims from Makkah to Madinah was for the cause of their īmān. The Muhājirīn, individuals and groups, were driven to migrate and settle elsewhere for no other cause. The hijrah was not to seek out a homeland, to attain wealth, or to achieve position. The Ṣaḥābah ﷺ who had migrated had left behind their homeland, wealth, homes, and belongings in order to save their faith and adhere to their creed. They raised the bar of sacrifice and sincerity to incredible heights in the path of upholding the word of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى. On the other hand, the Anṣār of Madinah were those who harboured them in their own homes, aided them financially, and supported them. They left a stunning example of true Islamic brotherhood. Not a brotherhood tolerated by empty words or lip service, rather they were and would forever be fused together by blood, wealth, giving preference to others, and mutual solace. This was a society that was brimming with these qualities.

Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ says regarding the condition of their īmān:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَّيَنْصُرُونَ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِيْ صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُّوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

For the poor Muhājirīn who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah and [His] approval and supporting Allah and His Messenger, [there is also a share]. Those are the truthful. And [also for] those who were settled in Madinah and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul, it is those who will be the successful.[1]

Imām al-Bukhārī has narrated the following:

لما قدموا المدينة آخى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بين عبد الرحمن بن عوف وسعد بن الربيع ، فقال سعد لعبد الرحمن : إني أكثر الأنصار مالا فأقسم مالي نصفين ولي امرأتان فانظر أعجبهما إليك فسمها لي أطلقها فإذا انقضت عدتها فتزوجها ، قال : بارك الله لك في أهلك ومالك أين سوقكم ؟ فدلوه على سوق بني قينقاع فما انقلب إلا ومعه فضل من أقط وسمن

When we came to Madinah as emigrants, Allah's Messenger ﷺ established a bond of brotherhood between ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf and Saʿd ibn al-Rabīʿ.

Saʿd ibn al-Rabīʿ said to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, "I am the richest among the Anṣār, so I will give you half of my wealth and you may look at my two wives and whichever of the two you may choose I will divorce her, and when she has completed the prescribed period (ʿiddat) you may marry her."

He replied, "May Allah bless your family and wealth, where is the market-place?"

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1 Sūrah al-Ḥashr: 8-9.

They showed him the market of Qaynuqā'. He then brought back from there some dried butter-milk (yogurt) and butter from the profits he had earned.[1]

From this it is clear that setting the motivation of all historical occurrences as a result of 'conflict' or 'material incentive' is nothing short of inaccuracy and gross negligence.

Hereunder are some examples and elucidations of the reliance on īmān and the results of such, which if attributed to material causes would be a lie.

The one fighting in the path of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى knows well that he is not fighting the disbelievers by himself and neither is the army fighting by their superior numbers or weaponry, if they have such. They fight by the spirit of their true īmān and knowledge that Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى assists the true mujāhidīn by way of tangible and intangible means. Examples of the former would be by Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى sending the angels to fight by their side or harnessing nature in their favour. Examples of the latter would be strengthening their hearts, sending down tranquillity amongst their ranks, or granting them the ability to persevere.

Let us take for example the study of the causes of victory for the Muslims in the Battle of Yarmūk. We find that the number of the Roman army was six times that of the Muslim army together with having superior military skills and weapons. The Muslims were comparatively weak in number and strength whilst also fighting far from the seat of khilāfah. Despite all this they won a clear and glorious victory. One studying the material visible causes by way of intellect alone will not be able to come to terms with the result of the battle, though it is unequivocally proven to be so. This would be due to having no knowledge about the true causes that outline human history and being unaware of the ways of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى in the universe.

فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيْلًا وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللّٰهِ تَحْوِيْلًا

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1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Buyūʿ vol. 3 pg. 3.

But you will never find in the way of Allah any change, and you will never find in the way of Allah any alteration.[1]

وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا

And never will Allah give the disbelievers over the believers a way [to overcome them].[2]

كَمْ مِّنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاللّٰهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allah.[3]

وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِندِ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

And victory is not except from Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.[4]

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَّا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ قُوَّةٍ وَّمِنْ رِّبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهِبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللّٰهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ

And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy.[5]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا إِنْ تَنْصُرُوا اللّٰهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ

If you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.[6]

So, īmān is one of the factors that is used to evaluate and pass judgments on historical incidents.

It should be noted that the philosophers of old do not believe in such incidents which have, without a shadow of doubt, been authenticated. Some disregard it

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1 Sūrah al-Fāṭir: 43.

2 Sūrah al-Nisā': 141.

3 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 249.

4 Sūrah Āl ʿImrān: 126.

5 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 60.

6 Sūrah Muḥammad: 60.

due to them rejecting the occurrence of *mu'jizah*[1] and *karāmāt*[2] whilst others find it difficult to comprehend or even interpret. This is all due to them subscribing to the ideology that the intellect, with all its confinements and limitations, is and should be the quintessential element in judging the text of the Qur'ān. They thus determine the meaning of the Qur'ān as their intellect deems fit.

The Orientalists of late have embraced this ideology and have spread its purport far and wide; clashing with the creed that supports faith on the unseen. Many contemporary researchers have trodden the same path in the Muslim lands having adopted secularist ideologies during their stays in European lands. They do not consider Islam to have afforded humanity a complete way of life that extends to every facet of living, rather in their minds it merely represents one's heritage or personal worship. In fact, many of them have generated doubts and fabrications that have no authentic bases in Islamic history. This is all a result of wishing to regulate Islamic history in the confines of tangible, perhaps national, and/or other mediums.

C. Being aware of the status, situation and position of people, together with validating what has been said about them.

ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﵁ says in this regard:

<div dir="rtl">

واحفظ لكل منزلته وأعطهم جميعا بقسطهم من الحق ، فإن المعرفة بالناس بها يصاب العدل

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> Identify the status of every person and afford every person their due of justice. Justice will come through being aware of the situations of people.[3]

Ibn Taymiyyah has in the beginning of his famous *fatwā* (religious verdict) regarding the Tartars laid down a profound principle for one intending to understand the law of Allah ﷾ in any case that one may be confronted with. He says:

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1 Miracles performed by the Prophets ﵇ with the permission of Allah ﷾.

2 Miracles performed by the pious servants of Allah ﷾, with His permission.

3 Al-Ṭabarī: *Tārīkh al-Rusul*, vol. 4 pg. 279.

Passing a judgment on any group or nation rests upon two principles. 1. Being aware of their condition. 2. Being aware of the law of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ regarding the likes of them. These two principles enact a law which counters ignorance as profiling people is not permissible without knowledge and insight.[1]

Based on this, it is necessary to investigate what has been related with regards to the greats of the early Islamic years; the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ. Studying their condition will make one aware of their perfect īmān, honesty, internal piety, external good deeds, and sacrifice of both life and wealth in the path of the truth. All this only raises them to high stages which makes them all—those that played a part in the fitnah and those that did not—worthy of being followed and worthy of narrating from. There is no doubt that their narrations will be accepted and their actions weighed on the scale of piety and perfection. This will do away with any evil qualities attributed to them. This is over and above the judgment that Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ has already passed regarding them; holding them pure and honorable. The explicit texts of the sharīʿah are replete and successive suggesting their purity and justice.

There remains no point of contention that the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ are leaders for every Muslim in matters of their faith. There is therefore, no chance for anyone to attempt to vilify their honour, pure beliefs, and untainted character. This does not mean that they never erred, as they were not infallible. Therefore, whatever occurred between them in political differences will be considered as *ijtihādī* (interpretive) differences which does not affect their noble status in any way. When codifying these issues in history, one should be extremely weary of holding them up in the light of disparagement.

Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ has commanded the believers to look back at what they know of the faith of their brothers which would surely do away with any attempts at disparagement. This insightful principle should always be kept in the forefront and no attention should be paid to the talks of the predators and biased men who

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1 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 28 pg. 510.

vilify and malign the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ. Only good thoughts should be entertained regarding them. Moreover, any fabrications that are spread to malign then should be refuted thoroughly.

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says, admonishing the believers in taking part in rumours that the people of evil spread regarding their brothers:

$$\text{لَّوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَّقَالُوا هَٰذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ}$$

Why, when you heard it, did not the believing men and believing women think good of one another and say, "This is an obvious falsehood"?[1]

$$\text{وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُم مَّا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَن نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهَٰذَا سُبْحَٰنَكَ هَٰذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ}$$

And why, when you heard it, did you not say, "It is not for us to speak of this. Exalted are You, [O Allah]; this is a great slander"?[2]

Both these verses outline an important principle:

Opinions do not render realities obsolete and fiction cannot oppose facts.[3]

Based on this, it is imperative to refer to original authentic sources in order to know the true facts. Knowledge should not be attained from liars, evil men, and bigots. Their evil and desires will lead them to paint a picture that contradicts reality. Muslims have been commanded by the sharīʿah to investigate and verify what he hears. Ponder over the following verse of the Qurʾān and ḥadīth of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

$$\text{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ}$$

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1 Sūrah al-Nūr: 12

2 Sūrah al-Nūr: 16.

3 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saʿdī: *Al-Qawāʿid al-Ḥisān li Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, pg. 195.

O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.[1]

Rasūlullāh ﷺ is reported to have said:

<div dir="rtl">

كفى بالمرء كذبا أن يحدث بكل ما سمع

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It is sufficient for a man to be considered as a liar that he relates everything he hears.[2]

It is for these very reasons that the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah took a particular interest in profiling the capable narrators and mentors from the incapable. Some have developed chapters in their books based on this entitling it, 'The chapter prohibiting weak narrations and exercising caution in learning them'.[3] The profiling of men too, will be only sought from a reliable scholar who has insight on the conditions of the Muslims.

D. Knowing the boundaries of taking from the books of the prejudiced and those that ascribed to other sects.

Another pertinent principle is to know and consider the limitations when taking from authors who are prejudiced or subscribe to sects that are misguided and steeped in innovation due to their works being influenced by such.

The scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah have displayed a keen interest in classifying other sects and their statements so that one may come to realise their schools of thought, stances, and conditions. This is so that the Muslim can be sure of their state of affairs and not be fooled by them.

Taking this into consideration some scholars have authored books specific to this science with the likes of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī: *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, Abū al-

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1 Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt: 6.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1 pg. 72.

3 Ibid.

Ḥasan al-Malṭī: *Al-Tanbīh wa-al-Radd ʿalā Ahl al-Ahwāʾ wa-al-Bidaʿ*, and Ibn Ḥazm: *Al-Faṣl fī al-Milal wa al-Ahwā wa al-Niḥal.*

The individuals of the other sects have themselves made efforts to codify their school of thought, beliefs, chronicles, lives of their men and scholars, debates, and refutations to their opposition. Some of them have taken on writing history and have done so in line with their specific beliefs or political stance. They have thus sensationalised the flaws of their opposition whilst covering their own faults.

Owing to the above it is necessary for the historian to familiarize himself with their beliefs and orientations. This will enable him to handle the material and texts brought forth by them appropriately; keeping in mind their background, views, and stances whilst comparing it with other similar incidents mentioned by reliable historians and scholars. Drawing comparisons between the texts whilst keeping in mind the general orientation and character of Islamic society will give one a clear view of the presence of prejudice—or lack thereof—in a narrator or story teller. If the signs of prejudice become apparent by acts of vilifying or maligning reliable worthy men, or by contradicting known aspects of the sharīʿah, or by contradicting the established traits, character, and norms of a society; his statements won't be heard and his narrations will not be given any attention. Disagreeing for the sake of disagreeing as well as prejudice blinds one from seeing the truth.

If the signs of prejudice are not apparent, even though he may be from the *Ahl al-Bidaʿ* (innovators), and is known for his honesty, piety, taqwā, and reliability; his narrations will be accepted. Some of the great scholars of ḥadīth have reproduced narrations of those individuals of the Ahl al-Bidaʿ who would not lie.

E. Knowing the boundaries of taking from the book of the Non-Muslims

Since Islamic history has sharʿī principles and guidelines, it is necessary for the Muslim historian to abide by these and base his research within the range of such. It is therefore imperative to be careful when taking from the books of non-Muslims. This is especially true since the secularists have been key proponents of

unfettered freedom—in the east and the west—which they run with in outlining Islamic history. They apply their own—home grown—notions in expounding upon the history of Islam.

Together with this, they uphold a secularist methodology that is in stark contrast to an Islamic methodology. The result of which is polar perceptions and fundamentals. Methodology forms part of perception and results of studies are based on perceptions. All the above has decidedly affected their judgments and studies which contradict Islamic injunctions and the actualities of an Islamic society. The impressions that the books of non-Muslims create when addressing Islamic history—especially the early years—should be studied with painstaking attention and apprehension. This is due to their lack of honesty when addressing issues pertaining to Islam, its system, and its men. In the light of such, it will not be permissible for a Muslim to narrate or take from them. This becomes even more clear when we consider that the conditions of delving into these issues is having faith in Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, His Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, the Last Day, and weighing all actions and speech by the scale of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

Furthermore, non-Muslims do not subscribe to any belief that would limit them from heaping lies upon the material of the Muslims. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

They only invent falsehood who do not believe in the verses of Allah, and it is those who are the liars.[1]

Similarly, their prejudice against the Muslims is not limited by anything either. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَآنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۚ اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just;

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1 Sūrah al-Naḥl: 105.

that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.[1]

Consequently, they have no of limits in their society and environment—and man is a product of his environment—due to the tide of materialism, power, and luxuries that they continue to drown in.

This in turn has led to exploitation and the planting of seeds of hatred in people; a recipe for never ending conflict. Since they have adopted their morals as the yardstick in deciding the morality of other societies, they have made blunders of epic proportions; skewing the history of entire societies.

To conclude consider the following: The Muslim scholars have not favoured the implementation of injunctions based upon the narrations of weak, albeit pious Muslims, then how would it be possible for Muslims to take from disbelievers who are far from reliable and who harbour ill towards the faith!

F. Exploring the use of Islamic terminologies

The ideological warfare of the west against the Muslims has been peppered by introducing and spreading terminologies that are foreign to Islamic society and history, which has caught on in various genres of literature. This use of such shows the obliviousness of contemporary researchers in comprehending the slippery slope they have embarked on. These new-age technical terms bring along with them a specific western ideology. They bear the impressions and insinuations of societies and historical climates—where they originate from—that is impossible to disassociate from.

An example of these terms would be, 'Democracy', 'Socialism', 'Aristocracy', 'Dictatorship', 'Theocracy', 'Imperialism', 'Right-wing', 'Left-wing' etc...

It should be noted that many Arab researchers have used these terms in their historical literature. For example, they utilize the term 'democracy', in lieu of

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1 Sūrah al-Māʾidah: 8.

'shūra' in an Islamic society or as a word to broadly outline its purport. Some intellectuals of the Islamic world in the 1950s were, perhaps, unaware that terminologies cannot be disassociated from the environment society it emanates from. They, in an effort to reconcile between western and Islamic ideologies, began using these terms to describe many functions of an Islamic society without taking note of the glaring differences and stigmas that present itself when applying it to a different era and a different society.

Democracy, for example, is a system of government by the public upon the public. This means that the public are the source of legislation and governance. This system further rests on the separation of religion from state. Based on the above, in the democratic system, humans are taken to be the policy makers of liberty. Individual liberty, as well as freedom of belief, opinion, and ownership.

On the other hand, the shūra system in an Islamic state relies on the directives of the Qur'ān and Sunnah which are the sources of legislation and governance. It also entitles the Ummah to appoint a governor by way of authorities in Islamic law with whom the governor would consult in important matters. They would monitor the dealings of people and to what extent its conformity is to carrying out the injunctions of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى, as there is no separation of religion from state in Islam. Dominion belongs solely to Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى and sovereignty to the sharīʿah. Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى says:

إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلّٰهِ

The decision is only for Allah.[1]

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكُمْ بِمَآ أَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ فَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ

And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the defiantly disbelievers.[2]

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1 Sūrah Yūsuf: 40.

2 Sūrah al-Māʾidah: 44.

<div dir="rtl">

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوۡنَ حَتّٰی یُحَکِّمُوۡكَ فِیۡمَا شَجَرَ بَیۡنَهُمۡ ثُمَّ لَا یَجِدُوۡا فِیۡۤ اَنۡفُسِهِمۡ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَیۡتَ وَیُسَلِّمُوۡا تَسۡلِیۡمًا

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But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.[1]

Islam is a complete way of life that addresses the political, social, and economic challenges faced by humanity. It ought to be understood, that Islam does not celebrate complete freedom and liberty as is the undertaking of the democratic system. Islam celebrates freedom as long as it does not result in harm to oneself or others.

Islam does not force anyone to accept the faith, though it does not allow a Muslim to change his or her faith. Anyone leaving the fold of Islam will consequently deal with the laws that apply to a renegade.

Islam does not advocate total freedom of individual ownership as is in vogue in the west. It would thus not be permissible to come into ownership of anything through impermissible means, such as through interest, deceptive schemes, depreciating the value of goods, and so on.

Islam does not accept personal liberty and freedom as outlined by democracy either. It would not be permissible for women to walk in the streets baring all, nor to be in seclusion with strange men; protecting the family model and the integrity of society.

Hence, as one may well understand unrestricted democracy clearly contradicts Islam. How did it then prove conceivable to some researchers to enforce this term upon Islamic history and say that the khilāfah in the era of the Righty Guided Khulafāʾ was a model of democracy?

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1 Sūrah al-Nisāʾ: 65.

The Muslims have followed the west in all things. Even in the terminologies that are linked to geographical boundaries and historical periods which have no connection to their reality or history. In the context of geographical representation, they say 'Middle East', 'Far East' and 'Near East', in relation to their location in Europe, as they consider themselves the centre of the world.

Similar is the issue of historical periods. Terms such as 'Ancient Times, 'Middle Ages', and 'Modern Times', are based on the historical vicissitudes of Europe which would imply particular ideas and characteristics that occupied these eras centred around ideological and social nuances and developments as lived by Europe; whereas Islamic history remained unaffected by these vicissitudes and developments. Muslim lands were determined by a single sequence of ideas, systems, and principles that remained unaffected by the change of time, empires, and kings. A history of one Ummah, a history of principles established and unchanged.

Some Muslim authors have opted to use terminologies and words that aren't found in the *Islamic dictionary.* In this lies a danger of assimilating ignorant ideologies and a loss amongst many self-sufficient terminologies.[1]

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1 Dr Akram Ḍiyā al-ʿUmrī: *Al-Mujtamaʿ al-Mudanī fi ʿahd al-Nubuwwah*, pg. 23

The Fiqh of the History of the Ṣaḥābah

I. Methodology of inferring from the history of the Ṣaḥābah

The Muslim Ummah is an Ummah of jihād and an Ummah of daʿwah. These are its two focal points. If one of these two are left out, the value of the Ummah will decrease accordingly. The exceptionality and honour that the Ummah thrives on is dependant in wholly fulfilling its principle responsibilities; fighting in the path of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ, and inviting towards His injunctions and sharīʿah.

Since the first generation of the Ummah fulfilled this responsibility to its fullest extent they became worthy of being the most honoured and the best. Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ says:

$$كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ$$

You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind.[1]

Rasūlullāh صَلَّاللهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ said:

$$خير الناس قرني$$

The best people are those of my era.[2]

They became role models and exemplary guides for those to come after them.

It is therefore compulsory upon every generation of Muslims that lived in the eras after them to recognise their true status as pious, pure, and honest souls. Hearts will thus be assured of the goodness they had carried and conveyed to humanity. This must be done showing total disregard to those who attempt at creating barriers between the early and later generations of the Ummah by skewing the life of Rasūlullāh صَلَّاللهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and casting doubts onto the faith by vilifying and defaming those who conveyed it.

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1 Sūrah Āl ʿImrān: 110.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*: vol. 4. pg. 189.

Highlighting the history of the first generation of the Ummah, the pious predecessors, is vital whilst focusing particularly on their efforts in taking upon themselves the responsibility of calling towards Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى and fighting in His path. Similarly, recognising their eminence and rank whilst making others aware of their stances and actions will result in a special bond being created between them, us, and more importantly our youth. The youth will then want to follow in their footsteps, take pride in them, and be honoured by having a connection to them. This will result in a link between the Ummah of the present and the Ummah of the past. A long standing Ummah with a radiant past of jihād, daʿwah, spreading knowledge, and holding firm onto the values of justice in guiding people to the ultimate success of this world and the next.

It is further of key importance to remind the Muslims of the correct and true methodology that should be followed when discussing the fiqh of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُمْ as opposed to becoming absorbed in the endless debates of common-law and arguing in establishing and negating with innovators and their like.

Laying down the true and correct methodology was the brain child of the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah who founded jurisprudic positions based on the Qurʾān and Sunnah, an avenue to develop all the legal injunctions of the sharīʿah.

The history of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُمْ and passing judgments upon it thus became the work of the muḥaddithīn and Muslim historians. It became necessary to evaluate all accounts found in the books of history by Muslim researchers and historians according to this methodology and by its conditions. This rings especially true in the current climate wherein its importance has been disregarded by many Muslims, ignorant of this methodology, which leads to doubts in evaluation and confusion in perception. These factors then result in accepting as true the lies and fabrications attributed to the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُمْ with a greater evil of falling in line with its proponents. As a consequence of this, a Muslim, unknowingly, falls into sin or goes on to oppose a divine ordinance of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى.

Question:

What is meant by 'The methodology of the history of the Fiqh of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ'?

Answer:

Those sharʿī regulations and laws by which one is able to appropriately deal with the history of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ. This 'fiqh' comprises of a range of sharʿī laws that are sourced from principle sources of legislation; The Qurʾān, Sunnah, and Ijmāʿ (consensus).

To infer from these laws or from this fiqh, the jurists and scholars of ḥadīth pondered over the Book of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى and the Sunnah, finding therein many explicit texts that hold no ambiguity and give a single meaning. They adopted those as is. Together with these, additional texts of the sharīʿah were used to derive other laws from.

Amongst the laws inferred was:

» The ʿadālah (reliability and integrity) of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ,
» Their rights upon the Muslims, and
» The law of those who vilify them.

All the above was considered to be amongst the principle beliefs of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah with no exception.

II. The status of the Ṣaḥābah and their integrity

The explicit and successive texts of the sharīʿah illustrate the compulsion of loving, honouring, and venerating the Companions of Rasūlullāh صَلَّاللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ. It further depicts the compulsion of adhering to their consensus, holding firm to their statements, and the impermissibility of vilifying them. All this is due to the honour afforded to them by Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى in the form of companionship to His Messenger صَلَّاللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ, their fighting alongside him, persevering in the face of harm metered out to them by the polytheists, migrating from their homeland,

leaving behind their wealth, giving preference over their children, and always placing the love of Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ above all else. By the virtue of this they became worthy of praise and their mistakes disregarded. Allah ﷻ declared, by way of revelation, His pleasure and promise of paradise for them. Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave them the glad tidings of it and called towards honouring and venerating them. He proclaimed their status as overseers to the Ummah and guiding stars for its people.

Hereunder are some of the texts that illustrate their purity and that they are the best nation produced as example for mankind. Allah ﷻ says:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ

You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.[1]

Allah ﷻ recounts them as being resilient in considering, protecting, and acting upon the requisites of the truth. They are therefore, an embodiment of integrity who shall be witnesses upon the actions of people. A witness can only be one who has the quality of integrity. Allah ﷻ says:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَّسَطًا لِّتَكُوْنُوْا شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيْدًا ۗ

And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you.[2]

Allah ﷻ promised them great rewards and a beautiful end. Allah ﷻ says:

لَا يَسْتَوِيْ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقٰتَلَ ۚ أُولٰئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ أَنْفَقُوْا مِنْ بَعْدُ وَقٰتَلُوْا ۚ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ

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1 Sūrah Āl ʿImrān: 110.

2 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 143.

Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Makkah] and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allah has promised the best [reward]. And Allah, with what you do, is Acquainted.[1]

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰى أُولٰئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَهَا ۖ وَهُمْ فِيْ مَا اشْتَهَتْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ خٰلِدُونَ

Indeed, those for whom the best [reward] has preceded from Us - they are from it far removed. They will not hear its sound, while they are, in that which their souls desire, abiding eternally.[2]

Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ praises them thus:

وَالسّٰبِقُوْنَ الْأَوَّلُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوْا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ تَحْتَهَا الْأَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا أَبَدًا ۚ ذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ

And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.[3]

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىاللهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّم too, advised the Ummah regarding his Companions رَضِيَاللهُعَنْهُم and displayed their status and honour.

Imām Aḥmad narrates in his *Musnad* from ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar رَضِيَاللهُعَنْهُ that ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَاللهُعَنْهُ gave a sermon at Jābiyah[4] and said:

قام فينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بمثل مقامي فيكم فقال استوصوا خيرا بأصحابي ثم الذين يلونهم ثم الذين يلونهم

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1 Sūrah al-Ḥadīd: 10.

2 Sūrah al-Ambiyāʾ: 101-102.

3 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 100.

4 A town in Syria. See. Yaqūt: *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, vol. 2 pg. 91.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ stood before us as I stand before you today and said, "I implore you to be good to my Companions, then to those after them, then to those after them."[1]

'Abd Allāh ibn Masʿūd ﷜ reports that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

خير الناس قرني ثم الذين يلونهم ثم الذين يلونهم ثم إن بعدكم قوم يشهدون ولا يستشهدون ، ويخونون ولا يؤتمنون ، وينذرون ولا يوفون ، ويظهر فيهم السِّمَن

The best of people are those of my era, then those who follow them, then those who will come after them. Then, they will be followed by those who will testify but will not be called upon to testify; they will betray the trust, and will not be trusted. They will make vows but will not fulfil them, and obesity will prevail among them.[2]

Abū Mūsa al-Ashʿarī ﷜ reports that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

النجوم أمنة للسماء فأذا ذهبت النجوم أتى السماء ما توعد و أنا أمنة لأصحابى فأذا ذهبت أتى أصحابى ما يوعدون و أصحابى أمنة لأمتى فأذا ذهب أصحابى أتى أمتى ما يوعدون

The stars are protection for the sky. When the stars go away, what the sky was promised will approach. I am a protection for my Companions. When I leave, what my Companions were promised will come. And My Companions are a protection for my Ummah. When my Companions leave, what my Ummah was promised will come.[3]

Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh ﷜ says, Abū Saʿīd Khudrī ﷜ narrated to us that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

يأتي على الناس زمان فئام يغزو فئام من الناس فيقال لهم فيكم من رأى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله و سلم فيقولون نعم فيفتح لهم ثم يغزو فئام من الناس فيقال لهم فيكم من رأى من صحب رسول الله صلى الله

1 *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (*Tartīb al-Sāʿātī*) vol. 22 pg. 168; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 2166; *Mustadrak al-Ḥākim*, vol. 1 pg. 114. He has authenticated it and Al-Dhahabī has concurred. Al-Albānī has authenticated it in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 1758.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4 pg. 189.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 16 pg. 82.

عليه و آله و سلم فيقولون نعم فيفتح لهم ثم يغزو فئام من الناس فيقال لهم هل فيكم من رأى من صحب من صحب رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله و سلم فيقولون نعم فيفتح لهم

A time will come when a huge army will wage war.

They will be asked, "Is anyone who saw Rasūlullāh ﷺ among you?"

They will reply in the affirmative, and they will be victorious.

Then a huge army will wage war.

They will be asked, "Is anyone who saw someone who accompanied Rasūlullāh ﷺ among you?"

They will reply in the affirmative. And they will be victorious.

Thereafter a huge army will wage war.

They will be asked, "Is anyone who saw someone who accompanied someone who accompanied Rasūlullāh ﷺ?"

They will reply in the affirmative. And they will be victorious.[1]

In *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* the following narration is recorded, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

ما من أحد من أصحابي يموت بأرض إلا بعث قائدا ونورا لهم يوم القيامة

There is no one among my Companions who dies in a land except that he shall be resurrected as a guide and light for them (people of that land) on the Day of Resurrection.[2]

With regards to the impermissibility of vilifying the Ṣaḥābah ﵃, Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

لا تسبوا أصحابي لا تسبوا أصحابي فوالذي نفسي بيده لو أن أحدكم أنفق مثل أحد ذهبا ما أدرك مُدّ أحدهم ولا نصيفه

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1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4 pg. 188; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 16 pg. 83.

2 *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 5 pg. 375.

Do not revile my Companions for if one of you gave in charity the amount of gold equivalent to Uḥud, it would not amount to as much as the *mudd*[1] of one of them, or half of it.[2]

From these narrations it can be understood that Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى has declared the ʿadālah (integrity) of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِىَاللهُعَنْهُ by Himself and on the tongue of His Messenger صَلَّىاللهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّم. No one else is capable of having any other opinion on the issue. Every narrator and every witness will be investigated and evaluated, besides the Ṣaḥābah رَضِىَاللهُعَنْهُ. The Ahl al-Sunnah are unanimous on this.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī says:

The ʿadālah of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِىَاللهُعَنْهُ is known by Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى proclaiming it and by Him giving news of their purity and selection in the texts of the Qur'ān.[3]

He then declares consensus on this saying:

This is the view of all the scholars and those jurists whose statements hold weight.[4]

Ibn Ṣalāḥ says:

The Ummah are unanimous upon the ʿadālah of all the Ṣaḥābah رَضِىَاللهُعَنْهُ including those who were involved in the Fitan. This view is unanimously agreed upon by the scholars who are worth of note. This view is based upon thinking good of them and taking into consideration their services to the cause. It is as though Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى created consensus upon this due to them being conveyers of the sharīʿah.[5]

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1 A unit of measurement equivalent to approximately 750 ml.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4 pg. 195; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 16 pg. 92.

3 Al-Khaṭīb: *Al-Kifāyah fī ʿilm al-Riwāyah*, pg. 93.

4 Ibid, pg. 96.

5 Ibn Ṣalāḥ: *Maʿrifah ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 428.

Ibn Ḥajar says:

> The Ahl al-Sunnah are unanimous that all—the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ—are reliable. The only disagreement comes from obscure innovators.[1]

Question:

What is the meaning of ʿadālah when declaring the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ as such?

Answer:

Being free from dishonesty and never lying in narrating ḥadīth. Never committing mistakes or sins is not meant by ʿadālah here as that is solely for the infallible.

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, in His infinite knowledge, knew that his vicegerents on the earth would be these individuals who were fallible. They would sin and commit interpretive mistakes just as all fallible beings do. It is for this reason that their interpretive differences would, at times, lead them to conflict; upon which they would be rewarded. Unfortunately, those that are ignorant of the laws of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى in interpretive differences by authorities in Islamic law continue to vilify and defame them. Not understanding that good actions and seeking forgiveness effaces bad, has led them to attach sin to the name of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ, without mentioning their good or their seeking of forgiveness.

Just as Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, in His infinite knowledge, knew that some of those who harbour hatred for Islam such as the extreme Rawāfiḍ and the Saba'iyyah will portray acceptance of the faith in order to cause disruption in it. They, together with the innovators such as the Khawārij and Muʿtazilah amongst others will exploit the ignorant and attack the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ based on their interpretive differences. Some of them will then interpolate what has been narrated from them and go to the extent of fabricating lies against them.

Just as Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, in His infinite knowledge, knew that the goal of some of these would be to invalidate His vicegerents who carried the responsibility of

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1 Ibn Ḥajar: *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 1 pg. 9.

conveying the Qur'ān and the Sunnah in order to incite doubts regarding His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger; both principle regulators of His faith and sharīʿah. Abū Zurʿah, the teacher of Imām Muslim says:

> If you see any person criticizing any of the Companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ then know full well that he is a heretic. This is because Rasūlullāh ﷺ is true, and the Qur'ān is true, and all that he brought was true. The Companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ conveyed this Qur'ān to us and the Sunnah. They intend to criticize our witnesses only so that they falsify the Qur'ān and Sunnah. It is more fitting to criticize them (i.e. those who criticize the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم) and they are heretics.[1]

Due to all of the above, Allah سبحانه وتعالى left the task of proclaiming their ʿadālah to Him and His Messenger ﷺ. The tongues of the opposition would thus be rendered speechless and the schemes of the conspirators would turn back onto them. He closed off every path that could have led to defaming their status and their vicegerency till the Day of Qiyāmah.

Al-Khaṭīb says:

> Even if, for arguments sake, none of the above was mentioned; Allah سبحانه وتعالى and His Messenger ﷺ proclaiming their ʿadālah, their condition would compel us to attest to the same. Their hijrah, jihād, expanding their lives and wealth, killing their own kith and kin, seeking goodness for the faith, strength of faith, and conviction would automatically raise them to the highest stages of ʿadālah and purity. There would be no doubt that would surpass all those that evaluate the ʿadālah of others forever and ever.[2]

It is therefore imperative for Muslims to dispel every statement that attempts to challenge their ʿadālah. They ought to affirm the purity of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم from greed, deceit, obliviousness, blame, shamelessness, oppression, injustice, misappropriation of funds, and every such evil quality that seeks to challenge

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1 Al-Khaṭīb: *Al-Kifāyah fī ʿilm al-Riwāyah*, pg. 97; Ibn Ḥajar: *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 1 pg. 10.

2 Al-Khaṭīb: *Al-Kifāyah fī ʿilm al-Riwāyah*, pg. 96.

there ʿadālah or defame their character. Muslims ought to attest to the fact that even though they weren't infallible, their ʿadālah is unquestionable. Furthermore, they are rewarded in their interpretive differences even if it led to conflict. If they had perchance committed a sin, they sought forgiveness from Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى; the Oft Forgiving. And lastly, that they have attained the status of companionship with Rasūlullāh صَلَّاللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ, a rank unattainable by anyone after them.

III. The stance of a Muslim regarding narrations that defame some of the Ṣaḥābah

The stance of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah regarding the Companions of Rasūlullāh صَلَّاللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ is between the two extremes of fanaticism and indifference. It is between those who raise the status of the Ṣaḥābah they revere above the Prophets, or more, and between those who vilify them, not understanding their status and rank. The Ahl al-Sunnah thus love the all Companions of Rasūlullāh صَلَّاللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and justly recognize the status they are worthy of. They do not raise them above the rank they are worthy of, nor do they relegate them below their appropriate status. The stance regarding their conflicts is that they had interpretive differences; one group correct, the other mistaken. The former receiving two rewards; for ijtihād and for coming to the correct conclusion. The latter receiving the reward of ijtihād with their mistake forgiven as it was done with pure intentions. They are not infallible, they were humans who would be correct at times and err at others. However, their correct conclusions were far greater compared to others and their mistakes were far less compared to others. Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى had promised them His forgiveness and pleasure.

Imām Aḥmad says:

> From amongst the clear, established, and known proofs is mentioning the good of all the Companions of Rasūlullāh صَلَّاللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ together with refraining from mentioning their errors and internal conflict. Whoever curses the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ, or any one of them, defames them, or latches onto their mistakes is a Rāfiḍī accursed innovator. Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَى will not accept his compulsory nor voluntary actions. Loving the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ is sunnah, praying for them rewarding, following them a path to salvation, and

holding firmly to their traditions an honor. The Companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ are the best of people. It is not permissible to mention any of their faults nor defame or vilify any one of them.[1]

Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī writes in *ʿAqīdah ahl al-Sunnah wa al- Jamāʿah*:

And we love the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ without discrimination or prejudice against any one of them. We hate whoever hates them and slanders them. We only say good things about them. Loving them is an act of faith, belief and kindness, whereas hating them is heresy, hypocrisy and transgression.[2]

Imām ʿUbayd Allāh Muhammad ibn Baṭṭah says:

ومن بعد ذلك نكف عما شجر بين أصحاب الله رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ؛ فقد شهدوا المشاهد معه وسبقوا الناس بالفضل ، فقد غفر الله لهم وأمرك بالاستغفار لهم والتقرب إليه بمحبتهم ، وفرض ذلك على لسان نبيه وهو يعلم ما سيكون منهم وأنهم سيقتتلون ، وإنما فضلوا على سائر الخلق لأن الخطأ والعمد قد وضع عنهم ، وكل ما شجر بينهم مغفور لهم

After that we should refrain from discussing the disputes that arose among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, for they witnessed great events with him and were the first people to attain virtue; Allah has forgiven them and has instructed us to pray for forgiveness for them and to draw close to Him by means of loving them, as He has enjoined on the tongue of His Prophet. He knew what would happen among them and that they would fight; however, they were given precedence over the rest of mankind because mistakes, whether deliberate or otherwise, were already forgiven for them, and they have been forgiven for all disputes that arose among them.[3]

These are some statements of the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah which clarifies the true and necessary stance a Muslim ought to adopt in understanding some of those statements that have been recorded in defaming some of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ due to the disputes and conflicts that arose between them.

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1 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: *Al-Sunnah*, pg. 78.

2 Ibn Abī al-ʿIz: *Sharḥ al-ʿAqīdah al-Ṭaḥāwī*, pg. 464.

3 Ibn Baṭṭah: *Al-Inābah*, pg. 260.

In this stance lies the solution of protecting one's pen and tongue from mentioning the evil attributed to them. It also imparts the need to think good of them and pray on their behalf. This is done whilst understanding their status and rank, together with searching for the best application regarding what some may have done. One ought to realize that these occurrences had been during the time of fitnah which was in an environment overtaken by uncertainties and thus led to differences of opinion. An authority in Islamic law, in such instances, will be forgiven if mistaken in judgment.

Another point of note here, is that many of the statements recorded regarding these incidents are either taken out of context, or are complete lies, or have been tampered with resulting in a skewed perception of the truth.

It is therefore necessary to refrain from delving into their disputes. Delving into such will lead to speculation running wild, supporting one group, and harboring ill against the other. Spreading such amongst the general masses and students who do not have the ability of comprehending the true nature of the occurrences, due to their young age or lack of education, will result in creating an imbalance in recognizing the status and right the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ hold over the Ummah.

As far as studying the topic in an academic setting that is governed by sharʿī principles and a correct methodology goes, it will be allowed if the intent is elucidation of sharʿī injunctions, explanation of correct stances, and correction of historical inaccuracies that have spread regarding the stance of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ in those battles.

IV. *Sabb al-Ṣaḥābah*[1]; definition, law, and those who involve themselves in it citing academic critique and freedom of discourse.

a. Definition:

Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā has explained it as attacking the integrity of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ by saying that they committed injustices, deviated, and adopted falsehood after Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

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1 Cursing the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ.

Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā says:

> Whoever considers this view as correct will be unanimously viewed as a disbeliever.

b. Law:

Imām al-Nawawī says:

> Know well, cursing the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ is ḥarām. It is from the impermissible abominations. Be it directed to those who played a part in the fitnah or not.[1]

Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ says:

> Cursing any one of them is from the major sins. Our view and the prevailing view is that one who does so will be punished.[2]

Some of the mālikī scholars say that such a person will be killed.[3]

Imām Aḥmad says:

> It is compulsory for the sultan to admonish and punish him. He cannot forgive him. Rather he will punish him and engage with him.[4]

Al-Maymūnī relates the following statement from Imām Aḥmad:

> What do they have against Muʿāwiyah ﷺ? We seek Allah's pardon. If you see anyone speaking ill of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, doubt his Islam.[5]

Isḥāq ibn Rahawayh says:

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1 Al-Nawawī: *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 16 pg. 93.

2 Al-Nawawī: *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 16 pg. 93.

3 Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ: *Al-Shifā bi taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, vol. 2 pg. 653.

4 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: *Al-Sunnah*: 78.

5 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Ḥukm Sabb al-Ṣaḥābah*, pg. 32.

Whoever curses the Companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ will be punished and imprisoned. This is the view of most of our companions.[1]

Imām Mālik says:

Whoever curses Rasūlullāh ﷺ will be killed and whoever curses his Companions will be punished.[2]

ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb says:

Those of the Shīʿah that hate ʿUthmān ؓ will be punished severely. Those that go to the extremes of hating Abū Bakr and ʿUmar ؓ will be punished more severely and will be hit and imprisoned till death. Killing though will only be permitted for one who curses Rasūlullāh ﷺ.[3]

Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā says:

The opinion of the jurists regarding one who curses the Ṣaḥābah ؓ is that if one does so viewing it as permissible, he will be considered a disbeliever. If not, he will be sinful.[4]

Ibn Taymiyyah says:

A group of our scholars have explicitly mentioned that those Khawārij who believe in the total disregard of ʿAlī and ʿUthmān ؓ are disbelievers. Similarly, those Rawāfiḍ who believe in cursing all the Ṣaḥābah will be labelled as disbelievers due to their regarding the Ṣaḥābah as apostate, cursing them, and branding them as sinners.[5]

Many narrations feature severe warnings for those who curse or malign the Companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah al-Madanī narrates from ʿUwaym ibn Sāʿidah ؓ that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

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1 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Ḥukm Sabb al-Ṣaḥābah*, pg. 33.

2 Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ: *Al-Shifā bi taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, vol. 2 pg. 652.

3 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Ḥukm Sabb al-Ṣaḥābah*, pg. 33.

4 Ibid., pg. 34.

5 Ibid., pg. 34-35.

إن الله اختارني و اختار لي أصحابا فجعل لي منهم وزراء و أنصار و أصهار فمن سبهم فعليه لعنة الملائكة و الناس أجمعين لا يقبل الله منه يوم القيامة صرفا و لا عدلا

Verily Allah has selected me and has selected for me Companions. He has made within them for my benefit minister, helpers, and family. May the curses of the angels, and all of men be on a person who maligns them. Allah ﷾ will not accept such a person's compulsory or voluntary acts on the Day of Qiyāmah.[1]

ʿAṭāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ narrates that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

لعن الله من سب اصحابي

May Allah's curse be upon who maligns my Companions.[2]

Imām al-Tirmidhī narrates on the authority of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mughaffal ﵁ that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

الله الله في أصحابي لا تتخذوهم غرضا بعدي فمن أحبهم فبحبي أحبهم و من أبغضه فببغضي أبغضهم و من آذاهم فقد آذاني و من آذاني فقد آذى الله و من آذى الله أوشك أن يأخذه

Fear Allah when with regards to my Companions. Fear Allah when with regards to my Companions. Do not make them a target of abuse after me. He, who loves them, loves them because he loves me. He, who hates them, hates them because he hates me. He who harms them has harmed me, and he who harms me has harmed Allah, and he who harms Allah, then it is very soon that Allah will take him to task.[3]

Imām al-Bukhārī has recorded on the authority of Anas ﵁ that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

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1 Al-Ḥākim has recorded the narration in *Al-Mustadrak* and has commented on the chain of narration as authentic. Imām al-Dhahabī has concurred with him, vol. 3 pg. 632.

2 Al-Suyūṭī has recorded it in *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaghīr*, vol. 2 pg. 351 and has commented, "Al-Ṭabarānī has narrated it and is authentic." Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim has recorded it in *Al-Sunnah*, vol. 2 pg. 453, Ḥadīth: 1000.

3 Al-Tirmidhī has recorded it in *Al-Sunan*, vol. 5 pg. 358 and has said, "It is a sound narration." Aḥmad has also recorded it in *Musnad* vol. 5 pg. 45, 57; Abū Nuaʿym in *Al-Ḥilyah*, vol. 8 pg. 287; Al-Baghawī; *Sharḥ al-Sunnah*, 14/70.

> Loving the Anṣār is a sign of Imān and hating the Anṣār is a sign of hypocrisy.[1]

c. Those who involve themselves in it citing academic critique and freedom of discourse.

The cursing and maligning that have been mentioned in the quotations provided above, has become known in contemporary times as 'academically critiquing the history of the Ṣaḥābah'. This is in fact the same curses that polluted the speech of the Saba'iyyah, Rawāfiḍ, Khawārij, Muʿtazilah, and heretics against the nobility of the Companions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ; the same curses that were heaped upon the Ṣaḥābah رضى الله عنه by the lying narrators—especially the Shīʿah—in the books of Islamic history.

The same slanders that were established as untruths and blown to smithereens by just men; by the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah in their histories of the Ṣaḥābah رضى الله عنه.

The same slanders and vilification that caused many a man to become targets of the curses of Allah سبحانه وتعالى and His Messenger ﷺ together with being targets of laws that entailed, being hit, imprisonment, or even death based on the differing views, as has been clearly explained above.

The renaming that has emerged in these latter times as 'academic critique of the early Islamic years' has remained exactly the same as the curses of the former times. It is a revival of the curses that the Ahl al-Sunnah put to bed when the lands and kingdoms were theirs and the heretics and innovators were subdued.

This revival, of late, has been at the hands of groups of the communists, Christians, Jews, and Orientalists who harbour a deep hatred for Islam.

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1 Imām al-Bukhārī has recorded it in *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Kitāb Manāqib al-Anṣār, Bāb Ḥubb al-Anṣār min al-Imān, vol. 4 pg. 223.

Their cause has been further assisted by sons of this very Ummah either unknowingly or due to becoming enamoured with the east, west, and their methodologies. They fall out of the sacred bounds of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ under the chants of academic critique and freedom of discourse. Forgetting, perhaps intentionally, that academic methodology in Islam and Islamic history is governed by sharʿī laws and principles that are vital to adhere to. Research and studies conducted have to remain within the bounds of these principles so that the conclusions reached are true to reality and conform to Islamic injunctions.

Innovators and heretics of these latter times have two distinct goals behi the revival of these curses:

1. Attacking the integrity of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ intending to sow doubts regarding the Qurʾān and the Sunnah as it was the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ who were the mediums of conveying these two principle authorities of the religion of Allah سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَ and His laws.

2. Establishing the inability of Islamic practices in the real world, especially in these times. Their effort is to malign and vilify the character of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَاللَّهُعَنْهُ together with the society they lived in just after the passing of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىاللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ. Their conclusion being, if they could not uphold the practices of Islam in that time, then how can we be expected to hold onto those methodologies of reformation in our time.