

## Research Methodology with a Special Reference to Hadith Compendia

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### ABSTRACT

Research signifies thorough investigation of the subject concerned with a view to developing new ideas or formulating new interpretation of the existing idea/s. In the field of Islamic Studies, Hadith sources, such as the six or nine canonical compilations, other categories of Hadith collections, and Hadith commentaries, among others, are surveyed to prove or disprove one thing or another. In most cases, only the reports from the purportedly authentic Hadith compendia are borrowed and quoted without subjecting them to critical analysis. In such borrowings of Hadith reports what is relied upon is the highly revered names of scholars of Hadith, such as al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Da'ud, Anas ibn Malik, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, etc. These Hadith scholars are known for having authenticated Hadith reports before they recorded them in their respective Hadith collections. All the Hadith books seem to have been based on chain of narrators, hardly giving any consideration to the nature of the narrated reports. Hadith reports still need serious process of authentication from the angle of Hadith-texts. For that matter, Hadith reports, irrespective of their sources, must be checked against several criteria, the Qur'an, highly authentic practices of the Prophet (s.a.w.), human reasoning, most reliable historical accounts, and moderation. The methodology applied in the paper is critical analysis. The conclusion reached in the paper is that despite the well-known authenticity of Hadith sources the borrowed reports therefrom entail further authentication from the angle of the texts of reports.

### KEYWORDS

Research Methodology, Hadith Compendia, Authentication of Hadith Texts, the Qur'an, Highly Authentic Prophetic Traditions, Human Reasoning, Authentic History, Moderation.

### 1. Introduction

Mere quotation of Hadith reports from purportedly authentic sources, such as nine canonical collections of Hadith, and other compilations of Hadith reports, such as Sahih of Ibn Khuzaymah, Sahih of Ibn Hibban, with an attempt to prove or disprove something is considered a valid task in research. It is known that the

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recorded Hadith reports in the sources have been authenticated from the angle of the chain (sanad), but, for sure, not from the angle of text (matn). Teachers and students need to undertake research of the Hadith reports they want to consider for academic objectives. This paper represents a humble attempt to deliberate over how to investigate Hadith texts and verify their authenticity.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

An endeavor to investigate Hadith reports recorded in Hadith compendia is generally frowned at and declared the attempt, however sincere it might be, as a rejection of Hadith. It is because the mainstream Muslim scholarship believe that almost all the Hadith reports, especially in the six canonical compilations of Hadith, Sahih of al-Bukhari (810-870), Sahih of Muslim (D. 875), Sahih of al-Tirmidhi (824-892), Sunan of Abu Da'ud (817-889), Sunan of Al-Nasa'i (D. 915), and Sunan of Ibn Majah (824-886), are already authenticated beyond any further room for doubts. Muslim scholars also undertake the task of reconfirmation of authenticity of Hadith reports, but only from the angle of the Hadith-Chain (isnad). The question arises as to who closed the door of reconfirmation of authenticity of Hadith reports from the angle of the text (matn). Reauthentication of Hadith reports does not amount to rejection of Hadith. It is rather a reconfirmation process to ensure whether the attribution of Hadith reports concerned to the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) is valid. Reauthentication of Hadith reports is a continuous responsibility of Muslim scholars. It is because the Last Prophet's (s.a.w.) warning—“whoever ascribes to me anything wrongly and deliberately deserves to be consigned to the Fire” (al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Kitab al-'Ilm, Hadith Nos. 106-110)—is very serious and still meaningful.

## **3. The Hadith-Texts Research Criteria**

To make investigation of Hadith reports' validity, five criteria are suggested: (1) the Qur'an, (2) highly authentic traditions of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.), (3) moderation, (4) human reasoning, and (5) most reliable history. Below is the justification of developing and executing these five criteria:

### **3.1 The Qur'an**

The Qur'an declares itself as the criterion (*al-Furqan*) to judge the validity of anything: “*In the month of Ramadan, the Qur'an was revealed as a guidance to the people, as Clear Signs of the true guidance and as the Criterion*” (2:185); “*And He has also revealed the Criterion*” (3:4); “*Most blessed is He Who sent down this Criterion on His servant, to be a warner to all mankind*” (25:1). If there is any apparent clash between the Hadith-text and the Qur'an, the Hadith-text is to be considered invalid.

### 3.2 Highly Authentic Traditions of The Last Prophet (S.A.W.)

There are the most authentic sayings and doings of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) recorded in sources based on practical and communicative continuity right from the time of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.). The Qur'an itself describes that the Last Prophet's sayings and doings must be followed seriously and sincerely: *"But nay, by thy Lord, they do not believe until they make you judge of what is in dispute between them and find within themselves no dislike of that which you decide and submit with full submission"* (4:65). So, Hadith reports are also to be checked again and again against the most authentic sayings and doings of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) to reconfirm that the reports concerned are authentic.

### 3.3 Moderation

The Qur'an inspires humankind to always chose the middle path in every walk of life. Some verses suffice to bring the idea home: (1) *"Do not keep your hand fastened to your neck nor outspread it, altogether outspread, for you will be left sitting rebuked, destitute"* (17:29); (2) *"Those who are neither extravagant nor niggardly in their spending but keep the golden mean between the two"* (25:67); (3) *"Seek by means of the wealth that Allah has granted you the Abode of the Hereafter, but forget not your share in this world and do good as Allah has been good to you and do not strive to create mischief in the land, for Allah loves not those who create mischief"* (28:77). The above-quoted first two verses (17:29; 25:67) exhort mankind to opt for balance between two extremes, extravagance, and miserliness. So, what is desirable in monetary transactions is, for sure, plausible in each action, reaction, interaction, and transaction. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quoted verse (28:77), the clear message is that immoderation in thoughts and practices causes chaos and corruption (fasad). In the recorded Hadith reports there are many which describe in disproportionate manner the quantity of reward or punishment. Such reports may not be reliable.

### 3.4 Human Reasoning

The Qur'an attaches much significance to application of human reason ('aql). The Qur'an condemns those who do not apply reason in their thoughts and practices: *"Indeed the worst kind of all beasts in the sight of Allah are the people that are deaf and dumb, and do not apply reason"* (8:22). In its six verses (16:78; 17:36; 23:78; 32:9; 46:26; 67:23), the Qur'an mentions three divine gifts—hearing (sam'), seeing (basar), and thinking (fu'ad)—which certainly constitute human intellectual power wherewith humans analyze and select the things in life. The Qur'an invites its addressees to apply reason to realize what the Qur'an says: *"We have bestowed upon you a Book that comprises your description. Do you not then apply your reason?"* (21:10). There are around fifty verses in the Qur'an which highlight the importance of application of reason. It is noteworthy that if application of reason

is desirable in understanding the Qur'anic verses, why not then in understanding the validity of Hadith reports?

### **3.5 Most Reliable History**

The Qur'an consists of so many historical narratives with a view to mainly rectify the errors in the so-called Judeo-Christian religious scriptures. Historiography calls for rectification of historical errors in the sources. Possibly, in Hadith literature there are historical narratives which may not be considered correct or acceptable in the light of the already validated and reliable narratives in the sources. One example may suffice to highlight the significance of this criterion. The well-known recorded history presents the list of those who embraced Islam first in the wake of the Last Prophet's message in Makkah. This list contains, among others, name of 'A'ishah bint Abi Bakr who according to Hadith sources was not even born at the time the Prophet began inviting the people to Allah's message. The details of this case will appear in the coming discussion.

## **4. Examples of Hadith Texts and Application of Research Criteria**

Around nine Hadith texts are taken up for the purpose of ascertaining the nature of their validity: (1) the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) asking for pen and paper, (2) mental and religious deficiency of women, (3) Satan teaching *Ayat al-Kursi*, (4) the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) warning his followers on their errors in ablution, (5) wives' prostration to their husbands, (6) the Last Prophet's prayer in the battle of Badr, (7) the gradual reduction of number of prayers from 50 to 5 times a day, (8) age of 'A'ishah at the time of her marriage to the Last Prophet (s.a.w.), (9) excessive punishment for small errors.

### **4.1 The Prophet Asking for Writing Pad**

Several Hadith collections have recorded a report concerning the Last Prophet's wish to write his last will. The translation of that report as recorded by al-Bukhari is as follows:

“Yahya ibn Sulayman reports from Ibn Wahb who reports from Yunus who reports from Ibn Shihab who reports from Obaid Allah ibn Abd Allah who reports from ibn Abbas that when the Prophet's illness turned very serious, he said: “Bring to me a writing material, I will write for you a message after which you will never get astray”. Upon this 'Umar said: It was due to too much pain that the Prophet asked for writing pad; we have the Book of Allah (the Qur'an) which is sufficient for us. The people at that moment made different observations and their voices turned noisy. The Prophet (s.a.w.) then asked them to leave as controversy before him is not a wholesome attitude. Thereafter Abd Allah ibn Abbas left and said:

Verily, misfortune is misfortune which caused obstruction between the Prophet's wish and writing his will" (al-Bukhari, Sahih, Kitab al-'Ilm, Hadith No. 113).

This report has several parts: (1) the Prophet (s.a.w.) asked for a writing pad to write something important, (2) 'Umar ibn al-Khattab's reaction that the Prophet's demand was under the pressure of excessive pain and that the Qur'an was sufficient for future, (3) different reactions of the people, raising their voice, (4) the Prophet (s.a.w.) asked his companions to leave as controversy over the matter was unbecoming for them, and (5) Ibn Abbas left from around the Prophet (s.a.w.) and commented that different observations of the people over the Prophet's wish became a hurdle in the way to the Prophet's dictation of his last will.

Each of these five parts of the Hadith report needs critical analysis. Firstly, when the Qur'an declared that: *"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favor unto you, and have chosen for you as religion al-Islam"* (5:3), and he himself announced in his farewell pilgrimage: *"I leave among you two things, which if you hold fast to them you will never go astray, the Book of Allah and the Traditions (sunnah) of the Prophet of Allah"* (Malik ibn Anas, *al-Muwatta'*, report No. 899), it is unthinkable that the Prophet (s.a.w.) wished to write some more message for his followers. Secondly, if the Prophet (s.a.w.) really wanted his people to bring a writing pad, they must have brought it without raising their eyebrows. 'Umar's observation that the Prophet's demand for writing pad was due to him being not so much conscious due to excessive pain was invalid as the Prophet (s.a.w.) is not considered unconscious anytime and anywhere.

And the second part of 'Umar's observation that the Qur'an was sufficient for them is also inconceivable because 'Umar, like other Companions, knew that the Prophet's Sunnah alongside the Qur'an was necessary for living a complete Islamic life.

Thirdly, the Companions having raised their voice in front of the Prophet (s.a.w.) goes against the Qur'anic advice for the Companions: *"O believers, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet and when speaking to him do not speak aloud as you speak aloud to one another, lest all your deeds are reduced to nothing without your even realizing it"* (49:2). The Companions were well-aware in the light of the Revelation concerned that raising their voice before the Prophet (s.a.w.) and speaking loudly amounted to disobedience to Allah's command and disrespect to the Prophet's person whom his companions loved and respected very much.

Fourthly, the report that Companions' loud murmuring angered the Prophet (s.a.w.) who asked them to disperse from around him is not in commensurate with the Prophet's general demeanor. The Qur'an describes the Prophet's disposition in these words: *"It was due to Allah's mercy that you were gentle to them. Had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would surely have scattered away from you. So, pardon them, and pray for their forgiveness, and take counsel from them in matters of importance"* (3:159). The Prophet (s.a.w.) was gentle and kindhearted, therefore the report that he expressed his anger over his Companions' loud murmur in front

of him contrasts with the Prophet's gentle manner of behavior as the Qur'an substantiates it.

Fifthly and lastly, Ibn 'Abbas left the place, expressing his disapproval of the people's unexpected approach to the situation. In the original report his comment appears very harsh (*inna al-raziyyah kulla al-raziyyah: verily, it is completely a misfortune*). Ibn 'Abbas was hardly 12-13 years old at that moment. Was it possible for him as a junior in age to utter harsh words for the senior Companions, including 'Umar? It is hard to digest this suggestion in the report concerned. Thus, the report miserably fails to withstand rational scrutiny.

#### **4.2 Intellectual and Religious Deficiency of Women Folk**

The translation of the report concerned is produced here: "Sa'id ibn Abi Mayam reports that he was informed by Muhammad ibn Ja'far who was informed by Zayd ibn Aslam from 'Iyaz ibn Abd Allah who reports from Abi Sa'id al-Khudri that the Prophet (s.a.w.) went to the mosque on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha, and after the solah and sermon proceeded to women's gathering place and said to them: 'O women folk, give charity because I was shown majority of women as companions of Hell', so they asked as to why it was that. The Prophet (s.a.w.) answered: women folk excessively curse each other and are not sincere to their social relationships; I do not see any of you compared to men folk but deficient intellectually and religiously. Upon this the women asked as to what their intellectual and religious deficiencies were. The Prophet (s.a.w.), then, explained that their intellectual deficiency is due to women's testimony having been regarded as half and their religious deficiency is due to their exemption from prayer and fasting during menstruation period" (al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Kitab al-Hayd, Report No. 300).

This report, however authentic from the angle of sanad (chain of narrators), appears defective from the angle of the text of the report. Firstly, the report is uncertain over when the dialogue between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and Muslim women folk took place, Eid al-Fitr day or Eid al-Adha day. Does this uncertainty of occasion not render the report doubtful? Secondly, when the Prophet (s.a.w.) visited the womenfolk's place on the occasion, the first thing he said was that their majority would be consigned to hell-fire due to their excessive cursing habit and disloyalty to social relationships hence they needed to observe charity. The second thing the Prophet (s.a.w.) is reported to have uttered was that women were intellectually and religiously deficient. The reason mentioned in the report for intellectual deficiency was that women's testimony was considered only half. In another report on the same subject there is clear reference to the Qur'anic verse (2:282) in which the Qur'an promulgates testimonial rule involving monetary transaction that two women's testimony is equal to one male's testimony. As it appears the Qur'an does not prescribe a permanent regulation concerning the value of women's testimony. This rule is very much related to the situation available in Arabian Peninsula where both men and women were not so advanced in financial

transaction. As the verse says, the wisdom behind two women's inclusion as witnesses was that they might rectify each other due to probable forgetfulness of anyone of the two. Does it not then mean that if forgetfulness does not exist, due to education and intellectual strength, the women's testimony is not required to be considered half. As regards the religious deficiency, the report refers to women's inability to perform the prescribed prayers and fasting. One may wonder how natural sickness (cycle of menstruation) becomes a deficiency? Exemption of menstruating women from prayer and fasting during menstruation period is a reward rather than a deficiency. Religious deficiency indeed means that one can perform prescribed rites, yet she abstains from observing them. Allah's reward in the form of exemption in no way constitutes deficiency. It is hard to believe that the Prophet (s.a.w.), the wisest person on the surface of the earth took Allah's reward for women as deficiency. It is well-known that Muslim scholars advance so many interpretations to justify the above report. They forget that this report constitutes humiliation to womenfolk. The Qur'an prohibits mankind to cause any sort of humiliation to anyone including women:

*"O believers, let not a group (of men) scoff at another group, it may well be that the latter (at whom they scoff) are better than they; nor let a group of women scoff at another group, it may well be that the latter are better than they. And do not taunt one another, nor revile one another by nicknames. It is an evil thing to gain notoriety for ungodliness after belief. Those who do not repent are indeed the wrong doers" (49:11).*

In the light of this verse, the report in view may not carry any significance.

#### **4.3 Satan Teaching Ayat Al-Kursi (2:255)**

A long report on the significance of reading Ayat al-Kursi (2: 255) has been recorded in hadith sources, including al-Bukhari's *Sahih* and Muslim's *Sahih*. The combined translation of the report in both the sources is given below:

'Uthman ibn al-Haytham reports from 'Awf who reports from Muhammad ibn Sirin who reports from Abu Hurayrah who narrated: I was tasked with keeping vigil over the charity items received in the month of Fasting. One night someone entered the place and started filling his bag with food grains. When I caught him red-handed and intended to take him to the Prophet (s.a.w.), the thief requested me to let him go with the promise he would never intrude again, and he would teach me something very great thing. So, the thief advised me: 'When going to bed at night, read *Ayat al-Kursi* (2:255), Allah will always be with you, protecting you till morning, and Satan will never approach you'. The following morning Abu Hurairah narrated the entire episode to the Prophet (s.a.w.) who said: the thief was Satan who is a liar but said right about the significance of reading *Ayat al-Kursi* (al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Kitab Fada'il al-Qur'an, Report No. 4742).



As for the significance of reciting *Ayat al-Kursi* (2:255), it is undoubtedly heartening. But the report in view contains a part which is hard to digest. As per the report Satan intruded the charity store in the guise of human in a bid to steal some food stuffs, but he was caught red handed by the security officer, Abu Hurayrah and the thief earnestly appealed to him to set him free in exchange of a gift from him. That gift was that the thief, Satan taught the security officer *Ayat al-Kursi* and advised him to read it before going to bed as this reading of the Qur'anic passage would protect him. The first thing to be critically analyzed is that Satan taught Abu Hurayrah the Qur'an. In *Suah al-A'raf* one can see the haughtiness expressed by Satan (Iblis, the Devil) who vowed to Allah to misguide the mankind by using all means and from all directions:

*"We initiated your creation, then We gave you each a shape, and then We said to the angels: 'Prostrate before Adam.' They all prostrated except Iblis: he was not one of those who fell in Prostration. Allah said: 'What prevented you from prostrating, when I commanded you to do so?' He said: 'I am better than him. You created me from fire, and him You created from clay.' Allah said: 'Then get you down from here. It does not behoove you to be arrogant here. So be gone. You will be among the humiliated.' Satan replied: 'Give me respite till the Day they shall be raised.' Allah said: 'You are granted respite.' Satan said: 'Since You have led me astray, I shall surely sit in ambush for them on Your Straight Path. Then I will come upon them from the front and from the rear, and from their right and from their left. And You will not find most of them thankful'" (7:11-17).*

As per these verses, Satan vowed to continue his mission of misleading the mankind until the Doomsday. Satanic reaction as shown in the above verses shows that he was dead set to accomplish his mission and vision. Does the report in view not controvert the Qur'anic description of Satan's plan (7:11-17)? It is not acceptable that Satan whose only job is to lead mankind astray taught the Qur'an to the security officer.

The report in view says that Satan earnestly appealed the security officer to let him go when he was caught red-handed. Satan is a creation from the spiritual world, possessing so many powers, including escaping and disappearing from human eyes. Another thing strange in the report is that Satan entered the charity store to steal food stuffs. Did he not know that entering the store in human form was very risky? Why did Satan not realize that the security officer was keeping his eyes on the entrance of the store? This part of the report in view appears concocted anecdote. Who did this? Allah knows better. Surely, Companion Abu Hurayrah must not have carried out the fabrication of the story. Someone else during the period of Hadith fabrication movement managed to use the names of authentic narrators, including Abu Hurarah, to describe the significance of reading *Ayat al-Kursi*.



#### 4.4 The Last Prophet's Prayer in The Battle of Badr

Hannad ibn Siriyy reports from Ibn al-Mubarak from 'ikrimah ibn 'Ammar from al-Hanafiyy from Ibn Abbas who reports from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab: "On the Day of Badr the Prophet (s.a.w.) looked at the Polytheists' army who were a thousand in number and his soldiers were only 319, and turned towards *Qiblah* and stretched his hands for invocation, communicating to his Lord: 'O Allah, accomplish for me what you promised me; O Allah, cause your promise to happen; O Allah, if this Islamic brigade is destroyed, You will never be worshipped on the earth; and the Prophet continued repeating his invocation to his Lord until the victory..." Muslim, *Sahih*, Kitab al-Jihad wa al-Siyar, Report No. 3412).

The Last Prophet's prayer contains a statement which goes against the first part of the invocation. The Last Prophet (s.a.w.) was sure about Allah's help in the battle. His claim that if Islamic brigade was defeated, there would be none to worship Allah on the surface of the earth. This apprehensive statement contradicts the Prophet's own position as the Prophet of Allah who never gets disheartened. The underlined wording of the Prophet's invocation constitutes a challenge to Allah's will. The Prophet (s.a.w.) was paragon of virtues: "*And you are certainly on the most exalted standard of moral excellence*" (the Qur'an, 68:4). It is unthinkable that the Prophet (s.a.w.) ignored the promise of Allah and uttered a challenging statement to Allah in his prayer. The first part of the Prophet's invocation is quite natural to be made in front of Allah, while the last part constitutes unnatural and invalid. Here the invalidation of the last part of the invocation as quoted above is not, God forbid, the critique of the Prophet's approach, it is rather a condemnation of what has wrongly been attributed to the Prophet.

#### 5. The Last Prophet's (S.A.W.) Serious Warning to His Followers on Ablution Error

Musa reports from Abu 'Awanah from Abi Bishr from Yusuf ibn Mahak from 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amr who reports that the Prophet (s.a.w.) remained behind us in a journey we had undertaken and we reached a point at the time of Solah al-'Asr; and while we started making ablution in which we merely rubbed (*tamassuh*) our feet, the Prophet (s.a.w.) called upon us twice or thrice in high pitched voice: 'Woe to the heels in the hell-fire' (al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Kitab al-Wudu', Report No. 160).

As the report appears, the Prophet (s.a.w.) warned his followers against rubbing their feet in ablution that their feet which remained unwashed would be consigned to hellfire. Here arises two questions: (1) Is it logical that simply because of not washing the feet the believers deserve to be consigned to the hellfire? And (2) Was the Prophet's shouting at his followers, as reported in the sources, in commensurate with his own style of orientation of his followers? The Qur'an depicts the Prophet's manner of teaching and training his followers: "*It was thanks to Allah's mercy that you were gentle to them. Had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would surely have scattered away from you. So, pardon them, and pray for*

*their forgiveness, and take counsel from them in matters of importance* (3:159). As regards the first question, the answer is that the Prophet's message does not contain any information that people will be punished even for their minor errors. The Qur'an says that Allah will forgive people's sins provided that they avoided committing *shirk* and other major crimes: "*If you avoid the major sins forbidden to you, We will absolve you of your 'lesser' misdeeds and admit you into a place of honor*" (4:31).

## **6. Wives' Prostration to Their Husbands**

Muhammad ibn 'Amr reports from Abi Salamah who reports from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "If I were to command someone to prostrate another person, I would prescribe for the wife to prostrate before her husband" (al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, Abwab al-Rida', Report No. 1159).

This statement has wrongly been ascribed to the Prophet (s.a.w.) as he was well-aware of the fact that prostration to any other than Allah was prohibited. The Qur'an was revealed to him, and the Qur'an reiterates this edict of Allah: "*And of His Signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate yourselves before the sun, nor before the moon, but prostrate yourselves before Allah Who created them, if it is Him that you submit to*" (41:37). Women and men are creations of Allah hence none of them deserve to be prostrated. Here Muslim scholars unnecessarily try to interpret the meaning of wife's prostration to her husband. Why do they do so? It is simply because they want to maintain al-Tirmidhi's report as authentic. Is al-Tirmidhi to them greater than the Qur'an?

## **7. Gradual Reduction of Number of Solah From 50 To 5**

Al-Bukhari and others have recorded a long report on the Prophet's ascension to Heaven. One part of this report comprises a dialogue between Moses (peace be upon him) and the Last Prophet (s.a.w.): When descending from the Heaven, the Prophet met Moses (peace be upon him) on the first heaven who asked the Last Prophet (s.a.w.): 'What commands you were given'? The Last Prophet (s.a.w.) replied: '50 times prayers a day'. Moses (peace be upon him) advised him to ask his Lord for a reduction in prayers' number as 50 times a day prayer is beyond the capacity of the people. The Last Prophet (s.a.w.) then returned to Allah to appeal to Him for lessening the burden of prayer. Allah then reduced it to 40. Moses (peace be upon him) kept insisting on the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) for further reduction in the number of prayer and the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) continued his request to Allah to further reduce the solah numbers until it became only 5. Moses (peace be upon him) even then advised the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) to request for another reduction in the number of prayers. But the Last Prophet felt shy and the prayers' number remained five (al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Bab al-Mi'raj, Report Number 3674; on the authorities of Hudbah ibn Khalid from Humam ibn Yahya from Qatadah from Anas ibn Malik from Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah).

One can hardly digest al-Bukhari's account of the Prophet's ascension to heaven. The report suggests that Allah was not, God forbid, wise, so He preferred an allocation of prayers for five times a day through a dramatic process. In fact, it was not an allocation of prayers for 50 times a day, but only for 5 times a day from the beginning. This anecdote appears entirely fabricated by those with vested interests. We pray to Allah to protect us from consuming fake traditions attributed to the Prophet (s.a.w.).

### **8. Age of Umm Al-Mu'minin 'A'ishah At the Time of Her Marriage to The Prophet (S.A.W.)**

Farwah ibn Abi al-Mughra' reports from 'Ali ibn Mishar from Hisham from his father, 'Urwah from 'A'ishah who said: "The Prophet (s.a.w.) married me when I was six years old and consummated it when I was nine years old" (al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Bab Tazwij al-Nabiy 'A'ishah, Report No. 3581).

Because of this report by al-Bukhari and others, it has become of the Muslim and non-Muslim psyche that the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) married 'A'ishah, a minor girl. To rebut this report as purportedly a genuine one there may be advanced many arguments. Here only four arguments are presented to declare the report in view concerning the age of *umm al-Mu'minin* 'A'ishah bint Abi Bakr as doubtful rather fake.

#### **8.1 Reputation of The Prophet (S.A.W.)**

This report has caused so much damage to the reputation of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.). It is claimed by many in the east as well as in the west that the Prophet (s.a.w.) married a minor girl. Any report damaging the Prophet's reputation must be forthrightly rejected as fabricated and spurious. The Qur'an declares the Prophet (s.a.w.) as a paragon of virtues (68:4). Can anyone who is considered paragon of highest character ever be imagined for having married a minor girl. No, not at all. It is because marrying a minor girl is a gross injustice. We cannot think of that injustice by the Prophet (s.a.w.). Muslim scholars unnecessarily try to justify the Prophet's marriage to a minor girl simply because they consider al-Bukhari and other Hadith scholars immaculately inviolable. They do not bother to think about the Prophet's immaculate character.

#### **8.2 Meaning of Biker (Virgin)**

The sources contain an authentic report that after the death of the first wife of the Prophet (s.a.w.), *umm al-mu'minin* Khadijah, a female Companion namely Khawlah bint Hakim approached the Prophet (s.a.w.) to suggest marrying someone again. When the Prophet asked whether she had any proposal in mind, she said: One was *biker* (virgin) and the other was *thayyibah* (widow). The Prophet (s.a.w.)

enquired about who they were, she answered: *Bikr* was ‘A’ishah bint Abi Bakr and *thayyibah* was Sawdah bint Zam’ah (Musnad Ahmad, volume 6, page 211, Report No. 25241 on the authorities of Muhammad ibn Bishr from Muhammad ibn ‘Amr from Abu Salamah and Yahya). The word *bikr* (virgin) does not mean from any angle underaged girl. The word *bikr* applies to some girl who has reached the age of puberty and was able to be married. ‘A’ishah was a virgin i.e., a girl of at least 15. Thus, at the time of consummation of marriage she was 18 years old. One might here suggest that several reports in the sources show that ‘A’ishah would play with dolls at the time of her consummation of marriage. Playing with dolls does not necessarily indicate that she was 9 years old.

### **8.3 The List of Those Who Accepted Islam First**

Muhammad ibn Ishaque has recorded a list of 70 people who accepted Islam first, including Asma’ bint Abi Bakr and ‘A’ishah bint Abi Bakr (Ibn Ishaque, *al-Siyar wa al-Maghazi*, page 143, quoted by Dr Raghib al-Sirjani, *Asma’ al-Sab’in al-Sabiqin al-Awwalin fi al-Islam*, posted on [www.islamstory.com/article\\_dated January 22](http://www.islamstory.com/article_dated_January_22), 2017). The sources confirm that ‘A’ishah was junior to Asma’ by 10 years, and Asma’ was 17 years old at the time of her Islam, so ‘A’ishah must have been 7 years old when she accepted Islam. In this case, ‘A’ishah was 17 when the Prophet married her and 20 at the time of consummation of marriage.

### **8.4 Position of Hisham Ibn ‘Urwah**

The last name in the chain of narrators is Hisham ibn ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr. He is said to have relocated to Iraq in his old age when his memory became very weak. And the report concerning ‘A’ishah’s age at the time of her marriage to the Prophet was a report at that old age. It is because all those who narrated this report are from Iraq. So, the report at his old age is thrown as a weak, unreliable, and flawed.

## **9. Condemnation of House Containing Dog and Picture**

It is reported on the authority of Abu Talhah that the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “Angels do not enter a house in which there is a dog or a picture” (Muslim, *Sahih*, Kitab al-Libas wa al-Zinah, Hadith No. 2105; through the chain of narrators: Hirmalah ibn Yahya from Ibn Wahb from Yunus from Ibn Shihab from Ibn al-Sabbaq from Ibn ‘Abbas from Maymunah).

Here, I would like to share the views of the world-renowned scholar, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, in my own words. The author of this article watched a video of Ghamidi on the above issue streamed around 5 years ago.

### 9.1 Entry of Angels into A House

Whatever the reason, angels enter a place or house only when they are commanded to enter. It is not for angels to decline entering a house where there is a dog or a picture.

### 9.2. The Qur'an Does Not Condemn the Dog as an Unclean Animal

In the Qur'an a hunt caught by a dog is declared *halal*: *"They ask you what has been made lawful to them. Say: 'All clean things have been made lawful to you, and such hunting animals as you teach, training them to hunt, teaching them the knowledge Allah has given you - you may eat what they catch for you - but invoke the name of Allah on it. Be afraid of Allah (in violating His Law). Allah is swift in His reckoning'" (5:4).* In the Qur'an the dog accompanying the people of cave is mentioned in an appreciable manner: *"On seeing them you would fancy them to be awake though they were asleep; and We caused them to turn their sides to their right and to their left, and their dog sat stretching out its forelegs on the threshold of the Cave. Had you looked upon them you would have certainly fled away from them, their sight filling you with terror"* (18:18).

### 9.3 Which Dog or Picture May Be Considered Reprehensible?

The pictures or drawings that are placed in a house for the purpose of worship are totally prohibited and angels may not visit such houses. An astray dog if enters a house may ease itself anywhere in the house, causing the house to become filthy. Such dogs entering a house and living there may not be plausible. But if the dog is pet and trained, there might be no problem in keeping it for any good cause. It is because the trained dog does not ease inside the house.

## 10. Conclusion

The most important issue concerning Hadith compendia is that the reports borrowed from there must be subjected to critical analysis against the Qur'an, highly authentic traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w.), human reasoning, authentic historical accounts, and moderation. In case a report does not stand scrutiny and it is brushed aside as fabricated and fake, it may not be considered an act of rejection of Hadith, it is rather a commendable act of reconfirmation of the authenticity of Hadith, which is a continuous process to be carried out by Muslim scholars until the Last Hour of the world. The process of research on Hadith from the angle of the text is not yet over in the Hadith compilation. If someone borrows a Hadith from sources, he/she must ascertain its reliability. It does not suffice to consider a Hadith authentic merely due to it having been recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

