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Assessing Goldziher's Claim of Fabrication of Hadith by the Companions of the Prophet

Jaafar Saad *, Aliyu Alhaji Rabi'u **

Abstract: The Muslims agreed that the sunnah of Prophet Muhammad PBUH is the second of the two revealed fundamental sources of Islam, after the Glorious Qur'an. The authentic sunnah is contained within the vast body of hadith literature. Therefore, any impugnation against it is a direct destruction of the *sharī'ah*. In this guise, Goldziher claimed that the fabrication of ḥadīth began after the death of the Prophet and that indeed, the first to fabricate ḥadīth were the companions themselves. This paper briefly highlights the methods of the earlier *muḥaddithūn* (traditionalists) and also assesses the claim of Ignaz Goldziher and his method in dealing with ḥadīth; it afterwards attempts the refutation of his claims. The work centers only on Goldziher's allegation for fabrication made by the companions of the Prophet. The paper adopts descriptive and analytical methods in data collection, discussion, and analysis. The paper used secondary data from published classical and contemporary sources. The study discovers that the accusations advanced by Goldziher are baseless, since he lacked credible evidence to support his hypothesis but depended heavily on narratives most of which fell short of historical reliability. It is recommended therefore, that students of knowledge and Muslims generally should be cautious of using Goldziher's works due its lack of scientific evidences.

Keywords and phrases: Ḥadīth criticism, orientalism, Ignaz Goldziher, ḥadīth fabrication, ḥadīth literature.

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Introduction

Prophet Muhammad PBUH is a special personality in the world history and culture of Islam. Muslims regard him not only as a leader of their community, and the medium through whom the Qur'ān was revealed, but also considered, by virtue of his status as a final Messenger of God (Q: 33:40); a suitable model for human behaviour (Q: 33:21). Because of this, his leadership guided the community while he was alive, and his example remains normative long after his death until eternity. The Qur'ān commands Muslims to follow the examples of the Messenger and so from the very beginning, the Companions RA concerned themselves with following his *sunnah* which is embodied in the authentic *hadith* literature. (Falahi, n.d., p.1). It is a consensus of the Muslims that the *sunnah* of the Prophet PBUH is the second of the two fundamental revealed sources of Islam, after the glorious Qur'ān.

The authentic *sunnah* is contained within the vast body of ḥadīth literature (Suhaib, p. 5). Ḥadīth is composed of two parts; the *matn* (text) and the *isnad* (chain of transmitters). A text may seem to be logical and reasonable, but it needs an authentic *isnad* with reliable reporters to be acceptable. 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubārak (d.181AH) said:

"الإسناد من الدين، ولولا الإسناد لقال من شاء ما شاء"

"The *isnad* is part of the religion, had it not been for the *isnad*, whoever wished to, would have said whatever he likes" (Muslim; *Muqaddimah*, p. 11). Since the aḥadīth are part of the important sources for the development of Islamic law, the Muslim community had to differentiate between those traditions that are reliable and those that are clearly fraudulent. But the problems associated with ḥadīth have led to much disunity over authenticity, and have led to the development of the complex science of ḥadīth as it serves as an additional link between Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'ān (Falahi, p. 2).

According to Falahi:

"Many Western scholars have accepted, with some reservations, and used hadith as fairly reliable historical sources. But for many others, the authenticity, and the date of origin of the hadith material are issues that have produced and continue to produce, heated debate. Western studies of Islam since the second half of nineteenth century have pointed out that, the method of *isnad* criticism is unreliable and have concentrated on the content of the text when judging the authenticity of a hadith. A Hungarian Scholar, Ignaz Goldziher's thesis that, the traditions ascribed to the Prophet and the Companions (*Sahabah*) contained in the classical collections of hadith, are not authentic reports of these persons but rather, reflect the doctrinal and political developments of the first two centuries after Muhammad's death, is based primarily on analysis of the content of the *ḥadīth* (*matn*) and not the transmitters (*isnad*)." (Falahi, p. 2).

A number of Western scholars – foremost among them Goldziher followed by Wensinck, Guillaume, Schacht, and others have tried to apply the 'historical critical methods' developed in the nineteenth century to the collection of ḥadīth. Their work was based on the usually unstated premises that what is not found in written records is a later addition or

fabrication. Therefore, they came to consider most of the canonically accepted ḥadīth of the Islamic community based upon its religious heritage and hence not authentic sayings, deeds, or tacit approval of the Prophet. This makes it necessary upon Muslim scholars to assess and refute the innovated method introduced by these western scholars.

Goldziher and Schacht's theory was deeply challenged by many works among which are Nabia Abbott's *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, 'Abd al-Muttalib's *Tawthīq al-Sunnah fī al-Qarn al-Thānī Ususuḥu wa Ittijāhātuh* (The Authentication of *sunnah* in the Second Century: its Bases and Directions), Professor Saad al-Marsafy's *al-Mustashriqūn wa al-Sunnah* (The Orientalists and the *Sunnah*), and Mustafa al-Sibai's second chapter of his *al-Sunnah Wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī al-Islāmī* (The *Sunnah* and its Status in Islamic Legislation). In addition, Ahmad Anwar Sayyid al-Janadi also addressed the issue in his book *al-Sunnah fī Muwājahat Shubhāt al-Istishrāq* (The *Sunnah* in Confronting Orientalism). Likewise, Talal Maloush's *Early Hadith Literature and the Theory of Ignaz Goldziher*, Muhammad Dhiya' al-Azami's *Dirāsāt fī al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Studies in Prophetic Traditions), M. Mustafa al-Azami's *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khatib's *al-Radd 'alā Mazā'im al-Mustashriqayn Goldziher wa Yusuf Shacht wa Man Ayyadahumā min al-Mustashriqīn* (Refuting Goldziher and Schacht's Claim and Those Who Support Them Among the Orientalist), among others, are good resources on the subject matter under discussion.

This work is not first in the area of the study, rather, most of the previous works are bulky and not easy to access by young researchers. Therefore, this work assesses only the claim of Ignaz Goldziher on the fabrication of ḥadīth against the Companions, an unfounded allegation capable of misleading many to doubt the credibility of the Prophet's Companions. The work also briefly studies the methods of the early Muslim traditionalists (*muḥaddithūn*) in the sciences of ḥadīth criticism.

Definition of Ḥadīth

From the linguistic point of view, *ḥadīth* is an Arabic word which has the primary connotation of 'new' being used as an antonym of *qadīm*, 'old' (al-Suyuti, 2003, vol.1, p.42). It is also being used as a story or news (Ibn Manzur, 1414H, vol. 2, p.132, 'Abd al-Muttalib, n.d., p.18). Some other words used in the same sense as *ḥadīth* include *khbar* and *athar*. However, there is another key word, though, a little bit different from the term *ḥadīth* in meaning, yet, used mostly as synonymous, that is the term *sunnah*. *Tarīqah*, *shir'ah* and *minhāj* are parallel of the *sunnah* (Falahi, p. 3). Technically however, the term *ḥadīth* implies specific reports of the Prophet's words and deeds (al-Suyuti, 2003, vol. 1, p.42). Some Scholars add the words of many of the early Islamic century Muslims (al-Suyuti, 2003, vol.1, p.42). The hadith literature on the other hand, means the quantum of brochures, which consist of narrations of the life of the Prophet and the things approved by him. Therefore, *hadith*, refers to the records/reports of the sayings, deeds and tacit approvals of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Some Scholars opine that only words, deeds and silent approvals of the Prophet can be referred to as ḥadīth, but you may refer to the words of the early scholars as *Athar* and *Khbar* (al-Suyuti, 2003, 1/43).

Development of the Sciences of Ḥadīth ('*Ulūm al-Ḥadīth/Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth*)

During the lifetime of the Prophet PBUH and after his death, his Companions (*Ṣaḥābah*) used to refer to him when quoting his sayings. The Successors (*ṭābi'ūn*) followed suit; some of them used to quote the Prophet PBUH through the Companions while others would omit the intermediate authority; such a ḥadīth is known as *mursal* (fast-forwarded). It was found that, the missing link between the Successor and the Prophet PBUH might be one person, i.e. a Companion, or two persons, the extra person being an older Successor, who heard the ḥadīth from the Companion. This is an example of how the need for the verification of each *isnad* arose (At-Tahhan, 2017, p. 3). As time passed, more reporters were involved in each *isnad*, and so the situation demanded strict discipline in the acceptance of *ahadith*; the science regulating this discipline is known as *muṣṭalah al-ḥadīth* (the terminologies of ḥadīth). Therefore, *muṣṭalah* books speak of a number of classes of ḥadīth in accordance with their statuses (Al-Tahhan, 2017, p. 3).

In this regard, a lot of books were authored in this field. As for the first generation, they did not write on *muṣṭalah* or '*ilm al-rijāl*' in general, rather, at the beginning, they included discussions on some of its branches in their books, like Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) in his book *al-Tamyiz*, and the preface of his *Sahih* (3-34), and al-Tirmidhi (d.279 H) in his '*Ilal*'. Also, among the earliest available works in this field are *Tarikh* of Ibn Ma'in (d. 233), *Tabaqat* of Khalifa b. Khayyat (d. 240H), *Tarikh* of Bukhari (d. 256), *Kitab al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil* of Ibn Abi Hatim (d. 327H) and *Tabaqat* of Muhammad bin Saad al-Zuhri (d. 320)(Al-Tahhan, 2017, p. 4). However, according to Hafiz Ibn Hajar, Abu Muhammad al-Ramahurmuzi (d.365H) was the first to write solely on *muṣṭalah al-ḥadīth*, followed by Hakim (d. 405 H), and Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463) and then followed by Abu Amr Ibn Salah with his comprehensive work "Muqaddimah" (Ibn Hajar, Nuzhat al-Nadhar, 1422, pp. 30-34). Works on *muṣṭalahul ḥadīth* were fully developed after Ibn Salah, a lot of works were carried out by different Scholars such as Imam Nawawi (d. 676H), al-Dhahabi (d.748H), Ibn Hajar (d.852H), al-Sakhawi (d.902H), al-Suyuti (d.911H) among others.

Historically, by the middle of the 3rd century AH/9th century CE, the ḥadīth had taken definite form, had established almost all its detailed contents, and completely won the field. In order to collect, sift and systematize this massive and amazing product, a number of eminent scholars began to travel throughout the length and breadth of the then Muslim world. This powerful movement is known as 'Seeking of the ḥadīth. By the end of the 3rd/beginning of the 10th century, several collections had been produced, six of which have, since then, been regarded as being especially authoritative and are known as 'The Six Genuine Ones' (*Sihah Kutub al-Sittah*)" (Falahi, p. 10). By this time, a quite number of the sciences of ḥadīth were in place to preserve the sanctuary of ḥadīth, such as the science of *tafaqut* (chronology) with some contributions from Muhammad bn Saad, Khalifa b. Khayyat among others. The science of validation (*al-Jarh wal Taadil*), *Tarikh*, *Maarifat al-Sahaabah*, *al-Asami wa al-Kuna*, *al-Munfaridat wa al-Wuhdaan*, *al-Ilal* among others.

Furthermore, Falahi observes that, at the time of the Prophet PBUH, the Companions were zealous to learn and recall his words and the incidents of his life. Thereafter, a very

strict system of judging traditions by virtue of their *isnad* arose, but it is difficult to state when this began. Malik, in his *Muwatta'*, does not always bother himself to give a complete *isnad* – even though the *balagiyyat* (hadiths without complete chain of transmission) in *Muwatta* are not many-, which would suggest that by his time, the method had not hardened into a strict system. But all the later books, give complete lists of the authorities through whom the traditions were transmitted from the Prophet PBUH. The theory is that, traditions were transmitted in a regular manner, so that those who heard them from their authorities were entitled to transmit them in turn. One is not justified in assuming that from the beginning, traditionalists were very particular in their methods; but as time went on, and tradition became a matter of vital importance, rules were elaborated (Falahi, p. 9).

Therefore, the importance of *isnad* culminated in the hadith literature till it was counted as part of the religion. Muhammad b Sirin (d.110H) said: “*The information one is collecting is religion. So, consider from whom you accept your religion*” (Muslim, *Muqaddimah* 1/14). Also, Abdullah bin al-Mubarak is reported as saying, “*The isnad is part of religion. But for it, anyone could say whatever he pleased*” (Muslim *Supra*). It was the common practice among the Companions – even while the Prophet PBUH was alive- to transmit his ahadith, when they meet each other. Some of them had even made special arrangements to attend the Prophet's circle in shifts and to inform each other of what they had heard and seen in the presence of the Prophet (al-Bukhari 1422H, vol. 1, No. 29).

Naturally in informing their fellows, they would have used sentences like: “the Prophet did such and such” or “the Prophet said so and so”. It is also natural that one of them who had gained knowledge at second hand, while reporting the incident to a third person, might have disclosed his sources of information and might have given the full account of the incident. There are ample references of this kind in the ḥadīth literature. An instance might suffice here; Dimam bin Tha'labah came to the Prophet PBUH and said to him: “*Muhammad, your messenger came to us and told us . . .*” (al-Bukhari vol. 1, No. 23). These methods, which were used in the early days for the diffusion of the *sunnah* of the Prophet, gave birth to '*isnad*', and this was the rudimentary beginning of the system. In this regard, Ibn Sirin's statement would be very helpful. He said:

They did not ask about the *isnad*, but when – Fitnah (assassination of caliph Uthman) – occurred, they said; “Name to us your men; those who belong to Ahl-al-Sunnah, their ahadith were accepted and those who were innovators their ahadith were rejected (Muslim, *Muqaddimah*, vol. 1, p. 15).

This gives the impression that the *isnad* was used even before the *fitnah*, but the narrators were not so perfect in applying it. Sometimes, they employed it and at others neglected it. After the assassination of the third caliph, they became more cautious and began to enquire about the sources of information and scrutinized them. At the end of the first century, the science of *isnad* was fully developed. There are sufficient references alluding to asking and enquiring about the *isnad* in the first century of the Hijrah (al-Azami, *Hadith Methodology* p. 33). Thence, the use of *isnad* and compelling others to mention their chains of transmission is as old as the transmission of ḥadīth itself.

Criticism of *Matn* (Text of *Hadith*)

Though, the criticism of *isnad* is the most popular when talking about the methods of early traditionalists, but the criticism of *matn* (Text) was also practiced by those scholars. The case of *shadh* (Aloof) and *munkar* (rejected) is clear evidence. According to al-Shafi'i, a *shadh hadith* is one which is reported by a trustworthy person but goes against the narration of a person more authentic than him. It does not include a *hadith* which is unique in its contents and is not narrated by someone else. According to Ibn Hajar, if a narration which goes against another authentic *hadith* is reported by a weak narrator, it is known as *munkar* (Ibn Hajar, 1422, p. 86). Traditionalists, as late as Ahmad used to simply label any *hadith* of a weak reporter as *munkar*. Sometimes, a *hadith* is labelled as *munkar* because of its contents being contrary to general sayings of the Prophet PBUH.

al-Khatib (d. 463) quoted al-Rabi' ibn Khaitham as saying: "Some *ahadith* (plural of *ḥadīth*) have a light like that of a day which is known to us. Some *ahadith* have darkness like that of night which makes us reject it" (al-Sakhawi, 2003, Vol. 1, p. 331;). Al-Auza'i says: "We used to listen to *ahadith* and present them to fellow traditionalists just as we present forged coins to a money-exchanger. Whatever they recognize of them, we accept, and whatever they reject of them, we also reject" (Ibn Abi Hatim, 1952 p. 1/22). The work of Ibn al-Qayyim, "*al-Manār al-Munīf*" is also clear evidence on the early criticism of *matn* which is contrary to what Goldziher claimed.

Writing Down of *Ḥadīth*

It is said that at the time of the advent of Islam, there were no more than 17 persons in the city of Makkah who knew how to read or write, and as regards the city of Madinah the number of those who knew the art was even smaller.

However, al-Azami refuted this view, opining that in pre-Islamic Arabia there were some schools in Makkah, Taif, Anbar, Dumat al-Jandal, Madinah, and in the tribe of Hudhail, where boys and girls learned together the skills of reading and writing. He added further that there were some literary activities as well (al-Azami, Early Hadith Literature, 1978 p.1).

Consequently, there were many contradictory statements made regarding the writing down of *ḥadīth*. In Taqyid al-Ilm, al-Khatib al-Baghdadi deals with the subject of the recording of *hadith* at length concerning whether or not it was prohibited by the Prophet. The researchers on the subject of the recording of Prophetic *hadith* discovered two groups of *hadith* that addressed the issue. The first group allows and indeed commands the writing down of *hadith*, whereas, the second group prohibits it. The permission to the writing down of *hadith* is understood from the following Prophetic traditions:

1. Abd Allah b. Amr b. al-As, Anas b. Malik and Abd Allah b. Abbas RA all reported that the Prophet PBUH said:

«قيدوا العلم بالكتاب»

"Document knowledge (*al-ilm*) by writing" (al-Hakim, 1990, p. 187).

2. Abd Allah b. Amr RA said:

عن عبد الله بن عمرو، قال: كنت أكتب كل شيء أسمع من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أريد حفظه، فنهتني قريش، فقالوا: إنك تكتب كل شيء تسمعه من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، ورسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بشر يتكلم في الغضب والرضا، فأمسكت عن الكتاب، فذكرت ذلك لرسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم؟ فقال: " اكتب فوالذي نفسي بيده ما خرج مني إلا حق "

"I used to write down everything that I heard from the Apostle of Allah PBUH. I intended (by that) to memorize it. The Quraysh prohibited me saying; Do you write everything that you hear from him while the Apostle of Allah is a human being; he speaks in anger and in pleasure?! So, I stopped writing, and mentioned it to the Apostle of Allah PBUH. He signalled with his finger to his mouth and said, "Write, for by Him in whose hand lies my soul, only truth comes out from it" (al-Darimī, 2000, p. 429) and (Ahmad, 2001, p. 58).

On the other hand, the *ḥadīth* understood to have prohibited writing was reported by Abu Saïd al-Khudri RA that Allah's Apostle PBUH said:

"لا تكتبوا عني، ومن كتب عني غير القرآن فليمحه، وحدثوا عني، ولا حرج، ومن كذب علي - قال همام: أحسبه قال - متعمدا فليتبوأ مقعده من النار "

"Do not write down anything from me, and he who has written down anything from me, except the Qur'ān, should efface it; and narrate from me, for there is no harm in that and he who attributes any falsehood to me deliberately will find his abode in the Hell-Fire (Muslim, Vol. 4, no. 2298).

This *ḥadīth* was challenged by many scholars, who deduced that it meant nothing (such as the *ḥadīth*) should be written with the Qur'ān on the same sheet, since there is ample evidence that the Prophet PBUH allowed writing the *ḥadīth*. They opined that it is apparent that the Prophet's sayings would not have survived if they were confined to oral transmission only. However, the real basis for the later collections of *ḥadīth* was the relatively few Companions, such as Abd Allah ibn Amr (d. 65H), Abu Hurairah (d. 58H), Ibn Abbas (d. 67–8H/), and Anas ibn Malik (d. 94H), (may God be pleased with them all) who continued to collect, record, and transmit them. The fact remains that, since the Prophet PBUH had asked the companions to refrain from recording his words, suggests that the practices were widespread.

An analytic look at the above *ḥadīth* of prohibition, and those of permission, many reasons could be discerned to justify the fact that, the prohibition was not in any way permanent but temporary.

According to al-Bukhari and others, Abu Saïd's *ḥadīth* is the statement of Abu Sa'id himself, that is erroneously attributed to the Prophet PBUH, and it actually meant that nothing should be written with the Qur'ān on the same sheet as this might lead someone to conclude erroneously that sentences or words written in the margin or between lines belonged to the Qur'ān. It should be remembered that this command was given when the

Qur'ān was being revealed and the text itself was incomplete. Otherwise, there does not appear to be any sound reason to forbid the writing of hadith (al-Azami, p. 23).

Wisdom behind the Temporary Prohibition

Maloush advanced the following as part of the reasons which we also subscribe to, that, it would seem that the Prophetic prohibition was made owing to the following considerations:

First; in order that the first Companions should not be preoccupied with anything besides the Qur'ān, and in avoidance of the *sunan* taking a position equal to that of the Qur'ān. This possibility was the main reason that `Umar b. al-Khattab RA refrained from compiling the *sunan* of the Prophet, and it was for the same reason that `Urwah RA erased all that he had written, though, later he regretted it. Moreover, the Prophet himself sent hundreds of letters. Many of them were lengthy, containing the formulae for forms and rituals of worship. According to the Qur'ān, his conduct and deeds should be followed by the community (al-Azami, p. 23).

Second, Imam al-Bukhari and various other leading traditionalists reported the statement of Zayd b. Thabit RA who was trusted by Abu Bakr al-Siddiq RA with the task of collecting the Qur'ān. Zayd was required to exert great efforts in this respect as the Qur'ān was written on primitive materials such as *`usub, likhaf, riqā', aktaf, nihaf* and others. These materials were evidently the only ones available for the recording of Prophetic hadith and this may have led to some confusion, resulting in a prohibition against writing hadith at that time. However, this prohibition was not in effect for a lengthy period, and shortly after, they were allowed to write down texts besides that of the Qur'ān, i.e. *al-tashahhud* (an invocation which is recited in the ritual prayers). After that, recording of Prophetic hadith was tacitly and generally permitted, in as much as Abu Sa'id himself, who reported the first Prophetic ban on writing, relates that; "*We were not previously allowed to write anything except the Qur'ān and al-tashahhud*" (Maloush, 2000, p. 107).

Furthermore, it is unrealistic to suppose that the Prophet should issue an absolute ban on writing down his *hadith* because, encouragement of the pursuit of knowledge by all possible means is central to the Islamic ethos. Indeed, writing is recommended in certain areas, such as the documenting of debts. al-Khatib al-Baghdadi argues that, since debts are to be documented by being written down, lest they should be disputed or forgotten, the recording of *hadith* becomes more urgent still, since they are generally more susceptible to the vicissitudes of memory. Also, a permanent Prophetic ban on the recording of his *hadith* would be grossly impractical since many of them explain and elucidate Qur'ānic texts, rules and principles that were, and remain, utterly necessary to the lives of the Muslims (Maloush, 2000, p. 108).

Moreover, the Prophet himself instructed his Companions, when he was close to death, to bring him a *kitab* (something to write on), so that he might dictate to them (Ahmad 2001, vol. 5 p. 135). In fact, there is much evidence of the Prophet's dictation; Umm Salamah, the Prophet's wife (RA), said: "*The Prophet called for a skin to be brought, and Ali was sitting with*

him. The Prophet carried on dictating to `Ali until the face and back of the skin were filled." Consequently, the practice of writing *hadith* became widespread, even Goldziher admitted that: "Many a companion of the Prophet is likely to have carried his *sahifah* with him and used it to dispense instruction and edification to his circle" (Maloush, 2000, p. 109).

From this backdrop, we can understand clearly that, *ḥadīth* was documented and the use of *isnad* was fully employed by the companions during the lifetime of the Prophet PBUH. This alone can refute the canvass upon which Goldziher based his allegations of fabrication, as it will be discussed in the following parts of this work.

Goldziher and his Argument on the Fabrication of Ḥadīth

In order to appreciate more, and deal with his unfounded claims adequately, a brief on his biography would be imperative. Goldziher, Ignaz (1850–1921), a Hungarian Orientalist, was one of the founders of modern Islamic scholarship (Thomson 2007). Goldziher's ancestors settled in the western Hungarian community of Kittsee (Köpcsény). His father, Adolf, moved to Székesfehérvár in 1842, where Goldziher was born, on June 22, 1850 (Simon, 2010). By the age of eight, Goldziher was studying the Talmud, and he published his first essay, on the origins and time of prayer ("SihatJizhaq. Abhandlung über Ursprung, Eintheilung und Zeit der Gebete" [Isaac's Discourse: A Contribution to the Origin, Arrangement, and Timing of Prayers]; 1862) while still a child (Simon, 2010).

According to Simon (2010): Goldziher viewed himself as a Jewish Hungarian citizen; he had little sympathy for Zionism. Although, he preserved a deep-rooted Jewish faith throughout his life, he regarded his religion as a private matter that did not affect his scholarship. He studied Arabic manuscripts at Leyden and Vienna, and travelled to Egypt, Palestine, and Syria before becoming a lecturer at the University of Budapest in 1872 (Thomson, 2007). This aided his mastery of Arabic language which he spoke very fluently (Gottheil, 1922, p. 190). He earned his living as secretary of the Budapest Neolog Jewish community for 30 years, as his university teaching was unpaid until he became a professor in 1904 (Thomson, 2007).

Goldziher's renowned works include the following four texts: *Die Zahiriten* (1884); *Muhammedanische Studien* (Muslim Studies; 2 vols., 1888–1890); *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (Lectures on Islam; 1910); and *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegungen* (Trends in Exegesis of the Koran; 1920). His treatise "Über die Entwicklung des Hadith" (On the Development of the Hadith; 1890) is regarded as his masterwork (Simon, 2010). His Islamic and Jewish studies complemented each other; as he was able to draw many parallels between the two religions, pointing out their differences as well (Thomson, 2007). According to Jung, Goldziher's pioneering work marks a turning point in the disciplinary development of Oriental studies. He was a nodal point in linking nineteenth-century Orientalism with the disciplines of comparative religion, protestant theology and modern Islamic studies. He applied the methods of historicist criticism to Islamic traditions (Jung, 2013, p. 107).

Goldziher, as a Hungarian Jew, he was also a member of the Royal Asiatic Society in London, the Société Asiatique in Paris and the Finno-Ugarian Society in Helsingfors. In 1889, he was awarded by King Oscar II of Sweden with a gold medal for his scholarly work at the Orientalist Congress in Stockholm (Jung, 2013, p. 107). Jung emphasized that, Goldziher's interest in religion; specifically, Islam, is closely linked to his position as both a sincere Jewish believer and a Hungarian nationalist who advocated religious reform as a means for the national integration of the Hungarian Jewry. He combined religious studies with a specific agenda for religious reform (Jung, 2013, p. 108). He died on November 13th, 1921 (Gottheil, 1922, p. 192).

His Argument on the Fabrication of *Hadith*

Goldziher claimed that the fabrication of *ḥadīth* began after the death of the Prophet PBUH and that the first to fabricate *ḥadīth* were the Companions themselves, as is made clear by his statement:

“The Prophet's pious followers have reverently repeated the enlightening sayings of the master and have endeavoured to preserve for the edification and instruction of the community everything that he said, both in public and in private... When the rapid succession of conquests led them to distant countries; they handed on these *hadiths* of the Prophet to those who had not heard them with their own ears and after his death, they added many salutary sayings which were thought to be in accord with his sentiments and could therefore, in their view, legitimately be ascribed to him, or of whose soundness they were in general convinced.” (Goldziher, 1971, p. 18).

He also said:

“Official influence on the invention, dissemination and suppression of traditions started very early... The Umayyads and their political followers had no scruples in promoting tendentious lies in a sacred religious form, and they were only concerned to find pious authorities who would be prepared to cover such falsifications with their undoubted authority.” (Goldziher, 1971, p. 44).

Chaudry summarizes the Goldziher's claim, thus:

“One of the first major blows to the traditional understanding of *ḥadīth* was landed by Ignaz Goldziher, whose theory was the basis for the later Schachtian critique. Goldziher, unlike Schacht, believed in an original canon of *ḥadīth* which had come from the Prophet, although, dearth in number. But due to mass fabrication in the Umayyad and the early Abbasid period that were attempting to justify their political and theological views, it had become very difficult to decipher what was ‘authentic’. He further ruled out the existence of *ḥadīth* collections under the Umayyad period but rather, that this period witnessed only *Fiqh* texts. This meant that the real formation of *ḥadīth* began in the middle of the 2nd century, which naturally placed great doubt on *ḥadīth* in general and this view became common in Western *ḥadīth* scholarship.” (Chaudry, 2017, p. 2).

Discussing and Refuting Goldziher's Allegations

Goldziher named companions whom he alleged to have fabricated ḥadīth as Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan and al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah RA and cited a statement from al-Tabari in his *Tarikh* (II, p. 112). The statement in question according to Goldziher, reads thus:

“Official influence on the invention, dissemination and suppression of traditions started very early. An instruction given to his obedient governor al-Mughirah by Mu`awiyah I, is in the spirit of the Umayyads: Do not tire of abusing and insulting Ali and calling for God's mercifulness for Uthman, defaming the companions of Ali, removing them and omitting to listen to them (i.e. to what they tell and propagate as *hadiths*); praising, in contrast, the clan of Uthman, drawing them near to you and listening to them (Goldziher, 1971, p. 44).”

The above statement was posited by Goldziher to be an official encouragement to foster the rise and spread of *ahadith* directed against Ali and to hold back and suppress *ahadith* favouring Ali (Goldziher, 1971, p. 44). However, a cursory look into the statement above reveals that there is feigning in the text, thus, the original text in al-Tabari is:

قال هشام بن محمد، عن أبي مخنف، عن المجالد بن سعيد، والصقعب ابن زهير، وفضيل بن خديج، والحسين بن عقبة المرادي، قال: كل قد حدثني بعض هذا الحديث، فاجتمع حديثهم فيما سقت من حديث حجر ابن عدي الكندي وأصحابه: أن معاوية بن أبي سفيان لما ولي المغيرة بن شعبة الكوفة في جمادى سنة إحدى وأربعين دعاه، فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ثم قال: أما بعد فإن لذي الحلم قبل اليوم ما تفرع العصا، وقد قال المتملس:

لذي الحلم قبل اليوم ما تفرع العصا ... وما علم الإنسان إلا ليعلما

وقد يجزي عنك الحكيم بغير التعليم، وقد أردت إيصاءك بأشياء كثيرة، فأنا تاركها اعتمادا على بصرك بما يرضيني ويسعد سلطاني، ويصلح به رعيتي، ولست تاركا إيصاءك بخصلة: لا تتحم عن شتم علي وذمه، والترحم على عثمان والاستغفار له، والعيب على أصحاب علي، والإقصاء لهم، وترك الاستماع منهم، وإطراء شيعة عثمان رضوان الله عليه، والإدناء لهم، والاسماع منهم فقال المغيرة: قد جربت وجربت، وعملت قبلك لغيرك، فلم يذمم بي دفع ولا رفع ولا وضع، فستبلو فتحمد أو تذم قال: بل نحمد إن شاء الله.

When Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan put al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah in charge of al-Kufah in Jumada, year 41 [AH], he summoned him. He praised and glorified Allah, and then he said, "... Although, I have wanted to advise you about many things, I left them alone, trusting in your discernment of what pleases me, what helps my regime and what sets my subjects on the right path. I would continue to advise you about a quality of yours -do not refrain from abusing Ali and criticizing him, nor from asking Allah's mercy upon Uthman and His forgiveness for him. Continue to shame the companions of Ali, keep them at a distance, and do not listen to them. Praise the faction of Uthman, bring them near, and listen to them (al-Tabari, 1387, p. 253)

The difference between the two statements is clear, this explicates that Goldziher fabricated the term “*hadith*” in the statement; hence, it is unjustifiable to suggest the invention and suppression of traditions whether officially or unofficially. Secondly, the

statement in Tabari was transmitted by Abu Mikhnaf (d. 157H), who was, according to al-Dhahabi “not trustworthy” and also labelled him as “a spoiled historian” (Dhahabi, 1963, p. 419). This is the narrator of the statement on which Goldziher based his allegation against Mu’awiyah and al-Mughirah.

More closely, therefore, Goldziher’s claim could also be refuted in the following points:

- 1- First and foremost, the chain of the transmission of this story shows that the story is fabricated in many ways;
 - a- The first man in the chain, Hisham b. Muhammad bin Saib al-Kalbi is not trustworthy; Imam Ahmad said about him; “*the man is a storyteller, and I don’t think anyone will accept any hadith from him*”. Al-Daraqutni says; “*he was a matrook (unanimously disclaimed and relinquished)*”. Ibn Asakir says; “*he is a rafidhi (extreme Shi’ite) and not trustworthy*” (al-Dhahabi, 1963 vol. 4, p. 304).
 - b- The second person is Abu Mikhnaf; he is Lut bin Yahya. Al-Dhahabi says about him; “*he is impaired and not trustworthy*” (al-Dhahabi, 1963, vol. 3, p. 419). Ibn Adiy says; “*he is extremist shi’ite and their story forger*”, he also said “*he has some bad stories which I would never like to mention*” (Ibn Adiy 1997, vol. 7, p. 241).
 - c- The third person is Mujalid bin Said who, according to Muhammad b. Saad “*is weak in ḥadīth*” (Ibn Saad 1990, 6/336). Al-Ashaji also said that; he is a shi’ite (al-Dhahabi, vol. 3, p. 438).
 - d- Fudhail bin Khadij from the chain is *majhool* (unknown) (Ibn Hajar, 2002, vol. 6, p. 359).
 - e- Saq’ub b. Zuhair and Hassan bin Uqbah al- Muradiy are trustworthy but the link to them is weak and broken as clearly explained above.
 - f- The narrator of the story; Hujr bin Adi al-Kindi, was also trustworthy; however, known with his Shi’ite inclination, he was sentenced by Mu’awiyah for his rebellion (Ibn Asakir 1995, vol. 12, p. 211; Ibn Saad vol. 6, p. 244). It is evident that, some ill-minded Shi’ites would seize his rivalry to Mu’awiyah to fabricate some stories in his words.

It is clear from the above analysis, that the chain of the story belongs to Shi’ites, and the main source is not trustworthy. Now, let’s take a brief glance at the Muslim scholars’ stance on Shi’ites’ narrations and stories; Yazeed bin Haroon says: “*You may wish to write (hadith) from any innovator as long as he doesn’t propagate his innovation, but don’t write anything from a rafidhi (Shiite) because they tell lie.*” Imam Malik was asked about Shi’ites and he said: “*We don’t talk to them and we don’t narrate anything from them because they tell lies.*” Imam Shafi’i said: “*I never saw*

anyone who gives fake testimonies worse than Shi'ites." Al-Dhahabi said: "But we affirmed that rafidha (Shi'ites) are the most ignorant and tell lies the most." He also said: "They mostly accept lies and reject truths" (al-Zarkashi 1998, vol. 3, p. 399).

Therefore, basing argument on this chain and the text narrated with it shows the ignorance of the arguer, and makes the argument light-weighted and invalid.

- 2- The trustworthiness of the *Companions* (companions) is unquestionable, as Allah Himself describes them in the Qur'ān thus: "Allah is well pleased with them, as they are well pleased with Him" (Q9:100). And the Prophet PBUH said: "The best among mankind is my generation (al-Bukhari, 1422, p. 171)". Anas b. Malik (a renowned companion and servant of the Prophet) said: "It is not everything that we tell you we heard it directly from the Prophet, but our companions inform us, and we do not tell lie to each other" (Khatib, N.D, p. 385). Therefore, the integrity of the Companions (including Mu'awiyah and Mughirah) will definitely keep them away from fabrication.
- 3- Maloush discusses this allegation in a very convincing debate, he says:

It is inconceivable that, Mu'awiyah and the governors that he had appointed would have compromised their position and subjected themselves to disgrace by forging or fabricating Prophetic *ahadith* against Ali or anybody else. If they had, they would have undoubtedly been perceived as liars by the companions of the Prophet and the Muslim community in general, mainly because they were bound to be accused by the opposing party. Goldziher also failed to show us where these alleged invented *ahadith* against Ali appear in the core Islamic texts...In conclusion, we can say that the text cited by Goldziher in no way substantiates his opinion that official involvement in the invention, dissemination and suppression of traditions began early. In fact, the whole issue consists of no more than a series of disparaging remarks which do not substantiate the degree of invention or suppression of Prophetic *ahadith* that Goldziher alleged. There is no evidence given that certain *ahadith* were fabricated against Ali or that certain *ahadith* in his favour were suppressed (Maloush181, 182-183).

Goldziher, allegedly claimed that al-Zuhri fabricated *hadith* for Umayyads, and other pious scholars invented *hadith* against Umayyads due to the enmity that existed between them (Goldziher, 1971, p. 40); this paper responds to this allegation in the following points:

- i. Muhammad b. Muslim b. Ubaidillah bin Shihab al-Zuhri, was described as: "A leader, teacher, hafiz of his time" (al-Dhahabi, 1985, p. 326). He was the first person to oblige the people of Sham on *isnad*, thus he said: O people of Sham why your *hadith* doesn't have bridles and reins?! Then, the people of Sham restricted themselves to mentioning *isnad* from that time (al-Dhahabi, 1985, p. 334). Amr b. Dinar stated that: "I never see a man who is more precise in narrating *hadith* than al-Zuhri, and I never see a man who *darahim* (money) is of no importance to him than al-Zuhri, to him money is just like dung" (al-Dhahabi,

1985, p. 334). Ahmad bin Hanbal said: “*al-Zuhri has most purified isnad*” (al-Dhahabi, 1985, p. 335). If this is the status of money and worldly things in the eye of al-Zuhri, and this is how pious he was, then, this is clear evidence that such a person will never take money to fabricate *hadith*, hence, this makes it clear that Goldziher’s allegation is unsound.

- ii. The work Goldziher cited was that of al-Fasi, Muhammad bin Ahmad Taqiyyuddeen (d.832), titled: *Iqd al-Thamin fi Tarikh al-Balad al-Amin*, and this book is more of a historical work than *hadith*, it contains the history of Makkah. Moreover, the book is incomplete, because the author died after first draft before revision (Alfasi, 1990, p. 66). And the work of al-Mas’udi, Ali bin Husain bin Ali (d. 347), who, according to Chaudri, was “*a scholar known for his Shi’ah leanings and dislike for the Umayyads*” (Chaudry, 2017, p. 3). In the same vein, Ibn Hajar explained that: “*his books replete that he is a Shi’ite, and at the same time a Mu’tazilite*” (Ibn Hajar, 2002, vol. 5, p. 531).

Moreover, in a recent work, Sani wrote on Imam al-Zuhri that:

Anybody who reads through the history of Imam al-Zuhri will find it full of praises and recommendations, and none among the scholars, leaders and historians of his days and after him have ever accused him of any moral misconduct” (2019, p. 447).

- iii. Generally, on the Goldziher’s claim on fabrication by the pious as he termed it, Maloush argues that:

Goldziher's allegation that the pious invented the *hadith*: “*There will come emirs after me who will kill the salat (yumituna) but continue to pray the salat...*” as a result of the Umayyad government's failure to support them in efforts which seemed unimportant to the latter, needs to be re-examined. It is the fact that it was not the wont of the Umayyads to have kept silent about anything that might have threatened their authority that leads us to believe that they would have reacted in one way or another against this *hadith* if it was intended to refer to them. However, there is nothing to prove that this was the case. If Goldziher's allegation is true, then, the *hadith* would not have been disseminated more widely in the Abbasid era than under the Umayyads, since he made it clear that, the *sunnah* found favour and official recognition under the Abbasids. Furthermore, there was in fact no reason to invent this *hadith* in disparagement of the Umayyads, since, the deferment of the prayer until the end of its time is legally permissible in any case. Finally, the way in which this *hadith* was presented by its narrators gives an indication of whether the pious invented it or not (Maloush, 2000, pp. 224-225).

- iv. Falahi discusses Goldziher’s claim, thus:

“Like Goldziher, Schacht proposed general statements concerning the time, first studied their contents and classified them within the framework of the development of the issue to which they were referred. He considered criteria from the *isnad* only secondarily. But as historical facts, he did not limit his

conclusion to the legal *ahadith*, on which he had based his theories. Goldziher introduced scepticism about *hadith*. Schacht and Setter suggest plausible mechanisms for the creation of false *hadith*. Because, this scepticism strikes at the very foundation of early Islamic literature, the rest of the edifice begins to crumble. The very piece of evidence that is meant to guarantee genuineness of the *matn*; the *isnad*, is being summarily dismissed as a fabrication. Therefore, to non-sceptics, the conclusions of Goldziher and Schacht are wrong because they are based on a misunderstanding of the transmission system. In other words, their (false) assumptions about the nature of *hadith*, has led them to (false) conclusions. And so, their arguments seem contrived, secular, and contrary to reason to those who disagree with them (Falahi, p. 3).”

From the arguments above, it was clear that Goldziher lacks the knowledge of the methods applied by the early *muhaddithūn* (traditionalists) in criticizing *hadith*, he also employed historical evidences in supporting his argument some of which were from non-reliable sources, and also not empirical in *hadith* literature, it also shows that he lacks the basic knowledge of ḥadīth criticism. These shortfalls, therefore, are laudable enough to make his submissions intellectually and academically less authoritative.

Conclusion

This paper discussed some methods employed by the early *muhaddithūn* in criticizing *hadith* from the perspective of both *isnad* and *matn*. It also covers the issue of writing down of ḥadīth which was part of the canvass upon which orientalist based their allegations of fabrication on the Companions. The science of *isnad* and when it was introduced in *hadith* literature was succinctly covered by the paper. It also assessed Ignaz Goldziher’s claim for fabrication of ḥadīth, -which served as the foundation to Schacht’s argument and other western Orientalists-, and his allegations on Mu’awiyah, al-Mughirah and the renown tābī’ī, Imam al-Zuhri. The paper was able to uncover the tricks and the misleading trends used by Goldziher in developing his accusations/allegations against the innocent companions of the Prophet (SAW) and noble scholars of *hadith* regarding fabrication. At the end, it was discovered that, he lacked cogent evidence to support his hypothesis and unfounded claims. The paper did not discuss the allegations in general, rather, it only discussed his allegations on Muawiyah, al-Mughirah and al-Zuhri. This is to make it easy for a reader to comprehend the argument. It is recommended that other articles should be written in piecemeal to discuss the allegations one after the other, considering the fact that all works carried out in the area are bulky.

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