

# Conflicting Views Regarding the Hadiths



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**Abstract:** *This article summarizes the studies published in the field of hadith and hadith studies, and gives a brief overview and analyzes the hadith approaches. The paper analyzes evolutionary changes of contradictory views on the development of hadith science in the West, a collection of six reliable sahih hadiths and foreign scholars attitude towards them, as well as the historical significance of hadiths and their importance in the Islamic world.*

*It is known that some hadiths were fabricated for various purposes. We are far from thinking that all hadiths are authentic and correct. However, because of some "fake" hadiths, we oppose the rejection of Islamic sources after Qur'an. Therefore, the essence and contents of many works published in the West must be reanalyzed today. As a practical implementation of the above-mentioned issues, most of the foreign researches on hadith have been studied with using comparative-historical, logical, and descriptive methods in this article.*

*As a novelty of this work, it is possible to present the analysis of new books, articles published abroad.*

*The results show that many western scholars changed their negative views about hadiths to positive side and they are also researching the historical significance of hadiths. In fact, they are studying "al-Kutub al-Sitta" as the main source after Qur'an.*

*According to our conclusions, many studies on the hadiths in the West have been conducted, but there is no mutual comparative analysis on this field. The role and significance of Central Asian scientists have not been studied adequately in the formation of positive opinions on hadith in the West.*

**Key words:** *hadith, fake hadith, Qur'an, Prophet, West*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The place and substance of the hadiths are invaluable in Islamic world. Because the hadiths play an important role in understanding Islam and Islamic law. they are studied and appreciated in Islam as the main source after the Holy Quran. At the same time, these religious manuals are the traditional educational manual of Muslim nations that teach human qualities, the right and proper behavior in the family and in the world.

Therefore, this article aims to summarize research published in the field of hadith and hadithology and provide a brief overview and analysis of today's approaches to hadiths.

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While studying Western researches on the hadiths, it has been observed that the initial negative attitudes towards hadiths changed positive side because of the persistent efforts of Muslim scholars and new evidence. In other words, in the late nineteenth and early 1990s, researchers claimed that hadiths are fake and they have no historical importance. However, their claims of no historical significance are completely groundless today. In this article, the founders of various theories and approaches to hadiths and most scientific papers on the subject have systematically investigated.

The structure of this work consists of parts such as the notion of hadith and the history of its formation, the conflicting approaches of different scholars to the hadith issue, the skeptical view of hadiths, modern approaches and conclusions.

## II. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Concept of the Hadith and the History of its Formation

Hadith in Islam refers to the record of the words, actions, and the silent approval of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. Hadith have been called "the backbone" of Islamic civilization, and within that religion the authority of hadith as a source for religious law and moral guidance ranks second only to that of the Qur'an (which Muslims hold to be the word of Allah revealed to his messenger Muhammad).

The hadith narrators are described as follows: "What is inherited from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is a hadith or a Sunnah related to speech, work, editorial, behavior, and biography" [35]. This definition includes several things inherited from Muhammad (peace be upon him) and narrated through trustworthy sources, which we refer to as "hadiths".

It is known that the science of hadith came after the death of the Prophet. After all, in the life of the Prophet, his words and actions were limited to hearing and contemplating at first, but later narrating them. The Companions who listened to the Prophet's hadeeth also heard many and others less because of different circumstances. This led to an increase in the need for narration and narration. Since the Companions heard the hadith directly from the Prophet, the hadiths do not contain any cases of appetite, lies or forgetfulness. M.Azami wrote [1] that if there was any ambiguity in the memory of the Companions, it was the custom to ask and approve it from the other Companions. The stages of Hadith science development can be summarized as follows:

In the first period, during the time of the Prophet, the Companions heard the hadith from the Prophet. They then conveyed these hadiths to others. For this reason, at this early stage, the science of hadith had the same characteristics as narration, memorization and transmission.



## Conflicting Views Regarding the Hadiths

In the second period, after the death of the Prophet, the Companions were scattered in various new states of Islam. Over time, the need for understanding the meaning of the Islamic rules and the meanings of the Qur'an increased. Since the hadiths were a source that facilitates understanding of Islamic sciences, there was a need for them to be explained. Trips to other cities and countries were made for this purpose. The Companions paid close attention to the hadiths narrated. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "If anyone intentionally refers to me in what I have not said, he will surely go to hell" [34].

Special research areas were established to verify the accuracy of the hadiths. For example, it is the science of the narration of "Ilm ad-diraya" that examines the authenticity of the narrators, whether they saw or heard the Prophet. The text of hadith has been critically studied in the science of "Naqd al-matn". That is, the text of the hadith is based on sufficient evidence and facts based on the verses of the Qur'an or hadiths on the subject, and it was given a level of "authentic" or "unacceptable" [34].

Various groups in society fabricated hadiths for their own benefit. That is, at that time political differences, sectarian tensions, and ignorant attempts to serve the religion of ignorant people were ignited. There were fake narrations and preoccupations for the sake of fiction and sermon or for the sake of favoring rulers. For example, there are reports that the first fabrication and false hadiths in the 7th century were spread by different groups in Medina for political purposes. In the VII-VIII centuries murjites, qadariyeh, rafizites and other similar movements spread heresy in hadith science. In order to prevent this from happening, sanads for hadith were needed. They even had to go to other countries to judge a single hadith.

From the second century of the Hijra, the period of the Companions ended, and the study of hadiths in terms of both text<sup>1</sup> and sanad<sup>2</sup> began.

Scholars started studying the history of Hadith narrators and their full biographies, and created special works in this area. For example, ar-Rabi ibn Subayh al-Saadi (d. 160/777), Sa'id ibn Abu Aruba (d.160/777), Muammar ibn Roshid al-Azadi (d.153/770), Abdumalik ibn Abdulaziz ibn Jurayh (d.151/768) classified the hadiths into chapters. That is, their works were devoted to a particular subject, such as interpretation, ethics, and the Shari'ah rules. The above works are a collection of hadiths, with little regard for their authenticity.

Since the third century A.D., the search for hadith intensified and independent works and classifications emerged. Large works of compilation of hadiths, musnad and mu'jam or musnafa<sup>3</sup> appeared. Specifically, the collection of

hadiths by scholars like Imam Bukhari (d. 2556/870), Imam Muslim (b. 2261/875), and Imam Termizi (d. 279/892) are among the collections of musannaf hadiths. In these works, the themes were organized into chapters. Musnad paid no attention to the topics in the collections. The narrations of a certain Companion were written in one place and then narrated by another. For example, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal [26] in his work "al-Musnad" first narrated the stories of the four caliphs, and then cited the stories of other companions. And in the Mu'jams, the muhaddithin (hadith scholars) presents their teachers' hadiths in alphabetical order. In short, the science of hadith, which dates back to the time of the Prophet, became more systematic in the ninth century AD.

### B. Two Approaches

It is well known that in Islam, the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the hadiths are regarded as the most reliable sources. However, from the 19th century onward, debate has begun on the authenticity, historicity and provenance of hadiths. For example, most westerners [27], [20], [10], and some Muslims [33] believe that most hadiths which were written in III / IX centuries were subsequently falsified for various reasons. In particular, Western scholars Goldziher [15] and Joseph Schacht [29] put forward a suspicious view on the science of hadith and hadith. According to their views, although many of the hadiths are believed to reach the Prophet, they are in fact created in later centuries. In the first centuries of Islam, there was no need to write, memorize, and preserve hadiths. The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions knew the Qur'an as unique. As evidence, Goldziher and Schacht have stated that there were no hadiths written until 722 [18] and concluded that many hadiths were fabricated for political reasons [9].

However, there are also many scholars who completely ignore this issue [1], [30]. For example, Muslim scholars such as F. Sezgin, Abu Shuhbah, and Al-Marsafi blamed Western researchers for prejudice and concluded that they did not thoroughly study the subject. The two groups of scholars differed in their interpretation of the hadiths. Sunni Muslims view the six major hadith collections ("Sahih Bukhari", collected by Imam Bukhari (d. 256 AH, 870 CE), includes 7,275 ahadith (2,230 without repetitions), "Sahih Muslim, collected by Muslim b. al-Hajjaj (d. 261 AH, 875 CE), includes 9,200 ahadith (2,200 without repetitions), "Sunan Abu Dawood", collected by Abu Dawood (d. 275 AH, 888 CE), includes 4,800 ahadith, Jami al-Tirmidhi, collected by al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH, 892 CE), includes 3,956 ahadith, Sunan al-Sughra, collected by al-Nasa'i (d. 303 AH, 915 CE), includes 5,270 ahadith, Sunan ibn Majah, collected by Ibn Majah (d. 273 AH, 887 CE), over 4,000 ahadith) as their most important. Based on the aforementioned hadith collections, they will evaluate the hadiths created in later times. After all, the text, sanads (chains) in these collections has proven to be justified. Most Western scholars, however, emphasize that the hadiths are later fabricated and have no historical basis. He even considers all six sahih hadiths fake. Western researchers have questioned why a collection of hadiths is not recognized as final, why there are contradictory parts of the hadiths, or if everything is clear in Quran, what is demand for hadiths.

<sup>1</sup> Matn - The word "Matn" (Text) in Arabic means something solid and rising from the ground.

<sup>2</sup> Isnad - The word 'isnad' has two meanings. 1. To attribute a word to its speaker, to lean on it, to say that its owner is so-and-so is *isnad*. 2. The sequence of people who will pass along the text is called 'isnad'. In this sense, 'isnad' and 'sanad' are the same.

<sup>3</sup> When translated from Arabic, Musannaf translates as "selected". Musannaf is a special type of hadith collection, in which the hadiths are grouped by topic, in contrast to the types of musnad. Therefore, the search for a hadith related to a particular area or subject was relatively easy in the collections of musannaf. The Musnad was earlier and the Musnad came into existence later. The collection of hadiths by Imam Bukhari, Muslim ibn Hajjaj, Ibn Majah, Abu Dawud, Isa Tirmidhi, and Imam Nasa'i are among the most popular collections of musannaf type.

Arguments between the two groups lasted for more than a century.

### C. Suspicious Attitudes Towards Hadiths

In particular, Gustav Weil [16] concluded that more than half of Sahih hadiths were invalid and had no historical significance. Sprenger [32], and Muir [25] rejected not only the authenticity of Imam Bukhari but also the authenticity of all the muslim hadiths.

The cumulative level of tradition of denial of hadiths can be found in the studies of Goldziher and Christian Snocks. For example, Goldziher's (Mohammedanische Studien) published in 1890 [15] is still a "fundamental" study of the science of hadith in the West. He put forward skeptical ideas about the hadiths in the western scientific world. In his view, conflicting groups legitimized their interests by falsifying hadiths and linking their creation with the Prophet. That is, the ruler and the scribes falsely fabricated the hadiths, legally strengthened their rule, and affirmed ever-present practices. The same views were reaffirmed in the work of David Samuel Margolos [23] and Henry Lammens [36] published in the 1930s. In particular, according to the revised edition of book by Margolos [23]: "Most Muslim scholars believe that the hadiths are fabricated. The sanads given in the hadiths are confusing and unreliable. Because, if Muslims had any idea that the Prophet was involved, no one would object. This is why the rulers used reliable narrators to falsify them". Although Henry Lammens [36] points out that there is some confusion in the authenticity of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim in some parts of the book, he acknowledges these two books as authentic and cast doubt on the other four Sunnis.

Goldziher's theory was further refined fifty years later by Joseph Schacht [29]. His books were highly regarded by leading scholars in the west. Specifically, N.J.Culson [12] came to the view that "Schacht has justifiably grounded the origin of Islamic jurisprudence". From the miner's studies, we can conclude:

1. Fiqh developed separately from the Islamic religion. Muhammad had no intention of creating a new legal system. In addition, his authority was lacking a legal basis. Political groups supported Muhammad for their own purposes.
2. The schools of fiqh were established in the second century of the Hijri. He put together existing traditions. They had nothing to do with the prophet's actions.
3. The purpose of the fiqh schools was to find the legal basis for the power of the opposition. That is why they fabricated false stories about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).
4. As a result, in the second and third centuries of the Hijra, scholars developed a habit of expressing their thoughts in the prophet's language.
5. Hadiths and their names are fabricated. They have no historical significance at all. Scholars link their ideas with the Prophet and present them to the public as a hadith.

In fact, his theory became popular in the west. Most oriental scholars have begun to do research on his view. These include the study of such Western scholars as Joseph van Ess [19], J. Robson [28], and N.D. Anderson [8].

Moreover, the theory of Schacht also influenced the conclusions of Muslim researchers such as Fazlur Rahman [13] and A.Fyzee [14]. For example, according to Fazlur Rahman [13], "Muslim scholars cannot see flaws in hadiths. They accept it as if it is "sahih". However, the ninth-century Hadith scholars themselves wrote that their work was

incomplete". A brief conclusion from these points is that the theories of Goldziher and Schacht stirred the skepticism of hadiths in the West and led many scholars to follow.

### D. Positive Approaches

However, scholars who have come to understand the true meaning of hadith have consistently challenged the views of Western researchers. The first to challenge Goldziher [15] and Schacht and his supporters was Nabia Abbot [1], [2]. He criticized Goldziher and Schacht theories, based on several sources and other evidence written during the Ummayyad Caliphate. According to N. Abbott [2], "the tradition of writing hadiths in Islamic religion existed during the Prophet's time. But the second caliph, Umar, ordered the destruction of all the hadiths in order to preserve the unity of the Qur'an and not to confuse it with other books".

The death of the caliph Omar and the emergence of the 'Uthman copy' of the Quran eliminates the fear of hadiths. Since the second half of the first century of the Hijra, the science of hadith flourished. As proof of the above, the researcher for the first time published samples of hadith written by Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As and Anas ibn Malik [2]. Hence, the writing of hadith existed from the time of the Companions. The collection of hadiths included in "Al-Kitab as-Sitta" is the result of an ongoing process. According to N. Abbott, scholars such as Goldziher and Schacht hastened and made wrong conclusions in evaluating the history of Islamic sciences, especially hadiths.

Fuat Sezgin [30] cataloged the original texts and proved that "the guilt of fabricating hadiths is not based on reliable sources". In Sezgin's book, he did not explicitly object to Goldziher and Schacht's theory. He noted that only the Companions wrote the Prophet's stories from the first century of the Hijra, and by the third century the same hadiths were compiled. That is, the ruler of the Ummayyad's, Umar bin Abdulaziz (d. 977 / 717-101 / 720), ordered the official collection of hadiths in order to avoid extinction and confusion. According to Sezgin, Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Hazm (d.120 / 737) and Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (d.124 / 742) succeeded in fulfilling this task. The proof of this He cited examples from Hanbal ibn Ahmad's "Ilal", Ibn Sa'd's "Tabaqot", al-Bukhari's "Tarikh", Tirmidhi's "Ilal", Ibn Abi Hatim's "Taqdima", al-Khatib al-Baghdadi's "Taqyid al-ilm", Ibn Abd Barr's "Jami' ayan al-ilm", al-Ramahurmuzi's "Al-muhaddis al-fasil" and other examples [22]. The author did not commented specifically on the historical significance of these books. Sezgin preferred to reject the original sources of misconceptions about hadiths.

John Burton is another of the scholars of the Western world who acknowledged the scientific validity of hadiths. He explained: "The followers of Islam know and deeply understand the essence of their religion. Other religious scholars, however, seek to draw conclusions based on preconceived ideas that are not well founded. That is, they cannot reach the very essence of a particular issue" [11]. He believes that the hadiths and texts of the hadiths have been thoroughly worked out. The fact that sources dating back to the early centuries of Islam were found to be identical when compared to "al-Kutub al-Sitta" indicates that Goldziher and Schacht made a mistake [11].

## Conflicting Views Regarding the Hadiths

The views of Western scholars have been examined by Abu Shuhbah [3], Al-Marsafi [7] and other Muslim scholars, and have been biased by the hadith. These researchers have accused Western scientists of ignorance of the “method al-hadith” science. In other words, in Talal Maloush's [37] dissertation, Goldziher and Schacht did not study the sanads (chains) of hadith. In his view, western scholars chose the text of the hadiths they needed from time to time and analyzed the interests of the ruling dynasty at that time. They did not pay attention to the (sanads) chain of hadiths. Maloush notes that if they studied the hadith by sanads, most of them would have reached the Prophet's Companions.

Al-Marsafi [7] has rejected Goldziher's claim that the hadiths were in the form of a collection of oral traditions, not from written sources in the third century. He proved that many of the hadith pages written after the first and second centuries of Hijra are identical with Imam Bukhari's “Sahih”. In other words, it is shown that Bukhari used more than 200 books by scholars who lived before him in writing “Sahih Bukhari”. Consequently, many Muslim scholars have proven from historical sources the authenticity of hadiths. He also refuted the prejudiced conclusions about hadith.

### E. New Approaches

In the late twentieth century, there was a need to study new discoveries, to change existing theories and ideas, and to reject them where appropriate. In particular, in 1985, M.Azami [4], [5] announced that he had found 12 authentic hadith texts of the second century of the Hijra. He edited a small number of them and published them under the name of “Sahifas” (pages) of Suhayl ibn Abu Salih. Fragments of early manuscripts of Abu Hurayrah's student Abu Hammam ibn Munabbih have been found in libraries in Berlin, Beirut and Damascus [17], [6]. These new findings prove that the hadiths were in written form even in the time of the Prophet. This is because the narrations written by the Companions are called “sahifas”. Thus, the discovery of the manuscripts of Suhayl ibn Abu Salih and Abu Hammam ibn Munabbih shows that the science of hadith had developed continuously since the time of the Prophet.

A study of Abu Hammam ibn Munabbih's hadiths revealed that 98 of 138 hadiths were included in the authentic hadiths of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim, and 136 were included in Ahmad ibn Hanbal's collection of hadiths entitled “Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal” [5]. Hence, the hadiths that have been authenticated in the six authentic hadith books were included in the collection only after they have been comprehensively studied and fully reviewed.

Harald Motzki, who was initially known for his negative thoughts about hadiths, encountered Abd al-Razzaq as-Sanani's hadith collection (Musannaf) (d. 21/826). The fact that this work dates back to the first century of the Hijra, the accuracy of its insights and the systematic development of the source changed Motzki's thinking on the positive sides. “... The idea that the hadiths are fake and that they have no historical significance is totally wrong. Many fragments of the first century of the Hijra have been found, forcing scholars to reconsider some wrong views on hadiths”.

The researcher M.Speight [31] compares many hadiths of the middle of the 7th century with the hadiths collected by scholars like Ibn Hanbal and Imam Bukhari in the third / ninth century, and concluded that many of them were the same. It is

possible to conclude from his research that hadiths that were written in the later periods were not falsified;

The views above have either normalized or completely changed the earlier views of hadiths. In particular, Gutte Juynboll [21] and Jonathan Brown [10] do not completely deny the hadiths. Some even try to show that the hadiths are authentic historical sources.

For example, J.Brown's research on al-Bukhari and Muslim studies, published in 2007, has a positive attitude toward hadiths. The negative attitude that is prevalent among Western scholars is virtually non-existent. The book consists of ten chapters. It contains six collections of hadiths, including the authenticity of the books of Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim, a brief overview of the literature on hadith science, the life and work of scholars, and the views of medieval scholars on the “two authentic” books. It also examines the role of al-Bukhari and Muslim in jurisprudence, the attitude of medieval rulers to authentic books, the culture of writing and the difficulties. The book analyzes the differences between Bukhari's Sahih and other works. He concluded that the method of selecting hadiths was clear. That is to say, Bukhari's authenticity of the narration must meet the following requirements:

- First, the sanad (the chain of transmission) of a hadith should be continuous;
- secondly, the narrator's years, places, and ages were investigated;
- the third narrator was supposed to belong to Islam;
- Fourth, the narrator was to be just, self-restrained, sharp-minded, flawed, and in full faith.

In the book of J.Brown [10], “the two authentic books are reliable sources after the Koran, and their authors, Bukhari and Muslim, are the greatest figures in Islamic civilization”. When the book was analyzed, it was noted that scholars and their scientific heritage were highly appreciated. In the West, Brown's study has been recognized as one of the largest works on the written legacy of Imam Bukhari and Muslim.

Thus, the newly discovered sources gave positive reactions to hadiths. Western scholars have also begun to write books about the historical importance of hadiths, and the role of scholars in the Islamic civilization, such as Imam Bukhari, Imam Tirmidhi, and Imam Darimi.

Thus, the following steps were taken to distinguish the authentic hadith from fake hadiths.

- 1) All who narrated the hadith were investigated in the analysis of the hadith. That is to say, narrator's life, genealogy, belief, degree of commitment to Islam, justice, intelligence, and many other qualities were carefully studied.
- 2) The text of the hadith has been verified. The hadith first examined the possibility that the word and meaning originated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), depending on the words and the meaning of the text. The words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) are the second after the Qur'an in terms of pleasure, beauty and purity.
- 3) The Holy Quran has also been compared. Because the hadith should never contradict the Quran. Hadiths are found in other authentic books and are compared.



4) It has also been compared with more reputable sources, such as “al-Kutub as-Sitta”.

Hence, each hadith is followed by a series of complex steps.

### III. CONCLUSION

When analyzing foreign publications on hadith, the following conclusions were made:

- In the 20th century, two groups of hadith scholars were formed: one group who completely denied the hadiths and others tried to show the historical significance of the hadiths;
- The first group worked only on the text of some of the hadiths and tried to link the interests of certain rulers with those hadiths. They used sources from the third century after the Hijri. After all, they believed that hadiths had not been written until the third century and that legends that had passed through that century had been written;
- The second group of scholars studied the historical significance of the hadiths through their sanads and published a series of hadith pages about the time of the Prophet. That is, they compared the Hadiths of the first and second centuries of the Hijri with the later ones and showed that they were identical;
- Recent sources of hadiths discovered in the late 20th century have led all scholars to think positively. Today, however, the historical significance of hadiths is recognized by many Western scholars;
- An analysis of the literature shows that the written legacy of the scholars of Central Asia is at the center of these discussions. In other words, the scientific heritage of such scholars as Imam Bukhari, Imam Tirmidhi and Imam al-Darimi were the main sources in proving the authenticity of the hadiths.

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