

Muhammad Muṣṭafa al-A'ẓami's Contribution to *Ḥadīth* Literature

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## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the contribution of Muhammad Mustafa al-A'ẓami to the *Ḥadīth* literature. It begins with the biography of Muhammad Mustafa al-A'ẓami with a special focus on his legacy, education and achievements. It also provides a detailed account of his works; his authored books as well as his edited books. In terms of his contribution towards *Ḥadīth* sciences, it first discusses his arguments in response to the claims and theories of Orientalists on the pre-Arabia literature and documentation of *Ḥadīth* in the first two centuries of Hijrah. The main contention of Orientalists is that the development of *Ḥadīth* literature took place after these two centuries. His response to the arguments of Orientalists regarding the *Isnād* system; its origin and validity, and his contribution towards the computerization of *Ḥadīth* literature in Arabic language is also discussed. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of M.M. Al-A'ẓami's approach regarding the origin, meaning, and methodology of *Ḥadīth* criticism is also made. He takes into account the arguments of opponents of *Ḥadīth* and comes up with academic responses to their objections. In light of Qur'ānic injunctions and other reliable sources, he argues that the science of *Ḥadīth* criticism is not a late invention, rather, a science initiated by the Prophet ﷺ himself. He also cites numerous incidents from the Companions in which they applied the principles of *Ḥadīth* criticism.

**Keywords:** *Sunnah*, *Ḥadīth* Criticism, Orientalists, Islamic Religious Sciences, *Isnād*.

## 1.1. Introduction

Indian subcontinent has been rich in terms of knowledge right from the Prophetic period. Twenty two Companions of the Prophet ﷺ came to the subcontinent to illuminate it with the light of Islam. After the period of Companions, their students started teaching Islam in general and its religious sciences including ḥadīth in particular in the subcontinent. In the second century AH, *ḥadīth* literature was taught in a systematic manner and the books of ḥadīth were also classified and

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compiled. It was Rabi' b. Sabih as Sa'di al Basri (d. 160 AH) who first started teaching *ḥadīth* in the subcontinent. In the third century, it was Raja' al-Sindhi (d. 221 AH) who became prominent in the teaching of *ḥadīth*. In the fourth century, it was Qadhi Abu Muhammad Mansuri who made significant contribution in this science *ḥadīth*. In the fifth century it was Shaykh 'Ali b. 'Uthman al Hujwīrī Ghaznavi who became engaged in the teaching of *ḥadīth*. One of the most prominent figures in the *ḥadīth* studies in the sixth and seventh centuries was Shaykh Razi al-Din Hasan b. Muhammad As Sagani (d. 650 AH). He wrote *Mashriq al-Anwar* which is considered to be the most significant book on *ḥadīth* literature. Then it was Shaykh 'Ali Muttaqi (d. 975 AH) who made significant contribution to *ḥadīth* literature. He wrote the famous book *Kanz al 'Ummal*. In the tenth century it was 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlavi who became famous in the teaching of *ḥadīth* in the subcontinent. He wrote many books in the field of *ḥadīth* sciences and also explanation of *Mishkāt al-Masabih*. Then his son Shaykh Nūr al-Ḥaqq Dehlavi (d. 1037) took the responsibility to teach the *ḥadīth* and write about its sciences. Another prominent name in this era was that of Shaykh Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Ahad Faruqi Sirhindi famous with the name Mujaddid Alf Thani (d. 1034 AH). Shah Walīyullah made significant contribution in *ḥadīth* literature in the twelfth century. He wrote explanation of famous *ḥadīth* book *Muwatṭa'* of Malik entitled *al-Musaffa (Persian)*, *al-Musawwa (Arabic)*. In the thirteenth century his son Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz (d. 1239 AH) continued the legacy of his father. He wrote famous book *Dabistan-i Muḥaddithīn* and various other books in the field of *ḥadīth* studies. Some other prominent scholars who contributed to *ḥadīth* studies in that century were Muhammad Qasim Nanotawi, 'Abdal Hayy Lakhnawi (wrote the famous book on *ḥadīth* criticism *al-Rafa' wa Takmil fil Jarh wa ta'dil*) and Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, Syed Nazir Hussain Muhaddith Dehlavi, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi and 'Abdur Rahman Mubarakpuri. Anwar Shah Kashmiri made significant contribution to the *ḥadīth* literature in 13<sup>th</sup> century. His lectures on *Sahih* of Al-Bukhari were compiled by Badr 'Alam Mirathi in the book entitled *Faiz ul Bari*. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century AH, Shabir Ahmad 'Uthmani made contribution to *ḥadīth* literature. He wrote *Fathul Malham* a detailed explanation of *Sahih* of Imam Muslim. Some other prominent figures of that century were Badr 'Alam Mirathi, Muhammad Yusuf Kandhalavi, Zafar Ahmad 'Uthmani Thanawi (wrote the famous book *A'la' us Sunan*), Muhammad Idris

Kandhlavi (famous books *Tuhfatul Qari*, *At Ta'liq al-Sabih 'ala Mishkat al Masabih*, *Hujiyyati Ḥadīth*), Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalvi (famous books *Auj al-Masalik Sharah Muwatta Imam Malik*, *Al Kawkab al Durari Sharah Tirmidhi*, *Al Abwab wat Tarajim li Sahih Al-Bukhari*). One of the most prominent figure of that century was Habib al-Rahman al A'zami. He edited various classical *ḥadīth* texts and classified them like *Musannaf* of 'Abdur Razzaq, *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba*, *Musnad Humaydi*, *Bihar ul Anwar*. Manazir Ahsan Gilani (d. 1956) contributed to the *ḥadīth* studies in a significant manner. He wrote the famous book *Tadwini Ḥadīth*. Manzur Ahmad Nu'mani is also among the prominent figures. He wrote the famous book *Ma'ariful Ḥadīth*.

### 1.2. Biography of Muhammad Mustafa Al-A'zami

Muhammad Mustafa Al-A'zami was born in 1930 C.E in Mau (Azamgarh) area of Uttar Pradesh, India.<sup>1</sup> He studied for about six months in the *Madrassa* of *Shahi Masjid* of Muradabad and almost for one year in Aligarh Muslim University. He completed his basic religious education in the well-known institution of India Dar al-'*Ulūm* Deoband in 1952 C.E. He completed his *Fazilah* degree from the same institution.<sup>2</sup> He went to Aligarh Muslim University to complete his research on the topic related to 'Muhammad b. 'Abd al Wahhāb but wasn't able to complete it due to his departure to Qatar. During his stay in Qatar, he came across the work of Joseph Schacht which turned out to be his life changing experience. He went to al-Azhar; a prominent University of Egypt for higher studies and completed his masters from this University in 1955 C.E.<sup>3</sup> Then he returned back to his homeland after completing his Master's degree.<sup>4</sup>

In 1955, he went to Qatar for employment purpose after a short stay in his homeland. He taught the Arabic language to non-Arabic audience there for some time. Then he got appointed as librarian in the national public library of Qatar. In the meantime, he worked on some important manuscripts due to his extreme educational interests.<sup>5</sup> He went to London and in 1966 C.E completed his doctorate on the topic 'Studies in early *Ḥadīth* literature' under the supervision of A J. Arberry and R.B. Serjeant from the famous Cambridge University of London.<sup>6</sup> He came back to Qatar and worked as curator of public library for two years till 1968 C.E.<sup>7</sup> He was then appointed as Associate Professor in Umm al-Qura University Makkah from

1968 to 1973 C.E. In the year 1973 C.E, he was appointed as Professor in King Saud University. He made tremendous contribution in the field of *Ḥadīth* sciences during this period. Significant numbers of researches have been made in the field of *Ḥadīth* literature under his supervision in the Universities of Makkah and Riyadh during the period of 1968 to 1991 C.E. He has held the post of evaluator in the field of *Ḥadīth* in various universities of Saudi Arabia. He has also been the member of different educational and research institutions.<sup>8</sup>

He worked as chairman of the department of Islamic Studies, college of education, King Saud University; visiting scholar at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (1981-82); Visiting fellow at St. Cross College Oxford, England (1987); King Faisal Visiting Professor for Islamic Studies at Princeton University, New Jersey (1992); Visiting Scholar at University of Colorado, Boulder, USA (1989-91) and member of committee for promotion, University of Malaysia. He was also an Honorary Professor, department of Islamic Studies, University of Wales, England.<sup>9</sup>

He was provided with the citizenship of Saudi Arabia due to his tremendous contribution to *Ḥadīth* literature in 1981 C.E and various other responsibilities were also handed to him.<sup>10</sup>

He was among the recipients of King Faisal Award in 1980 C.E for his marvelous contribution in the field of *Ḥadīth* literature. He received this award for the following works:

- a. For his book *Dirāsāt fi al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawi* which is the Arabic translation of his doctoral thesis *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature* with some addendums.
- b. Four volume edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah* which was published after his research.
- c. Computerization of Prophetic *Ḥadīth* in Arabic language.

He passed away on 20 December, 2017 at an age of 87 years in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

### 1.3. His Intellectual Legacy

#### 1. *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*

Originally his doctoral dissertation, the first edition of this book was published from Beirut in 1968 C.E, second edition in 1978 C.E and third edition in 1988 C.E and various other editions have also been published from time to time. It has been

translated in Turkish language in 1993 C.E and in Indonesian language in 1994 C.E. It is a prescribed textbook in various Eastern and Western Universities. In this book he responds to the arguments of Orientalists especially Goldziher and Schacht regarding *Ḥadīth* literature.

2. *Dirāsāt fi al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawi Ta'rīkhuhu wa Tadwīnuhu*

This book is actually the Arabic translation of his thesis. He translated it himself with some additions. The first addition of this book was published by King Saud University in 1975 C.E. Afterwards many other editions have been published from Riyadh and Beirut.

3. *Manhaj al-Naqd 'inda al-Muḥaddithin San'atuhu wa Tarikhuhu*

The first edition of this book was published in 1975 C.E from Riyadh. In this book the author has discussed about the methodology used by the *Ḥadīth* scholars to authenticate the vast *Ḥadīth* literature. He proves with the aid of strong arguments that the methodology used for *Ḥadīth* scholars for *Ḥadīth* criticism is by no means imperfect. It also discusses the methodology used by early *Ḥadīth* scholars regarding the recording of *Ḥadīth*.

4. *Kitab al Tamyiz li al-Imam Muslim*

This is the famous book of Muslim b. Hajjaj on the topic of principles of *Ḥadīth*. It was published after the edition and comments of Mustafa Al A'zamī.

5. *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature*

The first edition of this book was published from USA in 1977 C.E. Afterwards many editions have been published from time to time. This book deals with the methodology of *Ḥadīth* literature so that it would be easy to understand the *Ḥadīth*. It also provides a detailed response to the critique of Orientalists on *Ḥadīth* literature.

6. *The History of Qur'anic Text from Revelation to Compilation*

The author has divided the book into three parts. The first part deals with the history of Qur'anic text. He begins with the brief outlook of Islamic history in

which he discusses the Geo-political and religious conditions of pre-Islamic Arabia. Then he provides the outline of Prophet's life in Makkah and Madina.

The second part of this book discusses the history of Biblical scriptures. It begins with the brief outlook of early history of Judaism. Then it provides the history of Old Testament and its corruption. After the Judaism, it provides the brief outlook of early history of Christianity. Then it discusses the history of the New Testament, its anonymous authorship and its corruption. The final part of this book deals with the Orientalist discourse on the Qur'ānic studies. It also discusses about the motivations of Orientalists for the study of Islamic texts.

#### 7. *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah*

The author collected the authentic *Ḥadīth* apart from *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim after travelling to various countries. He had them published in four volumes after editing and commenting on them. The first edition of this book was published in 1970 C.E from Beirut. This is a unique book which was thought to have been lost but Mustafa Al-A'zamī discovered it and made its publication possible.

#### 8. *Kuttab al-Nabi*

The first edition of this book was published in 1974 C.E from Damascus. Second edition was published in 1978 C.E from Beirut and third edition in 1981 C.E from Riyadh. Numerous editions have been published afterwards from time to time. This book is translated in English language by the son of the author Anas Mustafa al A'zami. The author has divided the scribes of the Prophet ﷺ into three categories. The first category deals with those scribes who took the most active part in this process for example, Zayd b. Thabit, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Mu'āwiyah. The second category deals with those scribes which were relatively less active in this process than the first category like Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Abū Ayyub. The third category deals with those scribes which were least active in this process like Ja'far b. Abi Ṭālib, Abbas b. 'Abd al Muṭallib. This book discusses about the scribes of Prophet among the Companions. Historians have listed almost forty five scribes of Prophet among the Companions. The author has listed more than sixty scribes of the Prophet from the Companions.

### 9. *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*

The first edition of this book was published in 1985 C.E from New York and second edition in 1994 C.E from England. Afterwards there have been numerous editions of this book published from time to time. The author divides the book into two parts. The first part deals with law and Islam. It discusses the place of law in Islam and the role of Prophet in Islamic law. It then takes into consideration the arguments of Schacht regarding the place of law in Islam and the Prophet's role. Then it discusses the existence of Islamic law, judicial activities of Prophet and legal literature in the first century A.H.

#### 1.4. Contribution of Muhammad Mustafa Al A'zami to *Ḥadīth* literature

Muhammad Mustafa Al-A'zamī has made significant contribution to *Ḥadīth* literature. Some of the prominent aspects of his contribution are outlined below:

##### 1.4.1. Status of literary activities in the early period of Islam

There is an ample evidence for the presence of written material even in pre-Islamic Arabia. Documents related to the genre of everyday writing concerning legal and economic matters can be found. A bulk of correspondence by letters in the form of orders, cover letters and delivery invoices can be found written on wooden sticks and palm-leaf stalks. There can also be found the lists of personal or family names recorded on wooden sticks. Some legal texts regarding the decrees and prohibitions executed by the ruler or some other high ranking official of the community can also be found written on stone or rock. A unique type of legal text can also be found in the form of personal confessions. They were normally cast in bronze tablets and were probably hung in temples. They were composed of the texts containing public confessions of the cultic offenses committed by certain individuals or groups. It also recorded the penances imposed on them. In addition to these, there are some instances of religious texts worth to be considered of literary composition such as oracles, omens and proverbs. There exists a unique composition called Hymn of *Qaniya* that can be treated as literature in the strict sense of the word. It is actually the poem of twenty seven lines addressed to the goddess Shams.<sup>11</sup> From this discussion it becomes quite clear that there was the existence of large scale literary activities in pre-Islamic Arabia and it would be wrong to say that the number of persons who were able to write at the time of advent of Islam in Makkah was only

seventeen.<sup>12</sup> According to Al A'zamī, there were schools in the pre-Islamic Arabia in which education was provided to boys and girls. They were taught the skills of reading as well as writing. There were also much of the literary activities taking place in the pre-Islamic Arabia such as tribal poems and also historical incidents. Some writings possess occasional nature such as promissory notes, personal letters and tribal agreements.<sup>13</sup>

The first revelation<sup>14</sup> was actually a sort of motivation for the Prophet to set some kind of educational policy, because it was based on the principle of seeking knowledge. Prophet sent his Companions like Mus'ab b. 'Umair and 'Abdullah b. Umm Maktum to Madina to fulfill their role as teachers prior to his migration to Madina. The Prophet on his arrival to Madina commanded to build a mosque which was to be used as a kind of school. There were nine other mosques which served as schools for learning various Islamic sciences. The ransom for the prisoners of Badr was fixed to teach the children of Madina the art of writing.<sup>15</sup> The Prophet highlighted the importance of education through his sermons and admonished with punishment to those who showed reluctance towards it. Prophet sent large number of teachers to places like Bi'r Ma'unah, Najran and Yemen in order to educate people living outside Madina. Prophet also influenced the masses through the medium of his sayings about the role of education in the society.<sup>16</sup> The educational policy of Prophet proved very fruitful. There can be found a long list of secretaries of Prophet who used to write for him. Almost fifty secretaries can be listed who were assigned to write in special sectors such as correspondence with tribal chiefs, keeping account of Zakat and other kinds of taxes, agricultural products etc. Various advices from the Prophet can also be found on the art of letter writing, revision after completion, dotting ambiguous letters etc.<sup>17</sup>

#### 1.4.2. Orientalist conception of this literature and the response of M.M. Al-A'zamī

The view of Goldziher regarding this literature is that the works of the prose writers of the Umayyad period have perished almost entirely. He further says that in this branch of literature the same secular, non-Muhammadan spirit prevailed which has been mentioned as characteristic of the poets who flourished under the Umayyad dynasty, and of the dynasty itself. He further says that those traditions which were current in the Umayyad period were hardly concerned with law but rather with ethics, asceticism, eschatology and politics. According to M.M. 'A'zamī,



the reason for the conception of Goldziher regarding early writing and literature of Umayyad period is the natural outcome of his observance of the religious conditions of that time.<sup>18</sup> Goldziher is of the opinion that Muslim community was ignorant of Islam as a religious practice as well as dogma. Goldziher uses seven *Ḥadīths* for reference to verify his arguments regarding the ignorance of early Muslim community.<sup>19</sup>

According to M.M. Al A'zami, the conclusions made by Goldziher are not balanced because he fails to highlight the positive aspects of the educational activities of the early Muslim community. He makes use of some anti-Umayyad sources without critically analyzing them. He over-generalizes the facts and tries to apply a single incident to the whole community. For example, Goldziher used the *Ḥadīth* from the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Al Bukhārī narrated by Abū Qilaba, “Mālik b. Huwarith came to mosque of the Prophet and said, “I pray in front of you and my aim is not to lead the prayer, but to show you the way in which the Prophet used to pray.” He concluded that people of the early Muslim community had no idea how to perform daily prayers which is proof enough that Muslim community was extremely ignorant of even the essential religious matters. But according to M.M. ‘Azami, this conclusion is totally irrelevant because it was only meant for teaching process and it would be inappropriate to consider the whole community as ignorant by quoting a specific incident out of context.<sup>20</sup> Most of the times, teachers demonstrate practically some aspects in order to eradicate the errors in executing them.

#### 1.5. Recording of *Ḥadīth*: Arguments of Orientalists and M.M. Al-A'zami's Response

There are numerous verses from the Qur'ān which put emphasis on education; which includes the process of reading and writing. For example, “Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created.”<sup>21</sup> “Allah will raise to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge.”<sup>22</sup> “Are those equal, those who know and those who don't know?”<sup>23</sup> “Those truly fear Allah, among His servants, who have knowledge.”<sup>24</sup> There are also many Prophetic injunctions which emphasize on attaining knowledge. It also mentions great rewards for those who attain knowledge.

The recording of *Ḥadīth* began in the rudimentary form during the lifetime of the Prophet. Three methods were used by the Prophet to teach his *Sunnah* or *Ḥadīths* to the Companions.

Firstly, he used to repeat the things thrice in order to make them easy to memorize and understand. He also used to make the Companions repeat what they had learnt. He used to ask questions to the deputations arriving from various cities in order learn new things from them. Secondly, he used to teach his *Sunnah* by the written method. It includes the letters of the Prophet to kings, rulers, Muslim governors and chieftains. It also includes the dictations of the Prophet to different Companions like ‘Alī b. Abi Ṭālib, ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr b. ‘As etc. Finally, Prophet used to teach his *Sunnah* by practical demonstration. For example, method of ablution, prayers, fasting, pilgrimage etc.<sup>25</sup>

The Prophet also laid emphasis on knowledge in the farewell sermon of Hajj. Prophet created incentives for teachers as well as students. He said, when a man dies, his acts come to an end except three which includes the knowledge from which benefit continues to be reaped.<sup>26</sup>

Companions used to learn the *Sunnah* of the Prophet by three methods. Firstly they used to memorize it. For example, Anas b. Mālik said that we used to sit with the Prophet; and the Prophet taught us *Ḥadīth*. We used to memorize it and after we departed it was as if cultivated in our hearts. Secondly, there was a significant number of Companions who used to put the *Ḥadīth* in writing, for example, ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr b. ‘As. Finally, Companions used to learn *Ḥadīths* by practice.<sup>27</sup>

When the Companions of the Prophet spread to all over the Muslim world, there was now the need to travel to gather or collect the knowledge of *Ḥadīth*. There was only one method prevalent for learning *Ḥadīths* that is *Sama’*, reading by teacher to his students in the period of Companions. Then the new methods were devised from time to time like *‘Ard* that is reading by students to teachers, *Ijazah* that is to permit someone to transmit a *Ḥadīth* or book on the authority of the scholar without reading by anyone, *Kitabah* that is to write *Ḥadīths* for someone etc.<sup>28</sup>

There are two assumptions related to the recording of *Ḥadīth* from the camp of Orientalists. The first assumption is that the recording of *Ḥadīth* didn’t exist until the second century A.H. Second assumption is that the *Ḥadīths* were first recorded by al Zuhri on the order of ‘Umar b ‘Abd al ‘Aziz.<sup>29</sup>

These assumptions were formed due to the following misconceptions:

- a. Misinterpretation of the words *Tadwīn*, *Tasnif* and *Kitabah*. They were all understood in the meaning of record.
- b. Misunderstanding of the terms *Haddathana*, *Akhbarana*, 'An etc. They were all understood in the meaning of oral transmission.
- c. Certain arguments that the memory of Arabs was so unique that they felt no need to write down anything.
- d. Some traditions of the Prophet which prohibit the recording of *Ḥadīth*.
- e. Misinterpretation of statements of early *Ḥadīth* scholars which deal with the recording of *Ḥadīths*.<sup>30</sup>

One of the reasons for the misconception that *Ḥadīth* was not written until the end of first century A.H is that the historians while discussing *Tadwīn Ḥadīth*; have diverted their discussion towards the large scale *Tadwīn* of *Ḥadīth* that began in the second century A.H. They didn't take notice of or ignored those collections which were collected by Companions and Successors in the first century A.H. These collections were later compiled and classified by *Ḥadīth* scholars in the third century A.H. Historians didn't make mention of the *Ḥadīth* collections from Companions and Successors because they felt no need to make mention of them as they appeared already in the collections of the third century A.H. For example, the collection of Companion 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. Al 'Ās; known as *Sahīfah sadiqa*; was fully included by Ahmad b. Hanbal in his *Musnad*. Similarly the collection of Abū Hurairah through his disciple Hammam b. Munabih appeared in various famous collections like *Sahīḥ* of Al Bukhārī and *Sahīḥ* of Muslim and *musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal in the third century A.H. In the words of Abū al Hasan Nadvi, "If all those *Ḥadīths* are collected which are present in the collections of Companions and Successors and then they are compared with those present in later collections, it will become quite clear that most of the *Ḥadīths* from later collections have been written by Companions and there can't be found even the slightest variation."<sup>31</sup>

'Umar b. 'Abd al 'Azīz ordered not only Abū Bakr b. Hazm but also his other governors of various provinces to collect the written material of Prophetic traditions. He performed this task because of the fear that this precious heritage might be lost due to the sectarian conflicts and the consistent deaths of prominent *Ḥadīth* scholars. Then numerous books of *Ḥadīth* were brought to the caliph, which

were then compiled by his orders after careful scrutiny and copies of that compilation were sent to all provinces under his caliphate.<sup>32</sup>

The works of Companions and Successors can be termed as the first stage in the *Tadwīn al-Ḥadīth* process. The second stage of this process is the one initiated by ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al ‘Azīz. Then the next stage is the one in which *Ḥadīth* scholars compiled and classified *Ḥadīth* in the form of *musnad*, *sunan*, *jami*’ and *Saḥīḥ* genres.

According to Aloys Sprenger the *Ḥadīths* were set into writing in the earliest days of Islam. But he was aware of the fact that these writings were not books in the literary sense, but rather notes or perhaps collections of individual sayings meant for private use. This argument contradicts the view of Goldziher who writes that in the earliest Islamic times the predominant opinion was that only the Qur’ān should be put into writing, while *Ḥadīth* should accompany it as oral teaching only.<sup>33</sup> So according to Goldziher, there was a long period of purely oral *Ḥadīth* transmission. He is of the opinion that the *Ḥadīth* scholars put the *Ḥadīth* into writing due to three reasons:

- a. The fear of pious people to alter unintentionally the original wording of the Prophet.
- b. The rejection, expressed by many groups, of those *Ḥadīths* that appear in contradiction with the Qur’ānic authority.
- c. The aspect of tendency that is suppressing uncomfortable traditions.<sup>34</sup>

According to al Dhahabī, ‘Āishah said that her father Abū Bakr collected five hundred *Ḥadīths* of Prophet. He didn’t seem to be convinced about this act and finally burned his collection.<sup>35</sup>

Another frequently quoted opponent of written traditions among the Companions is ‘Abdullah b. Mas‘ūd. He is said to have ordered his son to immediately destroy a *Ḥadīth* narrated by him differently. The Makkan legal scholar ‘Amr b. Dinar didn’t allow his students to copy his traditions or even his own legal opinion due to the possibility of altering it afterwards. Al Awza’i is reported to have said that the science of *Ḥadīth* used to be a noble thing when people received it in lessons and memorized it together. But when it entered the books, its luster vanished and it came in contact with the people who have no understanding of it.<sup>36</sup>

According to a tradition, it was the Umayyad caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al ‘Azīz who ordered the first official collection (*Tadwīn*) of *Ḥadīth* because of the fear that it might vanish and its supporters might die out. This type of effort was attempted earlier also by Marwan-I and ‘Abd al ‘Azīz b. Marwan. This task was first assigned to Abū Bakr b. ‘Umar b. Ḥazm but it was completed by al-Zuhrī. He seems to have been plagued by scruples all over his life because of it which is evident from a number of dicta that have been handed down by or about him. For example, he says that we were reluctant to set the knowledge (that is tradition) down in writing, until these rulers forced us to do so. Now we are of the opinion that no Muslims should be forbidden to do it.<sup>37</sup>

The term used for prohibition of writing down is *kariha al kitab* meaning he was averse to writing things down. Fuat Sezgin suggested that it can be translated the other way as we were averse to transferring *Ḥadīths* in the way of *kitab* (i.e. the act of copying text without having read them to the master or heard them from him). But there are other instances which show that the phrase *kariha al kitab* is meant for prohibition of writing of *Ḥadīth*. For example, Ibrahim al Nakha’i disliked writing *Ḥadīth* in notebooks. In these types of instances it would be wrong to translate *kitab* as the manner of transmission of simply copying the written texts.<sup>38</sup>

The dicta in favor of writing down *Ḥadīths* may have been circulated as early as the first century A.H. The name of ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr b. ‘As appears frequently in this regard, who was the owner of a *Ṣaḥīfah* that is a booklet in which he had written down traditions of Prophet and his Companions. He didn’t keep it secret like others but he boasted it in public and gave it a name *al-Ṣādiqah*. This *Ṣaḥīfah* was then passed on to his son. The spread of *Ḥadīths* in favor of written form of preserving tradition took place mainly in the following second century A.H. in Makkah and one of the supporters of written *Ḥadīth* was Mujāhid. He is said to have lent his books to one of his pupils to copy. The lowest level of opposition against written tradition appears to have been in Yemen. Hammam b. Munabbih is the author of a *Ṣaḥīfah* that survives and has been edited.

From the middle of second century A.H onwards we find Iraqis among those who set in circulation the traditions in favor of written *Ḥadīth*. Thus the Basran al Khasib b. Jahdar first spread the Prophetic *Ḥadīth* according to which the Prophet said to a man who was complaining about his weak memory to help his memory with his right hand.<sup>39</sup>

According to M.M. Al A'zamī, the terms *Tadwīn* and *tasnif* are not meant for writing down but for collection and classification according to subjects. So the statement that the first person to perform the task of *Tadwīn* of knowledge was Ibn Shihab al Zuhri doesn't contradict the process of recording and collection of *Ḥadīth* in the first century A.H. It is because of the misinterpretation of the term *Tadwīn* which gave rise to such an argument. He says, there is no doubt that most of the Arabs possessed unique memory but it is in no way the justification for the argument that they were in no need of writing down knowledge because of their unique memory. There can be people with extraordinary memory in any period of time but the process of writing down knowledge can in no way be banned due to this.

M.M. Al A'zamī quotes *taqyid al 'ilm* of al Khatīb and says, he mentions the names of six Companions of the Prophet who disapproved the recording of *Ḥadīth*. Which are Abū Sa'īd al Khudri, 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud, Abū Musa al Ash'ari, Abū Hurairah, 'Abdullah b. Abbas and 'Abdullah b. 'Umar. He also provides the names of twelve Companions who were supposed to be against writing down *Ḥadīths*. Which include Al-A'mash, 'Abidah, Abū al 'Alīyah, 'Amr b. Dinar, Ibrahim al Nakha'i etc. According to M.M. Al A'zamī, these Companions or Successors had written down *Ḥadīths* and in many cases had sent them to others.<sup>40</sup>

The *Ḥadīths* against writing down traditions from the Prophet have been narrated by three Companions; Abū Sa'īd al Khudri, Zaid b. Thabit and Abū Hurairah. The *Ḥadīth* versions of Abū Sa'īd al Khudri and Abū Hurayrah are deemed weak and unacceptable by the *Ḥadīth* scholars due to the presence of transmitter 'Abd al Rahman b. Zaid. The *Ḥadīth* version of Zaid b. Thabit is *mursal* and unacceptable because its transmitter al Muttalib b. 'Abdallah didn't meet Zaid b. Thabit. The second version of *Ḥadīth* from Abū Sa'īd al Khudri which reads, don't write from me anything other than Qur'ān and whoever has written anything from me other than the Qur'ān should erase it is also of disputable nature among the *Ḥadīth* scholars. It is believed to be the statement of Abū Sa'īd al Khudri which was erroneously attributed to the Prophet. Even if it is considered to be *Ḥadīth* coming from the Prophet, it could mean to prohibit the writing of *Ḥadīth* on the same sheet of paper on which Qur'ān was written. The reason can be the mixing of words of Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* which could lead to the state of confusion that the words of *Ḥadīth* written on the same sheet belong to Qur'ān.<sup>41</sup>

According to M.M. Al A'zami, many *Ḥadīth* scholars copied *Ḥadīth* but sometimes disliked doing so for inappropriate or sometimes for no reasons. For example, it is reported that Ibrahim al Nakha'i was against writing *Ḥadīths* for the reason that whoever writes depends on it. It can be clearly concluded from this statement that he preferred to memorize the *Ḥadīths* so that the memory of scholar can act as an active library. It is inappropriate to interpret the statement in favor of his reluctance to write down *Ḥadīths*.<sup>42</sup>

The question raised by Goldziher regarding the traditions about prohibition or permission of writing *Ḥadīth* is that the *Ḥadīths* on both prohibition and permission of writing *Ḥadīth* are forgeries from the two rival groups of early period. According to him the two rival groups *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* (pro *Ḥadīth* group) and *Ahl al Rai'* (anti *Ḥadīth* group) forged *Ḥadīths* to safeguard their sectarian interests.

According to M.M. Al A'zamī, this conclusion from Goldziher is erroneous because the extremist scholars against writing of *Ḥadīth* belong to the pro *Ḥadīth* group. So how can a scholar from any group forge *Ḥadīths* in favor of its rival group? For example, Ibn Sirin and 'Abidah who belonged to the camp of pro *Ḥadīth* scholars are reported to have been against writing *Ḥadīths*. Same is the case with the anti *Ḥadīth* scholars.<sup>43</sup> According to al Dhahabī, "It seems that the prohibition of writing *Ḥadīth* was meant to make Companions more attentive towards the Qur'ān so that it can be copied and memorized without any mistake. When this task was achieved, the permission was again granted to write down *Ḥadīth*."<sup>44</sup>

There are numerous traditions which emphasize on the permission of writing *Ḥadīth*. For example, it is narrated from 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. Al 'Ās that Prophet said, "Put the knowledge into writing."<sup>45</sup> Similar words are narrated from Anas b. Mālik, 'Umar b. al Khattab and 'Alī b. Abi Talib. Another *Ḥadīth* is narrated from Rafi' b. Khudaij in which he mentions an instance in which they asked Prophet if they should write down *Ḥadīths* which they hear from him. The Prophet replied, "You should write them and there is nothing wrong in it."<sup>46</sup> It is narrated from 'Abdallah b. 'Umar that he asked the Prophet to grant him permission for writing *Ḥadīths* and the Prophet granted him the permission to write down *Ḥadīths*.<sup>47</sup>

The narration of al-Dhahabī regarding the burning of collection of *Ḥadīth* by Abū Bakr is deemed to be inauthentic by him. It contains in its *Isnād* a weak narrator 'Alī b. Salih al-Madini.<sup>48</sup> Instead there can be found numerous traditions narrated by

Abū Bakr in the later collections of *Ḥadīth*. Even if the incident is considered authentic, Abū Bakr himself states the reason for this act. He said, “It consists of some traditions which I have heard myself from the Prophet. It consists of other traditions which I have heard from other Companions and I am not sure about their authenticity. I don’t want to attribute to Prophet a word which was not uttered by him.” So this incident is an inappropriate evidence for the prohibition of writing down *Ḥadīth*.<sup>49</sup> When he sent Anas b. Mālik to Bahrain for the collection of *Zakat*, he handed him a book *kitab al sadaqah* which he wrote himself. It consisted of those Prophetic traditions which dealt with details of *Zakat* and other taxes. Al Bukhārī has narrated it in various sections of his *Saḥīḥ*.<sup>50</sup>

‘Umar b. al Khattab made a decision during his caliphate to collect and compile *Ḥadīths*. He sought the suggestion of other Companions and they all liked the decision. He thought about this decision for about one month and decided not to perform this task. The reason for abandoning this task was fear that Muslims might rely on this compilation like previous nations and the Qur’ān might lose its value. He was concerned about this because of the fast expansion of Islam. Large number of people was entering into the folds of Islam and they were not so much knowledgeable about the sources of Islam. It was quite possible that they could rely on the collections of *Ḥadīth* at the cost of Qur’ān. It becomes clear from this incident that ‘Umar was in favor of writing *Ḥadīth* otherwise he couldn’t have thought of taking such decision and also he couldn’t have thought so extensively about his decision. Furthermore he possessed a collection of *Ḥadīth* of his own which he had put in the case of his sword. Nāfi’ narrates from Ibn ‘Umar that he found *Ḥadīth Saḥīfah* which belonged to ‘Umar in his sword case and it was related to the rulings of *Zakat* on animals. It could be that *Saḥīfah* which was later in the possession of Salim which he read before al-Zuhrī. When ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al ‘Azīz became caliph he sent a person to Madina to bring the collections of Prophet and ‘Umar related to rulings on *Zakat*. He brought a *maktub* from the family of ‘Umar in which the rulings of *zakat* were exactly same as found in the *maktub* from the Prophet, both of these *maktubs* were copied for the caliph.

There can be some more reasons for the Prophet’s prohibition of writing *Ḥadīth* as follows:



- a. Prohibition and permission of writing down *Ḥadīth* was based on the knowledge of lexicography. For example, ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr was aware of lexicography and for this reason he was granted permission to write down *Ḥadīth*. Those who were not fully aware of lexicography were prohibited from writing *Ḥadīth* because of the chances of mistakes in their writing. This is the view of al Jazai’ri and Ibn Qutaibah.
- b. Writing of *Ḥadīth* was prohibited in the early period but it was later abrogated by the Prophet. This is the view of Ibn Qutaibah.
- c. Prohibition of writing *Ḥadīth* was general but the permission for its writing was specific for certain persons only. This is the view of Subhi Salih.
- d. Prohibition of writing was meant for those people who could rely on their memory. And its permission was meant for those who couldn’t have relied on their memories. Ibn Qutaibah preferred this view.
- e. Some people are of the opinion that writing was prohibited due to the lack of writing equipment. This is the view of Abū al A’la Mawdudi.<sup>51</sup>

It can be concluded from the above discussion that first stage of recording *Ḥadīth* in the written form was in the period of Prophet and Companions. Then this process was continued by Successors in the second century and afterwards. The arguments put forward by the Orientalists are based on the misconceptions and misunderstandings. Their views are refuted by *Ḥadīth* scholars from time to time. M.M. Al A’zamī has responded to those views systematically in his works. For example, *Sahīfah Hammam* is mentioned by al Dhahabī as *Nuskhah Hammam*. The word *nuskhah* means copy. This word has been derived from the fact that the students used to copy out from the teachers’ books. They used to copy it on sheets (*Sahīfahor Suhuf*), so the word *Sahīfah* was used as well. For example, *Sahīfah* of ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. ‘As can be termed as a book or a booklet because, it consisted of hundreds of *Ḥadīths*, and couldn’t be written on a single sheet. *Kurrsah* means a booklet or a notebook. *Risalah* also means a letter as well as book. For example, the *Risalah* of Samurah to his son, which according to Ibn Sirin contained much knowledge. The portion of this *risalah* is still preserved in *mu’jam* of al Tabrani and is a lengthy one.<sup>52</sup>

After mentioning these terms, al-A’zami classifies the literary period upto 150 A.H. into four categories:

- a. The writings and works of the Companions.
- b. The writings and works of the Successors who lived mostly in the first century.
- c. The writings and works of the scholars whose literary careers cover the later part of the first century as well as considerable period of the second century A.H.
- d. The writings and the works of the scholars who were born between 70 A.H. and 110 A.H.<sup>53</sup>

He lists fifty transmitters of *Ḥadīth* in the written form in the first category. He also mentions in detail about their literary activities. He discusses in detail their written collections and also responds to certain arguments against them. It includes Abū Hurayrah, ‘Umar b. al Khattab etc.<sup>54</sup> He lists in the second category forty nine transmitters of *Ḥadīth* who used to write down *Ḥadīth*. He also deals in great detail about their literary activities and also their written collections. It includes the nephew of ‘Ā’ishah; ‘Urwah b. Zubayr who was a great patron of writing down *Ḥadīth*.<sup>55</sup> He lists in the third category eighty seven transmitters of *Ḥadīth* who used to write down *Ḥadīth*. He dealt in detail about their literary activities and also their written collections. It includes al-Zuhrī, Ibn Sirin, Hisham b. ‘Urwah etc.<sup>56</sup> He lists in the fourth category two hundred and fifty one transmitters of *Ḥadīth* who used to write down *Ḥadīth*. He discussed the details of their literary activities and also their collections of *Ḥadīth*. He also mentions their students and teachers.<sup>57</sup>

#### 1.6. *Isnād* system: arguments of Orientalists and M.M. Al A’zami’s response

According to Leone Caetani, *Isnād* was a later invention that followed the traditions. This suggests that *Isnād* originated much later than it was thought. It may be a consequence of the needs of the new civilization due to the Muslim conquest. According to Caetani, ‘Urwah b. Zubair uses no *Isnād* and quotes no authority except the Qur’ān which means that in his period there was no existence of *Isnāds*. He concludes that the origin of *Isnād* may be placed somewhere between the period of ‘Urwah b. Zubair (d. 94 A.H) and Ibn Ishaq (d. 151 A.H) because *Isnād* is used by Ibn Ishaq but in the rudimentary form. The science of *Isnād* developed though not in perfect form in the period of al-Waqīdi (d. 207 A.H) and his secretary Ibn Sa’d (d.

230 A.H). He is of the opinion that the greater part of the *Isnād* was put together or created by the traditionists of the end of the second century.<sup>58</sup>

According to Joseph Horovitz, the entry of *Isnād* can be traced back to the period of last third of the first century. He argues that Ibn Ishaq often doesn't make use of *Isnāds* but he used it only when he was sure that the information he received was from his teachers. He further argues that the *Isnād* was known to al Zuhri but it was older than his period. He refutes the arguments of Caetani and Sprenger in which they claim that the *Isnāds* associated with 'Urwah are not genuine, he was credited with having an *Isnād* by the later compilers. According to Horovitz they failed to analyze all the *Isnāds* of 'Urwah. They only referred to that material which 'Urwah wrote to 'Abd al Mālik and ignored the material which he narrated in learned circles. According to him, Jews learned the science of *Isnād* from the Muslims; who had developed it.<sup>59</sup>

Schacht distrusts the *Isnād* Mālik from Nāfi' from Ibn 'Umar on two grounds. Firstly, stating that Mālik was too young to have heard Nāfi' directly. He can at best only have received a book containing traditions transmitted by him and Mālik pretended as if he had actually heard them. Furthermore, the date of Mālik's birth is not known definitely. Secondly, Schacht distrusts this *Isnād* because it is a family one, Nāfi' being the client of Ibn 'Umar. Schacht argues that the family *Isnād* was a device used to spread spurious traditions and he gives examples to prove it.<sup>60</sup>

According to M.M Al-A'zamī, the interpretation of the word *fitnah* by Robson is also erroneous. He suggests that the word *fitnah* best suits the first civil war between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah. The first reason is the existence of spurious traditions in the middle of the first century which belongs to the period of first civil war. A lot of traditions were forged during the civil war between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah by the supporters of both parties. It was done by those persons who were skeptic towards Islam. They disguised themselves as the supporters of any one of the parties and fabricated traditions for political purpose. So it seems appropriate to interpret the word *fitnah* as the period of first civil war. Another reason is the usage of phrase 'they didn't ask' which clearly shows that he was referring to the period earlier than his own. It also affirms the existence of *Isnād* in the earlier period but it was left to the transmitter whether or not he discloses his sources.<sup>61</sup>

Al-A'zamī treats the *Ḥadīth* literature as an independent branch and separates it from legal science and *Sīrah* literature. He comes up with twelve examples and produces them as an evidence in order to refute the claims of western scholars especially Schacht. He is of the opinion that absence of *Isnād* in the legal traditions or the *Sīrah* literature doesn't mean that the *Isnād* didn't exist at that period. He states that it was custom of the early scholars to skip the usage of *Isnād* in order to make the work precise. For example Al A'zamī quotes Abū Yusuf who says in *Kharāj* that he could have used *Ḥadīth* with *Isnād* if he doesn't have the fear of making his work voluminous. It was also the custom of early scholars to quote directly from the higher authorities instead of using the complete *Isnād* for the reason of making the work precise or may be for the reason that they had mentioned the complete *Isnād* in some other works. Sometimes the early scholars only mention that certain practice is the *Sunnah* of the Prophet without mentioning the *Isnād* or even the actual text because of the reason that the tradition is well established among the scholars. For example Al A'zamī quotes al Shāfi'ī who refers to a tradition in *Risalah* without giving any details but the Proper details can be found in his other prominent works like *al Umm*.

He is of the opinion that the literature of legal science or *Sīrah* literature is inappropriate to be used for the study of traditions and *Isnāds* and their growth. He treats *Ḥadīth* as the independent subject with many subsidiary branches. He concludes that it would be wrong and even unscientific to study *Ḥadīth* as the subject in legal books as Schacht and other western scholars did.<sup>62</sup>

### 1.7. Computerization of the religious texts

One of his original contributions includes the computerization of religious texts in a manner that was ahead of his time. He became aware of computer technology during his stay in USA in the late 1970's. He decided to apply such technology in the service of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. In 1980 he was able to submit a preliminary, computer-generated concordance of a small collection of *Ḥadīths* to the King Faisal International Award which proved to be successful. In 1981, he was able to purchase a superior type of computer HP 3000/S44 after using Hewlett Packard 1000 minicomputer for a very long period of time. He produced the new edition of *Sunan Ibn Majah* with a concordance of almost all the words in the book, alongside many

other indices generated by the computer. He strenuously obtained manuscripts from around the world so that printed editions could be verified. These efforts led to the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad being corrected, and the purchase of the first rate manuscript of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* based on the work of Yunini.<sup>63</sup> When the project was started in 1978, the computers were not in a position to enter texts with diacritics. In 1983, due to the latest technology it was possible to insert text with diacritics. He worked exhaustively with others on a programme that would automatically insert the diacritics into the stored texts so as to save manually inputting them, which had a success rate of 80%. By 1991, the programme had developed to the point where tens of volumes were digitally stored, as well as providing the possibility for sophisticated searches of the stored collections, with the programme amounting to 100 megabytes, and including digitalized pictures of geographical maps and locations that could be pinpointed and enlarged by the user.<sup>64</sup> However, as mentioned by Imtiyaz Damiel, this project was never completed despite the huge strides that were made at such an initial stage.

### 1.8. *Ḥadīth* criticism

One of the prominent contributions of Muhammad Mustafa al A‘zamī is the detailed academic analysis of origin, meaning and methodology of *Ḥadīth* criticism. He explained this science in an academic manner in order to provide response to the objections of opponents of *Ḥadīth* literature. According to him, the word *Naqd* was used for *Ḥadīth* criticism by the scholars of second century. It doesn't mean that this science was totally no existent in the first century. It emerged in the Prophetic period and got developed gradually. Qur'ān used the word *Tamyiz* which means to separate one thing from the other and it can be considered as the synonymous term with the *Naqd*. Some scholars named the science of *Ḥadīth* criticism as *al Jarḥwa al Ta'dīl*.<sup>65</sup>

One of the prominent objections from the opponents of *Ḥadīth* related to compilation of *Ḥadīth* literature is that the *Ḥadīth* scholars were unaware of the rules of *Ḥadīth* criticism; or the rules of the *Ḥadīth* criticism didn't exist at the time of compilation of *Ḥadīth* literature. *Ḥadīth* scholars somehow avoided the usage of the principles of *Ḥadīth* criticism at the time of compilation of *Ḥadīth* literature. These arguments can be found in the works of prominent opponents of *Ḥadīth* like Aslam

Jayrajpuri. According to him, *Ḥadīth* literature was compiled along with the *Isnād* and the principles of *Ḥadīth* criticism were formulated after that. He further writes that the *Ḥadīth* literature was put into writing in the beginning of the second century by the order of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al ‘Azīz but the *Ḥadīth* literature was criticized from the third century.<sup>66</sup>

This objection from the opponents of *Ḥadīth* is baseless because there are numerous verses of Qur’ān which highlight the importance of *Ḥadīth* criticism.<sup>67</sup> Qur’ān wants us to investigate the sayings of any person which is the basis of need of the science of *Ḥadīth* criticism. So it seems impossible that Prophet and his Companions didn’t formulate some principles regarding this science.

The injunctions of the Qur’ān related to *Ḥadīth* criticism were first of all put in application by the Prophet himself. There are numerous incidents from the Prophetic period which not only highlight the importance of this science but also throw light on its important principles. The first step which Prophet took in this regard was to warn his people about the punishment for attributing something intentionally to him. He encouraged them to show utmost caution in narrating the *Ḥadīths*. He said, narrate *Ḥadīth* from me but refrain from attributing falsehood to me, whoever attributes falsehood intentionally to me, he made his seat in the hellfire.<sup>68</sup>

Second step which Prophet took was to warn his people about those people who will attribute falsehood to him. He instructed to refrain from such people. He said, in the later times there will come liars to you, who will tell you those *Ḥadīth* which neither you nor your ancestors had heard before. You must protect yourselves from them; they may make you go astray.<sup>69</sup> The third step taken by the Prophet in this regard was the instruction that one should not accept anything without proper investigation. He said, it is enough for a person to be deemed as a liar if he narrates everything he hears without proper investigation.<sup>70</sup>

Fourth step taken by the Prophet was the instruction of *Dirayat al Ḥadīth*. It served as an important tool to check the inconsistencies in the text of the *Ḥadīth*. Companions used to identify the *Ḥadīth* by feeling its words because they were familiar with the style of the Prophetic utterances.

The Prophet applied the science of *Jarḥwa Ta’dīl* in the rudimentary form in his lifetime in order to provide guidance about it. Prophet gave the title *Ṣiddīq* to Abū

Bakr, he said ‘Abdullah b ‘Umar is *Rajulun Salihun*, he accepted the witness of Khuzaymah b. Thabit equivalent to two<sup>71</sup>; and similar other titles. It is actually a sort of *Ta’dil* and *Tawthiq*. Similarly, Prophet did *Jarh* of some persons like Abū Jahm and also of some hypocrites by mentioning their names. In the Prophetic period whenever Companions felt doubtful about any *Ḥadīth*, they used to ask the Prophet about it. In this way they implemented the principles of *Ḥadīth* criticism. There are many such incidents in the Prophetic period.

1. ‘Alī returned from Yemen at the time of *Hajjah al Wada’* and brought an animal of sacrifice with him. He saw Fatima in colored clothes and applied *Kohl* in her eyes. He went to Prophet and told him about it and also mentioned that she replied that it was done by the permission of the Prophet. On hearing all this from ‘Alī, Prophet replied that she told the truth and repeated it thrice.<sup>72</sup>
2. ‘Abdallah b. ‘Umar heard a *Ḥadīth* that whoever prays in sitting position gets half the reward. He went to the Prophet in order to get the clarification and saw Prophet praying in sitting position. He informed Prophet about the matter and he replied that you heard right, but I am not like anyone amongst you.<sup>73</sup>

According to Al-A‘zamī, after the death of the Prophet, Islam and its teachings got spread to vast areas. Firstly, it was due to the expeditions led by the Muslim army in order to defend Islam from the attacks of their enemies. They conquered different territories in order to spread the message and teachings of Islam and free people from the chains of disbelief, polytheism and various other vices. Secondly, it was due to the educational policy implemented by the caliphs of the Prophet. They used to send teachers to various provinces in order to make them aware of the teachings of Islam. It was due to their tiresome efforts that a lot of provinces entered into the fold of Islam. It was thus necessary to develop the science of *Ḥadīth* criticism in order to avoid *Ḥadīth* forgery. For this reason, Abū Bakr, and ‘Umar and ‘Alī were the most prominent personalities in this field.<sup>74</sup>

According to al-Dhahabī, Abū Bakr was the first person who showed the cautious nature in accepting the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet. He used as an example the incident in which Abū Bakr said to an old lady that he didn’t find any part of inheritance for her in Qur’ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet.<sup>75</sup> Same was the case with other caliphs. For example, Ibn ‘Umar said, ‘Umar command us not to accepted *Ḥadīth* from anyone

expect the one who is reliable.<sup>76</sup> ‘Alī used to take oath from the person who narrated *Ḥadīth* to him before accepting it.<sup>77</sup> Then Successors followed this trend and continued to develop this science. According to M.M Al A’zami, there were numerous scholars from Madinan school like al-Zuhrī, Hishām b. ‘Urwah, etc. who worked on this science and made efforts to develop its principles. There were also scholars from Iraqi school like Hasan al Basri, Ibn Sirin etc who also worked on the development of this science.<sup>78</sup> It becomes clear from the above discussion that the science of *Ḥadīth* criticism was present in the period of Prophet and the Companions in its basic form and in accordance with the need of that period. *Ḥadīth* scholars developed it from time to time and in accordance with the need of their times.

### 1.9. Conclusion

Al-A’zami clarified the wrong notion of Western scholars that there was lack of literary activity in the early period of Islam. He provided strong arguments in order to show the status of literary activities in the early years of Islam. He explained the role and activities of Prophet in the spread of educational policy. He pointed towards the existing literature of religious and non-religious nature that can be traced back to the Prophetic period. These arguments were posed in response to the Orientalists like Ignaz Goldziher who tried to show the ignorance of Muslim community in the first two centuries of Islam. Their main objective behind all this was to show the late origin of *Ḥadīth* literature.

He showed the incidents of writing *Ḥadīth* and other documents in the Prophetic period. He provides the long list of those Companions and Successors which belonged to the first two centuries of Islam. He also mentioned their collections of *Ḥadīth* along with the necessary details. He responded with strong arguments to the assumptions made by the Western scholars regarding the recording of *Ḥadīth*. He highlighted the defects in their arguments and responded to their misconceptions. He also discussed the case of prohibition of writing *Ḥadīth* by the Prophet and explained its causes. An attempt has been made in this thesis to include the arguments of various other *Ḥadīth* scholars like Fuat Sezgin who suggested that *Kariha al Kitab* can be translated the other way as we were averse to transferring *Ḥadīths* in the way of *kitab* (i.e. the act of copying text without having read them to



the master or heard them from him). This has been done in order to boost the relevance of this thesis.

Muhammad Mustafa al-A'zamī is credited with a unique contribution of computerization of the religious texts. In the discussion of *Ḥadīth* criticism it becomes clear that M.M. Al A'zamī responded to the wrong notion of opponents of *Ḥadīth*. M.M. Al A'zamī provides strong arguments to show the presence of principles of *Ḥadīth* criticism in the first two centuries of Islam. He narrates numerous incidents from the Prophetic period, the period of Companions and the period of Successors in which the principles of *Ḥadīth* criticism were implemented. In the period of Companions there was no need to compile this science because they were all trustworthy and they used to identify the forgery very easily. They had collections of *Ḥadīth* of their own which they had heard from the Prophet, for this reason it was hardly possible to make the forged *Ḥadīth* spread.

## References and Endnotes

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