

## An Examination of the Role of the Companions in Early Hadith Forgery

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### ABSTRACT

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The role that the Prophet's companions played in the campaign to fake hadiths is investigated in this article. There are two competing opinions regarding the genesis of the appearance of fake hadith, while both agree that political factors are the fundamental trigger. According to the first opinion, there have been incorrect hadith since the beginning of Islam. The first group of Muslims, the Companions of the Prophet, are the ones who are at fault. The majority of Western Revisionist academics, led by Goldziher and Schacht, agree with this viewpoint; non-mainstream Islamic scholars, such as Ahmad Amin and Abu Rayyah, endorse it. On the other hand, mainstream Islamic scholars, led by Muhammad Mustafa Azami, disagree, citing the Companions' justification ('adalah al-sahabah'). This article attempts to evaluate the arguments using the abductive method. Opinions corresponding to the data are taken, contrary to the rejection. It follows that the view that the Companions were complicit in the hadith's falsification is the one that is more grounded in scientific evidence. Conversely, the viewpoints that dispute it are founded solely on the widely accepted Companions' conception of justice, which is better described as dogma than actual scientific knowledge.

**Keywords:** Revisionist, Traditionalist, Hadith Forgery, Companions.

### ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mencoba untuk menguji keterlibatan Sahabat dalam gerakan pemalsuan hadis. Ada dua pendapat yang saling bertolak belakang terkait awal waktu munculnya hadis palsu, meskipun keduanya setuju bahwa faktor politik sebagai pemicu utamanya. Pendapat pertama menyebut hadis palsu telah muncul sejak masa awal Islam. Pelakunya adalah mereka yang hidup bersama Nabi yang dikenal dengan sebutan Sahabat. Pendapat ini didukung oleh mainstream sarjana Revisionist Barat yang dimotori oleh Goldziher dan Schacht; dan sarjana Islam non mainstream seperti Ahmad Amin dan Abu Rayyah. Di sisi lain, mayoritas sarjana Islam yang dimotori oleh Muhammad Mustafa Azami menolak pendapat tersebut dengan argumentasi keadilan Sahabat. Artikel ini berusaha untuk menguji dua pendapat yang saling bertolak belakang tersebut dengan memakai metode abduktif. Pendapat yang sesuai dengan data diambil. Yang tidak sesuai ditolak. Studi ini membuktikan bahwa pendapat yang menyebut Sahabat terlibat dalam pemalsuan hadis didukung oleh banyak bukti yang bisa dipertanggungjawabkan secara ilmiah. Sementara pendapat yang menolaknya hanya didasarkan pada argumentasi keadilan Sahabat yang lebih pas disebut sebagai dogma daripada teori ilmiah.

**Kata kunci:** Revisionis, Tradisionalis, Pemalsuan Hadits, Sahabat.

## INTRODUCTION

Both Western and Islamic hadith scholars agreed that political conflict was the primary motive behind hadith forgery (Brown, 2009). However, the opinions of these two groups differ on the timeline. Most Islamic scholars who support the doctrine of the Companions' justice believe that hadith forgery began after the outbreak of political unrest during Uthman's era and increased significantly following the open conflict between Ali and Muawiyyah. These groups further stated that the main perpetrators were from the Tabi'in (followers of the Companions), specifically citing Ibn Saba', rather than the Companions of the Prophet (Shuhbah, 1989; Sibai, n.d.).

Opponents of the Companions' justice theory have also been found to cite political unrest (fitnah) as the primary cause of the proliferation of false hadith. However, these groups also differ on the specific date of the fitnah. Muslim scholars within the group argue that the slander occurred during the latter half of Uthman's rule and Abu Rayyah was a significant representative of this view. In opposition, western scholars consider the fitnah to be the conflict initiated by Ibn Zubair around 72 H in Mecca which started as a result of the declaration of war against the Damascus government (Juynboll, 1992). Other Western scholars view the fitnah as relating to the assassination of Caliph Walid bin Yazid in 126 H, with Schacht being a proponent of this perspective (Schacht, 1950).

Inconsistent with these opinions, the present study is in line with Jonathan A.C. Brown, who asserted that political conflict began immediately after the death of the Prophet (Brown, 2009). However, it is important to establish that Brown did not address the issue of hadith forgery, unlike this study, where the political conflict was posited to be the root cause of the forgery. Hadith forgery began during the Prophet's lifetime and its perpetrators were contemporaries of Prophet Muhammad, known as the Companions. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively uncover the neglected reality of hadith forgery through the use of a new paradigm in hadith studies. The paradigm include an interdisciplinary approach to break the methodological stagnation in hadith science (Abdullah, 2018; Amin Abdullah, 2014; Ulum, n.d.) The study also aimed to address certain questions such as, why is the inclusiveness of the Prophet's Companions in the hadith forgery movement often ignored, and for what purpose is this reality overlooked?

## METHOD

The present study was carried out using a rare approach in religious studies called the abductive method. This method is in direct opposition to the deductive method typically used by Islamic scholars and the inductive method prevalent in Western revisionist scholarship (Abdullah, 2018; Brown, 2009). Furthermore, contrary to deduction or induction, the abductive method does not follow a formal sequence leading from data to a single hypothesis. Instead, it tests and identifies the best hypothesis from among existing ones. In this method, the best hypothesis is typically supported by evidence (Rakhmat, 2015). Within the context of the present study, the best hypothesis was supported by evidence derived from observations of historical artifacts, especially histories from authoritative narrators. Lastly, this investigation challenges the argument that Companions were exempted from hadith forgery through the presentation of several facts showing direct inclusiveness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Discourse on Hadith Forgery

Two opposing opinions have been observed to be in existence in terms of hadith forgery. The first opinion posits that hadiths have been falsified since the Prophet's lifetime, with the perpetrators being the Companions, as defined traditionally in Hadith Science. This theory is supported by non-mainstream Islamic scholars, such as Ahmad Amin and Abu Rayyah and mainstream Western Scholars known as Revisionist (Ulm, 2022). The argument is based on the mutawatir hadith, which states, "Whoever deliberately lies in my name should prepare their place in Hell." This statement was a reaction to existing falsehoods attributed to the Prophet. However, the argument has been rejected by most Islamic scholars who uphold the doctrine of the Companions' justice, where it was asserted that the Companions were exempt from engaging in hadith forgery.

According to Siba'i, the hadith predicts future events, and this is evidenced by the Prophet's directive to his Companions to convey the guide accurately without additions or omissions. Siba'i also asserted that there was no historical evidence or hadith showing the Companions' engagement in hadith forgery. In accordance with this, Siba'i, along with other supporters of the doctrine of Companions' justice, believes that it was the Shiites, particularly Abdullah bin Saba', who first falsified hadith to support heretical teachings. It is important to establish that Siba'i's thesis has been widely accepted among most Islamic scholars but will be challenged if evidence surfaces showing that the Companions participated in the forgery.

Through the examination of historical artifacts, this study aims to gather evidence supporting Amin's thesis, which Sibai rejected. During the course of the examination, it was found that Ali bin Abi Talib, in a collection of his sayings compiled by Syarif al-Radhi, addressed questions about false hadiths and the prevalent differences in narration at the time. Here we will quote verbatim the words of Ali bin Abi Talib from the book *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which, according to Stetkevych, was compiled by Syarif Radhi (Stetkevyc, 2007). Ali's words serve as evidence that challenges the hypothesis supporting the doctrine of the Companions' justice and strengthens the allegation that the Companions participated in hadith forgery.

*Inna fī aydi al-nās ḥaqqan wa bāṭilan wa ṣidqan wa kādhiban wa nāsikhan wa mansūkhan wa āmman wa khāṣṣan wa muḥkaman wa mutashābihan wa hifdzan wa wahman. Wa laqad kudhidhiba 'alā rasulillah 'alā 'ahdihi ḥatta qāma khaṭīban faqāla: man kadhdhaba 'alayya muta'ammidan fal yatabawwa' maq'adahu min al-nār.*

“Indeed, the hadiths that people have are true and false, truthful and untrue, nasikh and mansukh, general and specific, muhkam and mutasyabih, truly memorized, and those which are just wishful thinking. The Prophet had been lied to during his lifetime, so he stood up and said, ‘Indeed, many people have lied in my name. Therefore, whoever lies in my name, prepare to take his place in Hell.’ Then, after his death, he continued to be lied to.”

Consider the phrase, “And the Prophet had been lied to during his lifetime..” This leads to the question, who could have lied in the name of the Prophet during his lifetime? According to Islamic tradition, those around the Prophet were referred to as Companions. Siba'i and supporters of the doctrine of the Companions' justice often reject this historical fact. The reality is that even the Companions traditionally considered innocent were among those who engaged in hadith forgery (Ulum, 2019, 2022).

Siba'i's rejection appears to be an effort to uphold the prevailing theory that “all Companions are fair (*kullu ashābi al-nabī 'udūl*),” which implies the Companions' exemption from spreading fake hadith. This stance is understandable as it is in accordance with the scholar's ideological convictions. Following Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory (Potter, 1965), Siba'i's rejection serves to maintain the consistency of his beliefs. However, the dismissal of the historical artifacts previously mentioned undermines the scientific validity of his argument, as elucidated by Golschack (Gottschalk, 1965). Based on this understanding, Kamaruddin argued that the theory upheld by Siba'i is better described as dogma rather than a scientific theory, since, as shown by Jabali, the theory cannot withstand historical criticism (Jabali, 2005; Ulum, 2022).

The following narration from Bukhari further supports Amin's thesis that the Companions forged hadiths attributed to the Prophet. *Madaḥa aḥadu al-tābi'īn al-Barrā' bin 'Āzib faqāla: "Tūba laka ṣaḥibta al-nabī wa bāya'ta taḥta al-shajarah."* Qāla Barra': *Innaka lā tadrī mā aḥdathnā ba'dahu.* On one occasion, a Tabi'in praised Bara' bin Azib, a veteran of the Battle of Badr from the Ansar, as one of the fortunate Companions who had taken allegiance under the tree. Bara' responded, "Indeed you (praise me like that) because you do not know what hadiths we held after that."

Following the discourse of the present study, conclusions can be drawn that hadith forgery has existed since the Prophet's lifetime, and was perpetrated by individuals who lived contemporaneously with the Prophet. In summary, those who lived during the Prophet's time, referred to as Companions, are responsible for the initiation of hadith forgery.

### **The Endless Debate**

The discussion about fake hadith is related to the authenticity of the hadith which has become perpetual debate between the Western and Islamic worlds, primarily due to differing perspectives (Hallaq, 1999). The divergence arises because Islamic studies emphasize dogmatic ideological nuances, while Western studies adopt a more critical and academic approach. In this section we want to investigate how these two contrasting viewpoints assess the hadith of the Prophet. The works of Goldziher and Schacht were chosen to represent the Western perspective, while those of Azami were selected for the Islamic perspective. Azami, a prominent traditionalist Islamic scholar, sought to counter both from an academic standpoint. Additionally, other Islamic scholars frequently echo Azami's views when rejecting the theses of Goldziher and Schacht (Rahman et al., 2024.; Syarifah, n.d.).

Goldziher's thesis asserted that most hadiths did not originate from the Prophet. He acknowledged the possibility that some companions recorded hadiths during the Prophet's lifetime, but believed these instances were very rare. This view aligns with Islamic scholars who mention that companions kept personal records called *sahifah* (Rasyid et al., 2021). However, Goldziher perceived hadith as reflecting the interactions and conflicts among various sects during the early Umayyad dynasty. Schacht further argued that the initial codification of hadith, particularly in *Malik al-Muwatta*, primarily served jurisprudential purposes (Hallaq, 1999).

Azami countered Goldziher's arguments on seven points, drawing from various sources such as *Sunan Abu Dawood* regarding the people of Syria, who allegedly lacked knowledge of the *witr* prayer, *Sahih al-Bukhari* discussions on how to pray, and early spread of false hadiths

mentioned in Tarikh al-Tabari. The subsequent section detailed how Azami refuted Goldziher's claims about the early falsification of hadiths, using quotes from al-Tabari. And whether his argument able to match Goldziher's argument. We will see in the following paragraph.

### **Azami's rebuttal**

Goldziher, stated that the falsification of hadith occurred in the earliest times before it was officially codified during the era of Omar bin Abdul Aziz and systematically documented in the third century hijri (Erika, 2022.). The fabrication stated when Muawiyah assumed sole leadership of the Islamic world. Muawiyah sent letters to governors throughout the territory to contact Uthman supporters and publish hadiths about the alleged virtues. This effort aimed to counter the several hadiths about the virtues of Ali.

Al-Tabari delivered the letter from Muawiyah to one of the governors, Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, instructing to curse Ali. *"La tattaḥim 'an shatmi 'ali wa dhammihi wa al-tarahḥum 'ala uthmān wa al-istighfār lahu. Wa al-'ayb 'alā aṣḥābi 'alī wa al-iqṣā lahum wa tarki al-istimā' minhum.*

Goldziher stated that the companions were responsible for falsifying the hadith, and this was proven by the letters written by Muawiyah. However, Azami disagreed, stating that the letters did not show the slightest falsification. In conflict situations, each of the parties naturally tries to attract as many supporters as possible. According to Azami, it is only normal to hold anyone responsible for the murder of Uthman accountable (Azami, 1978).

The investigation by Azami lacked concrete facts and was perceived as ideological and subjective and therefore failed to undermine Goldziher's thesis that objective (Isnaeni & Susanto, n.d.). However, Goldziher study was based on data extracted from al-Ṭabarī. This critique focused on the vulnerability of the assumption proposed by Azami. A fundamental weakness was the disintegration of the assumption, based on concrete evidences presented by Goldziher. Despite the constant criticism from Muslim scholars, the thesis published by Goldziher remained unaltered because it was in line with historical facts extracted from sources also recognized by critics, including Azami and other muslim scholars (Saad & Rabiū, 2019.).

The document *al-Aḥdāth*, mentioned in the study conducted by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Madīnī, a mentor to Bukhari, was another historical fact that supported Goldziher. It was more comprehensive than al-Ṭabarī as well as referenced by Ibn al-Ḥadīd al-Mu'tazilī in the work titled *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (Al-Mu'tazili, n.d.). Al-Madīnī supported Goldziher on the falsification of hadith by the companions of Prophet Muawiya. Furthermore, historical artefact and the excerpts from al-Ṭabarī were thoroughly examined. He told how Muawiyah tried to



make a false hadith about the virtues of his companions to match the hadiths about the virtues of Ali bin Abi Talib, his political enemy.

“Muawiyah sent a manuscript to his employees after *ām al-jamā’ah*. It is stated that protection is released from anyone who narrates something about Abu Turab, namely Ali bin Abi Talib and his family. After that, in every country the khatib stood in every pulpit, cursing Ali, breaking away from him and decrying his family. At that time, the people who suffered the most were the inhabitants of Kufa because most of them were followers of Ali.

Then, Muawiyah assigned Ziyad bin Sumayyah to rule Kufa and Basrah. He knew the Shiites because in Ali’s time he had joined them. He pursued the Shia and killed them in every valley and hill, terrorizing them, cutting off their hands and feet, gouging out their eyes, crucifying them to the trunk of a date palm, and driving them out so that no one was left of them.

Muawiyah wrote again to his men throughout his power, “No witness should be given to the followers of Ali and his family; pay attention to the followers of Uthman, his lovers and those who narrate his virtue and glory; approach their assembly, approach them and glorify them. Write for me the name of the person who narrated the virtue along with the name of his parent and family.”

Then they did. Until it is narrated many virtues and glory of Uthman. For every narration he receives, Muawiyah reciprocates with various gifts. In each state people compete for position by narrating false hadiths. Anyone from the followers of Muawiyah who narrates the virtues of Uthman, is written with his name and given position and protection.

After the hadiths about Uthman were widely spread, in every city, in all parts of the country, Muawiyah issued a new order again, “The hadiths about Uthman have been collected and circulated everywhere. When this letter reaches you, invite the crowd to narrate the virtues of the Companions and the first caliphs. Do not leave a single hadith about the virtue of Abu Turab unless you make a comparison with the virtue of the Companions. Indeed, I am more pleased and comforted by such things because I can break the arguments of Abu Turab and his followers. And that is heavier for them than the manaqib of Uthman and his virtue.

Then his order was read to the people. Various hadiths about the virtue of companions began to spread, which were made up and not real. So earnestly did people spread the narration of the Companion, they mentioned it in the pulpits, put it in the books, taught it to their children, wives, slaves, and friends so that people study these hadith as they study the Qur’an.

Then Muawiyah issued another order throughout the country, “Investigate those who are proven to love Ali and his family. Remove their name from the list. Decide on their benefits. Whoever you suspect of loving them, punish him and destroy his house.” There was no greater disaster at that time than that which befell the people of Iraq, especially Kufa. So much suffering did they have to endure that there was a time when Ali’s lover was visited by a person he trusted. He told him his secret secretly out of fear of his maid or slave. He appeared as if he hated Ali to hide his love.

Many false hadiths appeared and slander spread among the jurists, judges and rulers. The greatest disaster arises because of the *riya* recitations of the Qur'an, the small people who show solemnity and piety. They made hadiths to increase their followers and gain profits, wealth and positions. Then the news and hadiths reached the hands of religious people who did not expect it to be a lie and slander. They accept it, narrate it and believe it to be the truth. If they knew that the news was false, they would not have narrated it and practiced religion according to it.

Al-Madīnī described how Muawiya used the power structure and resources to forbade the dissemination of Ali’s virtues while promoting a counter-history about Uthman. There was intense competition to compile accounts regarding the virtues of Uthman, with every single piece of history commanding a high price. After the narration of Uthman spread, Muawiya issued another decree to fabricate accounts praising the Caliphs preceding Ali. The study referred to this historical model as *al-Mu’āwiyāt* (Ulum, 2014).

The documentation above challenges the Azami assumption that denied the role of Muawiyah and the companions in falsifying hadith. It was strange Azami overlooked the account of the famous al-Madīnī, which provided crucial insight. In reality, the falsification of hadith occurred even long before Muawiya came to power as shown by the confession of Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib transmitted by Bukhari above. This confession came from someone closely associated with the perpetrators of falsifying hadith.

The study by Bukhari and his teacher, Ali al-Madini, significantly weakened the assumption proposed by Azami, showing that it needed to be developed on a solid foundation and was susceptible to criticism. Strangely, Azami also overlooked the account of Bukhari, showing the adoption of a selective method in data analysis. The bias raised concerns about objectivity, as it was observed Azami only considered data that supported the assumptions put forward, while disregarding contradictory evidence. It showed the inherent subjectivity present in studies conducted by great scholars such as Azami. However, the stance of Azami is not



completely baseless, as it is only natural to defend certain beliefs. This subjectivity was observed in the studies conducted by Goldziher and others (Mubin et al., n.d.).

Ideological bias was evident in the defense of Azami, as the Sunni tendencies were inherent in every argument proposed. Furthermore, the following contemporaries Mustafa al-Sibai and Abu Shuhbah, Azami defended the companions doctrine of justice, interpreted as freedom from falsifying hadith. Accepting the opinion of Goldziher weakened the traditional view of justice. Azami wanted to avoid this type of inference. To avoid such consequences, it was hastily as there is not a single word suggesting the slightest hint of any hadith fabrication. It depicted a cognitive dissonance in the argument.(Ulum, 2022)

Azami should consider all data, including information supporting the proposed assumptions. The contradictory data must be presented, even when interpreted differently. The adoption of this method depicted academic honesty, making the studies appear more objective. However, the exclusion of these data, led to subjectivity, making the argument biased in respect to justifying the actions of Muawiyah to consolidate power. The defence of Azami weakened the thesis of Goldziher, supported by extensive data that Azami overlooked and struggled to refute. This disclosed the strength of the rigorous assumption put forward by Goldziher and exposed the main weakness of the method adopted by Azami. The argument was unjustifiable in respect to the extensive data present by Goldziher.

### **Azami's inconsistency**

In rejecting the thesis by Goldziher, Azami adopted the historical critical method commonly used by western scholars, which focused on analogy as a main principle (Brown, 2009). This was evident in the defense of Muawiya Machiavelli politics. Azami stated that all rulers, including Muawiya, would definitely resort to any means necessary to win the loyalty of supporters and destroy the rebels. Therefore, Azami stated that the actions of Muawiyah were justified within this framework (Azami, 1978).

Azami showed certain potential by using methods of historical criticism to counter attacks by Western scholars, who adopted similar methodologies. However, Azami was inconsistent and relied more on classical methods. The preference limited Azami in effectively challenging the theories of western scholars. According to Kamaruddin, the reliance of Azami on information collected without in-depth testing, led to failure (Amin, 2009). This issue was made clearer in subsequent arguments regarding the *tadwīn hadīth*.

Azami applied a text analysis method developed by western scholars to prove the hadith was written during the era of the Holy Prophet, and not a century after being proclaimed dead.

It was stated that the hadith was transmitted orally for a century and only written by al-Zuhri at the request of Umar bin Abdul Aziz due to the misunderstanding of certain words such as *ḥaddathana*, *akhbarana*, *tadwīn*, *taṣnīf*, used by hadith transmitters.

Azami acknowledged the authenticity of the narration detailing the order of Umar bin Abdul Aziz to the governor of Medina, Abu Bakr bin Muhammad bin Amr bin Hazm, to write the hadiths. The majority of orientalist, such as Muir and Guillame, stated that the hadiths transmitted orally in the second century no longer existed. Therefore, the hadiths compiled by al-Zuhri were mostly inauthentic. Guillame even went as far as stating that the hadith must be regarded as an invention. According to Azami, the accusations made by Goldziher and Schacht were even more sadistic than the claims of Guillame. Goldziher and Schacht had rather harsh opinions.

The assumption put forward by Azami concerning the general opinion that the hadith was only written in the second century was based on information from the experts. However, it was unclear who initially proposed the idea, even esteemed scholars, such as Ibn Ḥajar and al-Dhahabī, simply quoted the opinion without investigating the conflicting information.

Azami resolved the contradictions between the permissibility and prohibition of writing the hadith. Meanwhile, three hadiths written by the following companions Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Abū Hurayrah, and Zayd ibn Thābit focused on the prohibition. The hadith written by Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī had two versions, while the one narrated by Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Zayd, was considered unreliable by Ibn Ḥibbān. Azami also considered it as hadith ḍa'īf. The narrations of Abū Hurayrah were unreliable, while the hadith by Zayd ibn Thābit, conveyed by al-Muṭṭalib ibn 'Abd Allah, lacked credibility as reported by rijal scholars who never met Zayd ibn Thābit. The narration by Zayd ibn Thābit had two versions, the focusing on prohibition originated from the Prophet, and the other was based on personal opinion. Therefore, it was difficult for Azami to state that the prohibition was from the Prophet.

The only narration of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī conveyed through the Hammam stated that It reads: *Lā taktubū 'annī, wa-man kataba 'annī ghayr al-qur'ān fa-l-yamḥuhu. Wa-ḥaddithū 'annī wa-lā ḥaraj. Wa-man kadhdhaba 'alayya qāla hammam aḥsibuhu qāla muta'ammidan.* Azami stated that this last hadith from the companions was authentic. It focused on the prohibition against writing hadith alongside the Qur'an, reflecting preventive measures during the rudimentary descent of the Qur'an to avoid any form of integration.

The study by Azami reflected the mainstream opinion, despite evidence of several companions who had records of the Prophet hadith. Furthermore, some of the companions had also expressed reservations about writing hadith. Azami proposed another theory suggesting that prohibitions arose in the early days when all attention was directed to preserving the Qur'an. It was feared hadith would divert attention away from the Qur'an. As these concerns disappeared, writing of hadith was allowed. This led to a competition among the companions to document the hadith, and such records were referred to as *sahifah* or *nuskhah*. Initially considered as individual work, it became a state endeavor following the order of Umar bin Abdul. Subsequently, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī and the companion continued the task. By presenting a series of sanad, the hadith collectors of Azami wanted to establish connections with the sanad of the hadith narrators sued by Schacht.

The study by Azami reflected the general opinion of Islamic scholars, particularly regarding the dominance of the traveling theory in this field (Said, 2009). It was exemplified by the isnad theory (Yahya et al., 2024). Azami refuted the study by Schacht that the isnad theory was applied after the second century of the Hijri. In respect to Ibn Sirrin (d. 110/728) as reported by Muslim, *Lam yakūnū yas'alūna 'an al-isnād fa-lammā waqa'at al-fitnah qālū sammū lanā rijālakum fa-yunẓar ilā ahl al-sunnah fa-yu'khadh ḥadīthu wa-yunẓar ilā ahl al-bida' fa-lā yu'khadh ḥadīthuhum*. According to Azami, the isnad was already in use following the event that led to the assassination of Caliph Uthman in 35 AH/656 AD.

Schacht opposed the statement made by Ibn Sirrin after dying in 110 A.H. Additionally, Schacht interpreted the term slander as the assassination of Caliph Walid ibn Yazid (d. 126). Azami challenged the interpretation by Schacht, focusing on the numerous slanders that took place before the assassination. These included the slander of Ibn Zubayr around 70 A.H. as well as the conflicts between Ali versus Muawiya, and Ali versus Aisha. Azami, like the majority of Muslim scholars, defined the word slander as the political event that accompanied the assassination of Caliph Uthman. Furthermore, Azami supported this definition with a grammatical analysis of the phrase, *lam yakūnū yas'alūna...* implying that Ibn Sirrin referred to an older tradition before the current period. The statement also meant that the practice of using Isnad existed, although it was not an absolute requirement.

Azami, though inconsistent disregarded certain accounts related to the sanad criticism, in an attempt to prove the hadith had been written since the earliest days, without any prohibition from the Holy Prophet. Some scholars were considered weak without addressing the perceived weakness, resulting in the rejection of a narration by Abu Hurayrah and Zaid bin

Thabit, and the acceptance of another by Abu Said al-Khudri. The rejected historical accounts of the Companions focused on the ranks of the rawi. Despite this, Azami failed to oppose the popular opinion that the hadith was only written in the second century, a concept accepted by a majority of Muslims and Western scholars, supported by accurate data. The tendency of Azami interpreting it differently to support respective assumptions is common.

Azami's argument showed certain weaknesses when challenged by Orientalist claims. By relying on the isnad theory, which Orientalists rejected, the debate remained inconclusive. Each side employed different methodologies with distinct characteristics. Consequently, the isnad theory alone cannot be the sole tool for assessing the quality of hadith. Therefore, it became essential to adopt an alternative method that complements the existing ones and accounts for the subjectivity of hadith critics. Karcic and Amin proposed incorporating methods from the social sciences, such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, and cultural studies. This interdisciplinary approach could be applied to various key themes of hadith to address the methodological impasse (Abdullah, 2018)

Differences in the study approaches of Islamic and Western scholars have been noted. While both focused on analyzing historical reports, they did so from different perspectives and underlying assumptions. Islamic scholars considered hadith and other materials related to the Prophet as authentic and trustworthy, frequently using them as a legal basis without hesitation. This strong ideological belief led to a dogmatic scholarly approach, where reports of uncertain authenticity were often given more importance than personal opinions. In contrast, Western scholars critically examined all historical reports. Their method was rooted in historical criticism, initially developed for biblical studies, and later applied to the study of hadith.

## CONCLUSION

The discourse on false hadith is intricately attributed to the ongoing debate regarding the authenticity of hadith between Western and Islamic scholars. Western scholars have contended that many hadiths considered authentic by the majority of Islamic scholars were simply forged during the early days of Islam. These scholars asserted that the early Islamic generation, known as the Companions of Prophet Muhammad, was included in this forgery. To further support the statement, the present study, which was carried out using the abductive method, dated the advent of hadith forgery to the Prophet's era. The investigation emphasized that the perpetrators in this regard include the prophet's companions. Generally, this fact is frequently overlooked in order to maintain the theory of *ādālah al-ṣaḥābah* means that the Companions were not

participants of hadith forgery. While the Western academic world addresses hadith forgery with critical analysis, the Islamic world has transformed the theory of the Companions' justice into a religious dogma that is beyond question. Typically, a study becomes increasingly ideological and diverges from scientific principles when harmonized with religious dogma, even if it adheres to academic standards. This is evidenced by the fact that historical evidence challenging religious dogma is often denied or reinterpreted to conform to the prevailing belief system.

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