

SIGNS INDICATIVE OF FABRICATION IN NARRATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The science of authenticating Prophetic narrations (ahadīth) to sift fabricated narrations from authentic ones, is as old as the emergence of fabricated narrations. This research study aims to reiterate the signs of fabrication in narrations, the hadīth methodology to counter it as well as the factors leading to fabrications. Hadīth scholars equipped themselves with an intellectual and historical toolkit to effectively detect fabrications in hadīth. In their endeavor they included scrutiny of the main text of the hadīth (matn) as impartially as the chain of transmitters (isnād). Their effort was not only directed to preserving the Sunnah at hand but also to lay the foundations for dependable hadīth authenticating sciences. The parameters laid down by scholars are consensually agreed upon by the hadīth scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l Jama'ah (People of the Sunnah and Community). As a result, both the authentic hadīth corpus (disseminated in different compilations) as well as authenticating methodology is preserved and warranted under the same dais.

KEYWORDS: Fabricated hadīth, Authentication, Isnād, Matn, Causes of fabrication

1. INTRODUCTION

Signs Indicative of Fabrication in Hadīth

A fabricated or ‘*Mawdū*’ hadīth is defined as a narration falsely and intentionally attributed to the Prophet ﷺ. It is a hadīth rejected unanimously by both hadīth scholars and scholars of *Usool al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence) due to its invalidity as proof, nor should it be mentioned lest it misinform the masses unless its fabrication is mentioned (Uthaimen, 2015).

The early generations up to the second century A. H. witnessed a pristine purity in hadīth transmission. However, the turmoil at the end of the caliphate of Uthman رضي الله عنه and his subsequent killing precipitated into strife taking on a religio-political formulation. Widespread factionalism on socio-political views of the caliphate, judgment and arbitration methods by the Companions and the legitimacy of the Caliphs led to an influx of fabricated ahadīth. Hadīth scholars took meticulous steps to counter, combat and recheck the methodology of ahadīth transmission through *isnād* (chain of transformation) and *matn* (content or text) criticism incorporated through the restructured hadīth methodology. Scholars with modernist inclinations contend that hadīth fabrications led to an irrevocable damage of the hadīth corpus rendering it corrupted, leaving people largely incapable of sifting rejected narrations from the authentic (*sahīh hadīth*). (Khan, 2010)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Fabrications in hadīth can be detected by signs both in the content or text of the hadīth (*matn*) and its chain of transmitters (*isnād*). Scholars employ various techniques for detection with respect to the narrators like their creedal beliefs, credibility, timeline, biography, and historical accuracy among other factors. They also stipulate conditions with respect to the text of the hadīth itself. The speech of the Prophet ﷺ is revelation, delivered with a motive and deliberation. The content in text that shows contradictions to reason and historical inaccuracy, conflict with basic tenets of the religion. It indicates promulgation of sectarian motives, among other precursors, which is a definitive indicator of fabrication in hadīth.

Ashry in the book ‘*Preservation of the Qur’ān and Sunnah*’ holds that fabrication in narrations is a result of groups acting upon ulterior motives, mainly the hypocrites besides others, when it comes to the chain of narrators. Furthermore, signs in the text of the hadīth can be indicative of fabrication even if the *isnād* seems flawless. Absence of abnormalities in texts and absence of a stilted style of the text are requirements for authenticity (*sihāh*). (Ashry, p. 113) The vastness of the Islāmic empire, unrestricted influx of converts, ignorance of the masses, the role of the Zanādiqah (A group known for its deviance from the fundamental doctrines of Islām) charlatans, and other groups with ulterior motives led to the addition of spurious hadīth. Sectarianism too played its fair share in the addition of fabricated ahadīth into the corpus.

Azami adds in his work ‘*Studies in Hadith methodology and literature*’ that fabricators who confessed their lies were branded as ‘liars’ by hadīth scholars and their narrations were rejected. The weak minded indulged in forgeries ostensibly to reap rewards in the Hereafter by forging hadīth to “draw people closer to religion”. Still others had political reasons like winning status with rulers or for sectarian motives. Nevertheless, hadīth scholars took painstaking efforts to trace

these fabrications, their roots, perpetrators, and fabrications (Azami, Fabrication of Hadīth Causes Means and Elimination, 1977).

Azami throws light on a finding that fabrications were not only new texts with new chains of transmissions, but existing texts replaced with a more ‘novel chain’ to gain public prominence and acceptance. Still others confirmed ahadīth which they never recalled later, however, scholars categorized such narrations as ‘unintentional fabrications’. Hadīth transmission itself was sophisticated and conducive enough to aid in detecting fabrications, namely the sciences of hadīth study and transmission (*ilmul dirayah*) and carrying of hadīth (*tahhammul hadīth*). The narrators sought knowledge primarily by hearing, reciting, writing, practicing and preserved it by memorization, and practicing. A careful study of the teachers and students with respect to these capabilities, analyzing their strengths and weaknesses in these learning methods, yielded significant results. Henceforth, every student and teacher of hadīth was archived and known with respect to his memory, narrations, books, and his teachers.

The study did not comprise of merely skimming through a narrator’s biography, but consisted of detailed logistics against well-defined parameters recorded for posterity. These parameters included the character of the narrator (according to prescribed guidelines) as well as textual comparisons (a permutation of textual comparisons *vis-a-vis* written texts, students, different visits with the same scholar, oral version and related text in the Qur’ān. (Azami, Fabrication of Hadīth Causes Means and Elimination, 1977, p. 18; Azami, Precaution against Errors and Forgeries, 2004)

In ‘*Identifying False Ahadīth*’, the authors shed light on specific textual precursors in fabricated hadīth like contradiction to Qur’ānic principles, mention of specific dates of future events, inconceivable pronunciation, non-reconcilability with the Qur’ān and *Sunnah* and contradiction to *Mutawātir* narrations. (Rohaizan Baru et.al, 2017)

Recent works by scholars on the sciences of fabrication detection aim to summarize warranted methods taken by early scholars to detect and sift counterfeit hadīth. Nevertheless, early hadīth scholars compiled volumes of actual records of fabricated hadīth under generic titles of ‘*Mawdu’āt*’ and ‘*Dhuafā*’ as a sample and tool to understand the etymological definition of ‘fabrication.’

3. METHODOLOGY

First, the research starts with an overview of epistemological studies on ‘fabrication in hadīth’ with special focus on the historical perspective. Secondly, excerpts from pioneering and comprehensive works of early scholars on detecting fabrications are reviewed (e.g. *Naqd al Manqūl* by Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله), according to the explanation of contemporary hadīth scholarship. Subsequently, analysis and synthesis from reviewing various books, journals and academic material on the subject, sheds ample light on ‘General Guidelines for Detection of Fabrication’. Finally, extensive research based on the guidelines and related works reveals the methods adopted by early scholars to detect fabrication along with the relevant data.

3.1 Fabrication of Hadīth: A historical perspective

Analysis of the historical record of hadīth development, gives an insight into the nature and reasons for fabrications. The narrator’s background, political agenda, cultural milieu, and incentives play a key role in fabrication.

The fabrication can be classified into intentional fabrication (*hadīth Mawdū'*) or unintentional fabrication (*hadīth Bāṭil*)

The former is an alleged lie against the Prophet ﷺ with the intention to corrupt the *Sunnah* knowingly or willingly or at least place additions to narrations for personal motives. The latter is an outcome of carelessness in hadīth transmission or a development that arose despite due care, resulting in an incorrect attribution to the Prophet ﷺ (Azami, *Fabrication of Hadīth Causes Means and Elimination*, 1977, p. 67)

Charlatans, weak minded folklore tellers, philosophers, nationalists, Zanadiqah (deviants who harbors of hatred for Islām), sectarianists, those aiming to pacify the elite ruling class and religious factionalists had their fair share in these fabrications. The types of fabricators and their intentions, seen under a historical, cultural and political perspective give us the signs indicative of fabrication.

3.2 Identification of fabrications in Hadīth

Hadīth scholars have laid regimented rules in order to sift the fabricated or '*Mawdū'* hadīth from the sound traditions. The scholars devised and formulated a scientific methodology, in order to classify the hadīth and recognize the signs of fabrication from the perspective of chain of transmission (*isnād*) and the text (*matn*). The indicative segments of fabrications were not merely subjective analysis, rather outcomes of codified rules governing the hadīth criticism.

The pioneering work of Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله *Naqd Al Manqūl*, on the precursors of fabrication in hadīth are a widely accepted set of rules enumerated thus:

- A. Extreme elements indicating impossibility of origination from the Prophet ﷺ
- B. Elements rejected by sensory possibilities
- C. Elements contradicting established *Sunnah* and its methodology
- D. Allegations of Companions concealing a certain hadīth

e.g hadīth which the Shia accept, like the caliphate of Ali رضي الله عنه

- E. Hadīth condoning something false

It is impossible for the Prophet ﷺ to have condoned falsehood, hadīth mentioning these are certainly indicative of fabrications.

3.3 General Principles Outlining Fabrication

3.3.1 Contradiction to the clear and unambiguous corpus of the Qur'ān

The narrations containing implicit or explicit contradiction to established principles of the Qur'ān and its teachings, are sure indicators of fabrications. The Qur'ān and *Sunnah* are coherent in their source and hence in the purport of their message as well. Anything of the Qur'ān which the *Sunnah* contradicts, is only an apparent contradiction which is reconcilable. (Kamali, 2009)

Therefore the hadīth that mentions historical dates of the Day of Judgment, conflicting reports on basic established eschatology like deeming a sin unforgivable and the like.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله laid down the principle that every hadīth which contradicts the Qur'ān should be rejected, if there is no way of reconciliation with the Qur'ān provided the hadīth is authentic.

However, it should be understood in the context with Qur'ānic purport, complementary to it. (Azami, Precautions against Errors and Forgeries, 2004)

3.3.2 Hadīth contradicting a definitive Sunnah and Deen

A definitive *Sunnah* may be that which is established as a practice of the time of the Prophet ﷺ and the Companions. The Companions rejected hadīth contradicting the Qur'ān and the established *Sunnah* without possibility of reconciliation (Rohaizan Baru et.al, 2017).

These narrations deny the fundamentally established corpus of the *Sunnah*. For example, narrated Jābir ibn Abdillāh رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said, “ My Companions are like stars, whichever of them you follow, you will be rightly guided (Ibn Abdul Barr, *Jami' ul-Bayaan ul-Ilm*, Vol. 2, pg. 91).

All hadīth regarding the visitation of Allāh ﷻ to the grave of the Prophet ﷺ, excellence of the month of Rajab, belief of al-Khidhr being still alive and professing love for the Arabs for various reasons, are dubious hadīth (Uthaimen, 2015, p. 23).

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمته does not lay regimented specific principles or specify the type of hadīth in question of contradiction, rather it is observed that narrations contradicting those well-established hadīth which constitute the corpus and basis of religion, are taken as fabrications.

3.3.3 Chronological Paradigm as Forgery Detection Tool

Chronology, dates of meeting, travelling and affiliation to student circles during the said era, were looked up by the hadīth scholars to detect counterfeit hadīth. Improbable or unmatched dates of births, deaths and meeting with the sheikh a narrators heard from, leads to outright rejection of his traditions (Ashry, p. 161).

3.3.4 Contradiction to Historically Accepted Facts

If the contents of the hadīth are not in accordance with established historical facts, the hadīth is known to be a fabrication. e.g hadith of the Prophet ﷺ entering a Turkish bath (Ashry, p. 165).

3.3.5 Contradiction to Sound Intellect, Common Experience and Known Facts

Reports describing extraordinary events, promising huge rewards for simple deeds or contradicting reason or prescribing heavy penalties for minor sins contradict count intellect and known experience. Hence they are rejected e.g. hadīth of Noah's ark circumambulating the Ka'bah seven times (Ashry, p. 165).

3.4 Conditions qualifying for fabrication

3.4.1 Impossibility of reconciliation between the Sunnah and the hadīth at hand

Outward or apparent contradictions cannot be taken as touchstones for forgery. If the hadīth can be consolidated, then both of these would be accepted without denial (Rohaizan Baru et.al, 2017).

3.4.2 Contradiction of Mutawātir hadīth

According to Ibn Hajar رحمته, if a narration goes against another authentic *hadīth* that is reported by a weak narrator, it is known as *munkar* (a Hadīth which is 'strange' or 'unknown').

Another condition for rejecting a hadīth is its contradiction to a *Mutawatir* hadīth (Rohaizan Baru et.al, 2017).

3.5 Methodology of Counterfeit Identification

3.5.1 Isnād as Means of Forgery Detection

3.5.1.1 Dates of births and deaths of the narrators

Ibn Hajar رحمته mentions dates of births and deaths. “Their dates of birth and demise are studied so that we can establish *Mu’āsarāt* (whether the narrators (*rāwī*) lived in the same era so that meeting (*liqā*) was possible or not)”

The history of fabrication can be identified from before the time of assassination of Uthman رضي الله عنه. The environment of growth of *isnāds*, the narrators environment, historical influences and other factors played a key role in detecting fabrications.

3.5.1.2 Timeline/ Era of narrators

The fabrication depended on the timeline and era of growth of *isnāds* and its transmission. The era of Companions seemed almost free of fabrications since the elite and most trustworthy were present to vouchsafe hadīth. They lived and witnessed the *Sunnah* and no fabricator could work his way through them without fail (Siddiqi M. Z., p. 15).

They were the apparatuses of hadīth transmission and *Sunnah* was too widely practiced amongst them, making it most conducive for fabrication detection and its elimination. (Ashry, p. 150)

3.5.1.3 Systematic Recording, learning and Transmission of hadīth

The transmission of hadīth in learning circles was systematic, regimented and met scholarly proves. The forgery in hadīth was easily detectable even though thousands of narrations were fabricated, they were sifted out easily. The compilations of hadīth were canonized and the various sciences like *Jarh wa Ta’deel*, *Ilmul rijāl*, and other sciences gained momentum in its development, all served as an inspection to any forgery and fabrications.

Azami quotes explain unassailable techniques on fabrication detections: Character Analysis, Textual Comparisons and rational criticism. (Azami, Precaution against Errors and Forgeries, 2004, pp. 111-114).

3.5.1.4 Character analysis of the narrator

Qualities like lying, weak memory, committing excessive mistakes, lawlessness (Kamali H., 2007, p. 189) and mental defect, disqualified the narrations of the narrators altogether.

The fabricators were known and well-informed by scholarly profess, who expunged their fabrications altogether. (Siddiqi M. Z., 2006, pp. 60-62).

- a) *Confessions of narrator*: Fabrication resulted due to ulterior motives like favoritism to certain professions, ignorant methods of calling to Islām and Qur’ān, urge for fantasy in narrations to captivate audiences and the like. The traditions identified with such inclinations were rejected and their falsifiers penalized, many identified through their own confessions like Abu ‘Esmā Nuh Ibn Abi Mariam, Abdel-Karim Ibn Al-Awjāa and others. (Ashry, p. 152)
- b) *Known for lying and/or lying against the Prophet*:ﷺ Lying upon the Prophet ﷺ deems the hadīth forged according to hadīth scholars (*muhaditheen*), along with lying in general matters. However, Albāni classified such ahadīth as very weak hadīth.

- c) *Innovation, partisanship, and sectarian backgrounds*: Innovators, philosophers, story tellers, ascetics and extreme fanatics were known for fabrication. Their narrations were identified and outright rejected.
- d) *Affiliation to groups indulging in forgery of hadīth*: The political inclinations, support of religious sectarian dogmas, theological lineages and personal interests were among the factors *muhaddithin* looked into, for forgery detections. Traditions narrated by narrators or adherents to any of these groups were rejected or at least scrutinized accordingly (Azami, Fabrication of Hadīth Causes Means and Elimination, 1977, p. 58).

3.5.2 Text (matn) as Means of Forgery Detection

3.5.2.1 *Textual comparisons*: A series of Comparisons were used for cross –referencing *matn*.

- i. Comparison of hadīth of different students of the same scholar.

Earlier scholars like Ibn Maʿīn, Ibn Mubarak and others compared the work of many students of the same scholar, this aided in grading narrators and detecting for forgeries of fabrications. Such a comparison enables authentic material to be known and distinguished from the forged ones.

- ii. Comparing different statements made by the same scholar on different occasions
- iii. Comparing orally transmitted hadīth with written versions

The narrations transmitted orally had to be vouchsafed by written records to prove their authenticity.

- iv. Comparison of hadīth with related verses of the Qurʾān
- v. This is evident practice, one of which is Umar’s rejection of the hadīth of Fatima bint Qais on maintenance of divorced. (Azami, Precaution against Errors and Forgeries, 2004)

3.5.2.2 *Rational Criticism*: Intellectual evidence was used to sift fabricated hadīth from the genuine traditions; the criticism was incorporated in learning, teaching, evaluating authenticity of hadīths and judging narrators. (Azami, 2004, p. 114)

For example it is inconceivable for Prophetic narrations to mention the ark of Noah circumambulating the Kaʿbah. (Ashry, p. 164)

3.5.2.3 *Violation of Arabic grammar and stilt in style of conveyance*: The eloquence of the Prophet ﷺ along with his pristine purity in speech, shows a stark difference when compared to the fabrications containing strange language and phrases, grammatical mistakes and the like. The *Sunnah* is revelation; hence it is unbecoming or inconceivable for its language to carry linguistic errors or stilt in style of conveyance. (Siddiqi M. Z., p. 113).

3.6 A Glimpse of Some Fabricated Hadīth Under Scholarly Review

3.6.1 *Contradiction to Islāmic Principle*
‘Love of nation (*watan*) is from faith’.

Source: *Kashf al-Khafa’ wa Muzil al-Ilbas* (1102), *al-Silsilah al-Hadīth ad-Dha’eefah* (36) and reported by al-Saghānī in his *al-Mawdhoo’at*.

The hadīth is contrary to Islamic principles of love and hate for sake of Allāh ﷻ (*wal'a wal bar'a*). A person should love that the religion of Allāh ﷻ be manifest in his homeland and that he calls his people to guidance as the Prophet ﷺ did.

3.6.2 Shi'ite leanings

'I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate to which you pass for knowledge'

Source: Ibn Taymiyyah classified it fabricated in his *Majmu'a Al-Fatawa*. Vol. 18, Pg. # 216.

This hadīth is an example of Shi'ite forgery on the merits of Ali عليه السلام, to propagate their ideologies. The scholars are weary to take transmission from narrators with Shi'ite leanings (Ghaffar, 1984).

3.6.3 Liar in Chain of Transmission

'Members of my household are like stars in the sky, whichever one you follow you shall be guided'

Source: Ath-Thahabi classified the narration fabricated due to a liar in the chain called Salam ibn Sulayman.

The hadīth also has flawed text, because fallibility cannot be attributed to a human being other than the prophets. Moreover, other authentic narrations mention following the Companions collectively or the path chalked out by them in understanding and implementation of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. Following them was made obligatory on account of their piety, integrity and knowledge and not infallibility.

3.6.4 Contradiction to Qur'ānic Principles

'Allāh ﷻ does not punish over an issue in which there is a difference of opinion regarding it.' The Ummah does differ on the issue of music being haram or not, yet it is a punishable sin.

3.6.5 'Merchants (and the like) fulfilling their ulterior motives

The aubergine is a cure for all ailments.

Source: Classified fabricated by Ibn Hajar Al-Asaqalaani

3.6.6 Contradiction to Islāmic principles, and other authentic reports

'He who begets a son and names him Muhammad both he and his son will be in Jannah.' Graded fabricated by Imam Ibn Jawzī.

The hadīth promotes the fact that factors other than faith and righteous deeds lead one to Jannah. Whereas the criterion for entry to Paradise are the mentioned two:

وَيَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رَزَقُوا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَنُؤُوا بِهِ مُتَشَبِهًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ٢٥

25. And convey good news to those who believe and do-good deeds, that they shall have gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: This is what was given to us before; and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them, and in them, they shall abide (Qur'ān 2:25).

‘The Prophet ﷺ once sat on a cushion made of silk.’ Source: classified as fabricated by Imam Zuhaylī. It contradicts the authentic report in the collection of Al-Bukhārī: Narrated Hudhaifah رضي الله عنه: The Prophet ﷺ forbade us to drink out of gold and silver vessels, or eat in them, and also forbade wearing silk and *Dibaj* or sitting on it [Sahīh al-Bukhārī 5837].

3.6.7 Math’hab fanaticism

‘He who raises hands in his *salah* has no *salah*.’

The narration propagates the Hanafī view that raising hands during *salah* is ‘*makrūh*’. On the contrary it is a well-established *Sunnah*, reported through successive (*mutawātir*) narrations.

3.6.8 Hadith with no chain

‘He who eats with one who has his sins forgiven, will have his sins forgiven with him.’ Source: graded Fabricated by Ibn Hajar

3.6.9 Grammatical errors and forgery.

‘All people are dead except the scholars (those with knowledge), and all the scholars (those with knowledge) are punished except the workers, and all the workers are drowned except the sincere, and the sincere are in great danger.

Source: Al-Sagh'ani said: this tradition is forged (*muftara*), and is not even correct grammatically "Al-Mawdoo'at" (200), Al-Shawkani mentioned it in "Al-Fawa'id Al-Majmoo'ah" (771), and Al-Fatni in "Tazkirat Al-Mawdoo'at".

4.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hadīth sciences have been a well-developed field of study with an erudite procedure and an *isnād* system thriving in a definitive cultural-political milieu. (Siddiqi M. Z., 2006, p. 76) For the growth of any field and its sustenance, an academic procedure and backing from the State is inevitable. We observe that religious teachings do not thrive, propagate, or even reach the common masses under political persecution and scholarly decadence. The teachings of Christendom perished under the Nicaean Creed, after state persecution of Arian Bishops and the Talmudic teachings perished after invasions of Jerusalem and the diaspora (Lohnes, 2018) (Britannica, 2018)

When the initial stages of growth of a religion sees turmoil and persecution from the state, the preservation of its teachings and legacy (Siddiqi) are at stake. The Companions and the Tābi’ īn learned the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ during his lifetime. After his death, they taught the *Sunnah*, most of which by then had become a ‘living tradition’ dispersed in every home in Madīnah. it was readily available by the cross-referencing of the Companions and their collective working over retrieving it. Nevertheless, the practice of teaching, learning and implementing the *Sunnah* and working out every affair on the basis of *Sunnah*, preserved it in totality.

The resistance which the preservation of the *Sunnah* had to encounter was met during the trials of the caliphate of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه and his subsequent assassination. Political hegemony dawned under the mask of religion, to induce personal motives through the channel of hadīth and religion. Nevertheless, such fabrications were met with stiff resistance from the Companions and the Tabiūn (Students of the Companions) who had already preserved the *Sunnah* in their bodies, minds and souls. They had only to devise ways to vouchsafe, uphold and continue propagation of the authentic *Sunnah*. This led to the dawn of hadīth sciences and the ‘*isnād*’ becoming an inherent part of the religion according to the well-known Hadīth scholar Abdullah ibn Mubarak “*Isnād is*

from the religion, had it not been for isnād anyone could have said anything". (Abdul Ghaffar, 1995) Contrarily, other religions perished under their own inefficient clergy or tyrannical rulers. Isn't the moat of a castle its intrinsic part as well?

The growth of hadīth was favored by the caliphs, who initiated many projects in hadīth preservation the first and most noteworthy amongst them was Caliph Umar II (Umar ibn Abdul Azīz) with the renowned hadīth scholar Imam Zuhri (Sibaa'i, 2009).

The creed and deed of the rulers and the scholars fitted hand in glove. As a general observation, whenever the hadīth scholars raised their head to defend the *Sunnah* as taught by the Prophet ﷺ they did not face strife in preserving it. However, there were isolated cases of rulers falling into deceptions of desires and false knowledge, but the scholarly body as whole was sufficient to contain it.

On the one hand, hadīth preservation so comparatively less resistance from rulers or foreign rulers as the empire was growing, there were potential dangers from within the splitting Muslim masses. The influx of masses into Islām, made it uncondusive to teach authentic *Sunnah* to all of them in short span of time. Moreover, infidels and hypocrites had also become Muslims, only to destroy the pristine teachings of Islām. Ascetics, Charlatans, Story-tellers, the ignorant masses had only to annex the word 'hadīth' for serving their ulterior gains.

Islāmīc sciences of hadīth flourished under the Ummayyad, Abbasids and the fore-coming Islāmīc empires with major compilations compiled as early as the 2nd century. The scholars developed epistemological approach to hadīth as a source of Islām. The dispersal of scholars through the Islāmīc empire, their teachings in circles, travels for hadīth, compilation of narrations, and other books in hadīth sciences like biographies of narrators, definitions of types of hadīth, hidden defects in Hadīth, books on *Mustalah* (terminology) of hadīth and compilations of weak and fabricated hadīth, etc. enabled the science to gain a stronghold.

Although fabrication was rampant, the circulation of spurious hadīth was limited to ignorant masses. The scholars, equipped with their sophisticated hadīth methodology, countered these fabrications, documented them, and showed their weakness by viewing them through a scholarly microscope and warning the masses. The scholarly methodology could identify the ascetic, ignorant or fanatical Muslim's narration from the words of the Prophet ﷺ. Simultaneously, the biographies of narrators, their teachers, students, and their narrations was being documented and circulated as well.

Hadīth transmission had the unique feature of being transmitted from one generation to the next with the requirement of each individual identifying whom he had heard the narration from and to whom he taught it. Moreover, the scrutiny of hadīth was strict. For example, a single known fabricator, unknown person or break in chain was sufficient to deem the narration fabricated or weak. The narrators should fulfill criteria of aptitude, competency in memorization and narrations, moral uprightness, religious adherence, exactitude in narrations and language, along with academic qualifications in other islamic sciences to be graded as 'acceptable' or trustworthy narrator.

So, the isnād system was unparalleled in its usage in Hadīth Methodology, being the most vital and indispensable tool to counter fabrication and the most effectually used in Islāmīc civilization. Recording the dates of births, deaths, travels and meeting of the various narrators, made the isnād a 'real-time' system. Apart from the decree of Allāh ﷻ to preserve the religion, the hadīth sciences and isnād system proved an incontrovertible way to preserve the *Sunnah*.

Manuscripts preserved till date speak for themselves in testifying to the validity of the *isnād* system. *Musnad* of at-Tayalisi, *Sunan* of ad-Darimi , *Kitāb al Kifāyah* are among the many (Siddiqi M. Z., 2006, p. 83).

5. EPILOGUE

Countering fabrications of hadīth is a well recorded phenomenon, equipped with pioneering hadīth methodology tools, proficiency of hadīth scholars and their diligence, along with thorough *matn* and *isnād* criticism. Hence, fabrication does not affect the hadīth corpus' role in legislation and authority in the Sharī'ah.

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TABLES

Table 1 Review of Literature

Author	Topic/Focus Question	Concept	Method/Analogy	Findings
Zeinab Ashry	Absence of defects in texts	Text should be free from defects to qualify as authentic (<i>sihāh</i>)	Absence of a trait, implies the presence of its antonym.	Stilt or grammatical defects in text are indicative of fabrication in hadīth.
Azami	Scholars' efforts in Hadīth study	Transmission and study of Hadīth	Summarized Biographical Data of Narrators/Scholars	Types of fabricators and their agenda gives insight into the fabrication
Rohaizan Baru	Means of identifying false hadīth	Textual precursors of fabrications	Textual Analysis of sample hadīth by scholars and author	Exactitude in future events, contradiction to Qur'ānic principles indicative of fabrication.