

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT *ḤADĪTH*: A CLARION-CALL FOR UNITY AMONG NIGERIAN MUSLIMS

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Abstract

Misconceptions about the interpretation of the prophetic traditions have been claimed to have precipitated uncompromising controversies and rejoinders among the Muslim scholars in the past and present time, especially in the contemporary Nigeria. It all began as a result of different perceptions deduced by the *Muḥadithūn* (Traditionists) regarding the verbal reports, deeds and tacit approval of the Prophet. This research paper shall critically examine the historical trends of *Ḥadīth* development and preservation from the Prophetic era till the period of the *Tābi'ūn*, the modalities adopted in the study of *Ḥadīth* and the roles played by the Muslim scholars in Nigeria to shed light on the misconstrued *Aḥādīth*. Historical and analytical methods shall be adopted in this study to pinpoint the genesis of *Ḥadīth* misconceptions, the expositions on selected issues that sprouted up in the recent time, as well as the rudiments of becoming a scholar of *Ḥadīth*; proffering virile antidotes to the misconstruction of *Ḥadīth* content (*Matn*) and the spurious fabrications made by some religious leaders, so that the Nigerian Muslims would curtail the conflict of intellectualism that linger on among themselves regardless of their doctrinal differences.

Keywords: Misconceptions, *Ḥadīth*, *Muḥadithūn*, Muslim scholars and Nigeria.

Introduction

Ḥadīth, more than other disciplines in Islamic Studies, has been observed as one the most controversial issues among the Nigerian Muslims, especially in the southern part of the country,

ranging from the religious leaders to the students of knowledge. Although, the issue of *Ḥadīth* could be said to have attained its maturity stage during the three best centuries of Islām, because the Prophet was still alive to explicate any ambiguous issue posed to him by the *Ṣaḥābah* with immediate or deferred verdicts. However, the later generations were considered to be crooked as the fabrication of *Ḥadīth* sprang up thereupon due to many reasons which shall be discussed later in this research paper. At this moment, the canon of *Ḥadīth* criticism and validation was developed by the *Muḥadithūn*, diversifying the basic principle of oral reports as entrenched in *Sūratu-l-Hujurāt*, which says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

O you who believe! If a reprobate comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly and afterwards become full of repentance for what you have done. (Q49:6)

The above verse emphasizes the idea of verifying the correctness of information and the curiosity to ascertaining the truth beyond a reasonable doubt vis-à-vis the proofs of the sources of *Sharī‘ah*, among which the *Ḥadīth* is a primary source. Furthermore, it’s impartial to assert that the strange ideologies of misinterpreting the *Ḥadīth* and passing a misleading verdict thereof could be seen as a manifestation of the prophecy given below:

عن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص قال: سمعتُ رسولَ الله صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّمَ يقول: إنَّ اللهَ لا يَقْبِضُ العِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ العِبَادِ، وَلَكِن يَقْبِضُ العِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ العُلَمَاءِ حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يَبْقَ عَالِمٌ اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُؤَسَاءَ جُهَالًا، فَسُئِلُوا فَأَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا. رواه البخاري ومسلم

Narrated ‘Abdullāh bn. ‘Amr bn. Al-Āṣ, who said: ‘I heard the messenger of Allāh, saying, Allāh will not obliterate knowledge (from people’s hearts), but takes it away by the death of the religious learned scholars till when none of the religious learned men remains, people will take as their leaders the ignorant who when consulted will give their verdict without knowledge. So, they will go astray and will lead the people astray. (Reported by Al-Bukhārī and Muslim).¹

With the message embodied in the above *Ḥadīth*, one could easily grasp that one of the issues which shall be examined in this study is having a sound knowledge of Arabic and being acquainted with the criteria for authenticating and invalidating *Ḥadīth*, applying rational and plausible techniques that are free from casting aspersions on a personality or composing subjective

rejoinders. This effort, *inter alia*, would lead us to the doctrinal and intellectual strife that lingers on among some Muslims about *Ḥadīth* in Nigeria today.

Historical Trends of *Ḥadīth* Preservation

The diligence displayed by the scholars of *Ḥadīth* on the development and preservation of *Ḥadīth* literature has been well acknowledged as a parameter for check and balances on oral reports which have no comparison in human history. Any attempt to understand and evaluate the preservation of *Ḥadīth* during the life time of the Prophet would be inadequate without giving the historical significance of the way the Prophet's utterances and actions were regarded during his life time. When he was bestowed with the mantle of Prophethood, those who believed in his message gave a high regard on anything he said, did or approved.² Thus, all his utterances and actions were recorded either in their memory or manuscript. In fact, the enthusiasm of the *Ṣaḥābah* to assimilate whatever the Prophet said or did could be observed in the attitude of Zāyd bn. Khālīd and Nawwās bn. Sam'ari among others.³ The above instances indicated that, *Ḥadīth* was of great significance that the *Ṣaḥābah* paid maximum attention to observe the Prophet so closely and carefully that most of his secretly conceived plans could not escape their watchful eyes.

Preservation of *Ḥadīth* during the Prophetic Era

During the Prophetic era, there were no pressing need for the documentation of *Ḥadīth* because of the following reasons; existence of the Prophet who could be consulted whenever the need arises, the dependence of the *Ṣaḥābah* on memorization and the general prohibition of the Prophet against documenting his statements except the *Qur'ān*.⁴ Based on this, it could be said that the recording and documentation of *Ḥadīth* was not allowed initially at *Makkah*. However, after this stage, in *Madīnah* the Prophet gave permission for the *Ṣaḥābah* to write his statement. This is crystal clear in the narration below:

*'Abdullāh bin 'Amr said: I used to write down everything that I heard from the Messenger of Allah, wanting to memorize it, but the Quraysh told me not to do that, and said: 'Do you write down everything you hear from him? The Messenger of Allah is human, and speaks when he is angry, and when he is content.' So I stopped writing things down. I mentioned that to the Messenger of Allah, and he pointed to his mouth with his finger and said: 'Write, for by the One in Whose Hand is my soul, nothing comes out of it but the truth. (Reported by Abū Dā'ud)'*⁵

It could be deduced that the prohibition of writing down the *Ḥadīth* at this early stage was to prevent the possibility of mixing up the *Qur'ān* with the Prophet's statement. However, the fact that he has permitted 'Amr bn. Al-Āṣ to write down his statements, personally shows that this prohibition was just temporary. In relation to the Glorious *Qur'ān*, *Ḥadīth* took a larger keen in the heart of the *Ṣaḥābah*; therefore, the need to guide, instruct and forbid what is bad made the Prophet uttered different statements. In the same vein, the companions devoted themselves to the preservation of *Aḥādīth*. Those who actively played pivotal roles in the preservation of *Ḥadīth* in this era, were Abū Hurāyrah who happened to be among the *Aṣḥāb-Suffah* and was said to be always with the Prophet and stored whatever he said in his memory, the Prophet's wives, most prominently, 'Ā'ishah, who reported the highest number of *Ḥadīth* among them and notable individual companions who wrote down the Prophet's statements in their *Ṣaḥīfah*⁶ (manuscripts) notable among them are; Abū Hurāyrah, 'Abdullāh bn. 'Amr bn. Al-Āṣ (which he entitled *Aṣ- Ṣaḥīfah Aṣ-Ṣādīqah*), Abū Bakr, 'Ali bn. 'Abī Ṭālib etc.⁷

Preservation of *Ḥadīth* during the Era of *Ṣaḥābah*

After the death of the Prophet, the era of the *Ṣaḥābah* witnessed the development of compilation of *Ḥadīth* on one hand, and the evolution of the science of *Ḥadīth* on the other hand⁸. As earlier stated, that there are some manuscripts ascribed to certain *Ṣaḥābah* and a handful number of *Aḥādīth* partly in memories of those who had observed him keenly. To this end, 'Umar bn. Al-Khaṭṭāb (634-44 C.E.) proposed to collect the *Ḥadīth* together, however, after given the matter a careful consideration and seeking advice of his companions; he was later obliged to give up this tasking project for the fear that the *Qur'ān* would be neglected by the Muslims.⁹ This demonstrated that the *Ṣaḥābah* paid adequate attention to the preservation of the *Ḥadīth*.

At this same era they scrutinized any statement claimed to have been reported from the Prophet to a large extent before authenticating it; this could be substantiated with the case of a grandmother of a deceased that came to Caliph Abū Bakr to claim her share in inheritance, the Caliph laid a solid foundation for the principle of authenticating *Ḥadīth* by making enquiries from others and did not give her one-sixth of the property until he had corroborating evidences before him.¹⁰ Thus, paying more attention to *Ḥadīth Isnād* and investigating the characters of those reporters. Imām Muslim reported Ibn. Sīrīn to have said thus:

عن ابن سيرين قال: لم يكونوا يسألون عن الإسنادِ فلما وقعتِ الفتنةُ قالوا: سئوا لنا رجالكم فينظروا إلى أهل السنة فيؤخذُ حديثهم وينظروا إلى أهل البدع فلا يؤخذُ حديثهم. (رواه مسلم)

They do not used to ask about Isnād, but when fitnah began, they inquired; tell us your men (Ḥadīth reporters). They will scrutinize the Ḥadīth, if it was reported by the Sunnis, they would accept it and if reported by the innovators, they would reject it. (Reported by Muslim)¹¹

It should also be noted that the fabrication of *Ḥadīth* that came up during this stage was curbed by comparing the *Matn* reported by one narrator against the other in order to lend credence to it and a basic system of *Isnād* came into limelight.

Preservation of *Ḥadīth* during the era of *Tābi'ūn*

With the above analysis of the development of *Ḥadīth* compilation during the era of the *Ṣaḥābah*, we can deduce that quite a large number of *Ḥadīth* were written down in manuscripts (*Ṣuhf*) to supplement those that were stored in memory. Therefore, *Ḥadīth* was in this form, when the *Tābi'ūn* succeeded the *Ṣaḥābah*.¹² This period witnessed tremendous improvement in the transfer of the knowledge of *Ḥadīth*. The *Tābi'ūn* also shared in common an astonishing zeal for the pursuit of *Ḥadīth* as done by their predecessors (*Ṣaḥābah*), rich men and women among them sacrificed their wealth for its sake, while the poor devoted their lives to it in spite of their poverty. Thus, the successors propagated *Ḥadīth* with unabated vigour¹³ and carried on their pursuit of it with remarkable assiduity. Ibn Abī Layla used to say that one could not be credited with knowledge of *Ḥadīth* until one was able to reject some and accept others.¹⁴ The Umayyad caliph who was a *Tābi'ūn* 'Umar bn. 'Abdīl 'Azīz¹⁵ popularly known as 'Umar II in accordance with his pious nature initiated and partly carried out the task which his great precursor whom he tried to emulate in so many other respects had conceived. Thus, he gave the first official directive for the collection and compilation of *Ḥadīth*. Through the scrupulousness of the *Tābi'ūn*, the traditions of the Prophet which had scattered throughout the Islamic world were collected together in one book. The instruction of 'Umar II that all the traditions of the Prophet should be compiled in form of a book was generally regarded as the first attempt in which the compilation of *Ḥadīth* had enjoyed official sanction. The spread of fabrication which was brought about by political and sectarian differences are among the reasons that motivated him.¹⁶ These, and other factors spurred 'Umar II for the compilation of the traditions of the Prophet in order to safeguard the obliteration of Islamic law. It could thus

be deduced that the official compilation of *Ḥadīth* began during the short reign of ‘Umar II, though the collections were compiled later by the scholars such as Ibn. Shihāb Az-Zuhri who used to say:

أمرنا عمر بن عبد العزيز بجمع السنن فكتبناها دفترا دفترا، فبعث إلى كل أرضٍ له عليها سلطانٌ دفترا

*‘Umar bn. ‘Abdil ‘Azīz instructed us to collect the Sunan, so we wrote it in volumes and a volume was sent to every land under his jurisdiction.*¹⁷

The origin of *Ḥadīth* literature is dated back to the letters, laws and treaties which were dictated to the scribes by the Prophet himself. They are likewise to be traced back to numerous *Ṣuḥf* (documents) which were compiled by the *Ṣaḥābah* and *Tābi‘ūn*. However, some of the *Tābi‘ūn* still documented their *Ḥadīth* in *Ṣuḥf* (scripts) which were later incorporated in books by the next generation. Some of these *Ṣuḥf* are mentioned in *Taqyīdu-’l-‘Ilm*,¹⁸ and among the books written during this period includes; *Jāmi‘* Ma‘mar bn. Rashīd Al-Yamānī, *Muwwaṭṭa’* by Muḥammad bn. ‘Abdur-Raḥmān bn. Abī Dhi’b (his book is older than that of Imām Mālik bn. Anas), *Jāmi‘* by Sufyān bn. ‘Uyāinah al-Hilālī, *Musnad*, by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah An-Nu’mān bn. Thābit, *Musnad* of Imām as-Shāfi‘, it was compiled on the basis of his *Kitābu-’l-’Umm* by Muḥammad bn. Ya‘qūb Al-Asam.¹⁹ It could be surmised from the foregone that, during the Prophetic era, *Ḥadīth* was narrated from the Prophet orally and stored particularly in the memory, although some *Ṣaḥābah* had committed themselves to writing for their individual references. The second stage witnessed the compilation of *Ḥadīth* on one hand and evolution of the science of *Ḥadīth* on the other hand. While the systematic way of collecting and compiling *Ḥadīth* adopted by the punctilious *Tābi‘ūn* cannot be over emphasized. Thus, upon the reliability and honesty of the *Tābi‘ūn* rests to a large degree, the trustworthiness of the great mass of *Aḥādīth* collected by the *Tābi‘u-Tābi‘īn* and the Muslim scholars of the subsequent generations.

Curriculum and Modalities of Studying *Ḥadīth* in Nigerian Schools

The study of *Ḥadīth* and its sciences has spread throughout Nigeria and it is being studied in various secondary schools, Arabic institutions and Universities in our country. Conspicuously, there had been a desperate attempt to sandwich Religious Studies into our Secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. This was done by introducing the Religion and National Values (RNV) curriculum at the basic education level, which led to the coalescing of five subjects; Islamic Religious Studies, Christian Religious Studies, Civic Education, Social Studies and Security Education.²⁰ M.A. Bidmos submitted that the motive of the curriculum designers was to teach

ethics and morality through Civic Education, Social Studies and Security Education.²¹ In addition, the curriculum developers deemed it fit that students in Science and Commercial classes should not offer religious studies on the account that it is in the Arts group; then if the teaching of religion is an avenue to inculcate good moral in them, what will be the faith of these students.²² The moral and ethical standards laid out in the scriptures are learnt through Religious studies while the so-called secular subjects can only become beneficial when religion is accorded the status of a foundational subject at all levels of education. In other words, emphasis should be placed on religious studies in our secondary school curriculum because sandwiching with other subjects is like throwing away the bath water with the baby. Islamic studies curriculum in the secondary school level has been prepared to inculcate true and balanced values in the young Nigerians when their mental and moral development is at a formative stage. It is pertinent to ask that; has the curriculum attained its objectives? This is because, curriculum cannot be enabled without the provision of competent teachers with self esteem; who are professionally trained and given periodic refreshers courses, and as well appreciates the importance of continuous reading for self-improvement.²³ But do we have such teachers in our education industry who can be creative and skillful enough to perform this task? The efficacy of Islamic Studies largely depends on the above. Unfortunately there are cases of Christian teachers handling Islamic studies in Education District six, Lagos state precisely at Babs Fafunwa Millennium Grammar School, Ojodu and Ransome Kuti Senior Grammar School, Fadeyi. Then, no one should expect the efficacy of Islamic Studies when it is taught by a Christian teacher.²⁴ *Ḥadīth* as one of the content of Islamic Studies curriculum should be taught with pedagogical strategies by professionally trained Muslim teachers who are competent of teaching from heart and experience rather than absolutely depending on *Ḥadīth* text books some of which might contain error. He can select from famous books of *Ḥadīth* that deals with discipline, obedience to parents etc., that are most congenial to the child's nature and standard.²⁵ Quadri asserted that Islamic studies cannot be handled just by any teacher who has a faint idea of the subject.²⁶ Nevertheless, the method used by the majority of teachers of Islamic studies which is one that targets cognitive domain of the learner is popularly known as talk and chalk method. In contrast, for learning to take place the pedagogical skills that have to do with affective domain of the learner should be evoked. Thus, they must be capable of situating every segment of the *Ḥadīth* in terms of relating it to life experience. Interestingly, the *Qur'ān* is a replete of pedagogy that targets the affective domain of the learners.²⁷ As a matter of fact; however, the use of practical methods is preceded by stating objectives of the lesson. This is a format that should be applied to all other contents of Islamic studies

curriculum, such as *Tawhīd*, *Qur'ān*, *Sīrah* etc.²⁸ Furthermore, the curriculum of Islamic education in the Nigerian Universities is in dire need of improvement and modifications because we observed that some important areas of Islamic Studies are lacking in the syllabus. The syllabus of Islamic studies taught in Universities, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, has less concern for specialization. The courses are arranged in such a way that student turns out to be jacks of all disciplines, but master of none. Thus, the ability of becoming a scholar of *Ḥadīth* or any other discipline is obviously sabotaged. Interestingly, Bayero University of Kano has taken a bold step in this aspect by establishing the Department of *Ḥadīth* and it had been awarding BA, MA and PhD degrees respectively in *Ḥadīth* Studies and its Sciences.²⁹ Moreover, in a country like Nigeria where there is a teeming population of non-Muslims whose duty to understand the message of Islām is vested on those who are learned in the discipline and competence in its study becomes significant, if not necessary.

In Nigeria there are many institutions awarding degrees in Islamic Studies and their programmes center on general knowledge of Islām without specialization. The lack of option for specialization in Islamic Studies in Nigerian universities affects the quality of graduate of this important discipline. Therefore, at least for the Islamic Studies students in Universities, the idea of separating the general courses into respective disciplines may be useful. From the list of courses for Islamic studies undergraduate and post graduate students, there contain some distinct areas of Islamic studies that can be classified as follows: *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* Studies, *Fiqh* and *Uṣūlul-'l-Fiqh*, Islamic Theology, Islamic Thoughts & Civilization etc.³⁰ To this end, lecturers of *Ḥadīth* in our Universities surely have enormous tasks to do. They are expected to be consistent and coherent in their teaching and not expected to engage in rote learning of some traditions of the Prophet only; they are expected to use the following steps:

- a. Careful study of the meaning of the contents of the *Ḥadīth (Matn)*, syntax and style
- b. Reflection on the implementation of the message conveyed in the *Ḥadīth*
- c. Application as well as experimentation with a view to acquire experience of the result;
- d. Compare and contrast the methodology adopted and contents of various books of *Ḥadīth*.
- e. Detailed study of selected passages from the *Kutubu Sittah* along with their commentaries.

In our Arabic institutions, in Nigeria, taking *Markaz Ta'limul-'Arabī* as a paradigm; the study of *Ḥadīth* therein has at least an adequate curriculum and is being offered as basic and compulsory subject in all classes.³¹ The books used for teaching *Ḥadīth*, their contents and respective classes are itemized below:

S/N	Classes	Curriculum	Contents
1	<i>Tahdhiriyyah</i> and ' <i>Idādiyyah</i> Level II (Preparatory class)	<i>Arbahun</i> <i>Basīyyah</i>	A study of short <i>Aḥādīth</i> without mentioning any chain of authority (<i>Sanad</i>) to give the taste of <i>Ḥadīth</i> to the neophytes and to ease its memorization.
2	' <i>Idādiyyah</i> Level III	40 <i>Aḥādīth</i> of <i>An-Nawawi</i>	A Study of forty Selected <i>Aḥādīth</i> from the six authentic books of <i>Sunnah</i> with shorter chains of authority (<i>Sanad</i>)
3	' <i>Idādiyyah</i> Level III	<i>Al- Aḥādīth -n-</i> <i>Nabawiyyah</i> <i>al-Mukhtarah</i>	A Study of several <i>Aḥādīth</i> selected from Ṣahīh Bukhāri and Muslim with commentaries, containing short chains of authority (<i>Sanad</i>)
4	' <i>Idādiyyah</i> Level IV	<i>Zubdatul</i> <i>Muwaṭṭa'</i>	A Study of selected <i>Aḥādīth</i> from the compendium of Al-Imām Mālik's <i>Muwaṭṭa'</i>
5	<i>Taojihiyah</i> Level I	<i>Bulūgh al-</i> <i>Marām</i>	A Detailed study of 100 <i>Aḥādīth</i> on acts of worship (' <i>Ibādāt</i>) and memorization of 100 <i>Aḥādīth</i> along with their chains of authority as well as the ode of <i>Al-Bāyquniyyah</i>
6	<i>Taojihiyah</i> Level II	<i>Bulūgh al-</i> <i>Marām</i>	A Detailed study of 100 <i>Aḥādīth</i> on and memorization of 100 <i>Aḥādīth</i> on Business transactions (<i>Mu'amalāt</i>) along with their chains of authority as well as the ode of <i>Al-Bāyquniyyah</i>
7	<i>Taojihiyah</i> Level III	<i>Bulūgh al-</i> <i>Marām</i>	A Detailed study of 100 <i>Aḥādīth</i> on manners and ethics (<i>Al-Ādāb wal Akhlāk</i>), memorization of 100 <i>Aḥādīth</i> along with their chains of authority as well as the ode of <i>Al-Bāyquniyyah</i>

Muslim Scholars in Nigeria and *Hadīth* Criticism

It is very difficult to state precisely when the criticism of *Hadīth* all began. Therefore, it is as old as the *Hadīth* narrators and reporters. It was recorded *ab initio*, that the companions themselves had divergent opinions on the interpretation of the Prophet's oral reports in his lifetime. One of them is given below:

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما، قال: قال النبي يوم الأحزاب: "لا يُصَلِّينَ أَحَدٌ الْعَصْرَ إِلَّا فِي بَنِي قُرَيْظَةَ"، فأدرك بعضهم العصر في الطريق، فقال بعضهم: لا نُصَلِّي حَتَّى نَأْتِيَهَا، وقال بعضهم: بل نُصَلِّي، لَمْ يُرَدِّ مِنَّا ذَلِكَ. فَذَكَرَ ذَلِكَ لِلنَّبِيِّ، فَلَمْ يُعَنِّفْ وَاحِدًا مِنْهُمْ. " (رواه البخاري)

Narrated Ibn. 'Umar: On the day (of the battle) of Al-Aḥzāb, the Prophet said, 'None of you (Muslims) should offer 'Aṣr prayer but at Banu Qurāyẓah's (place).' The 'Aṣr prayer became due for some of them on the way. Some of them said, 'We will not offer it until we reach it (the place of Banu Qurāyẓah); while some other's said, 'No, we will offer at this spot, for the Prophet did not mean that for us.' Later on, it was mentioned to the Prophet and he did not blame any of the two groups.' (Reported by Al-Bukhārī).³²

The above *Hadīth* is credence to the fact that the companions themselves differed on interpretation of the Prophet's verbal report based on their perceptions, but this does not lead them to utter spiteful or disparaging statements to one another until they returned to the Prophet for clarity. Today, some apologetic Muslims had and still continued to criticise the *Hadīth* of the Prophet from its authentic sources or claiming that the Qur'ān is the only source of *Sharī'ah*. One of these groups are the *Qur'āniyyūn*. This group claimed that the Qur'ān is the only sophisticated proof of *Sharī'ah*, thus it does not require any exposition of the Prophet, and the use of *Sunnah* to them, implies comparing Allāh's legislation to that of man,³³ and they quoted from *Sūratu- 'l-An'ām* Q6: 57; *إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ* 'The judgement is only Allāh's...' In our repartee, the argument of the Qur'anists is feeble and flimsy because of several verses of the Qur'ān that mandated the Muslims to adhere strictly to the guidance of the Prophet, in fact, the performance of ablution, *Ṣalāh*, *Zakāh*, *Sāwm* and *Hajj* cannot be performed religiously without the *Sunnah*. Another group of people who discredited the authenticity of *Hadīth* were the orientalist. Ignaz Goldziher, a Jewish orientalist, was reported by Ḥasan 'Abdul-Qādir to have claimed that the *Hadīth* literature all began during the Umayyad era of Islām and people began to fabricate *Hadīth* that did not contradict with the Islamic teachings and praising the Prophet's family. Goldziher further claimed that the love of Umayyads for 'Imām Az-Zuhri was to fortify their objectives of fabricating *Hadīth*, and that is why the tradition which

narrates that a *Ṣalāh* offered in *Masjid- 'l-Aqṣa* is 1000 greater than the *Ṣalāh* observed elsewhere was reported by Az-Zuhri alone, because of his intimacy **with** ‘Abdul-Malik.³⁴ At this juncture, As-Sibā‘ī, among other ambiguities raised by Goldhizer, had objectively reacted that the claim of Goldhizer that Islām was still in its infancy in the first generation is susceptible, because the religion has been perfected through the Prophet (Q5:3), and that is why ‘Umar had full control over the kingdoms of *Kisra* (Emperor of the French) and *Qayṣar* (Caesar of Rome) which by then were extremely developed and civilized.³⁵ The **efforts** made by Az-Zuhri and other scribes to compile the Prophetic *Ḥadīth* has been discussed under the preservation of *Ḥadīth* in ‘Umar bn. ‘Abdil ‘Azīz reign of Umayyad era.

Having said that, in Nigeria, the criticism of *Ḥadīth* took a very close dimension to that of the orientalist. The researchers have got paucity information on how the history of *Ḥadīth* criticism all began in the Nigerian society. Al-Fulāny (2016), traced the origin of the study and criticism of *Ḥadīth* to the 21st century, which we have considered inaccurate, anyway, he claimed that at this very century, the alumni of Saudi Arabian schools in Nigeria have started discussing the science and analysis of *Ḥadīth*; vividly explaining the *Sunnah* and antagonizing the heretical doctrines and innovations related to religious matters. Al-Fulāny further stressed that study and criticism of *Ḥadīth* in Nigeria could be seen from two perspectives; one, being the method of the alumni of Saudi Arabian schools who focused on interpretation of *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim* as well as others *Sunan* treatises like the classical system adopted by the scholars of *Ḥadīth* in Baṣrah, Kūfah, Baghdād, Makkah and Madīnah, the scholars that were accustomed to this system in Nigeria are *Shāykh* Aḥmad Ibrāhīm, a retired lecturer of Islamic studies Department, Bayero University of Kano and Dr. ‘Abdur-Raḥmān Aḥmad Al-Imām (of Arabic Department, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin), who usually explains the principles and science of *Ḥadīth* before its analysis on the Radio Station. The other method mentioned by Al-Fulāny was the European system that is used in the modern University; it was consolidated by the orientalist and the western scholars, following the pattern of the critics...they focused on the *Matn* before considering the *Sanad* and *Ḥadīth* reporters like a chemist does in the science laboratory. The scholar that adopted this system on television and open-air lectures in Nigeria is *Shāykh* Habībullāh of *Markaz* in Lagos. Finally, Al-Fulāny submitted that the third method was that inaugurated by Muḥammad ‘Awwāl ‘Ali Jabata in his mosque (in Ilorin) which he considered mischievous for every scholar and student to partake therein, because of his frequent allegation of *Kufr* to the past and present scholars.³⁶ In our own view, the submission of Al-Fulāny was inadequate because, it’s not convincing enough to affirm that the study and *Ḥadīth* criticism in Nigeria all began at the 21st century. However, we consulted

Dr. Abdur-Rahman Ahmad Al-Imam, who submitted that the study, criticism as well as *Takhrīj* (sourcing) of *Ḥadīth* in Ilorin was started by Shāykh ‘Ali Jabata, the father of Muḥammad ‘Awwāl ‘Ali Jabata in his public lectures in 1970, and Dr. Abu Bakr Aliagan of University of Ilorin, who was reported as the first PhD holder in *Ḥadīth* in the southern part of Nigeria, he always anchors Radio programmes to analyse *Ḥadīth*. Other Muslim youths who have contributed immensely to the study of *Ḥadīth*, especially in Ilorin, are ‘Abdul-Fattāḥ Sārūmī, who wrote a *Takhrīj* on the popular book, entitled: “*Mi’atu Ḥadīth*” and Nāfi‘ Arikewuyo Al-Jawharī who anchors public talks to expatiate on misconceptions about *Ḥadīth* in Ilorin. In fact, he contended that the only University to have inaugurated the Department of *Ḥadīth* in Nigeria was the Bayero University of Kano, pioneered by Dr. Bashīr and Muḥammad Thānī. This first Department in the history of Nigerian Universities had got the NUC approval and had graduated several undergraduate and postgraduate students. He finally said that he is optimistic that the Nigerian Muslim scholars would organize a National *Ḥadīth* competition in the future like that of Saudi Arabia, as we normally have the National Qur’ānic competition in Nigeria.³⁷ From the foregoing, our audience must have observed that the efforts of the Nigerian Muslim scholars towards the study and resuscitation of *Ḥadīth* appraisal and criticism have to be improved to an unprecedented level.

Exposition of Contemporary Issues on *Ḥadīth* in Southern Nigeria

Few months ago, some Muslim Youths in Yorubaland have published rejoinders on the misconceptions which all begun by one of the renowned scholars in Nigeria. This issue had led to pandemonium in open-air-lectures and Media houses etc. However, this research paper shall consider five out of the misconceptions debated by the antagonists and the protagonists of some of *Aḥādīth*, majorly recorded by ‘Imām Al-Bukhārī as well as other *Ḥadīth* reporters in their sound collections.

1. The *Ḥadīth* Concerning *Hāyd* (Menses):

عن عائشة قالت: كانت إحدانا إذا كانت حائضاً فأراد رسولُ الله أن يُباشِرَها أمرها أن تتزر في فور حيضتها ثم يباشِرُها،

قالت: وأيكم يملكُ إربته كما كان يملكُ إربته. (رواه البخاري)

Ā’ishah said: ‘Whenever Allāh’s Messenger wanted to fondle anyone of us during her menses, he used to order her to put on ‘Izār (loin cloth) and start

fondling her. Ā'ishah added, 'None of you could control his sexual desire as the Prophet could.' (Reported by Al-Bukhārī).³⁸

The antagonists of this *Ḥadīth* alleged the Prophet of having sex with his wives in the state of their menses; hence, they submitted that this *Ḥadīth* should be expunged from the book of Al-Bukhārī³⁹ and further buttressed their stance with Q2:187 that reads: '...and touch them not while you keep to the mosques...' Ibn. Kathīr argued that the majority of *Mufasssīrūn* opined that the verse means it is not permissible for the *Mu'takif* to engage in any sexual act or kissing even when he leaves the mosque, that is, sex is unlawful for him until he completed the ten-day-seclusion.⁴⁰ The protagonists argued that the use of loin cloth (*'Izār*) by his wives as stated in the *Ḥadīth* logically prevents him from having sex⁴¹. Also, Imam An-Nawawī was of the view that whoever made having sex with menstruating women lawful would become an infidel.⁴² In the same vein, Ibn. Hajar submits that the word *Mubāsharah* in the *Ḥadīth* content refers to touching of the bodies (of both spouses) and not having sex.⁴³ In our view, the Prophet could not be said to have engaged in such mischievous act as his attitude was likened to the Qur'ān by his wife Ā'ishah; this metaphor implies that the Prophet had never acted against the laws of the Qur'ān. In fact, it is considered as heinous sin based on the injunction of (Q2:222), which forbids having sex with one's wife in her menses.

2. The *Ḥadīth* that legislates Fighting with the Polytheists

عن ابنِ عمرَ أنّ رسولَ الله، قال: أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ، وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ، فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّ الْإِسْلَامِ وَحَسَابُكُمْ عَلَيَّ اللَّهُ. " (رواه البخاري ومسلم)

Narrated Ibn. Umar: Allāh's Messenger said: 'I have been ordered (by Allāh) to fight against the people till they testify that 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh, and perform Ṣalāh and give Zakāh, so if they perform all that, then they save their lives and properties from me except for Islamic laws, and their reckoning will be done by Allāh. (Reported by Al-Bukhārī).⁴⁴

The antagonists of this *Ḥadīth* claimed that its message is contradictory to the verses of the Qur'ān calling for peaceful co-existence in Islām⁴⁵, such as (Q2:256) which says: 'there is no compulsion in religion...' and (Q10:99) which reads: '...will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!' However, the protagonists of this *Ḥadīth* claimed that the verse is not contradictory to others in the Qur'ān due to similar verses urging the believers to fight in the cause of Islām, such as

(Q61:2) which reads: ‘Truly Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure.’ Another *Ḥadīth* which explained the word *Qātala* is given below:

عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال: "سمعتُ النبي يقول: "إذا صلي أحدكم إلى شيء يستزهُ من الناس فأراد أحد أن يجتاز بين يديه فليدفعه فإن أبي فليؤمته فإتما هو شيطان". (رواه البخاري)

Abū Sa‘īd Al-Khudry said: ‘I heard the Prophet saying, ‘if anybody among you is offering Ṣalāh behind something as a Sutrah (a small wooden barricade like the horse saddle) and somebody tries to pass in front of him (between him and the Sutrah), then he should repulse him and if he refuses, he should use force against him for he is Satan.’ (Reported by Al-Bukhārī).⁴⁶

The antagonists of this *Ḥadīth* claimed that it is one of the fabricated traditions in the Book of Al-Bukhārī, because the command to kill the one passing in front of a Muslim who prays, clearly contravenes the peaceful nature of Islām.⁴⁷ The protagonists of this *Ḥadīth* debunked this interpretation with the verse which reads:

وإن طأفتان من المؤمنين اقتتلوا فأصلحوا بينهما فإن بغت إحداهما على الأخرى فقاتلوا التي تبغي حتى تنفي إلى أمر الله فإن فآت فأصلحوا بينهما بالعدل وأقسطوا إن الله يحب المقسطين

If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other then fight against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies then make peace between them with justice and be fair: for Allah loves those who are just. (Q49:9)

The word *Muqātalah*, lexically means, to fight, to struggle, and to combat etc.⁴⁸ Al-‘Uthāyīmīn submits that *Muqātalah* means to fight the enemies so that the statement of Allāh becomes elevated, thus, that is why the (Q49:9) urges the Muslims to fight against those who rebelled against the religious leader, and if the Imām commands his subjects to fight against them, it becomes incumbent upon them in order to prevent spreading of evil and corruption...In fact, Abū Bakr used the used *Qātala* (to wage war against people) for those who rejected the payment of *Zakāh* until they take recourse to the truth but he did not kill them.⁴⁹ The protagonists further continued that killing is far-fetched from the meaning intended by Imām Al-Bukhārī who entitled it; ‘chapter of returning the one who passes in front of the one who prays’ and they added that Abū Sa‘īd interpreted the word *Qitāl* as to repulse (the person) harder.⁵⁰ The antagonists further said that the *Ḥadīth* nullifies freedom of religion which is the

first foundation of faith, and the *Muḥadithūn* and other scholars do not investigate into its *Matn* and *Sanad*, and its message promoting terrorism.⁵¹ Zarabozo commented on the *Ḥadīth* that the disbelievers of the west have tried to convince Muslims that it is uncivilized and incorrect to fight in the name of religion which is a matter of individual's conviction. Islām disallows coercion and allows persuasion, but the same people of the West sent troops to defend democracy and fight its opponents throughout the world, as if the propagation of ideology is acceptable while that of religion is not.⁵² What a paradox! In our repartee, the idea of throwing stone of terrorism to the Muslims while attempting to propagate their faith is unfair, because Islām preaches against invasion and massacre, and the entire battles fought by the Prophet were defensive and not offensive, hence Islām was not spread by the sword as falsely propounded by some orientalist and other western writers. The permission to fight was made after the Prophet migrated to Madīnah due to the prolonged stigmatization experienced by him and his companions in *Makkah* as stated in (Q22:39-40).

3. The *Ḥadīth* of *Rajm* as a punishment for Adultery under *Sharī'ah*

عن ابن عمر قال: أتى رسول الله بيهودي وبهودية قد أحدثا جميعاً، فقال لهم: "ما تجدون في كتابكم؟ قالوا: إن أخبارنا أحدثوا تحميم الوجه والتجبية. قال: عبد الله بن سلام: ادعهم يا رسول الله بالتوراة، فأتي بما فوضع أحدهم يده على آية الرجم وجعل يقرأ ما قبلها وما بعدها، فقال له ابن سلام: ارفع يدك، فإذا آية الرجم تحت يده، فأمر بهما رسول الله فزجما. قال ابن عمر فزجما عند البلاط، فرأيت اليهودي أجناً عليها. (رواه البخاري)

Narrated Ibn. 'Umar: A Jew and a Jewess were brought to the Allāh's Messenger on a charge of committing an illegal sexual intercourse. The Prophet asked them, 'What is the legal punishment (for this sin) in your Book (the Torah)? They replied, 'Our priests have innovated the punishments of blackening the faces with charcoal and (mortified in the public and mounting them on a donkey), 'Abdullāh bn. Salām said, 'O Allāh's Messenger, tell them to bring the Tawrāh.' The Tawrāh was brought, and then one of the Jews put his hand over the verse of the Rajm (stoning to death) and started reading what preceded and what followed it. On that, Ibn. Salām said to the Jew, 'Lift up your hand.' Behold! The verse of the Rajm was under his hand. Allāh's Messenger ordered that the two (sinners) be stoned to death, and so they were stoned. Ibn. 'Umar added: Both of them were stoned at the Balāṭ and I saw the Jew sheltering the Jewess.⁵³

The antagonists of the above tradition refuted the report that the Jews were the most contentious enemies of the Prophet in Madīnah, so is it possible for a person to make his staunchest enemy adjudicate a case of capital punishment over him? So, the Prophet did not judge with the Book of Allāh which is *Jald* (100 lashes)...because, the verse of *Rajm* is not free from hardship (inhumane and repugnant)...I have no doubt that this *Ḥadīth* had placed charges of religious fanaticism on Ibn. ‘Umar.⁵⁴ Before I proceed to the polemics of the protagonists, I would like to define *Rajm* lexically. *Rajm*, in Arabic, is a derivative of the verbal root *Rajama* which means to stone someone, to damn, to abuse and revile.⁵⁵ The protagonists argued that the verse of *Rajm* has only been abrogated in recitation but its ruling remains in the Qur’ān. Also, the statement that the law does not conform with the law of *Jald* in the Qur’ān is tantamount to false allegation, because the Prophet has the right to legislate a new law.⁵⁶ The antagonists further disproved the law of *Rajm* by saying that if Allāh had wished this killing for an adulterer, he would have promulgated it with a Qur’anic verse which has no incongruity, the contradiction between the Qur’an and the Prophet made us to be skeptical about the *Ḥadīth* and verses of *Rajm*, and we believed that all the *Aḥādīth* reported on *Rajm* are not free from fabrication and affectation.⁵⁷ The protagonists replied that the prophecy of casting doubt and disbelief in the law of *Rajm* has been mentioned in the *Ḥadīth* below:

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال: قال عمر: لقد خشيتُ أن يطولَ بالناسِ زمانٌ حتى يقولَ قائلٌ: لا نجدُ الرِّجمَ في كتابِ الله، فيضِلُّوا بتركِ فريضةِ أنزلها اللهُ، ألا وإنَّ الرِّجمَ حقٌّ على من زنى وقد أحصنَ إذا قامتِ البيِّنةُ، أو كان الحملُ أو الإِعرافُ. قال سفيانٌ: كذا حَفِظْتُ، ألا وقد رَجَمَ رسولُ اللهِ ورَجِمْنَا بعده. (رواه البخاري)

Narrated Ibn. ‘Abbās that ‘Umar said, ‘I am afraid that after a long time has passed, people may say, ‘we don’t find the verses of the Rajm in the Qur’ān, and consequently they may go astray by leaving an obligation that Allāh has revealed. Lo! I confirm that the penalty of Rajm be inflicted on him who commits illegal adultery if he is already married and the crime is proved by witnesses, or pregnancy, or confessions.’ Sufyān added, ‘I have memorized this narration in this way.’ ‘Umar added, ‘Surely Allāh’s Messenger carried out Rajm, and so we did after him.’ (Reported by Al-Bukhārī).⁵⁸

The above *Ḥadīth* is a clear prophecy which has actually come to pass. Furthermore, some jurists argued that *Jald* (Q24:2) is the only punishment that was legislated for both fornication and adultery in the Qur’ān, while the Kharajites espoused that the law of *Rajm* has never been enacted in Islām as a punishment for adultery. However, the majority of jurists established the law of *Rajm*

as carried out by the Prophet in the case of Ma‘iz, Al-Lakhmiyyah and Al-Ghāmiyyah as well as different sources of *Mutawātir Ḥadīth* on the law.⁵⁹ In our view, the application of the law of the Prophets before us is allowed in Islām by justification of legal rudiments as far as it does not contravene the law of Prophet Muḥammad, so, the curiosity of the Prophet to know the law of the Jews is a mere confirmation of his. Also, alleging Ibn. ‘Umar of religious fanaticism by the antagonists is an act of reprobate. The rationale behind the legislation of this capital punishment is to debar Muslims from committing mischievous acts like promiscuity, fornication, adultery, theft etc. Therefore, must a Muslim accept a law and jettison the other in the Qur’ān because of considering it repugnant to humane feeling? Therefore, the antagonists of *Rajm* have to realize that regardless of the lawless status of *Ḥudūd* (capital punishments) in our so-called *Sharī‘ah* courts of Appeal in southern Nigeria, although with a bit improvement in the North, does not imply the inexistence of the law under *Sharī‘ah*. Finally, the critics of the law are among the orientalist and the Muslims who have apologetically espoused their concocted fallacies against the well established law of abrogation in the science of the Glorious Qur’ān.

4. *Ḥadīth* of Prophet Mūsā and the Angel of Death

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: أُرْسِلَ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ إِلَى مُوسَى عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ صَغَّهُ فَرَجَعَ إِلَى رَبِّهِ فَقَالَ: أُرْسَلْتَنِي إِلَى عَبْدٍ لَا يُرِيدُ الْمَوْتَ. فَرَدَّ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْهِ عَيْنَهُ وَقَالَ: ارْجِعْ فَقُلْ لَهُ يَضَعُ يَدَهُ عَلَى مَنْتَنِ ثَوْرٍ، فَلَهُ بِكُلِّ مَا غَطَّتْ بِهِ يَدُهُ بِكُلِّ شَعْرَةٍ سَنَةٌ. قَالَ: أَيُّ رَبِّ، ثُمَّ مَاذَا؟ قَالَ: ثُمَّ الْمَوْتُ. قَالَ: فَالآنَ، فَسَأَلَ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُدْنِيَهُ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ زَمِيَةً بَحْرٍ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: فَلَوْ كُنْتُ ثُمَّ لَأَرَيْتُكُمْ قَبْرَهُ إِلَى جَانِبِ الطَّرِيقِ عِنْدَ الْكَيْبِ الْأَحْمَرِ. (رواه البخاري)

Narrated Abū Hurāyrah: The angel of death was sent to Mūsā, and when he came to him, Mūsā slapped him and spoiled one of his eyes. The angel went back to his Lord (Allāh), and said, ‘You sent me to a slave who does not want to die.’ Allāh restored his eye and said, ‘Go back and tell him (i.e. Mūsā) to place his hand over the back of an ox, for he will be allowed to live for the number of hairs coming under his hand.’ (So, the angel came to him and told him the same). Then Mūsā asked, ‘O my Lord! What will be then?’ He said, ‘Death will be then.’ He said, ‘(Let it be) now.’ He asked Allāh that He bring him near the Sacred Land at a distance of a stone’s throw. Allāh’s Messenger said: ‘Were I there, I would show you the grave of Mūsā by the way near the red sand-hill.’ (Reported by Al-Bukhārī)⁶⁰

The antagonists of this *Ḥadīth* claimed that it is naive to think that the scenario of Prophet Musa slapping the angel of death could be seen as tales and fables recorded in the Prophetic *Ḥadīth*; however, this report might be little information that Ka‘b Al-Aḥbār told Abū Hurāyrah in the days of their rapport, and Abū Hurāyrah fabricated it as *Ḥadīth Marfū‘* or another reporter forged it in his name, and if not so, what criterion shall we utilize to make this *Ḥadīth* intelligible, is it criteria of the Qur’ān or biography of the Prophet or coinage of human being from various ramifications as entailed in the Qur’ān?⁶¹ The protagonists responded that if those people in their shallow perception and parochial sentiments thought the story narrated in the *Ḥadīth* was forgery, then how do they believe other stories of inadvertent killing of the Egyptian by Mūsā (Q28:15), the stories of the sons of Ādam; Hābīl and Qābīl in (Q5:27-31), the stories of Yusuf and the Queen of Sheba (Bilqīs) in (Q27:20-44) etc.⁶² Ibn. Ḥajar says in this regard thus:

Some innovators queried this Ḥadīth...and Allāh has only sent the angel of death as a test for Prophet Mūsā and the latter slapped him because he saw that a human being entered his house without permission, and he did not know that he was angel of death, and the Law Giver has allowed slapping the face of the one who intrudes into the Muslim’s residence without his consent. In fact, the angels visited Prophet Ibrāhīm and Prophet Lūṭ in human form and they do not know them ab initio, and had it been Ibrāhīm knew that they were angels, he would have not entertained them with food (fatted calf)...Al-Khaṭṭābī encapsulated the statement of Ibn. Khuzāymah who added that Mūsā shoved him off (angel of death), and Allāh restored the eye of angel of death, for Mūsā to know that he was sent by Allāh, and he (Mūsā) then succumbed (to him).⁶³

The above assertion explicitly reveals that the angel of death came to Prophet Mūsā in human form which is quite possible as reported in *Ḥadīth* of Jibrīl who came to Prophet Muḥammad in human nature while sitting with his companions.⁶⁴ In our own repartee, the anger displayed by Prophet Mūsā was a temperament of man and the Qur’ān testifies to that in (Q7:154) & (Q20:86). This does not nullify the authenticity of the *Ḥadīth* as a similar message of anger was reported of Prophet Muḥammad (Q80:1-2). This has only shown they were humans like us. (Q18:110) & (Q21:8). This also implies that the Prophets of Allāh were always informed when the time of their death is near and this virtue is peculiar to them. It could also be said that the *Ḥadīth* reveals one of the esoteric or metaphysical knowledge endowed with Prophet Muḥammad which its acceptance is part of our fundamental creed (‘*Aqīdah*). For instance the *Ḥadīth* that talks about the descent of Allāh to the heaven of this world in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (*Ḥadīth* No: 1145) cannot, but be accepted, because no

one knows about Allāh’s attributes than His Messenger, therefore, giving indirect interpretation to the *Ḥadīth* as meaning the descent of Allāh’s command, His mercy or any of His angels is like lying on the Prophet.⁶⁵ Finally, we can safely submit that the rejection of the unseen knowledge preached in the *Ḥadīth* is tantamount to rejection of other *Aḥadīth* that fell under this category, such as the traditions discussing *Qadar* (predestination of man in his mother’s womb), prophesy of the second coming of Prophet ‘Isā (Jesus) and the rise of Dajjāl (false Christ) at the era of apocalypse.

5. *Ḥadīth* of Daughter of Al-Jāwn and the Prophet

حَدَّثَنَا الْأَوْزَاعِيُّ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ الرَّهْرِيَّ: أَيُّ أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ اسْتَعَاذَتْ مِنْهُ؟ قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنِي عُرْوَةُ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ: أَنَّ ابْنَةَ الْجَوْنِ لَمَّا أُدْخِلَتْ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَدَنَا مِنْهَا قَالَتْ: أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْكَ، فَقَالَ لَهَا: "لَقَدْ عُذَّتِ بِعَظِيمٍ. الْحَقِّي بِأَهْلِكَ". (رواه البخاري)

Narrated Al-Awzā’ī: I asked Az-Zuhri, ‘Which of the wives of the Prophet sought refuge with Allāh from him?’ He said, ‘I was told by ‘Urwah that ‘Ā’ishah said: ‘When the daughter of Al-Jawn was brought to Allāh’s Messenger (as his bride) and he went near her, she said, ‘I seek refuge with Allah from you.’ He said, ‘You have sought refuge with the Most Great; return to your family.’ (Reported by Al-Bukhārī) ⁶⁶

The antagonists of the above *Ḥadīth* claimed that its meaning portrayed that the Prophet attempted raping the daughter of Al-Jawn.⁶⁷ The Protagonists, however, vehemently opposed this biased submission that Ibn. Ḥajar, quoting Ibn. ‘Abdul-Barr said that the Muslim jurists unanimously agreed that the Prophet married the daughter of Al-Jawn.⁶⁸ They further argued that the Prophet told Abū ‘Usāyd in the completion of the *Ḥadīth* in (Al-Bukhārī:5255) to supply her with provisions and clothes, then accompany her to her family’s residence. It becomes evident that the Prophet divorced her owing to the clothing stated therein, which is the enjoyment legislated by the *Sharī‘ah* and returning her to her family is an idiomatic expression, hence, divorce cannot take place except after a legal marital contract.⁶⁹ In our own view, the Prophet could not be said to have committed *Zinā* as his character was likened to the Qur’ān’s. Also, the Law Giver has specifically granted the Prophet opportunity to marry from the Muslim women whom he loves or woos him as stated in (Q33:50), and that is why he was reported to have married eleven wives and none of his companion was mentioned to have married more than four. This is exceptional for the Prophet alone (*Khusūsiyyatu-r-Rasūl*).

Scholarly Principles of Authenticating *Ḥadīth*

The *Muḥadithūn* have laid down some basic rudiments of authenticating *Ḥadīth* and vice-versa. The mechanisms were to sieve the wheat from the chaff in the study. These are *‘Ilm-r-Riwāyah* (science

of narration) and *‘Ilm-’l-Jarh wa Ta’dīl* (science of validity).⁷⁰ The knowledge of authenticating *Ḥadīth* is very wide and that is why scholars in this field are very scrupulous. Bilāl Philips mentioned that Ibn.Mubārak argued that the early method of *Ḥadīth* criticism was to compare the words of scholars with each other; by comparing the between reports of different students of the same scholar, comparison between the words of the same scholar at different times of his life, comparison between oral report of the scholar and written texts, and comparison between a narrated *Ḥadīth* and its related Qur’anic texts.⁷¹ At this moment, the authentication of *Ḥadīth* remained in verbal form as it was in the first century, while proliferation of *Ḥadīth* collections sprang up at the time of Bukhārī and Muslim who selected from numerous works they have compiled.⁷² In the same vein, the scholars of *Ḥadīth* at this era had devised the criteria for validity of *Ḥadīth* which were universally acceptable till today. Isrār Aḥmad highlighted them, viz; chain continuity, integrity of narrators’ character, report precision, non-deficiency and non-aberrance. Therefore, any *Ḥadīth* that fulfills these conditions is considered authentic, while the weak *Ḥadīth* is below the criteria of fulfilling the conditions.⁷³ He further explicated that in the 2nd and 3rd centuries; tremendous efforts were made on the compilation of *Ḥadīth* treatises and the principles of textual validity was developed after that of the chain transmission.⁷⁴ It is germane to raise a question here that if two authentic *Ḥadīth* are contradictory in their textual proofs, which one is to be adhered to? For instance, the placing of the two hands before the knees and vice-versa on *Ṣalāh*, according to Ibn. Taymiyah either of the two is acceptable.⁷⁵ In this case, the *Fuqahā’* and the *Muḥadithūn* always act upon the *Ḥadīth* that has a sound *Sanad*. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah preferred the *Ḥadīth* that has a less-authentic *Sanad* but has conformity with the *Sharī’ah* and the Qur’ān, because the chain is not exclusively examined to authenticate a tradition. To sum it up, it is noteworthy that only a scholar that possesses in-depth cognition of science of *Ḥadīth* and its basic criteria of authentication aforementioned who can take up a stance in the case of two seemingly conflicting narrations, except, this will lead the *’Ummah* to unnecessary uproar, segregation, strife, intrigue and disunity etc.⁷⁶ Here, we shall now consider the reasons for fabrication of *Ḥadīth* and virile solutions to it.

Curtailling Fabrication of *Ḥadīth Matn*: An Antidote for Muslim Unity in Nigeria

In recent time in Nigeria, the Muslims have experienced intra-religious conflicts on *Ḥadīth Matn* and its analysis. For instance, the antagonists of the *Sunnis* made reference to the *Ḥadīth* referring to the *Khawārij* and ascribed their attributes therein to the *Sunnis*.⁷⁷ However, the antagonists have interpolated the contents of the *Aḥadīth* and gullibly accepted by their audiences. The antagonists proceeded to impugn the authenticity of the *Ḥadīth* of housefly recorded by (Al-Bukhārī: 3320). They claimed that the *Muḥadithūn* have to espouse the authenticity of this *Ḥadīth* with the stories

of Prophet Muḥammad, (to have done that once in his lifetime) and the inability achieve that shows the weakness and aberrance of the *Ḥadīth*.⁷⁸ The protagonists referred the former to (Q2:26) to debunk this fallacy. Also, they argued that the modern science has proven the fact that housefly has a poisonous tendency which could lead to pruritus and neoplasm...the Prophet commanded us to dip the housefly into our foods and drinks in order to replace its poisonous tendency with the antidote. However, housefly possesses the two qualities; poison and antidote. It's concomitantly logical to adduce that the honey-bee produces honey and stings man at the same time, and the medical doctors had proven honey as a vaccine for a healthy person to safeguard him from bacteria diseases and as well as to reduce the power of microbe or get rid of it in the body system.⁷⁹ The scholars of *Ḥadīth* have laid down the principles for the criticism and analysis of *Matn*, viz;

1. A tradition must not contradict a *Mutawātir* narration that is based on the community consensus (*'Ijmā' Qaṭ'ī*).
2. It must not go against rational thinking; laws of nature or factual experiences, thereby exceedingly establishing high reward for insignificant good deeds or severe punishment for minor sins.
3. Traditions exaggerating the virtues of some *Ayāt* and *Suwar* of the Qur'ān may not be authentic, but those mentioning superior virtues of persons, tribes and places should be generally rejected.
4. A *Matn* should not violate the basic rules of Arabic grammar and rhetoric.⁸⁰
5. The *Asbāb Urūd- 'l-Ḥadīth* (Reasons for *Ḥadīth* Narration) should be deciphered before any legal ruling is enacted thereof. A typical example of this was the case of a fasting Muslim while on a journey.(Al-Bukhari:1946)⁸¹

Having stated the criteria for knowing the validity of *Ḥadīth* texts or contents (*Mutūnu-l-Ḥadīth*), it is crucial to enumerate the factors that led to the fabrication of *Ḥadīth* in the past and nowadays. These are as follow:

1. **Political Factions:** This, to a large extent, has been considered a primary factor for the fabrication of *Ḥadīth*, such as the traditions condemning or commending prominent political leaders. A typical example was that of Ibn. Saba', a Jew who disguisedly claimed to have embraced Islām; he thus fabricated many traditions and circulated them among Muslims. More so, the enemies of Islām also forged some traditions that discouraged the payment of *Zakāh*, estate distribution and marriage.⁸²
2. **Rivalry of Madhāhib Adherents:** This has to do with supremacy of each member of the Madhāhib over another as they began to fabricate *Ḥadīth* in order to support their differences.⁸³ In fact, this discrimination among the adherents of every school of thought and dogmatic

imitation had pervaded the world in the 14th century. For instance, one of the students of Abū Ḥanīfah, called Al-Ḥaṣkafī wrote a panegyric for him in one of his lines as follows:

فَلَعْنَةُ رَبِّنَا أَعْدَادَ رَمَلٍ ## عَلَيَّ مَنْ رَدَّ قَوْلَ أَبِي حَنِيفَةَ⁸⁴

May the wrath of my Lord descend in number of pebbles;
Upon the one who rejects the statement of Abū Ḥanīfah.

However, one of the measures that were put in place by the scholars of *Ḥadīth* to expose the fabricated traditions and curb disunity therein today, are the books compiled on the subject.⁸⁵ The prominent books on this topic are *Silsilatu- 'l-Aḥādīth Aḍ-Ḍa'īfah wa- 'l-Mawḍu'ah* (chains of weak and fabricated traditions) of Al-Bāny, and *Ad-Durar Al-Muntathirah* of Imām As-Sayūfī as well as 100 fabricated *Ḥadīth* of ‘Abdullāh Faiṣal. In our view, other reasons while people fabricate *Ḥadīth* could be sectarianism, whims and caprices, paucity of knowledge, ignorance and gaining of superiority before the leaders of the day. It is suffice to submit that, these, and many more constitute the fabrication of *Ḥadīth* in the Nigerian society. Another measure to curtail *Ḥadīth* fabrication is to adhere strictly to the basic principles of *Matn* analysis and criticism as earlier mentioned.

Concluding Remarks

Based on the aforementioned discourse, it can be deduced that the evaluation of *Ḥadīth* development and preservation had begun from the prophetic era till the period of the *Tābi'ūn* whose trustworthiness and reliability led to the great works of *Ḥadīth* collections we have today. This implies that *Ḥadīth* was not compiled a century after the Prophetic era as claimed by the antagonists. It must be noted that the *Ḥadīth* prohibiting the recording of *Ḥadīth* by Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudry during the Prophet's lifetime was later abrogated with the *Ḥadīth* of ‘Abdullāh bn. ‘Amr with sound chains of transmission and texts. Furthermore, the desperate attempt of the curriculum developers to sandwich Islamic religious studies with other subjects at secondary schools with the claim that it does not inculcate the desired moral standards in the students is one of the factors that affects proper teaching and learning of *Ḥadīth* at this stage, likewise, the anticipated development in the study of *Ḥadīth* at the tertiary institutions has not been achieved in Nigeria. Also, it was observed that the criticism of *Ḥadīth* was not well pronounced across Nigeria except in few places and the low number of experts in the field has brought about setback in its development. Paradigm of expositions of the antagonists and protagonists on selected *Aḥādīth* has been critically examined in the light of sophisticated evidences. In addition, the principles of detecting fraud and forgery in *Ḥadīth Matn* have been highlighted, proffering virile antidote to curtail the rampant nature of the fabrication among the Muslims in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The researchers have come up with the following recommendations as adumbrated below:

1. That, the study of *Ḥadīth* has to be improved by allocating the subject or course, as the case may be, to the specialists in the field or at least, a teacher that has in-depth knowledge of *Matn* analysis.
2. That, the Nigerian Universities need to recruit experts in the field of *Ḥadīth* so as to clamour for inauguration of the Department of *Ḥadīth* as established at Bayero University of Kano.
3. That, the study of science of *Ḥadīth* has to be given special treatment in Nigerian Arabic and Islamic schools, and symposia on *Ḥadīth* competition has to be inaugurated across the country in order to meet up with international standards.
4. That, every Muslim needs to acquaint himself with the rudiments of authenticating Prophetic traditions in the case of seemingly contradictory reports and vice-versa in order to curb the tendency of misinterpreting *Ḥadīth* and leading people astray.
5. That, Muslim scholars in Nigeria have to endeavour to shun whims and caprices in adjudicating religious matters related to *Ḥadīth*.
6. That, the scholars have to beware of exclusively relying on internet sources or rational adjudication in verifying for authentic *Ḥadīth* rather they need to sieve the information with that of the pious Muslim predecessors who interpreted similar traditions, so as not to leave the Muslims in suspense and bewilderment.
7. That, the agencies of Islamic bodies have to collaborate with the people in charge of teachers' recruitment across to country in order to ensure that quality products are turned out in the field of Islamic Studies, especially in the area of *Ḥadīth*.

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6. This is a collection of the Prophetic sayings which were written down by one of his companions during his life time or by their successors.
7. Ajiri, *An Analysis*, 159-161.
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11. Muslim bn. Al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ist ed. (Cairo: Shirkatu- 'l-Qudus Li Nashr wa Tawzī‘, 2014), 12.
12. Ajiri, *An Analysis*, 67.
13. It was reported that Ibn. Shihāb Az-Zuhri spent money like water for the sake of *Hādīth*. Rabi‘a spent all he possessed in his search for *Aḥādīth*, and even had to sell the beams of the roof of his house for this purpose. Yahya Ibn Ma‘īn spent 150,000 dirhams which he inherited from his father, to the extent that he ended up without a pair of shoe to wear. While *Al- Khatib al-Baghdady* gave away 200 gold coins to those who devoted their lives to *Hādīth*.
14. Siddiq, *Hādīth Literature*, 30.
15. ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdil ‘Aziz was the eight caliph of the Umayyad, he was born in 61A.H and became caliph from (99-101AH).
16. The death of some eminent *Ṣaḥābah* made him fear the cessation of the knowledge of *Hādīth* and men of knowledge, spreading of reporters in various towns and the exhaustive nature of the chain of transmitters, the spread of innovation, falsehood and heresy and the spread of the art of writing.
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27. The practical examples used by Allah in teaching His Messengers are numerous and some of them are contained in (Q2:260, Q5:31 & Q28:7).
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