|S|Ü|H|A|

Misunderstanding of Statements and Practices of some Early Hadīth Scholars by some Orientalists

Mohammed ALSHEHRI*

"Bazı Şarkiyatçıların Erken Dönem Hadis Âlimlerinin İfade ve Uygulamalarını Yanlış Anlamaları"

Özet: Bu makale, James Robson gibi bazı oryantalistlerin ilk hadis âlimlerinin birtakım ifadelerini veya onların ilmî çabalarının bazı yönlerini nasıl yanlış anladıklarına dair iki kısa örnek sunmaktadır. James Robson ve diğer oryantalistlerin, asıl ifadelere dikkat etmediği ve bu söz ve uygulamaların ortaya çıktığı gerçek bağlam ve şartları araştırmadıkları gerçeğine ışık tutmaktadır.

In the Orientalist writings, there are clear misunderstandings of some statements and scholarly practices of some traditional scholars of *Hadīth*. Based on such misunderstandings, some assumptions concerning of the reliability of *Hadīth* in general have been made. In this article, there are two classic examples will be dealt with as treated by the British Orientalist James Robson (1890–1981). First, the statement of Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī's (d. 124/742) in which he referred to the command of some rulers to traditionists (scholars of *Hadīth*) to write down the *ahādīth*. The statement of al-Zuhrī, as will be cited later, was shown by Robson and some other Orientalists as evidence of fabrication of *Hadīth* in late Umayyad period. It was also used by him to prove that the activity of *Hadīth* fabrication applies, without any exception, to all parties at that time who started to invent reports in order to uphold the views

* Assistant Professor of Hadith Studies, Department of Hadith & its Disciplines, College of Islamic Law, King Khalid University, Abha, SAUDI ARABIA; shehri-m@hotmail.com

they wished to propagate.[1] Concerning al-Zuhrī's statement, Robson says:

> There can be no doubt that such traditions have been fabricated to support particular points of view. Al-Zuhrī is said to have accused the Umayyads of compelling people to forge traditions, a statement which may possibly be quite true...[2]

For this understanding of al-Zuhrī's statement, Robson is in debt to Guillaume, whose text reads:

> If any external proof were needed of the forger of traditions in the Umayyad period, it may be found in the express statement of al-Zuhrī: 'These princes have compelled us to write hadīth'. Undoubtedly the hadīth exalting the merit of the pilgrimage to the qubbatu-l-Sakhra at Jerusalem is a survival of the traditions al-Zuhrī composed.[3]

Other scholars like Guillaume also refer to other writers, namely Aloys Sprenger (1813-1856) and William Muir (1819-1905) for this statement, making no any reference to the originals. It should also be noted that this very idea is held by Goldziher, who comments that the statement of al-Zuhrī can only be understood on the assumption of his "...willingness to lend his name, which was in general esteemed by the Muslim community, to the government's wishes".[4] In any case, Robson might be expected, due to his familiarity with Arabic sources and being a professor of Arabic, to refer to the original source from which the statement was cited, an action that would have helped him to find out whether or not the statement was presented accurately. Nevertheless, he is content with adopting the comprehension of his predecessor, Guillaume, of such a statement; thus, he is inclined to accept its validity.

The fabrication of a number of *ahādīth* by different political or religious groups was already recognized by early Muslim scholars from the beginning of the phenomenon of circulating forged *ahādīth* after the time of the *fitnah* as stated by Ibn Sīrīn, which refers to the period after the assassination of the third Rightly-Guided Caliph, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (d. 35/656).[5] This was the watershed after which the Muslim nation became divided into a number of schools of thought and parties. That was why the demand to use *isnād* was

---

[1] James Robson, "Tradition, investigation and Classification," *Muslim World* 41 (1951), pp. 98-99.

[2] Ibid., p. 267.

[3] Alfred Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islam* (oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 50. In fact, Guillaume's translation of al-Zuhrī's statement, as Az'amī noticed, is rather strange. The text makes it quite clear that the statement in question has no relation with forgery. See: Az'amī, *Studies in Early Hadīth Literature* (Burr Ridge, US: American Trust Publications, 2001), p. 285.

[4] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. by C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), II, 47.

[5] Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Sakhawī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, 5th ed. (Jeddah: Maktabat al-Ansārī, 1968), III, 66-159.

introduced among the students of *Hadīth*, and systematic documentation of *Hadīth* began.[6]

As far as al-Zuhrī's statement is concerned, by consulting original sources, one will discover that there is no connection between the statement of al-Zuhrī and the forgery of *ahādīth*. The Arabic text quotes al-Zuhrī as saying:

> We used to disapprove of writing down knowledge [i.e. *Hadīth*] until these *Umarā'* (rulers) compelled us to do so. Then we decided that we should not withhold it from any of the Muslims.[7]

From tracing the historical context of al-Zuhrī's statement, we find that it was connected to a special occasion. It is reported that al-Zuhrī was entrusted with educating and teaching *Hadīth* to two sons of the Caliph Hishām b. 'Abd al-Mālik (reigned from 105/723-125/743), the tenth Umayyad Caliph. One day, the Caliph requested al-Zuhrī to write some *ahādīth* for his sons, but the latter, like some of his contemporaries, refused to do so. Hishām then insisted on that and sent two of his scribes to al-Zuhrī to record some of his *ahādīth*. Hence, around 400 *ahādīth* were dictated to the Caliph's sons. Accordingly, al-Zuhrī decided to accept any request from others to do so.[8] One of al-Zurī's students named Abū al-Mulayh said that the students of *Hadīth* did not aspire to write al-Zuhrī's Traditions until he was pressed by Hishām.[9] This is what Muslim scholars understood from this statement, and accordingly Ibn 'Abd al-Barr adduces it under a subject devoted to the permissibility of committing *ahādīth* to writing (*Bab Dhikr al-Rukhsah fi Kitāb al-'Ilm*).[10] It seems that Robson who was familiar with Arabic neglected this fact, of which he should have been aware of.

Before concluding this point, it is worth noting that the attitude of al-Zuhrī regarding recording the *Hadīth* seems to have been changed gradually. At the beginning, al-Zuhrī, like other Successors, did write down a good deal of *ahādīth* for his own use. His close friend Sālih b. Kaysān reported that he and al-Zuhrī sought knowledge together and used to say "...to each other, 'Let us write down the *Sunnah*', then we wrote that which came from the Prophet."[11] However, al-Zuhrī was not in favour of making these written materials of the *Sunnah* public. For the students of *Hadīth*, his general teaching policy was that if students want to learn, they must strive, and they should not be given any

---

6 Nur al-Din Itr, *Manhaj al-Naqd fi 'Ulum al-Hadīth* (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1979), p. 38-66.

7 [*Kunnā nakrah kitāba al-'ilm hattā akrahanā 'alayhi hā'ulā' al-umarā', fa ra'aynā an lā-namna'ahū ahadan min al-muslimīn*]. Mu'ammar b. Rashid, *Al-Jāmi'*, XI, 258; Abu Bakr Ahmad b. 'Ali al- Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Taqyīd al-'Ilm* (Damascus: Dar Ihyā' al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah, 1975), p. 107.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidayāh wa-al-Nihāyah* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1992), IX, 341.

10 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa-Fadlih. Dammām* (Saudi Arabia: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 1994), I, 298.

11 Abd al-Razzāq al-San'ānī, *Al-Musannaf* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1982), XI, 258.

ready-made knowledge in the shape of books or regular dictations.[12] This attitude influenced one of his prominent students, Mālik b. Anas who used to dislike giving *ijāzah* (permission of transmission) to his students, because they would gain knowledge in a short period of time without exerting much effort.[13] However, this teaching policy changed completely after the demand of Caliph Hishām to have some *ahādīth* written for his sons as we have just seen above.

The second example which the article deals with is related to *imam* Muhammad b. Ismaʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and the number of the *ahādīth* he selected and then deposited in his *Sahīh*. Al-Bukhārī stated that, in the course of his wide travels in search of *ahādīth*, collected around 600,000; but when he compiled his *Sahīh*, he only used 7,275, and when the repetitions are accounted for, the total is around 4000.[14] According to James Robson and other Orientalists, the *ahādīth* included in the *Sahīh* means that al-Bukhārī "...rejected the vast majority" of what he had collected.[15] He states that "It is rather alarming to think that out of 600,000 only 4,000 were considered sufficiently reliable to be included".[16] He then concludes that this selection of *ahādīth* indicates that authorities such as al-Bukhārī were dissatisfied with the enormous bulk of the Traditions (*ahādīth*) which they had amassed.[17]

Regarding the issue of the number of the *ahādīth* in the *Sahīh* of al-Bukhārī, there are some important points related to this issue that should be explained and clarified in order to evaluate Robson's view. It is important to deal with this issue because the same view of Robson was expressed by some scholars such, Gustav Weil,[18] William Muir, [19] and R. A. Nicholson.[20]

---

[12]   Al-Baghdadi, *Taqyid al-ʿIlm*, p. 106.
[13]   Ahmad b. ʿAlh al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Al-Kifāyah fī ʿUlūm al-Riwāyah* (Hyderabad: Daʿirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmaniyah, 1938), 316. *Ijāzah* is an authorization by a certain scholar, sometimes granted by a letter, to a student to transmit his/her *ahādīth* or book in which case the student need not read or have read the authorized *ahādīth* or book. See: M. M. Azʿami, *Studies in Hadīth Methodology and Literature* (Burr Ridge, USA: American Trust Publication, 1977), 20.
[14]   Ibn al-Salāh, *An Introduction An Introduction to the Science of the Hadīth. Trans. Eerik Dickinson. Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing Limited, 2006*, 15.
[15]   "Tradition, investigation", 100.
[16]   Ibid.
[17]   Ibid., p. 101.
[18]   Gustav Weil, *Mohammed der Prophet, sein Leben und seine Lehre* (Stuttgart: Verlag der J. B. Metzlerschen Buchhandlung, 1843), p. 45.
[19]   William Muir, *The life of Mahomet: With Introductory Chapters on the Original Sources for the Biography of Mahomet* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1861), 1: xxxvii.
[20]   Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 146. A similar idea is still voiced by some Christian missionaries in their discussions about the issue of the authenticity of *Hadīth* in Islam. See for example: A. A. Shorrosh, *Islam Revealed: A Christian Arab's View Of Islam* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson

Therefore, our discussion will examine the Orientalists' view in the light of the al-Bukhārī's scholarship and the traditionists' practice of transmission of *ahādīth*, and thereby ascertain its actual worth.

Before embarking on the nature of al-Bukhārī's work, *al-Sahīh*, a number of issues should first be clarified. According to the disciplines of *Hadīth* studies, the practice of the early traditionists in counting the number of transmitted *ahādīth* was that every independent channel of transmission is counted as a separate *hadīth*.[21] In other words, if there is a *matn* (text) of a *hadīth* with ten chains of transmission it is not regarded as one *hadīth* but rather as ten *ahādīth*, even though the text attached to each chain is the same in every case.

An example of this practice is the narration of 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Mahdī (d. 198/814), a great Basran *Hadīth* critic, concerning *al-mash 'ala al-khuffayn* (wiping the upper-side of one's shoes). He says: "I have thirteen Traditions regarding *al-mash 'ala al-khuffayn* from al-Mughīrah [b. Shu'bah, a Companion] transmitted from the Prophet."[22] What al-Mughīrah narrated, in fact, is one single action of the Prophet, which he happened to see. This single action was reported to Ibn Mahdī from thirteen independent channels which he counted as thirteen Traditions.[23] Likewise, Muhammd b. Khuzaymah (d. 311/932) in his *Sahīh* collected thirty *ahādīth* in one chapter regarding the matter of cleansing cloth.[24] The texts of these *ahādīth* are not different from each other; they all revolve around 'Ā'ishah speaking of the matter of cleansing, but with thirty different *asānīd*. So, it was obviously regarded by Ibn Khuzaymah as thirty *ahādīth*. Meanwhile, there might have been many other chains of transmissions of which he was unaware.[25]

Similarly, the *mutawatir* (consecutive) *hadīth* "Whoever lies against me intentionally then let him take his seat in the Fire"[26] was signalled out in a separate treatise by Sulaymān al-Tabarānī (d. 360/970). In this work, al-Tabarānī produces around 180 chains of transmission from 60 Companions for this and other similarly worded *hadīth* or *hadīth* with the same meaning. In this way, he makes around 180 *ahādīth* out of these channels. This is best illustrated in the following:

Publishers, 1988), p. 22; N. L. Geisler and Abd al-Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent In The Light Of The Cross* (Grand Rapids (MI): Baker Books, 1993), p. 165; J. Ankerberg and J. Weldon, *Fast Facts On Islam* (Eugene (OR): Harvest House Publishers, 2001), pp. 50-51.

21 Al-Qāsimī, *Qawā'id al-Tahdīth*, p. 61.
22 Ibn Abī Hātim al-Rāzī, *Al-Jarh wa-al-Ta'dīl*, I, 261.
23 Az'amī, *Studies in Early Hadīth Literature*, p. 218.
24 Muhammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzaymah, *Sahīh Ibn Khuzaymah*, ed. Muhammād Mustafa al-A'zamī (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1970), pp. 179-181.
25 Az'amī, *Studies in Early Hadīth*, p. 286.
26 *Sahīh Muslim*, I, 10.

Abū Bakr — ⌈ Jābir–Muhammad–al-Qāsim– 'Ammār–al-Siqti
          └ al-Habrāni–Talid– 'Ammār–Ibrāhim b. Hāshim

'Umar — ⌈ Aslam–al-Dujayn– Muslim–Abū Muslim
         ├ 'Ubayd Allāh–Yahyā–Khālid–Qays–Ibn Dāwud al-Makkī
         └ Qarazah–Ash'ath–Ibn Idris–Ahmad al-Ahwal–Ibn Abī Shaybah

'Uthmān — ⌈ Sa'id–al-Sai'gh–Sulaymān– 'Ali b. 'Abd al-'Aziz
          ├ 'Ali– 'Amr–Abu Ja'far–al-Firyābi–Asad–al-Miqdām
          └ 'Āmir–Ibn Abī al-Zinād– 'Abd al-Rahmān–Yahyā–al-Tustari

Prophet

Rib'i — ⌈ Mansūr — ⌈ Shu'bah– 'Amr–Ahmad al-Makkī
                    ├ Shurayk– 'Ali–'Abd Allāh b. Hanbal
                    ├ Qays–Jandal–Ibn Abī Shaybah
                    └ Kuhayl–Muhammād–Hassan–al-Azraq
        └ Abī Burdah — ⌈ Qays–Yazīd–Abū Zuhayr–al-Husayn
                        └ Al-Haytham–Muhammad–al-Tabbā'

Tha'labah–Habīb–al-A'mash — ⌈ Fudayl–Dawūd — ⌈ 'Abd Allāh
                                             └ Muhammad
                            ├ Jarīr– Ishāq– 'Ali
                            └ 'Abthar– 'Uthmān– al-Husayn

'Ali — 'Abd al-Rahmān–al-Hakam–al-A'mash — ⌈ Muhammād– 'Uthmān
                                           ├ 'Ubayd Allah–Ishaq– 'Ali
                                           ├ 'Ali–Abu Bakr– 'Ubayd
                                           └ 'Abd Allah–Yahyā–al-Husayn

Abī 'Abd al-Rahmān–'Abd al-A'lā–Abū 'Awānah–Hammād — ⌈ Mūsā
                                                     └ Muhammad
Amr–Abī 'Ammār–Talhah–al-'Amash–Mu'āwiyah–Yahyā–Muhammad
Qays–al-Hasan–Rashid–al-Rabī'–al-Darimī– 'Abd Allāh
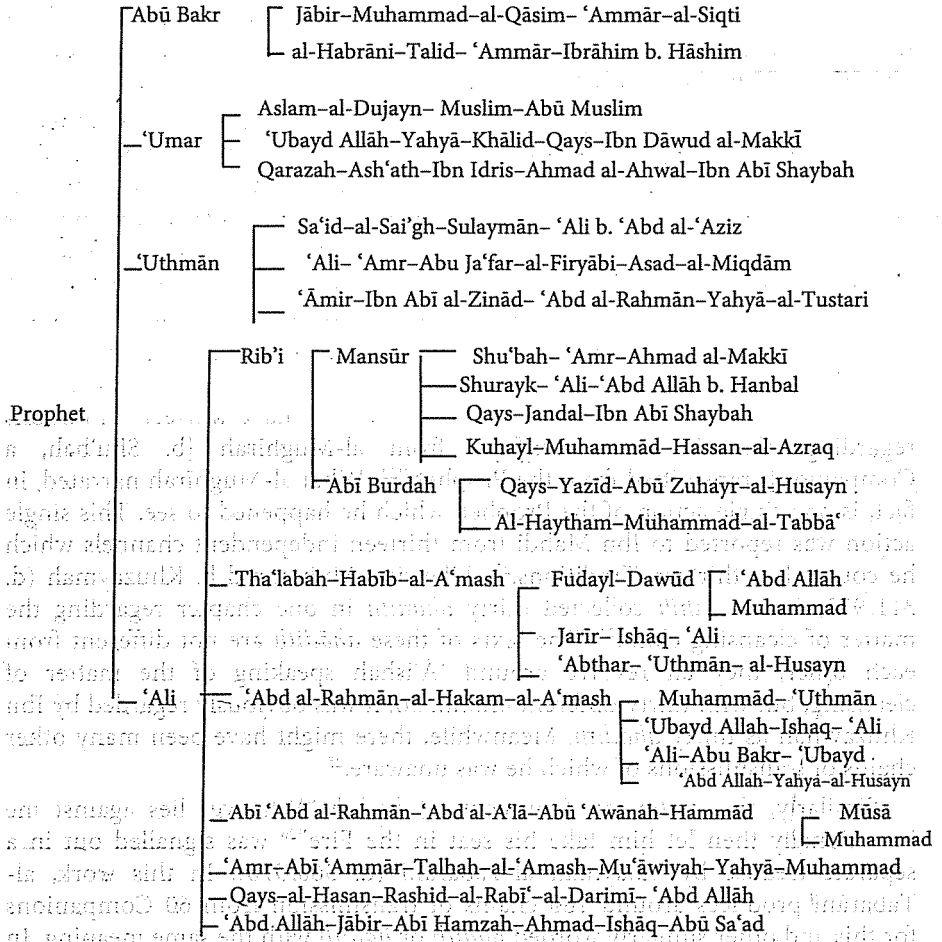'Abd Allāh–Jābir–Abī Hamzah–Ahmad–Ishāq–Abū Sa'ad

Figure 4.2: The first four lines of the 180 channels of al-Tabarānī's transmission of the *hadīth*: "*Man kadhaba*".

If a particular count limits itself to the chains and narrators for the above wording alone, according to al-Tabarānī's work, this specific wording is reported verbatim from not less than thirty-seven Companions.[27]

It is a common phenomenon of the *isnād* system that as we go further in time, the number of transmitters increases. Sometimes, a *hadīth* transmitted by one Companion acquires a number of students in the next generation of the

---

[27] Sulaymān b. Ahmad al-Tabarānī, *Turuq Hadīth Man Kathaba 'Alayya Muta'ammidan*, ed. 'Ali Hasan 'Abd al-Hāmīd (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1989), pp. 7-19.

Successors, and these students may have twenty to thirty students belonging to different countries and provinces.[28] With every generation, the number of teachers and students grew exponentially. In the Successors' time, scholars like Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), and 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/697) made reference to hundreds of teachers. Regarding students, al-Zuhrī himself, for instance, had over fifty students who recorded *ahādīth* in writing from him.[29] If every one of them had written only five hundred Traditions from him, the number could have been 25,000. If every student of al-Zuhrī had only two or three students, this number of Traditions should have increased at the end of the second century to about 75, 000. At the time of al-Bukhārī, they would have been hundreds of thousands.[30]

The growing number of transmitters resulted in the tremendous growth of the number of books and the number of *Hadīth* narrations.[31] Approximately from the middle of the second half of the second century (175/767-200/815) the *mawsu'at* (encyclopedias) such as al-*Masānīd* (pl. of al-*Musnad*) started to emerge. It was during the period of Caliph Harun al-Rashīd (170/786-203/818) when the proliferation of books on all Islamic and Arabic disciplines such as *Hadīth*, exegesis, syntax, literature was taking place.[32]

In terms of *Hadīth*, al-Dhahabī points out that during this period the books of *Hadīth* became numerous with variation in their subjects, classification, styles and volumes.[33] The traditionists of this period relied on early books and collections of *Hadīth*. Al-*Masānīd*, for instance, tends to include the *ahādīth* which were originally in books such as those of Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767), al-Awzā'ī (d. 157/773), and Mālik (d. 179/795). An example of that is al-*Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal where we can find a number of books of his *shuyukh* (teachers) such as Hammād b. Salamah (d. 167/784). The *Musannaf* of Hammād b. Salamah containing around 1542 narrations were received by Ahmad from different teachers, then gathered in his *Musnad*.[34] This resulted in a single *hadīth* in al-*Musannaf* of Hammād becoming two or three in al-*Musnad*, based on the number of teachers to which Ahmad had read al-*Musannaf* or heard it from. Consequently, the number of the *ahādīth* of Hammām can even be doubled if the hearing of al-*Musnad* of Ahmad had taken place within a group of scholars.

---

28 Az'amī, *Studies in Hadīth Methodology*, pp. 33-34.
29 *Tabaqāt*, 2: 135; al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Al-Kifāyah*, p. 318.
30 Yusuf, S. M. *An Essay on the Sunnah, its Importance, Transmission, Development, and Revision* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1977), p. 85.
31 Shams al-Din al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Huffāz* (Beirut: Dar Ihiya' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1956), 1: 212; Az'amī, *Studies in Hadith Methodology*, pp. 32-45.
32 *Tadhkirat*, I, 212-114. See also, Hakim al-Mutāirī, *Tārikh Tadwīn al-Sunnah* (Kuwait: Jāmi'at al-Kuwait, 2002), pp. 50-99.
33 *Tadhkirat*, I, 160.
34 Al-Mutāirī, *Tārīkh*, pp. 60-80.

From this practice, it became common among scholars of *Hadīth* to count every *isnād* as one *hadīth*. As a result, a single statement of the Prophet narrated by one hundred *asānīd* was referred to as one hundred *ahādīth* and a few thousand *ahādīth* became hundreds of thousands of *ahādīth*.[35]

The occurrence of the diffusion of *asānīd* in the second and third generations of the early Muslims has been extensively studied by the prominent scholar Nabia Abbott. She observes that the phenomenal growth of the corpus of *Hadīth* literature that occurred in the second and third century of Islam is not due to growth in content but due to a progressive increase in the parallel and multiple chains of transmission, i.e., *asānīd*.[36] Using the mathematical application of geometric progression, Abbott concludes:

> ...we find that one to two thousand Companions and senior Successors transmitting two to five traditions each would bring us well within the range of the total number of traditions credited to the exhaustive collections of the third century. Once it is realized that the *isnād* did, indeed, initiate a chain reaction that resulted in an explosive increase in the number of traditions, the huge numbers that are credited to Ibn Hanbal, Muslim and Bukhārī do not seem to be so fantastic after all.[37]

The last point to be included here is that the term hadīth (Tradition) to some traditionists covers not only the sayings, deeds, and tacit approvals of the Prophet, but also the deeds and legal decisions of the Prophet's Companions and the Successors. Accordingly, the number of Prophetic Traditions combined with those of the others would increase and their *asānīd* would multiply. Among the traditionists who considered the traditions of the Companions as part of the *Sunnah* is al-Zuhrī. Being dissatisfied with the collection and writing of the Prophet only, al-Zuhrī went further and collected the opinions of the Companions as well as their juristic views. According to Sālih b. Kaysān, they both recorded the Traditions of Muhammād, and after that, al-Zuhrī said to him: "Let us write what comes from the Companions as it is indeed *Sunnah*. I replied that 'it was not *Sunnah*, so we should not write it'. Thus, he wrote and I did not, so he succeeded and I lost."[38]

Let us now consider the nature of al-Bukhārī's collection of *ahādīth* in the light of the facts discussed above. It should be clear by now that the massive number of 600,000, although in another source it was 300,000,[39] collected by al-Bukhārī is meant to be an account of the texts of the *ahādīth* with their multiple attached *asānīd*, including the traditions of the Companions and Successors. This huge number of collected transmissions should come as no

---

[35] Az'amī, *Studies in Early Hadīth*, p. 301.

[36] Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, p. 2.

[37] Ibid., p. 72.

[38] *Musannaf*, XX, 258.

[39] Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalanī, *Hady al-Sārī Sharh Sahīh al-Bukhārī* (Riyadh: Taybah lil-Nahsr, 2005), p. 22.

surprise because al-Bukhārī collected the Traditions for 16 years from a considerable number of transmitters. He is quoted as saying: "I have written down what I heard from more than 1000 men".[40]

As far as *al-Sahīh* is considered, the aim of al-Bukhārī was to compile a manual of *ahādīth* in response to the request of his teacher Ishāq b. Rāhawayh (d. 238/852) who wished for a scholar who would assemble a short but comprehensive book containing genuine *ahādīth* from the Prophet only.[41] He then selected a portion from his vast collection of *ahādīth* and arranged them according to their subjects, and his intention was to include all the authentic *ahādīth* he had known. For this purpose, al-Bukhārī states that: "I have only included in my book *al-Jāmi'* [Comprehensive Collection, i.e. his *Sahīh*] what was established as authentic *ahādīth*, and I left out many authentic ones for fear of prolixity [*wa-taraktu min al-sahīh makhāfat al-tūl*]".[42]

This is also made clear in the original title of his work, which is: *al-Jāmi', al-Musnād, al-Sahīh, al-Mukhtasar, min Umur Rasul Allah wa-Sunanihi wa-Ayyāmihi* (*The Comprehensive Collection of Supported Sound Hadīth Summarised from the Affairs, the Practices and the Times of the Messenger of Allah*).[43] The collection of al-Bukhārī is better known as *al-Jāmi' al-Sahīh* or *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*. According to Ibn al-Salah, al-Bukhārī and Muslim did not take in "...all of the sound *Hadīth* in their *Sahīhayn* [pl. of *Sahīh*] and they did not take it upon themselves to do that".[44]

In the light of the above discussion, Robson's view about the number of *ahādīth* selected by al-Bukhārī in his *Sahīh* is indeed an erroneous interpretation of al-Bukhārī's statement and scholarship. As seen above, al-Bukhārī did not attempt to produce an inclusive collection of all the sound Traditions that reached him. From al-Bukhārī's statement, it is clear that his *Sahīh* is a partial collection of authentic *ahādīth*. The collected *ahādīth* of al-Bukhārī amounts to 600,000 and this is a large number which reflects the channels and sources of the transmission, and not the actual number of the texts or subjects (*mutūn*) of the Traditions.

From the above discussion, it could be said that Robson and others clearly misunderstood some of the statements and practices of early traditionists as represented in the two examples discussed above.

---

[40]   *Tadhkirat*, II, 134. See also, M. Z. Siddiqi, *Hadīth Literature, its Origins, Development and Special Features*. Revised ed. Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993.
[41]   Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar Alām al-Nubalā'* (Beirut: Muassast al-Risalah, 1956), XXII, 405.
[42]   Taj al-Din b. 'Ali al-Subkī, *Tabaqāt al-Shafi'iyah al-Kubrā* (Ahsa, Saudi Arabia: Hajar lil-Tibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 1992), II, 221.
[43]   Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Hādī al-Sarī*, p. 18. Emphasis added.
[44]   Ibn al-Salāh, *An Introduction*, p. 9.

"Misunderstanding of Statements and Practices of some Early Hadīth Scholars by some Orientalists"

Abstract: Hhe article briefly presents two examples of how some Orientalists such as James Robson misunderstood some statements of early scholars of Hadīth or some aspects of their scholarship. It sheds light on the fact that James Robson and other Orientalists do not pay attention to the actual statements and do not investigate the actual contexts and circumstances in which some statements and practices arose.