

## “Don’t You Ever Say a Word About Him!”: Ḥadīth Scholars and Censorship in Early Islamic History

### “Sakin Ondan Bahsetme!”: Erken İslam Tarihinde Muhaddisler ve Sansür

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper argues that early *ḥadīth* compilations reflect theological debates among Islamic sects in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries. In early Muslim society, each sect or group held distinctive opinions on controversial theological issues, such as free will versus predestination and the significance of the Companions. Each side defended its position using specific arguments. When the Qur’ān provided sufficient evidence to support their views, they used it; otherwise, they turned to the extensive *ḥadīth* compilations to bolster their doctrines. However, these collections did not always perfectly align with their needs, as they sometimes contained counter-narratives and unfavorable transmitters. In such cases, some narrators or traditionalists deliberately interfered with or falsified both the *isnāds* and the texts of the *ḥadīths*. It is possible to trace these manipulations in the *ḥadīth* books compiled during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries. This paper aims to highlight examples of falsification in *ḥadīth* literature by using the method of comparison (*mu’āraḍa*) and to emphasize the possibility of identifying the transmitters responsible for these manipulations.

**Keywords:** Ḥadīth Scholars, Censorship, Shi’a, Ahl al-Ra’y, Mu’tazila

#### ÖZ

Bu makale, erken dönemde derlenen hadis kitaplarının 2./8. ve 3./9. yüzyıllardaki mezhebî tartışmaları yansıttığını iddia etmektedir. Erken dönem Müslüman toplumunda her mezhep veya grup, özgür irade karşısında kader ve sahâbenin konumu/önemi gibi tartışmalı itikadi konularda farklı görüşlere sahipti. Taraflar kendi pozisyonunu belirli argümanlarla savunmuş, Kur’an ayetleri kendi görüşlerini desteklediğinde bunu yeterli görmüş; aksi takdirde, görüşlerine destek bulmak için kapsamlı hadis derlemelerine başvurmuşlardı. Ancak kendi görüşlerini desteklemeyen rivayetler de içeren bu eserler onların ihtiyaçlarına her zaman tam olarak cevap vermemişti. İlgili kitaplar kendi kabulleri ile uyuşmayan nakiller içerdiğinde, bazı râviler/muhaddisler hadislerin isnâd ve metinleri üzerinde tasarruflarda bulunarak bunları sansüre tabi tutabilmişlerdir. Çok yaygın olmadığı anlaşılan bu gibi uygulamaların izi 2./8. ve 3./9. asırlarda derlenen hadis kitaplarında

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sürülebilmektedir. Bu makale, *muâraza* yöntemi ile hadis literatüründeki bazı sansür örneklerini göstermenin ve bunlardan sorumlu olan râvileri tespit etmenin imkânını araştırmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Hadis Âlimleri, Sansür, Şia, Ehl-i Rey, Mu'tezile

## Introduction

How loyal were *had ith* scholars (*muḥaddith un*) to the verbatim transmission of narrative chains (*isn ad*) and texts inherited by their masters? Were *had ith* scholars, who occasionally insisted on maintaining even had iths containing grammatical mistakes as they are, leaving them subject to the criticisms of linguists, equally objective when it came to an unacceptable person in an *isn ad* or when the *had ith* pushed the limits of acceptance regarding controversial theological questions? What were the ongoing discussions during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries between *Ahl al-Ḥad ith* and *Ahl al-Ra'y*, *Mu'tazila*, *Shi'a* or other sects on *had iths*? When did the had ith scholars depart from the texts inherited from their teachers, and what were their motivations for this? This study addresses these issues by examining specific examples of censorship found in *had ith* compilations from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. Answering these questions holds significance because of specific claims concerning *had ith* history. For example, a claim that the greater part of *had iths* was the result of the religious, historical, and social development of Islam during the first two centuries<sup>1</sup> can be verified by answering these questions. If we detect many censorship activities during the said period, we should accept this claim. However, if Islamic sources point out only a few acts of censorship, and we can determine these acts only via those sources, we reject it.

The terminology used to refer to censorship by *had ith* scholars is an important methodological issue. As I will mention below, certain sections on particular topics in the classical literature of *had ith* methodology point out to falsifications about *isn ads* and texts. Next, how should terminology regarding such practices be updated? Throughout this essay, I will use the concepts of “censorship,” which is closely related to politics and governments, and “deliberate interference” as synonyms for such falsifications –such as hiding a name in an *isn ad* or changing a word in a *had ith*– about *had ith* texts. It is necessary to emphasize at this point that although I have not identified a direct relationship between censorship by *had ith* scholars and political centers of power, it is possible to indicate that such an attitude became more common during the *Mihna* period. However, during this period, given the government pressure faced by *Ahl al-Ḥad ith*, it seems improbable that a text was redacted in accordance with political considerations. In addition, as this study reveals, such censorship and redaction activities seem to have been rare fruits of theological discussions rather than political ones.

## 1. Censorship and Other Interventions

Redaction (censorship or other interventions) in classical *had ith* literature occurred in one of two ways: either as an interference in the *isn ad* of a *had ith* or in its text. Such interventions can occur for a number of reasons and do not always constitute an act of censorship. They may identify a mistake in a particular *isn ad*, where one or more narrators (*r aw is*) in the chain of

1 For this claim, see Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, translated by C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), 2/19.

transmission are misidentified. They might identify similar "flaws" (*'illa*, p. *'ilal*) in the text of a *ḥadīth*, such as grammatical or orthographic errors. Such issues were common in the early years of *ḥadīth* history, when the conventions of the field were still evolving. They may also selectively quote a portion rather than the entirety of a *ḥadīth* in their work because of their historical context or other factors. This is called *taqṭī'* or *ikhtiṣār* in the classical literature, and cannot be considered censorship, even if intentional. On the other hand, such interventions could also be acts of deliberate censorship—that is, attempts by *rāwīs* to conceal information that they viewed as potentially harmful. *Rāwīs* might elide the name of someone whom they suspected of harboring heretical beliefs, or, alternatively, hide the name of a trustworthy *rāwī* in cases where they feared the *ḥadīth* they were narrating might bring their name into disrepute. *Rāwīs* or compilers might also elide a portion of a *ḥadīth* text out of similar concerns (i.e., that it might be prone to a "misreading" that could promote a heretical idea or harm the reputation of a respected figure).<sup>2</sup> It is these acts of deliberate censorship that are my focus here.

Distinguishing between these two types of scholarly intervention is not always easy, as our ability to do so ultimately depends on our ability to assess the motivation behind the act. How can we know that an *isnād* or text has been deliberately censored? Are there any tools to identify the interventions in *ḥadīths* in classical Islamic sources? Before answering these questions, we should consider the systematization process of the *ḥadīth* science. In earlier layers of *isnād*, particularly when the concept of regular *ḥadīth* citation has not been established, it is normal for a narrative to be cited in various forms. This variation arises from distinct reasons that necessitate the transmission of the *ḥadīth* at different times or places. In the first quarter of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AH, the narration of *ḥadīths* became a discipline regularly applied in teaching circles and among specialists. This narration gradually became text-based, and the transmission of the general meaning (*al-riwāya bi al-ma ḥnā*) faded. However, there are other reasons for the variation in texts after the first quarter of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AH. Such differences are often due to mistakes of *rāwīs*; on some occasions, however, they are the consequences of deliberate interferences that appeal to a particular audience.<sup>3</sup> It may not always be accurate to describe such interference as censorship, even if a narrative, given comprehensively in a book, is given in an abridged manner in another. In such cases, it is necessary to make certain comparisons and take into account the motives for writing a work that includes the narrative,

2 *Ahl al-Ḥadīth's* approach to theological debates, especially regarding God's attributes, was generally unfavorable. Therefore, they censored or euphemized some *ḥadīths*. For a discussion of different types of censorship, see Livnat Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam: The Challenge of Traditionalism (700-1350)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 216-223.

3 Erul identifies three categories of *rāwī* interference: "addition," "diminution," and "amendment." Two narrative examples that he mentions but does not analyze in detail are examined below, see Bünyamin Erul, "Taṣarrufāt al-Ruwāt fi Mutūn al-Marwiyyāt", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 42 (2001), 173-212. Süleyman Doğanay identified the following deliberate interventions in *ḥadīth* narration: a lack of proficiency in the Arabic language, transmission by the general meaning, summarizations, additions, a lack of scholarly seriousness, and political concerns or interests, see *Hadis Rivayetinde Rāvi Tasarrufları* (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2009), 69-100.

as well as that work's internal dynamics and audience, to identify the most accurate text and *isnād* of the *ḥadīth*.

In classical Islamic literature, two main topics seem related to redaction (censorship or other interventions): *tadlīs* and flaws (*al-īlal*). *Tadlīs* discussions connect with the *isnād*, and flaws connect with the *isnād* and text (*matn*). We will, however, examine only a limited number of *tadlīs* examples herein, since in this act of concealing the source of information, the narrator does not mention the name of the *rāwī* or the author, or even mentions their name in an unrecognizable manner, often because of his association with heretical beliefs—not *tadlīs*' historical process. Therefore, it is possible to consider *tadlīs* in classical literature as a redaction that bears in mind the tendencies of an audience in a certain era and can therefore be considered censorship of the *isnād*. The examples of deliberate interference, such as hiding a name in the *isnād* or changing a word in the text, are similar to *'illa* in classical literature in some respects but differ from them in others. Flaws and censorship activities can be both related to the *isnād* and the text of a *ḥadīth*. However, the identification of flaws in classical “*Ilal*” works like Ibn Abī Ḥātim's (d. 327/938) *ʿIlal al-Ḥadīth* and al-Dāraḳuṭnī's (d. 385/995) *al-ʿIlal al-vārīda* is more related to the context of the *isnād* and its problems and less about the text. In contrast, deliberate interferences are usually related to texts. In addition, both the *rāwī* who cites the *ḥadīth* in a disordered manner and the *muḥaddīth* who applies the act of censorship might be reliable. Nevertheless, whereas the flaw, which hinders the acceptance of *ḥadīth*, often arises from mistakes, the act of censorship is a conscious act. In the end, the new text, which is different from its original, has a flaw because of this new situation; this, however, is about censorship and not a mistake since the interference in the text is conscious. Therefore, this essay excludes discussions about disorder and focuses solely on attitudes toward deliberate redaction of *ḥadīth* texts. Such a redaction can be regarded as an activity that aims to transform a text inherited from previous generations in a way that renders it more acceptable in a new context.

How can we prove a claim that an *isnād* or text has been deliberately interfered with? To identify possible problems in a *ḥadīth* and to reach a conclusion about the reliability of a *rāwī*, classical *ḥadīth* scholars often collected all the variants of a *ḥadīth* they could find (*sabr/jamʿ al-turuq*) and compared them with one another (*muʿāraḍa*).<sup>4</sup> Indeed, when different *isnāds* branch out after a *madār*,<sup>5</sup> in narration are compared, both the ambiguous name remaining indistinct and the alterations made to the text can typically be identified. Although comparing different versions of a *ḥadīth* enables identifying the problems of the *isnād* or the text, this

4 For the comprehensive method of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, see Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Hadīth Criticism: The Taqdīm of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (240/854-327/938)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 80-126; Christopher Melchert, “The Life and Works of al-Nasāʿī”, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 59/2 (Autumn 2014), 394-401; Pavel Pavlovitch, *Muslim al-Naysābūrī (d. 261/875): The Traditionalist*. (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 147-156.

5 This concept generally refers to a *rāwī* who compiled a myriad of *ḥadīth* in early Islamic history and narrated them. For more discussions on the term, see Halit Ozkan, “The Common Link and Its Relation to the Madār”, *Islamic Law and Society* 11/1 (2014), 42-77.

act, on its own, is not sufficient to determine the individual responsible for each change. At this stage, it may be useful to detail the comparison method: The existence of discrepancies between the traditions of two *rāwīs* who narrate a tradition from the same scholar indicates that the *rāwī* of the tradition differs from the original, whether through addition, subtraction, or another kind of modification, in the text or the *isnād*. However, this alone is not a conclusive proof of censorship because it is always possible that the scholar narrated the tradition in two different ways or the *rāwī* in question might have cited a different version of the same text, perhaps one from a different period. Nevertheless, when such a discrepancy is identified and no earlier precedent for the variant text can be found, this at least allows us to consider censorship as a possibility. For more conclusive evidence, however, we must turn to contemporary sources to demonstrate that the scholar with the variant account deliberately engaged in censorship. Apart from this method, the most accurate approach regarding the interference on the *isnād* or the text is to content yourself with an explanation made by a person who is truly acquainted with the person undertaking such an initiative.

In classical literature, we seldom find scholars that make a theoretical reference to the censorship/redacting problem or attempt to identify the reasons for redaction on the basis of audience. Nevertheless, it is well known that special attention is paid within *ḥadīth* commentaries to identify names that were left uncertain in the text. *Fath al-Bārī* by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), probably the most meticulous work in *sharḥ* literature, stands out in this respect. A comment by Ibn Ḥajar regarding tombs visited by the Prophet is worth mentioning:

The two persons, or even one, lying in these graves are anonymous. Apparently, *rāwīs* have deliberately preferred this [omitting their names] to conceal them. This is an appropriate behavior. Indeed, it is not appropriate to conduct comprehensive research on the names of persons with negative narratives.<sup>6</sup>

As read, this explanation, which clarifies that there are negative reports about Companions in certain narratives, identifies possible *rāwī* interference in such narratives and deems such intervention acceptable or legitimate. Nevertheless, at this point, deliberate interference in the generation of the Companions and the interference after the systematization of *ḥadīth* transmission should be assessed separately. We must also consider the social environment in which such interference occurs. That is, the narration of negative stories within certain incidents could hurt the person involved or even his living family members, or even lead to a permanent grudge among established families. Therefore, dismissing incidents that may lead to negative evocations of a certain person is not unusual in consideration of the social life of that time. In our opinion, the aspect approved by Ibn Ḥajar is not the foregoing situation; rather, he approves the approach in which relevant names are concealed by latter *rāwīs* for various reasons; in other words, he affirms their redaction for new addressees.

This paper claims that the problematic relationship between *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholars and other schools can occasionally compel them to redact and censor some *ḥadīths*. Therefore,

6 Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, *Hadī al-Sārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifa, 1379), 320.

the issue of *had th* censorship will be approached with a focus on its addressees rather than the place or types of interference. In this context, this article will provide certain examples of deliberate interference directed against Sh 'a, Mu'tazila, and *Ahl al-Ra'y*, before concluding by an examination of these examples in terms of *had th* history.

## 2. Different Groups in Early Islamic Society

In this context, emphasis should be placed upon the *Ahl al-Ḥad th*, whose relationship with different belief groups will be examined within the framework of censorship activities, and who are the subjects responsible for interventions concerning *had ths*. The term "*Ahl al-Ḥad th*" fundamentally serves as an overarching conceptual framework, encompassing a diverse array of temporal and geographical orientations. Emerging from the final decades of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AH, this group aimed to cultivate a sense of unity and cohesiveness among Muslims, thereby ameliorating prevailing societal divisions and shaping the domains of faith and social life in accordance with the paradigm presented by Prophet Muhammad. These individuals believed that the solution could be found not only in the Qur'an but also in the *had ths*, actions, and *fatwās* of the companions, as well as the successors (*t bi' n*). They diligently compiled and categorized these sources based on their subjects. In general, they grounded their viewpoints in *had ths* and encouraged strict adherence to their apparent meanings. Furthermore, they criticized the practice of making *ijtih d* separate from the Qur'an and *had th*. Their approach to religious texts has also inherently shaped their perspectives toward their dissidents. In this context, they have directed sharp critiques toward religious adversaries, notably the Sh 'a and Mu'tazila in matters of belief, as well as opponents in the field of jurisprudence, specifically the proponents of *Ahl al-Ra'y*.

One prominent dissident of *Ahl al-Ḥad th* is the Sh '  community within early Islamic society, who firmly believe that 'Al  is the most deserving figure for the caliphate. In their hierarchy of virtues (*taf d l*), they typically prioritize 'Al  above 'Uthm n, and at times, even ahead of Ab  Bakr and 'Umar. Alongside this, they concurrently voice criticism toward specific *ṣaḥ b s* of the Prophet. The *Ahl al-Ḥad th*, on the other hand, have placed significant emphasis on the virtues of the companions, particularly the first three caliphs. They have centered on the role of the Prophet and his Sunnah as social leaders rather than emphasizing any of the im ms. Through these preferences, they legitimized the prevailing understanding of governance, in contrast to Sh '  communities that consistently challenged the authority. In certain early historical records, the perspectives of the *Ahl al-Ḥad th* on the Mu'tazilites, also known as the Qadariyya, have been shaped by decisive issues such as whether actions constitute a component of faith, predestination debates, and the concept of God's visibility in the afterlife. However, the opponents of *Ahl al-Ḥad th* in the field of jurisprudence were *Ahl al-Ra'y* jurists, who were capable of engaging in *ijtih d* when new social needs emerged, and they evaluated the *had ths* according to their own criteria. Almost invariably, the *muhaddith n*,

who often limited themselves to presenting literal interpretations of verses and *ḥadīths* in contrast to the positions of *Ahl al-Ra'y*, have consistently recorded and critiqued the viewpoints held by the latter that depart from the Sunnah. They did so in dedicated refutation books and specific sections of various works.

### 3. *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* vs. Shī'ite Communities

During the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, the relationship between *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and Shī'ite communities, which were no more than an ordinary minority, evolved into a community under the imamate of Ja'far al-Sādiq (d. 148/765). This evolution into a community with certain principles is an interesting research area. In the practices of discrediting (*jarh*) and accrediting (*ta'dīl*) in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, *ḥadīth* scholars dealt with narratives by pro-Shī'ite *rāwīs* in terms of their scientific competence, accepting them as long as their content was not deemed excessively pro-Shī'ite. Most muḥaddithūn maintained the same attitude in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century; therefore, scholars such as al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim (d. 261/875) included pro-Shī'ite *rāwīs* in their compilations of authentic *ḥadīths*.

Yet *ḥadīth* scholars rarely made it clear who they were addressing in *ḥadīths* books in their titles of chapters (*bāb*), which makes it difficult to identify who they targeted, particularly in texts from the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. Nonetheless, an attentive comparison of the sources of both schools can help clarify these matters. For example, according to the *ḥadīth* commentary books, the titles of numerous chapters in al-Bukhārī's work actually take aim at Shī'ite communities.<sup>7</sup>

For my purposes here, I will evaluate the most fundamental dispute between the two schools, that is, the religious position of the Companions. According to the general Shī'ite view, it is impossible to rely on the Companions for the transmission of religious knowledge and information because they usurped 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib's hereditary right to the caliphate and therefore lost their religious credibility. Inevitably, knowledge (*'ilm*) in the Shī'ite view is thus brought through the *isnād* of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, not through the Companions.<sup>8</sup>

Pro-Shī'ite *rāwīs* showed a special interest in the reports that circulated in *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* circles about the virtues of 'Alī and *Ahl al-Bayt* and the faults of Companions (*ma'āyib / mathālib*).<sup>9</sup> Their interest in compiling narrations within the framework of *mathālib* brought forth a new literature in that period.<sup>10</sup> Fearing that such narratives would shake the reputation

7 For some examples, see Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *al-Tawḍīḥ li-sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Khālīd Maḥmūd ar-Rabbāt and Jum'a Fathī 'Abd al-Ḥalīm. 35 vols. (Doha: Wizārat al-Awqāf, 2008), 9/388, 33/140.

8 For the problem of some *isnād* patterns in the Shī'ite narrative books, see Etan Kohlberg, "An Unusual Shī'ī Isnād", *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), 142-9. For the development of Shī'ite ḥadīth thought, see Bekir Kuzudışlı, *Şia ve Hadis* (İstanbul: Klasik, 2017).

9 For an assessment on how *faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba* became a separate genre in response to discourses against the Companions, see Scott C. Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Ḥadīth Literature and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 255-266. For a comprehensive analysis of the competing approaches of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and Shī'a to the genre of *faḍā'il*, see Mahmut Demir, *Hadis ve İdeoloji* (Ankara: Otto, 2015). See also Afsaruddin, *Excellence and Precedence* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), chapter 6.

10 For the *mathālib* literature, see Muhammed Enes Topgöl, "Writings as a Form of Opposition: "Mathālib"



and position of the Companions, *ḥadīth* specialists occasionally opted to disregard them entirely, but more often they chose to redact them. Such redactions take two principal forms: (1) problematic passages in a longer narrative are excluded from the text, in other words, the text undergoes intentional summarization; (2) the Companion, who is mentioned in a negative manner, is rendered anonymous by a *rāwī* or compiler.

### 3.1. ‘Uthmān ibn Affān and Opposition

In classical *ḥadīth* literature, certain narratives are sometimes redacted to avoid problematic issues or to protect the reputation of the Companions. This section presents an example of each type with regard to ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (d. 35/656), the third caliph in the Sunnī tradition.<sup>11</sup> The first narrative includes a dialogue between ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir (d. 37/657) and ‘Uthmān. Although it is cited completely in certain sources, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), in his *al-Musnad*, excludes some passages. Cited by Aḥmad through the *isnād* of “‘Abd al-Ṣamad → al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl → ‘Amr ibn Murra → Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja‘d,” Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja‘d (d. 97/716 [?]) speaks as follows in the narrative:

‘Uthmān called over a group, including the Companion ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir, and said, “I will ask you something; I would be happy if you approve my words. Tell me for the sake of God: do you know that the Prophet of God prioritized the Quraysh over other people and the Hashemites over other Quraysh tribes?” The group was quiet. Thereupon, ‘Uthmān went on: “If I had the keys to Heaven, I would, by God, have given it to the Umayyads until the last.” He sent for Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr and said: “Do you want me to tell you something about ‘Ammār? We were walking to Baṭḥā, hand in hand with the Prophet of God. We came upon the parents of Yāsir. They were being tortured. ‘Ammār’s father asked, ‘O Prophet of God, will this ever change?’ The Prophet replied: ‘Be patient’ before praying, ‘Oh Allah, forgive the family of Yāsir; indeed, You must have already forgiven them.”<sup>12</sup>

Certain ruptures become apparent in the course of the narrative. Specifically, it is difficult to understand why ‘Ammār became central to the narrative immediately after the Umayyads were mentioned. The problem in the narrative flow can be understood through a report by Ibn Shabba (d. 262/876) via the *isnād* of “al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl → ‘Amr ibn Murra → Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja‘d.” In it, Sālim says,

‘Uthmān called over a group, including Companion ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir, and said: “I will ask you something; I would be happy if you approve my words. Tell me about the name of God: do you know that the Prophet of God prioritized the Quraysh over other people and the Hashemites over other Quraysh tribes?” The group was quiet. Thereupon, ‘Uthmān went on: “If I had the keys to Heaven, I would, by God, have given it to the Umayyad until last. Indeed, I will grant them a favor and use them as government officials even though some

Literature in First Three Centuries AH”, *Ilahiyat Studies* 8/2 (2017), 243-276.

- 11 For an examination of ‘Uthmān’s supporters called ‘*Uthmāniyya* and their relationship with *Nawāṣib*, see Nebil Husayn, *Opposing the Imām: The Legacy of the Nawāṣib in Islamic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 39-64.
- 12 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-‘Arna‘ūt et al. (Beirut: al-Risāla al-‘Ālamiyya, 1436/2015), 1/492-3.

may not like this.” ‘Ammār took the floor and said: “Even if you will humiliate me [*‘alā ragħmi anfi?*]?” ‘Uthmān replied: “Even if you will be humiliated!” ‘Ammār continued: “You will do the same even if you will humiliate Abū Bakr and ‘Umar?” Thereupon, ‘Uthmān became enraged and roughed up ‘Ammār [*fa-wathaba ilayhi fa-waṭa ‘ahū waṭ’an shadīdan*]. People were scattered in fear. ‘Uthmān sent messengers to the Umayyad: “The evilest of God’s creatures! You set me up against this man; I was overwhelmed by him, and I am overwhelmed too.” Then, he is sent for Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr and said: “I had to respond to him as he told me. I should have never pushed him. Now, go find that man and win his consent through one of these three: He should apply retaliation, receive a price, or forgive.” ‘Ammār responded: “I swear to Allah, I will not accept any of these until I meet the Prophet of God and complain him about ‘Uthmān!” When they came back to ‘Uthmān, he said: Let me tell you a story about him. I was in Baḥḥā with the Prophet of God; he took me by hand and led me to him and his family. They were being tortured. His father [Yāsir] asked ‘The Prophet of God!’ Will this ever change? The Prophet replied: ‘Be patient, the family of Yāsir’, before praying, ‘Oh Allah, forgive the family of Yāsir; indeed, You must have already forgiven!’”<sup>13</sup>

Both versions of this narrative come through the same *isnād*, yet Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s version differs from that of Ibn Shabba: it not only portrays ‘Ammār differently but also excludes the incident between him and ‘Uthmān entirely. In other words, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s narrative makes certain deliberate redactions. This may, in part, be because *al-Musnad* is a work that compiles only the words, actions, or habits of the Prophet (*marfū*), excluding the Companions’ words and deeds (*mawqūf*). In addition to being *mawqūf*, however, the excluded parts may raise questions about the relationship between the companions and reduce their reliability.

Identifying such redactions, regardless of their motives, is one matter. Ascertaining who actually carried out these procedures is another. Was it Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal? His master, ‘Abd al-Ṣamad ibn ‘Abd al-Wārith (d. 207/822-3)? Did al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl (d. 167/784) or earlier *rāwīs* in the *isnād* have cited the narrative in different ways in different periods? Because this narrative derives from al-Qāsim, it is improbable that earlier figures, such as ‘Amr ibn Murra (d. 118/736) and Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja’d, were responsible. On the other hand, it is worth noting that Ibn Shabba reached al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl only through the mediation of a *rāwī*. In his *isnād* however, no name is mentioned between him and al-Qāsim.<sup>14</sup> In addition, certain parts of the narrative are cited from ‘Amr ibn Murra by some *rāwīs* other than al-Qāsim. For example, according to the *isnād* of “Yaḥyā ibn Ādam → Qutba ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz → al-A‘mash → ‘Amr ibn Murra” cited by Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja’d speaks as follows:<sup>15</sup>

13 ‘Umar ibn al-Namārī, *Tārīkh al-Madīna al-Munawwara*, ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt (Jidda: Dār al-Iṣfahānī, 1399), 3/1098. In this *isnād*, the father of al-Qāsim is mentioned as al-Fuḍayl, rather than al-Faḍl. In the subsequent pages of his work, Ibn Shabba includes other versions through different *isnāds* regarding how ‘Uthmān knocked out ‘Ammār.

14 In his work, Ibn Shabba reaches al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl by means of Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl, known as Ārim (d. 223/838).

15 Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Awwāma. (Jidda: Dār al-Qiblat al-Thaqāfat al-Islāmiyya, 1431/2010), 16/110.

Companions of Muḥammad recorded the defects of ‘Uthmān and asked: “Who will tell these defects to him?” “Me,” replied ‘Ammār and took them to ‘Uthmān. Upon reading his own defects, ‘Uthmān said: “May Allah put you to shame!” Thereupon, ‘Ammār asked: “May He put shame to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar as well?” Thereupon, ‘Uthmān beat him so much ‘Ammār passed out. [The *rāwī*] said: He was wearing some shorts. Then, ‘Uthmān sent al-Zubayr and Ṭalḥa to him. They said to ‘Ammār: “Choose one of these three things: You either forgive him, receive a price, or apply retaliation.” ‘Ammār replied: “I will accept none of them until I meet Allah.”

This narrative describes the same incident using a narrative provided by Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Shabba. But the *rāwī* preferred a brief narration here, and apparently focused on the defects of ‘Uthmān rather than on the virtues of ‘Ammār. In any case, this narrative supports the possibility that Ibn Shabba’s more detailed account might be more accurate. Because the narration mentioned above is also included in the text by Ibn Abī Shayba, a contemporary of Ibn Ḥanbal, it is possible to say that the interferences by certain *ḥadīth* scholars is an individual act rather than being a collective one.

To understand who was responsible for the redactions in this particular *ḥadīth*, we must analyze how the *ḥadīth* was transferred in the layers following al-Qāsim. The narration in *al-Ṭabaqāt* by Ibn Sa’d (d. 230/845), one of the earliest sources to include this *ḥadīth*, is even shorter than the one in Aḥmad’s text. He offers this report through the *isnād* of “Muslim ibn Ibrāhīm and ‘Amr ibn al-Haytham → al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl → ‘Amr ibn Murra...” His account allows for the *ḥadīth* cited by ‘Uthmān about the virtues of ‘Ammār family, but does not refer to background information underlying the *ḥadīth*.<sup>16</sup> Reports by Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038), through “... ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Abān → al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl → ‘Amr ibn Murra...,”<sup>17</sup> and by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), through “... Mu‘tamir ibn Sulaymān → al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl → ‘Amr ibn Murra...,”<sup>18</sup> are similar to the version provided by Ibn Sa’d.

Certain *rāwīs*, who take the *ḥadīth* from al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl, include additional passages in the text of Ibn Shabba. For example, the report by Ibn ‘Asākir (d. 571/1176) through the *isnād* of “... ‘Abdullāh ibn Bakkār → al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl → ‘Amr ibn Murra...” is in the form of a complete text, albeit with slight differences.<sup>19</sup>

Apparently, this narrative was received from ‘Amr ibn Murra by al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl and Sulaymān al-A‘mash (d. 148/765), and from al-Qāsim by Mu‘tamir ibn Sulaymān (d. 187/803), ‘Abdullāh ibn Bakkār, ‘Amr ibn al-Haytham (d. 200/815[?]), ‘Abd al-Ṣamad ibn ‘Abd al-Wārith, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Abān (d. 207/822), and Muslim ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 222/837). Both *rāwīs* of ‘Amr have narrated problematic passages in the text; the text in the first two *rāwīs* of al-Qāsim are long, while others are significantly brief. This may be construed as al-

16 Muḥammad ibn Sa’d, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣadr, 1387/1968), 3/248-9; 4/136.

17 Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-Awliyā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1405), 1/141.

18 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīna al-Salām*. ed. Bashshār Awwād Ma‘rūf (Tunus: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1436/2015), 4/506.

19 ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Medīna Dimashq*, ed. al-‘Amrawī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1415-1421/1995-2001), 39/253.

Qāsim narrating the narrative in different ways at different times. Both Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Shabba provide a long version through ‘Abd al-Ṣamad; however, only Ibn Ḥanbal excludes the apparently problematic passages. Therefore, this interference must belong to either ‘Abd al-Ṣamad or Ibn Ḥanbal. Although it is theoretically possible that ‘Abd al-Ṣamad narrated the narrative in both longer and shorter versions, it seems more likely that Ibn Ḥanbal, the standard bearer of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, was responsible for the redaction.<sup>20</sup>

As for how Companions are rendered anonymous in narratives, a narrative from Usāma ibn Zayd (d. 54/674) offers a useful example. As many historical narrations show, on various occasions, those who were unhappy with the practices of ‘Uthmān communicated their requests and complaints to him through other Companions, Usāma ibn Zayd being among them. According to the *isnād* of “Sufyān → al-A‘mash → Abū Wā’il” recorded by al-Ḥumaydī (d. 219/834), when Usāma was asked why he did not talk to ‘Uthmān, he replied, “You think I don’t talk to him unless I declare you! However, I talk to him before I broach the subjects about which I don’t want to be the first to mention.” Then, Usāma mentions a *ḥadīth* about commanding the right (*al-amr bi al-ma‘rūf*).<sup>21</sup> Because the narrative concerns the need to warn ‘Uthmān about certain issues, it was apparently found problematic by certain *rāwīs*, for which reason ‘Uthmān’s name was disregarded. The report by al-Bukhārī through “‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī → Sufyān → al-A‘mash...” mentions ‘Uthmān as “so and so” (*fulān*).<sup>22</sup> Al-Ḥumaydī and ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī (d. 234/849) both took the narrative from Sufyān ibn ‘Uyayna (d. 198/814); in the first text, the name ‘Uthmān is clearly indicated, whereas in the second text, he is left anonymous. Accordingly, the second version must have been subject to interference, perhaps by Ibn al-Madīnī or his disciple al-Bukhārī. It is also possible that Sufyān might have narrated the report in a different manner on different occasions. However, this possibility does not seem likely, given that the texts of *ḥadīths* were generally already stabilized in this period. Sufyān may have deliberately narrated the text with interference on some occasions. Nevertheless, this is not likely, since the divide between *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* vs. Shī‘ite groups widened only at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH.

On the other hand, in the report transmitted by Ibn Ḥanbal through “Abū Mu‘āwiya → al-A‘mash ...,” the name of ‘Uthmān is not mentioned, and he is left anonymous.<sup>23</sup> However, Ibn Abī Shayba, who includes the same narrative with the same *isnād*, clearly expresses the name of ‘Uthmān.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the first text was probably subject to interference. The text by

20 For a discussion about the ‘Ammār’s torture’s report, see Mairaj U. Syed, “The Construction of Historical Memory in the Exegesis of Kor 16, 106”, *Arabica* 62 (2015), 624-631.

21 ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr al-Ḥumaydī, *al-Musnad*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī (Beirut: ‘Ālem al-Kutub, 1962), 1/250.

22 Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arnaūṭ (Beirut: al-Risāla al-‘Ālamiyya, 1432/2011), “Bad’ al-Khalq”, 10.

23 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 36/132. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā recorded this narrative via the *isnād* “Dāwūd ibn ‘Amr → Ḥammād ibn Zayd → Aṣīm → Abū Wā’il,” excluding the name of ‘Uthmān; see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Sifat al-Nār*. ed. Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf (Beirut: Daru Ibn Ḥazm, 1417/1997), 144-5.

24 Muḥammad ibn Abī Shayba, *Musnad Ibn Abī Shayba*, ed. al-Gazāwī – al-Mazyadī (Riyad: Dār al-Waṭan,

Aḥmad via “Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far → Shu‘ba → Sulaymān [al-A‘mash]...” mentions ‘Uthmān as “that [hādhā]”.<sup>25</sup> The same applies to the text by al-Bukhārī, who included the narrative by means of Bishr ibn Khālid (d. 253/867).<sup>26</sup> Narrating the *ḥadīth* from Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far, known as Ghundar (d. 193/809), Bishr left ‘Uthmān anonymous; therefore, it might be more accurate to ascribe this interference to a person from the previous generation rather than Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal or al-Bukhārī. Finally, the report by Aḥmad through the *isnād* of “Ya‘lā ibn ‘Ubayd → al-A‘mash...” does utter the name of ‘Uthmān.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.2. The House of Fāṭima

Following the death of the Prophet, a group around ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib wanted him to be a caliph. Apparently, this group occasionally gathered for discussions at the house of Fāṭima. The report by Ibn Abī Shayba through the *isnād* of “Muḥammad ibn Bishr → ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn ‘Umar → Zayd ibn Aslam → his father Aslam” regarding one such gathering, reads as follows:

Following the passing away of the Prophet of God, people pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr; thereupon, ‘Alī and al-Zubayr went to the house of Fāṭima, the daughter of Prophet, and discussed with her what to do. When ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was informed of this, he immediately went for Fāṭima and said: “O daughter of the Prophet of God! I swear to Allah, there was nobody other than your father whom we loved better among the created. Now, after your father, you are who we love the most! I swear to Allah, I will order the burning down of this very house unless you prevent this group!” They came after ‘Umar left, whereupon Fāṭima spoke as follows: “Do you know what? ‘Umar came here. He swore to Allah that he would demolish this house on you if you did not give up. By Allah, he fulfills his oaths. Now leave right away. Think about your convictions and do not visit me again.” Therefore, the group left the house, never went there again, and finally pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr.<sup>28</sup>

The narrative about the same incident in *Faḍā‘il al-Ṣaḥāba*, ascribed to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal through the *isnād* of “Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm → Abū Mas‘ūd [Aḥmad ibn al-Furāt] → Mu‘āwiya ibn ‘Amr → Muḥammad ibn Bishr → ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn ‘Umar → Zayd ibn Aslam → his father,” appears below:

Following the passing away of the Prophet of God, people pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr; thereupon, ‘Alī and al-Zubayr went to the house of Fāṭima and discussed with her what to do. When ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was informed of this, he said: “O daughter of the Prophet of God! There’s nobody we love more than your father! Now, after your father, you are who we love the most!” When ‘Alī and al-Zubayr came near Fāṭima, she said: “Now leave in a proper and quiet manner [*inṣarīfā rāshidayn*]”. They never returned to her [to talk about this issue] and pledged allegiance [to Abū Bakr].<sup>29</sup>

1418/1997), 1/118-9.

25 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 36/145.

26 al-Bukhārī, “al-Fitan”, 17.

27 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 36/117.

28 Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, 20/579.

29 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā‘il al-Ṣaḥāba*, ed. Waṣī Allāh ibn Muḥammad (Mecca: Jāmi‘ at Umm al-Qurā), 1403/1983, 1/364. Although Mu‘āwiya is one of the teachers of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Muḥammad and Abū Mas‘ūd are not.

As evidenced above, even though both narratives are obtained by means of Muḥammad ibn Bishr (d. 203/818), they differ significantly. Although neither narrative touches upon the content of the conversations with Fāṭima, they must have been about politics, given the indication about the allegiance to Abū Bakr and the strong reaction by ‘Umar. In the first version, ‘Umar explicitly threatens to destroy the house; in the second version, simple speech replaces this threat. This was probably due to the interference of the *rāwīs* after Bishr. It is probable that they did not find it appropriate for a Companion such as ‘Umar to threaten Fāṭima and consequently excluded this apparently problematic passage from the narrative. Consequently, censorship is clear here even though the person responsible for it cannot be identified.

### 3.3. The Incident of the Camel

After ‘Uthmān was martyred in Medina and Muslims swore allegiance to ‘Alī, certain groups asked ‘Alī to find the murderers of ‘Uthmān. Because their wish was not immediately fulfilled, they cooperated against ‘Alī. The conflict around the camel of ‘Ā’isha, it is known in the history of Islam as the “Battle of the Camel”. This was the historical context of the battle, and in the end, many were killed. Some Sunnī sources include narratives that indicate ‘Ā’isha’s discontent with the general situation at that time and her wish to return to Medina. For example, a narrative recorded by Ibn Abī Shayba through the *isnād* of “Abū Usāma → Ismā’īl [ibn Abī Khālid] → Qays” reads as follows:

When, at night, ‘Ā’isha arrived near some water called Haw’ab, owned by ‘Āmirites, the dogs barked at her. As ‘Ā’isha asked, “Which water is this?” “Haw’ab water,” they replied. Thereupon, ‘Ā’isha stopped and said: “I’ll certainly turn back [to Medina]!” Talḥa and al-Zubayr said: “May Allah have mercy on you! Slow down! You will go, Muslims will see you, and Allah will make peace among them thanks to you.” ‘Ā’isha replied: “I’ll certainly be back! Indeed, I once heard the Prophet of God saying ‘How will one of you be when Haw’ab dogs bark at him or her?’”<sup>30</sup>

The narration by Nu’aym ibn Ḥammād (d. 228/843) via “Yazīd ibn Hārūn → Ibn Abī Khālid ...,” contains the *marfū’* part of the narrative and the turnback request of ‘Ā’isha who finds out where dogs bark. Here, the names of the Companions who tried to stop her are not given, and the text reads merely, “they replied.”<sup>31</sup> In the report recorded by Iṣḥāq ibn Rāhūya (d. 238/853) through the *isnād* of “Jarīr → Ismā’īl ibn Abī Khālid ...,” the names of those who say to ‘Ā’isha, “You should go on, maybe Allah will make peace among people thanks to you,” are not expressly given.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, the following text recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal through the *isnād* of “Yaḥyā [al-Qaṭṭān] → Ismā’īl ...” differs from the version of Ibn Abī Shayba in certain respects:

When ‘Ā’isha took the road at night and arrived near some water called Haw’ab, owned by ‘Āmirites, the dogs barked at her. As ‘Ā’isha asked, “Which water is this?” “Haw’ab water,”

30 Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḡ*, 21/372.

31 Nu’aym ibn Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, ed. al-Zuhayrī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Tawhīd, 1412/1991), 83-4.

32 Iṣḥāq ibn Rāhūya, *al-Musnad*, ed. al-Balūshī (Medina: al-Maktabat al-Īmān, 1412/1991), 3/891.

they replied. Thereupon, ‘Ā’isha stopped and said: “I’ll certainly turn back [to Medina]!” Someone near her said: “No, you will go, Muslims will see you and Allah will make peace among them thanks to you.” ‘Ā’isha replied: “I heard once the Prophet of God saying ‘How will one of you be when Haw’ab dogs bark at him or her?’”<sup>33</sup>

As can be seen above, the call for ‘Ā’isha to go is clearly ascribed to Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr in the version of Ibn Abī Shayba, but it remains anonymous in the narratives of Nu‘aym ibn Ḥammād, Ibn Rāhūya, Ibn Ḥanbal, and Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965)<sup>34</sup> through *isnād* of “... ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shayba → Wakī’ and ‘Alī ibn Mushir → Ismā’īl...” On the other hand, according to the report by Aḥmad through “Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far → Shu‘ba → Ismā’īl ibn Abī Khālid → Qays,” ‘Ā’isha hears dogs barking and says she will come back. In the end, al-Zubayr says, “You may return, but Allah will make peace among people thanks to you.”<sup>35</sup> This shows that it is Ismā’īl, not his disciples or the authors who include the narrative in their respective works, who occasionally redact the narrative he obtained from Qays. Ismā’īl probably rendered al-Zubayr and Ṭalḥa anonymous in the narrative because this report could detract from the reputation of these Companions, since the response by ‘Ā’isha to the request that she return is considered the origin of the bloody incident of the Camel.

#### 4. *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* vs. Mu‘tazila

Evidently, during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries, *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* adopted a distinctive religious approach, which both coincided with the norms of the masses and nourished their belief. Nevertheless, in matters of religion and jurisprudence, certain other movements criticized and refused to adopt the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*’s religious convictions and the *ḥadīth* accounts connected to them. Criticisms raised by Mu‘tazila, cited by Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) in his *Ta’wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, and criticisms of Bishr al-Marīsī (d. 218/833), quoted by ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-Dārimī (d. 280/894), illuminate this point. These criticisms often focused on Allah’s attributes and the nature of faith, fate, and free will. The *ḥadīth* scholars answered these criticisms by presenting narratives under certain titles in “Kitāb al-Īmān” and “Kitāb al-Sunnah,” which they organized as either separate works or chapters in *ḥadīth* books. In addition, *ḥadīth* scholars wrote refutations directly aimed at the Mu‘tazila as well. What is interesting is that narratives about certain pro-Mu‘tazila figures were still included in *ḥadīth* books, despite the tensions between the schools. Nonetheless, this tension was sometimes reflected in the *isnāds*, and the presence of *rāwīs* with a Mu‘tazilite tendency was considered problematic. This particular issue was solved by rendering such people anonymous.

33 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 40/298.

34 Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān al-Tamīmī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt (Beirut: Mu‘assasa al-Risāle, 1414/1993), 15/126. This tradition closely resembles the first Ibn Abī Shayba text.

35 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 41/197.

#### 4.1. ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd: An Unmentionable Name

Such censorship is observed in Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s *al-Musnad*. At the beginning of the second quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH, the Mu‘tazilite school was at the height of its political influence, and followers of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* were subject to various oppressions. For this reason, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, a *muḥaddith* and a standard bearer of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, was reluctant to include a narration from a Mu‘tazilite *rāwī* in his work. This is reflected in the *isnād* and remarks below:<sup>36</sup>

According to a report by ‘Abdullāh, his father [Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal] said: Yazīd reported us and said: A man reported us. -[probably al-Qaṭī‘ī, transmitter of Aḥmad’s book, writes:] “The name of this person is given as ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd in the book of Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān [‘Abdullāh].”- Abū Rajā’ al-‘Uṭāridī reported us that ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn said as follows: “Family of Muḥammad did not feed on a loaf of oily wheat bread because of him until he died.” Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān spoke thus: “My father had crossed out this *ḥadīth* in his book. When I asked him, he wrote *ṣaḥḥa*, *ṣaḥḥa*<sup>37</sup> on the *ḥadīth*.” Then again, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān said: “My father crossed out this *ḥadīth* since he could not assent to mention the name of the man from whom Yazīd recorded the narrative.”

These remarks by ‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad (d. 290/903) reveal that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was the person to conceal the name of the proto-Mu‘tazilite ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd (d. 144/761), as well as the grounds for this act. As per my understanding, Ibn Ḥanbal initially included ‘Ubayd’s narrative in *al-Musnad* but later scraped it out, probably because he was subjected to certain difficulties during the *Miḥna*. As the author of the book, however, ‘Abdullāh incorporated the *ḥadīth* within *al-Musnad* with certain explanations, although it was crossed out. This remark also indicates that another author, al-Qaṭī‘ī (d. 368/979), had *al-Musnad* copies written by both Ibn Ḥanbal and ‘Abdullāh. Indeed, this must be the only way to say that the narrator, whose name was not mentioned openly in the text of Ibn Ḥanbal, “is recorded in ‘Abdullāh’s book as ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd.” This narration clarifies why Ibn Ḥanbal interfered with the *isnād*, as well as his role as a book’s author in the text he narrates.<sup>38</sup>

Another example of censorship related to ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd is seen in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Bukhārī. In the chapter titled “Kitāb al-Fitan,” al-Bukhārī states in his narrative that “both Muslims, who pit against one another with swords in hand, will be in the fire,” through the *isnād*

36 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 33/181-2.

37 In fact, the record “ṣaḥḥ” can be interpreted in multiple ways. First, this may mean that the mentioned act of *darb* (crossing out) actually took place. If we accept this interpretation, this means Aḥmad did not consider the *ḥadīth* appropriate for inclusion in *al-Musnad*. Second, the imposition of this remark on the crossed-out *ḥadīth* might indicate its appropriate inclusion in *al-Musnad*. Third, this may mean that the *ḥadīth* is authentic. In my opinion, this third possibility is unlikely because the authenticity of *ḥadīths* is not marked in this way in *al-Musnad*. For transcription marks in Islamic manuscripts, see Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2009), s. 283-5.

38 For more information about the compilation of Aḥmad’s *al-Musnad*, see Christopher Melchert, “The *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: How It Was Composed and What Distinguishes It from the Six Books”, *Der Islam* 82/1 (2005), 32-51.



of “‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb → Ḥammād → *rajul lam yusammihī* → al-Ḥasan...”<sup>39</sup> The *rāwī* from whom Ḥammād obtains the report was made anonymous through the words *rajul lam yusammihī*, “a man whose name he did not mention.” ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd is the narrator of the *ḥadīth* from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), while the *rāwī* of ‘Amr is Ḥammād ibn Zayd (d. 179/795), who might therefore be the one who kept the name secret. If this is true, then Ḥammād ibn Zayd narrated a report from someone he called *rajul*, and his *rāwī*, ‘Abdullāh, indicated that “Ḥammād ibn Zayd did not disclose his name.”

This case was of some interest to classical scholars. In his commentary on *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ibn Ḥajar points out to it on two occasions. In explaining the remark *rajul lam yusammihī*, he informs readers that this person is ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd, the prominent Mu‘tazilite, and that ‘Amr was not good at preserving *ḥadīth*. According to the explanation by Ibn Ḥajar, al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341) does not identify himself, simply saying the name is obscure, whereas Moghulṭāy ibn Qilīch (d. 762/1361) assumes that this person might be Hishām ibn Ḥassān (d. 147/764). Nonetheless, this is a remote possibility, according to Ibn Ḥajar.<sup>40</sup> In the preface of his annotation, Ibn Ḥajar gives the relevant *isnād* by al-Bukhārī and adds the following assessment:<sup>41</sup>

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, who is al-Jumaḥī → Ḥammād, who is Ibn Zayd → *rajul lam yusammihī*, who is ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd, the leader of Mu‘tazilite thought. Al-Bukhārī narrated this *ḥadīth* so as to reveal his mistake.

The value of this explanation of why al-Bukhārī included this narration in his book requires further discussion; regardless, Ibn Ḥajar says nothing here about the person who concealed the name or his motives for doing so. In any case, his explanation indicates that al-Bukhārī knew that the name given in this instance was ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd. The following explanations are offered by al-Bukhārī just after the narration and include certain remarks about the stages of the *ḥadīth*’s transmission:

Ḥammād ibn Zayd said: I spoke about this *ḥadīth* to Ayyūb [al-Sakhtiyānī] [d. 131/749] and Yūnus ibn ‘Ubayd [d. 139/756] to ask them to tell me. They replied: “al-Ḥasan narrated this *ḥadīth* from Abū Bakra by means of Aḥnaf ibn Qays”. [al-Bukhārī said:] Sulaymān [ibn Ḥarb] [d. 224/839] narrated the *ḥadīth* from Ḥammād for us. Mu‘ammal [d. 206/821], on the other hand, conveyed us the *ḥadīth* through the *isnād* of “Ḥammād ibn Zayd → Ayyūb, Yūnus, Hishām and Mu‘allā ibn Ziyād → al-Ḥasan → Aḥnaf → Abū Bakra → the Prophet”. In addition, the *ḥadīth* was narrated by Ma‘mar from Ayyūb, by Bakkār ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz from Abū Bakra through his father, and by Ghundar via the *isnād* of “Shu‘ba → Manṣūr → Rib‘ī ibn Khirāsh → Abū Bakra → the Prophet”. Sufyān narrated the *ḥadīth* from Manṣūr [d. 132/750], but did not ascribe it to the Prophet.<sup>42</sup>

Apparently, Ḥammād ibn Zayd heard the narrative from ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd but wanted to obtain it from more reliable traditionalists because he did not want to mention the name of ‘Amr in his *isnād*. Therefore, he presented the same narration to prominent *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholars

39 al-Bukhārī, “al-Fitan”, 10.

40 Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifā, 1379), 13/32.

41 Ibn Ḥajar, *Hady al-Sārī*, 341.

42 al-Bukhārī, “al-Fitan”, 10.

in Baṣra, and then narrated it from them, not from ‘Amr. Indeed, the sources that include the Ḥammād version of the narration invariably give the *isnād* of “Ayyūb, Yūnus, Hishām, and Mu‘allā → al-Ḥasan” or “Ayyūb, Yūnus → al-Ḥasan,” and not that of ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd.<sup>43</sup> This proves that Ḥammād narrated the *ḥadīth* from the aforementioned *ḥadīth* scholars and not from ‘Amr, whom he had rendered anonymous in the wake of this incident. The report by al-Bukhārī is a rare document, demonstrating the narration from whom it was taken in the first stage.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, except for *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Bukhārī, it is impossible to verify that the narration initially came from an anonymous person before being taken from the *muḥaddiths* of Baṣra.

## 4.2. Can Life Be Extended?

The tension between the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and the Mu‘tazila led to deliberate interference in the texts. Through the *isnād* of “Sufyān → ‘Āṣim ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh al-‘Umarī → ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Āmir ibn Rabī‘a → his father → ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb → the Prophet,” al-Ḥumaydī gives the narrative “Combine the hajj and ‘umra, since the succession of these two extends your life; as bellows eliminate dirt, they eliminate poverty and sins,” before quoting the following words of Sufyān ibn ‘Uyayna:<sup>45</sup>

‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jazarī [d. 127/744-5] conveyed this report to us from ‘Āṣim [d. 132/750] by means of ‘Abda. When ‘Abda came, we went to ask him about the *ḥadīth*. “‘Āṣim told it to me,” he said. ‘Āṣim in question was also there. Then we went near ‘Āṣim and asked about the *ḥadīth*, and he narrated it to us as such. I heard the *ḥadīth* from him again later. On one occasion, he narrated the *ḥadīth* by ascribing it to ‘Umar as *mawqūf*, but did not mention his father. However, he often narrated the *ḥadīth* in the form of “‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Āmir → his father → ‘Umar → the Prophet.”

Sufyān said: “We sometimes bypassed the expression ‘extends your life’ [*sakatnā ‘an*] and did not narrate it lest these Qadariyya followers use it as evidence. There is no evidence in their favor in the *ḥadīth*.”

Obviously, the “we” in the foregoing remark by Ibn ‘Uyayna signifies *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*. Since the expression “extends your life” pushes limits of the predestinarian approach among *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, it could not be mentioned in the presence of persons with Qadarī tendencies or where they could overhear what was said. That Ibn ‘Uyayna points to early Mu‘tazilites as the reason behind his choice, not to mention this expression, for two reasons. First, it shows that the tension between the schools, as seen in this example, might have compelled the narrators to interfere with the text in some manner. Second, it shows that the Mu‘tazila, who are often considered as anti-*ḥadīth*, actually considered the narratives from the Prophet or at least made

43 For some examples, see Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 34/87, 150; Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1412/1992), “al-Fitan”, 14, 15.

44 At this point, it is worth noting that al-Bukhārī also included *isnāds* other than that of ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd for the same *ḥadīth* in his work (see “al-İmān”, 12; “al-Diyāt”, 1).

45 al-Ḥumaydī, *al-Musnad*, 1/10. For the same tradition, see Ya‘qūb ibn Sufyān al-Fasawī, *al-Ma‘rifā wa al-Tārīkh*, ed. al-‘Umarī (Medina: Maktaba al-Dār, 1410/1989), 2/692-3; Ibn Abī Khaythama, Aḥmad ibn Zuhayr, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, ed. Ṣalāh ibn Fathī Halal (Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ḥadītha, 1429/2008), 1/282.

use of them as evidence against their rivals, in line with the scientific practices of the time. Sufyān ibn 'Uyayna's words, as narrated by al-Ḥumaydī, evidently attracted the attention of Mu'tazilite scholars and were interpreted by al-Balkhī al-Ka'bī (d. 319/931).<sup>46</sup>

As can be seen, he sometimes blackens [*hanatha*] some part of *ḥadīths* and mentions only the section he wishes.

A closer examination of this narrative reveals a serious reservation about transmitting expressions about the extension of life, as Ibn 'Uyayna indicates. This expression is not included in the *isnāds* of "Ibn Jurayj → 'Āṣim ibn 'Ubayd Allāh → 'Abdullāh ibn 'Āmir → his father,"<sup>47</sup> "Sufyān ibn 'Uyayna → 'Āṣim ibn 'Ubayd Allāh...",<sup>48</sup> "Sharīk → 'Āṣim...",<sup>49</sup> and "Abū Khālid al-Aḥmar → 'Amr ibn Qays → 'Āṣim..."<sup>50</sup> However, Ibn Ḥanbal's *isnād*, "al-Aswad ibn 'Āmir → Sharīk → 'Āṣim..." does include it.<sup>51</sup> What is more interesting is the following explanation by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in the narration of Sufyān, which does not actually contain the mentioned addition: "Sufyān said one hundred times that the *ḥadīth* did not include expressions of 'his father' and 'extends your life.'"<sup>52</sup> The inclusion of this expression in the *isnāds* of Ibn 'Uyayna and al-Aswad ibn 'Āmir (d. 208/823) by al-Ḥumaydī gives the impression that the wording of the "extension of life" was actually present in the original *ḥadīth*. According to al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) was another actor in the transfer of this *ḥadīth*. The relevant addition is included in al-Dāraquṭnī's report through the *isnād* of "Sufyān al-Thawrī → 'Āṣim ibn 'Ubayd Allāh → 'Abdullāh ibn 'Āmir..." After identifying disputes in the *isnād*, al-Dāraquṭnī narrated from 'Alī ibn al-Madīnī, and 'Alī narrated from Sufyān ibn 'Uyayna as follows:<sup>53</sup>

I saw 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jazarī in 123. He came to 'Abda ibn Abī Lubābah when I was already with him. This was the first time I saw 'Abd al-Karīm. He asked ['Abda], from whom he heard this *ḥadīth*, meaning the *ḥadīth* about combining hajj and 'umra. 'Abda replied: "'Āṣim ibn 'Ubayd Allāh conveyed it to me." When 'Āṣim came for the pilgrimage, we asked him about *ḥadīth*. He narrated for us and included the addition 'extends your life.' Sufyān said: "He sometimes uttered and sometimes bypassed these words – the expression 'extends your life.'"

46 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad al-Balkhī, *Qabūl al-Akhbār wa Ma'rifat al-Rijāl*. ed. Husaynī ibn 'Umar (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1421/2000), 1/305-6. Since the narrative is recorded by al-Ḥumaydī, a strict student of Ibn 'Uyayna, and is eventually conveyed by Ibn Abī Khaythama, the note by the researcher of *Qabūl*, stating that the report is fabricated and unidentifiable in related sources, is inaccurate.

47 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Hammām, *al-Muṣannaf*. ed. Habīb al-Rahmān al-A'zamī (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1403/1983), 5/3; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 24/460.

48 Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 8/22; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 1/303; 24/464; Ibn Māja, *al-Sunan*, ed. Khalīl Ma'mūn Shīkha (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1416/1996), "al-Manāsik", 3.

49 Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 8/31.

50 Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, 8/21; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 6/185.

51 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 24/463.

52 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 24/464.

53 'Alī ibn 'Umar al-Dāraquṭnī, *al-'Ilal al-Wārida*, ed. al-Salāfī (Riyād: Dār Tayba 1405/1985), *al-'Ilal*, 2/130-1. Although al-Dāraquṭnī includes the narration with the *isnād* of al-Thawrī, the name Sufyān, which is always intact in the *isnād* and actually referring to Sufyān Ibn 'Uyayna, must have been taken for Sufyān al-Thawrī.

This narration, on the one hand, confirms the words in the text of al-Ḥumaydī; on the other hand, it shows that the mentioned addition was incorporated into the *ḥadīth* very early on. The expressions at the end of the quotation clarify that ‘Āṣim narrated the report in different forms. Probably under his influence and in consideration of possible problems due to this addition, Ibn ‘Uyayna eventually opted not to mention this expression. There is no information about whether ‘Āṣim had such a concern or even whether he had Qadarī tendencies.

The extent to which the intellectual debates between *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and Mu‘tazila on *ḥadīth* narratives requires additional research. A limited number of sources clearly show that *ḥadīth* scholars occasionally interfered with the *isnāds* and texts.

### 5. *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* vs. *Ahl al-Ra’y* / Ḥanafites

Along with Mu‘tazila that based its theology on reason, *Ahl al-Ra’y* was also increasingly being criticized by *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* especially from the third quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AH onwards, as the former had been referring to *qiyās* and *ijtihād* for legal issues. While most of these criticisms were related to *fiqh*, they also reflected theological problems in them. The most common criticisms include *Ahl al-Ra’y*’s lack of knowledge in the science of *ḥadīth*, their failure to take authentic *ḥadīths* into account, and their penchant for making religious judgments through *qiyās* and *ijtihād*, both highly disapproved of by *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*. Prominent *Ahl al-Ra’y* scholars were associated with the idea of the postponement of judgment on the committers of serious sins (*irjā*) as a point of dispute on belief. The harsh feelings of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholars might have been influenced by the good relationships of certain Ḥanafī followers with officials and their reward of being assigned to official posts. Indeed, particularly during the era of the Miḥna, *Ahl al-Ra’y* scholars oversaw most judicial offices.<sup>54</sup>

#### 5.1. Abū Ḥanīfa

The figure at the center of the tension between the two schools was Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān ibn Thābit (d. 150/767). *Ḥadīth* scholars reportedly kept him at arm length and occasionally gave him a rough edge in their tongue.<sup>55</sup> These criticisms led to the writing of books or book chapters against Abū Ḥanīfa, as can be seen, for example, at the end of *al-Muṣannaḥ* by Ibn Abī Shayba.<sup>56</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa is not considered to have been a particularly important *rāwī* of *ḥadīth*; nevertheless, certain *ḥadīths* that were narrated by him were included in *ḥadīth* books. Some *muḥaddiths*, however, did not want to mention his name and interfered with *isnāds* that included his name. An *isnād* in Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal’s *al-Musnad*<sup>57</sup> highlights the conflict

54 For the founding period of the Ḥanafī school, see Nurit Tsafir, *The History of an Islamic School of Law: The Early Spread of Hanafism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), 2004.

55 The relevant criticisms can be found in the voluminous chapter dedicated to criticisms of Abū Ḥanīfa in *Tārīkh* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī.

56 For more information about the *al-Muṣannaḥ* by Ibn Abī Shayba, see Scott C. Lucas, “Where Are the Legal ‘Ḥadīth?’ A Study of the ‘Muṣannaḥ’ of Ibn Abī Shayba”, *Islamic Law and Society* 15/3 (2008), 283-314.

57 Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 38/132: “*ḥaddathanā* Ishāq ibn Yūsuf *akhbaranā* Abū Qilāba *kazhā qāla* Abī

between *Ahl al-Ra'y* and *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, which grew gradually more distinct during and after the Miḥna period. In this *isnād*, the name of the person from whom Iṣḥāq ibn Yūsuf (d. 195/811) narrated the report is given as “Abū Fulāna.” According to *al-Musnad* editors, after this unusual nickname (*kunya*), ‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad entered and claimed that the relevant interference was actually carried out by his father, Ibn Ḥanbal. For this reason, I believe the translation should read as follows: “Abū Fulāna informed us. [‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad said:] My father said thus [*kadhā qāla abī*]. He deliberately omitted his name. Someone other than him narrated this *ḥadīth* to us and gave his name. He means Abū Ḥanīfa.” On this reading, ‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad identifies Abū Fulāna as Abū Ḥanīfa through another *isnād* for the same *ḥadīth*. Nevertheless, there is another possibility regarding the identity of the person speaking. Indeed, according to another reading, based on slightly different punctuation, the translation of the text should be as follows: “Abū Fulāna informed us. This is how it is. My father said [*kadhā. Qāla abī*]: ‘He deliberately did not mention his name. Someone other than him narrated this *ḥadīth* to us and gave his name. He means Abū Ḥanīfa.’” In this case, Iṣḥāq ibn Yūsuf is the one who deliberately concealed the relevant name.

Of these two possibilities, I believe the first is better. Not once in his *al-Musnad* does Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal use Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān ibn Thābit as a *rāwī*. I verified this fact through the *isnād* of “Muḥammad ibn Bashshār → Iṣḥāq al-Azraq → al-Nu‘mān → Alqama → Ibn Buraydah → his father” in *al-Musnad* by al-Rūyānī (d. 307/919-920).<sup>58</sup> Here, al-Rūyānī attains the report of Iṣḥāq ibn Yūsuf, known as al-Azraq, by means of Muḥammad ibn Bashshār (d. 252/866), and in the *isnād*, Iṣḥāq ibn Yūsuf clearly identifies the person from whom he obtained the report, calling him “al-Nu‘mān”. Therefore, it is necessary to ascribe this interference to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Strikingly enough, the conflict between *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and *Ahl al-Ra'y* at the time even penetrated certain interferences regarding names in the *isnāds*, in such a manner as to evoke censorship. Another significant point is that the explanation by ‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad attributing the interference to his father was probably recorded in the *isnād* by Abū Bakr al-Qatī‘ī, the transmitter of *al-Musnad*. However, we could not identify the source from which ‘Abdullāh learned that the nickname mentioned therein was actually meant for Abū Ḥanīfa.

## 5.2. Nūḥ ibn Abī Maryam

There is no general attitude adopted by *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholars toward the *rāwīs* of the Ḥanafī School. It is not certain whether they rejected them all or not; so, each *rāwī* should be evaluated separately. However, it is evident that Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) and Muḥammad al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805), were not considered to be transmitters of *ḥadīth* – as they were not originally *ḥadīth* scholars – although they had separate *ḥadīth* compilations known as *al-Āthār*

lam yusammihī ‘alā ‘amdin wa ḥaddathanā ghayruhū fa-sammāhu ya ‘nī Abā Ḥanīfa ‘an ‘Alqama ibn Marthad ‘an Sulaymān ibn Burayda ‘an abīhi.”

58 Muḥammad ibn Hārūn al-Rūyānī, *al-Musnad*, ed. Ayman ‘Alī ([Cairo]: Mu‘assasat Qurṭuba – Riyad: Dār al-Rāya, 1995/1416), 1/63.

which were probably taken from their master Abū Ḥanīfa. Apart from these two, attitudes toward Abū ‘Isma Nūḥ ibn Abī Maryam (d. 173/789), who received his Ḥanafī teachings directly from Abū Ḥanīfa as one of his early disciples, are quite interesting. As Nūḥ was not regarded as a reputable *rāwī*; his inclusion in specific *isnāds* apparently disturbed certain *ḥadīth* scholars. A relevant narrative was recorded by Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn (d. 233/848), a prominent figure in *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*. According to this narrative, Naṣr ibn Bāb (d. 193/809[?]) was dictating the book of ‘Awf al-A-‘rābī (d. 146/763) to Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn. However, at one point in his dictum, he hesitated for a moment, which made Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn suspicious. When Yaḥyā took the text of his master, he discovered that Naṣr reached ‘Awf through Nūḥ ibn Abī Maryam. Yaḥyā thus learned that his master, in his moment of hesitation, skipped the name of Nūḥ ibn Abī Maryam while narrating the *ḥadīth* to his disciples. Therefore, Ibn Ma‘īn abandoned Naṣr.<sup>59</sup> Apparently, even though there is no record of the relationship between Naṣr and Ḥanafī thought, Naṣr probably excluded Nūḥ ibn Abī Maryam with the conviction that he was a Ḥanafī and a weak *rāwī*. This attitude was actually a *tadlīs* that we did not mention its historical process. Yaḥyā was loyal to texts and found it inappropriate for a *ḥadīth* scholar to black out his source; consequently, he no longer obtained *ḥadīth* from Naṣr. At this point, it is worth noting that Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn was tolerant of Hanafī thought,<sup>60</sup> unlike other *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholars.

### Assessment and Conclusion

Among the examples of censorship discussed above, four targets the Shī‘īte community, three the Mu‘tazila, and two targeted the *Ahl al-Ra‘y*. The relationship between the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and Shī‘īte communities requires clarification in many aspects, particularly during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH. In the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH, Shī‘īte communities became completely independent of Sunnī circles and were able to transmit *ḥadīth* within themselves.<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that examples of deliberate redactions and censorship in Sunnī works became more frequent during this period. This likely reflects *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*’s desire not to strengthen the hands of Shī‘īte *ḥadīth* disciples, who were well informed about the content of Sunnī narrations and began to develop their own literature. Simple redactions would have served to protect the disciples of the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* as well as the larger body of people who attend lectures on specific texts from such “wrong ideas”. More detailed studies may reveal additional examples that bear traces of the conflict

59 Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn, *Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Uthmān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2011), 1/3–176, 1/8.

60 Clearly, this problem has not been studied in detail. However, the fatwās at the end of Yaḥyā’s book, narrated by his pupil al-Dūrī, serve as the most fundamental justification for this interpretation.

61 For more details, see Muhammed Enes Topgöl, *Erken Dönem Şii Ricâl İlmî: Keşfi Örneği* (İstanbul: İFAV, 2015), 281, 385–386. For the higher frequency of transitions between Sunnī and Shī‘īte narratives in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AH and the decreasing number of transitions in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH, see Bekir Kuzudışlı, “Sunnī-Shī‘ī Interaction in the Early Period: The Transition of the Chains of Ahl al-sunna to the Shī‘a,” *Ilahiyat Studies* 6/1 (2015), 7–45.

between *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and the Shī‘a.<sup>62</sup> The search for such narrative materials should focus on reports likely to prejudice the position of the Companions,<sup>63</sup> or alternatively, on reports that might support specific jurisprudential provisions between the two schools. A comprehensive analysis of these narrations within Sunnī and Shī‘ite references will enable researchers to reach clear conclusions regarding the relationship between the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and Shī‘ite groups.

Again, it is necessary to carry out a separate examination of the extent of censorship caused by the conflict between *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and Mu‘tazila. Such an examination may focus on *ḥadīths* that contradict the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*’s theological position, for example, faith, fate, free will, and attributes of Allah. Apart from the narrative above about how *hajj* and ‘*umra* extend one’s life, certain *ḥadīths* assert that some acts, such as visiting relatives and praying, have the same effect. The analysis of different *isnāds* in such narratives can provide insights into whether *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholars intervened in the same manner in all such narratives. While comparing Mu‘tazilite and Sunnī renditions of such narratives is difficult because of the lack of a comprehensive set of Mu‘tazilite literature, both secondary Sunnī sources and Zaydī literature might be useful in this regard. In particular, the conflict between *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and *Ahl al-Ra‘y* can be examined by focusing on narratives about *fiqh*. Above all, we need further investigation on how *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholars assessed or interpreted narratives in early Hanafī literature—in particular whether they refrained from transmitting these narrations and whether they censored them. Such a study could be enhanced by exploring the works of al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933) and al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) and by examining the early literature.

Censorship practices, including the nine examples I have identified here and some others that have been studied in different studies, might also be analyzed regarding their time and mode of occurrence. A glance at the periods of deliberate interferences identified here shows that six examples date to the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH. At this point, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal stands out. In other words, most deliberate interferences in *ḥadīths* seem to have taken place in the Miḥna period, when *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholars were subject to severe oppression. In light of the sources, I should emphasize that certain intentional interventions within both the *isnāds* and textual content, which I have identified but have not incorporated into the text, generally took place during this period. On the other hand, later *tadlīs*’ in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century were apparently more affected by a lack of competence in the *ḥadīth* discipline among *rāwīs* than by belief-related conflicts. During the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AH, *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* scholars were very weak as political figures. Transmitting *ḥadīths* was their only weapon, and they therefore turned to redaction to express their discontent with the presence of elements

62 Certain relevant examples exist in ‘*Advā alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* by al-Najafī ([Qom: Mu‘assasat al-Ma‘ārif al-Islāmiyya, 1419], 116 ff). In his *Ma‘ālim al-madrasatayn*, Murṭaḍā al-‘Askarī mentions ten types of interference, which he describes as cases of “concealment” (*kitmān*) and “distortion” (*tahrīf*) ([Beirut: Markaz al-Tibā‘a wa al-Nashr, 1426], 1/393 ff). Nevertheless, please bear in mind that both this argument and examples of such types may include certain tendencies based on *madhab*.

63 For idea of ‘*adālat al-ṣaḥāba*, see A. Osman, “‘*Adālat al-Ṣaḥāba*: the construction of a religious doctrine”, *Arabica* 60 (2013) 272–305.

that supported their rivals in those *ḥadīths*. They did not completely disregard such narrations probably because they wanted to convey other elements in the content of such narration or because they wanted to convey any inherited narration. Nevertheless, they interfered with them in various ways. In consideration of censorship related to Shīʿite communities, it is worth noting that the historical era mentioned above also coincides with the establishment of Shīʿite consciousness.

The acts of censorship vary by place and style of realization. In four of the nine examples of deliberate interference presented here, *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* followers obscured (*ibhām*) or skipped the name of the person they did not want to mention in an *isnād*. In three of these, the aspects likely to negate *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*’s beliefs were excluded, or more precisely censored. In two of these cases, the names of the Companions were obscured because it was considered inappropriate to mention them in a particular context. This situation necessitates a closer examination of anonymous persons in the *isnāds*. Indeed, the presence of anonymous or unknown *rāwīs* in earlier layers of *isnāds* falsifies the argument that the *isnāds* are developed during this period.<sup>64</sup> However, as is argued throughout this study, the concealment of the names of *rāwīs* apparently arises from motives other than consciousness for a complete recording of names, namely, theological and judicial concerns. Additionally, these examples demonstrate the presence of censorship in the *isnāds*, as well as in texts.

Finally, it should be emphasized that apart from censored texts, those that enable identification of censorship are also largely available in Sunnī sources, which contain many narrations that support Shīʿite thought but are not censored. This situation reveals two crucial points: during a research, all available versions of a *ḥadīth* should be considered, and the attitude of censoring *ḥadīths* that support dissidents does not apply to all *ḥadīth* scholars and authors. It is evident that a *ḥadīth* has been interfered with for the following two reasons: (1) due to the presence of dissenting narrators and (2) because the text pertains to *mathālib al-ṣaḥāba*. Since the *ḥadīths* that have such characteristics are relatively rare in the *ḥadīth* literature, examples of censorship are not expected to occur frequently.

64 Bekir Kuzudişli, “Hadis Araştırmalarında Oryantalist Gelenek ve Motzki”, Harald Motzki, *İsnad ve Metin Bağlamında Hadis Tarihlendirme Metotları*, comp. and trans. Bekir Kuzudişli (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2011), 30-3.



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