

The Qur'an as a Criterion for Hadith-Text Examination

Israr Ahmad Khan

Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies
International Islamic University Malaysia
Malaysia

Abstract

Muslims rightly believe that the Qur'an and Sunnah (sayings and doings of the Last Prophet) are the most fundamental sources of Islamic thought, life, and civilization. Yet, they are not equal in terms of authenticity. The Qur'an is fully reliable without an iota of doubt. But Hadith literature contains both reliable and unreliable reports on the Prophet's (s.a.w.) sayings and doings. In order to check authenticity of Hadith and Sunnah as recorded in sources Muslim scholars have developed some criteria, which basically serve the purpose of authentication of chain of reporters (sanad). As for the text of reports, no serious efforts have been made by Hadith scholars. The Qur'an must be considered as a criterion to check the position of text of Hadith reports. If there is an uncompromising conflict between Hadith-text and the Qur'an, Hadith report must be rejected as fabricated and unreliable even though its chain of reporters appears

authentic. In this article ten Hadiths have been selected from al-Bukhari's and Muslim's famous works of Hadith for text checking using the Qur'an as criterion. The selected Hadith in this article are: (1) lies attribute to Prophet Ibrahim, (2) predetermination of human destiny, (3) Irrelevance of Man's deeds for entry into Paradise, (4) coercion in conversion to Islam, (5) Moses' power to delay his death, (6) Moses' condemnation of Adam's error, (7) time involved in the creation of the universe, (8) Transfer of Muslims' sins to Jews and Christians, (9) Eve as the root cause for women's infidelity, and (10) women as source of bad omen. The author sees the texts of these Hadith as in sheer conflict with one or the other statement of the Qur'an hence he suggest that these Hadith are unreliable. The objective of this research is not to discredit the contribution of great Muslim scholars; it is rather to investigate further into the authenticity of Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w.) sayings and doings as compiled and recorded by Hadith scholars.

Keywords

The Qur'an, Sunnah, Hadith, Chain of Reporters, Hadith-Text

Introduction

Hadith examination is a very serious as well as delicate discipline under Hadith Studies. Its origin may be traced back to the chaotic situation consequent upon the assassination of the third Muslim Caliph, 'Uthman ibn 'Affan. During that period many sections of the Muslim society exploited the opportunity to promote their respective agenda, political, sectarian, spiritual, commercial, and material. In order to fully benefit from the situation they fabricated traditions in the name of the Prophet (s.a.w.). One may see that hundreds of thousands of traditions were concocted and attributed to the Prophet (s.a.w.). The currency of the fabricated traditions in the Muslim societies prompted Muslim scholars to rise to the occasion. They played their role in identifying the genuine traditions from the whole lot of traditions. To check the authenticity of traditions in the name of the Prophet (s.a.w.), several criteria were developed. These criteria were to mainly authenticate the chain of narrators, and not the text of reports. The most famous and widely acclaimed collections of traditions

that are considered authentic collections include Mu'atta' of Malik ibn Anas (d.179 A.H.), Sahih of Muhammad ibn Islama'il al-Bukhari (d.256 A.H.), Sahih of Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri (d.261 A.H.), Sunan of Abu Da'ud (d.275 A.H.), Sunan of Muhammad ibn 'Isa al-Tirmidhi (d.279 A.H.), and Sunan of Ahmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasa'i (d.303 A.H.). These and other compilations of Hadith represent the authentication of Hadith only through the authentication the chain of narrators. No Hadith collections were ever compiled on the basis of authentication of both chain of narrators and text of reports. Some Muslim scholars like Abu xanifah (d.150 A.H.), al-Shafi'i (d.204 A.H.), Ibn al-Jawzi (d.597 A.H.), Ibn Qayyim (d.751 A.H.) suggested Hadith-text examination by applying certain universally established criteria. One such criterion as suggested is the Qur'an. Muslim scholars are almost unanimous over the position of the Qur'an vis-a-vis Hadith. According to them, in a situation of uncompromising conflict between a tradition recorded in the name of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Qur'an, the tradition will be rejected as unacceptable. Unfortunately, despite Muslim scholars' wish of Hadith-text authentication through the Qur'an, no serious step could be taken towards that effect. The present article represents a humble attempt to apply the Qur'an as a criterion to check the validity of some traditions recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim in their works of Hadith.

Understanding the Position of the Qur'an vis-a-vis Hadith

People vary from one another in their approaches and angles while deciding about one thing or another. Such differences of views can be sorted out and settled only with the help of some universally established standards. In making judgment about the nature of *ahadith* scholars may differ from one another. In such situation the first criterion to be looked at is the *Qur'an*. It does not represent any human mind; it is revealed speech of Allah. It is in its own words "the criterion" (*al-Furqan*):

It was the month of Ramadhan in which the Qur'an was bestowed from on high as a guidance unto man, and a self-evident proof of that guidance, and as the criterion by which to discern the true from the false.

(2:185)

And it is He who has bestowed from on high the criterion by which to discern the true from the false.

(3:4)

Hallowed is He who from on high, step by step, has bestowed upon His servant the criterion by which to discern the true from the false.

(25:1)

It is a God-given criterion, which spells out what is right and what is wrong. As the *Qur'an* tells us, Allah revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.) two things, the *Qur'an* and its *bayan* (interpretation):

Thus, when We recite it, follow its wording: and then, behold, its bayan (interpretation) will be upon Us.

(75:18-19)

Hadith and Sunnah of the Prophet (s.a.w.) serve undoubtedly as the interpretation of the *Qur'an*. Thus the Prophet's utterances and practices symbolize the *bayan*. In that case both the *Qur'an* and *Bayan* should complement each other. There should be perfect harmony between the two. If any component of *bayan* i.e. *Hadith* contrasts with the *Qur'an*, the tradition attributed to the Prophet (s.a.w.) may be forthrightly rejected as unacceptable. The Book of Allah is not only to guide but also serves as mediator in a situation of dispute. *Surat al-Nisa'*: 59 reads:

O you who have attained to faith! Pay heed unto Allah, and unto the Apostle, and unto those from among you who have been entrusted with authority; and if you are at variance over any matter, refer it to unto Allah and the Apostle.

This *verse* exhorts the believers to make Allah and His Prophet as the judge in their disputed matter. Compilations of *Hadith* are not free from controversies in terms of contents. The *Qur'an* represents Allah's authority. The contents of *Ahadith* can be checked with the *Qur'an*. If there is no conflict between the two, *Ahadith* should be declared as authentic. In case of apparent conflict, traditions should be categorized as unreliable.

‘A’ishah’s Approach

The Prophet’s wife ‘A’ishah was repository of knowledge. She was consulted time and again by the people concerning the Qur’anic revelations, statements of the Prophet (s.a.w.), practices of the Prophet (s.a.w.), and Islamic law. She served as a teacher to the knowledgeable as well as the students, young and old, senior Companions and junior ones, women and men. She was approached for getting one or the other problem resolved not only after the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) demise but also during the Prophet’s (s.a.w.) own time. Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari observes the position of ‘A’ishah among the Companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.) in these words:

Whenever we faced a problem concerning Prophetic tradition, we approached ‘A’ishah and we found the academic solution with her.¹

Her approach to Hadith vis-a-vis the Qur’an will be found crystal clear from the examples quoted below.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) once said: “One, who was called to account (on the Day of Judgment), was punished”.² ‘A’ishah (d.57 A.H.) found it contrary to a Qur’anic statement (84:7-8: “*As for him whose record shall be placed in his right hand, he will in time be called to account with an easy accounting*”). She shared her concern with the Prophet (s.a.w.) who satisfied her by saying: That is the easy reckoning; but he who was questioned is bound to be doomed”.³

Here in this account ‘A’ishah’s concern shows that *Hadith* should not contradict the *Qur’an*. After the demise of the Prophet (s.a.w.), she commanded the respect of the Muslims not only as the mother of believers but also as a repository of knowledge. People used to contact her for understanding something or the other, particularly the matters related to the Prophet’s utterances.

She was asked this question: Is Ibn ‘Umar’s report—“the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: “They (the dead) hear what I say”—true? She, then, denied the authenticity of this report, presented what the Prophet really said (“They know what I say is true”), and in the end recited two *ayat*: 1) “*Verily, you cannot make the dead hear*” (27:80), and 2) “*You cannot make those hear who are in graves*” (35:22).⁴ By quoting the *Qur’an* she

wanted to make it clear that the Prophet (s.a.w.) cannot say anything against the *Qur'an*.

When 'Umar was wounded seriously, Suhayb started crying. Upon this, 'Umar said: "Why are you crying for me? I heard the Prophet (s.a.w.) saying: Verily the dead is punished due to some of the cries its people make on it". After the death of 'Umar, this tradition was brought to the notice of 'A'ishah. She said: The Prophet (s.a.w.) did not say that, but what he said in this regard was this: "Verily, Allah increases the torment of the non-believer due to the cries of his relatives for him". She further said: The Qur'an should be enough for you in this matter. It says:

And no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another's burden.

(6:164; 17:15; 35:18; 39:7; 53:38).⁵

'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas is reported to have viewed that the Prophet (s.a.w.) saw Allah twice. When this was brought to 'A'ishah, she forthrightly rejected the opinion and recited a verse from the Qur'an:

No human vision can encompass him, whereas He encompasses all human visions: for He alone is unfathomable, all aware.

(6:103).⁶

Abu Hurayrah's report of a Prophetic tradition was quoted to 'A'ishah: "Evil portents are in the woman, the animal, and the residence". She immediately corrected it saying: "The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: the people of the ignorance period used to say that the evil omens are in the woman, the animal, and the residence". She, then, quoted a Qur'anic verse to further confirm her stand:

No calamity can ever befall the earth and neither your own selves, unless it be in Our decree before We bring it into being.

(57:22).⁷

With regard to the temporary marriage (*mut'ah*) there was controversy among Muslims. Some favored to retain it and others considered it prohibited forever. When this issue was presented to 'A'ishah, she said:

Between me and you is the Book of Allah; it says: "And who safeguard their chastity, except with those joined to them in marriage bond or whom their right hands possess: for they are free from blame.

(23:5-6)

Hence one who desired other than whom Allah granted him in marriage or whom Allah gave him as his possession transgressed.⁸

'Umar's Stand

'Umar ibn al-Khattab (d.23 A.H.) once immediately rejected a statement attributed to the Prophet by Fatimah bint Qays, a female Companion, as unacceptable on the ground that it was against the *Qur'an*. Fatimah claimed that after she had been divorced three times by her husband, the Prophet (s.a.w.) judged that she had no right to alimony and lodging.⁹ 'Umar's rejection of this Hadith was based on a *Qur'anic* statement (65:1 "*Do not expel them i.e. divorcees from their homes; and neither shall they leave unless they become openly guilty of immoral act*").¹⁰

'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas' Attitude

Someone reported a statement of the Prophet (s.a.w.) putting ban on the meat of the domestic donkeys. 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas rejected the authenticity of the report on the basis a verse from the *Qur'an*:

Say: I find not in the message revealed to me any meat forbidden for one who wishes to eat it, unless it be dead meat, or blood poured forth. Or the flesh of swine—for it is an abomination—or what is impious on which a name other than Allah has been invoked.

(6:145).¹¹

Abu Hanifah's Remark

Nu'man ibn Thabit Abu Hanifah (d.150 A.H.) remarked in his treatise, "Al-'Alim wa al-Muta'allim" (The Knowledgeable and the Student) that it must be believed in that the Prophet (s.a.w.) never said anything unjust and never uttered and did anything against the Qur'an. He was of the view that any tradition in the name of the Prophet (s.a.w.) which was in clash with the Qur'an was to be rejected as false. He clarified that his rejection of a tradition was not the rejection of the Prophet's statement but that of one or the other narrator's lie attributed to the Prophet (s.a.w.).¹²

Al-Shafi'i's Observation

Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (d.204 A.H.) observed in his masterpiece, al-Umm that if a Hadith was in contrast with the Qur'an, it could not be from the Prophet (s.a.w.), even though it was narrated by authentic narrators. For that matter he quoted a Hadith of the Prophet (s.a.w.):

Hadith will, indeed, spread far and wide in my name; whatever thereof is in conformity with the Qur'an is genuinely mine; and whatever thereof clashes with the Qur'an is certainly not from me.¹³

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyy's Comment

In response to a tradition attributed to the Prophet (s.a.w.)—"the life of the world is seven thousand years and we are in the seventh millennium"—Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyy (d.751 A.H.) read a verse from the Qur'an:

They ask you about the Final Hour—when will be its appointed time? Say: the knowledge thereof rests with my Lord alone; none but He can reveal as to when it will occur. Heavy were its burden through the heaven and the earth. Only all of a sudden will it come to you". They ask you as if you were eager in search thereof: Say: The knowledge thereof

rests with Allah alone, but most men know not.

(7:187).¹⁴

Relevant Examples

Certain examples are being given here below in which the texts of *Ahadith* will be checked against the *Qur'an*.

1-Lies Attributed to Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh)

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded a *hadith* on the authority of Abu Hurayrah:

“The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: Ibrahim (pbuh) never spoke lies except three lies”.¹⁵ This tradition comprises an allegation against prophet Ibrahim (pbuh). The *Qur'an* exonerates him of this kind of allegations. It says:

And call to mind, through this divine writ, Ibrahim. Behold,
he was a man of truth, a prophet.

(19:41).

The *Qur'an* reads:

And also mention in the Book Abraham: he was a man of
truth, a prophet”.

(19:41)

It describes prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) as a paragon of truth (*siddique*), whereas the *Hadith* quotes some exceptions to this quality of prophet (pbuh). The Qur’anic word “*siddique*” to glorify Ibrahim (pbuh) means “perfectly truthfull”.¹⁶ Al-Raghib al-Asfahani (d.502 A.H.) mentions four views concerning its meaning: 1) one in whose life truth dominates, 2) one who never speaks a lie, 3) one who is so much given to the truth that the occurrence of lie is impossible, and 4) one whose deeds correspond to his assertions.¹⁷ In fact, prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) was a man of truth in all these four senses. In Arabic this form of any word signifies perfection.

If the *Hadith* mentioned above is considered authentic, *Qur'anic* statement proves meaningless. If the sanctity of the *Qur'an* is maintained, the above tradition will have to be classified as unreliable. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d.852 A.H.), one of the highly recognized commentators of al-Bukhari's *Hadith* work, *Sahih*, seems to be inclined towards maintaining the authenticity of the tradition in view. He quotes Ibn 'Aqil (d.513 A.H.) as having said that the situation faced by Ibrahim forced him to resort to making false statements, which according to him was quite logical.¹⁸ Al-Qazi Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi (d.543 A.H.) approves this *Hadith* by saying that the position of Ibrahim (pbuh) as a prophet and friend of Allah required him to be openly with truth but he was allowed concession and he accepted it, and resorted to speak lies.¹⁹ Al-Qurtubi (d.671 A.H.) tries to justify the *Hadith* by using the same argument as Ibn al-'Arabi developed.²⁰ Ibn al-Jawzi (d.597 A.H.) rejects the allegation of speaking lies to Ibrahim (pbuh) as unfounded. He says that what are attributed to Ibrahim (pbuh) as lies are not lies but equivocations (*ma'aareez*). In order to prove his point he advances several examples from Islamic history itself.²¹ Yet, he remains short of declaring the *Hadith* as unacceptable.

Al-Alusi (d.1270 A.H.) does not find any problem in the authenticity of the report. He says that the mention of lies attributed to Ibrahim (pbuh) is metaphorical (*majaaz*), and not in its actual sense.²² Metaphorical application of the word "lie" may not generally be considered a problem, but to use it for a prophet is certainly undesirable. Moreover it is not imaginable that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) applied the word "*kadhib*" (lie) even metaphorically for the Prophet for whom the *Qur'an* uses the most honorable title "Siddique" (the most truthful).

Amin Ahsan Islahi (d.1997 C.E.) also seems to justify the authenticity of the *Hadith*. He says that the word "*kadhib*" has three connotations, lie, mistake, and double entendre; in the *Hadith* this word has been used in the sense of double entendre. He further argues that the word "*kadhib*" was used by Arab poets in that sense hence there may not be any problem in the report.²³ Even though the Arab poets and orators used the word "*kadhib*" in the sense of double entendre, it is hard to imagine that the Prophet (s.a.w.) used a word which had the potential to mislead the people, particularly when the *Qur'an* takes a very clear stand about the position of the great prophet, Ibrahim (pbuh).

Al-Fakhr al-Razi (d.606 A.H.) categorically declares the *Hadith* as a lie. He suggests that it is more appropriate to accuse the narrators of fabricating the lie than attributing the lie to the prophets (pbuh).²⁴ Syed Mawdudi (d.1979 C.E.) criticizes the approach of those who consider the *Hadith* in view as authentic. He says that these people keep the truthfulness of al-Bukhari's and Muslim's sources of information so much dear to them that they do not mind if a prophet stands accused of speaking lies. It is not reasonable, he argues, to attribute to Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) such a gross statement merely on the ground that the chain of narrators of such tradition is not defective.²⁵ Syed Qu'ib is of the view that there is no need of referring to prophet Ibrahim's statements concerned, as mentioned in the *Qur'an*, as lies. These are not lies but satirical answer meant for the people.²⁶

2-Predetermination of Human Destiny

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have included in their *Hadith* works a chapter on predestination (*kitab al-qadar*). All the reports recorded in it are to conform to the idea that everything in the life is predetermined. The first *Hadith* quoted in these sources is on the authority of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud. According to this tradition the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Verily, the first structural form of everyone of you is gathered in his mother's womb for forty days, then it turns into a clot of blood (*'alaqah*) and remains like this for the same period, then it turns into lump of flesh (*muzghah*) and remains like this for the same period whereupon the angel is sent who breaths into it life, and is commanded to write its sustenance (*rizq*), life-span (*ajal*), whole life activities (*'amal*), and its end either as a condemned one (*shaqiyy*) or as a rewarded one (*sa'id*).

By the one except whom there is no deity but He! One of you indeed performs the deeds of the people deserving paradise until there is almost no distance between him and the paradise, he is then overtaken by the destiny (*al-kitab*); he consequently does the deeds of those to be condemned to the hell, and he enters it. And one of you performs the deeds of the condemned until there is a very little distance between him and the hell, he is then overtaken by the destiny and he starts doing good deeds, as a result of which he enters the paradise".²⁷

According to this tradition, man is not free to think, choose and act; he is bound to do only what has already been fixed by the Creator. This concept of predetermination

is in stark contrast with the theory of examination as mentioned in the *Qur'an*. Around twenty two (22) times the *Qur'an* has reiterated the fact that man is being tested in various ways. Translation of such two verses are given here below.

Behold, We have willed that all beauty on earth be a means by which We put men to a test, to see as to which of them are best in conduct.

(18:7)

He Who created Death and Life, that He might test you, as to which of you is best in deed

(67:2)

These *Qur'anic* statements are crystal clear over the position of man on earth. He lives and acts here as an examinee. The concept of examination entails freedom of will to think, decide, choose and act. The *Qur'an* says that man is to the extent of his needs is free, whereas the Hadith quoted above denies this privilege to man; it binds him to the predestined plan.

The above tradition also contrasts with the concept of malleability of man. The *Qur'an* has used three phrases, “they might” (*la ‘allahum*), “you might” (*la ‘allakum*), and “he might” around 44, 68 and 3 times respectively. These phrases indicate that man is able to change if he wishes so. Three verses are being quoted here to bring the point home.

And we tried them with blessings as well as afflictions, so that they might mend their ways.

(7:168)

Thus Allah makes His messages clear to you, so that you might find the guidance

(3:103)

But speak to him in a mild manner, so that he might bethink of him or be filled with apprehension.

(20:44)

These assertions refer to man as a malleable creature. The feature of malleability does not allow one to think of man as bound and coerced by the destiny.

Here one might raise a question as to the meaning of *verses*, which apparently support the idea of predestination. It should be born in mind that those verses have been interpreted in a way that they appear to be in favor of fore-written destiny of man. This essay does not allow this debate. It might suffice to say here that no *verse* of the *Qur'an* contradicts another *verse*. There is a complete harmony among all the statements in the *Qur'an*. An interpretation of a *verse*, which goes against another *verse*, is not acceptable. A *mufassir* has a duty to interpret the *Qur'an* in a way that the entire *Qur'an* appears as an integral whole. Since a number of *verses* very clearly mention the idea of man's examination on the earth, no *verse* can ever be construed as speaking in favor of predetermination theory.

Most of the traditions recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim in their *kitab al-qadar* may not withstand any scrutiny in the light of the *Qur'anic* theory of man's examination and that of his malleability. What the above tradition declares and what the *Qur'an* explains are both poles apart. There may hardly be any way to effect compromise between them. That is why only one of them can be accepted as right. Naturally, the judgment will go in favor of the *Qur'an*.

Apart from this, the above tradition has an inner discrepancy. There are obviously two sections in the tradition, one informing about the process of predetermination, the other talking about the impact of predetermination on man's life and the end-result. In the first section, there is a reference to only one book (*kitab*) according to which man's life will be patterned. But in the second section, there is a reference to one more book according to which man, to some extent, is independent to decide and act. The book of destiny overtakes the man only after he enjoys his freedom for a certain period of time. Even this discrepancy may suffice to render the Hadith unreliable.

3-Entry into the Paradise: No Role of Man's Deeds

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded this *Hadith* on the authority of various authorities including Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: None of you shall ever enter the paradise due to his deed. Someone asked: Even you, O Prophet of Allah! The Prophet (s.a.w.) answered: Yes, even I, except that my Lord covers me with His

merc".²⁸ This statement seems to be contradicting the glad tiding given by the *Qur'an* that the sincere believers' good deeds will lead them to the paradise (7:43; 16:32; 52:19; 77:43). In both the periods of the Prophet (s.a.w.), *Makkan* and *Madinan*, revelations came assuring the believers and informing the non-believers that the success in this life and the hereafter depends on sincere faith and good deeds (2:25, 82, 277; 3:57; 4:57, 122, 173; 11:23; 14:23; 18:107; 22:14, 23, 50, 56; 29:58; 31:8; 32:19; 42:22; 47:12; 85:11 etc).

The *Qur'an* uses the term "jaza" (reward and recompense), when referring to believers' entry into the paradise (16:30-31). In 23:1-11 it has been clearly stated that the entry into the paradise is the real success (*falah*), which is guaranteed for those with good deeds. Verse 10:4 spells out that the promise of Allah is genuine, and the promise is that He will reward in the hereafter those with sincere faith and good deeds justly. Even the mercy (*rahmah*) of Allah is conditioned to faith and good deeds (45:30). Verse 9:111 announces that there is an agreement between the believers and Allah, according to which, the believers will sacrifice their wealth and lay down their life in the path of Allah, and Allah will grant them entry into the paradise. In short, the *Qur'an* recognizes the significance of good deeds, whereas the above Hadith denies the impact of good deeds.

Ibn Battal (d.449 A.H.), a commentator of al-Bukhari does not find any contradiction between the above tradition and the *Qur'anic* statement concerning the significance of good deeds. He says that the Hadith refers to the man's entry into the paradise and everlasting comforts therein, and the *Qur'an* (16:3 & 43:72) informs about the role of good deeds in determining the status of man therein.²⁹ This is mere surmise. It seems Ibn Battal really finds conflict between the *Qur'an* and the above tradition, but only in an enthusiasm of maintaining the sanctity of the tradition he comes up with this untenable idea.

Al-Karmani (d.786 A.H.), another commentator of al-Bukhari tries to justify the tradition in a different way. He claims that mere good deeds will not cause one to enter the paradise, as the paradise is not the recompense of deeds; entry into the paradise needs the mercy.³⁰ In this view there are two problems. First, the *Qur'an* itself declares unequivocally that Allah has bought from believers their life and wealth and in return He has reserved their places in the paradise (9:111). Second, it is true that there is a role of Allah's mercy but the role of man's deeds cannot be ignored. It is man's good

deeds, which make him deserve Allah's mercy (45:30). If Allah's mercy is conditioned with good deeds, how can one deny the contribution of man's deeds?

Al-Alusi (d.1270 A.H.) comes up with another argument to forge compromise between the two, the above tradition and the *Qur'anic* statement on the matter concerned. He says that the *Qur'an* refers to a general reason and the tradition discloses the real reason for the entry into the paradise.³¹ He forgot to see that the tradition does not give any credit to good deeds at all.

The above tradition is forcefully used to condemn Mu'tazilite's stand that man will enter the paradise due to his deeds. They advance the *Qur'an* to support their view.³² There is a possibility of the above tradition to have been developed with a view to silencing the Mu'tazalite scholars.

Moreover, the second part of the tradition, which mentions that even the Prophet (s.a.w.) will not be eligible for the entry into the paradise without the mercy of Allah, in a way seems to be degrading the position of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.). The Prophet's position is above board. His name is mentioned beside Allah. The question itself (even you, O Prophet of Allah?) is questionable. It may not have been raised by any of his companions who were well aware that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was already a sign of Allah's mercy (21:107).

4-Coercion in Conversion to Islam

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded this *Hadith* on the authority of 'Umar, Ibn 'Umar and Abu Hurayrah etc: "The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: I have been commanded to wage war (*qital*) against the mankind (al-nas) until they acknowledge (*shahadah*) that there is no deity but Allah; one who professed it (*la ilaha illa Allah*), his life and property are safe from me, except for the sake of justice, and his reckoning is on Allah".³³

This tradition offers the idea of force in spreading Islam in the world. Ibn Hajar finds some problem in this report, yet he tries to interpret it in a bid to fend off the blame of coercion in Islam. He says that the word 'war' (*qital*) may also mean something else that can prevent war such as imposition of levy (*jizyah*) on non-Muslims; and the word '*shahadah*' signifies acceptance of Islam or enemy's subjugation, which could be achieved either by killing or by imposing levy or by treaty.³⁴ This interpretation may

not be tenable. The tradition as quoted above declares in an unambiguous manner that the prophet (s.a.w.) was bound to fight the people to force them to accept Islam, and in the case of people's rejection of this new faith he had to continue his war against them until their total submission to Allah. Al-Sam'ani (d.489 A.H.) sees in this tradition, among other things, obligation of *jihad* (war) against the non-believers.³⁵ He has rightly understood the import of the *Hadith*. But this *Hadith* is in quite contrast with certain *Qur'anic* injunctions.

There shall be no coercion in matters of religion. Distinct has now become the right way from the error.

(2:256)

If they turn away, we have not sent you as a guard over them: you are not bound to do more than deliver the message.

(42:48)

So, exhort them; your task is only to exhort: you cannot compel them (to believe).

(88:21-22).

These *verses* too obviously prohibit the use of force in conversion to Islam. All Islamic jurists hold that forcible conversion is under all circumstances null and void, and that any attempt at coercing a non-believer to accept the faith of Islam is grievous sin: a verdict, which disposes of the widespread fallacy that Islam places before the unbelievers the alternative of "conversion or the sword".³⁶ And this verdict of Muslim scholars is certainly based on the above *Qur'anic* precepts.

Here one might refer to certain *Qur'anic verses*, which exhort the believers to fight against the non-believers until the chaos (*fitnah*) comes to a finish and the religion becomes of Allah (2:193 & 8:39). It should be born in mind that these *verses* categorically refer to a situation where the enemy has initiated the war and the believers have to fight back in self-defense. The backdrop of the above two *verses* is that of the battles in which Madinah was invaded by the *Quraysh*. If these *verses* are read along with other *verses* preceding and succeeding, there will not arise any confusion whatsoever. It may be suggested here that the above tradition has also a

historical background confining the fight only against the non-believers of Makkah. There will, then, arise another problem. According to the tradition in view, the Prophet had to continue the war until the enemy accepted Islam. Historically, the enemies were in no war forced to enter the new faith.

Islam does have the principle of co-existence between believers and non-believers. The agreement between the Prophet (s.a.w.) and the Jews stands witness to it. The *Qur'an* commands the believers to interact justly and generously with the non-believers who have no clash with them (60:8). Although war is allowed against the enemy in certain circumstances but in case of Muslims' victory over the enemy use of force to convert the non-believers is in no way justified.

5-Moses' Power to Delay His Death

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded this tradition on the authority of Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: The angel of death went to Moses and asked him to respond to his Lord's call to die. Moses, then, hit the angel's eye and knocked it out. The angel returned to Allah and complained: You sent me to such a servant of yours who does not want death; he gouged my eye out. Allah, then, returned to him his eye and asked him to check with Moses whether he wanted the life.....³⁷ This tradition, even after a cursory look, seems to be a story from Judeo-Christian traditions (*Isra'iliyyat*). It reminds of other stories in the Jewish sources, particularly that of wrestling between Yahweh (Jewish god) and Jacob, a prophet. According to this story, Jacob defeated his Lord in this fighting.³⁸ Some scholars have denied the authenticity of this tradition on the ground that it was not possible for Moses, a mortal being, to harm an angel. Ibn Khuzaymah (d.311 A.H.) calls these scholars as heresiarch (*al-Mubtadi'ah*).³⁹ He argues that the angel entered Moses' residence in the form of a human and Moses considering him an intruder, not knowing that he was an angel hit his eye and injured him. Had Moses, he maintains, recognized the identity of the angel, he would not have attacked him.⁴⁰ This line of argument represents his imagination and speculation. Moreover, it does not make any difference whether the angel appeared in the form of a human and entered the place of Moses; it is not possible for a human to harm an angel.

It is interesting to note that Al-Bukhari has basically recorded this report as a story related by Abu Hurayrah. He only in the end of the report observes that another chain of narrators consisting of, among others, Ma‘mar and Hammam narrates it from Abu Hurayrah as the statement of the Prophet (s.a.w.). Even Muslim has quoted it first of all as a story told by Abu Hurayrah himself.⁴¹ It seems more reasonable to consider this tradition as a story related by someone other than the Prophet (s.a.w.).

Even if the above tradition is considered statement of the Prophet, it may not be found justified. It goes against what the *Qur’an* says. The angel as reported in the tradition was that of the death. He approaches a human only at the time of his death. The *Qur’an* reiterates that time of death is divinely appointed; and that when it comes, there is no way for anyone to postpone it:

When death approaches one of you, our angels take his soul,
and they never fail in their duty.

(6:61)

To every people is a term appointed: when their term is
reached, not an hour can they cause delay, nor can they
advance it.

(7:34; 10:49)

When their term expires, they will not be able to delay for a
single hour, just as they will not be able to anticipate it.

(16:61)

And to no soul will Allah grant respite, when the time
appointed has come.

(63:11)

In the above tradition Moses managed to postpone his death by retaliating against the angel of death. It is not imaginable that Moses did so. Al-Nawawi (d.676 A.H.), in a bid to prove the authenticity of the tradition, comes up with another idea that the angel of death did not approach Moses first time to cause him to die but to put the angel to test whether he is able to carry out his duty.⁴² It is a far-fetched idea, which may not be proved either rationally or qur’anicly. Here it appears that the ahl al-Hadith do not hesitate to use even unfounded arguments based on mere speculation (*al-zann*), which

cannot be the substitute of the truth (10:36). The truth is in the *Qur'an*, and not in the speculation developed by man.

6-Moses' Condemnation of Adam's Error

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded this *Hadith* on the authority of Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: Adam and Moses argued. Moses said: 'O Adam! You are our father; you frustrated our hope and caused our expulsion from the paradise'. Adam said: You are Moses; Allah privileged you with His word and wrote for you with His own hand. Do you blame me for something Allah had predetermined for me forty years before my creation".⁴³

In this report there are several things objectionable. First, Moses addresses Adam by name. It is not befitting for a prophet to address his father by his name. It runs counter to the principle of "*Ihsan*" (excellent treatment) given to all the prophets including Moses (2:83). Second, the son is not supposed to condemn the father for his error. If he is bound to refer to his father's mistake, he has to apply once again the principle of "*Ihsan*". Moses' words are very harsh and unbecoming of a pious son for a pious father. Third, why did Moses condemn Adam for something for which Allah had forgiven him? It is a well-known norm that after repentance the person concerned should not be reminded of his past errors. Fourth, why did Moses blame Adam? Did he not know that the Satan had lured Adam into infringing upon the limit? Allah has categorically mentioned that it was Satan who caused Adam to be expelled from the paradise. The *Qur'an* says:

O children of Adam! Do not allow Satan to seduce you in the same way as he caused your parents to be driven out of the paradise.

(7:27)

Since Moses received revelation, he must have been told about the role of Satan in Adam's expulsion from the Garden. According to Allah, Satan is to be blamed for that, not Adam. Yet, Moses blamed Adam. It is strange rather unbelievable.

While answering to the above observations, al-Maazari (d.536 A.H.), a commentator of Muslim's work, has referred to various interpretations.⁴⁴ One, a son may be allowed

on certain occasions to condemn his father. Yes, in certain circumstances the son may condemn the father, but what was the exigency that Moses found himself obliged to condemn Adam? One may not speculate about any need for that. Two, the law (*shari'ah*) of both Adam and Moses was different from each other hence no problem in a son's blaming his father. Since the parents-children relationship is a phenomenon from the time immemorial, Allah must have revealed to his prophets about the principles of that relationship. We have seen earlier that in Moses' law the concept of "*Ihsan*" was already there to govern the relationship of the two parties. Three, Moses blamed Adam who was already away from the world of responsibility; in the other-worldly life the blame is ineffective; it does not cause any problem to the blamed. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d.463 A.H.) thinks that Moses' blaming Adam was an exception to the rule that "none should be blamed for something against which he has already repented".⁴⁵ This is an oft-applied argument in a situation where there are no rational or moral arguments. It seems both al-Maazari and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr forgot to bring to their minds that in the hereafter no one will ever blame the other because it is a frivolous act (*laghwa*), which is an impossibility in the hereafter:

They will not hear in the paradise any vain discourse, but only salutations of peace.

(19:62)

They shall there exchange with one another a cup free of frivolity, free of sin.

(52:23)

No frivolity will they hear therein, nor any mischief.

(56:25)

No vanity shall they hear therein, nor untruth.

(78:35)

In a Garden on high, they shall hear no word of vanity.

(88:10-11)

Al-Tibi (d.743 A.H.) uses the above tradition to reject the views of jabarite school of thought, on the one hand, and condemn Mu'tazilite scholars, on the other.⁴⁶ It creates

suspicion about the genuineness of the tradition. It is not unlikely that the above tradition was fabricated in a bid to hit at others.

7-Time-Schedule of the Entire Creation Process

Muslim has recorded a *Hadith* on the authority of Abu Hurayrah: “The Prophet took hold of my hand and said: Allah created on Saturday the earth, on Sunday the mountains therein, on Monday the trees, on Tuesday the misfortune, on Wednesday the light, on Thursday spread in it animals, and on Friday in the late afternoon He created Adam....”⁴⁷

This report runs counter to the *Qur’anic* statement. It informs that the entire process of creation was accomplished in seven days, whereas the *Qur’an* refers to six-day process of creation of everything in the universe. Two such *verses* are being quoted here below.

Verily, your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six days.

(7:54)

We indeed created the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in six days.

(50:38)

This information is available in many other places such as 10:3; 11:7; 25:59; 32:4; 57:4. There is no way to effect compromise between the above tradition and the *Qur’an*. It is strange that Muslim’s commentator, Al-Nawawi (d.676 A.H.) has ignored this contradiction and passed by it without any comment. Did he not know about the *Qur’anic* time-schedule of the creation? If he was aware, why did he, then, keep mum on this report? It seems he demonstrated his prejudice in favor of what appears to be a statement of the Prophet reported through reliable reporters. If a *Hadith* appears to be contradicting the *Qur’anic* statement and there is no way of compromise between them, the tradition should be rejected as baseless.

8-Transfer of Muslims' Sin to Jews and Christians

Only Muslim has recorded on the authority of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari three traditions of the same theme.

1. "The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: On the Day of Judgment Allah will produce to every Muslim a Jew or a Christian, and say: This is your ransom".⁴⁸
2. "The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: No Muslim dies but Allah consigns a Jew or a Christian to the hell in his place".⁴⁹
3. "The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: On the Day of Judgment many Muslims will appear with as much burden of sins as mountains. Allah will forgive them for their sins, which He will place on Jews and Christians".⁵⁰

Al-Nawawi, Muslim's commentator seems to be unable to advance any rationale for the above traditions. He, therefore, tries unsuccessfully to interpret them in a bid to maintain their sanctity. He is of the view that what Abu Hurayrah has reported from the Prophet (s.a.w.)—"For everyone there are two places reserved, one in the hell and the other in the paradise. If a believer enters the paradise, his place in the hell will be taken over by a disbeliever due to his disbelief"⁵¹—explains the above *Ahadith*. He means to say that Jews and Christians will enter the hell owing to their own sins and not because of the sins of Muslims. In order to strengthen his stand he derives an argument from another Hadith—"He who introduces an evil act will have to bear the sin of everyone who does it"⁵²—that the non-believers will bear Muslims' sin due to their having introduced evil acts.⁵³ Al-Nawawi's arguments may hardly withstand a scrutiny. The above traditions clearly mention that Allah will transfer the Muslims' sin to Jews and Christians. The second tradition, which he has quoted to explain the matter does not say what he derives from it. He has taken only one part thereof and left another one thereof. According to this Hadith, the introducer of a sin will be burdened not only with his sin but also with the sin committed by others, the while the sin of others will not be commuted. The above three *Ahadith* are categorical in the transfer of Muslims' sin to Jews and Christians, who will be burdened with two categories of sins: 1) their own, and 2) Muslims'.

The above three *Ahadith* as recorded by Muslim alone are as such in gross contrast with the *Qur'anic* statement:

And whatever any human being commits rests upon himself alone; and no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another's burden.

(6:164)

The *Qur'an* rejects the idea of transfer of one's sin to others, whereas the traditions spell out a totally different message. Al-Nawawi does feel very strongly about this contradiction between the *Qur'an* and Muslim's traditions, but suggests interpreting the latter so as to remove the conflict. As we have seen earlier, his attempt to make a compromise between the two apparently contradictory ideas has miserably failed, making it crystal clear that there is an uncompromising conflict between what the *Qur'an* says and what the traditions are conveying. It is interesting to note that when Abu Burdah (d.104 A.H.) quoted the above tradition concerning the transfer of sin to others, on the authority of his father, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, Umayyad caliph 'Umar ibn Abd al-'Aziz (d.101 A.H.) was surprised and he asked Abu Burdah three times: Did your father really narrate it from the Prophet (s.a.w.)? He even asked him to take oath to that effect.⁵⁴ The fifth pious caliph's question seems to be genuine. It leaves an impact on the mind, creating a doubt about the authenticity of the traditions concerned. Although Abu Burdah took oath and confirmed that he heard the tradition from his father, the doubt about its authenticity, which emerged in the mind of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, remains in place.

9-Reference to Adam's Wife, Eve as the Root Cause of the Women's Infidelity to Their Husbands

Al-Bukhari and Muslim have both recorded a tradition on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Were it not for the children of Israel, the food would never get rotten and the meat would never putrefy; were it not for Eve, no woman would ever turn infidel to her husband".⁵⁵

This tradition traces back the causes of two things, decay of food items and infidelity of woman. The cause of putridity of food stuffs, as mentioned in the above tradition, is related to the children of Israel. The cause of women's infidelity to their husbands, as indicated in the above tradition, is connected with the mother of mankind, Eve. It stems from here that the foods were not rotten before the time of children of Israel. Al-

Nawawi quotes some scholars anonymously as saying that when the children of Israel stored the special food items, *al-mann wa al-salwa*, defying the instruction for not doing that, the foods got rotten; and the decay of food from then continued.⁵⁶ This line of argument raises several questions. First, was the storing of food items so serious offence that the entire humanity was subjected to forbear the suffering? Second, why was the entire mankind punished because of the belligerence of Israel's children? Third, why was the scope of food items' decay expanded from *al-mann wa al-salwa* to all kinds of food stuffs? Fourth, were the elements in the foodstuffs that are vulnerable to decay not available in the foodstuff before the children of Israel? It does not seem easy to answer to these genuine questions.

The Qur'an has mentioned the blessings of Allah upon the followers of Moses. One such blessing appeared in the form of special food items, *al-mann wa al-salwa*. We find their mention at three places, 2:57; 7:160; and 20:80. At these places and other ones where the case of children of Israel has been mentioned, one may find the mention of various offences children of Israel committed and also the punishment in commensurate with those sins. None of these descriptions contain any reference to the defiance of Jews by storing the heavenly edibles. The Qur'an reiterates time and again that the major sins cause the displeasure of Allah. Storing the food item does not constitute from any angle a major crime. Apart from that, it is not mentioned in the genuine sources (the Qur'an and Hadith literature) that the children of Israel had been forbidden from storing the food.

The Qur'an makes it clear that the punishment is only for the sinful and not for others who did not commit the sin:

And if anyone earns sin, he earns it against his own soul: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

(4:111)

According to the Qur'an, the burden of someone will not be placed on someone else:

Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but itself: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another.

(6:164)

These are eternal principles of justice as decreed by Allah. There was no way to burden the entire humanity with the burden of the children of Israel. If they committed something wrong, only they deserved the chastisement, and not others.

The putrid nature of edible items is not the manifestation of some nation's crime but it is natural trait of the animate and inanimate beings on the earth. If the foodstuffs were free from putrefaction before the children of Israel were punished, the edible items would not have been alterable even in the stomach. In that case, the digestion system of man must have been different. As a matter of fact, man is created with certain elements in his body. In order to maintain the physical health man needs water, carbohydrates, vitamins, proteins, minerals, irons etc. These nutrients are supplied by the vegetables, fruits, water, lintels etc. These stuffs are vulnerable to decay because the nutritious elements are by nature like that. Man's digestion system demands that the stuffs taken in must be of putrid nature otherwise nothing would get digested and man would never be able to take anything. There might be no evidence to prove that before the children of Israel the animals when died would not putrefy at all. If it was so, the man would not have been able to take meat and digest it. The concept of death is a reality from time immemorial. The death of food was and is its decay hence the decay of the edible stuffs must have been in place right from the day Adam and Eve stepped into the earth.

The second message of the above report is that the mother of the entire mankind, Eve was responsible for man's expulsion from the paradise because she duped Adam into taking the forbidden fruit. It cannot be true. The Qur'an presents the case of Eve in a different manner:

Then did Satan make them both slip from the Garden and
get them both out the state in which they had been

(2:36)

As it is obvious from this statement, Satan tricked both Adam and Eve into taking the forbidden fruit. It was not the case as claimed by al-Nawawi. He brings the interpretation advanced by al-Qazi that Satan persuaded Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and Eve, then, did the same to Adam who took the fruit against the instruction of Allah.⁵⁷ The report goes against the Qur'anic statement hence unacceptable.

Al'Ayni puts his understanding of the statement concerning the role of Eve as reported in the above tradition: "She invited Adam to eat the fruit of that tree".⁵⁸ Ibn Hajar explains the role of Eve in this way: In this statement there is a reference to Eve's persuasion of Adam due to which Adam took from the forbidden tree. Khayanah (violation, infidelity) on the part of Eve means that she accepted what was presented to her by Satan in a beautiful manner; and she presented that idea to Adam in an attractive way.⁵⁹

Both these comments made by al-'Ayni and Ibn Hajar represent classical example of ignoring the Qur'an in a bid to authenticate tradition recorded by al-Bukhari. Had they looked even cursorily at the Qur'anic statement (2:36), they would never have believed what they did. As the Qur'an puts it, it was not Eve who forced Adam to do wrong but it was Satan who persuaded Adam and also Eve. Why should, then, Eve be blamed for what she did not commit at all.

Most probably, the statement as reported in the above tradition was made by some teacher while making the interpretation of the verse 2:36; and later on it was by mistake reported as that of the Prophet (s.a.w.). It was not possible for the Prophet (s.a.w.) to say something which was in contrast with the Qur'an. The bible does blame Eve for causing Adam to deviate from the command of God. It is to be born in mind that the currently available Bible does not represent the original revelation from God; it is totally corrupted; its adherents have modified it to the extent of damaging its purity. There is a very clear conflict between the statement of Bible and that of the Qur'an. The truth is with the Qur'an, not with the Bible.

The above report is a source of humiliation to women. Is it only wife who turns disloyal to the husband? Does the husband not do the same to the wife? Why, then, to blame wife alone? Infidelity on the part of either man or woman is not because of Eve's or Adam's error, but because Allah created man with that capacity. The Qur'an says:

By the soul and Him who perfected it in proportion; He,
then, inspired to it its right and wrong.

(91:7-8)

If a woman and man commit sin against each other, it is because they have its innate capability. It is man's freedom of thought, choice and action that he/she does, at times, wrong and, at some other times, right.

10-Woman, House, and Animal: Sources of Evil Luck

Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others have recorded a tradition on the authority of ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar which confirms the woman, animal, and house as evil portents. The tradition in the words of Muslim is: The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: If the ill-luck was true, it should be in the horse, woman, and house.⁶⁰ Al-Khattabi tries to interpret the report mentioned above in his own way. He says that the evil portent in house is its insufficient space to live and also its bad neighbor; that in the woman is her impudent tongue and her inability to conceive and give birth; and that in the horse is its being unfit for the war”.⁶¹ It is nice to say that but the wording of the tradition does not allow this kind of interpretation. It is very clear from al-Khattabi’s interpretation that he wanted to remove the doubt about the authenticity of al-Bukhari’s recorded tradition. Otherwise he does see problem in the statement reported in the tradition. Ibn Hajar adopts the same approach; he quotes various views which strengthen the idea of position of woman as a source of evil omen. But he himself is of the view as expressed by al-Khattabi.⁶²

If evil omen is really what al-Khattabi and Ibn Hajar say, why is it, then, confined to only women? To these two scholars, evil omen of woman signifies her abusive language and inability to conceive. Are these two problems only in women and not in men? There is no denying the fact men are also of the same nature; they also use abusive and offensive language; they may also be incapable to impregnate their wives due to the non-functional position of their sexual prowess. But the tradition does not refer to men as evil portents. Why is it so?

Can one imagine that the Prophet (s.a.w.) condemned women as evil portents? It is not possible at all. The Qur’an came down to him; he was fully aware of the position of evil portent. The Qur’an says:

Whenever good came to them, they said: “Ours is this”. And if evil afflicted them, they ascribed it to evil omen connected with Moses and those with him. Be informed! Verily, their evil omen are with Allah but most of them know not.

(7:131)

This verse puts it clearly that evil omen is nothing but people's own superstition. Actually, when the people are afflicted with one or the other painful experiences, they immediately try to identify the factor for the pain and generally put the blame on something or some place or some human as the source of bad luck. They forget that their suffering whatsoever was not due to any source of bad luck on the earth but it was because of the divine law according to which both the happiness and the distress befall man. It is this message which has been conveyed in the verse (7:131).

Verses 36:18-19 read:

They said: We see evil omen from you: if you cease not, we will surely stone you, and a painful torment will touch you from us. The Messengers said: "Your evil omens be with you! (Do you call it evil omen) because you are admonished? Nay, but you are a people transgressing all bounds.

In this statement of the Qur'an we find repudiation of the evil omen idea. It is non-existent; it is actually people's suffering and their ignorance about its cause that they develop the superstition concerning evil omen.

When this tradition was brought to the notice of 'A'ishah, she corrected the report that the Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Arabs of the ignorance period and the Jews used to say that woman, house, and animal were the sources of bad luck". 'A'ishah even made the observation that the reporter of the tradition did not hear the first part of the Prophetic statement.⁶³ Ibn Hajar finds the report narrating 'A'ishah's comment defective due to some defect in the chain of narrator. But when he finds himself before some authentic reports narrating 'A'ishah's observation, he makes a judgment that 'A'ishah's interpretation is a far-fetched idea in relation to so highly authentic tradition recorded by al-Bukhari. While negating the approach of 'A'ishah, he says that the Prophet (s.a.w.) should not have made it as a news about the ignorant people.⁶⁴

It seems that the only concern of Hadith commentators is to insist and maintain the authenticity of traditions recorded in this or that book at any cost. Ibn Hajar should not have been so daring to denounce what 'A'ishah said. If 'A'ishah's observation is taken into consideration, the problem in the tradition is resolved without any hitch.

Conclusion

As the Qur'an itself spells out, its position is as the criterion to judge the position of anything including the traditions attributed to the Prophet (s.a.w.). When some traditions recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim were subjected to scrutiny in the light of the Qur'anic statements and spirit, these traditions appeared problematic. Justice demands that these traditions, even though they are authentic from the angle of chain of narrators, should be declared as unacceptable. Muslim scholars owe a great duty to authenticate the compendia of Hadith by using the Qur'an as a criterion.

Note

- ¹ Al-Tirmidhi, Muhammad ibn 'Isa, Sunan (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 1995), vol. 5, kitab al-Manaqib, Hadith no. 3892.
- ² Al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Isma'il, *Sahih* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 1400 A.H.), vol. 1, kitab al-'Ilm, Hadith no. 103.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Muslim, *Sahih with al-Nawawi's Commentary* (Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1997), vol. 3, kitab al-Jana'iz, Hadith no. 2151.
- ⁵ Al-Zarkashi, Badr al-Din, *Al-Ijabah* (edited by Sa'id al-Afghani, al-Maktab al-Islami, Beirut, 1980), pp. 67-68.
- ⁶ Ibid. pp. 85-86.
- ⁷ Ibid. p. 104.
- ⁸ Ibid. p. 139.
- ⁹ Muslim, op. cit., vol. 5, kitab al-Talaq, Hadith nos. 3681-3704.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., Hadith no. 3694.
- ¹¹ Al-Qurtubi, Muhammad ibn Ahmad, *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an* (Dar al-Kutubb al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 2000), vol. 4, part 7, p. 77.
- ¹² Al-Dumayni, Misfir Ghuram Allah, *Maqayis Naqd Mutun al-Sunnah* (Self published by the author, Riyadh, 1403 A.H.), p. 287.
- ¹³ Ibid. P. 297.
- ¹⁴ Ibn Qayyim, Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr, *Al-Manar al-Munif fi al-Sahih wa al-Da'if* (ed. 'Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah, Maktab al-Ma'ibu'at al-Islamiyyah, Halab, n.d.), p. 80.
- ¹⁵ Al-Bukhari, op. cit., vol. 2, kitab al-Anbiya', Hadith nos. 3357-3358; Muslim, op. cit., vol. 8, kitab al-Faza'il, Hadith no. 6097.

- 16 Ibrahim Mustafa and others (editors), *Al-Mu'jam al-Wasit* (Al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah, Istanbul, n. d.), p. 511.
- 17 Al-Asfahani, al-Raghib, *Al-Mufradaat fi Gharib al-Qur'an* (Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1998), p. 280.
- 18 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari* (Dar al-Salam, Riyadh, 2000), vol. 6, p. 473.
- 19 Ibn al-'Arabi, Abu Bakr, *Ahkam al-Qur'an* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1996), vol. 3, pp. 262-263.
- 20 Al-Qurtubi, Muhammad ibn Ahmad, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, part 11, pp. 198-200.
- 21 Ibn al-Jawzi, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Ali, *Zad al-Masir fi 'Ilm al-Tafsir* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 2002), vol. 3, part 4, pp. 266-268.
- 22 Al-Alusi, Al-Sayyid Mahmud, *Rooh al-Ma'aani* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabî, Beirut, 1999), vol. 9, part 17, pp. 85-87.
- 23 Islahi, Amin Ahsan, *Tdabbur-e-Qur'an* (Taj Company, Delhi, 1997), vol. 5, pp. 162-163.
- 24 Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din, *Mafatih al-Ghayb* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, 1997), vol. 8, p. 156.
- 25 Mawdudi, Abul A'la, *Tafhim al-Qur'an* (Idara Tarjuman al-Qur'an, Lahore, 1997), vol. 3, pp. 167-168.
- 26 Syed Qutb, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (Dar al-Shuruq, Cairo, 1996), vol. 4, p. 2387.
- 27 Al-Bukhari, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, kitab al-Qadar, Hadith no. 6594; Muslim, *op. cit.*, vol.8, kitab al-Qadar, Hadith no. 6665. The translation given is of the tradition as recorded by Muslim.
- 28 Al-Bukhari, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, kitab al-Marza, Hadith no. 5673, and kitab al-Riqaq, Hadith no. 6464; Muslim, *op. cit.*, kitab Sifatt al-Munafiqin, Hadith nos. 7042-7054. The words of the tradition quoted above are from Muslim.
- 29 Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, vol. 11, kitab al-Riqaq, p. 357.
- 30 *Ibid.* p. 358.
- 31 Al-Alusi, *op. cit.*, vol. 7, part 14, p. 502.
- 32 Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, vol. 11, p. 358; Ibn 'Atiyyah, *Al-Muharrar al-Wajiz* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 2001), vol. 3, p. 391.
- 33 Al-Bukhari, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, kitab al-Jihad wa al-Siyar, Hadith no. 2946; Muslim, *op. cit.*, kitab al-Iman, Hadith nos. 124-130.
- 34 Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p.105.
- 35 Al-Nawawi, Muhy al-Din, *Al-Minhaj:Sharh Sahih Muslim* (Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1997), vol. 1, p. 160.
- 36 Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an* (Dar al-Andalus, Gibraltar, 1980), p. 58.

- 37 Al-Bukhari, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya', Hadith no. 3407; Muslim, *op. cit.*, vol. 8, kitab al-Faza'il, Hadith no. 6101.
- 38 The Bible, Genesis, 32:22-32.
- 39 Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, p. 538.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Muslim, *op. cit.*, vol. 8, Hadith no. 6100.
- 42 Al-Nawawi, *op. cit.*, vol. 8, p. 128.
- 43 Al-Bukhari, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, kitab al-Qadar, Hadith no. 6614; Muslim, *op. cit.*, vol. 8, kitab al-Qadar, Hadith nos. 6684-6689. The translation given there is based on the report according to Muslim's report no. 6684.
- 44 Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, vol. 11, p. 622.
- 45 Ibid. p.621.
- 46 Ibid. p. 623.
- 47 Muslim, *op. cit.*, vol. 9, kitab Sifat al-Munafiqin, Hadith no. 6985.
- 48 Ibid. kitab al-Tawbah, Hadith no. 6942.
- 49 Ibid. Hadith no. 6943-6944.
- 50 Ibid. Hadith no. 6945.
- 51 Ibn Majah, *Sunan* (Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1997: along with the commentary of al-Sindi), vol. 4, kitab al-Zuhd, Hadith no. 4341.
- 52 Muslim, vol. 4, kitab al-Zakat, Hadith no. 2348.
- 53 Al-Nawawi, *op. cit.*, vol. 9, pp. 87-88.
- 54 Muslim, vol. 9, kitab al-Tawbah, Hadith no. 6943.
- 55 Ibid. vol. 5, kitab al-Riza', Hadith no. 3663; al-Bukhari, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya', Hadith no. 3399.
- 56 Al-Nawawi, *op. cit.*, vol. 5, p. 301.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Al'Ayni, Badr al-Din, *'Umdat al-Qari* (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 2001), vol. 15, p. 291.
- 59 Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, p. 444.
- 60 Muslim, *op. cit.*, kitab al-Salam, Hadith nos. 2225-2226; al-Bukhari, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, kitab al-Tibb, Hadith no. 5753.
- 61 Al-'Ayna, *op. cit.*, vol. 21, p. 406.
- 62 Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, pp. 75-78.
- 63 Al-Zarkashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104.
- 64 Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*, vol. 6, p. 76.