

## POLEMICAL DISCOURSE ON *ḤADĪTH MATN* ANALYSIS IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Misconceptions about interpretation of prophetic traditions have been claimed to have precipitated uncompromising controversies and rejoinders among Muslim scholars in the past and present time, especially in the contemporary Southern Nigeria. It all began as a result of different perceptions deduced by the *Muḥaddithūn* (Traditionists) regarding the verbal reports, deeds and tacit approval of the Prophet. This research paper has examined preservation of *Ḥadīth* from the Prophetic era till the period of the *Tābi'ūn*, the roles played by the Muslim scholars in Nigeria to shed light on the misconstrued '*Aḥādīth*. Historical and analytical methods were adopted in the study to pinpoint the genesis of *Ḥadīth* misconceptions, polemics on selected issues that sprouted up in the recent time, as well as rudiments of proffering solutions to the misconstruction of *Ḥadīth Matn*. The finding has revealed that some Muslim scholars were benighted of in-depth cognition of *Ḥadīth* contents. However, Muslims need to take recourse to unbiased *Ḥadīth* commentaries in order to curtail their intra-religious rivalries regardless of their doctrinal differences.

**Keywords:** Misconceptions, *Ḥadīth Matn*, *Muḥaddithūn*, Scholars, Nigeria

### Introduction

*Ḥadīth*, more than other disciplines in Islamic Studies, has been a subject of controversy among Nigerian Muslims, especially in the southern part of the country, ranging from the religious leaders to the students of knowledge. Although, the issue of *Ḥadīth* could be said to have attained its maturity stage during the three best centuries of Islām,<sup>1</sup> the later generations were considered to be crooked as the fabrication of *Ḥadīth* sprang up thereupon due to sentimental or emotional reasons. At this moment, the canon of *Ḥadīth* criticism and validation was developed by the *Muḥaddithūn*, diversifying the basic

principle of oral reports as entrenched in *Sūratu'l-Hujurāt* (Q.49:6). This verse emphasizes the idea of verifying the correctness of information and the curiosity to ascertaining the truth beyond a reasonable doubt vis-à-vis the proofs of the sources of *Sharī'ah*, among which the *Ḥadīth* is a primary source. Furthermore, it is impartial to assert that the strange ideologies of misinterpreting the *Ḥadīth* and passing a misleading verdict thereof could be seen as a manifestation of the prophecy in *Ṣaḥīḥul 'l-Bukhārī*.<sup>2</sup> This study examines adequacy of *Ḥadīth* curriculum in the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Nigerian Universities as well as polemical discourse of the protagonists and the antagonists on selected 'Aḥādīth with the view to ascertaining the correct position.

### **Preservation of *Ḥadīth* during the Prophetic Era and Afterwards**

During the Prophetic era, there were no pressing need for the documentation of *Ḥadīth* because of the existence of the Prophet who was consulted whenever the need arose; and because of the dependence of the *Ṣaḥābah* on memorization and the general prohibition of the Prophet against documenting his statements except the *Qur'ān*.<sup>3</sup> Based on this, it could be said that the recording and documentation of *Ḥadīth* was not allowed initially at *Makkah*. However, after this stage, in *Madīnah* the Prophet gave permission for the *Ṣaḥābah* to write his statement.<sup>4</sup> After the death of the Prophet, the era of the *Ṣaḥābah* witnessed the development of compilation of *Ḥadīth* on one hand, and the evolution of the science of *Ḥadīth* on the other hand.<sup>5</sup> At this same era, they scrutinized any statement claimed to have been reported from the Prophet to a large extent before authenticating it; this could be substantiated with the case of a grandmother of a deceased that came to Caliph Abū Bakr to claim her share in inheritance, the Caliph laid a solid foundation for the principle of authenticating *Ḥadīth* by making enquiries from others and did not give her one-sixth of the property until he had corroborating evidences before him.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, paying more attention to *Ḥadīth Isnād* and investigating the characters of those reporters as narrated by Ibn. Sīrīn in the prelude of *Saḥīḥ Muslim* also became a policy.<sup>7</sup>

With the above analysis of the development of *Ḥadīth* compilation during the era of the *Ṣaḥābah*, one could deduce that quite a large number of *Ḥadīth* were written down in manuscripts (*Ṣuḥūf*) to supplement those that were stored in memory. Therefore, *Ḥadīth* was in this form when the *Tābi'ūn* succeeded the *Ṣaḥābah*.<sup>8</sup> The Umayyad caliph who was a *Tābi'* 'Umar bn. 'Abdil 'Azīz<sup>9</sup> popularly known as 'Umar II in accordance with his pious nature initiated and partly carried out the task. Thus, he gave the first official directive for the collection and compilation of *Ḥadīth*.

### **Muslim Scholars in Southern Nigeria and *Ḥadīth* Criticism**

It is very difficult to state precisely when the criticism of *Ḥadīth* all began. It could therefore be concluded that it is as old as the *Ḥadīth* narrators and reporters. It should be noted that the companions themselves had divergent opinions on the interpretation of the Prophet's oral reports in his lifetime.<sup>10</sup> This lends credence to the fact that the companions themselves differed on interpretation of the Prophet's verbal reports based on their perceptions, but this did not lead them to utter spiteful or disparaging statements

to one another until they returned to the Prophet for clarity. Today, some Muslims had and still continued to criticise the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet from its authentic sources or claiming that the Qur'ān is the only source of *Sharī'ah*. In Nigeria, the criticism of *Ḥadīth* took a very close dimension to that of the orientalisists. The researchers have got paucity information on how the history of *Ḥadīth* criticism all began in the Nigerian society. Al-Fulāny traced the origin of the study and criticism of *Ḥadīth* to the 21st century. He claimed that it was during this very century that the alumni of Saudi Arabian schools in Nigeria started discussing the science and analysis of *Ḥadīth*; vividly explaining the *Sunnah* and antagonizing the heretical doctrines and innovations related to religious matters.<sup>11</sup> In the opinion of this paper, the submission of Al-Fulāny cannot be said to be accurate because according to other notable scholars like Dr. Abdur-Rahman Ahmad Al-Imam, the study, criticism as well as *Takhrīj* (sourcing) of *Ḥadīth* in Ilorin was started by Shaykh 'Alī Jabata, the father of Muḥammad 'Awwāl 'Alī Jabata in his public lectures in 1970 C.E while Dr. Abu Bakr Aliagan of the University of Ilorin, who was reported to be the first PhD holder in *Ḥadīth* in the southern part of Nigeria followed suit. He, in his own case, used to anchor Radio programmes to analyse *Ḥadīth*. Following in the footsteps of the above mentioned two scholars and contributing immensely to the study of *Ḥadīth*, especially in Ilorin, are Muslim youths like 'Abdul-Fattāḥ Sārūmī, who wrote a *Takhrīj* on the popular book, entitled: "*Mī'atu Ḥadīth*" and Nāfi' Arikewuyo Al-Jawharī who anchors public talks to expatiate on misconceptions about *Ḥadīth* in Ilorin. In fact, he contended that the only University to have inaugurated the Department of *Ḥadīth* in Nigeria is the Bayero University, Kano pioneered by Dr. Bashīr and Muḥammad Thānī. This first Department in the history of Nigerian Universities had got the National Universities Commission's approval and had graduated several undergraduate and postgraduate students.<sup>12</sup>

On the study and criticism of *Ḥadīth* in Nigeria, Al-Fulāny submitted further that that could be seen from three perspectives; one, being the method of the alumni of Saudi Arabian schools who focused on interpretation of *Ṣaḥīḥu 'l-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥu 'l-Muslim* as well as other *Sunan* treatises like the classical system adopted by the scholars of *Ḥadīth* in Baṣrah, Kūfah, Baghdād, Makkah and Madīnah. The scholars that are accustomed to this system in Nigeria are Shaykh Aḥmad Ibrāhīm, a retired lecturer of Islamic Studies Department, Bayero University of Kano and Dr. 'Abdur-Raḥmān Aḥmad Al-Imām (of the Arabic Department, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin), who usually explains the principles and science of *Ḥadīth* before its analysis on Harmony FM Radio station, Idofian, Kwara State. The other method mentioned by Al-Fulāny is the modern method that is adopted in the University majorly entrenched by the orientalisists and the western scholars, who following the pattern of the critics first focus on *Matn* before considering the *Sanad* and *Ḥadīth* reporters. An apt example of scholars that adopt this system on television and open-air lectures in Nigeria is Shaykh Ḥabībullāh of Markaz in Lagos. Finally, Al-Fulāny submitted that the third method was that inaugurated by Muḥammad 'Awwāl 'Alī Jabata in his mosque (in Ilorin) which he considered achievable for every scholar and student to partake therein, because of his frequent rebuke of *Kufr* to past and present Muslim scholars.<sup>13</sup>

### Way out of Misconception about *Ḥadīth Matn* in Southern Nigeria

In recent time in Nigeria, the Muslims have experienced intra-religious rivalry on *Ḥadīth Matn* analysis. For instance, the antagonists make reference to the *Ḥadīth* referring to the *Khawārij* and ascribed their attributes therein to the *Sunnīs*.<sup>14</sup> However, the antagonists have interpolated the contents of the '*Aḥādīth*' and gullibly accepted by their audiences. The antagonists proceed to impugn the authenticity of the *Ḥadīth* of housefly in *Ṣaḥīḥu 'l-Bukhārī*.<sup>15</sup> They claim that the *Muḥaddithūn* have to corroborate the authenticity of this *Ḥadīth* with the stories of Prophet Muḥammad, (to have done that once in his lifetime) and the inability to achieve that shows the weakness and aberrance of the *Ḥadīth*.<sup>16</sup> In response, the protagonists refer the antagonists to verse 26 of *Suratu 'l-Baqarah* to debunk this fallacy. Furthermore the protagonists argue that modern science has proven the fact that housefly has in one of its feathers poisonous tendency which could result to pruritus and neoplasm, thus the Prophet commanded the Muslims to dip the housefly into their foods and drinks in order to neutralize its poison with the antidote contained in the second feather. It is concomitantly logical to adduce that the honey-bee produces honey and stings man at the same time, and medical doctors have proven honey as a vaccine for a healthy person to safeguard him from bacterial diseases and to reduce the power of microbe or get rid of it in the body system.<sup>17</sup>

In order to prevent misconceptions and arguments on *Ḥadīth Matn*, scholars of *Ḥadīth* have laid down some principles for criticism and analysis of *Matn*, viz;

1. A sound *Matn* must not contradict a *Mutawātir* narration that is based on the community consensus ('*Ijmā' Qaṭ'i*).
2. A sound *Matn* must not go against rational thinking; laws of nature or factual experiences, thereby exceedingly establishing high reward for insignificant good deeds or severe punishment for minor sins.
3. Any tradition exaggerating the virtues of some '*Ayāt* and *Suwar* of the Qur'ān may not be authentic, but those mentioning superior virtues of persons, tribes and places should be generally rejected.
4. A *Matn* should not violate the basic rules of Arabic syntax and rhetoric.<sup>18</sup>
5. The '*Asbāb 'Urūdi'l-Ḥadīth* (Reasons for *Ḥadīth* Narration) should be deciphered before any legal ruling is enacted thereof. A typical example of this was the case of a fasting Muslim while on a journey in the *Ṣaḥīḥu 'l-Bukhārī*.<sup>19</sup>

### *Ḥadīth Matn* Analysis in Southern Nigeria: A Scholarly Polemic

In this section, the paper considers for discussion, five of the misconceptions debated by the antagonists and the protagonists of '*Aḥādīth*', majorly recorded by 'Imām Al-Bukhārī as well as other *Ḥadīth* reporters in their sound collections.

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

Ā'ishah said: 'Whenever Allāh's Messenger wanted to fondle anyone of us during her menses, he used to order her to put on 'Izār (loin cloth) and start fondling her. Ā'ishah added, 'None of you could control his sexual desire as the Prophet could.' (Reported by Al-Bukhārī).<sup>20</sup>

The antagonists of this *Ḥadīth* alleged the Prophet of having sex with his wives in the state of their menses; hence, they submitted that this *Ḥadīth* should be expunged from the book of Al-Bukhārī<sup>21</sup> and further buttressed their stance with Q.2:187 that reads: '*...and touch them not while you keep to the mosques...*' Ibn. Kathīr argues that the majority of *Mufasssirūn* opine that the verse means it is not permissible for the *Mu'takif* (one engaging in 'I'tikaf) to engage in any sexual act or kissing even when he leaves the mosque, that is, sex is unlawful for him until he completed the ten-day-seclusion in *Ramaḍān*.<sup>22</sup> The protagonists argue that the use of loin cloth ('Izār) by his wives as stated in the *Ḥadīth* logically prevents him from having sex.<sup>23</sup> Also, Imām An-Nawawī is of the view that whoever made having sex with menstruating women lawful would become an infidel.<sup>24</sup> In the same vein, Ibn. Hajar submits that the word *Mubāsharah* in the *Ḥadīth* content refers to touching of the bodies (of both spouses) and not having sex.<sup>25</sup> It could be submitted that the Prophet could not be said to have engaged in such mischievous act as his attitude was likened to the Qur'ān by his wife, Ā'ishah. This metaphor implies that the Prophet had never acted against the laws of the Qur'ān. In fact, such act is considered as heinous sin based on the injunction of (Q.2:222), which forbids having sex with one's wife in her menses.

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

Narrated Ibn. 'Umar: Allāh's Messenger said: 'I have been ordered (by Allāh) to fight against the people till they testify that 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, and perform *Ṣalāh* and give *Zakāh*, so if they perform all that, then they save their lives and properties from me except for Islamic laws, and their reckoning will be done by Allāh. (Reported by Al-Bukhārī).<sup>26</sup>

The antagonists of this *Ḥadīth* claim that its message is contradictory to the verses of the Qur'ān calling for peaceful co-existence in Islām<sup>27</sup> such as (Q.2:256) which says: '*there is no compulsion in religion...*' and (Q.10:99) which reads: '*...will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!*' However, the protagonists of this *Ḥadīth* claim it is not contradictory to the verses of the Qur'ān due to similar verses urging the believers to fight in the cause of Islām, such as (Q.61:2) which reads: '*Truly Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure.*' Another *Ḥadīth* which explained the word *Qātala* is given below:

Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudry said: 'I heard the Prophet saying, 'if anybody among you is offering *Ṣalāh* behind something as a *Sutrah* (a small wooden barricade like the horse saddle) and somebody tries to pass in front of him (between him and the *Sutrah*), then he should repulse him and if he refuses, he should use force against him for he is Satan.' (Reported by Al-Bukhārī).<sup>28</sup>

The antagonists of this *Ḥadīth* claimed that it is one of the fabricated traditions in the book of Al-Bukhārī, because the command to kill the one passing in front of a Muslim who prays clearly contravenes the peaceful nature of Islām.<sup>29</sup> The protagonists of this *Ḥadīth* debunked this interpretation with (Q.49:9). The word *Muqāṭalah*, lexically means, to fight, to struggle, and to combat etc.<sup>30</sup> Al-'Uthaymīn submits that *Muqāṭalah* means to fight the enemies so that the statement of Allāh becomes elevated, thus, that is why the (Q.49:9) urges the Muslims to fight against those who refuse to settle disputes amicably in order to avoid the spread of evil and corruption. In fact, Abū Bakr used the word *Qātala* (to wage war against people) for those who rejected the payment of *Zakāh* until they took recourse to the truth but he did not kill them.<sup>31</sup> The protagonists argue further that killing is far-fetched from the meaning intended by Imām Al-Bukhārī who entitled the chapter containing the *Ḥadīth* as: '*Chapter of returning the one who passes in front of the one who prays*'. They also add that Abū Sa'īd interpreted the word *Qitāl* as to repulse (the person) harder.<sup>32</sup> The antagonists further argue that the *Ḥadīth* nullifies freedom of religion which is the first foundation of faith, and that the *Muḥadithūn* and other scholars do not investigate into its *Matn* and *Sanad*, and its message promoting terrorism.<sup>33</sup> Zarabozo commented on the *Ḥadīth* that the disbelievers of the west have tried to convince Muslims that it is uncivilized and incorrect to fight in the name of religion which is a matter of individual's conviction. Islām disallows coercion and allows persuasion, but the same people of the West sent troops to defend democracy and fight its opponents throughout the world, as if the propagation of ideology is acceptable while that of religion is not.<sup>34</sup> What a paradox!

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

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

ordered that the two (sinners) be stoned to death, and so they were stoned. Ibn. 'Umar added: Both of them were stoned at the *Balāṭ* and I saw the Jew sheltering the Jewess.<sup>35</sup>

The antagonists of the above tradition refuted the report that the Jews were the most contentious enemies of the Prophet in Madīnah, so, is it possible for a person to make his staunchest enemy adjudicate a case of capital punishment over him? So, the Prophet did not judge with the Book of Allāh which is *Jaldah* (100 lashes)...and the verse of *Rajm* is not freed from inhumane and repugnant ruling...in fact, this *Ḥadīth* had placed charges of religious fanaticism on Ibn. 'Umar.<sup>36</sup> Before proceeding to the polemic of the protagonists, it is important to define *Rajm* lexically. *Rajm*, in Arabic, is a derivative of the verbal root *Rajama* which means to stone someone, to damn, to abuse and to revile.<sup>37</sup> The protagonists argued that the verse of *Rajm* has only been abrogated in recitation but its ruling remains in the Qur'ān. Also, the argument that *Rajm* does not conform with the law of *Jaldah* in the Qur'ān is tantamount to false allegation, because the Prophet has the God-given mandate to legislate a new law.<sup>38</sup> The antagonists further denounce the law of *Rajm* by saying that if Allāh had wished this killing for an adulterer, he would have promulgated it with a Qur'anic verse which has no incongruity. The contradiction between the Qur'ān and the Prophet made them to be skeptical about the *Ḥadīth* and verses of *Rajm*, and they believe that all the *'Aḥādīth* reported on *Rajm* are not free from fabrication and affectation.<sup>39</sup> The protagonists, in their response, submit that the prophecy of casting doubt and disbelief in the law of *Rajm* has been mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ-l-Bukhārī*.<sup>40</sup> This *Ḥadīth* is a clear prophecy which has actually come to pass. Furthermore, some jurists argue that *Jaldah* in (Q.24:2) is the only punishment that was legislated for both fornication and adultery in the Qur'ān, while the Kharajites argued that the law of *Rajm* has never been enacted in Islām as a punishment for adultery. However, the mainstream jurists establish that the practice of *Rajm* was carried out by the Prophet in the case of Ma'iz, Al-Lakhmiyyah and Al-Ghāmiyyah. Different sources of *Mutawātir Ḥadīth* on the law affirm this.<sup>41</sup> One of the concurrent narrations (*Ḥadīth Mutawātir*) on the law of adultery was the *Ḥadīth* of Ibn. Mas'ūd in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*.<sup>42</sup> However, the *Sharī'ah* permits application of the law of earlier Prophets as far as it does not contravene the law of Prophet Muḥammad. Therefore, the curiosity of the Prophet to know the law of adultery from the Jews' scripture is a mere confirmation of his. Also, alleging Ibn. 'Umar of religious fanaticism by the antagonists is an act of reprobate. Hence, the rationale behind the legislation of this capital punishment is to debar Muslims from committing sexual promiscuity, fornication and adultery.

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

Narrated Abū Hurāyrah: The angel of death was sent to Mūsā, and when he came to him, Mūsā slapped him and spoiled one of his eyes. The angel went back to his Lord (Allāh), and said, 'You sent me to a slave who does not want to die.' Allāh restored his eye and said, 'Go back and tell him (i.e. Mūsā) to place his hand over the back of an ox, for he will be allowed to live for the number of hairs coming under his hand.' (So, the

angel came to him and told him the same). Then Mūsā asked, 'O my Lord! What will be then?' He said, 'Death will be then.' He said, '(Let it be) now.' He asked Allāh that He bring him near the Sacred Land at a distance of a stone's throw. Allāh's Messenger said: 'Were I there, I would show you the grave of Mūsā by the way near the red sand-hill.' (Reported by Al-Bukhārī)<sup>43</sup>

The antagonists of this *Ḥadīth* claim that the scenario of Prophet Mūsā slapping the angel of death could be seen as tales and fables recorded in the Prophetic *Ḥadīth*; and that the report might be an information that Ka'b Al-Aḥbār told Abū Hurāyrah in the days of their rapport which Abū Hurāyrah thereafter fabricated as *Ḥadīth Marfū'*. They argue that if not, what criteria shall be utilized to make this *Ḥadīth* intelligible, is it criterion of the Qur'ān or biography of the Prophet or coinage of human being from various ramifications as entailed in the Qur'ān? <sup>44</sup> The protagonists respond that if the antagonists think the story narrated in the *Ḥadīth* was forged, then how do they believe other stories of inadvertent killing of an Egyptian by Mūsā in (Q.28:15) or the stories of the sons of Ādam; Hābīl and Qābīl in (Q.5:27-31) or the stories of Yusuf and the Queen of Sheba (Bilqīs) in (Q.27:20-44)? <sup>45</sup> Ibn Hajar says in this regard thus:

Some innovators queried this *Ḥadīth*...Allāh has only sent the angel of death as a test for Prophet Mūsā and the latter slapped him because he saw that a human being entered his house without permission, and he did not know that he was angel of death, and the Law Giver has allowed slapping the face of the one who intrudes into the Muslim's residence without his consent. In fact, the angels visited Prophet Ibrāhīm and Prophet Lūṭ in human nature and they did not know them *ab initio*, and had it been Ibrāhīm knew that they were angels, he would have not entertained them with food (fatted calf)...Al-Khaṭṭābī encapsulated the statement of Ibn Khuzāymah who added that Mūsā shoved him off, that is, angel of death, and Allāh restored the eye of angel of death for Mūsā to know that he was sent by Allāh, and he (Mūsā) then succumbed (to him).<sup>46</sup>

The above assertion explicitly reveals that the angel of death came to Prophet Mūsā in human nature which is quite possible as reported in *Ḥadīth* of Jibrīl who came to Prophet Muḥammad in human form while sitting with his companions.<sup>47</sup> It could be said that the anger displayed by Prophet Mūsā was a temperament of man and the Qur'ān testifies to that in *Suratul 'Araf* verse 154 and *Surat Taha* verse 86. This does not nullify the authenticity of the *Ḥadīth* as a similar message of anger was reported of Prophet Muḥammad (Q.80:1-2). This has only shown that the Prophets were humans as affirmed in Chapter 18verse 110 and Chapter 21verse 8. It could also be said that the *Ḥadīth* reveals one of the metaphysical knowledge Prophet Muḥammad was endowed with, the belief in which is part of the Muslims' fundamental creed ('*Aqīdah*'). Finally, it could be safely submitted that rejection of this *ḥadīth* teaching belief in the unseen knowledge is tantamount to rejection of other '*Aḥadīth*' that fall under this category, such as the

traditions discussing *Qadar* (predestination of man in his mother's womb), prophecy of the second coming of Prophet 'Isā (Jesus) and the rise of Dajjāl (false Christ) at the era of apocalypse.

#### 5. *Hadīth* of Daughter of Al-Jawn and the Prophet

Narrated Al-Awzā'ī: I asked Az-Zuhrī, 'Which of the wives of the Prophet sought refuge with Allāh from him?' He said, 'I was told by 'Urwah that 'Ā'ishah said: 'When the daughter of Al-Jawn was brought to Allāh's Messenger (as his bride) and he went near her, she said, 'I seek refuge with Allah from you.' He said, 'You have sought refuge with the Most Great; return to your family.' (Reported by Al-Bukhārī)<sup>48</sup>

The antagonists of the above *Hadīth* claim that its meaning portrayed that the Prophet attempted raping the daughter of Al-Jawn.<sup>49</sup> The Protagonists, however, vehemently oppose this biased submission that Ibn Ḥajar, quoting Ibn 'Abdīl-Barr said that the Muslim jurists unanimously agree that the Prophet married the daughter of Al-Jawn.<sup>50</sup> They further argue that the Prophet told Abū 'Usāyd in the completion of the *Hadīth* in Al-Bukhārī to supply her with provisions and clothes, then accompany her to her family's residence.<sup>51</sup> It becomes evident in the *Hadīth* that the Prophet divorced her owing to the statement she uttered, and returning her to her family is an idiom for marital repudiation, hence, divorce cannot take place except after a legal marital contract.<sup>52</sup> In the same vein, the Law Giver has specifically granted the Prophet opportunity to marry from the Muslim women whom he loves or woos him as stated in (Q.33:50), and that is why he was reported to have married eleven wives and none of his companion was mentioned to have married more than four. This is exceptional for the Prophet alone (*Khusūṣiyyatu-r-Rasūl*). Hence, alleging the Prophet of such mischievous debauchery is tantamount to vituperating him as a pedophile as claimed by the critics due to his marriage to 'Ā'ishah at the age of six and consummating her at nine.<sup>53</sup>

#### Concluding Remarks

Based on the aforementioned points, it can be deduced that the evaluation of *Hadīth* development and preservation had begun from the prophetic era till the period of the *Tābi'ūn* whose trustworthiness and reliability led to the great works of *Hadīth* collections today. This implies that *Hadīth* was not compiled a century after the Prophetic era as claimed by the antagonists. It must be noted that the report prohibiting the record of *Hadīth* during the Prophet's lifetime was later abrogated with the *Hadīth* of 'Abdullāh bn. 'Amr with sound chains of transmission and texts. Also, the paper has briefly traced the history of *Hadīth* criticism among Muslim scholars in Southern Nigeria and the intellectual tussle between the antagonists and the protagonists of selected traditions of the Prophet analysed according to their respective scholarly submissions.

#### Recommendations

Based on the above enunciations, the following are recommended:

1. The study of *Ḥadīth* has to be improved by allocating the subject or course to only specialists in the field or at least, a teacher that has in-depth knowledge of *Matn* analysis.
2. The Nigerian Universities need to recruit experts in the field of *Ḥadīth* so as to clamour for inauguration of the Department of *Ḥadīth* as established at Bayero University, Kano.
3. The study of science of *Ḥadīth* has to be given special treatment in Nigerian Arabic and Islamic schools.
4. Muslims need to acquaint themselves with rudiments of *Ḥadīth* authentication in order to curb misinterpretation of *Ḥadīth* contents.
5. Muslim scholars in Nigeria have to endeavour to shun whims and caprices in adjudicating religious matters related to *Ḥadīth*.

#### Endnotes

1. The three best centuries (*Al-Qurūn- 'l-Mufaḍḍalah*) of Islām refer to the Prophet's lifetime till the end of period of the *Tābi'ūn*. These periods witnessed the codification, authentication and classification of *Ḥadīth*.
2. Muḥammad M. Khān, trans., *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.1 (Riyāḍ: Dār-us-Salām Publishers and Distributors, 1997), *Ḥadīth* No: 100, 115.
3. Bilal Philips, *Usul al-Ḥadīth* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2007), 21.
4. Nāṣiruddīn Al-Khaṭṭāb, trans., *Sunan Abī Dā'ud*, vol.4, 1st ed. (Riyāḍ: Maktabah Dār-us-Salām, 2008), *Ḥadīth* No: 3646, 209-210.
5. Adam M. Ajiri, "An Analysis of the Development of *Ḥadīth* Up to the Period of Official Compilation" in *Fluorescence of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria*, ed. 6. 6. Z.I.Oseni (Ibadan: HEBN Publishers Plc, 2008), 164.
7. Muḥammad B. Ismā'īl, *Al-Fiqh- 'l-Wāḍiḥ mina- 'l-Kitāb wa Sunnah 'Ala Madhāhib- 'l-Arba'ah* (Cairo: Dar- 'l-Manār, 1417 A.H.), 162.
8. Muslim bn. Al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1st ed. (Cairo: Shirkatu- 'l-Qudus Li Nashr wa Tawzī', 2014), 12.
9. Ajiri, *An Analysis*, 67.
10. 'Umar ibn 'Abdil- 'Aziz was the eight caliph of the Umayyad, he was born in 61A.H and became caliph from 99-101AH.
11. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.1, *Ḥadīth* No: 4119, 269-270.
12. Ādam Al-Fulānī, *Fī Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī Baḥṭhun wa Murāja'ah* (Cairo: Maktabatu wahabah, 2016), 10-12.
13. An interview conducted with Dr. Abdur Rahman Ahmad Imam, a lecturer in the Arabic Department, Al-Hikmah University at his residence at Zango area, Ilorin, on 15th October, 2017, after *Maghrib* prayer.

14. Ādam Al-Fulānī, *Fī Ṣaḥīḥ*, 10-12.
15. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.1, *Ḥadīth* No: 302, 209.
16. *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.1, *Ḥadīth* No: 3220
17. Sahab Salafi Network, Accessed October 19, 2017. <https://www.sahab.net/forums/index.php?app=forums&module=forums&controller=topic&id=107781>.
18. Al-Fulānī, *Fī Ṣaḥīḥ*, 103.
19. Ḥabīb A. Jum'ah, *Waqafāt 'Ilmiyyatun Ḥādī'ah Ma' Ādam Yaḥya Al-Fulānī* (n.d, n.p), 86-87.
20. Ghulam Nabi Falahi, *Development of Hadith: A Concise Introduction of Early Hadith Literature* (UK: Islamic Mission, n.d.), 10-11.
21. Al-Munajjid, Reasons for *Hadith* Narration, accessed October 21, 2017. <https://www.islamqa.info/ar/12481>.
22. Anonymous, *Silsilatu-r-Rudūd Al-'Ilmiyyah 'ala Mudīr-'l-Markaz*, part 2 (Ilorin: As-Salafi productions, n.d.), 7.
23. Ismā'īl bn. Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn. Kathīr*, vol.1 (Cairo: Dar-t-Tawfiqiyyah Li Turāth, 2009), 264.
24. Anonymous, *Silsilatu*, 8.
25. An-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Bī Sharḥ An-Nawawī*, vol.3, 1st ed. (Cairo: Al-Maṭba'atu-l-Miṣriyyah, 1929), 204.
26. Ibn. Ḥajār Al-'Asqalāny, *Fath-'l-Bārī Bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ - 'l-Bukhārī*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār-'l-Ma'rifah, n.d), 304.
27. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.1, *Ḥadīth* No: 25, 66.
28. Anonymous, *Silsilatu*, 10.
29. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.1, *Ḥadīth* No: 509, 312-313.
30. Anonymous, *Silsilatu*, 2.
31. Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (London: Macdonald & Evans Limited, 1980), 743.
32. Muḥammad S. Al-'Uthāymīn, *Sharḥ Al-'Arba'in An-Nawawiyyah* 1st ed. (Cairo: Maktabatul-Haddy Al-Muḥamaddiyy, 2009), 110-111.
33. Anonymous, *Silsilatu*, 5.
34. Al-Fulānī, *Fī Ṣaḥīḥ*, 28.
35. Jamalud-Din M. Zarabozo, *Commentary on the Forty Ḥadīth of An-Nawawī*, vol.1 (USA: Al-Bashir Publications and Translations, 1998), 422.
36. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.8, *Ḥadīth* No: 6819, 423.
37. Al-Fulānī, *Fī Ṣaḥīḥ*, 31-32.
38. Wehr, *A Dictionary*, 329.
39. Jum'ah, *Waqafāt*, 29-30.
40. Al-Fulānī, *Fī Ṣaḥīḥ*, 90.
41. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.8, *Ḥadīth* No: 6829, 428-429.

42. Y.K. Jum'ah, "A Re-Examination of the Law of Rajm (Stoning to Death) as a Punishment for the Committance of Adultery in Sharī'ah." *Al-Aṣālāh International Journal, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Al-Hikmah University* 3, no. 1 (October 2012): 112-113.  
Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī Ḥadīth* No 6878
43. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.2, *Ḥadīth* No: 1339, 243.
44. Al-Fulānī, *Fī Ṣaḥīḥ*, 96.
45. Jum'ah, *Waqafāt*, 69.
46. Al-'Asqalāny, *Fath- 'l-Bārī*, vol.6, 442.
47. Al-'Uthāymīn, *Sharḥ Al- 'Arba 'īn*, 19.
48. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī* vol.7, *Ḥadīth* No: 5254, 118.
49. Anonymous, *Silsilatu*, 9.
50. Al-'Asqalāny, *Fath- 'l-Bārī*, vol. 9, 357.
51. Khān, *Ṣaḥīḥ- 'l-Bukhārī Ḥadīth* No 5255
52. Anonymous, *Silsilatu*, 10.
53. Ṣafīyyu-r-Raḥmān Al-Mubarakpuri, trans., *Ar-Raḥīqu- 'l-Makhtūm (The Sealed Nectar)*, 1st ed.(Saudi Arabia: Dar-us-Salam Publications, 1996), 146.

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