

Shahab Ahmad's Hostile-Intellectual Approach towards Ḥadīth Sciences

Muhammad Iqbal Awan

M.Phil Islamic Studies,

Govt. College University, Lahore

Dr. Hafiz Khurshid Ahmad Qadri

Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies

Govt. College University, Lahore

Version of Record Online/Print: 01-12-2020

Accepted: 01-11-2020

Received: 31-07-2020



Abstract

The article strives to expose the attitude of a western grown Muslim scholar Shahab Ahmad (1966 – 2015 AD) to the 2nd major Islamic source Ḥadīth and its sciences. The question to be answered here is what kind of approach, hostile or supporting, Shahab had towards Ḥadīth sciences? Many critics knocked his corpus regarding his modern conceptualization of Islam, but his Ḥadīth sense remained undiscussed yet. This paper encircled all his Ḥadīth treatment while using the analytical research approach. Shahab seems facing a great opposition of Ḥadīth terminology in the way of proving his life-argument of 'satanic verses'. Shahab put several grave accusations on Muḥaddithīn (the traditionists) just like as "adjusters" and "editors" of chains and "underminers of text". His excessive usage of deficient and incomplete chains of transmission to prove his argument, his acceptance of omitted chains and declaration of complete chains as 'fabricated', his 'self-assumptions' in the chains all depict his ill-will. By going through his oeuvre, it becomes apparent that Shahab Ahmad criticized almost the entire process of Ḥadīth Sciences which shows his hostility and less knowledge of Ḥadīth. Being taught in secular institutions of the West, Shahab Ahmad had a hostile attitude towards Ḥadīth sciences.

Keywords: Ḥadīth methodology, western thought, cosmopolitanism, muḥaddithīn, isnād, incomplete chain, riwāyah.

Introduction:

This paper is going to discuss the specific treatment of *Hadith* sciences – a very important branch of Islamic studies – by a western-based Muslim scholar of Islam Shahab Ahmad (1966 – 2015 AD). Therefore, the *Hadith* sciences and Shahab Ahmad both should be introduced primarily. The word '*Hadith*' is meant as conversation, story, news, or a report. In Islam, it is regarded as an individual report of instruction, saying, or an action of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him), or his tacit approval or disapproval. *Hadith* is the second primary source of Islamic rules and regulations after the Qur'ān, which is unanimously agreed by the Muslims. The authority of the *Hadith* has been expressed extensively in the Holy Qur'ān as:

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ ۚ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِينَ¹

*"Say! obey Allah and the Messenger then if you Turn away Verily Allah does not love those who reject faith"*²

Another one is:

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ³

"And obey God and the Messenger so that you may have mercy on you".

Many other similar verses are also there. The Holy Prophet's (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) practices and instructions are very crucial to be a true Muslim because these elucidate the basics of the mentioning of the Holy Qur'ān. So, the authority of the Prophetic *Hadith* is proved. But this authority has been underestimated commonly by western minded people.

Such a modern western scholar of Islam Shahab Ahmad (1966 – 2015 AD), who worked enough regarding re-conceptualization of Islam, but in vain, because it denotes only the contradictions and cultural diversity of Muslim communities. Having been born to Muhammad Mumtazuddin Ahmad and Syeda Razia Hassan, a broad-minded and a Medical Professional Muslim family, Shahab was raised in the societies of mixed ethnicities of Singapore. As his sister Dr. Shahla Ahmad (b. 1964 AD) stated that irrespective of one's religion and culture, everyone was respected there and her family used to celebrate every ritual like *Eid*, Christmas, *Divali*, New Year, etc.⁴ Throughout his educational career, Shahab Ahmad was educated mostly in the Cristian institutions, as he was, at once amazingly, a sole Muslim student in an English boarding school.⁵ So, such a liberal and western mode of life influenced his thinking style a lot. At just 18, he began to express his views and thinking in written shape and made his debut by writing an article titled, "Muslim World's Failure to Accept Technology" which he presented at a

conference⁶. Later, at the American University of Cairo, he graduated in 'Middle East History' and 'Political Science'. Shahab Ahmad's interest in the Arabic Language and the history of Islam grown very up, therefore he decided to take the Master of Arts Program, with major 'Islamic History' and minor 'History of the Near East' in 1992 - 93.

Then for a doctoral degree, he joined the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. His Christian mentor, teaching colleagues and friends, in Princeton and Harvard Universities, like Michael Cook (b.1940 AD), Dr. Noah Feldman (b.1970 AD),⁷ and others also did a great job to impress his thought about *Aḥādīth*. Shahab penned a few research articles and a couple of books like "What is Islam: The Importance of Being Islamic (2015)" and "Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam (2017)". In which, he utilized his knowledge of *Ḥadīth Sciences*.

Ultimately, this study intends to know the behavior of Shahab Ahmad towards *Muḥaddithīn* - transmitters of the reports - and his views about *Isnād* - the chains of transmission - either complete or incomplete. Shahab's adduced *Riwāyahs* - reports - are also going to be analyzed here in this paper to extract his original position about this branch of Islamic knowledge.

Literature Review:

Since Shahab Ahmad had a dissentient sort of thinking and writing, therefore, he has been discussed and criticized by plenty of critics earlier. While renewing his memories, some of the authors enlightened his educational and lifetime achievements in their creations like "Tribute To Professor Shahab Ahmed 1966-2015" by Ebrahim Moosa, "Memorial, M. Shahab Ahmed, 99" Princeton Alumni Weekly, October 05, 2016 Issue, "The Revisionist" The Friday Times, Sep 25 - Oct 01, 2015, Vol. XXVII, No.33 by Natasha Shahid, "Extra Ordinary Scholar Shahab Ahmed Redefined Islam" Chicago Tribune, September 21, 2015, by Noah Feldman and "In Memoriam; Shahab Ahmed" *al-'Usūr al-Wuṣṭā*, 24 (2016) by Sarah Eltantawi, etc.

Shahab Ahmad's broad thinking about the rituals, traditions, and customs of many Muslim societies and his concept of "conceptualization" and "re-conceptualization" of Islam has also been analyzed by many authors like Khalil, Andani in his "Book Review "What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic" by Shahab Ahmed", *Islam And Christian-Muslim Relations*, 2016, Malice Ruthven in "More Than A Religion (What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic)", *London Review of Books*, Vol,38 No.18, Michael E. Pregill in his "Shahab Ahmed's What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic as a Disciplinary Critique", *Harvard Theological Review*, Jan 24-2017, and Wasim Nasir in "What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic by Shahab Ahmed", *Intellectual Discourse*, 24: 1 (2016). Michael E. Pregill has also appraised

Shahab's study of the regions in "I Hear Islam Singing; Shahab Ahmed's What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic", Harvard Theological Review, Jan 2017, 110 (1).

Like other aspects of Shahab's thought, his 'amazing' theory of the formation of Islamic orthodoxy have also been put under discussion in the following works like "How Has the Islamic Orthodoxy Changed Over Time?", The Nation, Jan 11-18, 2016 Issue by Elias Muhanna, "Shahab Ahmed; Before Orthodoxy; The Satanic Verses in Early Islam", Journal of Arabic Literature, 49 (2018) by Peter Webb and "Book Review (Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam) by Shahab Ahmed", Journal of the American Academy of Religions by Amir Hussain, etc.

Keeping all the above literature review in mind, one may easily assess that in all his narratives and findings, his sense of *Ḥadīth* sciences remained undiscussed yet. The question – that how he had treated this very important branch of Islamic sciences – is still to answer. This study particularly deals with his method of *Ḥadīth* usage.

Novelty Of The Study:

After having enough written material about the biography of Shahab Ahmad, about his modern thinking and reshaping of Islamic conceptualization and orthodoxy, about his view of early Islamic history, the novelty of this paper becomes very obvious. Because this would be a sole effort to reveal Shahab's specific treatment regarding *Ḥadīth* sciences in his corpora.

Research Questions:

To proceed with this research work, we should have the answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there any treatment of *Ḥadīth* methodology in Shahab's corpus or not?
2. How had he taken and used *Ḥadīth* sciences to prop his narratives?
3. What kind of approach, hostile or supporting, he had towards this branch of Islamic knowledge?

Research Methodology:

The analytical research method has been adopted in this research work. Since Shahab Ahmad compiled several books and research articles, therefore, all those have been taken and analyzed to unveil his attitude towards *Ḥadīth* sciences. The *Riwāyahs* – which have been presented by him in his works – are also used to display his original sense of *Ḥadīth*. In this paper, the following further dimensions are being revealed to expose Shahab's approach towards *Ḥadīth* sciences. As apparent in his literary creations,

Shahab maintained a disgusting point of view about the *Muḥaddithīn* i.e. (plural of 'Muḥaddith', a Ḥadīth transmission scholar or Traditionist), as he strictly criticized and blamed them with serious allegations. Considering the incomplete chains of transmission as "authentic" and complete chains as "fabricated" brought the dark aspect of Shahab's thought about *Isnād* to the light.

MuḤaddithīn And Shahab Ahmad:

The role of *Muḥaddithīn* can be assessed only in this way that the Holy *Sunnah* of the Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him), his sayings and instructions, his tacit approvals all meant only to be conveyed to the next generations. So, the question was still there that how these authoritative practices or instructions could be transmitted generation-wise. In the era of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) these were recorded by the companions, who reported a large number of traditions of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him), as Abū Hurairah (d.59 AH) reported 5374 traditions⁸, 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Umar (d.74 AH)⁹ transmitted 2630 traditions and many others. They adopted intensive care to narrate and report any act or instruction of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) to anyone else. In this regard, many instances can be adduced, as 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (R.A) (d. 23AH/644AD) urged a minimum of two testimonies from Abu Mūsā b. al-Ash'arī, as he narrated a tradition from the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him). So, they narrated these to the next and next generations, but when these chains of narration got longer and longer, the collectors and compilers of Ḥadīth became intensively careful, because they had learned the meaning of their God's command of فَتَبَيَّنُوا¹⁰ (*fa-tabayyanū*), which is "to verify". Therefore, the verification of the sources of information became natural in the transmission of a report. This is what the Ḥadīth methodology is. Now, where does Shahab Ahmad's claim of "self-assigned role"¹¹ about those Ḥadīth scholars stand? They were not self-assigned but divinely-assigned to verify the authenticity of a report. Another displeasing blame of Shahab is that the role of *Muḥaddithīn* is "self-constituted"¹², also cannot be placed on the Ḥadīth scholars (*Muḥaddithīn*), because factually, the responsibility of seeking truth was assigned to them divinely. They were rightly guided for that project of Ḥadīth movement.

While playing the blame game, Shahab Ahmad went to a broader extent, as he seems to challenge the exemplary manners i.e. *Uswa Ḥasanah* of the exemplary personality of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him), by saying that the Ḥadīth project did not require only a particular method, but "a particular type of Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) suited to its authoritative and prescriptive purpose",¹³

whose words and deeds can be taken to establish a model for Muslims. Challenging the deep-rooted concepts and beliefs of Muslims has become Shahab's offensive way of research. The *Ḥadīth* is the narration of the deeds and sayings of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) and a record of his exemplary manners (*Uswa Ḥasanah*). So, therefore, the project of *Ḥadīth* recording does not require at any level a particular type of the Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) because it would be heavily contradictive with the verse:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ¹⁴

"Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example".

Rather than being an exemplary personality, the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) himself requires the recording and transmission of his exemplary deeds, sayings, and instructions.

Interestingly, Shahab has accused even those early traditionists (*Muḥaddithīn*) too, from whom he recorded several reports to construct the edifice of his notion. As he declared them "the eliminators of text" and "underminers of the chains",¹⁵ "editors",¹⁶ and "the strategic adjusters"¹⁷ of the contents of *Aḥādīth* (Plural of *Ḥadīth*). All of these allegations depicts very clearly the biased position of Shahab himself because the transmitters of earlier times transmitted the reports to the best of their knowledge, and observations. They conveyed what had been seen, learned, or received by them without editing or adjusting. So, if their narrations do not meet Shahab's notion, then it is not their fault, because they were committed to seeking the mere truth. Thus, one thing can be seen on the scene quite easily that the absence of *Gharānīq* narrative - Shahab's life-project - in all canonical *Ḥadīth* compilations is the only cause of all this hostility and irritation of Shahab Ahmad with *Muḥaddithīn*.

Usage Of *Riwāyahs* (Reports) With Deficient Chains:

Shahab Ahmad's *Ḥadīth* treatment may be analyzed from his monograph "Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam (2017)" which is, generally, considered his life achievement. As to prop the notion of *Gharānīq*, Shahab has exercised several tricks and illusions. While analyzing his adduced *Riwāyahs* - the main pillars of his narrative - one can easily access his uninformed approach towards *Ḥadīth* methodology. Although it is universally admitted that to prove a narrative, solid arguments play a pragmatic role, but the situation is quite opposite here, as Shahab did not abstain from adducing even the *Riwāyahs* with deficient, weak, and incomplete chains of transmission. Some of them, for instance, are the *Riwāyah* 40¹⁸ of his book "Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam (2017)" which is cited in the *Mukhtārah* of Ḍiyā al-Maqdisī from Ibn 'Abbās. In this

chain, a narrator between Aḥmad b. Mūsā Ibn Mardawayh al-Iṣbahānī and Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Iṣbahānī is missing, but Shahab adjusted the name of the father of Muḥammad b. Mūsā there, and states "I am assuming the link here".¹⁹ Another one is *Riwāyah* no. 44 cited from *Mu'jam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360AH)²⁰ here is the same situation of "I am assuming this link" too. Now it is compulsory to know that on what grounds he assumed anyone's name to adjust in a chain of transmission? Who allows him to commutate it. The adjustment of his self-assumed names for the missing narrators made him a clear manipulator and an adjuster as well.

Amazingly, having cited these deficient chains, Shahab Ahmad projected his hostile doctrine about *Ḥadīth* methodology very strongly. As he believes that the complete *Isnād* seem to be fabricated at all by the traditionists onward from 150AD, to upgrade their reports²¹ and "the deficient *Isnād* that carry *Sīrah*, *Maḡhāzī* and *Tafsīr* reports are very likely not fabricated at all"²². This claim seems very irrational because the reports having sound *Isnād* are posited true and authentic unanimously by the entire Muslim scholarship.

The deficient chains of transmission have uncertainty about the missing and anonymous narrators. Because it cannot be brought to the fact that who they were? Whether they were Muslims or even non-Muslims, Christians, or hypocrites? Having no surety of those missing people abstains to make up something derogatory about the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him).²³ Shahab's deliberate inclusion of such deficient chains of reports took him at odds. It is obvious, that while having some people missing from the chains, no one may go ahead.

The vulnerability of Riwāyah Bi Al-Ma'nā, Collective, and Incomplete Chains in Shahab's Corpus:

Shahab Ahmad used many collective chains of narration to prove the Satanic Verses incident. Firstly, we take his narratives regarding this incident, and secondly, the legal status of this sort of tradition will be discussed. Shahab's excessive dependence on collective reports or *Riwāyah bi al-Ma'nā* made his arguments very vulnerable, as, for instance, he quoted a tradition²⁴ from *Jāmi' al-Bayān* of al-Ṭabarī with the following chain:

"al-Qāsim b. al-Ḥasan al-Baḡhdādī - al-Ḥusayn b. Dā'ūd, Sunayd al-Miṣṣīṣī - Ḥajjāj b. Muḥammad al-Miṣṣīṣī - Abū Ma'shar Najīh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Madanī - Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Quraẓī al-Madanī and Muḥammad b. Qays al-Madanī."

But the fact is that this report has been initiated with the phrase "*qālā*", which explicates "the two of them said". This *Riwāyah* seems to have a collective chain having the collation of two separate accounts. As regarding this tradition, Shahab describes Imām Suyūṭī's practice to ignore the textual

variants and present it as a single collective report.²⁵ The collective *Isnād* or chains are a kind of *Riwāyah bi al-Ma'nā*, in which different reports and accounts are combined and collected into a single account. It was often used in the *Sīrah*, *Maghāzī* and *Tafsīr* genres. This sort of report depicts the abridgment of a historical event or incident, but not word by word. As it has been described by Shahab in quoting a *Riwāyah* from 'Umar al-Wāqidi (d.207 AH), a famous or infamous figure in reporting this sort of traditions. Al-Wāqidi was a biographer in the shape of a storyteller at all. So, he has often used to narrate *Riwāyah bi al-Ma'nā* to provide an uninterrupted narrative of the biography, for which he has been widely criticized. Shahab presented many collective and summary reports which neither quote the alleged satanic verses and nor even mention the alleged satanic intervention, for instance, is *Riwāyah* 33 of his book "Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam (2017)". So, Shahab wants to prove the usualness of *Riwāyah bi al-Ma'nā* in the *Sīrah*, *Maghāzī* and *Tafsīr* literature in favor of the projection of his doctrine.

By studying critically, it would be evident that a *Riwāyah bi al-Ma'nā* has always a chance to err. Very strict conditions have been implemented on this type of tradition by the *Muḥaddithīn*. To accept or reject these conditions, there are eight different opinions. Transmission of *Riwāyah bi al-Ma'nā* is declared valid consensually by *Muḥaddithīn*, only for the person, who got acquainted very well with the words lexically and orthographically, but in other cases, it is invalid and forbidden.²⁶ So, therefore, the *Riwāyah bi al-Ma'nā* becomes vulnerable, because of the inherent weaknesses in its method. Transmitting the "self-constituted meanings of a report" to the coming generations endangers its exact spirit. Thus, it is quite better to avoid the excessive narration of this sort of tradition.

To the incomplete chains, Shahab has also an astonishing thought of "not deeming them as false or non-genuine", as he stated "apparently incomplete (*Isnād*) does not mean that it is not genuine as far as it goes. This is not a false *Isnād* but an incomplete one".²⁷ After considering a chain 'incomplete', it seems very wondering to depend on it and declaring it 'genuine'. On another occasion, Shahab also stressed the notion of declaring the incomplete chains as genuine.²⁸ Hence, Shahab remained unaffected by the narration of reports with even incomplete chains of narration. He gathered a sum of incomplete or unreliable transmission reports from *Sīrah*, *Maghāzī* and *Tafsīr* compilations and books to argue his notion.

Evaluation Of Shahab's Riwāyahs:

The evaluation of Shahab's intellectual approach towards *Ḥadīth* Methodology can be done only from his quoted *Riwāyahs*. These traditions should be analyzed here to reach a fair conclusion because he spent almost half of his whole life to collect these reports from different corpora of exegesis

of the Holy Qur'ān and biography of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him). By appraising critically, it will be evident that he presented some reports, summary reports, and abridgments, but not a single one is at the standard of a sound or *ṣaḥīḥ* report. Not all but some for instance, as his very first *Riwāyah*,²⁹ which was narrated from Muḥammad b. Ishāq (d.151 AH) and Salamāh b. al-Faḍl (d.191 AH). In this *riwāyah*, as a part of fame, the first narrator was widely criticized for quoting from unreliable or anonymous people and for transmitting lies, as he was called "a liar" *kādhīb*.³⁰ And the second narrator of this *riwāyah* is regarded as *da'īf* (weak) *matrūk* (rejected) and *majrūḥ* (discredited) transmitter. Including this sort of transmitters, a *riwāyah* cannot be deemed authentic and true. Nāsir al-Dīn al-Albānī (d.1999 AD) has also taken Ibn Ishāq's presence as a sufficient basis to reject this report. In the very second *riwāyah*,³¹ Shahab Ahmad – as discussed earlier – penned a report again having an incomplete chain of transmission – as Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH) does not give a chain linking Sa'īd b. Manṣūr to al-Quraẓī – which shows Shahab's uninformed sense of *Ḥadīth* sciences. Shahab Ahmad filled in the blanks while saying the chain is very probably "following assumptions". So by assuming the missing narrators, he ventured to make the chain acceptable, but in vain. At number 3, Shahab has brought a collective chain's report from the man about whom the consensus is established of his bad reputation,³² namely al-Wāqidi. He is infamous due to his merging of different reports into one. The obscurity of his narrator al-Muṭṭalib also made a sense to reject the tradition.

The *Riwāyahs* 4, 5, and 6 are absolute summary versions of *Riwāyah* 2. The question arises here that if the *Riwāyah* 2 has been rejected as unreliable and inauthentic, then how long the summary versions of that particular report can go on? No.7 is from *Maghāzī* of Yūnus b. Bukayr al-Kāfī, of which the content has also been transmitted by weak chains of transmission. The next report – narrating the story of so-called satanic verses – has also been rejected mostly, because of the presence of Ibn Lahī'ah al-Miṣrī in the chain. As he had not a good reputation as a *Muḥaddith*. The incomplete chains³³ have played a decisive role in the quotations of Shahab Ahmad in his corpora, just like one of them is *Riwāyah* No. 9, where the chain of transmission does not reach the original reporter 'Urwā b. al-Zubayr.

Shahab has played with several abbreviated, collective, abridged, and summary versions, as he would be able to prove his argument. *Riwāyah* 10³⁴ is an abbreviated citation of the *Maghāzī* of Mūsā b. 'Uqbah, but it has been taken from the *Sīrah* of al-Dhahabī (d.728 AH). This seems to be Shahab's style to consider a *Riwāyah* of the earliest times of Islam, taken from the citation of a later medieval scholar's work. Abridgment of earlier narrated *Riwāyah* no. 9 appeared in another report taken again from the citation of Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī (d.430 AH). One thing is more significant in the narrative of Shahab

Ahmad, which is quite evident that when he does not find some particular parts of satanic verses narrative – his projected notion –, he begins to accuse the narrators of ‘editing’, ‘omitting’ and “even boulder strategic omissions”³⁵ and of the ‘strategic adjustment’ as well. This behavior reflects Shahab Ahmad’s acute hostility towards the department of *Ḥadīth* sciences.

Thirty-seven reports have been cited by Shahab Ahmad in his Ph.D. dissertation.³⁶ But after completing almost 16 years of more research, he could be able to add only 13 reports more in his same monograph “Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam (2017)”. This success has been gained only by adding the abridged, citations, collective, and summary versions of the earlier reports, likewise the *Riwāyahs* 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and many others which are repeated more than once.

Five other *Riwāyahs* has been adduced from a *Tāb’ī*³⁷ Qur’ān scholar Abū al-‘Āliyah al-Baṣrī, which are called as *Mursals*³⁸. Due to the disagreement on the authority of a *Mursal*, and weak narrator like Dā’ud b. Abī Hind, all chains of transmission by Abū al-‘Āliyah regarded as rejected.³⁹ The missing persons’ chain again occurs in *Riwāyah* 31 of Shahab’s book, where Ibn ‘Aqīlah is abbreviating the chain by omitting the intermediary transmitters. In some other reports, cited by Shahab, the attribution to Ibn ‘Abbās was made through Ibn Kalbī, who is not himself sure at all.

*“Yūsuf b. Hammād related to us: Umayyah b. Khālid related to us: Shu’bah b. Ḥajjāj al-Baṣrī related to us from Abū Bishr from Sa’īd b. Jubayr from Ibn ‘Abbās – in my estimation the Ḥadīth is doubtful [fī-mā aḥsib al-shakk fī al-ḥadīth].”*⁴⁰

Amazingly, even after having the remarks “I doubt the *Ḥadīth*” of the narrator himself at the end of the chain of *Riwāyah* 43, Shahab did not hesitate to argue against this short statement in the text. Although, this is a *khabr al-Wāhid* too, of which al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī stated that it may be rejected when its text contradicts reason, known *Sunnah*, or a ruling of the Qur’ān.⁴¹ This *Riwāyah* has also been rejected on account of the transmitter’s uncertainty, as to whether it reaches back.⁴²

Thus, it is noteworthy that Shahab Ahmad wants to meet the challenge of the specialist traditionists or *Ḥadīth* scientists. Significantly, he has collected plenty of reports with having abbreviated, collective, summarised, weak, and abridged versions and incomplete chains of narration. This deed made him a less significant scholar of *Ḥadīth* sciences. Because he had usually quoted all the content, which is something like weakening and even rejection of his narrated reports. The said traditions are an apparent view of Shahab’s non-acceptance of this methodology.

Conclusion

Thus, with the help of the above discussion, it became very clear that the hostility of Shahab Ahmad hovers at his entire intellectual journey of Islamic theology. Especially, regarding the conventional sciences of Ḥadīth and its transmission, he stands at odds with the common folk. Shahab Ahmad seems to be highly irritated by the *Muḥaddithīn*. The sole obvious reason for that irritation is the outright negation and absence of Shahab Ahmad's literary lifeline "Satanic Verses story" in their Ḥadīth corpora, as he confessed that the *Gharānīq* story "was not included in any of the Canonical Ḥadīth collections". He also blamed them as "the eliminators of text", "the under-miners of the chains", "editors" and "the strategic adjusters" of the alleged incident of *Gharānīq*. But actually, Shahab himself has been proved here to be a "strategic adjuster" and "manipulator", because he assumed the names to adjust in the chains of transmission, as he justified it in one of his books as, "I am assuming the link here". So, because of arguing pessimistically against the *Muḥaddithīn*, he seems to be very opposite to this process of fact-finding.

Shahab Ahmad's anti Ḥadīth sciences doctrine seems at its peak when he opines that the "complete and sound chains (*Isnād*)" are the result of some fabrication, and "the deficient and incomplete *Isnād*" of *Tafsīr*, *Sīrah*, and *Maghāzī* literature had not been fabricated at all. This type of irrational thinking does not result in the favor of Ḥadīth methodology, but it depicts Shahab's antagonism because the reports having sound *Isnād* are posited true and authentic unanimously. This proved his superficial and lazy approach to this very important branch of Islamic knowledge.

In Shahab's conclusion-making, the collective and deficient Chains of transmission (*Isnād*) play a significant role, which reflects his inner wish to make the authenticity of Ḥadīth methodology dubious at all. Adducing the *Riwāyahs* reported from anonymous narrators and quoting *Riwāyah bi al-ma'nā* and incomplete chains of transmission - attributed to someone absent from the chain like Ibn Abbas and others - became Shahab's fashion in his treatises, which accurately shows his uninformed sense and ignorance about Ḥadīth sciences. So, this study strove to identify Shahab Ahmad's deliberate hostility towards this literary genre of Islam.

Recommendations

The relationship between Shahab Ahmad and the Ḥadīth methodology urges to inquire the following more points to reach the exact position.

1. The legality of the usage of abridgments, summery versions, and deficient chains reports.
2. An appraisal of Shahab Ahmad's basic learning of Ḥadīth methodology.
3. The critical study of Shahab Ahmad's assumptions in *Isnād*.

4. Western influence on Shahab Ahmad's *Ḥadīth* Sense.
5. Modern research methodology should be included in the syllabi of Pakistani universities.
6. Western doctrine about *Ḥadīth* sciences should also be taught here in the east.



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³⁷ A person from the very next generation of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allah be upon him).

³⁸ A kind of report in which the chain of transmission stops at a *Tābi 'ī*, who refers it directly to the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) without mentioning the name of any *Sahābī*, as he says "The Messenger of Allāh (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) said". In fact, a *Tābi 'ī* cannot hear anything directly from the Holy Prophet (Peace and greetings of Allāh be upon him) without the help of a *Sahābī*. So, the omission of *Sahābī*'s name from the chain of transmission grades the report as "*Mursal*".

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