CHAPTER III

DATA OFFERED

A. Ignaz Goldziher and The Advocacy of Scepticism

Goldziher suspicions about the authenticity of *ḥadīth* sprang from several observations. The material found in later collections makes no references to earlier written collections and uses terms in the *isnād* imply oral transmission, not written source. Moreover, the ubiquitous contradictory traditions, the apparent proliferation of *ḥadīth* in later collections not attested to in earlier ones, and the fact that younger Companions of Muḥammad seem to have known more about him (that is, they transmitted more *ḥadīth*) that the older Companions who presumably knew the Prophet for a greater length of time, suggested to Goldziher that large scale fabrication of *ḥadīth* took place.[59]

As a result, Goldziher provides a significantly different version of the origin and development of *ḥadīth* literature. Golziher has no trouble accepting that the Companions preserved the words and dedds of the Prophet after his death, and that these might have been recorded in written form in *ṣaḥīfah*. In this way he remains very close to Muslim interpretation of the development of *ḥadīth* literature. He not only presumes that the Companions tried to preserve the sayings and judgments of Muḥammad, but also that some of them likely did so in written form (that is, in *ṣaḥīfah*). And, when these

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[59] Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis...*, 18-21.

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Companions passed on what they had heard and recorded to the next generation of Muslims, the use of the *isnād* began.[60] But for Goldziher, the invention of and interpolation into *hadīth* also began very early, for both political[61] and paraenetic[62] reasons. And so mutually exclusive *hadīth* proliferated; "it is not surprising that, among the hotly debate controversial issues of Islam, whether political or doctrinal, there is not one in which the champions of the various view are unable to cite a number of traditions, all equipped with imposing *isnād*."[63]

With the rise of 'Abbāsid the situation change significantly, according to Goldziher, 'Abbāsid rule was more theocratic than the more secular Arab

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[60] On the other hand, Goldziher admits the possibility that those *ṣaḥīfah* whose existence is professed may well be, "the innovation of later generations used to provide justification for later *ṣaḥīfah* against an opposition hostile the writing down of *hadīth*.". Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2: 22.

[61] For example, *hadīth* praising the immediate family of Muhammad, where not overtly anti-Umayyad, certainly served the pro-'Ali cause. The Umayyads responded in kind: they invented, or had respected theologians invent, *hadīths* in their favour and at the same time suppressed the arguments of their opponents in the form of *hadīths*. However, these fabricated or tendentious *hadīths*, which normally supported in some way the political and dynastic agenda of the Umayyads, are not evident in the collections of *hadīths* that we have today because, Goldziher suggests, their successors to the empire, the 'Abbāsid, would have very actively suppressed *hadīths* which supported Umayyads claim, the Murji'ah, the Khawārij, and latter the 'Abbāsid participated in polemics and apologetics in the form of *hadīths*. Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2: 89-108.

[62] *Hadīths* were invented by pious teachers who were working against the perceived moral laxness of Muslims under the Umayyad rule. And so "pious inventors of traditions", couched their own teachings in the form of prophetic *hadīths*—a procedure prticularly easy for the first few generations after the Compnions. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2:42-43. This fabrication, Goldziher point out, should not neccesarily be considered sinister or deceptive. Other *hadīths* were invented by *quṣṣāṣ*, stotytellers or perhaps "homiletic exegestes" or "tellers of sacred stories" who invented stories in the form of *hadīths* for purposes of edification or entertainment. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2:150-155. Clearly many of these traditionists who fabricated *hadīths* accepted the following *hadīth* which justified their activities:
"After my departure," says the Prophet, "the number of sayings ascribed to me will increase in the same way as sayings have been ascribed to previous prophets. What therefore is told to you as assaying of mine you will have to compare with the Book of God, and what it is by me, whether I have in fact said it my self or not." Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2:56.
[63] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2:44.

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paganism of the Ummayad.[64] Concequently, the new dynasty encouraged the development of *sharī'a* and even employed court theologians to advise the caliphs, some of whom themselves studied and participated in theological debates. This attempt to give public life a more religious character also involved giving official recognition to the *sunnah*. The rise of the *sunnah* had begun during the Umayyad period in part in opposition to the perceived wickedness of the time, but its supporters remained relatively ineffective until the advent of the 'Abbasid revolution. The report that the Umayyad caliph 'Umar II commissioned the first collection of *ḥadīth* must be dismissed as untrustworthy because of the number of contradictions in the account and the absence of references to Abū Bakr Ibn Ḥazm's work in later literature. For Goldziher, this claim is hagiographic, that is, "nothing but an expression of the good opinion that people had of the pious caliph and his love for the *sunnah*."[65]

Goldziher maintains that, while reliance on the *sunnah* to regulate he empire was favoure, these was still in these early years of Islam insufficient material going back to Muḥammad himself. Scholar sought to fill the gaps left by the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* with material from other sources. Some borrowed from Roman law. Others attempted to fill these lacunae with their

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[64] The 'Abbasid evolution also brought more non-Arab people to the fore. The empire began to lose its Arab character as more and more of its political and religious leaders were non-Arabs. These foreign elements, particularly the Persian *mawālī*, subsequently attempted to cloak some of their own religious beliefs and practices in Islamic guise. Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2:59-60.

[65] The works by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, known as 'Abd al-Malik ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767), of the Ḥijāz and Sa'īd ibn Abī Arūba (d. 157/773) in 'Irāq, are traditionally cited as the first which were collections of *ḥadīths*. Goldziher argues that their two works were in fact ones in jurisprudence, not *ḥadīth*, but adds that, since nothing of the contents or form of these books is extant, speculation about them is pointless. Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2:196-197.

own opinions (*ra'y*). This latter option came under a concerted attack by those who believed that all legal and ethical questions (not addressed by the Qur'ān) must be reffered back to the Prophet himself, that is, must be rooted in *ḥadīth* as a primary source of law and in discrediting *ra'y*. But in many ways it was Pyrrhic victory. The various legal *madhhas* were loath to sacrifice their doctrines and so they found it more expedient to fabricate *ḥadīth* or adapt existing *ḥadīths* in their support. Even the advocates of *ra'y* were eventually persuased or cajoled into accepting the authority of *ḥadīths* and so they too "found" *ḥadīths* which substantiated their doctrines that had hitherto been based upon the opinions of their schools' founders and teachers.[66] The insistence of the advocates of *ḥadīths* that the only opinions of any value were those which could appeal to the authority of the Prophet resulted in the situation that "where no traditional matter was to be had, med speedily began to fabricate it. The greater the demand, the busier was invention with the manufacture of apocryphal traditions in support of the respective these." The *Ṭalab* journeys which followed, during which the travelers sought to collect *ḥadīths* from the various centres of Islamic empire, helped construct a more uniform corpus of extant *ḥadīths* out of the various disparate local collections.[67]

Eventually, however there were reactions to this widespread fabrication of *ḥadīths*. Goldziher traces three such us reactions to this phenomenon. Ironically, fabricated *ḥadīths* began to circulate in which

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[66] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2: 78-82.
[67] Ignaz Goldziher, "The Principles of Law in islam", 8: 301.

Muḥammad is made to condemn those who would fabricate *ḥadīths* about him. Other simply rejected the whole corpus of *ḥadīths* and reffered only of the Qur'ān. The third reaction was the one which arose among the traditionalist themselvesand came eventually to dominate. The developed a means by which to evaluate the authenticity of any *ḥadīth*. This method focused not on the actual content of the *ḥadīth* (*matn*) but on the transmitters of the *matn*, that is, on *isnād*. Goldziher seems to suggest that this critique was in nascent form already around 150 A.H. Even with this type of examination, forgeries continued to be made through the manipulation of the *isnād* in somewhat more subtle ways. According to Goldziher, *ḥadīths*, which originally had *isnād* ending with Companions or Successors, were often extended back to the Prophet. That is *aḥādīth mawquf* were transformed into *aḥādīth marfū'ah* by tacking on the Prophet and any other necessary names to the end of the *isnād*. *Isnād*s were also "tampered" with by the *mu'ammarīn*— the long-lived ones. Foe goldziher these where persons who pretended to have had direct contact with Muḥammad even though this might mean that they would have to be well over a hundred years old (and at times hundreds of years old).[68]

A stated earlier, Goldziher questions the traditional date at which the formal collection of *ḥadīths* began. It was not in the time of 'Umar II, but with the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Malik ibn Anas (d. 179/795) that the process started.[69]

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[68] Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis...*, 11.

[69] However, there are several important qualifications to this statement. The *Muwaṭṭa'* is not a corpus traditionum but a corpus juris: the *ijmā'* or *sunnah* of Medina, not *ḥadīth*, is the basis for the laws and religious practices outlined in the work. And so Mālik ibn Anas is at best interpreter of *ḥadīths* rather than a collector of them. Furthermore, it is clear from his work that

That is, goldziher believes that gathering began only towards the end of the second century A.H. (late eight or early ninth C.E.) with *fiqh* works being precursors to proper *ḥadīths* works.[70] These latter works came soon after, as a more systematic arrangement of the *ḥadīth* material became necessary. As the insistence the legal and religious practice be rooted in *ḥadīths* had grown, so too had the available material. This arrangement took two forms: the *musnad*[71] and the *muṣannaf*[72]. The *muṣannafs* came to predominate, but the *musnads* continued to be compilled.[73] An example of *musnad* is the compilation of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. The firstu *Muṣannaf* that gained prevalence was the compilation of al-Bukhārī. It unlike *Muwaṭṭa'*, is a work of *ḥadīths* with al-Bukhārī's contribution of the six canonical collections in the middle of the third century A.H. (second half of the ninth century C.E.),

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proper *isnāds* were not felt to be necessary (that is only a fraction of the *ḥadīths* cited extend back to Muḥammad). Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2: 197-202.

[70] Hence, Goldziher take no definitive stance on the oral versus written transmission of material prior to this period, which plays such an important role in the debate over the authenticity for some scholars.

[71] The term *musnad* (supported) was originally used for such traditions as were supported by a complete uninterrupted chain of authorities (*isnād*) going back to a Companion who related it from the Prophet himself. But later on the term came to be used in the general sense of a reliable and authoritative tradition. In these sense of the term is also used for all reliable works in the *ḥadīth* literature, and works like the *sunan* of ad-Dārimī and the *ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī are called *musnads*. But technically it is used only for those collections of *ḥadīths* in which they are arranged according to the names of the final authorities by whom they are related, irrespective of their subject-matter. Such are the *musnads* of Abū Dāwud Ṭayālisī (d. 234/819), Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 233/847), ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Shaybah (d. 235/849), ʿUthmān ibn Abī Shaybah (237/851), Abū Khaythamah (d. 234/844) and others. He who collected *ḥadīths* in the form of *musnad* is called a *musnid* or a *musnidī*. The *musnads* works themselves, however, differ in detail in the arrangement of the authorities who originally related them. In some of them they are arranged in the alphabetical order of their names. In some of them they are arranged according to their relatives merit in the acceptance of Islam and inn taking part in the early important events of the Prophet's mission. In some of them they are arranged according to the affinity of their tribe to the Prophet. Muḥammad ʿAjjāj Khāṭib, *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*... Read also Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, "*Ḥadīth*—A Subject of Keen Interest", in *Ḥadīth and Sunnah—Ideals and Realities*, Ed. P.K. Koya, (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Books Trust, 2003), 16.

[72] *Muṣannaf* are those large collections of *ḥadīths* in which the traditions relating to most or all the various topics mentioned above are put together and arranged in various books or chapters, each dealing with a particular topic. To this class belong the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Imām Mālik, the *ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, etc. Muḥammad ʿAjjāj Khāṭib, *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*... Read also Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, "*Ḥadīth*", 17.

[73] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2: 210-214.

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Goldziher feels, there was a decline in *ḥadīth* literature in the sense that, instead of being compilers of new material, *ḥadīth* scholars became copyist and editors producing *mukhtaṣars*, or "abridge version".[74]

In summary, Goldziher sees in *ḥadīth*s "a battlefield of the political and dynastic conflicts of the first few centuries of Islam; it is a mirror of the aspiration of various parties, each of which wants to make the Prophet himself their witness and authority."[75] Likewise,

> Every stream and counter-stream of thought in Islām have found its expression in the form of *ḥadīth*, and there is no difference in this respect between the various contrasting opinions in whatever fields. What we learnt about political parties hold true too differences regarding religious law, dogmatic points of difference etc. Every *ra'y* and *hawā*, every *sunnah* and *bid'a* has sought and found expression in the form of *ḥadīth*.[76]

And even thought Muslim tradisionalist developed elaborate means to scruntinize the mass of traditions that were then extant in the Muslim land, they were "able to exclude only part of the most obvious falsifications from the *ḥadīth* material."[77] Goldziher, for all his scepticism, accepted that the practice of preserving *ḥadīth*s was authentic and that some *ḥadīth*s were likely to be authentic.[78] However, having said that, goldziher is asamant in maintaining that:

> In absence of authentic evidence it would indeed be rash to express the most tentative opinion as to which parts of the *ḥadīth* are the

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[74] Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis...*, 12.
[75] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2: 115.
[76] *Ibid.*, 126.
[77] *Ibid.*, 140.
[78] *Ibid.*, 164.

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oldest material, or even as to which of them date back to the generation immediately following the Prophet's death. Closer acquaintance with the vast stock of *ḥadīths* includes sceptical caution rather than optimistic trust regarding the material brought together in the carefully compiled collections.[79]

And so it is in his advocacy of scepticism that Goldziher made his great impact on the course of *ḥadīths* studies in West.[80]

Goldziher never went much beyond this simple scepticism about the authenticity of the bilk of the *ḥadīth* material to advance a more practical theory for determining the chronology and provenance of any specific *ḥadīth*. He limited his dating of *ḥadīths* to the general comments like "mature stage of its development" or "first few centuries of Islam". Although he hesitated to date the traditions, the scholars who continued his work expended considerable effort in that very endeavour.[81]

> We will probably consider by far the greater part of it as the result of the religious, historical, and social development of Islam during the first two centuries. The *ḥadīth* will not serve as a document of infancy of Islām, but rather as a reflection of the tendencies with appeard in the community during the mature stages of it development.[82]

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[79] *Ibid.*, 18-19. Elsewhere, Goldziher summarized his conclusions in the following manner:

> Judge by scientific standard, only a very small part, if any, of the contents of these canonical compilations (that is, those of Bukhārī and Muslim) can be confidently referred to the early period from which they profess to date. Minute study soon reveals the presence of the tendencies ans aspirations of alater day, the working of a spirit which wrest the record in favour one or other the opposing these in certain disputed questions. Ignaz Goldziher, "The Principles of Law in Islam", 8: 302.

[80] Berg noted that the skepticism of Goldziher was not unique. His contemporaries, such as D.S. Margoliouth, Henri Lammes, and Leone Caetani also expressed reservations about the authenticity of *ḥadīths*. Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis...*, 53.

[81] *Ibid.*, 12.

[82] *Ibid.*, 19.

B. Nabia Abbott and Early Continuous Written *Ḥadīth*

Nabia Abbott tries to argue that there was an early and continous practice of writing *ḥadīth* in Islam. By "early", she means that the Companions of the prophet them selves kept written record of *ḥadīth* and "continous" that most *ḥadīth* were transmitted in written form (alongside the oral transmissin) until the time they were compiled in the canonical collections. For her then, it is this written transmission of *ḥadīth* that serves as the guarantee about their authenticity.[83]

Abbott suggests that literacy was not uncommon among Arabs even in pre-Islamic times and reports about Muḥammad were already being written during his lifetime.[84]

The problem for Abbott, given this suggestion, in the obvious lack of any early attempt to standardize all these reports about Muḥammad and, more tacitly, the lack of extant manuscripts from this period. Her solution to this conundrum is to lay the blame squarely on the shoulders of the second caliph, 'Umar I (d. 23/644). Because of the lack of familiarity with the Qur'ān in the newly conquered lands outside Arabia, the caliph feared "a development in Islam, parallel to that in Judaism and Christiany, but particularly in the latter, of a body of sacred literature that could compete with, if not distort or

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[83] Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri, Vol. II (Qur`anic Commentary and Tradition)*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), 1-2.
[84] *Ibid.*, 6-7.

challenge of the Qur'ān."[85] So he destroyed the manuscripts of *ḥadīth* he discovered and punished those who had possessed them. Abū Hurayrah (d. 58/678) reported later that, so long as 'Umar lived, the people dared not say "the apostle of Allāh said" for fear he would have them flogged, imprisoned, or otherwise severely punished.[86]

'Umar's son 'Abdullāh and Zayd ibn Thābit al-Anṣārī were among the few who opposite written *ḥadīth*. Many more intensified their search for the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, both oral and written. Eventually even 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar dictated his growing collection. The first professional transmitter were Muḥammad's illiterate follower Abū Jurayrah and his client Anas ibn Mālik al-Anṣārī (d. 94/712). When questioned about his numerous traditions, Abū Harayrah explained that he was poor, had been long with Muḥammad, and had devoted his life to memorizing his *ḥadīth*, while the Meccan were preoccupied with the market and Medinans with their lands. Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, twice governor of Medina, and his secretary Abū 'l-Za'za'ah write a great number of traditions from Abū Hurayrah's recitation. Abū Hurayrah dictated *ḥadīth* to many, especially to his son-in law Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib (d. 94/712), who became concerned when one of his pupils relied on his memory.

The literate Anas ibn Mālik was a staunch defender of written *ḥadīth*. He transmitted mostly from Muḥammad and his family and from a few

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[85] *Ibid.*, 10.
[86] Nabia Abbott, "Hadith Literature: Collection and Transmission of Hadith", in *Arabic Literature to the End of Umayyad Period*, Ed. A.F.L. Beeston and Others, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

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leading Companions. He exhorted his sons and pupils to "chain down knowledge through writing" from his dictation or copying his manuscripts. 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit al-Anṣārī (d. 34/654 or 655), teacher of the Qur'an and of writing, transmitted from Abū Hurayrah and Anas. He established a family of three generations of *ḥadīth* scholars. His son and grandson aimed at collecting knowledge from the Anṣār. They transmitted from Ka'b ibn 'Amr (d. 55/675), who was accompanied by a servant carrying a container full of manuscripts.[87]

Anas and his family migrated about mid-century to Baṣra, where they found a large following. They received strong support from the client family to Sīrīn and his six sons, one of whom, Muḥammad become Anas' secretary. Anas himself functioned as a stationer, copyist and/or bookseller, *warrāq*. His outlook, associations and literary activities over a long period of time account for his reputation as the leading transmitter and preserver of *ḥadīth*.

Many Companions avoided (at least publicly) the use of written aand even oral *ḥadīth* lest they incur the caliph's wrath (even though they did not necessarily concur with him on this issue). However, the real basis for the later collections of *ḥadīth* was the relatively few Companions, such as 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn Al-'Āṣ (d. 65/684), Abū Hurayra (d. 58/678), Ibn 'Abbās (d. 67-8/686-8), and Anas ibn Mālik (d. 94/712), who continued to collect, record, and transmit them.[88]

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[87] *Ibid.*, 2.
[88] *Ibid.*, 7-11.

With the death of 'Umar and the successful promulgation of the 'Uthmatic recension of the Qur'ān, the two major fears regarding the use of *hadīth*s were significantly diminished. According to Abbott, the use of *hadīth*s theun flourished in the second half of the first century and even those early Muslims, who like 'Umar, eschewed the use of *hadīth*s in written form, succumbed to preserving their knowledge thus. *hadīth*s were taught in the major centres of Islam, particularly Medina and Mecca, for legal paraenetic, and entertainment purpose, not only by jurists and judges, but also by teacher, preachers, and storytellers.

Abbott recognizes the western scholars, such as Goldziher, question the veracity of the later report of literacy activities during this early period. She states that she herself shared these same doubts but now believes them to be largely unjustified, for the description of this period is relatively consistent and well-attested. Abbott adds:

> For not only was there a remarkable degree of unanimity among the admiring student and followers of these men and like-minded tradisionists concerning to the overall literary activity, but reluctant and at times censorious testimony by the opposition bears witness to this literacy activity. Furthermore...there are literally dozens of their contemporaries scattered across the vast empire who were engaged in similar activities but who for one reason or another never received marked public attention.[89]

In an attempt to counter Goldziher's suggestion of the secular nature of Umayyad rule, Abbott argues that the Umayyad caliphs Mu'āwiyah (d. 60/680), Marwān (d. 65/684), and 'Abd al-Malik (d. 86/705), for example, all

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[89] *Ibid.*, 17.

took an active interest in transmitting and/or recording *ḥadīths*.[90] 'Umar II is particularly associated with *ḥadīths* literature. Abbott accepts the report. (found in the recention of Sha'bānī (d. 120/738) of Mālik ibn Anas'a *Muwaṭṭa'* that this Umayyad caliph commissioned Abū bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥazm (d. 120/738) to record *ḥadīths* and *sunnah*.[91] Abbott argues that he was only of many the caliph contacted in order to secure authentic *ḥadīths* and that Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhrī finished this enormous task and that these *daftar*s (manuscripts) were distributed, but that because of resistance in the provinces and the untimely death of 'Umar II, they never received much attention[92] (though the work of az-Zuhrī lived on through his many noteworthy students). Thus, Abbott has attempted to remedy this "oversight" by Goldziher and to give the Umayyads their due by stressing their role in encouraging the written transmission of the *ḥadīths* material.

With this form of transmission of *ḥadīths*, Abbott is also able to provide the following explanation for the appearance of a rapid expansion in the number of *ḥadīths*. Manuscripts, particularly those preserved by succeeding generation of the same family, which were lengthy document, were divided into separate sections and given the *isnād* of the original document. From one such document could come hundreds of *ḥadīths*. "If not

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[90] According to Abbot, Goldziher "overlooked certain phenomena and was misled by later Islamic interpretation of early Islamic cultural history." She adds that Goldziher, "like most of his contemporaries, minimized the tangible cultural developments of the 'Umayyad period and continued therefore to stress the role of oral transmission and to consider all early literary records as temporary aids to memory." *Ibid*, 64.

[91] *Sunnah* for Abbott, during this time refers not just to the "example or conduct of Muḥammad, but applies also to the caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Umar I and to number of outstanding men who held high office under these three leaders of state." Furthermore, it refers to "specific fields of administrative and legal practices". *Ibid*., 27.

[92] *Ibid*., 18-32.

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only comprehended, this process would give the impression of a sudden huge increase in the number of tradition..."[93] Futhermore, Abbott argues that:

> The development of the family *isnād* and continuous written transmission lead to the...inescapable conclusion...that the bulk of the *ḥadīth*(s) and *sunnah* as they had developed by about the end of the first century was already written down by someone somewhere, even though comparatively small numbers of memorized traditions were being recited orally.[94]

That is, she not only accepts the bulk of family *isnād* as genuine, but also credits them for guaranteeing the authenticity of *ḥadīth*s in general. And these parallel oral and written transmissions each served to safeguard the other and so prevented the large-scale fabrication of *ḥadīth*s. Therefore, Abbott can conclude that the content of the *sunnah* was more or less fixed by the time of az-Zuhrī.

Abbott sees in the *riḥlas* (the journeys in search of knowledge and usually associated with oral tradition), in the use of *warrāqūn* (stationer-copyists), and in the average memory of average raditionist evidence for the continued use and production of manuscripts of *ḥadīth*s. In fact, the oral transmission has been overemphasized according to her because Western scholars have generally failed to grasp *ḥadīth* semantics properly. Arabic terminology for writing materials and in *isnād*s has also been misunderstood. An example of the former in the word *ṣaḥīfah*. It is normally translated as ""sheet (of writing material)" but can refer to anything from a single sheet to a large *daftar* (manuscript). An exampleof the latter are the words *ḥaddatha*

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[93] *Ibid.*, 29.
[94] *Ibid.*, 39.

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(to relate) and *akhbara* (to tell), which seem to connote oral transmission. Also statements in the sources which imply a certain traditionistdid not use written materials may simply mean he did not use them publicly. This is not to say that Abbott equates oral transmission with fabrication and written tradition with authenticity:

> It would, of course, be absurd to equate oral transmission with excessive fluidity of either form or content, with the usually accompanying implication of conscious fabrication, and it would be equally absurd to equate literary record with complete fixity of form and content implying thereby the exclusion of the probability of fabrication. But I would likewise be absurd not to concede that oral transmission is indeed more conducive to fabrication that is literary fixity.[95]

C. Nabia Abbott and Explosive Increase of *Isnād*

Nabia Abbott observed that the phenomenal growth of the corpus of this literature is not due to growth in content but due to progressive increase in the parallel and multiple chains of transmission, i.e., *isnāds*:

> ... the traditions of Muḥammad as transmitted by his Companions and their Successors were, as a rule, scrupulously scrutinised at each step of the transmission, and that the so called phenomenal growth of Tradition in the second and third centuries of Islam was not primarily growth of content, so far as the hadith of Muḥammad and the hadith of the Companions are concerned, but represents largely the progressive increase in parallel and multiple chains of transmission.[96]

Take a highly simplified example of one Companion narrating a single *ḥadīth* from the Prophet to two students, these students themselves teachs that narration again to two pupils each and so on until we reach the time of al-

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[95] Nabia Abbott, *Studies II*, 64.
[96] *Ibid.*, 2.

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Bukhārī and his contemporaries. It notes that in Al-Bukhārī's generation at least 16 individuals will be hearing the hadith from their respective teachers. Because each individual chain of transmission counts as a separate *hadīth*, what started out as a single narration transmitted by one Companion only, has evolved within a short period of time to 16 ahadith; an increase of 1600%. The true nature of affairs, however, being far greater, with a far greater number of Companions transmitting a far greater number of narrations to a far greater number of students. This then is the form in which proliferation took place, the dispersion of narrators and chains of transmission. Using the mathematical application of geometric progression, Nabia Abbott concludes:

> ... using geometric progression, we find that one to two thousand Companions and senior Successors transmitting two to five traditions each would bring us well within the range of the total number of traditions credited to the exhaustive collections of the third century. Once it is realised that the isnad did, indeed, initiate a chain reaction that resulted in an explosive increase in the number of traditions, the huge numbers that are credited to Ibn Ḥanbal, Muslim, and Bukhārī seem not so fantastic after all.[97]

In order to show what Nabia Abbott really meant by explosive increase in *isnād*, here will be taken an example of the *hadīth* on fasting. This *hadīth* has been transmitted fully as well as in parts.[98]

Abū Hurayrah reported the Prophet saying: (that Almighty Allah has said) Every act of the son of Adam is for him; every good deed will receive tenfold except fasting. It is (exclusively) meant for me, and I (alone) will

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[97] *Ibid.*, 72.
[98] Muhammad Mustafa Azami, *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurispundence.* (Oxford: The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and Islamic Society, 1996), 157.

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reward it. He abandons his food for My sake and abandons drinking for My sake and abandons his pleasure for My sake. When any one of you is fasting he should neither indulge in sex nor use obscene language. If anyone reviles him he should say, "I am fasting." The one who fasts has two (occasions) of joy: one when he breaks the fast and one on the day when he will meet his Lord. And the breath (of a fasting person) is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk.

The chart below shows the transmission of the *isnād* of this *ḥadīth* to the classical collections (to be read from top to bottom):

		Ḥanbal II, 440	Abū	Ibrāhīm	A. Aḥwaṣ	b. Masʿūd
Nas. IV, 134	B. Bashshār	Muḥd	Shuʿba	A. Isḥāq		
		ʿA. Razzāq IV, 308	Maʿmar			
		T, Kabīr I, 84b	Qatāda	Ḥai	Bashīr	
		Ḥanbāl VI, 240	Yazīd	Jaʿfar	Umm Salim	
		Ṭawsaṭ I, 252	Khārija	Yazīd	ʿĀisha	
		Ḥumaidī No. 1011	Sufyān	ʿAmr	B. ʿUmair	
		T, Kabīr V, 9a	ʿAnbasa	Ḥasan	ʿUthmān	
Ibn. Ḥibbān No. 931			Saʿid	Muṭarrif	b. A. Al-ʿĀṣ	
Nas. IV, 132	Hilāl A. Aʿlā	ʿUbaidullah	Zaid	A. Isḥāq	b. Ḥārith	
		Zaid. Musnad 202	ʿAlī	His father	ʿAlī	

This lengthy *hadīth* has been transmitted by many scholars in parts. Ibn Ḥanbal has endorsed it at least 24 times. It is preserved in the collections of A'māsh (d. 148 A.H.), Ibn Juraij (d. 150 A.H.), and Ibrāhīm ibn Tahman (d. 168), transmitters from the students of Abū Hurairah. It is also found in Shi'ite, Zaidi, and Ibadi sources.[100]

Confining the discussion only to the third generation of narrators from Abū Hurayrah, who mostly belong to the first half of the second century of the Hijra, the following features appear: There are 22 third-generation transmitters-nine from Medina, five from Baṣra, four from Kūfa, and one each from Mecca, Ḥijāz, and Khurasān. These variously trace their source to 11 students of Abū Hurayrah, whose homes were in Medina, Baṣra, and Kūfa. A second interesting point is that not all the Medinese, Baṣrites, or Kūfans are the students of one man. Three of the Baṣrites trace the source of their knowledge to one Basrite, but the other two cite two different Medinese as their source.[101]

Clearly the *isnād* result in an explosive increase in the multiple and parallel chains of transmission of the *aḥādīth* that trace back to the Prophet and the Companions. The content do not increase.

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[100] *Ibid.*, 161.
[101] *Ibid.*, 162.