The Role of Reason in Hadith Criticism in the Islamic Tradition

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By Rashad Ali

Dedicated to my teacher, Ustādh Dr Mohammad Farid ElShayyal,
who sadly passed this week. An exemplar, in speech and deed.
A beautiful soul.
May he be enveloped in Divine Mercy.

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Introduction

The debate surrounding rationality, reason, the use of intellect, logic and scripture is arguably as old as scripture itself. In an Islamic theological, cultural and religious context, the question, 'what has Athens to do with Jerusalem?' could just as easily be asked with reference to Mecca or Medina (replacing Jerusalem). There is of course a significant Islamic tradition, whether in theology, matters of basic beliefs and intellectual methodology in approaching fundamental beliefs, or religious ethics or law commonly referred to as 'Sharīah'. This is fairly well known in matters of theology proper (that is, belief in and conceptualisations of God), given that those debating between the various schools of Islamic theology present, and claim, that each of their positions are congruent with both reason and revelation throughout history.

What is less acknowledged is the role given to rationality (*aql*) by scholars engaged in the transmission of hadīth (that is, *naql* – transmitted texts), when these are related to ethics and religious law. This brief essay surveys evidence from the writings of early and late (*salaf* and *khalaf*) scholars of each of the Islamic disciplines, across schools of theology and religious rite. First it attempts to illustrate and explain the basic principles as outlined by 'mainstream' or 'orthodox' traditionalists, and those scholars perceived as more 'conservative' than the mainstay of sunnī 'orthodoxy'[1], namely, Ibn Taymīya

(d. 1328) . Then it outlines the early scholars' methodology in these matters as explained by Shātibī (d. 1388). It then returns to look at how critical approaches within the tradition, and textual criticism, formed the standard approach of hadīth masters and was maintained and developed through history, taking by way of example Ibn Abdul-Barr's (d. 1071) commentary on the famous collection of Muhammad bin Isma'īl al-Bukhārī' (d. 870). And then takes the work of Ibn Qayyim (d. 1350), the famous student of Ibn Taymīya, and his critique of texts rather than chains of narration i.e. content criticism, and criterion for doing so, as an example of how the rational criticism of transmitted text, was developed.

The essay closes with a correction of the over-zealous rationalists who through their zeal for rationality inadvertently became sectarian, with a selection of statements and views, from across the major theological and traditional spectrum, on avoiding anathematizing and excommunicating the faithful based upon their intellectual or scriptural opinions. Maintaining a balanced perspective therefore is the intent. The ability to contextualise the painstaking work of other scholars, not holding sacred their works and opinions but rather giving them a critical reception is the normative position within the Islamic tradition, as is taking a rigorous intellectual and rational approach across multiple disciplines.

On Conflicts between Rationality and Scripture and the priority of Rationality

Ibn Bazīza[2] (d. 1405) explained the principle when commenting on al-Juwaynī's (d. 1085) famous text[3] on creed, *al-Irshad ilā Qawātī ul-Adilla fī Usūl il-I'tiqād (A Guide to the Conclusive Proofs in the Principles of Creed)*: rational principles take priority and scripture is interpreted in conformity with them, taking them away from their literal reading when necessary, thus[4]:

> "Principle: Our scholars have stated, 'when there is conflict between rational proofs (*dalā'il ul-aqlīya*) and the apparent meaning of the scripture (*zawāhir ul-shar'īya*), then to accept them both is impossible (*mahāl*) because they are in conflict; as is rejecting them both for this would leave us nothing save blind ignorance! And invalidating rational proofs because of the soundness of the scriptural proofs (*dalāla ul-sam*), is impossible, because the intellect is the foundation of the scripture (*al-aql asl ul-shar*'). If we were to invalidate the foundation due to soundness of the branch (*far'*) it would necessitate invalidating both of them! Hence it is mandatory to uphold the soundness of the rational proof and interpret the apparent meaning of the scripture [in accordance with it]. And God's aid is sought!"[5]

> "...it is mandatory to uphold the soundness of the rational proof and interpret the apparent meaning of the scripture [in accordance with it]."
> – Ibn Bazīza

What if someone comes across narrations, which are absurd especially in the realms of aqīda? How did the Salaf and the early scholars deal with it? And how did usūlī scholars explain this?

If a narration seems absurd, scholars would then seek to interpret it in a manner that is not absurd, hence the criterion *usūlī* scholars place for rejection of a narration is: that which cannot be given a reasonable interpretation (*la yahtamal al-tawīl*) which is not far fetched (*ba'īd*). If it is reasonable then

it would be accepted; if not, then either *tafwīdh* (resign the meaning to God) i.e. narrate the hadith and leave it alone, or reject the hadith.

This is the criterion we find from al-Rāzī (d. 1210) in his *Mahsūl*[6], al-Juwaynī in *Irshād*, and supported by great scholars of hadīth like the Ibn Daqīq al-Īd (d. 1302) in several works including his *Ihkām*.[7] This is worth elaborating with an example from the Salaf:

> "Chapter of relating narrations that 'verily God created Ādam, peace be upon him, in His form':
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> [paragraph 162] (Imām) Mālik was asked regarding narrating hadīth which state 'verily God created Ādam upon him be peace, in His form (sura)', or that He would enter His Yad (Hand) in the fire and remove whom He wishes; Mālik strongly condemned (*inkāran shadīd*) and forbade the narration of such hadith. It was said to him 'people of knowledge narrate them' and he asked, 'who are they?' We said 'Ibn Ijlān from Abī Zinād'. To which he replied, 'Ibn Ijlān was not someone who was familiar with such matters nor is he a Scholar (ālim)'
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> Verily it is disliked to narrate such matters from the perspective that they were not established through authentic chains (*sahīhat ul-isnad*) in his view, and it is not permitted to ascribe to the Messenger, may peace and blessings be upon him, or relate from him that which is not authentic in narration. Also, it is giving a similitude where a likeness is given for God, and God transcends any likeness to the creation. As God most High says: "There is nothing whatsoever like unto Him" (Sūrah al-Shūra, verse 11). And if these narrations, assuming they are authentic, do not oblige actual knowledge (*ilm ul-haqīqī*), but just apparent [knowledge], it is not allowed to abandon what is definitive real knowledge, obliged by the intellect, for a narration which is either not authentic or does not provide real knowledge as established by the intellect and established principles [of evidence].
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> [163] Indeed Mālik was questioned about the narration from the Prophet, may peace and blessings be upon him, that verily our

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Lord descends (*yanzil*) every night to the heavens of the world, he said, 'we leave these narrations as they are [i.e. without comment], if they are authentic'.

[164] And he was asked about: "al-Rahmān alal-Arsh Istawā/The Most Merciful ascended the throne" (Surah Ta Ha, verse 5) said *Istiwā* is known, its modality is not comprehended (*ghayr maʿqūla*), asking concerning it is a heretical innovation (*bidʾā*). Mālik detested entering into rhetorical theology, and argumentation in theology, and said, disputation in matters of theology hardens the heart."[8]

''…any hadīth which conflicts with the intellect (aql) or sound transmission (samʾ al-sahīh), was considered weak (daʾīf) or fabricated (mawdūʾ) to the people of knowledge (ahl al-ilm).''
— Ibn Taymīya

Ibn Taymīya on conflicts between reason and scripture makes the following points[9]

"If what is meant by conflict between scripture and rationale, two definitive points of view (*qatiʾayn*), we do not accept this is possible. If what is meant is between a speculative proofs (*zannī*) then preference is given to the preponderant proof (*rājih*) always (*mutlaq*).

If what is intended is when one of the two (rational & scriptural) is definitive (*qatī*) and the other speculative (*zannī*), then what is definitive is always given precedence. And when the definitive proof is rational (*aqlī*) it is given precedence because it is definitive (*qatī*) not merely because it is rational (*aqlī*)."[10]

Later the Imām states:

"…any hadīth which conflicts with the intellect (*aql*) or sound transmission (*samʾ al-sahīh*), was considered weak (*daʾīf*) or fabricated (*mawdūʾ*) to the people of knowledge (*ahl al-ilm*)."[11]

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Hadīth tradition among the Imāms of the Salaf from Shātibī's *Muwaffaqāt¹²*

Hadīth literature can be confusing. A famous saying attributed to the great jurist and hadīth scholar Ibn Wahb (d. 813), a student of Imām Mālik, intimates that they can be misguiding except to the *faqīh* (someone who has depth of understanding literally, and used to mean a jurist). It is effectively people's recollections of prophetic sayings, deeds and approvals transmitted by his companions to others. Sometimes they were stated publicly, sometimes in private formal gatherings, and other times at the request of rulers, students, an everyday person seeking guidance, etc. These were then collected by scholars who specialised in collecting and arranging these traditions or narrations in different ways. Some did not concern themselves with the subject matter but emphasised the source i.e. which companion it originated from. Others arranged different sources by subject matter e.g. beliefs or creed, prayer, fasting, warfare etc. The first were called *Musnad*, the latter *Sunan* or *Jāmī¹³*.

Hadith are divided into two parts. Actual content (*matn*/text), the meat if you like, and the elaborate chain of narration (*sanad*/chain) – who is narrating this from the Prophet? So for example, in contemporary editions of the *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik, it is narrated that the freed slave Nāfī, narrates from the companion Abdulllāh bin Umar (the son of the second Caliph of Islam), that the Prophet condemned the killing of women and children (on the battle field). In some transmissions Mālik just relates directly from Ibn Umar without mentioning Nāfī. This hadīth though is one which scholars such as Jalāl ul-Dīn al-Suyūti (d. 1505) have stated was mass transmitted i.e. given that there were an innumerable number of individuals narrating this it was so well known that it is deemed not plausible to have been fabricated (*mutawātir*). As such al-Nawawī (d. 1277), Shātibī and others cite this as a rare case of basic principles of absolute consensus in medieval Islamic jurisprudence on the prohibition of killing women and children, and by extension non-combatants.[14]

In any case, apart from a handful of such mass transmitted narrations, which are explicit and unequivocal in meaning (*qatī dalāla*), the rest are,

as you can imagine, often what is commonly referred to as *khabar ahādī* or isolated and single narrations. These are not definitive, establishing as a fact that the Prophet uttered such statements, or claiming that such incidents definitely took place. And even if in theory they were *mutawātir* (mass transmitted), Shāṭibī points out that rarely would we have all the relevant context and information, linguistic assumptions, agreement on grammatical aspects necessary for interpretation, an absence of any equivocal words or meanings (*ishtirāk*), usage of metaphor (*majāz*), technical meanings specified by religious teachings (*naql shar'ī*), custom/idiom (*adāt*), relative usage subject to specification of an apparent general statement (*takhṣīṣ ul-umūm*), restriction of an absolute statement (*taqyīd ul-mutlaq*), the absence of an abrogating statement (*nāsikh*), later statements or precedents, or conflicts with rationality/intellect (*mu'ārid aqlī*). Shāṭibī states that reaching definitive (*qatī*) knowledge bearing in mind all of the above is quite a feat, and hence most narrations on their own are actually speculative (*zannī*) (meaning a very likely opinion in this case but falling short of absolute certitude), but with ancillary evidence (*qarā'in mushāhada aw manqūla*) could yield certain knowledge (*yaqīn*).[15]

One shouldn't, therefore, take information imparted in hadīth as gospel (if you pardon the expression). That is, despite the best efforts in assuring biographical data was available (*ilm al-rijāl*) on all folk who transmitted hadīth; using historic analysis to judge whether the chain of custody stood up with any gaps (was the chain of narrators actually connected – *mu'tassil*); establishing that the narrators were reliable (*dābit*) and rooting out aberrant narrators who made obvious mistakes (by contradictory reports or contradicting better established narrations – *shudhūdh*) and weak narrators, leaving those people who had integrity (*adāla* as opposed to known liars); and employing specialists look for linguistic and historic mistakes (*ilal ul-hadīth* was a special category of finding such errors) isolated narrations in and of themselves, even if judged as being sound (*sahīh*), should be seen as presumptively sound (*zannī*).

So how do we determine definitive knowledge? Well Shāṭibī gives us some good examples. I will take just one. Everyone knows of the obligation of salāt, or prayers. This is not taken from one verse, which orders you to

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establish prayer, but it is mentioned on some 121 occasions in the Qur'an alone, praising those who pray, warning those who abandon it, repeating its blessings, describing it as a characteristic of the believer and so forth. There is also a multiplicity of hadīth (thousands). The meaning is so well established through inductively reading the scripture (*istiqrā*) that this concept is regarded as definitive (*qatī*).

Outlining principles of Islamic jurisprudence or the Sharīah through this process leads us to definitive sets of ideas. These include principles of religious law (*qawā'id*) and the intended purposes of the Sharīah (*maqāsid*).

"Nothing in the Sharīah should contradict the rational principles (addilat ul-shar'īya la tunāfī ahkām ul-uqūl)"
– Shātibī

Protecting life, preserving the religion, protecting property, preserving the intellect and family integrity are the fundamental aims and purposes of Islam according to the *maqāsid*. Establihsed principles include prohibiting the means of fraudulent transactions and undefined and ambiguous contracting; all rules should not contradict natural laws but depend on them; and many established rules in scripture such as 'the starting point is that all things are permitted' (*asl fil-ashyā al-ibāha*), and 'harmful things are forbidden' (*al-asl fil-mudār al-tahrīm*).

It is such principles and purposive maxims of the religion (*kulliyāt*) that are established and govern how any narration or isolated hadīth tradition should be analysed in light of, and specific rules (*juziyāt*) should be understood and contextualised within.

Isolated hadīth therefore should be understood in light of such things as:

1. *Maqāsid* – if they don't serve a purpose they are to be parked, as they are not congruent with the religion.

2. *Qawā'id kullī* – comprehensive principles: they should either be reconciled with them or they should be rejected.

3. Nothing in the Sharīah should contradict the rational principles (*addilat ul-shar'īya la tunāfī ahkām ul-uqūl*)[16]

4. *Amal* – the ahadīth should have been acted upon by the early generations – the Salaf.[17]

Shātibī states that this was the understanding in general of the major Imāms of the Salaf, Mālik, Abū Hanīfa (d. 767), Īsa bin Abbān (d. 835) and others – I would add the likes of al-Awzā'ī (d. 774) and Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 778). He moreover explains that this is how the companions dealt with people and each other when narrating hadīth, and demonstrated how they dealt with *dalīl* or evidences, bringing forth many examples.

He cites a few from Ā'isha,[18] for example when it was said that, "people are punished in the grave after their deaths because their families cry for them",[19] she explained as a matter of principle that people are not held to account for others' actions. The Qur'ān establishes this principle in many verses such as "no bearer of burdens shall bear the burdens of others."[20]

> Shātibī explains that it was a basic rational principle that we take the asbāb or rational causes into account and these are the laws of the universe (adāt) by which we live.

Another narration also found in Bukhārī is when a woman and a dog break the prayer, which Ā'isha rejects as it is comparing women to dogs! She rejects another narration, that bad omens lie in birds and women, as an irrational superstition that was from pre-Islamic (*Jāhilīya*) times.

When people sought to flee from a plague in the time of Umar bin al-Khattāb (d. 644) he was asked, "do you flee from the decree of God?" In his astonishment at who was asking such an irrational question he replied, "Would that someone other than you had asked the question! We are fleeing from one decree of God to another!" Shātibī explains that it was a basic rational principle that we take the *asbāb* or rational causes into account and these are the laws of the universe (*adāt*) by which we live.

Shātibī gives many other examples of how Imām Mālik would have an apparently sound hadīth but if it contradicted basic principles it would be parked. This includes ones implying dogs or their saliva were impure, which contradicts the Qur'ān when it tells Muslims to eat from hunting dogs, and he added the general maxim that all of creation, including living animals, are

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pure. Well known examples where the primary meaning of narrations could lead to damage to commerce and hence property, such as allowing people to renege on contracts if they 'hadn't parted ways' from where they were were similarly not acted on. This is famous as it comes through a strong chain of custody, one which Imam Bukhārī considered a golden chain, i.e. most reliable of all hadīth, mentioned earlier as an example (Mālik–Nāfi–Ibn Umar) Shātibī does mention that Shāfiʾī (d. 820), the Imām and student of Mālik of 8/9 years in hadīth didn't adopt this approach, but this was the general methodology of Mālik, Ibn al-Qāsim (d. 806) (a student of Mālik for 20 years), Īsa bin Abbān and many others.[21]

Shātibī considers many other ways in which the salaf Imāms understood religion and the Sharīah in his major text. This is in no way exhaustive, but we are presenting here just a few issues to consider when thinking and trying to understand and integrate isolated hadīth into the religion. Shātibī also mentions concepts of the general good and benefit (*maslaha*), avoiding harm (*darar*), moderation (*wasatīya*), how social rules are to be rationalised (unlike rituals which may be supra-rational), how mercy – *rahma* – is the essence of the religion, and interestingly avoiding 'stupid conclusions' when trying to reconcile specifics, rules, ahadīth and general principles![22]

This is not some new fangled modernism,[23] it is the way of the Salaf.

Examples of contentious ahādīth in Imām Bukhārī's *al-Jāmī al-Sahīh* from *Kitāb al-Ajwiba an il-Masā'il il-Mustaghraba min Kitāb il-Bukhārī* (*The Book of Responses on Contentious issues that are in the Book of Bukhārī*)[24]

Ibn Abdul-Barr was both a major hadīth master (*hāfidh*) and jurist (*faqīh*) in the Mālikī *madhab*, or religious rite. He was nicknamed the hadīth master of the West, as a major scholar of Andalus, Cordoba, Spain (hence Qurtubī). His works are well-known and major references in hadīth *takhrīj* (source extraction and analysis), *sharh* (commentary), *riwāya* (narration), *khilāf ālīy* (diversity of religious interpretations across schools and the early tradition), Maliki *fiqh*, *khilāf nāzil* (differences within the school) and his *tarjīhāt*

(personal preferences). His analysis of the hadīth and commentary on the narrations in the *Muwatta*, in *al-Tamhīd līmā fil-Muwatta min al-Ma'ānī wal-Asānīd,* is considered the definitive work on the subject. Similarly, his *Istidhkār* is considered an indispensible work of *khilāf*, being a commentary on the entire *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik, expanding on the opinions of scholars across the entire spectrum of *madhāhib* from companions, their successors and the established religious schools and the now non-existent jurists. His *al-Kāfi fi Fiqh Ahl al-Madīna*, on the official *madhab* of the school of Imām Mālik, is taught and studied widely. He is also well known for his *Jāmī Bayān ul-ilm wa Fadliihī*, among many other works devoted to the biographies of companions – *al-Isti'āb fi Mari'fat ul-As'hāb*, jurists – *al-Intiqā fi A'immat ul-Thalātha*, and interpretations of the Qur'ān, among other subjects.

Kitāb al-Ajwiba an il-Masā'il il-Mustaghraba min Kitāb il-Bukhārī[25] is a singular work, which as the title suggests is a set of questions about the content and chains of ahādīth in *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*. It's a small work, but interesting from a critical analysis point of view when looking at narrations in light of critical hadīth studies, *aqīda* (creed) and *matn* critique within the collection of Imām Muhammad bin Isma'īl al-Bukhārī's famous *Sahīh* collection of hadīth.

Selected points made in the *Ajwiba* include:

1. Mas'h on the Turban?

The first example is hadīth number two in the book. Awza'ī related on the authority of Yahyā bin Abī Kathīr, on the authority of Abī Salama, on the authority of Ja'far ibn Amr bin Amr bin Ummayā, on the authority of his father who said: "I saw the Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him[26]), make *mas'h* (wipe wet hands in ritual ablution – *wudu*) over his turban and his *khuffain* (leather socks)".[27]

Why does Imām Bukhārī mention this follow up (*mutābi'a*) without mentioning the *sanad* (chain)? Ibn Abdul-Barr makes the following observations:

"Imām Bukhārī added this as a supportive follow up narration (*mutābi*) of Ma'mar for Awza'ī because it is supportive of the narra-

tion from Yahyā ibn Abī Kathīr as this hadīth mentioned *mas'h* over the turban... in fact Abdul-Razzāq narrated from Ma'mar with his chain from Yahyā bin Abī Kathīr from Abī Salama from Amr bin Ummaya al-Damarī who said: 'I saw the Prophet (p) make *mas'h* over his *khuffain*' and did not add, or mention 'wiping over the Turban', and Abdul-Razzāq is of the most reliable (*athbat*) of people who narrate from Ma'mar. In fact he wrote his exquisite book[28] where he has a chapter on 'Mas'h over the Turban', but does not mention this hadīth. He does however mention in the chapter of Mas'h over the Khuffain this very narration which also didn't mention the wiping over the Turban."

He continues later:

"Sufficient for you is the fact that Abdul-Razzāq, in his *Musannaf,* has the narration of Ma'mar and the narration of Amr bin Umayyā, wiping over the Turban. God's help is sought!".

He mentions there are other narrations through Awza'ī with some narrators missing e.g. Ja'far and adding others such as Walīd bin Muslim. Ibn Abdul-Barr then goes on to say:

"And this narration has come through Yūnus bin Yazīd from al-Awaz'ī, from Yahya from Abī Salama, from Amr bin Umayyā that, 'verily he saw the Prophet (p)wipe over his *khuffain*' and did not mention the Turban nor was there mention of Ja'far."

He then adds:

"This narration has come also through Abī Salama from Mughīra, from Abī Salama from Abū Hurayra (ra)[29], and none of them mention wiping over the Turban, it could be that these two narrations are actually a different hadīth (i.e. relating a different incident), however those that declared it defective[30],considered it one hadīth, and *idtirāb[31]*. And the idtirāb in the hadīth of Amr bin Ummayā is major,

and so the hadīth is not established to the majority of people of knowledge in hadīth and so was not extracted by Abū Dawūd nor Ahmad bin Shuayb[32]."

He ends by saying:

> "Bukhārī is alone in bringing this hadīth and this narration that he mentions, was not supported by anyone, and perfection belongs to the Possessor of Glory and Godliness". A timely reminder for all![33]

2. Prayer initially obliged in merely cycles of two rak'a?

The second example is taken from the sixth hadīth discussed in the book. A hadīth narrated by Ā'isha (ra) said: "Prayer was obligated in cycles of two *rak'a* and two *rak'a*, both in residence and on journeys. Prayer on journey remained as it has been, and prayer in residence was increased.[34]

Ibn Abdul-Barr starts and sums up what he is going to explain:

> "Verily the discussion (*kalām*) on this hadīth is long! We mentioned it in our book *al-Tamhīd* and in *Istidhkār* also, so we will only mention from them a small portion but, God willing, that which is sufficient. Surely this hadīth cannot be taken at face value, assuming the authenticity of its content, because there are many *athār* (reports) which conflict with this, as for the chain of narrators, in terms of transmissions no one has made any contentious statements regarding it."

He immediately begins to explain why:

> "And from the reasons why this narration is disparaged is that the apparent meaning (*zāhir*) obligates shortening obligatory prayers,

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whereas Ā'isha (ra), who brought this narration did not act in accordance with this tradition and her action, in contrary, is well known. And there is not necessarily an issue with acting in conflict with this, because it is possible that it was an unfounded opinion, that she may have rescinded her opinion, or implied an alternative to its apparent meaning. As this is an informative report (*khabr*) and it is not allowed that it can be abrogated, because it is impossible to have abrogation in factual statements, rather it is commands and prohibitions that are abrogated."

He expands the principle stated on abrogation and cites evidence to substantiate his previous statements:

"Abdul-Razzāq mentions from[35] Ma'mar from Zuhrī from Urwa from Ā'isha 'that verily she would perform her prayers completely when travelling'.[36]

He then mentions odd explanations such as those that said as she was Um ul-Muminūn (Mother of the Believers), wherever she may be, she is 'home' as it is like a place of 'residency'. This is ridiculous according to Ibn Abdul-Barr. He states:

"It is said to them: this is a false (*fāsid*) interpretation (*tawīl*) with no basis for such a deduction (*waj'h*), and it is not permitted to interpret/explain away Ā'isha (ra) in this matter by contradiction to the Sunna and consensus (*ijmā*)… Indeed the Muslims have agreed that shortening was permitted for her in her journeys. The majority of them say: 'it is not necessary to shorten prayers (*qasr*), if that was the case the Prophet (p) would have always shortened his prayers [and never done them completely, as he did] and he is Abū ul-Muminūn – (Father of the Believers), and in fact Ā'isha (ra), the Mother of the Believers, would travel with him! Do you not see that Ubay bin Ka'b (ra) used to recite: 'The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, his wives are Mothers to them, and he is a Father

for them[37]. There were many Mothers to the Believers who travelled for Hajj and Umrah (major and minor pilgrimages) and other than that and it has not reached us from any of them that they had such an interpretation."

He mentions other companions that acted likewise, as he says:

"... indeed there were a group from the Salaf ul-Sālih (righteous predecessors) who would perform complete prayers, among them Uthmān bin Affān, Sa'd bin Abī Waqās and other than them."

He adds a number of additional points, including the fact that the Prophet (p) would both shorten and combine when on journeys, that:

"...it hasn't reached us from any of the scholars of the Muslims that they forbade a traveller from joining people in prayer in the mosque. All of which indicate to you that shortening prayers was not a duty upon them, verily it was a Sunna and permitted (*ibāha*) as narrated from Ā'isha (ra) from the Prophet (p) as has Umar (ra) from Ya'lā ibn Umayyā who said to him, 'it is not for us to shorten our prayers when we are travelling and we are safe (from fear, *aminūn*) and God has said: 'And when you are travelling in the Earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten your prayers if you are afraid'.[38] Umar (ra) said: 'I was taken aback by this, so I asked the Messenger of God (p) about this so he said to me 'this is a charity, that God has bestowed upon you, accept the charity'".

This indicates shortening prayers is a mercy, ease, and a well established Sunna."

To complete the refutation and reasoning he adds that the Prophet (p) said:

"Verily God has taken off from the traveller fasting [Ramadān] and halved the Prayer."[39]

And then states:

> "This is evidence that prayer was not made obligatory in cycles of two as [is claimed] was said by Ā'isha (ra). It was said because prayer was obligated in cycles of four when it was prescribed. And the Messenger of God (p) prayed in twos on a journey with some from the people of knowledge, among them Ibn Abbas (ra), Nafi'ī bin Jubayr bin Mut'im (ra), Hasan al-Basrī, all of whom claimed Prayer was [ordinarily] four rak'āt as when it was first prescribed during the 'Night-Journey', and began when Jibra'īl (as) prayed with him in the House of Prayer, starting with *Dhuhr* (the midday prayer) and ending with *Sub'h* (dawn prayer) over those two days, all as four *rak'āt* cycles except *Maghrib* (Sundown) and *Sub'h*.

> There is no difference of opinion among the biographers of the Prophet who reported that Prayer was not obliged except after the Night-Journey… all of this refutes the hadīth narration [attributed to] Ā'isha (ra) or moves it away from the apparent meaning."

He remarks:

> "This that we have mentioned to you is the *madhab* of Mālik and the majority of his companions and Ahl al-Madīna (the school of the people of Madīna).[40]

He does add a lot more, including the views of scholars on the subject, and a brief discussion on the 'Night-Journey', but these are not relevant to his analysis and his rejection of this narration despite the soundness of its chain.

3. Adhān and Iqāma – how do we perform the call to Prayer?

Hadīth number nine in the text is regarding the call to Prayer. It is narrated by Ibn Ulayya from Khālid al-Hudhā'ī from Abī Qilāba from Anas who said: Bilāl was ordered to double the wording of the *adhān* and single the *iqāma* – Isma'īl said: I mentioned to Ayyūb and he said 'except the *iqāma*.'[41]

What does this 'exception' mean with this wording? Is it from the ḥadīth or not? And what is the meaning of Mālik (r)[42] not repeating the saying 'the prayer has started'?

Ibn Abdul-Barr responds that whilst this narration is sound and the over-riding majority accepted the additional statements of the sub-narrator, people differed on this i.e. the implications and accepting this narration. He says:

> "Regarding the statement 'except the *iqāma*' the *ulamā*' (scholars) differed from the people of *fiqh* and *athar* (narration) who interpret this ḥadīth and what the statement refers to when it says, 'the prayer has begun' should be repeated twice. People have two different points of view about this, one group takes the view the *iqāma* should be said once, except 'the prayer has begun' as they establish it should be repeated from this narration and other ḥadīth. Among them Shāfi'ī and Awzā'ī, Ahmad, Is'ḥāq, Yahyā bin Yahyā al-Naysabūrī the companion of Mālik, Abū Thawr (d. 860), it is the *madhab* of al-Hasan al-Basrī and Mak'hūl, al-Zuhrī, and this was adopted by Abī Mahdhūra and the *mu'adhins* (callers to prayer) of Mecca to this day as they have all mentioned...
>
> And the other group says 'the prayer has begun' twice as that is twice, and the *adhān* too all except the *takbīr*[43], which should be read four times, and the *iqāma* is doubled from the beginning to the end, except the *tahlīl*[44], and this is view of the Kufans."

And then, interestingly, he brings forth the view of the Medinan school, by means of Imām Mālik. He says:

> "Mālik said: the *mu'adhins* don't say 'the prayer has begun' just once, and mentioned that the son of Sa'd al-Qaraz (ra) the *mu'adhin* of the Messenger of God (p) Abī Bakr (ra) and Umar (ra) would make the call to prayer in Medina by saying 'the prayer has begun' once."

He adds a little later:

"al-Shāfi'ī did [also] take the view in Baghdad 'the prayer has begun' in the *iqāma* should be read once as mentioned by Za'farānī... but then returned to the view that it is said twice in Egypt."

And he clearly explains the reasoning for Mālik disregarding other narrations:

"... as for Mālik (r) abandoning the repetition of 'the prayer has begun' twice, the *adhān* and *iqāma* were not in need of a particular narration (*akhbār khāṣṣa*) from trustworthy folk (*udūl*) because it was something that took place day and night, five times, not something rare that needed a particular, sound, individual narration.

The *adhān* and the *iqāma* were established for him from the *mutawātir amal* (mass transmitted practice) in the abode of *hijra* (i.e. Medina) and established *Sunna*. The principle (*asl*) for Mālik in these narrations is to not accept reports that conflicts with this, in such matters and in the branches (of practice)."

So mass transmitted practice were not to be abandoned because they were in conflict with hadīth apparently deemed sound. As he says:

"... indeed many such individual reports have been rejected with what is less established than this practice. Certainly the report of Abī Qilāba from Anas and it is single from them – also – the people of Basra, and in fact it is permitted for Mālik to not pay attention to it, not pay attention to the narration of Ayyūb and his addition. As if it is said: he paid attention to it but declared it defective (*ma'lūl*). And my response is likewise built on his principle in what I mentioned to you. And God knows best."[45].

Hadīth masters such as Ibn Abdul-Barr continued to critique narrations and demonstrated that there were different approaches and ways of doing so than merely those established by one school. They did not consider any text or narration sacred and beyond analysis or rejection, if this was done according to rigorous criteria and methodologies.

Ibn Qayyim on textual analysis and non-*isnād* approaches to finding fabricated ahadīth

Ibn Qayyim[46] begins his work on critiquing the transmitted texts (*Naqd al-Manqūl*[47]), with a question he was purported to have been asked:

> "Is it possible to know hadīth are fabricated with set criteria without analysis of its chain?"[48]

He explains this is a major question, and also states that only those who are:

> "... immersed in the sound *Sunna*, who are immersed within its corpus, who have specialised in it and have a talent for it, who are "staunch" in their knowledge of traditions and reports; have awareness of the *sīra* (biography) al-Rasūl (Messenger), may God blessings and peace be upon him,[49] and his guidance, his commands and prohibitions, what he informed us of, what he liked and hated, his *dawā* (call) and what he legislated for his Ummāh (Community), who was so immersed as though they had mixed with the Messenger and been at one with his (noble) Sahāba (companions); folk similar to this..."

Those who were "earnest" in following the traditions and knowledge, with these attributes, could judge what is sound and attributable to the Messenger and what is not sound (*la yāsih*) i.e. fabricated[50]. He explains for those unfamiliar with the above it is not for them! He says this is:

> "...the same as the followers of major jurists and eponyms of the schools of thought (Ā'imma), they are familiar with their opinions (*aqwāl*), texts, schools of thought (*madhāhib*), their methodologies, their sources of thought, which others just would not know. And God knows best."[51]

He then gives examples of what the hadīth masters have said about such narrations and identified fabricators or people that transmit such rejected narrations and why such narrators must therefore be untrustworthy.

Ibn Qayyim writes:

> "An example of this: what is related by Ja'far bin Jisr on the authority[52] of his father, on the authority of Thābit, on the authority of Anas who claimed from the Prophet (*yarfa'ū*),[53] "Whoever says SubhānAllāh wa bi-hamdihī[54] God will plant a million date palms in paradise whose roots will be made of Gold". Ja'far here is Ja'far bin Jisr bin Farqad Abū Sulaiman al-Qassār al-Basrī. Ibn Adī said: 'his ahadīth are manākīr (very strange)', Izdī said 'he is disparaged' and his father, Yahya bin Ma'īn said 'he is nothing, his narrations aren't written [i.e. not accepted for consideration]'. Nisā'ī and Dāraqutnī said: (he is) weak. Ibn Hibbān said: 'he has left the bounds of trustworthiness' (*adāla*), Ibn Adī said: 'in general his hadīth are not preserved'."[55]

So Ibn Qayyim presents this as an example of how Hadīth Masters would see a narration which was an obvious fabrication and therefore find who would be considered unreliable and fabricators, as they would narrate odd things that were rejected. And he goes on to state: "these are examples in which there is no doubt for anyone who even has the slightest knowledge of the Messenger (p) and his speech that they are fabrications (*mawdū*), forgeries and lies upon him".[56] He gives other examples of such similar "extremely exaggerated" claims as an obvious "darkness", and which show they are "obvious forgeries".[57]

Furthermore, Ibn Qayyim laid out comprehensive principles (*umūr kullīya*) to recognize fabricated (*mawdū*) hadīth and places them under sub-headings.

1. Exaggeration in rewards and punishments

Ibn Qayyim explains that these narrations manifest the limits of "stupidity and ignorance"! And the actions of the Zindīq[58] (those who sought to discredit Islam) were "diminishing the status (*tanqīs*) of the Messenger (p) by attributing the likes of these words to him."[59]

2. Conflicting with or rejecting knowledge acquired by observation as a sign of forgery (takdhīb ul-hiss lil-hadīth al-mawdū)

Ibn Qayyim gives the amusing example: "Aubergines are a cure for all diseases(!)" And expands:

> "If this was said by some healers people would have mocked them!".

He gives another example, "if a man sneezes when he is speaking this a proof of his truthfulness(!)" And adds, "even if some of the people have stated that the chain is rigorously authentic (*sahīh*), our observations bear testimony to its falsehood."[60]

''Even if some of the people have stated that the chain is rigorously authentic (sahīh), our observations bear testimony to its falsehood.''
– Ibn Qayyim

He gives other examples of irrational statements or statements in conflict with our observations and explains that such folk are often:

> "Burdened with far-fetched interpretations (*tawīl*) for such false (*bātil*) hadīth.[61]

3. Implausible statements indicate they are fabrications

Statements which Ibn Qayyim describes as:

> "Clearly implausible, which are far from the statements of intelligent people, let alone Prophets".[62]

He gives many examples such as:

> "Salt is a cure for seventy illnesses,"

> "You should remain constant in eating grapes and bread."

> "Whoever takes a rooster as a friend will be protected from Satan and magic."

"Do not insult the rooster, for it is my friend! If the children of Adam knew what was in the rooster's call, they would buy them with gold!"[63]

This is particularly telling as oddly some have argued that these last narrations about roosters have a sound (*hasan*) *sanad* (chain of narrators) due to the fact there are a few different chains that support each other![64]

4. A false idea indicates a false hadith (al-maʾnīy bātil yadullu ala in-al-hadīth bātil)[65]

Ibn Qayyim states:

"And from this, when the hadīth is invalid in itself, indicates by its invalidity that it is not a statement of the Messenger (p)."

He lists a plethora of examples including:

"Whoever doesn't have wealth (*māl*) from which to give in charity (*sadaqa*) then let them curse Jews and Christians"(!)

The Imām adds:

"For verily cursing can never take the place of charity!"

And:

"There is no one whose name is Ahmad or Muhammad except that I have obliged on myself to enter into Paradise"[66]

As other example of obvious forgeries.

5. Forgeries which don't even appear to be like the statements of Prophets, upon whom be blessings and peace

Ibn Qayyim explains this criterion thus:

> "Hadīth which don't even appear to be Prophetic speech let alone that of the Messenger of God(p) as revelation sent down to him; for God said: 'he speaks not of his own desire, it is but revelation sent down to him'.[67] So narrations that don't even appear to be like the revelation, nay not even statements the companions would make.
>
> For example the hadīth: 'three things improve one's vision, gazing on greenery; flowing water; and a beautiful face'. This statement is far from being the words of the likes of Abū Hurayra, Ibn Abbas, nay Sa'īd ibn Musayyib or Ahmad or Mālik!"

Rather Ibn Qayyim states these and "similar narrations are from what was fabricated by some of Zanādiqa."[68]

He explains as a sub-criterion:

> "Every hadīth which mentions beautiful faces, or praise for them, or orders one to gaze upon them, or seek to have their needs fulfilled through them, or that the fire will not touch them, are lies and clear forgeries."

According to Ibn Qayyim many such narrations could be attributed to Umar bin Rāshid, whom he explains others had stated was the source of such forgeries, but also figures such as:

> "Ibn Hibbān: he fabricated hadīth and Abū al-Faraj Ibn ul-Jawzī placed this hadīth in his *al-Mawdū'āt*."[69]

6. Hadīth that mention specific dates

Ibn Qayyim states that any mention of specific events happening on certain dates, specifying "in such a month" etc. were deemed "forgeries and lies"[70]

7. Hadīth appearing as the words of a healer is a sign of forgery

There are examples already given that covers this, and he gives some more, such as the effects of "eating fish on the body", or encouraging eating sweets if you are believers. Here Ibn Qayyim mentions other narrations that state:

> "Jibra'īl (as) brought *harīsa* from paradise for me which I ate and it gave me the strength of 40 men."[71]

> "Blowing on food removes blessings."

> "Feed your women dates when they are menstruating."[72]

8. Among the fabricated ahadīth are those that mention the continual life of Khidr, upon whom be peace

Ibn Qayyim mentions all such narrations are obvious fabrications as they are in conflict with the:

> "Qur'ān, Sunna, the consensus of the verifying authorities (*muhaqiqīn min al-ulamā*) and ration (*maqulāt*)".[73]

9. Fabricated narrations are a testimony of their own invalidity[74]

Many examples are given of narrations which he says are so irrational that they must be fabrications aimed at "mocking and shaming the Messengers and their followers", such as those describing the nature of the heavens and skies and the length and the height or tallness of Prophets reaching the skies, and where the sun is in the heavens and skies, that:

> "There is no doubt that these are fabrications of the Zanādiqa".[75]

And narrations which state that the "Earth is on a rock", which Ibn Qayyim is shocked to see people include in their exegesis on the Qur'ān.[76]

10. Fabricated hadīth conflicting with the explicit [texts] of the Qur'ān

Ibn Qayyim mentions the example of a narration stating:

> "The length of the world is seven thousand years and we are now in the seventh millennium".

The Imām explains:

> "This is the clearest of forgeries, if it was true then everyone would know how much of the time span of the world was remaining but the Qur'ān clearly states 'Say! Most surely the knowledge of it is only with God'[77] and 'Verily only God alone has knowledge of the hour[78]' and the Prophet (p) said 'No one knows when the hour is save God[79]'."[80]

He presents a sub-section then on "An error that occurred in Sahīh Muslim" and expands:

> "An example of this is an error that occurred in the hadīth of Abū Hurayra: 'God created the Earth on Saturday...' this hadīth, and it is in *Sahīh Muslim*, except that the mistake is in its raising of it [to the Prophet]. It is certainly a statement of Ka'b al-Akhbār, and has been similarly stated by the Imām of Ahl al-Hadīth (people of narration) Muhammad bin Isma'īl al-Bukhārī in his *Tarīkh al-Kabīr* and others from the scholars of the Muslims. It is as they stated, that verily God created the Heavens and Earth and what is between them in six days, whilst this hadīth states that the length of creation was seven days, and God knows best."[81]

He repeats more criteria on implausible narrations and also other specifics over which scholars have disagreed.

11. Ḥadīth which are disparaging of black people and Abyssinians are all fabrications/forgeries

Narrations that say things such as:

> "Beware of black people…"

> "He saw food and asked 'who is this for?' Abbas said: 'food for the Abyssinians'. And he said: 'Don't do that, verily when they are hungry they steal, and when satiated they fornicate'".

Such narrations are all lies and forgeries (*kulluha kazab*).[82] Similarly, narrations condemning slaves were considered fabrications (*mawdū*)[83]

12. Ḥadīth forgeries where there are clues that indicate their falsehood (butlān)

Ibn Qayyim gives an interesting example of using historic indicators of the Prophet (p) to demonstrate the falsehood of narrations. He gives the example of a tribe claiming exemptions from Jizya[84] granted by the Prophet. But explains that the document they produced was apparently witnessed by Saʿd (ra) and Muʿāwīya (ra), whereas the Imām states that, "Saʿd bin Muʿādh passed away in the Ghazwa (battle) of Khandaq and Muʿāwīya only embraced Islam [much later] at the conquest [of Mecca] and was of those granted freedom." This means they could not have met at the same time to witness the document. He gives many more indicators based on linguistic and historic knowledge that demonstrated the contents were plainly a forgery.[85]

Ibn Qayyim produces many other examples, 227 in total, and provides specific critique too, but these fall under the broader criteria and rational or intellectual principles mentioned here already to critiquing the texts of the hadith, rather than looking at the chains of narration. That is, without a need to analyse the chains except retroactively to see where such fabrications were originating from.

Ibn Daqīq al-Īd (d. 1302)[86] on avoiding *takfīr* against those using rational precepts

Imam Hafidh Ibn Daqīq al-Īd explains:

> "...theologians and hadīth scholars and the literalists (*hashwīya*) end up making extrapolations on other peoples beliefs and doing *takfīr* (ex-communicating Muslims out of the faith) based on these assertions. Their rational beliefs e.g. if the anthropomorphists believe God has limbs they are effectively worshipping a body and not worshipping God, so they are Kāfir(!); or the Mutazilites who reject our construction of necessary attributes as separate from the essence and therefore reject the rules that arise from them, are Kāfir(!); similarly the Mutazilites make assertions on others about the logical consequences or implications of their beliefs and call them Kāfir.

> The truth is that we do not declare Kāfir anyone of the people of our *qibla*,[87] except by rejecting what is definitive (*mutawātir*) from the Sharīah[88] from its conveyer[89]. For then he would be rejecting and declaring false the *Shar'*. It is not merely the rejection of a definitive concept that is the basis of *takfīr*, but the rejection of a principle from revelation that is definitive both in the manner it has reached us (*tarīq*) and definitive in meaning (*dalāla*).

> So many of the *usūli* scholars have explained this by the following: verily one who denies a means by which the Sharīah is established is not declared a Kafir (*lam yakfur*) such as the one who denies *ijmā* (consensus). But the one who denies the [content of the] Sharīah after acknowledging it [in a definitive way] has made *kufr* because he declares it to be false."

Interestingly he relates from Abū Is'hāq al-Isfarīnī, "I don't declare anyone a Kāfir except someone who calls me a Kāfir!" And explains his position as drawn from the hadīth which mentions that when one person calls another a Kafir, then one of them is as described, and he definitely knew he wasn't the one!

Ibn Daqīq himself explains that this is not to be taken literally, but is a dire warning to those who declare Muslims unbelievers, which he says unfortunately some of the people of *sunna* and hadīth fall into.[90]

Ibn Taymīya also explained on the subject of *takfīr* the following:

"Imām al-Shāfi'ī may God be pleased with him said: we don't reject the testimony [of the sects] except the Khattābīya because they believe in the permissibility of lying.

Imām Abū Hanīfa may God be pleased with him... did not ex-communicate (declare Kāfir) any of the people of the Qibla (i.e. Muslims)."[91]

Ibn Taymīya carries on:

"We prefer that we do not ex-communicate any of the people of Qibla.[92]"

On the Meaning of *kufr* and further warning against *takfīr* – unbelief and ex-communication

Imām Ibn Mandhūr (d. 1311) defines *kufr* from a linguistic perspective:

"*Kufr* linguistically means a cover or to hide (*satr*). It is said: to be ungrateful for one's blessings (*kufr ul-niʿma*), or whoever covers over something (*man kafara shay*) when you cover it (*ghattāhu*), so *kufr* is to negate faith (*naqīd ul-Imān*); *kufr ul-niʿma* is to deny blessings (*jahd*), or *kufr* in something is to be free from it, as in *kaffara*, such as whoever expiates for their oath (*kaffara ʿan-yamīnī*), when they perform the expiation."[93]

The technical definition (*istilāh*)according to al-Zarkashī (d. 1392) is that *kufr*:

"Is the rejection (*inkār*) of what is known inherently / necessarily from the religion of our Master Muhammad (p) such as rejecting the existence of The Creator or his Prophet (p) or similar to those matters".[94]

Warning against reckless *takfir*

Hujjat ul-Islām Imām al-Ghazali (d. 1111) said:

> "None are quick to *takfir* save the ignorant...verily hold your tongue against those of faith as much as you are able – as long they profess 'there is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger' without rejecting it and by rejecting it meaning they belie the Messenger of God, (p) – by making an excuse or excuses, for verily in *takfir* there is danger and in silence there is no danger![95]

Imām Abd al-Wahhāb Ahmad al-Sha'rānī (d. 1565)[96] in his summary and explanation on *al-Manthūr*, the work of Imām al-Zarkashī on principles of Sharīah, says:

> "Shaykh Izz ul-Dīn[97] (d. 1262) said: 'Know! Verily *takfir*, and negating (faith) or declaring someone misguided, or a heretic in itself carries a grave danger. It is mandatory (*wājib*) upon the ulama to take extreme precaution in giving edicts and rulings in such matters. It is mandatory on the one who is legally / religiously responsible to avoid the instances of where there are *shubūhāt* (issues that are ambigious or contentious), and the area of opinions and slips (*zilal*) and the areas of major disputes...'"[98]

He continues:

> "And in this principle there are various issues: The first: verily many of our companions[99] unconditionally impute *takfir* on anyone who denies what is agreed upon (*al-mujma' alaih*)".

29

> "...how can we make takfir of someone who diverges from the ijmā (consensus), yet we don't make takfir of someone who rejects the principle of ijmā..."
> – al-Juwaynī

"Al-Nawawī[100] (d. 1277) said: 'this is not applied unrestrictedly (*itlāq*), rather for the one who rejects what is agreed in the text (*nass*). This is for one of the manifest issues of Islām which both the masses and the elite share knowledge in, such as Zakāt (mandatory alms), Salāt (Prayer), and the like. It is in such matters that someone may be anathematized. As for one who rejects what is agreed upon but known only to the elite (*khawwās*)[101] such as the rights of inheritance...[102] and the like then such a person is not a Kāfir (non-believer). Whoever rejects what is apparently agreed upon, for which no definitive text (*nass*)[103] exists, there is a huge difference of opinion (*khilāf*)."[104] Rafi'ī[105] (d. 1226) transmits from the Imām[106] that we would say: 'how can we make *takfir* of someone who diverges from the *ijmā* (consensus), yet we don't make *takfir* of someone who rejects the principle of *ijmā*, we may declare it an innovation or misguided [but not *kufr*]."[107]

In fact Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 1085) himself states:

> It has come on the tongue of jurists that the one who conflicts with the *ijmā* commits unbelief (*yakfur*): this is definitively false (*bātil qat'ān*). For verily the one who denies the principle of *ijmā* – such as the Imāmiya and Nazzām and the Khawārij – are not anathematized (*la yakfur*).[108]

Conclusion

As we have seen in the above examples early Islamic thought, and scholars steeped in Islamic heritage and tradition, were not averse to the use of reason in making sense of scripture. For them reason and revelation stood together as two pillars upholding knowledge. It is perhaps a sign of our times – and the lack of knowledge amongst the public, including many Muslims – that such a basic clarification even needs to be made. The use of critical rational faculties were particularly honed in ascertaining authenticity and acceptability of hadith.

Furthermore, in classical Islamic theology, rational enquiries – or what was called the '*aqliyāt*' (rational disciplines and sciences) – were considered not just the preserve of the elite scholars, but rather an individual duty[109] (*fard ayn*) upon every single sane, adult. They could not appeal to the authority of a jurist or scholar to justify their beliefs. *Taqlīd* or following qualified scholarship in a specific question was considered acceptable in detailed interpretations of religious jurisprudence or *fiqh*, but not permitted in rational matters, including but not restricted to, theology, creed or what was also known as *usūl* or first principles, as the command to know such matters was obligated in the Qur'ān. One cannot believe in something if one doesn't well, actually *believe* it is true. This applies to beliefs, but also other areas of theology – and for many, even morality – at a basic level and in the correct application of the *fiqh* i.e. detailed rules, to circumstances.

The spirit of intellectual enquiry therefore is something that is a duty and necessary for every individual. Hopefully the above also demonstrates that this spirit pervades through the Islamic disciplines, sciences and specifically the discipline of hadīth sciences and across the various Islamic schools of thought and disciplines, theology, creed, principles of jurisprudence and jurisprudence itself and the way in which they interacted with 'narration' and rationality, from the earliest days to the present.

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Endnotes

1. Normally the preserve of the Asharītes. see: George Maqdisi (1962), "Ash'arī and Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History", in *Studia Islamica, No. 17.* Leiden: Brill.

2. A well known theologian, jurist of orthodox Sunnī Islam, and major legal scholar of the Malīkī school and Asharite school of creed.

3. A translation of Juwaynī's text is available in English, by Paul Walker and published by Garnet, Reading, UK, 2000.

4. Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī, was a major well known jurist, scholar of usūl, and Shafite religious ethics.

5. P. 227, *al-As'ād fī Shar'h ul-Irshād (al-Mushtamal alā Qawā'idil-I'tiqād) li-Imām al-Haramayn Abī al-Ma'ālī Abd al-Mālik al-Juwaynī',* authored by Abd al-Azīz bin Ibrāhīm bin Ahmad al-Qurashī al-Taymī well known as Ibn Bazīza al-Tunisī (d. 1274), Edited by Abdul-Razzāq Basrūr and Imād Suhaylī, published by Dār ul-Diyā, Kuwait (2013).

6. P. 147, Volume 2, *al-Mahsūl,* Dar ul-Kutub al-Ilmiya.

7. *Ihkām ul-Ahkām shar'h Umdat ul- Ahkām*, Dar Ibn Hazm, has many discussions on interpretations and the rules and principles involved. Specifically for this, see p. 823.

8. Pp. 162-163, Kitāb *al-Jāmī [bi-shar'h] al-Shaykh Abī Bakr al-Abharī al-Baghdādī al-Mālikī* of Imām Abdallāh bin Abdal Hakam al-Misrī al-Mālikī, Dar al-Gharb al-Islamī (2004).

9. The text is 6 volumes and this is just some of the debates on theology, scripture and first principles of faith (*usūl ul-dīn*). *Dur' Ta'ārrudh ul-Aql wa Naql - aw muwāfaqa ul-sahīh al-manqūl wa sarīh al-ma'qūl (Averting the Conflict Between Reason and Scripture - or Sound Reconciliation Between Sound Reason and What is Exact in the Scripture) by* Shaykh al-Islām Taqī ul-Dīn Ahmad bin Abd ul-Halīm bin Abd ul-Salām Ibn Taymiya al-Dimishqī al-Hanbalī, Dar ul-Kutub ul-Ilmiya, Beirut, Lebanon (1997).

10. Pp. 49-50, Vol. 1.

11. P. 87, Vol. 1.

12. References from *al-Muwaffaqāt fī Usūl il-Shar'īya* of Imām Abū Is'hāq al-Shātibī edited by Muhammad Abdul Qādir Fadilī. Maktabat al-Asarīya, Sa'īda-Beirut, Lebanon (2004).

13. For a good understanding of the standard terms used in this text see 'An Introduction to the Sciences of Hadith' of Ibn Salah in Arabic *al-Muqadimma* (accessible at: https://g.co/kgs/UHrP1q)

14. Pp. 18–19, Vol. 1.

15. P. 16, Part 3.

16. P. 16, Part 3.

17. P. 34, Part 3.

18. For a full account of the many narrations she critiqued, rejected, contextualized from the companions see *al-Ijāba lil-Īrād ma Astadraka Ā'isha alaā al-Sahāba*, published Maktabat al-Islāmī by the jurist and specialist in hadīth and law, al-Imam Badr ul-Dīn al-Zarkashī (d. 1392).

19. Narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim in their respective Jāmī.

20. Chapter 6:164.

21. Pp. 12–16, Juz 3.

22. P. 199, Juz 4.

23. As is commonly asserted by fideistic fundamentalists today.

24. By al-Hāfidh Jamāl ul-Dīn Abi Umar Yūsuf bin Abdillāh bin Muhammad Ibn Abdil-Barr al-Namarī al-Qurtubī al-Mālikī (d. 1071) well known as Ibn Abdul-Barr the Hadīth master of the West (*Hāfidh ul-Gharb*).

25. Edited by Abdul-Khāliq bin Muhammad Mādī, published by Waqf ul-Salām al-Khairīy, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, (2004).

26. *SallAllāhu alaihi wa sallam*. From here on we will use (p) to donote this honorific blessing upon the Prophet.

27. Hadīth 205, in Chapter on Purification, Book of Ablution.

28. Referring to his *Musannaf*.

29. *Radī Āllahu 'anhu/ha* (may God be pleased with him / her).

30. The wording is *alaluhā* i.e. stated it had *ilal* or defects, making it *ma'lūl*. This is not immediately apparent but is known to specialists in the subject.

31. *Idtirāb* or actually a *mudtarib* hadīth, refers to a type of hadīth where either the content is contradictory in its variant narrations, or narrators are contradictory. It is both that are likely the case here.

32. The author of *Sunan*, Imām al-Nisā'ī.

33. Pp. 112–116.

34. Book of Prayer, Chapter: 'how was prayer obliged on the Isrā?' No. 1090.

35. Reporting *mu'anan* or *an* meaning 'on the authority of' without explicitly saying it was narrated formerly or heard directly from.

36. Transmitted in the *Musannaf* of Abdul-Razzāq, vol. 2, p. 561/4461 – this is a particularly strong narration due to well-known narrators and Urwa's close relation to Ā'isha (ra).

37. This is a recitation of the Qur'ān of Ibn Abbas (ra) and is mentioned in various collections of *Tafsīr* such as Ibn Kathir, Qurtubī and Ibn Abdul-Barr in *al-Tamhīd* 11/171, ff. 1, p. 139.

38. Al-Nisā, 4:101.

39. Hadīth narrated by Ahmad bin Hanbal in his Musnad, and considered *hasan lī-ghayrihī* or sound due to supporting narrations – including by Nāsir ul-Dīn al-Albānī in *Sahīh al-Jāmī,* no.1835, ff. 4, pp. 144–5.

40. Pp. 136–145.

41. Book of Adhān, the recitation of lines of the *Iqāma* is single except the statement 'the Prayer has begun', no. 607.

42. *RahimahuAllāh* (may God have mercy on him).

43. Saying *Allāhu-Akbar*

44. Saying *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh*/There is no god but Allāh

45. Pp. 163–168.

46. Ibn Qayyim is the well known jurist of the Hanbālī school of thought, and student of Taqī ul-Dīn Ahmad Ibn Taymīya.

47. *Critiquing the Transmitted – the Fractious Distinction Between what is Rejected and what is Accepted,* by Shams ul-Dīn Muhammad Abū Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyya, corrected and annotated by Hasan al-Samīhī al-Suwaidān, published by Dar al-Qadirī, Beirut, Lebanon (1990).

48. P. 32.

49. The author writes the full formula after mentioning the honorific title each time, *sallAllāhu alaihi wa-sallam.*

50. The phrase here is different to 'not authentic' which merely implies weakness, but rather in the technical language of the science means fabricated.

51. P. 33.

52. The word used here is '*an*' – which is a short form of *mu'anan* – a form of narration without explicitly stating that one heard or necessarily received it from the authority mention hence translated as on the authority of normally.

53. 'Raised' or narrations mentioning this word imply it goes back to the Prophet as a saying without being certain that this is necessarily the case. Though as a category this is different to narrations which stop at the companions and their followers.

54. Glory be to God, free from imperfections and may He be praised.

55. P. 33 – the names mentioned in this citation are major scholars of this science.

56. P. 34.

57. Pp. 38–39.

58. These were individuals who professed to embrace Islam outwardly with an intent to distort the teachings of Islam and often confessed to fabricating Prophetic statements and the like.

59. P. 40.

60. Pp. 41–42.

61. P. 43.

62. P. 44.

63. P. 45.

64. See Mulla Alī al-Qārī (d. 1605) who argued this though Nāsir ul-Dīn al-Albānī (d. 1999) argued that not only are their chains weak but the narration was fabricated in *Da'īf al-Jāmi'*, hadīth no. 3023, ff. 38, pp. 45–46.

65. P. 50.

66. P. 51.

67. Al-Najm: verse 4.

68. P. 53.

69. P.55.

70. P. 56.

71. P. 57.

72. P. 58.

73. Pp. 62–63.

74. P. 68.

75. P. 70.

76. P. 71.

77. Al-Arāf: verse 187.

78. Luqmān: verse 34.

79. The editor merely cites Bukhārī.

80. P. 73.

81. P. 78.

82. P. 88.

83. P. 89.

84. A tax paid in exemption from military service which non-Muslims were not obligated, but were permitted, to undertake.

85. P. 90. These were two companions of the Prophet who were claimed to be witnesses or scribes of the said agreement.

86. Considered one of the major scholars of Islam and a *Mujtahid Mutlaq*, or an absolute scholar, in Islam who followed his juristic positions. Ibn Daqiq was also a specialist in hadīth sciences and fundamental principles of Islamic faith and religious ethics.

87. Anyone who claims to be a Muslim, literally: the one who faces the direction of prayer.

88. He gives the example of a concept such as prayer later in the text.

89. Literally *Sāhib*.

90. P. 823, *Ihkām ul-Ahkām shar'h Umdat ul-Ahkām*, Dar Ibn Hazm (2002), Ed. Hasan Ahmad Isbir..

91. P. 54 of the same text cited above by him.

92. Direction of prayer for Muslims.

93. *Lisān ul-Arab,* by Imām Ibn Mandhūr al-Ifrīqī, 5/144, published by Dar ul-Sādir, Beirut, Lebanon. This is considered the single most authoritative source in terms of Arabic Language dictionaries and was the basis of E. W. Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*.

94. *Al-Manthūr fīl-Qawā'id*, Imām Abī Abd-Allāh al-Zarkashī' 3/384, published by the Ministry of Awqāf, Kuwait (1984). This is one of the most respected works on the principles underpinning religious ethics in Islam.

95. *Al-Tafriqa Bayna al-Islām wal-Zandiqa*, by Imām al-Ghazālī, pp. 21–22, ed. Mahmūd Bījū.

96. *Al-Maqāsid al-Sanniyya fī Bayān al-Qawā'īd al-Sharīah,* by Imam al-Rabbānī Abī Abd-al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī, published by Dar al-Fath, Ammān, Jordan (2016). Al-Sha'rānī was a major scholar of religious ethics, first principles, creed and spirituality.

97. Imām al-Izz ul-Dīn Ibn Abdul-Salām the major scholar of Usūl, Sharīah Principles, author of *tafsīr* (Qur'ān exegesis), *fatwa* (religious edicts), a major work of *fiqh* summarizing Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwayni's *Nihāyat ul-Matlab fī Dirāyat ul-Madhab*, and a singular text on linguistic methodologies in interpreting scripture entitled *al-Amālī*. He was given the title Sultān ul-Ulama.

98. P. 392.

99. The Shāfi'ī school of religious rite.

100. Imām al-Nawawī is the major later reference point for the Shāfi'ī school who along with Imām Rafi'ī are considered to represent the soundest views of the school.

101. Meaning specialists and scholars.

102. He gives a particularly complicated example.

103. What is intended as known to scholars of jurisprudence is a definitive text rather than speculative (*zannī*) one as explained in the books of *usūl*.

104. Taken from *Rawda ul-Talibīn,* 2/146 published by Maktab al-Islāmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon (1984).

105. Imān Rafi'ī is considered second only to Imām al-Nawawī in representing the official view of the Shāfi'ī Madhab.

106. Meaning al-Juwaynī.

107. This quote is taken from his *al-Azīz Shar'h ul-Wajīz,* 11/462, published by Dar ul-Kutub ul-Ilmiyya ed.Alī Ādil Abd al-Mawjūd (1997).

108. Taken from *al-Burhān lil-Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī,* 1/462, 4th Edition, Dar al-Wafā, published in Mansūra, Egypt (1998).

109 See: Pp. 136–144, *Tanqīh ul-Fusūl/Muqaddimāt al-Thānī – 'Dhakhīra fī Furū il-Mālikiya'* – published by Dar el-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon, (2017). See also: "Authority and its role in classical Islam – as understood by Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī" (https://link.medium.com/FDH55izDb2).

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