

Conceptual Study of Clinton Bennett's Thoughts About Hadith

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Abstract:

From the very beginning, orientalist started inquiring and recertifying the facts regarding the classical sources of Islam; their main focus was Qur'an and *hadith* and thereby the personality of Holy Prophet ﷺ. Nineteenth century and the present time are the climax of oriental criticism and research of the Islamic literature. In fact all orientalist and especially Clinton Bennett have tried to reconstruct and refine the classical literature of Islam afresh, namely Qur'an, *Hadith* and the biography of Holy Prophet ﷺ. When they failed to discredit the text of Qur'an because of the protection of *hadith* as an only explanation and certification of the intended meanings of divine revelation, they concentrated their all attacking efforts on *hadith* itself.

Clinton Bennett is one of those orientalist who's main focus has been the Classical sources of Islam and especially *hadith* sciences, that is why Bennett has successfully been able to create a new structure of *hadith* and a new vision of the exegesis of the holy Qur'an, of his own.

The study under hand focuses on the Authenticity of *hadith*, Objection on the Credibility of Hazrat Abu Hurayrah and criticism on the principles of Matan, which deals with the responsive point of view of Mr. Bennett regarding different aspects of *hadith* literature. The topics like Authenticity of *hadith*, possibility of mutual contradictory matter, the integrity of *hadith* narrators, the principles of narration and comprehension of *hadith* (Rivayat & Dirayat) as discussed by Bennett in his various books especially in "In Search of Muhammad (ﷺ)", have been hereby reviewed and analyzed. This research is descriptive and analytical in nature and presents a detailed analysis of the work, it is based upon.

Key Words: Clinton Bennett, *hadith* literature, Authenticity of *hadith*, Sanad and Matan of *hadith*, Credibility of Hazrat Abu Hurayrah.

1. Introduction

The statements, actions and discourses of The Noble Prophet ﷺ are classified as *hadith*. This is divine revelation like Qur'an which is proved by the following verses,

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وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ. إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ³

As soon as it was revealed, it was recorded, learned and preserved by the companions respectively. *Muhadithin* (محدثين) succeeding companions or contemporary junior companions started compiling *hadith* individually and it started spreading inherently. Different scholars started evolving and developing a regular science of *hadith* containing hard and fast rules of science of *hadith*. As the time went by the people started forging the *hadith* in order to achieve their own ends or to serve a special cause. Accordingly the Muslim scholars evolved a fool proof system to censor the forge material. This is the master work of the Muslim scholars which in result of their marvelous and outstanding hard work, developed the fort of *hadith* system to protect it from all sorts of interventions and malformations. Resultantly the art of *Asma o Rijaal* (الاسماء والرجال), *Jarah o Ta'deel* (الجرح و التعديل), *Ilm ul Ansaab* (علم الانساب), *Ilm ul Tabqaat* (علم الطبقات) and *Ilm Mustaleh ul Hadith* (علم المصطلح الحديث) etc came into the birth.

The companions used to love the holy Prophet ﷺ to the highest extent and believed that obeying the Prophet ﷺ is actually obeying the God. Therefore, they used to fulfill and adopt every Sunnah and obey every *hadith* in the true sense of the words. Moreover they conveyed the message of obeying the Prophet ﷺ accordingly. As all the companions were trained by the holy Prophet ﷺ and educated by personal supervision of the holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore they were very particular about the performance of the orders of Qur'an and Prophet ﷺ. This is why that the holy Prophet ﷺ has order to copy and obey the companions' along with His person similarly. As there is a tradition from collection of *Ibn e Maajah* which runs like that:

فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا عَرَفْتُمْ مِنْ سُنَّتِي، وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ⁴

Likewise and other tradition highlight the position of companions as a role model and ideal guide.

أَصْحَابِي كَالنُّجُومِ فَبِأَيِّهِمْ أَقْتَدَيْتُمْ أَهْتَدَيْتُمْ⁵

³ Al-Najam, 53: 3-4.

⁴ Ibn e Maajah, Al-Sunan, Research: Muhammad Fawad Abdul Baqi (Al-Qahira:Dar ehya al-kutab al-Arbiyah), 16/1, Hadith no: 43.

Moreover it is a principle one of the most guiding statutes of *hadith*. Any narration from the companions whoever he might be is binding on the Ummah as is a follow-able *hadith* because all companions are ‘Aadil and beyond any sort of suspicion. As all the *Muhadithin* have agreed upon that every companion is ‘Aadil.

Clinton Bennett has defined the authentic research work of early Muslim scholars while producing literature of *Sihah e Sitta* and *al-Kutub al arba’h*. Lately and simultaneously ‘*Mishkat*’ has emerged as a brilliant source of *hadith*. He has recognized the authenticity of contents of *Sahih Bukhari* and has classified the *hadith* regarding historical events which is highly appreciated by western orientalists.⁶

Mr. Bennett has also critically studied the science of *hadith* and its principles and tried to understand and relate the terminology of the traditions. He has discussed the *Matn* and *Sanad* of *hadith* system, credibility of the narrators and even the companions along with the contents of *hadith* diverging with the text of *Qur’an*. All the above mentioned issues discussed by Mr. Bennett would be analyzed in detail herein.

2. Orientalists’ and the *hadith* literature

If we go through the orientalism literature regarding the *hadith* and *Sunnah*, we conclude that the orientalists responded the said systems in two ways. Firstly, they criticized the authenticity of *hadith*, its legal status, juristic compatibility and the process of its compilation. Secondly, the text and chains of narration have been examined and analyzed; apparently the texts have been tried to antagonize the text of *Qur’an*. Mutual contravention of *hadith* has been highlighted. It has also been supposed that most *hadith* are against the human thinking and modern sciences. Therefore, they contended that such *hadith* are not the result of revelations and the Sayings of the holy Prophet ﷺ as they contravene the same. Such quotations have been taken from *Siha Sitta* (صحيح سته) in order to give the impression that, if such authentic collections consist of such contentions then what to talk of the other *hadith* books.

As far as the reservations of orientalists regarding the literature of *hadith* and *Sunnah* is concerned, historically speaking Aloys Springer (1893) started reportedly criticizing the narration and the status of *hadith* in his three-volume book *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, published between 1861 and 1865. William Muir (1905) continued the criticism on the authenticity of *hadith* literature in his famous book ‘*The life of Mahomet*’. He claims

⁵ Muhammad bin Abdullah al-khateeb, *Mishkat al Masabih*, Research: Muhammad Nasir ud-din al-baqi (Bairoot: Al-maktab al Islami, 1985), 1696/3, *Hadith* no: 6018.

⁶ Bennett, *In search of Muhammad* (London: Cassell Wellington House 125 Strand, 1998), 24-35.

that most of the Muslim narrators distorted the facts. Therein he cited certain modes of narrations and chains of *hadith* differing with each other. Simultaneously, Reinhart Dozy (1820-1883) established *hadith* as a separate entity of Islamic knowledge. Claiming in his book *Het Islamisme* (1863) half of the sahih Bukhari is undoubtedly true and dependable narrations while the late collection of hadith made possible some falsification and fabrication in *hadith* literature.

Afterwards Goldziher (1921) gave a detailed account of the criticism in his book 'Muslim studies' wherein he analyzed the process and literature of *hadith*. Afterwards all of the orientalist followed Goldziher's principles such as Alfred Gallium (1965) contributed to the subject by his books 'Islam' and 'Traditions of Islam'. Moreover Joseph Schacht (1969) analyzed in his book '*The Origin of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*' the sources of Islamic law in the light of the Goldziher's principles. While discussing the narration of hadith he tried to create suspicions regarding the origin and evaluation of the hadith system. Thereafter David Samuel Margoliouth (1940), Robson, Gibb (1895 -1971)⁷, Will Deurant (1981), Arthur Jaffery (1959), Montgomery Watt (2006), Josef Horovitz (1931), Von Kremer (1889), and Nicholson (1945) also contributed to the criticism and evolution of hadith and Sunnah.

In modern times William A. Graham (b1943), Patricia Crone (1983), Michael Cook (1977), Esposito (b.1940), Spencer (b 1962), Kramer (b 1954), Pinna Werbner (b 1944) and Herbert Spencer (b 1962) are the contributors.

3. Criticism on the principles of Matn

Hadith e Nabvi ﷺ has comprises of two parts. First part of *hadith* is called Sanad that is the chain of narrators the way through which someone gets access to the saying, act or sanction of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Terminologically that saying, act or sanction are reached upon through Sanad is called Matn. In other words where Sanad finishes than the text starts, that is the second part of hadith and the same follows the first part.

Mohadithin (محدثين) used to decide the authenticity of *hadith* after examining both the parts of *hadith*. Yet the orientalist are often heard saying that Mohadithin had concentrated upon Sanad and neglected the text or Matn. This objection is baseless because Mohadithin had not just relied upon the Sanad as far as critical examination of the *hadith* is concerned. If the history of *hadith e sahih* is seen, this includes Shaaz (شاذ) and Illah (علة) both as far as the authenticity of Sanad and Matn is concerned. For that matter if at one hand there is a *hadith*

⁷ Sir Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb, FBA, known as H. A. R. Gibb, was a Scottish historian on Orientalism.

called Maqloob ul Sanad (مقبول السند) the too is Maqloob ul Matn (مقبول المتن). The same way in order to know the *hadith* e Modhu' (موضوع) the content of Matan is must to be examined which is mentioned in so many books.

Bennett gives a brief note of the rules concerning 'Matn' suggested by Ibn al-Jawzi (d.1200), Al-Shawkani (1427-97) and others were developed as follows:

- (1) *Hadith* must not contradict any other, or the text of the Qur'an.
- (2) *Hadith* must not be contrary to the dictates of reason.
- (3) They must not guarantee false reward for insignificant good deeds, or punishment for insignificant bad deeds.
- (4) They must not praise parts of the Qur'an over and against others.
- (5) They must not attribute racial superiority to any groups.
- (6) They must not contain dates of future events.
- (7) They must not ascribe to the Prophet (ﷺ) anything inconsistent with his office.
- (8) They should conform to the rules of Arabic language and usage.

Bennett expresses that the presented rules are not followed in certain *hadith* Therefore; he raises an objection against the validity of such *hadith*. For example as cited by him the following *hadith* contravening above mentioned principle No: 1 is as under:

In my view, there are quite a few *hadith* in wide circulation which do not conform to the above criteria, which could easily be identified and disregarded.

One example: Abu Hurayrah recounted a *hadith* that Muhammad (ﷺ) declared that a 'woman went to hell because she starved a little female cat' (B 55: 46 *hadith* no. 689). This conforms neither to the first matn criterion (the Qur'an holds out the possibility of repentance and divine forgiveness even for very serious crimes, see Q 5:39, 3:135, 17:33; 42:40), nor to the third criterion, even if it does reflect Muhammad's (ﷺ) well-known fondness for cats. Indeed, Mernissi (2015) (1991) cites 'A'isha as saying, 'A believer is too valuable in the eyes of God for Him to torture that person because of a cat' (1991: 72).⁸

Mr. Bennett has given a criterion of his criticism of the content or Matn of *hadith*. He is of the point of view that when the text of *hadith* is contravening the text of Qur'an, then the *hadith* is taken to be void. The general application of the said rule is almost the same in

⁸ Bennett, In Search of Muhammad, 58

system of *hadith*, yet the above given *hadith* does not come under the above given rule because it does not contradict the quoted verses of Qur'an. The Qur'an has restricted the divine forgiveness with the repentance.⁹ But in the case of this *hadith* the element of repentance is absent, so the said instance does not sequenced with policy of Holy Qur'an.

Secondly, according to Dr. Bennett, said *hadith* does not proportionate with the crime and punishment rule because a sin being a trivial does not invite the sentence of hell-fire. As understood by him the third criterion of Matn of *hadith*, a small sin does not activate the big punishment. He may be asked whether a cat or dog or any pet can be starved to death in the Western society and what may be the punishment thereof if the act is intentional? Islam also judges the acts by intentions. Western rule about pet killing

Thirdly, he has cited another opinion of Hazrat Ayesha رضى الله عنه which is directly opposed to that of Abu Hurayrah, that God would not punish a believer because of a cat. He has put forward this instance to highlight the difference of opinion between Hazrat Ayesha and Hazrat Abu Hurayrah. The quotation has been taken from the book of Imam Zarkashi (794 A.H.) "الإجابة فيما استدركنه عائشة على الصحابة" which suggests that Hazrat Ayesha used to correct a number of the Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Abu Hurayrah was not a unique one in that case. It is to be noted here that Mr. Bennett has questioned the credibility of traditional status of Hazrat Abu Hurayrah and the later has been labeled as a misogynist.¹⁰

The *hadith* under study also highlights the same impression. In other words, He intends to discredit the whole treasury of *hadith* along with the collection of Abu Hurayrah numbering about 5374 and thereby biggest and most certified collection of Sahih Bukhari and others. Along with that, the credibility of Imam Bukhari is questioned and the collection of Sahih Bukhari is automatically discredited. It is implied that how come Imam Bukhari has taken the whole collection of Sahih Bukhari without proper censoring and it also manifests the lack of the knowledge of above mentioned criterions? Therefore it is necessary to examine whether the same *hadith* has been reported in other collections from the channel of Abu Hurayrah or other roots etc.

The same *hadith* has also been reported by Hazrat Asma Bint Abi Bakr, the elder sister of Hazrat Ayesha in these words:

⁹ فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

¹⁰ Bennett, In Search of Muhammad, 61-62.

عَنْ أَسْمَاءَ بِنْتِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صَلَّى صَلَاةَ الْكُسُوفِ، فَقَالَ: " دَنَتْ مِنِّي النَّارُ، حَتَّى قُلْتُ: أَيُّ رَبِّ وَأَنَا مَعَهُمْ، فَإِذَا امْرَأَةٌ، حَسِبْتُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: تَخَذِشُهَا هِرَّةٌ، قَالَ: مَا شَأْنُ هَذِهِ؟ قَالُوا: حَبَسَتْهَا حَتَّى مَاتَتْ جُوعًا " ¹¹

Almost the same *hadith* is happened to be found in Sahihain reported by Hazrat ‘Abdullah bin Umar:¹²

Apart from the Sahihain, same *hadith* has been reported by Ibn e Habbaan in his Sahih by the reference of ‘Abdullah ibn Amar Bin ‘Aas too:¹³

Imam Nawavi (1277AD) has established a chapter on the basis of the same *hadith* and named the chapter of prohibition for rendering cruelty to cat and other such animals

بَابُ تَحْرِيمِ تَغْذِيبِ الْهَرَّةِ وَنَحْوِهَا مِنَ الْحَيَوَانِ الَّذِي لَا يُؤْذِي ¹⁴

Ibn habaan has arranged a chapter in this regard in the name of:

ذِكْرُ الْخَبَرِ الدَّالِّ عَلَى أَنَّ الْمُسِيءَ إِلَى ذَوَاتِ الْأَرْبَعِ قَدْ يُتَوَقَّعُ لَهُ دُخُولُ النَّارِ فِي الْقِيَامَةِ بِفِعْلِهِ ذَلِكَ ¹⁵

Imam Bukhari in his book ‘Al Adab al Mufrad’ has constituted a chapter on animal protection

بَابُ رَحْمَةِ الْبَهَائِمِ ¹⁶

All the above mentioned traditions and the discussions pertaining to them is, in fact a charter of the basic rights of living creatures and the human beings obviously are on the top of list. The man who cannot understand the penalty of cat’s death, how can he understand the Qur’anic maxim of ‘who killed a man, has actually killed the whole humanity’?

There is another *hadith* in Sahihain, apparently contradicting the said *hadith* and which is also reported by Hazrat Abu Hurayrah. According to that *hadith* an Israelite woman had received the entry of heaven because of her action in which she quenched the thirst of a thirsty dog. In Sahih Bukhari Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet ﷺ said,

"While a dog was going round a well and was about to die of thirst, an Israeli prostitute saw it and took off her shoe and watered it, so Allah forgave her because of that good deed."

¹¹ Muhammad bin Ismail Bukhari, Al jame Al Sahih, (Bairoot: Dar Toaq Al Nujat, 1422 A.H), 112/3, Hadith: 2364.

¹² Bukhari, Al Jame al Sahih, 130/4, Hadith: 3318.

¹³ Ibn e Habban, Al Sahih, Research: Shoib al Arnwoat (Bairoot, Moasisa al risala, 1988), 439/12, Hadith: 5622.

¹⁴ Yahya bin Sharf Navavi, Alminhaj (Bairoot: Dar ehya al turas al arbi, 1392 A.H), 172/16.

¹⁵ Ibn e Habban, Al Sahih, 438/12.

¹⁶ Muhammad bin ismail Bukhari, Al adab al mufrad, Research: Sameer bin amen al zuhairi (Al Riaz: Maktabah al ma'arif le nashr wa al tauze'e, 1998/1419 A.H), 196/1.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «بَيْنَمَا كَلْبٌ يُطِيفُ بِرَكْبَةٍ، كَادَ يَقْتُلُهَا الْعَطَشُ، إِذْ رَأَتْهُ بَغِيٌّ مِنْ بَغَايَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ، فَتَنَزَعَتْ مُوقِفَهَا فَسَقَتْهُ فَعَفَّرَ لَهَا بِهِ»¹⁷

In the above mentioned stories of two women, the commonality is the fear of God. In the first case there is absence of fear of god. While in the second the fear of god is manifested. There is a lesson or principle highlighted in both the stories that in the first case neither the committed sin was too small, nor in the second case good deed was that significant. The main and material subject is the intentions to harm or benefit the living creatures. Mercy of God is activated by intentions and not deeds.

Both the above mentioned stories are related by Abu Hurayrah and included in Sahihain, therefore, it cannot be said that the former sources are misogynist because the tradition of favoring the women is also narrated by the same source.

➤ Inquiring the Status of the Woman in the Cat Story

Clinton Bennett has referred to a *hadith* of Hazrat Ayesha in the support of his own point of view is that God does not use to punish a believer just because of a cat. In the complete narrative of this tradition by Hazrat Ayesha it is hoped that the woman mentioned in the *hadith* of Hazrat Abu Hurayrah might not be a believer. This kind of narrative is also found in various books of *hadith*. Such a precedent is expressed in Musnad Abi Dawood Tiyalisi:

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو دَاوُدَ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا صَالِحُ بْنُ رُسْتَمٍ أَبُو عَامِرٍ الْحَزَارِيُّ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا سَيَّارُ أَبُو الْحَكَمِ، عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ، عَنْ عَلْقَمَةَ، قَالَ: كُنَّا عِنْدَ عَائِشَةَ فَدَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ، فَقَالَتْ: يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ أَنْتَ الَّذِي تُحَدِّثُ أَنَّ «امْرَأَةً عَذِّبَتْ فِي هِرَّةٍ لَهَا رَبَطَتْهَا لَمْ تُطْعَمْهَا وَلَمْ تَسْقِهَا» فَقَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ: سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْهُ، يَعْنِي النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: أَتَدْرِي مَا كَانَتْ الْمَرْأَةُ؟ قَالَ: لَا، قَالَتْ: إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ مَعَ مَا فَعَلَتْ كَانَتْ كَافِرَةً، إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ أَكْرَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُ فِي هِرَّةٍ، فَإِذَا حَدَّثْتَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ تُحَدِّثُ¹⁸

Likewise Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal has taken it from Musnad Abu Daood and Imam Zarkashi has copied in his book which has been presented by Mr. Bennett as a proof.

ورواه الإمام أحمد في «مسنده» (519/2) عن أبي داود الطيالسي به. وأورده الزركشي في كتاب «الإجابة فيما

استدركنه عائشة على الصحابة»!

¹⁷ Bukhari, Al Jame al Sahih, 173/4, Hadith: 3467.

¹⁸ Suleman bin daood al tiyalsi, Musnad, Research: Muhammad bin abdul mohsin al turkey (Egypt: Dar Hijr, 1999/1419 A.H), 28/3, 1503.

The analytical examination of the above mentioned tradition is given here under in the light of the view of *Muhadithin*.

The author of 'Majma'u zwa'id states that "Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal has narrated this *hadith* and its chain is credible."

"رواه أحمد ورجاله رجال الصحيح".¹⁹

Sheikh Shoaib has examined the roots of the Musnad analytically and analogically and categorized this report as 'Hassan'.

"إسناده حسن".²⁰

Some scholars have also adopted this narrative for example Qadhi Ayyaz has certified the woman to be an unbeliever.

وقد مآل إلى كونها كافرة بعض أهل العلم كالفاضي عياض!!

While according to the narrative of Ibn-e-Hajar the woman was believer as Ibn Hajar in his 'Fatahul Bari' has explained this *hadith* and said that Imam Nawawi has taken the woman as a believer and that she entered the hell because of the same sin.

بَسَبَ ذَلِكَ قَالَ النَّوَوِيُّ الَّذِي يَظْهَرُ أَنَّهَا كَانَتْ مُسْلِمَةً وَإِنَّمَا دَخَلَتْ النَّارَ بِحِدِّهِ الْمَعْصِيَةِ كَذَا قَالَ وَيُؤَيِّدُ كَوْنَهَا
كَافِرَةً مَا أَخْرَجَهُ الْبَيْهَقِيُّ فِي الْبَغْتِ وَالْتُّشُورِ وَأَبُو نَعِيمٍ فِي تَارِيخِ أَصْبَهَانَ مِنْ حَدِيثِ عَائِشَةَ وَفِيهِ قِصَّةٌ لَهَا مَعَ أَبِي
هُرَيْرَةَ وَهُوَ بِتَمَامِهِ عِنْدَ أَحْمَدَ²¹

It can be believed that the told story is not true because Imam Ibn Hajar would not have kept silence on the occasion had the woman been unbeliever while explaining this *hadith* in Fatahul Bari.

➤ Examining the Only Evidence in the Dialogue between Hazrat Ayesha and Hazrat Abu Hurayra

Saleh bin Rustam is the only evidence and narrator of the comment of Hazrat Ayesha. Therefore his narrative is not that credible as that of Abu Hurayrah which has also been corporate by a number of relaters such as Asma Bint Abu Bakr, 'Abdullah Bin Umar and 'Abdullah Bin 'Amr bin 'Aas. None of them has mentioned that the woman was unbeliever.

¹⁹ Noor ud Din Ali bin abu bakar Al Haismee, Majma uz zawa'id, Research: Hassam ud din al qudsi (Cairo: Maktabah al Qudsi, 1994/1414 A.H), 191/10, Hadith: 17465.

²⁰ Ahmad Bin Hanbal, Musnad, Research: Shoib al Arnwoat and Aadil Murshid (Bairroot: Moasisa al Risala, 2001/1421 A.H) 424/16, Hadith: 10727.

²¹ Ahmad bin Ali Ibn e Hajar Al Asqalani, Fath ul Bari, Research: Muhammad fawad Abdul Baqi (Bairroot: Dar ul Ma'arifa, 1379 A.H), 358/6.

According to the rating of Abu Dawood tyalisi and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Saleh bin Rustam is a credible narrator while most of the scholars like Yahya Bin Mo'in, Ibn Abi Sheba and Ali bin Madini have declared him a weak narrator because of his literal reporting mistakes. Even if we take him a credible narrator, his lonely-hood in this narration to be declared a weak narration as compared to the report of Abu Hurayrah. Because this is historically a more reliable tradition because of the multiplicity of its chains of transmission, as it is reported to go back to several companions whereas the *hadith* quoted by Bennett is said to go back to only one companion. We may therefore consider it more faithful to the real character of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Conclusively the general impression of the credibility of the report of Abu Hurayra is dependable.

Bennett has cited another tradition as an example which does not fulfill the above mentioned requisites as he says:

Many *Hadith* have Muhammad (ﷺ) predicting future events, which, whilst not contravening criterion (6) as such, resembles the type of 'soothsaying' (kihana) which Muhammad himself detested and forbade. I have in mind, for example, *Hadith* which predict, or appear to predict, the order in which Abu Bakr and Umar would rule as Khalif and their respective accomplishments.²²

Clinton Bennett has pointed out the *hadith* regarding the ruling period of Hazrat Abu Bakar and Umar which contravene the criteria no 6 mentioned above. In order to examine the credibility of the text of the said *hadith* in the light of the criteria no 6. We would, hereunder look into the principle narrated by *hadith*-experts itself and sees the applicability of the said principle on the quoted objection pointed out by Bennett:

ومنها: أن يكون في الحديث تاريخ كذا وكذا مثل قوله: "إذا كان سنة كذا وقع كيت وكيت". وضرب لذلك مثلاً

ثم قال: "وأحاديث هذا الباب كلها كذب مفترى".²³

That is the *hadith* with the bindings of fixed dates and years is not acceptable as *hadith*

The real text of the said quoted *hadith* by possible memory of Bennett is given below with the reference of Imam Bukhari.

²² Bennett, In search of Muhammad, 58.

²³ Rabi bin hadi bin umar al-mudkhali, *Hujiyat al-khabr al-ahaad fi al-aqaid wa al-ehkam* (Madina al-Munawara: majma al-malik fahad li taba'at al-mushaf sharif), 1/64.

وَعَنْ سَفِينَةَ قَالَتْ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: «الْخِلَافَةُ ثَلَاثُونَ سَنَةً ثُمَّ تَكُونُ مُلْكًا». ثُمَّ يَقُولُ سَفِينَةُ:

أُمْسِكْ: خِلَافَةً أَبِي بَكْرٍ سِتْنَيْنِ وَخِلَافَةً عُمرَ عَشْرَةَ وَعُثْمَانَ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ وَعَلِيَّ سِتَّةً.

Sufaina has said that he had heard the Prophet who said that: Khilafat would continue for thirty six years following which kingship would proceed which would contain two years rule Abu bakar Ten years rule Umar twelve years rule Uthman and six years rule Ali.

Hadith-experts have mentioned the possible model of the fabricated hadith because of the fixed dates and year's prediction. The principles declaring the hadith as fabricated because of the prediction of the fixed dates and years are mentioned as a sample in the following lines:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " إِذَا كَانَتْ سَنَةٌ ثَلَاثِينَ وَمِائَةً كَانَ الْغُرَبَاءُ قُرْآنَ فِي

خَوْفٍ ظَلَمٍ، وَمُصْحَفٌ فِي بَيْتٍ قَوْمٌ لَا يقرأ فِيهِ، وَرَجُلٌ صَالِحٌ بَيْنَ قَوْمٍ سُوءٍ

Hazrat Abu Hurayrah has said that the Prophet said with the arrival of one sixty hijri four things would become stranger that is 1, Qur'an in the mind of cruel 2, Qur'an as a booklet in the houses of people who would not recite it, and the pious man among the bad people

Conclusively speaking the sampled or model hadith of fixed period prediction cited by Bennett do not tally with the model given by hadith-experts because of lack of fixed colander year thus the objection is rejected and do not apply.

4. Objection on the Credibility of *Hadith* Narrators/ Sanad

When the objectionists cannot discredit the text of the tradition then they focus on the chain of narrators and try to discredit or create suspicions regarding the narrators for example age of narrators, non accessibility and the character of Narrators. The main object is to discredit the tradition itself. The same treatment has been applied to the narrators of prophetic ^{صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم} miracles. Clinton Bennett has raised objection on Ibn e Abbas and Anas bin Malik for their lesser ages and on Hazrat Abu Hurayrah for his credibility. Ibn 'Abbas Prophet's ^{صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم} cousin who was 13 years old at Prophet's death and Anas Ibn Malik who was 19 years old only. Orientalists consider these two sources doubtful because of the age of these two persons.

Bennett has agreed with them by saying that;

Others point out that many of the miracle *hadith* are traced to two transmitters, Ibn 'Abbas (a cousin of the Prophet) and Anas Ibn Malik, whose youth at Muhammad's death (they were 13 and 19 respectively) may cast doubt on their testimony, and to Abu Hurayrah, to whom reference was made above. As it

happens, of the four *hadith* in Bukhari, one is attributed to Anas Ibn Malik (58:35 *hadith* no. 208) and one to Ibn 'Abbas (58:35 *hadith* no. 210) and thus Asad (1981) comments on the weakness of both *hadith*. 'Anas', he says, 'was not present at Mecca at the time in question' whilst Ibn 'Abbas 'was not yet born!' 'Abbas indeed appears to have narrated not a few incidents which he could not possibly have witnessed. Commenting on another *hadith* attributed to 'Abbas, Asad writes, 'as to Abbas having heard these words from his father ... this is impossible, for Ibn Abbas was born ten years after the beginning of the Prophet's mission.

If 'Abbas was a source of false *hadith*^ he may have coined the warning about false transmission (cited above) to protect himself; Anas narrates a similar tradition: 'the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever tells a lie against me intentionally, surely let him occupy his seat in hell fire"' (B 3:39). People would hardly suspect these sources of fraud! On the other hand, 'Abbas was renowned, amongst his contemporaries, both for his Qur'anic *tafsir* (exegesis; see his *Majimu'ah min al-Tafasir*) and for knowledge of the *hadith*, and is said to have kept written records.²⁴

Generally speaking the traditions of miracles are mainly the focus material of orientalists. They do not accept such contentions pertaining to the biography of the holy Prophet ﷺ while they would accept such narrations relating to the holy Christ amicably.

Secondly speaking the narrations from Anas bin Malik and Abdullah bin Abbas are of very high importance because the both were very close to the Prophet ﷺ and the most dependable companions in Arab world.

Thirdly had they been reporting a false tradition other companions of higher ages must have rejected them.

Fourthly the *hadith* related to the miracle of split of moon is not only narrated from these two companions but also from Jubayr b. Mutim²⁵, Abd Allah b. Umar²⁶ and Abd Allah b. Masud²⁷, God be pleased with them too.

²⁴ Bennett, In Search of Muhammad, 46.

²⁵ Muhammad bin Isa'a al-tirmizi, Al- Sunan, Research: Ahmad Muhammad Shakir (Egypt: Shirka maktaba wa matba'a mustafa al babi al-halbi, 1975), 477/4, Hadith No: 2182.

²⁶ Muslim bin Al-Hajaj, Al-Jame Al-Sahih, Research: Muhammad Fawad Abdul Baqi (Bairoot: Dar ehya al-turas al-arbi), 2159/4, Hadith No: 2801.

²⁷ Bukhari, Al-Jame Al-Sahih, 206/4, Hadith No: 3636.

Fifthly the companions' narration with missing one narrator is called **Mursal** that is acceptable according to *hadith* system. Therefore the said narrations are acceptable by any standard of the science of narration.

Lastly in the presence of deterrence of Hell fire for the false Prophetic narration is so fearful and proverbial that any Muslim and especially a companion can never dare to forge a false narration pertaining to the holy Prophet ﷺ.²⁸

Historically speaking the split of Moon and the traditions of Anas bin Malik and Abdullah bin Abbas have been accepted by the primary generations of Muslims and the classical writers of the collections of *hadith*. For example Bukhari and Muslim have preferred such narration from the said persons (Anas bin Malik and Abdullah bin Abbas) over other companions because of the highest degree of integrity and authenticity of the chain of narrators following them.

i. The Credibility of Hazrat Abu Hurayrah

Hazrat Abu Hurayrah the companion of Holy Prophet ﷺ is top narrator of *hadith* as far as the number and the clarity of text is concerned. 5374 *hadith* are narrated by Him and has a prominent status in the science of *hadith*. After accepting Islam, he benefited from the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for three years. He was always in search of some *hadith* during that time. He enjoyed the close company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for those three years and had no other business except the company of the holy Prophet ﷺ like all other companions of Suffa (Ahl e Suffa).

Most of the orientalists questioned the credibility of Hazrat Abu Hurayrah because of his extensive narration. Critics target the top narrator because in this way they aim at discrediting big amount of *hadith*. Critics raised the point that Abu Hurayrah related the biggest number of *hadith* while he has enjoyed only three years in the company of Holy Prophet ﷺ which is for lesser than the time spend by most of the companions who narrated a small number of *hadith*. The reason of the maximum narration from Abu Hurayrah is that he was a whole time companion of Muhammad as compared to most companions who were part-time *hadith* Narrators. It has two reasons, the first and for most reason being the well-wishing prayer of Holy Prophet ﷺ for the better memory for Abu Hurayrah and the second reason being the inquisitiveness on his part regarding the love and preservation of *hadith*

²⁸ عَنْ الْمُغِيرَةِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: «إِنَّ كَذِبًا عَلَى لَيْسَ كَذِبٍ عَلَى أَحَدٍ، مَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى مُتَعَمِّدًا، فَلْيَتَبَوَّأْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ». Bukhari, Al Sahih, 80/2, Hadith No:1291.

which has been time and again recognized and highlighted by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As the Noble Prophet ﷺ had pointed out at times that no one would ask such a point other than him. For example it is proved in the *hadith* given below:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي سُلَيْمَانُ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ أَبِي عَمْرٍو، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْمَقْبُرِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَسْعَدَ النَّاسِ بِشَفَاعَتِكَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ؟ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «لَقَدْ ظَنَنْتُ يَا أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ أَنْ لَا يَسْأَلَنِي عَنْ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَحَدٌ أَوْلُ مِنْكَ لِمَا رَأَيْتُ مِنْ حِرْصِكَ عَلَى الْحَدِيثِ أَسْعَدَ النَّاسِ بِشَفَاعَتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، مَنْ قَالَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، خَالِصًا مِنْ قَلْبِهِ، أَوْ نَفْسِهِ»²⁹.

This shows the dire inquisitiveness of Abu Hurayrah for *hadith* and the same has been appreciated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying “O Abu Hurayrah! I did know that no one would ask for this except you because you are very fond of getting *hadith* from me”.

Bennett has spared no time to discount the veracity of Abu Hurayrah. He has tried his level best to create the impression that all other companions had no regard of Abu Hurayrah. He has also tried to negate the collection of Hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah with a single stroke of his pen. Bennett has noted that:

....Muhammad's (ﷺ) companions, we are told, would enquire from each other whether, in their absence, any new *hadith* had been witnessed. As it happens, Abu Hurayrah may not be the best example to cite; *hadith* attributed to him are perhaps especially vulnerable to criticism. ‘Umar (Companion and Khalif) called him ‘the worst liar among the *muhaddithun* (narraters of *hadith*)’ (cited by Forward, 1994: 105).....³⁰

The answer of this objection has few parts which are given as under:

1. The reference cited above evaluating the status of Abu Hurayrah has been taken from an orientalist and not from the original and basic Islamic sources. Clinton Bennett most probably has selected a secondary reference from a secondary scholar. It shows that he intends to criticize and discredit the whole system of Islamic tradition or science of *hadith*. He knows that by doing so, he would be successful to create doubts in the most recognized collections of *hadith* which are mostly contributed by Hazrat Abu Hurayrah.
2. Such references are not found in the recognized collections of *hadith* that is Sihah Sitta. This incident has been reported by the scholars 'Abdul-Husayn Sharf al-din al-Musawi

²⁹ Bukhari, Al Sahih, 31/1, Hadith No:99.

³⁰ Bennett, In Search of Muhammad, 25-26.

(d. 1957)³¹ and Abu Rayyah³² that 'Umar struck Abu Hurayrah with a shield for relating too many hadith upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and accused him of lying. This tradition has been taken from Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, by the Shiite Mu'tazilite Ibn Abi al-Hadid who quotes Abu Ja'far al-Iskafi. Abu Ja'far al-Iskafi is a third century, Shi'ite Mu'tazalite and he has narrated this incidence without citing the requisite chain or sanad, centuries after the death of both the companions. Such references are mostly attributed by the scholars who promote animosity of Abu Hurayrah while on the other hand a group of scholars have provided a solid defense to the traditions of Abu Hurayrah.³³ The Iraqi Brotherhood scholar 'Abdul-Mun'im Saalih al-'Alee al-'Izzee, has provided a fool proof solid defense of the contributions of Abu Hurayrah, entitled *Dif'a 'an Abee Hurayrah* answering almost every objection regarding the work of Abu Hurayrah in his 500 pages book.. In this work, al-'Izzi reviewed, page by page, over 110 classical works (most of which are in a number of volumes, extending thousands of pages), which spares no objection raised against Abu Hurayrah and leaves no stone unturned pertaining to the evaluation of the traditional status of Abu Hurayrah.

3. It is historically reported that the Jahmee, Bishr al-Mareesee was the only and the first narrator of alleged incidence that Umar accused Abu Hurayrah of lying. Responding to the said report Imam al-Darimee rejected such possibility with logical analysis of the history; Imam has asked Jahmee to provide reference and altogether ruled out such possibility because Hazrat Umar has entrusted Abu Hurayrah with most important Islamic institutions.³⁴ Thus the fabricated instance had never been happened.

4. Moreover, al-'Izzee has reported that several traditions in Sahih Bukhari are narrated by Salim ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar, and Hafs ibn 'Asim ibn 'Umar, the grandsons of Umar with the sanad of Abu Hurayrah, which manifests the family confidence and the Muslim community trust on the Sanad of Abu Hurayrah.

5. It is interesting to note that when Hazrat Ayesha and Hazrat Hafsah died Hazrat Abu Hurayrah led the funeral prayers and Ibn 'Umar was among the attendees. This is reported by

³¹ He was a Shi'a twelver Islamic scholar. He was the teacher of Mahmud Abu Rayyah

³² He summarized in his book, *Adwa' 'alas-Sunnat-il-Muhammadeeyah* (Cairo: 1958), most of the arguments of the orientalist. He tried to show that Sunnah is fabricated and for that matter he raised questions on Abu Hurayrah's veracity.

³³ Al-Khateeb, *al-Sunnah Qabl al-Tadween*, p. 457; al-'Izzee, *Difaa' 'anAbee Hurayrah*, p. 123)

³⁴ 'Uthman bin Sa'eed Al-Darimi, *Radd al-Imam al-Darimee 'alaa Bishr al-Mareesee*, Research: Muhammad Hamid al-fiqi, (Bairoot: Daar al-kutb al-'ilmiyah, 1358 AH), 132-135.

al-Bukhari in his Taareekh-as-Saghaar and Al-Haakim reports in al-Mustadrak that Ibn 'Umar was among the people and had no objections.

قَالَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ: فَحَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ جُرَيْجٍ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، قَالَ: «شَهِدْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، صَلَّى عَلَى عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا

بِالْبَيْعِ» وَابْنُ عُمَرَ، فِي النَّاسِ لَا يُنْكِرُهُ «وَكَانَ مَرُوءًا، اعْتَمَرَ تِلْكَ السَّنَةَ فَاسْتَخْلَفَ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ»³⁵

Al-'Izzee remarks, "We know that the Muslims choose the best among them to lead funeral prayers, how much more so when it is the wife of their Prophet ﷺ in this world and the next?" One may surmise that had 'Umar considered Abu Hurayrah to be a liar and beat him for that, how would Ibn 'Umar allow (indeed, have no objections) Abu Hurayrah to lead the funeral prayer for his sister and Prophet's ﷺ wife, Hafsaa?

6. In his caliphate, Omar bin Al-khattab (May Allah be pleased at Him) gave Abu Hurayrah the governship of Al-Bahrain as Muhammad bin Sireen has quoted the dialogue between both the companions:

Omar handled Abu Hurayrah the govern ship of Bahrain, and Abu Hurayrah came to Omar with 10,000 Dinars. Omar said to him: "O' you the enemy of Allah and the enemy of His book! You took exclusive possession of this money?" Abu Hurayrah answered: "I am not the enemy of Allah, nor the enemy of His book, but I am the enemy of who take enmity against them." Omar asked: "Then from where did you get this money?" Abu Hurayrah answered: "I got this money by breeding my horses, my slave labors, and by getting consecutive gifts." They examined his claim and found him saying the truth. Then Omar asked Abu Hurayrah to take the governship, but Abu Hurayrah refused. Omar said: "You hate to work while a better person than you was seeking it i.e. Yusuf?" Abu Hurayrah said: "Yusuf is a prophet Peace Be upon Him, a son of a prophet who was a son of another prophet and I am Abu Hurayrah the son of Umaymah and I am afraid of three things that have two folds each." Omar asked: "Why would not you say five?" Abu Hurayrah answered: "I am afraid to speak without knowledge, to quell without clemency, afraid that my back would be beaten, that my money would be taken, and that my honor would be insulted."³⁶

It is well proved by the classical sources of Islam that Abu Hurayrah was the most committed companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as far as the transmission of *hadith* is concerned as he

³⁵ Muhammad bin Abdullah al-Hakim al-Nesapuri, Al-Mustadrsk, Research: Mustafa Abdul Qadir Ata (Bairroot: Dar ul Kutab al Ilmiya, 1411/1990), 5/4, Hadith No: 6716.

³⁶ Abu Abdullah Hakim neshapuri, Al mustadrak ala Sahihain, Research: Mustafa Abdul Qadir Ata (Bairroot:Darr ul Kutab Ilmia, 1990), 378/2, Hadith No: 3327.

had no wife or a personal business which could keep him away from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Therefore he accompanied the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the journeys as well as in the stay at Medina. He was one of the most famous members of Ashaab e Suffa who had no other job to do except to learn and preserve the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ.

ii. Bennett took Imam Bukhari and hadith literature as misogynist

Clinton Bennett criticizes the feminine policy of Islam as a misogyny practice referring to the reports from Mernissi (1940-2015)³⁷ and Leila Ahmad (Born 1940)³⁸ who present the *hadith* and Imam Bukhari as misogynist. It is hereby, alleged that the later Muslims have forged the traditions regarding women policy of Islam citing various *hadith*.

Mernissi in her books '*The Forgotten Queens of Islam*' and '*Women in Islam*' has cited some traditions calling them as misogynist which she has taken from Sahih Bukhari with reservations. She has criticized the *hadith* which contains that "Those who entrust their affairs to a woman will never know prosperity". While quoting Mernissi, Dr. Bennett has discussed the government of Benazir Bhutto(2007), this way he wants to highlight gender discrimination in Islam. He discusses several explanations of this tradition given by Mernissi.

The first explanation relates the *hadith* only with the political scenario of Iran at the time of Purandukht, the only women ruler, while the said tradition was narrated by the Holy Prophet a long time ago and had never been cited or repeated by any companion.

The said objection is multi-lateral which we will deal in separate individual aspects. It is a critical issue which has been a point of mutual interaction and discussion since long time amongst the respective scholars of Islam and the political system. And even in modern time it is a burning issue in the contemporary democracies. The subcontinent has been facing this problem in many places and states, Queen of Jhansi (1858) and Queen Razia Sultana (1240) are the two old precedents in the subcontinent pertaining to the rule of women. Two most recent precedents are available namely Haseena Wajid (b1947) of Bangladesh and Benazir Bhutto (2007) of Pakistan. There are numerous international precedences of female head of states in the modern world. But the main problem is with the Muslim community. The root

³⁷ Fatema (or Fatima) Mernissi was a Moroccan feminist writer and sociologist.

³⁸ Leila Ahmed is an Egyptian American writer on Islam and Islamic feminism. She became the first professor of women's studies in religion at Harvard Divinity School in 1999, and has held the Victor S. Thomas Professor of Divinity chair since 2003.

of the problem is *hadith* of Abu Bakra as the Clinton Bennett has highlighted the said issue with the reference of Mernissi.³⁹

The narrator of this tradition “Those who entrust their affairs to a woman will never know prosperity” has been criticized by Mernissi because the narrator has used this tradition to oppose Hazrat Ayesha especially at the time of her protest lodged against Hazrat Ali in the Battle of Jamal. Mernissi opines that Hazrat Ayesha Siddiqah is the pioneer of the rights of women regarding the practical political participation. She had broken the ice by lodging the protest against the Caliph. She led the procession personally, came out of the four walls and arranged a war “**The Battle of camel**” by demonstrating the Islamic legal rights of the women. While there after the said protest was propagated and highlighted as a *fitna* by a large number of Muslims inspired by the said *hadith* of Abu Bakra. Therefore Bennett observes that

“In her ‘*Women and Islam*’ (1991) Mernissi set out to critique this and other oft-cited misogynist *hadith* with a view to establishing whether or not they represent Muhammad’s authentic voice”.⁴⁰

It is noted that the issue discussed by Bennett puts forward the following observations:

- 1) Mernissi takes the credibility of the said *hadith* unreliable as observed by Mr. Bennett.
- 2) The late disclosure of the said *hadith* on the occasion of the protest lodged by hazrat Ayesha implies that Hazrat Abu bakra might want to avoid his participation in the conflict and not to side by hazrat Ayesha Siddiqah.
- 3) Abu bakra is the same person who had been awarded hadd e qadhaf by hazrat Umar therefore his narrative invites the question of reliability.
- 4) Most of the scholars of *hadith* believed that the said *hadith* is not the legislative resolution rather a plain narrative in the perspective of Iranian empire and its system. Some scholars believed that the said *hadith* was narrated for the guidance of Zoroastrian people and not for the Muslims.
- 5) Some scholars including Mernissi have given their opinion that the queen of Saba had been mentioned and admired by the Qur’an therefore the rule of woman is precedential.

³⁹ Clinton Bennett, *Muslims and Modernity: An Introduction to the Issues and Debates*, (London: The tower building 11 York road continuum, 2005), 136-142.

⁴⁰ Bennett, *Muslims and Modernity*, 136.

Before discussing and analyzing the above mentioned points one by one, it seems appropriate to quote herein the exact words of *hadith*. The exact words of *hadith* are:

حَدَّثَنَا عُثْمَانُ بْنُ أَهِيَمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَوْفٌ، عَنِ الْحَسَنِ، عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ، قَالَ: لَقَدْ نَفَعَنِي اللَّهُ بِكَلِمَةٍ سَمِعْتُهَا مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَيَّامَ الْجَمَلِ، بَعْدَ مَا كِدْتُ أَنْ أَلْحِقَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْجَمَلِ فَأُقَاتِلَ مَعَهُمْ، قَالَ: لَمَّا بَلَغَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ أَهْلَ فَارِسَ، قَدْ مَلَكَوا عَلَيْهِمْ بِنْتُ كِسْرَى، قَالَ: «لَنْ يُفْلِحَ قَوْمٌ وَلَوْ أَمَرَهُمْ امْرَأَةٌ»⁴¹

Hazrat Abu Bakrah has said that (Allah protected me) with the words which I heard from the Prophet, benefitted me in the war of Jamal. When the Prophet heard the news that the people of the Persia had made the daughter of Khosrau their Queen (ruler), he said, 'The nation cannot flourish whose affairs are in the hands of a woman'

To make it clearer, leading for a protest is not relative to this *hadith*. The *hadith* apparently disrecommends the rule of women. Yet the issue is a still burning-one between the two main parties (Rightists and leftists) one of them does not allow the female rule while the other in modern age, with the help of international community has allowed the same. Therefore, Haseena Wajid is a female ruler of Bangladesh while Benazir Bhutto was the first female ruler of Pakistan. As we have learned from the history of the political system of Islam there is a precedent provided by the khilafat e Rashida, the first four Caliph successions to the rule belongs to male gender in the presence of Ummuhat ul Mumineen. This precedent discourages the introduction of female rule to Islamic political system.

1) Merrnisi takes the credibility of the said *hadith* as unreliable as observed by Bennett

The *hadith* cited above being taken from Sahih Bukhari, therefore the first question is raised on the credibility of Sahih Bukhari and Imam Bukhari himself. If the *hadith* is unreliable, the person of Imam Bukhari and his integrity becomes affected adversely.

Generally speaking, Imam Bukhari is a most prudent and diligent *hadith* compiler. He has worked very hard to collect and verify each single *hadith* to include in his collection. It is not expected from him that he would select an incredible *hadith* in his collection because this is the very job of the compilers to differentiate and verify the category of *hadith*.

The *hadith* compilers have evolved a fool proof system to censor and differentiate the credibility and verify the type of *hadith*. The majority of Muslim scholars and the compilers

⁴¹ Bukhari, AL-Jame Al-Sahih, Hadith No: 4425.

of *Sunnah* have recognized Sahih Bukhari as a most authentic and dependable collection of *hadith* after Qur'an on the face of the earth.

Some enlightened orientalist and modern Muslims have shown their reservations for the collection of Imam Bukhari and have neglected its dependability and integrity. One of them is Mernissi who has been quoted time and again by Bennett, who has raised objection on the *hadith* of Abu Bakra in Bukhari, the companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. All the companions have been declared as 'Aadil by the Holy Prophet and on this point there is a consensus of the whole Ummah.

The specific *hadith* of Abu Bakra, which has been criticized by Mernissi because of the very person of Abu Bakra and Imam Bukhari being misogynist; had he been a misogynist? He would not have opined against Hazrat Ali. Hereby we throw light on the history of *hadith* and some quotations have been taken to evaluate the degree of authenticity of the said *Tradition*: Abdul Rahman Mubarakpuri (1925) in his book '*Tuhfatul Ahwazi*' which is the translation of '*sunan Tirmizi*' comments on the said *hadith* in these words:

"This is a 'Sahih' *hadith*"

هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ⁴²

It confirms the authenticity of the said *hadith*. Abu Abdullah Hakim Neshapuri (321- 403 AH) in his book '*Mustadrak*' verifies the authenticity of the *hadith* and confirms the approvable qualities by Sheikhain (Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim)

هَذَا حَدِيثٌ صَحِيحٌ عَلَى شَرْطِ الشَّيْخَيْنِ وَمُؤْتَرَجَاهُ⁴³

Conclusively speaking Mernissi has criticized the *hadith* of Abu Bakra firstly because of the person of Abu Bakra and secondly because of Imam of Bukhari being misogynist. It has been proved in the above discussion that both these dimensions are incredible as having no ground.

2) The late disclosure of the said *hadith* on the occasion of the protest lodged by hazrat Ayesha implies that Abu bakra might want to avoid his participation in the conflict and not to side by hazrat Ayesha Siddiqua too.

Relating this *hadith* 25 years later and that too on the occasion of the war of Camel by Hazrat Abu Bakra, is itself a mysterious according to Mernissi. Keeping in view the circumstances Mernissi raises the questions,

⁴² Muhammad Abdul Rehman Mubarikpuri (1353A.H), Tuhfatul Ahwazi be sharha Jame Tirmizi (Bairoot, Darul Kutab Ilmia), 447/6, Hadith No:2261.

⁴³ Al-Nesapuri, Al-Mustadrsk, Hadith No:7790.

Did he, she surmises, really remembers this *hadith* or was it fabricated as a posthumous justification for his decision not to support the revolt (1991:50-1)⁴⁴

Revoking of the very *hadith* by Abu Bakra, does not necessarily apply to Hazrat Ayesha that too on the occasion of Battle of Camel. Such incidence is not the only and unusual occasion in the history of the Companions.

A *hadith* like the former instance does not necessarily apply to the occasion. It has a likewise possibility of partial or complete application. Sometimes a particular occasion becomes the cause of recollection of some *hadith*. Because in the history of Islam no women had ever led such movement therefore it became the reason of recalling a possible relation of the very *hadith*.

The allegation on Hazrat Abu Bakra of opposing hazrat Ayesha is meaningless because another *hadith* of Bukhari too relates to the instance where Abu Bakra has advised Ahnaf bin Qais not to join the army of Hazrat Ali.

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ، حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ زَيْدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ، وَيُونُسُ، عَنِ الْحَسَنِ، عَنِ الْأَخْنَفِ بْنِ قَيْسٍ، قَالَ: ذَهَبْتُ لِأَنْصُرَ هَذَا الرَّجُلَ، فَلَقِيَنِي أَبُو بَكْرَةَ فَقَالَ أَيْنَ تُرِيدُ؟ قُلْتُ: أَنْصُرُ هَذَا الرَّجُلَ، قَالَ: ارْجِعْ فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: «إِذَا التَقَى الْمُسْلِمَانِ بِسَيْفَيْهِمَا فَالْقَاتِلُ وَالْمَقْتُولُ فِي النَّارِ»، فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا الْقَاتِلُ فَمَا بَالُ الْمَقْتُولِ قَالَ: «إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَرِيصًا عَلَى قَتْلِ صَاحِبِهِ»⁴⁵

While the decision of un-joining the army of Ayesha Siddiqua was his personal decision. He has not persuaded any person not to join Hazrat Ayesha's army. This does not necessarily prove that Abu Bakra had some personal grudge with Hazrat Ayesha. Had this been the reason then he would not have asked any person not to join the army of Hazrat Ali. If it is said that Abu Bakra had un-purposely prepared an excuse to oppose Ayesha Siddiqua, it was easy for him to join Hazrat Ali in that case.

It is very interesting that Abu Bakra never had a public announcement namely in some mosques or in some open places that 'O people! Don't side Hazrat Ayesha because the Prophet has said that no nation can prosper in the leadership of a woman.' While the words of *hadith* are:

God has benefited me with the very sentence in the days of war of camel which I had heard from the holy Prophet. It was very likely that I would have joined the people of Camel and would have fought along with them.

⁴⁴ Bennett, Muslim and Modernity, 139.

⁴⁵ Bukhari, Al Jame Al Sahih, Hadith No: 31.

The very saying was his personal concern. The way he had stopped Ahnaf bin Qais Hazrat, Ali's companion such precedent is not known about the companion of Hazrat Ayesha in Sahih Bukhari. Therefore, it is wrong to understand that he had forged a tradition in order to defame the leadership of Hazrat Ayesha and it is also not true that the said hadith is peculiarise with Hazrat Ayesha. Because she never claimed Khilafat but she was trying to force Hazrat Ali to prosecute the murderers of Hazrat Uthman. If some enlightened person opposes such tradition because of the possibility of debarring the leadership of women like Benazir etc, likewise the person or people who exaggerate in the love of Hazrat Ali would show his concerns also because Abu Bakra had stopped a head of tribe (Ahnaf bin Qais) from joining Ali's force. In reality these both versions are wrong because Abu Bakra had stated exactly what he has heard from the holy Prophet.

3) Abu bakra is the same person who had been awarded hadd e qadhaf by hazrat Umar therefore his narrative invites the question of reliability.

Mernissi, as quoted by Bennett relating to Hazrat Abu Bakra had adopted the style which is improper and prejudiced, not applicable to the actual story and circumstances. The actual happenings are narrated below:

When Hazrat Umar summoned Abu Bakra with his companions versus Mugheera bin Sho'ba at Medina and examines the required eye witnesses against Mugheera Bin Sho'ba alleged to be illicitly engaged with a woman known as Umm e Jamil. Herein Mugheera Bin Sho'ba declared that the said woman was not Umm e Jamil but his own wife who had great similarity with Umm e Jamil. One of the four witnesses given a doubtful statement, it had created a benefit of doubt in the favor of the accused. According to Islamic law Hadd was enforced and executed on the accusers; that was Abu Bakra and his two companions. Thereafter, Hazrat Abu Bakra and other two were to declare tobah in order to restore their integrity as witnesses but Abu Bakra solemnly declared never to commit witness in his life rather than to be ta'aib. Conclusively speaking all happened in the result of a misunderstanding and in the complete absence of bad intention or prejudice. They never intended to allege falsely or to tell a lie.

Imam Bukhari has taken fourteen hadith from Abu Bakra. His sixty four hadith have been pointed out by Imam Yousaf Al Muzzi (654-742AH). Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal has reserved and established a full chapter on the narrations of Abu Bakra. Thereby it has been seen that none of the Imams mentioned above have raised any objection against the integrity and narration of Abu Bakra. Mernissi by no means can be preferred over the said Imams. So, said notion of Mernissi is rejected.

4) Most of the scholars of *hadith* believed that the said *hadith* is not the legislative resolution rather a plain narrative in the perspective of Iranian empire and its system.

If it is said that the Holy Prophet had said this at the occasion of the enthronement of a woman (Puran dukht) of Iran therefore it is apparently specific for Puran dukht but it is not so because Puran dukht was not the culprit of tearing out the Holy letter of the holy Prophet. Beside this there is no other reason to apply this *hadith* to Puran dukht. Because her tenure of rule was not cruel While Ibn e Athir and Ibn e Jarir had appreciated and praised her tenure of rule and had quoted good examples.

If it is said that this *hadith* is specified with Puran Dukht because of being Mushrika, it is not true because the Queen of Sheeba was also a Mushrika and her story was revealed in Makah while enthronement of Puran Dukht happened after the Truce of Hdaybiyyah.

This *hadith* being Sahih could not be recorded as Mawzu or Zaef therefore Clinton Bennett had tried to discredit the legal authority of the said *hadith* but it proved not to be of any use, by saying:

Other writers accept the authenticity of this *hadith* but not its traditional interpretation. They argue that Muhammad was not legislating for all time that no women could rule but was predicting that in this particular historical instance, Persia would not flourish since following king Khosrau's murder by his own son, a succession of princes succeeded each other over the next five years while anarchy reigned. Muhammad may thus have foreseen the likely outcome of rule by inexperienced women in such turbulent times. In fact, two queens, Purandukht and Azarmidukht, each ruled briefly, only to be overthrown by a grandson of Khusrau.⁴⁶

But the words "لن يفلح قوم" included in the said narration implies that the above quoted *hadith* was not specified to a particular nation because the word '*Nation*' (قوم) used in this *hadith* is a common noun and not a proper noun. Therefore, it does not only apply to Polytheists but also to Muslims too and in this way this *hadith* has the status of general rule.

5) Some scholars including Mernissi have given their opinion that the queen of Sheba had been mentioned and admired by the Qur'an therefore the rule of woman is precedential.

Dr. Bennett had tried to create an impression through Mernissi that the said *hadith* is contradictory to the text of Qur'an, because reign of Queen of Sheba has been mentioned in

⁴⁶ Bennett, Muslims and Modernity, 139-140.

the holy Qur'an appreciate-ably. Therefore, as far as the critics are concerned they believed that if the rule of women was unlawful, Qur'an would have never mentioned it appreciate-ably. Therefore the objectionists are using this Qur'anic precedent against the said *hadith* of Abu Bakra.

A Qur'anic story of a Mushrika Queen does not apply to the Islamic government rules. It never debars a Muslim woman from leadership or ruler ship. Queen Sheba was not a ruler of a Muslim state and she was called by Suleman and thereby her ruler-ship was put to end. There is no information in the Qur'an which mentioned the continuation of her reign of rule. If it is believed that exeggesists have information that Prophet Suleman had married her, Israelite sources contain that she was married to king Hamdan who was the custodian of kingdom and kingship. He was the ruler till the death of Hazrat Suleman. It means that Suleman had appointed Hamdan the king of Yemen instead of Queen Sheba. The exegesists have concluded from the saying of the holy Prophet "*The nation cannot prosper and flourish in the leadership of the women*".

iii. Were Isnads falsified?

Dr. Bennett want to discuss this matter in this way that in order to have a short link ('Ali isnad) people were used to practice 'Tadlees' in this way Isnads were falsified. But Bennett did not mention that this does not falsify all the "Isnads". Bennett cites Muir's (1819-1905) comments about the Non-Muslims thinking against Muslims as

Much non-Muslim sceptism about the authenticity and historicity of the *hadith* is simply the suspicion that Muslims were self-serving, dishonest and not very interested in 'truth'⁴⁷.

Conclusively speaking, Mr. Bennett objects on the image of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a perfect one in the eyes of Muslims as he sees that image is different when compared to the faith and the history, but the history and the references he discusses from different authors' point of view and admit the fact that it was hard to find those contradictory references in true resources;

Yes, there are *hadith* (on punishment, women, and so on) which I do not find appealing but I actually had a hard job tracing many references to these in other literature to their original source!⁴⁸

Referring to Muir Bennett does not approve his approach because the Muir's point of view has no base and record in original and classical record of history. Bennett opines that it is

⁴⁷ Bennett, In Search of Muhammad,60.

⁴⁸ Bennett, In Search of Muhammad,64.

very hard to find contradicting references to the common Muslim versions. Yet some orientalist like Muir have objected to the Muslim thinker's attitude and self-centeredness.

Conclusion

Qur'an and *hadith* are the main sources of Islam. Therefore, orientalist have been making use of the both sources and examining them. Qur'an being the word of God, miracle book and unchallengeable, the orientalist have focused upon *hadith* for their objections and reservations in order to discredit the teachings of Qur'an. *hadith* consists of the two main constituent namely Sanad and Matan. Text being highly protected prophetically, thus the chain of narrators becomes the main target of the orientalist.

When they cannot discredit the text of the tradition then they focus on the chain of narrators and try to discredit or create suspicions regarding the narrators for example bio data of narrators, non accessibility and the character of Narrators. The main object is to discredit the tradition itself. The same treatment has been applied to the narrators of holy Prophet ﷺ in the study of Clinton Bennett.

Orientalist are often heard saying that *Mohadithin* had concentrated upon Sand and neglected the text or Matn. And Bennett has been referring to the same.

Clinton Bennett has highlighted the diverging aspects of narration in Hadith He has also contended that contradictory texts of traditions make the biographic facts complex and uncertain. It is also seen that if this is the case on smaller issues, how can the big issues be settled rightly?

Secondly he is of the point of view that some companions have forged traditions which suited their position and preferences and related them to the Person of Holy Prophet ﷺ. Any how he followed his fore-runners; his target is Hazrat Abu Hurayrah because the Bennett knows that without discrediting Hazrat Abu Hurayrah, the main collection of *hadith* cannot be damaged. Thus creating suspicions about the *hadith* included in Sahih Bukhari by the same chain, therefore even Sahih Bukhari lost its proverbial credibility. He tried to highlight the so-called rift between the companions of Beloved Prophet ﷺ by narrating apparently divergent traditions and magnifying impossible conflict.

Thirdly he has brought forward a point that most of the contents of tradition do not qualify according to the sets standards of *Muhadithin*. Bennett has neglected herein the hierarchy system of *hadith* while he has discredited a weaker kind of *hadith* altogether null and wide. He has done it intentionally and mala-fide to discredit the *hadith* system. He has tried to jeopardize and contravene.