



## AN ORIENTALIST TODAY: Jonathan A.C. Brown's Thoughts on Hadith

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**Abstract:** The term "Orientalist" refers to scholars, mostly from the West, who specialize in studying Eastern cultures, including Islamic texts such as the Quran and Hadith. This study explores the views of a contemporary Orientalist, namely Jonathan Andrew Cleveland Brown, on Hadith. Grounding on Brown's works on hadith and related topics as the main data, this study found that Brown has introduced a distinctive concept known as "the canonization theory", typically applied as a stage in the cult or development of the Bible and Torah. Brown has applied the theory to explore the history of the books of hadith composed by Bukhari and Muslim. His perspective ultimately supports the consensus of Muslim scholars who consider Sahih Bukhari and Muslim as the primary source of Islamic law after the Quran. The canonization of *Sahihain* has undergone extensive study and critique from hadith experts. The reception of Sahih Bukhari has also experienced dynamics, such as the rejection by the Naisabur community, who favored Sahih Muslim, until Sahih Bukhari was established as the foremost reference on hadith, inspiring the development of a new epistemology in the study of hadith. Overall, Brown advocates for a balanced approach to Hadith, respecting Islamic tradition while maintaining a critical and scientific perspective in understanding and interpreting hadith.

**Keywords:** Hadith, Jonathan, Orientalist, canonization

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### Introduction

THE SENTENCE expresses that "Orient" is a semi-mythical construct applied to a group of countries east of Europe. While the term describes East and South Asian countries, the primary emphasis is its usage of Southwest Asia and North Africa, specifically the

Middle East. Edward Said, in his influential work "Orientalism"<sup>1</sup> explored how Western scholarship and discourse about the East often perpetuated stereotypes and power imbalances. He argued that the Orient was not just a geographic region but a construct shaped by Western perspectives, influencing how the East was perceived and represented. Said urged for a more nuanced understanding, highlighting the impact of such representations on politics, power dynamics, and cultural relations.

Today's Orientalists, predominantly Western scholars, assert that the Prophet Tradition, Sunnah or Hadith, has undergone a canonical evolution, adapting to Muslim conditions and no longer relying solely on the opinions of previous Companions. This evolution is evident in changes in the approach to understanding hadith found in various hadith books. The methods of understanding hadith during the Companion's era cannot be applied universally today.<sup>2</sup> The contemporary Orientalist perspective is similar to its predecessors, who generally focused on Islamic discourse as the primary research subject. The Orientalist approach, characterized by clarification and problem-solving, emphasizes that the authenticity of sources of Islamic law from the Qur'an and hadith remains uncertain. However, modern Orientalists, often referred to as post-Orientalists, offer a more objective view of Islamic doctrine, avoiding openly criticizing and blaming Islam as a religion rife with conflict and strife.

The shift in orientalist thinking towards a more objective study of Islam can be observed in the works of scholars such as Huston Smith, John Esposito, and Karen Armstrong. These scholars have made efforts to accurately describe Islam without being offensive. In his book "The Religions of Man," Huston Smith criticizes the misinterpretation of the concept of Jihad in Western society, particularly the use of the term "Holy War," which portrays a violent and aggressive image. Smith emphasizes that

<sup>1</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Toronto: Random House of Canada Limited, 1979).

<sup>2</sup> Adis Dudcija, "Evolution in the Canonical Sunni Ḥadīth Body of Literature and the Concept of an Authentic Ḥadīth During the Formative Period of Islamic Thought as Based on Recent Western Scholarship," *Arab Law Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (October 10, 2009): 389–415.

the true essence of Jihad is not one of aggression but rather a moderate struggle that individuals engage in throughout their lives. He explains that while Jihad is often associated with the concept of war, it is primarily interpreted as a defensive action or a means of defending oneself from enemy attacks. In Islamic teachings, Jihad is seen as a form of self-defense and a response to violence committed by the enemy rather than an initiative to start a war. This perspective reflects a more nuanced and balanced understanding of Jihad within the context of Islam.<sup>3</sup>

Muhammad Mustafa Azami (1932-1996) maintained that the first orientalist to study Hadith was Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921) through his work "*Muhammedanische Studien*," which was later continued by Joseph Schacht (1902-1969) with his work "*The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*".<sup>4</sup> Historical evidence indicates that Goldziher lived during the same period as Theodor Noldeke (1836-1930) and Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936), who are recognized as the pioneers of the Orientalists studying Islam as a modern science. The connection between Goldziher and Hurgronje becomes evident through the inclusion of Hurgronje's name on the dedication page of the monumental work "*Muhammedanische Studien*"<sup>5</sup> originally in German and later translated into English as "*Muslim Studies*".<sup>6</sup> This work established Goldziher as the foremost initiator of European Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, even revered as the first "*Holy Book*" of Orientalists. Additionally, Schacht's *The Origins of Muhammad Jurisprudence*<sup>7</sup> is considered the second significant work for

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<sup>3</sup> Badarussyamsi, "Islam Di Mata Orientalisme Klasik Dan Orientalisme Kontemporer," *Tajdid* XV, no. 1 (2016).

<sup>4</sup> Aan Supian, "Studi Hadis Di Kalangan Orientalisme," *Nuansa* 9, no. 1 (2016): 25-34.

<sup>5</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *MUHAMMEDANISCHE STUDIEN* (Toronto: University of Toronto Library, 1889).

<sup>6</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *MUSLIM STUDIES* (Britain: State University of New York Press Albany, 1971).

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Oxford at The Clarendon Press (London: Oxford University, 1950), <https://doi.org/10.1017/s000293000090485>.

Orientalists.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it's not surprising that contemporary Orientalists continue to praise Schacht. Jeanette Wakin<sup>9</sup> at the beginning of her article,<sup>10</sup> recalls Schacht's statement about being a significant figure in European and American scholarship on Islam, particularly renowned for defining and elaborating on the origins and early development of Islamic law.

Certain Western scholars' defense of the traditional narrative of hadiths and Islamic origins was driven by a need to uphold the established framework of early Islamic history despite specific criticisms raised by Revisionist scholars. Revaluation scholars countered Orientalist and Revisionist claims by challenging inherent inaccuracies in assumptions and emphasizing the extensive breadth and complexity of the Islamic hadith tradition. In doing so, they argued that a more nuanced perspective diminishes the efficacy of many criticisms.

The evolving landscape of Orientalist perspectives on Islam is vividly depicted. Nawir Yuslem highlights a notable upswing in specialized scholarships for Islamic studies, signaling an increasing acknowledgment of Islam as a viable career path. This tendency is further underscored by the persistent commitment of Orientalists in the 2020s to the study of hadith. Noteworthy is the fact that several scholars, such as Jonathan A.C. Brown, have secured scholarships from Middle Eastern countries, as exemplified by his academic journey.

In light of this, Brown's view on hadith merit exploration. Currently serving as the Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU) at Georgetown University, Brown plays a pivotal role in an institution funded by the internationally recognized Arab figure, Alwaleed Bin Talal. Established in 1993, the center is acclaimed for

<sup>8</sup> Cahya Edi Setyawan, "Studi Hadits: Analisis Terhadap Pemikiran Schacht Dan A'zami," *Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisipliner* 1, no. 2 (2016): 253–80.

<sup>9</sup> Wakin adalah orientalis wanita yang lahir pada 2 Agustus 1928 dan wafat pada 13 Maret 1998 (Jacob Lassner, "In Memoriam: Jeanette Wakin," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118, no. 3 (1998): 323–24.).

<sup>10</sup> Jeanette Wakin, "Remembering Joseph Schacht (1902-1969)," in *Islamic Legal Studies Program Harvard Law School*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, MA 02138, USA: Islamic Legal Studies Program Pound Hall, n.d.), 52.

its contributions to studying the history of Muslim-Christian relations and promoting improved relations through dialogue.

### **Brown's Academic Journey**

This orientalist named Jonathan Andrew Cleveland Brown.<sup>11</sup> He converted to Islam in 1997 and was previously registered as an Anglican Christian. He was born on August 9, 1977, in the United States city of Washington DC, to Brown and an anthropologist named Ellen Clifton Patterson. He became a bachelor at the age of 20 with magna cum laude honors at Georgetown University. His work at that time reviewed the role of the American University at Al-Azhar Cairo as the oldest and most prestigious university in the Middle East. His doctoral education was then completed in 2006 in the Department of Islamic Thought at the University of Chicago. He also worked in Seattle at the University of Washington in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization from 2006 to 2010. In mid-2010, he worked as an assistant professor in Islamic studies and Islamic-Christian relations at Georgetown University, to be precise, at the School of Foreign Service institution.<sup>12</sup>

From there, Brown's writings spread to the study of Islamic law, Sufism, Arabic lexicographic theory, and Arabic literature. To perfect his knowledge of various Islamic studies, he also explored Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, India, Iran, and even Indonesia, until finally in his remarkable study of Hadith, he fell into the category of orientalists who studied related to the history of falsification and historical criticism of Hadith that developed during Islamic civilization.<sup>13</sup>

Brown's interest in Hadith studies began in 2003, precisely when he wrote an article entitled Social Context of Pre-Islamic Poetry: Poetic Imagery and Social Reality in the Mu'allaqat<sup>14</sup> in the

<sup>11</sup>"Jonathan A.C. Brown". Wikipedia. Ensiklopedia Gratis. 10 November 2022. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan\\_A.\\_C.\\_Brown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_A._C._Brown)

<sup>12</sup> Nur Kholis, "Kritik Atas Kritik Matan Jonathan A.C. Brown," *Tajdid* 20, no. 1 (2021): 144–72.

<sup>13</sup> Kholis.

<sup>14</sup>*The famous Mu'allaqat is the work of Zuhair ibn Abi Salma Rabi'ah ibn Riyah al-Muzni. It was called mu'allaqat because, at that time, the highest appreciation for poetry*

Arab Studies Quarterly article house, Volume 25, Number 3. In the article, he concludes that understanding historically well-documented societies can help explain poetry from vanishing regions.<sup>15</sup>

He also wrote another article in 2004 regarding the study of hadith with the title Criticism of the Proto-Hadith Canon: al-Daraqutni's Adjustment of al-Bukhari and Muslim's Sahihs or if translated into Indonesian it can be interpreted as Criticism of the Canonization of Hadith: Assessment of ad- Darulqutni against Sahih Bukhari and Muslim. The article appeared in the Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies, volume 15, number 1, 2004.<sup>16</sup>

He continued to study hadith until he published an article again in the journal The Muslim World, volume 96, no. 1, 2006, entitled "The Last Days of al-Ghazzali and the Tripartite Division of the Sufi World: Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali's Letter to the Seljuq Vizier and Commentary". Brown concludes that Sufism is currently a name without a reality; previously, it was a reality without a name.<sup>17</sup>

In 2007, Brown again wrote a study related to Hadith Science, entitled "New Data on the Delateralization of Dad and its Merger with Za' in Classical Arabic: Contributions from Old South Arabian and the Earliest Islamic Texts on D / Z Minimal" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Volume 52, No. 2. In his abstract, Brown writes

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*was hanging on the walls of the Kaaba. Mu'allaqat is a conventional and classic Arabic Jahiliyah poetry which, at that time, the Arab nation before the birth of Islam had a standard language from the combination of North and South Arabia, which was supported by annual religious activities such as the Hajj and Ukkad, Mijannah and Dzul Majaz market trade. Another name for mu'allaqat is as-sab'u ath-thiwal or seven long poems and mudzahhabat (written in gold ink). It is known that Hammad, a hadith narrator, is called the compiler of as-sab' ath-thiwal. Tim Penulis Taufiq Ahmad Dardiri, *Merangkai Ilmu-Ilmu Keadaban*, ed. Ibnu Burdah, *Fakultas Adab Dan Ilmu Budaya UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta*, 2013.*

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Brown, "The Social Context of Pre Islamic Poetry," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (2003): 29–50.

<sup>16</sup> J. A. C. Brown, "Criticism of the Proto-Hadith Canon: Al-Daraqutni's Adjustment of the Sahihayn," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 15, no. 1 (2004): 1–37, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/15.1.1>.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan AC Brown, "The Last Days of Al-Ghazzali and the Tripartite Division of the Sufi World (Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali's Letter to the Seljuq Vizier and Commentary)," *The Muslim World* 96, no. 1 (2006): 89–113.

that the history of the phoneme of the letter dhadh and its combination with the phoneme zha' has evidence that is full of enigma, so by presenting data from the Ancient South Arabian speech community and lexical data from the Islamic tradition, the article concludes that in The fourth to mid-eighth centuries, AD was a period that was free to choose between Dhadh and Zha' because this data is supported by the fact that Classical Arabic society was divided into two groups, namely those who pronounced them separately and produced a tradition of Koranic letters. In contrast, others did not differentiate between them. Brown also presents data from the earliest Arabic texts, which explains the minimal similarities between the D/Z of the texts of Abu 'Umar az-Zahir (w. 345 AH/957AD) and Isma'il ibn 'Abbad (d. 385 AH/995 AD) with provides a glimpse of how the Islamic lexical tradition explains the historical relationship between these two phenomena.

Even in the same year, namely 2007, Brown launched his work related to Hadith Science "The Canonization of al-Bukhari and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Hadith Canon". Brown maps the origins of the development and function of the two books, namely Sahih Bukhari and Muslim, through the lens of canonicity. His study reviews how these books changed from controversial to indispensable in Sunni legal circles because they were considered a common language for discussing the Prophet's legacy. Brown studied the role of the hadith canon in ritual and narrative, so he tried to investigate the canonical culture built around the text and the trends in Sunni scholarship that rejected it. Brown also explores this tension in contemporary debates between the Salafi movement and traditional law schools.<sup>18</sup>

In 2008, Brown wrote an article entitled "How We Know Early Hadith Critics Did Matn Criticism and Why It's So Hard to Find", published in the journal *Islamic Law and Society*. Brown argues by giving examples of Matan criticism from the 3H/9M to 4H/10M

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<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim (The Formation and Function of The Sunni Hadith Canon)*, IDC Publishers, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and VSP (Leiden, The Netherlands: IDC Publishers, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and VSP, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004158399.i-431>.

centuries that Sunni hadith critics were not only skilled in examining isnad alone. They also engaged in criticism of Matan but consciously created an image of exclusive focus on isnad in an attempt to ward off attacks by rationalist opponents. Brown says that critics disguise the activities of matan criticism in the language of isnad criticism.<sup>19</sup>

In 2009, Brown published his work "Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World", which was published by Oneworld, Foundations of Islam series on June 1, 2009. This book provides a detailed exploration of the collection and criticism of hadith and a study of the controversy surrounding its role in modern Islam. This book is suitable for students, scholars, and general readers interested in essential elements of Islamic studies. It has vocabulary, a bibliography, and diagrams to explain problematic definitions.<sup>20</sup>

In 2011, Brown produced a work on the personality of the Prophet, "Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction", published in 2011 by Oxford University Press. He presents three chapters of the life of the Prophet Muhammad, namely the general history known by the majority of Muslims, comments on historical representations of Muhammad, and the influence of the Prophet on Islamic civilization since his death.<sup>21</sup>

In the subsequent year, 2012, Brown wrote an article "The Rules of Matn Criticism: There Are No Rules", in the journal *Islamic Law and Society*. In his abstract, he wrote that Sunni Islam elaborates on the method of hadith criticism by prioritizing assessment of sanad criticism to avoid the subjectivity of individual reasoning by containing strict rules. However, in modern times, the development of science and modern social norms provide challenges in interpreting Matan or the meaning of

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<sup>19</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown, "How We Know Early Hadīth Critics Did Matn Criticism and Why It's So Hard to Find," *Islamic Law and Society* 15, no. 2 (2008): 143–84, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851908X290574>.

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 2017.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.librarything.com/work/10548205>

hadith so that rigid criticism of Matan is distracted by the interpretive admiration of modern science.<sup>22</sup>

In his other work, "Slavery and Islam: English, OneWorld Academic", published by One World, he very carefully explores the arguments from Islamic religious texts regarding the abolition of slavery by a comparison between Christian, Jewish, and Islamic traditions to try to reconcile modern moral certainty with the perfection of God's Command by explaining how Islam views slavery in theory and the reality that it has been practiced throughout Islamic civilization.<sup>23</sup>

### **Brown's Thoughts Regarding Hadith**

Scholars hold different views on hadith. Goldziher's claims that hadith are not historical documents but rather social reflections. Schacht promoted "projecting back theory", challenging the origins of fiqh and ash-Syāfi'i's role. G.H.A. Juynboll (1935-2010) and Harald Motzki (1948-2019) expanded this with the typical link theory. Then appeared Hadith-oriented orientalists include John Wansbrough (1928-2002), Patricia Crone (1945-2015), Michael Cook (b. 1942), and Norman Calder (d. 1998). Brown's critical approach to Hadith studies is often considered distinctive compared to earlier Orientalists due to his nuanced perspective that goes beyond traditional biases. He seeks to understand Hadith literature's historical context, methodologies, and complexities, challenging preconceived notions and contributing to a more comprehensive and balanced analysis.

Brown concurs with Azami's classification of the essence of Hadith, as outlined in his book "Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature",<sup>24</sup> aligning with the perspectives of Muhibbatush (scholars of Hadith). The stories and reports about Prophet Muhammad, known as Hadiths, have permeated various facets of scholarship and expression within Islamic civilization. They find

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<sup>22</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown, "The Rules of Matn Criticism: There Are No Rules," *Islamic Law and Society* 19, no. 4 (2012): 356-96, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851912X639923>.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/book/447884570/Slavery-and-Islam>)

<sup>24</sup> M. Mustafa Al-A'zami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature* (Canada: Islamic Teaching Center, 1977).

their place not only in books of law and theology but also in Quranic commentary, mysticism, politics, Arabic grammar, history, and etiquette. This wide-ranging incorporation reflects the central role of Prophet Muhammad's teachings in shaping diverse aspects of Islamic thought and practice. Therefore, Brown has defined the characteristics of hadith literature as it emerged in the mid-eighth century. It consisted of reports attributed to Muhammad and transmitted by full isnâds from him. He elaborates that literature qualifies as Hadith if it meets matn and isnad criteria.<sup>25</sup>

Brown revealed that no courtroom stenographer assiduously recorded Muhammad's every word and furnished an official transcript of His orders, religious edicts, or everyday speech during his career as a prophet and leader from 610 AD to his death in 632 AD. Hadith, reflected from the report about the Prophet, consists of a text (main) describing his words or actions and a chain of transmission (*isnâd*) by which this report was communicated. More than one Companion could clearly report His saying or doing something, or a Companion could recount this report to more than one person. Therefore, the distinguishing between an instance of the Prophet speaking or acting, which is referred to either by the Arabic term "hadith" or "tradition," and the various chains of transmission of His is indispensable.<sup>26</sup>

Brown's research emphasizes the historical canonization process to discern why *Sahih Bukhari* is often considered superior to *Sahih Muslim* in the study of Hadith. This assessment typically involves evaluating the methodologies, criteria, and historical contexts surrounding the compilation and acceptance of these foundational Hadith collections within Islamic jurisprudence.

Brown has a complex approach to hadith in Islamic studies. He acknowledges the importance of hadith as a significant source for understanding Islam, but also recognizes the challenges and complexities involved in interpreting and applying hadith. Like

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<sup>25</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*.

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan A.C. Brown.

the characteristics of his predecessors, he has a unique idea regarding research on hadith, known as canonization.

The canonization process carried out by Brown can be seen from his discussion of the complex issues surrounding Hadith in Islam, including the history of Hadith literature, their reliability, and the processes through which Hadiths have been transmitted and evaluated among Muslims. In his journal titled "Did the Prophet Say It or Not? The Literal, Historical, and Effective Truth of Hadīths in Early Sunnism," he concludes that one of the reasons for addressing the question of whether the Prophet spoke a Hadith or not is the role and existence of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh/Ijtihad) scholars and Islamic theology. Early scholars have made Hadith a subject of their debates within Islamic scholarship. He uses a historical context, Hadith authentication, and a contemporary relevance approach in the article.<sup>27</sup>

Brown believes that hadith should be critically and contextually examined to understand their original message. He emphasizes the need to consider historical, social, and cultural context when narrating a hadith. He also acknowledges the existence of controversial or questioned hadiths and emphasizes the importance of deeper study to assess their authenticity and relevance. The following is the canonization process of the Sahih Bukhari described by Brown.<sup>28</sup>

#### *The Book of Sahih Bukhari Underwent a Process of Review and Criticism*

Hadith experts studied and criticized the methodology used by Imam al-Bukhari in his Sahih. The result was the discovery of Bukhari's distinctive standards and methods in selecting hadith. The study of the Sahih also produced a new genre of hadith books known as Mustadrak, as was done by al-Hakim an-Naisaburi (d. 405 AH/1017 AD) when using the standardization method used by

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<sup>27</sup> Jonathan A C Brown, "Did the Prophet Say It or Not? The Literal, Historical, and Effective Truth of Hadīths in Early Sunnism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129, no. 2 (October 11, 2009): 259–85.

<sup>28</sup> Mochamad Ismail Hasan, "Kanonisasi Jonathan Brown Atas Shahih Al-Bukhari," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 2, no. 1 (2019): 35–54, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ljid.v2i1.1752>.

Bukhari and Muslim in selecting hadiths that were not included in the Sahih the two Imams.

The canonization of Sahih Bukhari can be seen when the Sahih book is used as a reference standard for writing or a template for compiling other hadith books, such as Mustakhraj, which has the characteristic of copying or re-quoting the redactions of hadiths that have been included in the Sahih by writing different sanads. This can be seen in the work of Abu Bakar Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Isma'ili (d. 371 H) with the title *Mustakhraj 'ala Sahih al-Bukhari*.

Even the standard of assessment, which is claimed to have been carried out by Bukhari, was then used by Hadith scholars when criticizing its Sahih and produced new works known to us as 'ilal, such as 'Ilal by Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Ammar asy-Syahid (d. 317 AH/912 AD) and *at-Tatabbu'* by Ali ibn Umar ad-Darquthni (d. 385 H/995 AD).

Ad-Darquthni has criticized at least 217 hadiths with details of 100 Sahih Muslim narratives, 78 Sahih Bukhari narratives, and 32 narratives of both. The criticism that was made was to add sanad or matan because Darquthni saw the inconsistency of Imam Bukhari's method and found that Bukhari narrated hadith from narrators with Khawarij ideology, such as 'Imran ibn Hittan.

The process of criticizing Sahih Bukhari also inspired works on clarifying ambiguous and unclear narrators, such as those carried out by Ibn 'Adi in the book *Asami Man Rawa 'Anhum Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari* and by Muhammad ibn Ishaq or Ibn Manda in his work *Asami Masyayikh al- Imam al-Bukhari*.

### *The Distribution of Sahih Bukhari*

Throughout the 4th century, the Book of Sahih Bukhari was also transmitted to several areas such as Naysabur, Jurjan, Baghdad, and Central Asia. In Naysabur, Sahih Bukhari is also studied. Imam Bukhari lived for about five years in this city and conveyed Hadith to the city's students. However, the people of Naysabur are generally not very interested in the Hadith conveyed by Imam Bukhari because they prefer the Hadith conveyed by the people of this area, namely Imam Muslim.

Naysabur is where the *Mustakhraj* book genre was born, so many Mustakhraj works were born from this city. Because the

book Sahih Muslim is more popular, Mustakhraj's work on Sahih Muslim is more numerous in this city than Mustakhraj's work on Sahih Bukhari. It can be seen that there are 8 books in Mustakhraj's Sahih Muslim, 4 works by Mustakhraj, which are a combination of Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, and 1 work by Mustakhraj Sahih Bukhari. The Naysabur people's little attention to Sahih Bukhari is partly because there are differences in views regarding the Koran between the Naysabur people and Imam Bukhari because Imam Bukhari thinks that the lafaz of the Koran is a creature, not the word of Allah, which is qadim. 19 In the city of Jurjan, Sahih Bukhari was transmitted by Ibn Adi, who studied with al-Firbari (al-Firabri?) , a student of Imam Bukhari. Apart from Ibn Adi, Abu Ahmad Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Ghitrif (d. 377 H/987 AD) also transmitted and produced Mustakhraj's work on Sahih Bukhari in this city. Many Jurjan scholars consider Sahih Bukhari a more accurate representation of Hadith than other Hadith books. Al-Isma'ili (d. 371/981 AD) argued in the introduction (muqaddimah) of his Mustakhraj that Sahih Bukhari is a higher (superior) book than Sahih Muslim, also better than the Book of Sunan Abu Dawud because it has a higher standard. Higher level in selecting Hadith, as well as a better explanation of the legal content of the Hadith.

In the city of Baghdad, the book Sahih Bukhari is also distributed. This city inherited the book from the cities of Naysabur and Jurjan. The scholar who spread Sahih Bukhari was Ali bin Umar alDaruqutni who received the history from Abu Said Ahmad bin Ruwaih (d. 357 H/967 AD). Another scholar was Abu Bakar Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Barqani (d. 425 H/1033 AD), who made a version of Musnad from Shahihain (Saheeh Bukhari and Sahih Muslim). In this city, many works related to Sahih Bukhari were also born. For example, al-Daruqutni's student, Abu Mas'ud Ibrahim al-Dimasqi (d. 401 H/1010 AD), wrote atraf from Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Another scholar who created atraf works from Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim was Khalaf bin Muhammad al-Washithy (d. 400 H/1010 M). Another work is the biography of the narrators in the books of Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, written by Hibatallah bin Hasan al-Lalaka'i (d. 418 H/1027 M).

### *Sahih Bukhari as Inspiration for a New Epistemological Status*

In the 4th century H, not only was there great attention paid to the Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim books, but many Islamic scholars also began to discuss the Prophet's hadiths with concepts (terms) that lead to the meaning of mutual agreement (*ijma'*) and epistemological superiority for certain Hadith books. This can happen because of two points of view. Hadith experts say that this happens because of personal beliefs regarding the widespread acceptance of Sahih Bukhari, which is believed to have abundant uses/benefits. The jurisprudence experts think this occurs because of the increasing application of the idea of *ijma'* (consensus) in the book of Hadith. It is known that *ijma'* has strong roots in Islam.

This idea of *ijma'* appears in the study of useful fiqh, which four schools of jurisprudence agree is a source of Islamic law, and influences the study of Hadith. The two points of view above are motivated by the anxiety of Hadith scholars with the authority of a Hadith and whether the truth of a Hadith book can be tested. This background gives rise to the idea of the epistemological superiority of a Hadith book. Apart from functioning as the main justification for making decisions during the time of the companions and generations of *tabi'in*, *ijma'* also functions as a tool in debates between legal school experts in several cities such as Kuffah. This idea of *ijma'* also has a normative basis from the Hadith of the Prophet in the book of Sunan Ibn Majah, as stated in the editorial of the Hadith:

حدثنا العباس بن عثمان الدمشقي حدثنا الوليد بن مسلم  
حدثنا معان بن رفاعة السلامي حدثني أبو خلف الأعمى قال  
سمعت أنس بن مالك يقول سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول إن أمي لا تجتمع على ضلاله فإذا رأيت  
اختلافا فعليكم بالسجاد الأعظم

(*Ibn Majad said*) Has told us *Al 'Abbas bin 'Uthman Ad Dimasyqi* has told us *Al Walid bin Muslim* has told us *Ma'an bin Rifa'ah As Salami* has told me *Abu Khalaf Al A'ma* he said: *I heard Anas bin Malik said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: "Indeed, my Ummah will not unite over error, if you see discord then you must be in sawadul a'dzam (the largest group: meaning the one that is by the Sunnah."*

Ash-Shafi'i thinks that the agreed Hadith has the same level of legal obligation as the Koran. Therefore, for ash-Shafi'i, those who consciously reject such history must repent. Al-Thabari also discusses a more authoritative reliance on the Prophet's Hadith in the technical terms of Hadith science. Only Hadith, which are narrated extensively, massively, mutawatir (musta fid Vatican) are considered qat'iyshahih. Thus, Hadiths that are not massively narrated (Hadith ahad) can only be guaranteed for their authenticity and epistemological truth by the narrators or collectors themselves. The epistemological status of these mutawatir narrations and their role in generating law began to receive more attention during the 4th century AH. This epistemological status did not only apply to Hadith, but also spread to the Hadith books. This can be seen from Ibn Manda's statement that there are four books of Hadith written by four imams, which are considered authentic books, namely the works of al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, and al-Nasa'i. Thus, Ibn Manda gave rise to the idea that the generation of Imam Bukhari and Muslims represents a collection of religious knowledge agreed upon by everyone. Namely the knowledge contained in the four Hadith collections of these scholars.

Ibn Manda also mentioned the story of the Egyptian Hadith expert who was also the disseminator of Sahih Bukhari, namely Ibn Sakan (d. 353/964 AD) that on one occasion, there was a group of hadith students who gathered at Ibn Sakan's house, they were confused about choosing a hadith book from among the many collections of hadith books. They asked Ibn Sakan for guidance on which hadith books they should study from the many hadith collections. Then Ibn Sakan entered his house and came out carrying four books, saying, "These books are the foundation (*qawa'id*) of Islam. Namely the books of Muslims, Bukhari, Abu Dawud, and al-Nasa'i. Therefore, these four books are the most important for Hadith students. This book also provides general references that need to be shared."

The idea that the Hadith compilation book has this weight based on agreement (*ijma'*) and is a general basis for law and doctrine was also conveyed by al-Khattabi (d. 388 H/998 AD) in muqadimah of his commentary on Sunan Abu Dawud. He

considered Sahih Bukhari to be a valuable book of religious knowledge that was agreed upon by everyone. It also becomes an alternative way to measure differences of opinion between various groups of ulama and generations of schools of thought. He also mentioned that the Khurasan ulama, as the birthplace of the network of Sahih Bukhari narrators, preferred this book based on the requirements of the hadith. However, personally al-Khattabi considered Sunan Abu Dawud more beneficial regarding legal knowledge. He also revealed that Sahih Bukhari is a treasure of knowledge and a repository of religious knowledge. Because of its critical and early quality, this book becomes a decision-maker for the people regarding which Hadith are authentic and which are weak.

#### *The Role of al-Hakim in the Spread of Sahih Bukhari's Influence*

After being studied and criticized, the Book of Sahih Bukhari received a new epistemological status: a book of Hadith that is authentic (valid) based on *ijma'* (agreement) from the Hadith scholars. However, recognition of the new status is only limited to Hadith expert scholars. The scholars of the Hanbali School and the Syafi'i School represent this. Both groups agree that the book Sahih Bukhari (also Sahih Muslim) is a general reference for authentic Hadiths of the Prophet. This happened at the end of the 4th century H.

Over time, this agreement also spilled out from the community of Hadith scholars towards the majority of Muslims, especially Sunnis. In the mid-5th century H, legal experts from the Maliki, Hanafi, Mu'tazilah, Hanbali, and Syafi'i schools of thought all believed that the Hadith accepted by the people had definite truth value.

This cannot be separated from al-Hakim's role as the Book of Sahih Bukhari disseminator. As previously explained, al-Hakim has created a work in the form of a *mustadrak* based on the standards used in the Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim books. He established the standards used by Imam Bukhari and Muslims in a way that could reconcile the requirements of Sunni Hadith scholars and Mu'tazilah scholars whose attacks on scholars whose school of thought was based on narration disturbed him (al-

Hakim) throughout his career. Al-Hakim uses the standard Hadith of Imam Bukhari (also Muslim) to measure authenticity in criticizing Hadith other than those books.

He did this throughout his life to increase the number of authentic Hadith. He wrote these standards in his work *Mustadrak*. The originator of the *Mustadrak* work was Imam al-Daruqutni, but al-Hakim later developed it with the aim of being a tool for polemics. Al-Hakim's work became so influential so quickly that it reached Andalusia while he was still alive. The dissemination of this standard was not only carried out by al-Hakim himself. He was assisted by his friend Abu Ishaq al-Isfarayini and his student Abu Nashr al-Wa'ili, who entered the area of law and its creation. Meanwhile, al-Hakim only focuses on the area of Hadith studies.

Thanks to the participation of Abu Ishaq and Abu Nashr, this standard was also accepted by legal scholars. They also proclaimed that agreement (*ijma'*) on the Book of *Sahih Bukhari* (also *Sahih Muslim*) gives the book absolute authenticity value. Al-Juwaini repeated this proclamation by proving that the two books (*Saheeh Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*) could bridge the acute dispute between the Hanbali and Shafi'i sects of the ulama. The standards of authenticity formulated by al-Hakim were subsequently used in *takhrij* on Hadith that were not in *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* by subsequent generations. *Takhrij* is an effort to put into practice the measure of authenticity of the Hadith that he has formulated.

Giving authority to *Sahih Bukhari* fulfilled three critical needs within the Sunni Ulama group in the mid-5th century AH (11 AD) in several areas, such as Baghdad and Naysabur. First, the canonical books of Hadith (*Sahih* et al.) have provided a common measure of authenticity for scholars from various schools of law (*fiqh*) when they conduct debates or, present their doctrines or support the Hadith. they use it as proof of the truth of a text. These two canonical books have become the agreed authority for evaluating all narrations attributed to the Prophet Muhammad after going through dissemination efforts by al-Hakim Naysabur's students and also members of the network of transmitters of the

two canonical books to leading scholars from the Shafi'i School, Hanbali, and Maliki who are in Iraq and Iran.

Sahih Bukhari as a canon is really needed by scholars to mention or quote Hadith from both or one of them because it has an authenticity value that the *ijma'* of the people has guaranteed. In the mid-8th century AH (14 AD), the Hanafi School scholars felt the need to recognize this *ijma'*. Second, as the science of jurisprudence has grown away from the field of Hadith criticism, the institution of the canon (authentic standards of Sahih Bukhari) has also begun to play an essential role as an authoritative reference for jurists who cannot personally judge the truth of a Hadith. Third, the canon (authentic standard) of Sahih Bukhari not only functions as a device of approval to give authority to the Prophet's history, but it also becomes a reference (*exemplum*) that can form the science of collecting and criticizing Hadith. Therefore, when educational institutions were established, such as madrasas, when schools of jurisprudence began to harden (experience orthodoxy), and the field of legal theory had matured, Sahih Bukhari emerged as a legitimate institution for legal experts who sought agreement and consensus in debates or became an authoritative reference for Hadith scholars who try to systematize the study of Hadith words.

All of this is the result of extensive studies carried out by the network of narrators Sahih Bukhari and al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, focusing their studies on the measure of truth or authenticity, which was then given authority by scholars such as Abu Ishaq al-Isfarayani, Abu Nashr al-Wa'iliy, and al-Juwaini.

In the 2000s, it is noteworthy that Orientalists, particularly Andrew Lawrence Rippin (1950-2016),<sup>29</sup> engaged in the Canonization of Islamic studies, specifically focusing on the Quran. Rippin analyzed John Wansbrough's (1928-2002) approach to studying the Quran. According to Rippin, the canonization process involves at least five stages: composition, circulation, revision, collection, and recognition.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Wikipedia, "Andrew Rippin Curriculum Vitae," in *Wikipedia*, n.d.

<sup>30</sup> Achmad Lutfi, "John Wansbrough Dan Historitas Alquran," *QUHAS: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 7, no. 2 (2018): 105-15.

## Conclusion

Both in its sensitivity and production approach, today's Orientalism differs from the Orientalism Edward Said addressed four decades ago. In the current landscape, the lens through which cultures and regions are perceived has evolved, influenced by shifting societal dynamics, globalization, and advancements in media and technology. The contemporary manifestation of Orientalism reflects a complex interplay of cultural exchange, geopolitical considerations, and a nuanced understanding that acknowledges the limitations and biases inherent in representing diverse societies.

Jonathan Brown, a prominent scholar in Islamic studies, offers valuable insights into the evolving landscape of Orientalism alongside Edward Said's seminal work, especially regarding the study of Hadith. Brown's perspectives add depth to the discussion, emphasizing the need to consider diverse viewpoints and engage in a nuanced examination of cultural representations. In contemporary Orientalism, Brown underscores the importance of acknowledging the multiplicity of voices within the regions under scrutiny and recognizing the agency of those being studied.

Furthermore, Brown's contributions extend to critically examining the methodologies employed in orientalist research, emphasizing the significance of ethical considerations and an awareness of the power dynamics inherent in producing knowledge. By incorporating Brown's perspectives, the discourse on Orientalism gains a more comprehensive understanding, emphasizing the necessity of a balanced and inclusive approach that fosters mutual understanding and dismantles stereotypical narratives.

In essence, the research that Brown has conducted, particularly regarding the Canonization of the *Sahihain*, which describes the links between old orientalist views and Brown's contemporary perspectives, will enrich the ongoing dialogue regarding Orientalism, fostering a more robust framework for analyzing cultural representations and promoting a nuanced appreciation of the complexities inherent in cross-cultural interactions.

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