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TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF HADITH: TRANSITIONING FROM FICTION TO HISTORICAL REALITY THROUGH THE EXPLORATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

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Introduction

In contemporary times, Hadith has become a subject of scrutiny through the lenses of rationality and Westernization. Following the Quran, Hadith serves as the cornerstone of faith for Muslims, and authentic Hadith forms the ethical framework that, together, comprises the twin sources of Allah's law (*Sharia'h*). They offer guidance for prosperity in this life and eternal happiness in the hereafter. Although the Quran and authentic Hadith are formally distinct sources, they maintain an inseparable bond in a dynamic relationship.

The significance of authentic Hadith cannot be underestimated. This work underscores the importance of critiquing Hadith, known as Hadith methodology, but emphasizes the need to apply recognized tools of Hadith scholarship such as *Asma al Rijal* and *Jarah wa Ta'deel*. Alternatively, other methodologies should be employed while considering their relevance to the field of Hadith. The terminology related to Hadith is well-established and should not be confused with new definitions borrowed from other disciplines that may distort established concepts. Disregarding Hadith based on invalid or irrelevant analytical tools is a deviation from its essential role as a fundamental source of knowledge and legislation.

It is an established fact that the Quran and authentic Hadith are the 'twin sources' for legislating and understanding Islam, both possessing equal authoritative weight (*Mithliyat fil Haqiqah*). An approach that isolates Hadith from its foundational sources is an indirect attempt to redefine Islamic culture and its legacy, which is counterproductive in contemporary times, just as it was in the past. Such a negative approach towards Hadith is detrimental and risks altering the essence of Islam and its followers.

In recent times, the study of Hadith has been shaped by the principles of rational thinking and the influence of Westernization. This has given rise to novel perspectives and interpretations within the field of Hadith scholarship. Some of these notions may tend to be more speculative or speculative than grounded in established tradition. It's essential to engage with these new ideas while maintaining a connection to classical and authentic scholarship, as the latter provides a solid foundation and authoritative guidance for understanding and interpreting Hadith. Balancing innovation with the wisdom of established scholarship is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the Hadith tradition and ensuring that it continues to serve as a reliable source of guidance for Muslims.

Unreliability of Hadith being Unpreserved

1. Issue of Preservation of Hadith in the written form and opinion of Imam Ibn Qutaybah al Dinawari- A Brief Analysis

Did the Prophet^{SAW} really order to erase everything preserved in written form except the Qur'an? The traditions related to this issue come under the category of *Mukhtalif al Hadith* (apparently contradictory). The overall summation of traditions is as follows:

The Prophet said, "Don't write anything on my authority except the Qur'an and erase it if it is. But you can narrate from me; there is no problem in it for sure."¹

As mentioned in the beginning that there are both kinds of Hadith in favour and in against preserving Hadith in written form. But the first thing worthy to be mentioned is that Imam Ahmad has brought the above narration in his *Musnad*, why not to consider this, as it is compendious narration related to this

¹ Ghazal Mehmood, *Malayana Hadith*, new delhi, ayes pub, 2016, pp 268, pp 267, 268