

The Concept of *Munkar* in al-Dhahabī's Critique of al-Hākim's Hadith Authentication in al-Mustadrak

Konsep Munkar dalam Kritik al-Dhahabī terhadap Otentikasi Hadis al-Hākim dalam al-Mustadrak

Sanaa Fadel Abbas^a, Maessa Ali Rawabdeh^b *

*Corresponding Author: misar1973@bau.edu.jo

^a Al-Balqa Applied University, Al-Karak University College, Jordan

^b Al-Balqa Applied University, Princess Alia University College, Jordan

Abstract

The exclusion of certain hadiths by the compilers of *al-Shaykhān* (*Sahīh al-Bukhārī* and *Sahīh Muslim*), despite their acceptance of the same transmitters in other narrations, indicates the presence of particular flaws within those reports. This selective process has generated substantial discussion in the field of hadith criticism, especially around the notion of “authentication according to their conditions.” Scholarly debates have long centered on how such conditions were defined, interpreted, and applied by later critics. This study explores the methodological divergence between al-Hākim al-Nisābūrī (d. 405/1014) and al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) concerning the use of Bukhārī and Muslim's criteria as benchmarks for authenticity. Specifically, it examines hadiths that al-Hākim classified as “authentic according to the conditions of al-Shaykhān or one of them,” but which al-Dhahabī subsequently rejected as *munkar*. Through an inductive-critical approach, the analysis engages six representative cases drawn from *al-Mustadrak* and *Talkhīs al-Mustadrak*, allowing for a close reading of how both scholars articulated and operationalized their respective standards. The findings suggest that al-Hākim's approach to authentication was often generous, at times overlooking structural and contextual defects, whereas al-Dhahabī's assessments reflected a stricter evaluative framework. His judgments of *munkar* frequently rested on the identification of weak transmitters, disrupted isnād structures, or questionable transmission contexts. Beyond highlighting their methodological contrast, this study raises broader questions about the coherence and applicability of “conditions of the Shaykhān” as a category of hadith validation. Rather than closing the debate, the cases underscore the interpretive tensions within classical hadith criticism and invite further inquiry into how later scholars negotiated between textual authority and critical scrutiny.

Keywords: *Hadith Criticism, Al-Hākim al-Nisābūrī, Al-Dhahabī, Conditions of al-Shaykhān, Munkar*

Abstract

Pengecualian sejumlah hadis oleh para penyusun *al-Shaykhān* (*Sahīh al-Bukhārī* dan *Sahīh Muslim*), meskipun mereka menerima periwayatan dari perawi yang sama dalam riwayat lain, menunjukkan adanya cacat tertentu pada hadis-hadis tersebut. Proses selektif ini telah memunculkan perdebatan luas dalam kajian kritik hadis, khususnya terkait konsep “otentik menurut syarat al-Shaykhān.” Perdebatan ilmiah berfokus pada bagaimana syarat tersebut didefinisikan, ditafsirkan, dan diterapkan oleh para pengkritik hadis generasi setelahnya. Studi ini meneliti perbedaan metodologis antara al-Hākim al-Nisābūrī (w. 405/1014) dan al-Dhahabī (w. 748/1348) dalam menggunakan kriteria al-Bukhārī dan Muslim sebagai tolok ukur keotentikan. Secara khusus, penelitian ini mengkaji hadis-hadis yang oleh al-Hākim dinilai “otentik menurut syarat al-Shaykhān atau salah satunya,” tetapi kemudian ditolak oleh al-Dhahabī sebagai *munkar*. Melalui pendekatan induktif-kritis, penelitian ini menganalisis enam



kasus representatif yang diambil dari *al-Mustadrak* dan *Talkhīs al-Mustadrak*, sehingga memungkinkan pembacaan mendalam atas bagaimana kedua ulama merumuskan dan menerapkan standar mereka masing-masing. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan al-Hākim dalam menilai otentisitas cenderung longgar, kadang mengabaikan cacat struktural maupun kontekstual. Sebaliknya, penilaian al-Dhahabī mencerminkan kerangka evaluasi yang lebih ketat, dengan penolakan *munkar* yang sering didasarkan pada keberadaan perawi lemah, mata rantai periwayatan yang terputus, atau konteks transmisi yang bermasalah. Lebih dari sekadar menyoroti perbedaan metodologis, penelitian ini mengajukan pertanyaan lebih luas mengenai konsistensi dan keberterapan “syarat al-Shaykhān” sebagai kategori validasi hadis. Alih-alih menutup perdebatan, temuan ini justru menegaskan adanya ketegangan interpretatif dalam kritik hadis klasik serta membuka ruang untuk penelitian lebih lanjut tentang bagaimana para ulama kemudian menegosiasikan otoritas teks dengan ketelitian kritis.

Kata Kunci: Kritik Hadis, *Al-Hākim al-Nisābūrī*, *Al-Dhahabī*, *Syarat al-Shaykhān*, *Munkar*

Introduction

The issue of *authentication according to the conditions of al-Shaykhān* (al-Bukhārī and Muslim) remains one of the most debated methodological questions in hadith studies. The concept took shape in the post-canonical era, when scholars attempted to reconstruct the implicit criteria employed by the compilers of the two most authoritative collections. Since neither al-Bukhārī nor Muslim explicitly articulated their selection principles, later critics were left to infer them, producing diverse interpretations and often conflicting judgments. As Brown (2009) argues, the canonization of these collections fundamentally reshaped hadith scholarship by encouraging attempts to reverse-engineer their implicit standards.¹ Other scholars, such as Duderija (2011), have traced the gradual systematization of what were once intuitive practices into more formalized methodological principles.² Lucas (2002) similarly highlights how earlier figures, including Ibn Sa’d, Ibn Ma’in, and Ahmad b. Hanbal, established evaluative precedents that later informed discussions about the reliability of transmission.³ Davidson (2014) adds that the post-canonical transmission process itself generated fresh interpretive challenges,⁴ while regional approaches, such as those in al-Andalus, show how different intellectual contexts

1 Jonathan A. C. Brown, *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Hadith Canon*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

2 Adis. Duderija” *Evolution in the Canonical Sunni Hadith Body of Literature and the Concept of an Authentic Hadith During the Formative Period of Islamic Thought as Based on Recent Western Scholarship*.” Arab Law Quarterly 23, no. 4 (2009): 389–415.

3 Scott C. Lucas, *Constructive Critics, Hadith Literature, and the Articulation of Sunnī Islam: The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Sa’d, Ibn Ma’in, and Ibn Hanbal* (Leiden: Brill, 2004). <https://lib.ugent.be/catalog/rug01:001281739>

4 Garrett Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition: An Intellectual and Social History of Post-Canonical Hadith Transmission*, Chicago: The University of Chicago, (2014). Scott .Lucas. *Carrying on the Tradition: A Social and Intellectual History of Hadith Transmission across a Thousand Years* (by Garrett A. Davidson). *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 38(3-4), (2022): 164–170. <https://doi.org/10.35632/ajis.v38i3-4.2992>

shaped the way authenticity was defined and applied.⁵

The complexity of this issue is evident in the sharp disagreements between Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Hākim al-Nīsābūrī (d. 405/1014) and Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348). Al-Hākim frequently classified reports as "authentic according to the conditions of al-Shaykhān," yet al-Dhahabī often rejected those same reports as *munkar* in his abridgement of *al-Mustadrak*. The research problem therefore centers on assessing the reliability of al-Hākim's application of these supposed conditions and examining the scientific basis for al-Dhahabī's counter-judgments. More specific questions include: What precisely were al-Hākim's criteria for determining compliance with the conditions of al-Shaykhān? How consistently did he apply them in practice? On what methodological foundations did al-Dhahabī rest his judgments of rejection? And to what extent did al-Hākim's approach align with earlier critics who had laid the groundwork for Sunni hadith evaluation?

Contemporary scholarship has revisited these tensions with renewed interest. Hamza al-Malibārī has demonstrated that early critics prioritized subtle defects (*'ilal*) and contextual evidence, whereas later critics often relied on apparent chains and general rules.⁶ Hatim al-'Awnī has further argued that much confusion in understanding classical judgments arises from a failure to distinguish systematically between early and later methodologies.⁷ Recent contributions also include Ahmad Sanobar's analysis of the evolution of hadith criticism,⁸ alongside focused studies on al-Hākim's approach in *al-Mustadrak*^{9 10} and al-Dhahabī's critical revisions.¹¹ Contemporary frameworks tend to emphasize the integration of principles, practice, and epistemological assumptions, while highlighting the need to move beyond superficial chains-of-transmission judgments toward more substantive analysis of narrator reliability and methodological rigor.¹²

5 Muhammad Akmaluddin, "Developments of Hadith Riwaya in Al-Andalus (2nd - 3rd Centuries of Hijriyya)." *Ulumuna* 21, no. 2 (2017): 228-52. <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v21i2.5>

6 Hamza Al-Malibari, *The Balance between Early and Later Scholars in Authenticating and Analyzing Hadiths* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2018), 89.

7 Hatim Al-Awni, *Al-Manhaj al-Muqtarah li Fahm al-Mustalah* (Riyadh: Dār al-Hijrah, 2019), 127.

8 Ahmad Sanobar, *Hadith Criticism in the Levant in the Twentieth Century* (Damascus: Dār al-Bashair, 2019), 78.

9 Yasser Al-Shamali, "Authentication According to the Conditions of Al-Syaikhān," *Journal of Sharia and Islamic Studies* 15, no. 43 (2000): 127-165.

10 Anas Jad, "The Leniency of Al-Hakim: An Applied Study on Hadiths Corrected by Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak and Judged as Fabricated by Al-Dhahabi" *Journal of Eastern Scientific Research* 10, no. 4 (2018): 1390-1420.

11 Yasser Al-Shamali, "Al-Dhahabi's Methodology in Summarizing Al-Mustadrak," *Journa of Sharia and Law* 26, no. 1 (1999): 85-122.

12 Hartati, Khoirul Anam, Indal Abror, and Ahmad 'Ubaydi Hasbillah, "Beyond al-Jarḥ wa at-Ta'dīl: A Critical

Despite this growing body of research, notable gaps remain. Few studies have undertaken a systematic comparison of al-Hākim and al-Dhahabī in cases of direct disagreement. The precise meaning and application of al-Dhahabī's designation of *munkar* remains underexplored, as does the tension between al-Hākim's theoretical commitment to the conditions of al-Shaykhān and his practical departures from them. Addressing these gaps, the present study aims to provide a methodological analysis of disagreement cases between the two scholars, to clarify al-Dhahabī's use of *munkar* as a technical category, and to propose an applied framework for similar comparative studies. The research employs a mixed approach: inductive collection of relevant reports, critical analysis of isnād structures, and comparative evaluation of early and later criteria. The study is organized into four main sections: theoretical framework, detailed analysis of six representative case studies, comparative discussion of methodological differences, and concluding reflections with implications for contemporary hadith criticism.

The Debate on Authentication According to the Conditions of al-Shaykhān

The concept of “authentication according to the conditions of Al-Syaikhān” stands as one of the most controversial concepts in hadith science, as Al-Bukhari and Muslim did not establish explicit written conditions, but rather followed a precise practical methodology. This methodological approach reflected the sophisticated understanding of hadith criticism that characterized the early canonical period, where scholars relied on a comprehensive evaluation of transmission contexts rather than the mechanical application of predetermined rules¹³. This concept emerged with the subsequent generation of hadith scholars who attempted to derive the criteria of Al-Syaikhān. However, early scholars focused more on practical application than abstract theorization, making the precise definition of this concept complex. The challenge of systematizing the implicit methodology of al-Bukhārī and Muslim reflects the broader tension between contextual judgment and rule-based criticism that characterized the evolution of hadith scholarship.

Al-Hakim clarifies his understanding in the introduction to Al-Mustadrak, stating¹⁴: “I seek Allah’s assistance in collecting hadiths from trustworthy narrators

Study of the Narrators Accused of Lying in Sunan Ibn Mājah,” *Jerusalem: Journal of Qur’anic and Hadith Studies* 26, no. 1 (2025): 78.

13 Al-Awni, *Al-Manhaj al-Muqtarah*, 127.

14 Muhammad ibn Abdullah Al-Hakim al-Nisaburi, *Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn*, ed. The Scientific Team of

whose chains resemble what Al-Syaikhān relied upon.” This expression “resemble their chains” (tushbiḥu asānīdahumā) reveals ambiguity in precisely determining the criteria. The use of the term “resemble” (tushbiḥu) rather than “identical to” (mithlu) suggests that al-Hākim recognized the difficulty of precisely replicating the methodology of Al-Syaikhān.

Scholars are divided into two opinions regarding Al-Hākim's intention. The first view, held by scholars such as Ibn Al-Salāh¹⁵, Al-Nawawī¹⁶, and Ibn Hajar¹⁷, considers the intended meaning to be the same narrators from whom Al-Syaikhān transmitted. This interpretation emphasizes biographical continuity, arguing that authentication should be based on using narrators who were already validated by the canonical collectors' acceptance of their narrations. The second view, supported by scholars like Al-'Irāqī¹⁸ and Al-San'ānī¹⁹, holds that the intended meaning refers to narrators who match them in level and rank. This approach focuses on qualitative equivalence rather than biographical identity, suggesting that narrators of similar reliability standards could fulfill the conditions even if not directly used by Al-Syaikhān.

However, Al-Hākim's practical application demonstrates clear leniency (tasāḥul), which refers to a more permissive approach in accepting narrators and applying critical standards compared to the stringent methodology of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim. This leniency manifests in accepting narrators who did not meet the precise criteria of Al-Syaikhān, being more flexible in transmission requirements, and applying less rigorous textual criticism. This methodological leniency may reflect the transitional nature of Al-Hākim's period, when systematic criticism was still developing and scholars were more inclined toward inclusivity in hadith collection. Al-Hākim's approach was influenced by his era's methodology, which inclined toward expansion in hadith collection, seeking to preserve authentic materials that might

the Office for Sunnah Studies (Syria: Dār al-Minhaj al-Qawim, 1439 AH), 1:164.

15 Uthman ibn Abdul Rahman, Ibn Al-Salah (d. 643 AH), *Siyanat Sahih Muslim min Al-Ikhlal wal-Ghalat wa Himayatuh min Al-Isqat wal-Saqt*, ed. Muwafaq Abdul Qadir, 2nd edition (Beirut: Dār Al-Gharb Al-Islami, 1408 AH), 99.

16 Yahya ibn Sharaf Al-Nawawi, *Irshad Tullab Al-Haqa'iq ila Ma'rifat Sunan Khayr Al-Khala'iq*, ed. Abdul Bari Al-Salafi, 1st edition (1408 AH), 1:124.

17 Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH), *Al-Nukat 'ala Ibn Al-Salah*, ed. Rabi' Al-Madkhali, 1st edition (Medina: Markaz al-Buhūth bi-l-Jāmi'ah al-Islāmiyyah, 1404 AH), 1:314.

18 Zayn al-Din Abd al-Rahim al-Iraqi (d. 806 AH), *Al-Taqyid wa al-Idab Sharh Muqaddimat Ibn al-Salah*, ed. Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Uthman, 1st edition (Medina: al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, 1389 AH), 30.

19 Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-San'ani (d. 1182 AH), *Tawdih Al-Afkar li Ma'ani Tanqih Al-Anzar*, ed. Salah Owaidah, 1st edition (Beirut: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, 1417 AH), 1:69.

have been overlooked by the canonical compilers²⁰.

This leniency led to widespread criticism, with Ibn Taymiyyah commenting: “Al-Hākim’s authentication alone cannot be relied upon; rather, Al-Hākim authenticates hadiths that hadith experts know to be fabricated and false”²¹. Ibn Taymiyyah’s critique represents the scholarly consensus that emerged regarding the methodological inadequacy of al-Hākim’s approach. This criticism underscores the fundamental tension between preserving potentially authentic materials and maintaining the exacting standards that distinguished the canonical collections from later compilations.

This methodological debate surrounding al-Hākim’s work illustrates the broader epistemological challenges in hadith scholarship: the difficulty of codifying implicit expertise, the tension between inclusivity and precision, and the evolution of critical standards across different scholarly generations. These issues would continue to influence subsequent developments in hadith methodology, particularly in the work of al-Dhahabi and later critics.

Al-Dhahabi’s Concept of *Munkar* and Its Criteria of Application

It is widely recognized that Al-Dhahabi occupies a distinguished position among hadith scholars for his precision in applying critical standards. This precision becomes particularly evident when examining his summarization of Al-Mustadrak, where he employed various critical terminologies, with “munkar” being the most prominent. From a linguistic perspective, the term munkar derives from “nakara,” which essentially means the opposite of recognition²². The terminological evolution of this concept is quite fascinating – it began with early scholars applying it to hadiths that contradicted reliable narrators, then gradually developed into the more precise definition used by later scholars: a narration transmitted by a weak narrator that contradicts a trustworthy one.

When we examine how the concept of munkar evolved during the crucial 3rd to 5th centuries AH, we discover remarkable diversity among early scholars that reveals much about their critical thinking. Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH/855 CE), for instance, took a remarkably comprehensive approach. Rather than focusing solely on narrator reliability, he considered whether the content aligned with established

20 Anas Jad, “*The Leniency of Al-Hakim: An Applied Study on Hadiths Corrected by Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak and Judged as Fabricated by Al-Dhahabi*,” 1398-1420.

21 Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmu’ al-Fatawa*, comp. Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad (Medina: Majma’ al-Malik Fahd li-Tibā’at al-Mushaf al-Sharif, 1425 AH), 1:255.

22 Ahmad ibn Faris, *Mu’jam Maqayis al-Lughah*, ed. Abd al-Salam Harun (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1979 CE), entry “nakara.”

Islamic principles²³. This holistic methodology shows his deep understanding of both textual and contextual elements.

Yahya ibn Ma'in (d. 233 AH/848 CE) developed what we might call a more systematic framework. His focus centered on identifying explicit contradictions between different narrations, and he consistently emphasized the importance of finding corroborating evidence²⁴. This methodical approach contributed significantly to standardizing critical terminology during this formative period.

The Razi scholars - Abu Hatim (d. 277 AH/890 CE) and Abu Zar'a (d. 264 AH/878 CE) - brought yet another dimension to the discussion. They created sophisticated gradations in their application of munkar, distinguishing between narrators who consistently produced unreliable reports (whom they labeled "munkar al-hadith") and those whose problematic transmissions were isolated incidents requiring individual evaluation²⁵. This nuanced approach demonstrates how hadith criticism was maturing during this era.

Perhaps most intriguingly, Al-Bukhari (d. 256 AH/870 CE) developed what can only be described as an advanced methodology. He would reject unique transmissions from trustworthy but lesser-known narrators when they lacked support from more established authorities. His considerations extended beyond simple reliability to include factors like the narrator's area of expertise and the specific circumstances surrounding transmission²⁶. Meanwhile, Muslim (d. 261 AH/875 CE) emphasized the importance of combining comprehensive chain analysis with careful textual evaluation, as evidenced in his work "Al-Tamyiz"²⁷.

What emerges from studying these approaches is a clear picture of how different generations of scholars tackled the same fundamental challenge. The early scholars (*mutaqaddimun*) operated with considerable contextual flexibility. They took into account factors that might seem peripheral to modern readers - things like a narrator's particular area of specialization, regional transmission patterns, and whether

23 Ahmad ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, *Nuzḥah al-Nazar fī Tawḍīḥ Nukhbah al-Fikr*, ed. Abdullah al-Rahili ((Riyadh: Safir Press, 1422 AH)), 89; for further reading on this topic, see Abdul Qadir Al-Muhammadi, "*Al-Shadh wa al-Munkar wa Ziyadat al-Thiqah - Muwazanah bayna al-Mutaqaddimin wa al-Muta'akkkhirin*" (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1426 AH), 59.

24 Yahya ibn Ma'in, *Tarikh Ibn Ma'in (Riwayah al-Dawri)*, ed. Ahmad Muhammad Nur Saif (Mecca: Markaz al-Bahth al-Ilmi wa Ihya al-Turath al-Islami, 1399 AH), 3:127.

25 Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Hatim, *Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil* (Beirut: Dār Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, 1371 AH), 1:37; Abu Zar'a al-Razi, *Su'alat Abu Dawud li Abi Zar'a fī al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*, ed. Sa'd ibn Abdullah al-Hamid (Medina: al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya, 1404 AH), 201.

26 Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, *Al-Tarikh Al-Kabir* (Hyderabad: Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyya, 1377 AH), 1:234.

27 Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Naysaburi, *Al-Tamyiz*, ed. Muhammad Mustafa al-A'zami ((Riyadh: Maktabat al-Kawthar, 1410 AH)), 156.

the content maintained thematic consistency with established Islamic teachings.

Later scholars (*muta'akhkhirun*), however, moved toward more systematized definitions. Ibn al-Salah (d. 643 AH/1245 CE) provided what became the standard definition: "what a weak narrator transmits in contradiction to a trustworthy one." Al-Nawawi (d. 676 AH/1277 CE) built upon this by emphasizing that explicit contradiction was necessary, while Ibn Hajar (d. 852 AH/1449 CE) refined the definition further to "what a weak narrator contradicts a trustworthy one in"²⁸.

Al-Dhahabi's genius lies in how he managed to bridge these two approaches. Rather than simply adopting either the flexibility of the early scholars or the rigid systematization of later ones, he created something new. His methodology displays three distinctive characteristics that set him apart: he conducted comprehensive evaluations that considered both obvious and hidden transmission defects; he made contextual judgments that weighed all available evidence rather than isolated factors; and he applied his criteria selectively based on his deep understanding of individual narrator profiles.

We can see this methodology at work in his practical applications. In one case, he ruled on hadith (4931) with the simple statement: "Munkar, and Humran are weak," directly connecting the narrator's condition to his evaluation. In another instance, his ruling "Munkar, and the correct version is disconnected (*mursal*)" demonstrates the contextual flexibility he inherited from early scholars²⁹.

Ultimately, Al-Dhahabi's approach represents something quite remarkable - a reconciliatory methodology that successfully bridges different scholarly traditions. By combining the contextual awareness of early critics with the systematic precision of later scholars, he created a more nuanced application of critical terminology that continues to influence hadith criticism today.

Case Studies Analysis

Hadith about the Title of Prophet/Messenger

Al-Hakim said: "It was narrated to me by Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Al-Abbas; narrated to us by Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul Aziz Al-Baghawi; narrated to us by Khalaf ibn Hisham; and narrated to me by Ali ibn Hamza; narrated to me by Hussain ibn Ali Al-Ju'fi; from Humran ibn A'yan; from Abu Al-Aswad Al-Dili;

28 Uthman ibn Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-Salah, *Ma'rifat Anwā' Ulum al-Hadith*, ed. Nur al-Din Itr (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1406 AH), 80; Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, *Al-Taqrīb wa al-Taysir li Ma'rifat Sunan al-Bashir al-Nadhir*, ed. Muhammad Uthman al-Khusht (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Arabi, 1405 AH), 45; Ahmad ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, *Nuzhah al-Nazar fi Tawdih Nukhbah al-Fikr*, ed. Abdullah al-Rahili (Riyadh: Safir Press, 1422 AH), 89.

29 Al-Dhahabi. *Talkhis al-Mustadrak*. 3:129, 133.

from Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: An Arab came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and said: 'O Nabī of Allah.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) replied: 'I am not Nabī of Allah, but I am Nabī of Allah.

³⁰ الله لست بنبيء الله ولكني نبي.

The methodological divergence between Al-Hakim and Al-Dhahabi becomes particularly evident when examining their treatment of a hadith narrated through Humran ibn A'yan. Al-Hakim follows his characteristic pattern of focusing on apparent chain reliability, stating: "This hadith is authentic according to the conditions of Al-Shaykhayn, but they did not record it. It has a clarifying witness with a chain that is not among the conditions of this book."³¹ In contrast, Al-Dhahabi's response demonstrates his more stringent approach: "Rather, it is rejected (munkar); it is not authentic"³². This disagreement centers on their evaluation of Humran ibn A'yan Al-Kufi, whose presence in the transmission chain reveals fundamental differences in their critical methodologies.

The scholarly assessment of Humran ibn A'yan explains Al-Dhahabi's decisive rejection of this transmission. Several early critics questioned Humran's reliability: Ibn Ma'in described him simply as "weak"³³, while Ibn Hibban noted, "He was a Shia"³⁴, Abu Dawud characterized him as "a Rafidi"(extremist Shia)." Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: "He and his brother were Shia"³⁵, Al-Dhahabi's evaluation places Humran as "a Tabi'i with Rafidi tendencies"³⁶, using terminology that indicates not merely sectarian affiliation but a degree of extremism that could compromise transmission reliability.

What makes Al-Dhahabi's rejection particularly significant is his distinction between different levels of sectarian deviation. His use of the term "Rafidi" rather than simply "Shia" suggests a more severe assessment that goes beyond doctrinal disagreement to question fundamental trustworthiness in transmission. This aligns with Ibn Taymiyyah's critique of this hadith, where he noted: "What has been narrated from the Prophet that he said: 'I am the Prophet of Allah, and I am not

³⁰ Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, 4:83.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Al-Dhahabi, *Talkhis Al-Mustadrak*, 3:129.

³³ Yahya ibn Ma'in, *Tarikh Ibn Ma'in*, ed. Ahmad Nour Saif (Damascus: Dār Al-Ma'moon for Heritage, 1400 AH), 94.

³⁴ Muhammad ibn Hibban al-Busti, *Al-Thiqat* (Hyderabad: al-Mawsū'ah al-'Uthmāniyyah, 1393 AH), 7:94.

³⁵ Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal, *Al-ʿIlal wa Maʿrifat al-Rijal*, ed. Wassi Allah Abbas (Riyadh: Dār Al-Khani, 1422 AH), 1:551.

³⁶ Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Dhahabi, *Al-Mughni fi al-Du'afa'*, ed. Nur al-Din Itr (Qatar: IDārat Ihya' al-Turath al-Islami, 1987), 191.

Nabi' of Allah'—I have never found any reliable chain for it. I have never seen it in any hadith books or well-known works of prophetic biography. A narration like this cannot be relied upon"³⁷.

To understand Al-Dhahabi's position more deeply, we must refer to his methodological criteria regarding dealing with innovators (*mubtadi'ah*). Al-Dhahabi believes that accepting the narration of an innovator depends on several factors: the type of innovation, its impact on the narration, and the narrator's truthfulness and trustworthiness in transmission. Al-Dhahabi tends to be strict in accepting the narration of an innovator if his innovation is severe and affects the credibility of his narrations³⁸. In the case of Humran ibn A'yan, Al-Dhahabi's rejection was not based merely on sectarian affiliation, but on his assessment that the degree of doctrinal deviation ("Rafidi" rather than merely "Shia") could affect the accuracy and integrity of transmission, making the narration unreliable according to his strict methodological standards.

Al-Hakim's authentication, despite these criticisms, reflects his different methodological priorities. Rather than focusing primarily on individual narrator weaknesses, he appears to have weighted the presence of supporting chains and corroborative evidence more heavily. The hadith appears in various forms through different transmitters, including versions recorded by Ibn 'Adi through Hamzah Al-Zayyat³⁹ and Ibn Mandah through Abu Khalid Al-'Aqili⁴⁰, suggesting wider circulation that Al-Hakim may have considered supportive evidence for authenticity.

This analysis shows that the disagreement between Al-Hakim and Al-Dhahabi is not merely sectarian bias, but reflects a fundamental difference in methodological standards: Al-Dhahabi applies strict criteria that prioritize doctrinal soundness as a guarantee of transmission integrity, while Al-Hakim gives greater weight to corroborative evidence and supporting witnesses in evaluating hadith authenticity. The disagreement ultimately reflects the scholarly richness of hadith criticism rather than methodological flaws, demonstrating Al-Dhahabi's commitment to stringent authentication standards while showing Al-Hakim's broader evaluative approach in supplementing existing collections.

37 Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Nubuwwat*, ed. Abdul Aziz Al-Tuwayan (Riyadh: Adwa' Al-Salaf, 1420 AH), 2:882.

38 Al-Dhahabi, *Mizan al-Itidal fi Naqd al-Rijal*, 1:3-5.

39 Ahmad ibn 'Adi al-Jurjani, *Al-Kamil fi al-Du'afa'*, ed. Adel Abdul Mawjoud and Ali Muawwad (Beirut: Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya, 1418 AH), 3:367.

40 Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Mandah, *Majalis min Amali Abi Abdullah ibn Mandah*, ed. Marzuq Ali Ibrahim (Riyadh: Dār al-Watan, 1412 AH), 120.

Hadith about Yūsuf's Actions

Al-Hakim said: "It was narrated to us by Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Abdullah Al-Saffar; narrated to us by Ahmad ibn Mihran Al-Asbahani; narrated to us by 'Ubaydullah ibn Musa; narrated to us by Israel, from Khusayf, from 'Ikrimah, from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), who said: 'Yusuf made three missteps: when he was inclined toward her, so he was imprisoned; ...

"عَتَرَ يُوسُفُ ثَلَاثَ عَثَرَاتٍ، حِينَ هَمَّ بِهَا قَسَجَنَ"⁴¹

Al-Hakim admits: "This hadith is authentic based on the conditions of al-shyaikhān, but they did not record it."⁴² Al-Dhahabi remarks: "This is a rejected (munkar) report."⁴³ Al-Suyuti recorded it in *Al-Durr Al-Manthur* and said: Ibn Mardawayh narrated it from Ibn Abbas⁴⁴. Al-Hakim authenticated a hadith from Khusayf about Yūsuf's missteps as meeting the conditions of al-Bukhari and Muslim, while Al-Dhahabi rejected it as "munkar". This disagreement reveals fundamental methodological differences requiring examination of both scholars' criteria and their validity.

Al-Dhahabi's rejection centers on Khusayf ibn Abdul Rahman Al-Jazari, whose weakness is documented by multiple authorities. Ahmad ibn Hanbal called him "not reliable, not strong in hadith, with severely inconsistent reports"⁴⁵. Ibn Abi Hatim noted his poor memory and mistakes⁴⁶, while Ibn Hajar concluded he was "honest but of poor memory, affected by irja' in later years"⁴⁷. Ibn 'Adi reveals: "He narrates a lot, but his reports contain falsehoods when transmitted by weak narrators"⁴⁸. This scholarly consensus provides the foundation for Al-Dhahabi's technical rejection.

The case demonstrates Al-Dhahabi's consistent application of his *Mizan al-Itidal* principles, which target narrators who's "degree is low due to memory or breaches" - precisely describing Khusayf's documented problems. His use of "munkar" reflects systematic methodology in identifying compromised transmissions, showing precision rather than arbitrary judgment.

Supporters of Al-Hakim argue for his methodological legitimacy. Ibn

⁴¹ Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, 4:321.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Al-Dhahabi, *Talkhis Al-Mustadrak*, 3:4929.

⁴⁴ Al-Suyuti, *Al-Durr al-Manthur fi al-Tafsir bil-Ma'thur*, 4:543.

⁴⁵ Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Ilal*, 3:214.

⁴⁶ Ibn Abi Hatim, *Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*, 3:404.

⁴⁷ Ibn Hajar, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib*, 1:224.

⁴⁸ Ibn Adi, *Al-Kamil*, 3:552.

al-Salah defended that “Al-Hakim carefully gathered authentic ahadith, either meeting Bukhari and Muslim’s level or deemed authentic though not reaching their standard”⁴⁹. Critics counter with Ibn al-Mulaqqin’s observation that “this is munkar because it contains Khusayf, weakened by Ahmad and others, and neither al-Bukhari nor Muslim recorded from him”⁵⁰.

The debate reveals core differences: Al-Hakim focuses on technical chain structure and contextual evaluation, while Al-Dhahabi emphasizes cumulative weakness evidence and stricter standards for unique narrations. Al-Hakim’s approach considers his Mustadrak’s supplementary function and graduated reliability standards, while Al-Dhahabi applies rigorous consistency with documented narrator problems.

The Khusayf case confirms that both scholars maintained methodological integrity within their respective frameworks. Al-Dhahabi’s rejection aligns with the broader scholarly consensus on Khusayf’s unreliability and follows his stated principles consistently. Al-Hakim’s authentication reflects a different but systematically defensible approach, prioritizing supplementary coverage over absolute technical compliance. Their disagreement demonstrates the sophisticated diversity of hadith scholarship rather than methodological flaws.

Hadith about al-Dajjal and the Ummah

Al-Hakim said: “It was narrated to us by Abu Bakr ibn Ishaq; informed us by Muhammad ibn Shadhan Al-Jawhari; narrated to us by Zakariya ibn ‘Adi; narrated to us by ‘Isa ibn Yunus; from Safwan ibn ‘Amr; from ‘Abdul Rahman ibn Jubair ibn Nufayr; from his father (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: When the grief of the companions of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) over those who were killed at Mu’tah intensified, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: ‘The Dajjal will reach a people like you or even better than you---three times---and Allah will never disgrace a nation of which I am the first and ‘Isa ibn Maryam is the last.

⁵¹“لَيَنْزِعَنَّ الدَّجَالُ قَوْمًا مِمَّنْكُمْ أَوْ خَيْرًا مِنْكُمْ - ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ - وَلَنْ يَخْزِيَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً، أَنَا أَوْلُهَا، وَعِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ آخِرُهَا”.

Al-Hakim states: “This hadith is authentic according to the conditions of al-shyaikhān, but they did not record it”⁵². Al-Dhahabi says: “This is mursal

49 Ibn al-Salah, *‘Ulum al-Hadith*, ed. Nur al-Din ‘Itr (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1986), 89.

50 Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Mukhtasar Talkhis al-Dhahabi*, 2:816.

51 Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, 5:33.

52 Ibid.

(disconnected), and it is a rejected (munkar) report”⁵³.

The crux of Al-Dhahabi's objection lies in what he saw as a fundamental flaw in the chain involving Abdul Rahman ibn Jubair ibn Nufayr. Though Ibn Hajar described him as “a mukhadram from the second generation whose father was a companion”⁵⁴. Abu Hatim praised him as “reliable and among the prominent early followers in Syria”⁵⁵, there remained a critical gap. Abdul Rahman, despite living during the Prophet's era, never actually met him—creating what hadith scholars call an irsal or disconnection that cannot simply be overlooked.

What we see here is Al-Dhahabi applying his well-established principles with characteristic precision. Throughout his work in *Mizan al-Itidal*, he consistently emphasized that structural problems in transmission chains cannot be ignored, regardless of how trustworthy individual narrators might be. As Al-Dhahabi explained it: “This hadith suffers from irsal; ‘Isa ibn Yunus received it from Safwan, making it a rejected report. Jubair ibn Nufayr al-Hadrami may have lived during the Prophet's time, but his narration from the Prophet remains disconnected”⁵⁶.

Those who might defend Al-Hakim's position could reasonably argue that when dealing with highly reliable narrators and seemingly authentic content, some methodological flexibility makes sense. After all, this particular hadith appears in works by Ibn Abi Shaybah⁵⁷, Nu'aym ibn Hammad⁵⁸, and Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi⁵⁹, suggesting it had wider acceptance among scholars. Modern defenders of Al-Hakim often point out that his *Mustadrak* was designed to supplement Al-Sahihan collections with authentic material they had missed, which might justify somewhat different evaluation criteria.

However, critics find strong support for Al-Dhahabi's technical approach. Al-Shawkani clearly identified the structural issue: “It qualifies as mursal because Abdul Rahman was a follower, not a companion”⁶⁰, while al-Munawi acknowledged:

53 Al-Dhahabi, *Talkhis Al-Mustadrak*, 3:133.

54 Ibn Hajar, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib*, 1:138.

55 Ibn Abi Hatim, *Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*, 2:512.

56 Zain al-Din Muhammad al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir Sharh al-Jami' al-Saghir* (Egypt: Al-Maktabah al-Tijariyah al-Kubra, 1356 AH), 5:449.

57 Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*, ed. Saad Al-Shathri (Riyadh: Dār Kunuz Ishbiliya, 1436 AH), 11:25.

58 Nu'aym ibn Hammad, *Kitab al-Fitan*, ed. Samir Amin Al-Zuhairi (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Tawhid, 1412 AH), 2:571.

59 Muhammad ibn Ali Al-Hakim Al-Tirmidhi, *Nawadir al-Usul fi Abadith al-Rasul*, ed. Abdul Rahman Amira (Beirut: Dār Al-Jil, 1987), 1:620

60 Muhammad ibn Ali Al-Shawkani, *Nayl al-Awtar Sharh Muntaqa al-Akbbār*, ed. Issam Al-Din Al-Sabbati (Egypt: Dār Al-Hadith, 1413 AH), 9:229.

“Therefore, this hadith is indeed *mursal*”⁶¹. This scholarly consensus regarding the technical defect validates Al-Dhahabi’s methodology, which treats unbroken transmission chains as non-negotiable requirements for authentication, regardless of how appealing the content might be or how trustworthy individual links appear.

The disagreement reveals something important about these two scholars’ different priorities. Al-Hakim seems willing to weigh narrator reliability and content plausibility more heavily than absolute chain continuity, while Al-Dhahabi insists on strict technical requirements for unbroken transmission. Al-Hakim’s authentication suggests confidence in the hadith’s essential accuracy despite the structural gap, whereas Al-Dhahabi’s rejection reflects an unwavering commitment to formal chain integrity as the bedrock of hadith authenticity.

Looking at the Jubair case, we can see both scholars operating consistently within their established methodological frameworks. Al-Dhahabi’s rejection demonstrates his systematic application of technical chain requirements that align with classical hadith principles, while Al-Hakim’s authentication reflects his supplementary approach that considers factors beyond strict structural compliance.

Hadith about the Ummah and Shari’ah

Al-Hakim said: “It was narrated to us by Abu Al-Abbas Muhammad ibn Ya’qub; informed by Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul Hakim; informed by Ibn Wahb; narrated to me by Yahya ibn Ayyub; from Zaban ibn Fa’id; from Sahl ibn Mu’adh ibn Anas; from his father (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: ‘The Ummah will remain upon the Shariah as long as three things do not appear among them...’”

”⁶² لَا تَزَالُ الْأُمَّةُ عَلَى شَرِيعَةٍ مَا لَمْ تَظْهَرْ فِيهِمْ ثَلَاثٌ:

Al-Hakim narrated this hadith in *al-Mustadrak* and authenticated it, stating: “This hadith is authentic according to the conditions Al-Shaykhān, though they did not record it”⁶³. While al-Dhahabī responded in *al-Talkhīs*: “It is rejected (*munkar*), and Zaban was not relied upon by Al-Shaykhān”⁶⁴. This contradiction reveals a fundamental methodological difference between the two scholars in applying authentication criteria, where al-Hakim claimed to apply the conditions of Al-Shaykhān without actual verification, while al-Dhahabī indicated that al-Bukhārī and Muslim’s exclusion of Zaban ibn Fā’id demonstrates his failure to meet their

61 Al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, 5:449.

62 Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, 9:933.

63 Ibid.

64 Al-Dhahabi, *Talkhis Al-Mustadrak*, 1:101.

standards.

The imams of jarh WA-ta'dīl unanimously agreed on Zaban ibn Fā'id's weakness. Ahmad ibn Hanbal stated: "His hadiths are rejected (munkar)," ⁶⁵ and Ibn Hibbān described him: "He narrates uniquely from Sahl ibn Mu'adh hadiths that appear fabricated; he cannot be relied upon" ⁶⁶. This precisely identifies the defect's location, as the hadith under study passes through Sahl ibn Mu'adh. Al-Haythamī indicated multiple defects, saying: "It contains Ibn Lahī'ah and Zaban, both weak," ⁶⁷ constituting practical consensus on rejecting the hadith.

Al-Dhahabī's commentary represents a distinguished model of critical methodology, where he not only mentioned the narrator's weakness but pointed to a fundamental methodological principle based on practical induction, Al-Shaykhān ' methodology rather than the theoretical application of abstract rules. His use of "munkar" has precise terminological significance, referring to hadiths narrated by weak narrators contradicting reliable ones or uniquely transmitted without corroboration, exactly applying to Zaban's situation in this hadith.

Al-Hākim's position can be understood within his broader project of collecting hadiths he considered meeting Al-Shaykhān's conditions, but this methodology suffers from the difficulty of applying another scholar's criteria without complete familiarity with his methodological subtleties. In contrast, al-Dhahabī's methodology represents critical development through studying imams' practical methodology via inductive analysis of their selections, making it more precise and less susceptible to methodological error.

This case confirms that inductive authentication requires a deep study of the methodology being induced from, and that jarh WA-ta'dīl consensus on a narrator's weakness constitutes strong evidence difficult to overcome. Contemporary scholarly consensus on this hadith's weakness validates al-Dhahabī's methodology and highlights the importance of balancing preservation and criticism in hadith heritage.

Hadith about Six Cursed People

Al-Hakim said: "It was narrated to us by Abdullah ibn Ja'far Al-Farisi; narrated to us by Ya'qub ibn Sufyan; narrated to us by Ishaq ibn Muhammad Al-Farwi; narrated to us by Abdul Rahman ibn Abi Al-Mawal; from 'Ubaydullah ibn Mawhab; from Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn Hazm; from 'Amrah; from 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace

⁶⁵ Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Al-Musnad*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1421 AH), 24:391.

⁶⁶ Muhammad ibn Hibban, *Al-Majruhun*, ed. Mahmud Zayed (Aleppo: Dār al-Wa'i, 1396 AH), 1:313.

⁶⁷ Noor Adeen Ali Al-Haythai, *Majma' al-Zawa'id wa manba' al-Fawa'id*, vol. 1, p. 202

and blessings be upon him) said: "There are six people I have cursed, and Allah has cursed them, and every prophet whose supplication is answered has cursed them: The denier of Allah's decree (qaDār), ...'"

68. "سَيِّئَةٌ لَّعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَكُلُّ نَبِيٍّ مُّجَابٍ"

Al-Hākim authenticated this hadith, stating: "This hadith is authentic according to al-Bukhārī's conditions, though he did not record it,"⁶⁹ while al-Dhahabī responded with a detailed refutation: "Ishāq, though one of al-Bukhārī's teachers, narrates severe munkar reports. Al-Nasā'ī says he is not trustworthy, Abū Dāwūd calls him weak, al-Dāraquṭnī abandoned him, while Abū Hātim considers him truthful. 'Ubaydullāh is not relied upon by hadith scholars, and this entire hadith is munkar"⁷⁰. This commentary reveals al-Dhahabī's meticulous methodology in dismantling the chain narrators by narrator, indicating how conflicting critical opinions about a single narrator affect the final judgment of the hadith.

The sources transmitted this hadith through completely contradictory paths. Al-Tirmidhī⁷¹, Al-Tabarānī⁷², Ibn Batta⁷³, and al-Hākim⁷⁴ narrated it as connected (musnad), while Al-Fākihī⁷⁵, Al-Tahāwī⁷⁶, Ibn Batta⁷⁷, and al-Hākim⁷⁸ Narrated it as disconnected (mursal) through 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Mawhab from 'Alī ibn al-Husayn from his father from his grandfather 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib. This contradiction in connection and disconnection, sometimes from the same sources, indicates fundamental disorder in transmission, weakening confidence in the narration altogether.

Al-Tirmidhī indicated this problem, stating: "This is how 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Abī Al-Mawālī narrated this hadith from 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Mawhab from 'Amra from 'Ā'isha from the Prophet. However, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Hafs ibn Ghiyāth, and others narrated it from 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abd Al-Rahmān ibn

68 Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:263.

69 Ibid.

70 Al-Dhahabi, *Talkhis Al-Mustadrak*, 4:256.

71 Muhammad ibn Isa Al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, ed. Ahmad Shakir (Beirut: Dār Ihya' al-Turath al-Arabi, 1975), 4:457.

72 Al-Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, 3:136.

73 Ibn Battah, *Al-Ibana an Shariat al-Firqa al-Najiya*, 4:112.

74 Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:263.

75 Muhammad Ibn Ishaq Ibn Abbas Al-Fakihi, *Akhbar Makkah fi Qadeem al-Dahr wa Hadithih* (Beirut: Dār Khidr, 1414 AH), 2:2.

76 Al-Tahawi, *Mushkil al-Atbar*, 4:366.

77 Ibn Battah, *Al-Ibana*, 4:113.

78 Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak*, 1:263.

Mawhab from 'Alī ibn al-Husayn as mursal, and this is more authentic.”⁷⁹ Ibn Abī Hātim reported that Abū Zur'a said: "Ibn Abī Al-Mawālī's narration is false. The correct version is 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abd Al-Rahmān ibn Mawhab's narration from 'Alī ibn al-Husayn as mursal”⁸⁰. These texts confirm that the chain disorder is not merely ordinary variation but a confirmed error from one of the narrators.

Added to the disorder problem is the weakness of 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abd Al-Rahmān ibn Mawhab, who represents the convergence point of all paths. Ibn Hajar stated he is “not strong,”⁸¹ judgment means his unique narrations cannot be used as evidence, especially with an existing disorder. Scientific methodology requires that a disordered hadith from a weak narrator cannot have one of its versions preferred over another; rather, all should be judged weak.

This case highlights the importance of Al-Dhahabī's analytical precision compared to al-Hākim's lenience in authentication, where the latter sufficed with apparent chain examination without delving into narrator conditions and hadith path variations. It also confirms the necessity of studying all hadith paths before judgment, as transmission disorder is strong evidence of imprecise preservation, and the practical consensus of specialized critics like Abū Zur'a and Al-Tirmidhī on weakening the connected narration represents precise scientific methodology in distinguishing between authentic and defective reports.

Methodological Divergences between al-Hākim and al-Dhahabī in Hadith Authentication

The study of applied cases reveals fundamental differences between the methodologies of Al-Hakim and Al-Dhahabi in evaluating hadiths. This methodological divergence reflects broader scholarly tensions documented by contemporary researchers in specialized studies on hadith methodologies and critical development across centuries, including Akmaluddin's analysis of regional hadith variations in Al-Andalus⁸². Brown's examination of canonization processes⁸³, Davidson's study of post-canonical transmission practices⁸⁴. Duderija's work on hadith

79 Al-Tirmidhi, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 4:475.

80 Ibn Abi Hatim, *Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*, 5:7.

81 Ibn Hajar, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib*, 1:226.

82 Akmaluddin. "Developments of Hadith Riwaya in Al-Andalus: 228–52.

83 Brown, *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Hadith Canon*.

84 Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*.

authentication evolution⁸⁵, and Motzki's investigations into early hadith materials⁸⁶.

Al-Hakim's fundamental problem in extracting hadiths that he claimed met the conditions of Al-Shaykhayn lies in his reliance on "superficial criteria," which manifests in several interconnected methodological aspects. His contentment with apparent examination of chains without delving into hidden defects that early critics considered paramount represents the first aspect of this superficial approach. The second aspect involves his mechanical application of the concept of "conditions of Al-Shaykhayn" instead of understanding the implicit methodology followed by Al-Shaykhayn. As Brown confirms in his study on the canonization of Al-Shaykhayn⁸⁷, attempting to apply the criteria of Al-Shaykhayn without understanding their historical and methodological context leads to erroneous results. The third aspect is Al-Hakim's neglect of the specific contextual indicators and circumstances of each hadith, which was a fundamental principle among early critics, as Al-Malibari demonstrates. This superficial approach contradicts the sophisticated methodology of early critics who relied on "comprehensive contextual judgment" rather than the mechanical application of rules⁸⁸.

Al-Hakim's leniency appeared in his acceptance of narrators from whom Al-Shaykhayn did not transmit or who were disputed among critics. This included his acceptance of Humran ibn A'yan and Khusayf ibn Abd al-Rahman despite their being weakened, his acceptance of chains containing hidden disconnections, such as the Dajjal hadith⁸⁹, and his leniency with strange or problematic texts⁹⁰. The question of "fluctuating criteria" in Al-Bukhari and Muslim requires a deep understanding of the nature of critical methodology in the third century AH. What appears as "fluctuation" in the criteria is the application of the "specialized critical context" principle adopted by early critics.

A skilled critic may select the most authentic narrations from a weak narrator's reports, and this is only acceptable from leading authorities like Al-Bukhari and Muslim and those equal to them in criticism and understanding, because they are most knowledgeable about their hadiths and their proper contexts in the Sunan. Each hadith has its specific indicators as stated by the verifying imams. When preferring

85 Duderija, "Evolution in the Canonical Sunni Hadith Body of Literature and the Concept of an Authentic Hadith During the Formative Period of Islamic Thought as Based on Recent Western Scholarship": 389–415.

86 Motzki, Harald (ed.). *Hadith: Origins and Developments. The Formation of the Classical Islamic World* 28.) London: Routledge, 2004(. 432 pages.

87 Brown, *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunni Hadith Canon*.

88 Al-Malibari, *The Balance between Early and Later Scholars in Authenticating and Analyzing Hadiths*, 156.

89 Ibn Abi Hatim, *Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil*, 2:512.

90 Al-Mizzi, *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, 7:306.

one hadith over another or accepting a narrator's report in one context while rejecting it from the same narrator in another context, there are indicators and data upon which the preference and acceptance of the narration are based in one case over the other⁹¹. Al-Bukhari, for instance, might accept a narrator in one context and reject him in another based on hidden indicators invisible to superficial observers. This is what Al-Dāraquṭni confirmed in his criticisms, which Ibn Hajar defended in "Taghliq Al-Ta'liq" by explaining these hidden contexts⁹².

Al-Hakim, however, attempted to imitate this flexibility without possessing the same critical depth, resulting in what appears as "leniency" but is actually "incomplete application" of advanced methodology. The difference between "conscious methodological flexibility" and "unjustified leniency" lies in possessing the necessary critical mechanisms to distinguish different contexts. In contrast, Al-Dhahabī (d. 748 AH) adhered to the judgments of early critics and criteria of sound connection, adopting a precise methodology based on verifying the soundness of chains both apparently and inherently, studying narrators' conditions according to statements of earlier critics, considering contextual indicators, and judging according to the totality of evidence rather than merely apparent chains⁹³.

The applied study demonstrates the superiority of Al-Dhahabī's methodology, as all hadiths he judged as munkar (rejected) contained decisive defects, and he adhered to the judgments of early critics while Al-Hakim contradicted them in numerous cases⁹⁴. This confirms the validity of early critics' methodology, the importance of considering hidden defects, and the danger of leniency in authentication criteria.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that al-Dhahabī's classification of certain hadiths as munkar, despite al-Hakim's claims that they meet the conditions of al-Shaykhān, reflects superior methodological rigor and accuracy. The analysis reveals that al-Hakim's authentication approach, while well-intentioned, suffered from insufficient attention to hidden defects and contextual factors that experienced hadith critics like al-Dhahabī consistently identified.

91 Al-Muhammadi, *Al-Shadh wa al-Munkar wa Ziyadat al-Thiqah - Muwazanah bayna al-Mutaqaddimin wa al-Muta'akkkhirin*, 29.

92 Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī. *Taghliq al-Ta'liq 'alā Sahih al-Bukhārī*. Edited by Sa'id 'Abd al-Rahmān Mūsā al-Qazaqī. Beirut: Dār 'Ammār, 1405 AH.

93 Al-Malibari, *The Balance between Early and Later Scholars in Authenticating and Analyzing Hadiths*, 156.

94 Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Ilal*, 1:551.

The findings confirm that the deliberate omission of specific hadiths by the authors of *Sahih al-Bukhārī* and *Sahih Muslim*, particularly when the narrator is someone they cited elsewhere, indicates doubt about authenticity and uncertainty in accepting it. Consequently, claiming that a certain hadith is authentic because it meets the conditions of al-Shaykhān constitutes a serious issue requiring careful examination and review, both in theoretical foundation and practical application. Moreover, al-Dhahabī's precise judgments in these cases highlight his expertise in hadith criticism and analytical skills in evaluating authenticity.

While this study provides important insights into methodological divergences between al-Hākim and al-Dhahabī, its scope remains limited to a small set of representative cases from al-Mustadrak and *Talkhīs al-Mustadrak*. Broader comparative analyses across larger hadith corpora may reveal additional nuances in their critical approaches. Future research should therefore expand beyond individual case studies to examine how concepts such as *munkar*, *'illah khafiyyah* (hidden defects), and "conditions of al-Shaykhān" were applied across different regions, periods, and scholarly networks. Such investigations would not only refine our understanding of classical hadith criticism but also contribute to developing frameworks for applying these methodological principles in contemporary scholarship.

Author Contributions

Maessa Ali Rawabdeh conceptualized the study, developed the research objectives, drafted the introduction, reviewed the literature, and designed the methodology. She also managed the selection and classification of hadiths. Sanaa Fadel Abbas contributed to the theoretical framework, historical background, and analysis of the judgments of Imam Al-Dhahabi, and he co-drafted the discussion and conclusion. Both authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Ethical Approval

This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors.

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The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available

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