

## **The Role of Hadith Science in Preserving the Authenticity of the Prophet's Sunnah and Responding to Quraniyyun Claims on Quora**

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### **Abstract**

The Al-Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet are two main pillars of Islamic teachings that complement each other: the Al-Qur'an provides basic principles, while the hadith explains and applies them in real life. Since the early days of Islam, qira'ah scholars and hadith experts have maintained their authenticity with strict scientific discipline. However, in the modern era a group known as the Quraniyyun or Inkar Sunnah people has reappeared, they reject the authority of hadith and argue that the Koran alone is sufficient as a source of law. This article discusses the Quraniyyun movement as it often appears on online platforms such as Quora, by exploring their arguments and weighing them using the rijal science approach (the science of hadith narrators). Through a literature review of books, journals and digital discourse, this research shows that rijal science is not just a traditional legacy, but rather a strong historical verification system. In this way, the authenticity and authenticity of the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ remains firmly established amidst modern discourse which often separates reason from tradition.

**Keywords:** Quraniyyun, Inkar Sunnah, Rijal Science, Sanad criticism, Quora

### **Introduction**

The Inkar al-Sunnah movement is not a new phenomenon that emerged in the modern era. Historically, the idea of rejecting the Sunnah has been present since the early period of Islam. In fact, several groups in the first century Hijriyah had shown symptoms of rejection of the authority of the Sunnah as the second source of Islamic law after the Koran (Azami, 1977, p. 16). This phenomenon then developed and influenced the religious patterns of Muslims, especially in the context of religious fanaticism and debates over religious authority.

In terms of language and discourse, the rejection of the Sunnah has serious implications: it challenges the position of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ not only as a transmitter of revelation, but also as an authoritative figure in interpreting and explaining religious messages in the context of social life (Rahman, 1982, p. 47). This causes the status of the Sunnah as a second source of law to be questioned. This impact does not only appear in the public space of the general public, but also occurs in the academic environment and intellectual thinking on campus, a space that should be the center of epistemological balance.

The development of understanding of Inkar al-Sunnah not only needs to be seen as a threat, but also as a discursive space that allows the emergence of a critical analytical approach.

This critical study includes two aspects: doctrinal arguments and the historical setting of their emergence. Argumentatively, this group argues that all the words, actions and approvals of the Prophet were only manifestations of revelation through the guidance of the angel Gabriel. Thus, they reject the possibility that the Prophet played a role as an independent determiner of the law (Wansbrough, 2004, pp. 101–102).

This view is often combined with the claim that all of the Prophet's *aqwāl*, *af'āl* and *taqrīr* did not originate from his personal initiative, so they do not have to be used as a binding legal basis. This kind of argument sounds systematic, so it can give a strong impression to some people, especially those who do not understand the methodology of narrating and codifying hadith (Motzki, 2001, p. 29). Therefore, the *Inkar al-Sunnah* phenomenon needs to be analyzed through two main approaches:

1. Sociological Analysis

To see how the emergence and spread of this view affects the structure of the social unity of Muslims, including the tension of religious identity and scientific authority.

2. Historical Analysis

To trace the intellectual journey, development of arguments, and socio-political position of this group in Islamic history from classical to contemporary times.

These two approaches are necessary so that the *Inkar al-Sunnah* phenomenon can be understood comprehensively, not only as a theological polemic, but also as an intellectual and social phenomenon that continues to be produced and reproduced throughout history.

## Methods

This study employs a qualitative library-based research design that integrates classical Islamic sources, modern academic scholarship, and contemporary Qur'anist discourse drawn from online platforms such as Quora. As a library research project, the study does not involve fieldwork or empirical surveys; instead, it relies on systematic textual analysis to examine the claims, arguments, and epistemological assumptions of the Qur'anist movement.

### Data Sources

The primary data for this study consist of two categories:

- (1) Contemporary Qur'anist Arguments:

The study analyzes publicly articulated Qur'anist positions drawn from Quora discussion threads between 2018–2024. Quora was selected because it functions as a stable repository of contemporary Qur'anist discourse, where adherents articulate their critiques of the Sunnah, the hadith corpus, and traditional Islamic authority. These posts provide insight into popular formulations of arguments and the rhetorical strategies used in digital spaces.

- (2) Classical and Modern Islamic Scholarship:

To contextualize and evaluate Qur'anist claims, the study examines a range of authoritative sources including classical works of hadith methodology (e.g., al-Bukhārī, al-Shāfi'ī, Ibn Qutaybah), commentaries (e.g., al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī), and biographical literature, alongside modern academic works on hadith transmission, early Islamic intellectual history, and Qur'anic

hermeneutics (e.g., Fazlur Rahman, Harald Motzki, Jonathan Brown, Gregor Schoeler). These texts serve as the critical counterpoint through which Qur'anist discourse is assessed.

## Results

### Definition of Quraniyyun (denying the Sunnah)

The term Quraniyyun or Inkar al-Sunnah refers to a group that rejects the authority of the Sunnah as a source of Islamic law after the Koran. They argue that the Koran is the only source of religious teachings that is authoritative and sufficient, so that explanations from the Sunnah are not needed (Rahman, 1982, p. 113). This group usually rejects hadiths in whole or in part, on the grounds that they do not have strong historical certainty like the Koran (Azami, 1977, pp. 41–42).

Historically, Quraniyyun prefers a rational approach to religion and considers the compilation of hadith as the result of the political-religious process that occurred after the death of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Wansbrough, 2004, p. 104). Thus, Quraniyyun can be understood as: The group that accepts the Koran as the only authority of the Shari'a, while rejecting the authority of the Prophet's Sunnah, both as a legal guide and as a practical explanation of the Koran (Motzki, 2001, p. 33).

### *The Early Roots of Sunnah Rejection*

The earliest indications of rejecting the Sunnah as a source of Islamic law and belief in the Qur'an as the sole source of Islamic guidance can be traced back to the period of the Companions. Al-Ḥasan narrated that when 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn was sitting among his companions, a man requested that they teach nothing except the Qur'an. 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn called the man closer and asked:

“Do you know if you and your companions rely only on the Qur'an where you will find that the zuhr prayer consists of four rak'āt, the 'aṣr prayer four rak'āt, the maghrib prayer three rak'āt, and that the recitation is only in two rak'āt? Do you know if you rely only on the Qur'an where you will find that ṭawāf around the Ka'bah is seven rounds, and the sa'ī between Ṣafā and Marwah?”

After hearing this, the man responded, “Follow (the Sunnah), otherwise you will go astray.” (Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm al-Riwāyah*, Madinah al-Munawwarah: al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d., vol. 1, p. 15). At this stage, the rejection of the Sunnah was individual and not associated with any organized group. However, this phenomenon intensified during the lifetime of Imām al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204 H). Hence, most documentation concerning early Sunnah denial is drawn from his writings. As cited by Shuhudi Ismail, al-Shāfi'ī categorizes Inkar al-Sunnah adherents into three groups:

1. Those who reject all Sunnah.
2. Those who accept only the Sunnah that agrees with the Qur'an.
3. Those who reject āḥād narrations and accept only mutawātir reports. (Shuhudi Ismail, *Metode Penelitian Hadis*, Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1992, p. 8)

In al-Umm, al-Shāfi'ī devoted a chapter titled al-Ṭā'ifah allātī Raddat al-Akhbār Kullihā (“The Group that Rejects All Reports”). Al-Sibā'ī, quoted by 'Imād Sayyid al-Sharbīnī, states that those who rejected the Sunnah argued that the Qur'an is sufficient and exhaustive in explaining every matter, and thus any additional legislation through hadith would be contradictory since the Qur'an is qaṭ'ī (definitive), while hadith is ḡannī (probabilistic). (Imād

Sayyid al-Sharbīnī, *Shubuhāt Ḥawla al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī wa al-Radd ‘alayhā*, Ajuzah: Maktabah al-Imān, 2011, p. 12).

According to M. M. al-A‘zamī, Imām al-Shāfi‘ī successfully refuted and suppressed this movement for many centuries. Historical accounts show that the rejection of Sunnah did not re-emerge within the Muslim world until the 14th century Hijri (19th–20th century CE), coinciding with Western colonial presence.

### The Re-Emergence of Modern Qur’an-Only Movements

When European colonial powers dominated Muslim lands, they introduced ideological strategies to weaken the Islamic intellectual framework, including attempts to undermine the Sunnah. Thinkers such as Rashīd Riḍā and Tawfiq Ṣidqī revived the claim that the Qur’an alone is sufficient, citing verses such as: “We have omitted nothing in the Book.” (Qur’an, 6:38) “We have sent down to you the Book as clarification of all things.” (Qur’an, 16:89) (Al-Sibā‘ī, *Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī‘ al-Islāmī*, Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2006, p. 149) Al-Sibā‘ī rebuts that the Qur’an provides universal principles, while the detailed explanation of those principles is given through the Sunnah. This is affirmed in:

“And We revealed to you the Reminder so that you may clarify to the people what has been revealed to them.” (Qur’an, 16:44)

Al-A‘zamī emphasizes that rejecting the Prophet’s explanation implies rejecting the Qur’an itself, since Qur’an commands obedience to the Prophet (al-A‘zamī, p. 60).

### ***Modern Denial of the Sunnah (Inkar al-Sunnah al-Mu‘āṣir) the Prophet***

As previously discussed, the contemporary manifestation of Sunnah rejection is not a new phenomenon; rather, it is a revival of earlier patterns of denial that had already been refuted and neutralized by classical scholars, most notably by Imām al-Shāfi‘ī in his seminal works on the authority of the Sunnah. The intellectual claims advanced by contemporary Sunnah rejectors are, in essence, merely a reproduction of earlier objections, reformulated in modern vocabulary but rooted in the same foundational misunderstanding. This modern phase of Inkar al-Sunnah emerged at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century and continues into the present day.

However, there are important distinctions between the classical and modern forms of Sunnah denial. The earlier, classical form generally arose due to a lack of understanding regarding the function, scope, and authoritative role of the Sunnah in Islamic law. Thus, when scholars clarified its epistemological and juridical significance, many of the early rejectors came to accept its validity. The modern rejection, by contrast, is driven not by ignorance, but by ideological premises and interpretive frameworks that differ fundamentally from the pre-modern Islamic scholarly tradition (Ya‘qub, 2011, p. 44).

The modern Inkar al-Sunnah movement approaches Islamic texts with a methodological framework influenced heavily by Western critical scholarship, particularly the Orientalist tradition of Hadith criticism. Consequently, their project has two central aims:

1. To undermine the binding legal authority of the Sunnah alongside the Qur’an, and
2. To cast doubt upon the reliability of Hadith transmission by questioning the integrity of the sanad (chain of transmission) and the methods of the muḥaddithūn (Hadith scholars).

This modern trend is deeply intertwined with the emergence of Western academic tools such as historical skepticism and literary-critical analysis which were initially applied to Biblical studies and later transferred selectively to Islamic texts. Muslim intellectuals who

adopted these methods often did so without a comprehensive understanding of the distinct epistemological structure and rigorous methodology of the Islamic Hadith sciences. As a result, the contemporary rejection of the Sunnah represents not merely a theological dispute, but a methodological conflict over the sources and mechanisms of religious authority in Islam.

### **Responses of Hadith Scholars to the Denial of the Sunnah (Inkar al-Sunnah)**

The emergence of groups denying the Sunnah whether through textual or rational arguments prompted classical hadith scholars to develop methodical responses. Among the most influential figures were al Shāfi‘ī, Ibn Qutaybah, and al-Khaṭṭābī, whose works shaped Sunni legal epistemology for centuries (Ibn Qutaybah, 1955; al-Khaṭṭābī, 1983; Brown, 2009). Their discussions demonstrate how the Sunnah was defended both scripturally and rationally against early anti-Sunnah tendencies.

#### ***Mastery of Arabic Does Not Negate the Authority of the Sunnah***

While linguistic competence is essential for engaging the Qur’an, it does not justify dismissing the Sunnah. The Qur’an repeatedly commands obedience to the Prophet (Qur’an 4:59; 59:7), presupposing a reliable mechanism for the preservation of his teachings. Classical scholars argued that following the Prophet is inseparable from following the transmitted Sunnah (al-Khaṭṭābī, 1983; Siddiqi, 1993). Thus, the “Qur’an-only” claim contradicts the Qur’an’s own legal and moral framework.

#### ***The Meaning of Tibyān li-kulli shay’ (Qur’an 16:89)***

The word tibyān does not suggest that the Qur’an contains exhaustive legal details. Classical exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr held that the verse refers to the Qur’an providing foundational principles, while the Prophet supplies detailed explanation (al-Ṭabarī, 2000; Ibn Kathīr, 1999). Modern scholarship likewise emphasizes that the Qur’an assigns the Prophet a clarifying role (Qur’an 16:44), which presupposes the validity of the Sunnah (Kamali, 1999). Thus, tibyān implies complementarity, not exclusivity.

#### ***Hadith Āḥād: Probabilistic but Legally Binding***

Hadith scholars recognized that solitary reports (āḥād) are probabilistic, but they argued that law often relies on probabilistic evidence so long as it meets reliability standards. Early theorists such as al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī considered khabar al-wāḥid authoritative when transmitted by upright narrators (al-Juwaynī, 1979; 1997). Modern academic studies also confirm that early Muslims treated solitary reports as binding in legal al-Ghazālī, reasoning (Hallaq, 1986; Motzki, 2017). Rejecting all hadith on the basis of their probabilistic nature reflects a misunderstanding of Islamic epistemology.

#### ***Hadith Cited by Anti-Sunnah Authors Are Methodologically Weak***

Classical scholars observed that narrations used to reject the Sunnah are generally weak (ḍa‘īf) or disconnected (munqaṭi‘). Ibn Qutaybah (1955) and al-Khaṭṭābī (1983) explicitly addressed these arguments, demonstrating the methodological inconsistency of relying on weak reports to invalidate the entire corpus. Recent scholarship confirms that early anti-Sunnah movements lacked coherent textual evidence and relied on isolated or anomalous material (Saeed, 2014).

#### ***Additional Responses Toward Modern Qur’anist Arguments***

Modern anti-Sunnah discourse repeats earlier misunderstandings. Arguments that the Sunnah is non binding due to its probabilistic nature overlook the fact that Islamic law including Qur’anic interpretation frequently relies on probabilistic judgments (Hallaq, 1986).

Misreadings of Qur'an 16:89 often ignore 16:44, where the Prophet is explicitly tasked with explaining revelation. Selective acceptance of scripture is criticized in Qur'an 2:85, a point highlighted by contemporary scholars (Auda, 2008; Kamali, 1999). Appeals to Qur'an 6:38 similarly overlook more explicit verses requiring obedience to the Prophet (Qur'an 59:7; 33:36).

### ***The Early Prohibition of Writing Hadith***

The early restriction on writing hadith must be interpreted historically. Classical sources note that the ban aimed to avoid confusion between Qur'anic revelation and prophetic statements, particularly amidst low literacy and scarce writing materials (al-Baghdādī, 1980). Despite this, the Prophet permitted documentation in specific cases such as the Ṣaḥīfah of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr. Modern researchers emphasize that once the Qur'an was securely compiled, hadith documentation expanded rapidly and systematically (Burton, 1994; Lucas, 2004). Thus, the prohibition was contextual, not principled.

### **What is Quora and the Emergence of the Inkar Sunnah Movement Within It**

Quora is a social media platform based on a Question-and-Answer (Q&A) interaction model, which enables users to ask questions and provide answers on a wide range of topics. The platform was founded in 2010 by Adam D'Angelo and Charlie Cheever, former senior figures at Facebook (Cheever & D'Angelo, 2010). Meanwhile, the Indonesian-language version of Quora was officially launched in 2018 as part of Quora's global expansion strategy in Southeast Asia (Quora Press Release, 2018).

According to web traffic analytics reported by Alexa24 (2020), Quora Indonesia has more than 100,000 active users, indicating its significant role as a digital public discussion space in Indonesia (Alexa.com, 2020). The primary objective of Quora is knowledge sharing. For this reason, many responses provided on the platform tend to be explanatory and are frequently based on personal experience, data, and practical knowledge (Pathil & Lee, 2016:203)<sup>25</sup>. However, the platform's open and decentralized discussion environment also allows the spread of non-mainstream religious interpretations, including the modern Inkar Sunnah movement, which emphasizes the Qur'an as the sole source of Islamic law while rejecting the authority of hadith and the prophetic Sunnah.

### ***Quora Features Supporting the Spread of Inkar Sunnah Ideas***

#### ***Filter Bubble Algorithm***

Quora employs a content filtering algorithm that adjusts displayed content based on the user's historical interests and activities (Zimba, 2019:28). As a result, users who engage with Inkar Sunnah content are more likely to continue encountering similar content repeatedly, strengthening ideological echo chambers.

#### ***Answer Request Feature***

Users may request responses from individuals they perceive as competent, but the platform does not require scholarly verification or religious credentials. Consequently, religious issues may be addressed by individuals lacking foundational knowledge in Islamic studies (Wang et al., 2013:1342).

#### ***Group-by-Interest (Spaces)***

Quora offers Spaces, or thematic interest groups, which allow users to participate in discussions tailored to specific topics. Within religious and Qur'anic interpretation Spaces,

discussions often develop without reference to classical Hadith sciences, *usul al-fiqh*, or the scholarly tradition (Bapala, 2021).

### ***Upvote System***

Answers with the highest number of upvotes are prioritized for visibility. This system favors persuasive popularity over academic validity, meaning that well-written but methodologically weak arguments can become dominant (Wang et al., 2013).

Through these combined features, Quora becomes a fertile environment for:

- the dissemination of anti-hadith ideology
- highly individualized interpretations of the Qur'an, and
- the formation of ideological communities independent from traditional Islamic scholarly authority, such as *sanad* transmission, *ijazah*, and formal religious training

## **Discussion**

### **Views of Quraniyyun Advocates on Quora**

#### ***The Quraniyyun Emphasis on the Qur'an as the Sole Normative Source***

Advocates of the Quraniyyun position reject the assumption that a Muslim must possess detailed knowledge of the Prophet Muhammad's daily habits in order to "follow" him. In their view, such a requirement stems from a mistaken understanding of *ittibā' al-rasūl*. Questions about how the Prophet ate, slept, dressed, or conducted domestic routines are considered theologically irrelevant because the Qur'an does not present these details as part of religious obligation.

For Quraniyyun thinkers, the Qur'an does not call for imitation of the Prophet's biological routines or technical aspects of daily life. The Prophet is not presented as a ritual figure whose mundane practices must be replicated; rather, his primary role is to transmit revelation, provide moral and theological guidance, and embody integrity and steadfastness in fulfilling his mission. Thus, to follow the Prophet is to internalize the values he exemplified, not to recreate the physical patterns of his existence.

A commonly cited verse is Q. 33:21, which describes the Prophet as an excellent exemplar (*uswah ḥasanah*). Quraniyyun readings interpret this verse as context-bound specifically referring to perseverance and resolve during moments of military and psychological pressure not as a mandate to emulate detailed behaviors such as eating or dressing styles.

On this basis, they reject the construction of *sunnah* as a compendium of biographical minutiae meant to be physically imitated. For them, the Qur'an centers morality, principles, and ethical orientation rather than ethnographic documentation of the Prophet's domestic life. Therefore, the common question, "How can one follow the Prophet without knowing his daily practices preserved in hadith?" is deemed irrelevant within a Qur'an-focused theology.

Consequently, Quraniyyun conclude that a Muslim can fully follow the Prophet through the Qur'an alone. Obedience to God and His Messenger rests on adherence to the revealed message, not on reconstructing the Prophet's personal routines. The values of justice, honesty, perseverance, and moral commitment constitute the essential model the Qur'an instructs believers to emulate.

#### ***Quraniyyun Critique of the Hadith Codification Process***

Another central argument advanced by Quraniyyun concerns the historical formation of the hadith corpus. They emphasize that hadith reports about the Prophet's sayings and actions were not systematically recorded during the Prophet's lifetime or in the decades immediately

following his death. They point to the well-established historical fact that the major canonical collections, such as Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, emerged in the 3rd/9th century.

According to Quraniyyun critiques, the long gap between the Prophet's life and the eventual compilation of hadith literature created considerable room for historical distortion, transmission errors, and the blending of unverifiable oral traditions. The socio-political dynamics of the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, they argue, further shaped religious narratives, making the later hadith compilations vulnerable to political, sectarian, or ideological influences.

They also challenge the methodological reliance on isnād chains of narrators as the basis for validating hadith. Exclusive dependence on oral transmission, especially amid dramatic social and political transformations, is seen as insufficient for establishing historical authenticity. In this framework, attributing statements to the Prophet through long chains of transmitters is viewed as epistemologically fragile.

For some Quraniyyun, these issues justify a highly skeptical stance toward the hadith tradition as a whole. They contend that the late codification carried out by individuals living centuries after the Prophet undermines the ability of hadith collections to serve as binding sources of law. In contrast, the Qur'an possessing a clear and traceable history of transmission from the earliest community is considered a more stable and verifiable reference.

Importantly, this critique is not directed at the Prophet himself. Rather, Quraniyyun position it as a critique of the historical mechanisms that, in their view, did not adequately preserve his teachings. As a result, they advocate a religious orientation grounded directly in the Qur'anic text.

### ***Quraniyyun Arguments Concerning the Prohibition of Writing Hadith***

Quraniyyun often cite a report attributed to the Prophet: "Do not write anything from me except the Qur'an. Whoever has written anything else should erase it." They interpret this as evidence that the Prophet intentionally prohibited the documentation of his non-Qur'anic statements. In their reading, the prohibition served to safeguard the purity of the Qur'an and prevent its conflation with the Prophet's non-revelatory speech. The instruction to erase existing notes is seen not as a temporary caution but as a normative restriction meant to prevent the emergence of a parallel religious authority. Thus, later efforts to compile hadith are portrayed as a departure from the Prophet's own directives.

Quraniyyun further argue that the absence of formal hadith collections in the earliest period indicates that written hadith was not part of the original religious practice. The early Muslim community relied primarily on oral communication, and the production of hadith literature in later centuries reflected different historical conditions not the Prophet's intentions.

They also link the development of hadith to the political climates of the Umayyad and Abbasid eras. Figures such as al-Bukhārī are portrayed as working within complex political environments, raising concerns about the infiltration of unverifiable or ideologically shaped narratives. From this perspective, the early prohibition of writing hadith undermines the normative legitimacy of the entire hadith system.

For these reasons, Quraniyyun maintain that religious authority must rest solely on the Qur'an the only revelatory text preserved intact since the first generation while the hadith tradition lacks comparable historical guarantees.

### **Responses to Quraniyyun Arguments**

#### ***On the Claim That the Qur'an Alone Suffices Without Sunnah***

The Quraniyyun separation between moral authority and normative authority does not align neatly with how the Qur'an or early Muslim practice conceptualize the Prophet's role. Qur'anic exegesis has consistently treated verses such as Q. 59:7 as granting the Prophet binding legal authority, not merely ethical leadership. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī emphasizes this point in his *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (vol. 30), and Fazlur Rahman (1979) similarly argues that the Qur'an positions the Prophet as the practical interpreter of revelation.

Academic scholarship also notes that the Qur'an alone does not provide complete procedural guidelines for acts of worship or law. Ritual prayer, almsgiving mechanics, pilgrimage procedures, penal regulations, and commercial norms were shaped through the Prophet's actions and the practices of the early community. Even critical scholars such as Joseph Schacht (1950) and G. H. A. Juynboll (1983) acknowledge that early Muslims treated the Prophet's practice as an essential legal reference.

Moreover, classical legal theory from al-Shāfi'ī onward already distinguishes between the Prophet's cultural habits and his normative actions (al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Risālah*). Concerns about "total imitation" are therefore addressed within the tradition itself. Historically, disregarding the Sunnah would create substantial normative gaps and sever continuity with the earliest Muslim community. As Motzki (2000) shows, the religious life of first-century Medina cannot be understood without reference to socially preserved Prophetic traditions.

#### ***On the Claim That Hadith Codification Was Too Late to Be Reliable***

The notion that hadith writing began only in the 3rd century is contradicted by textual evidence. Early manuscripts such as the *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām ibn Munabbih (1st/7th century), studied extensively by Motzki (2000), demonstrate that written hadith circulated within the first century. Nabia Abbott's manuscript research (1967) also challenges the idea of a purely oral Hijazi culture, showing significant use of writing among early Muslims.

Classical sources document that companions such as 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ kept written records of hadith (al-*Ṣaḥīfah al-Sādiqah*), and early rulers like 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 101/720) initiated formal collection efforts. While no scholar denies the possibility of distortion, academic consensus does not support the conclusion that the time gap invalidates the entire tradition. Even Schacht, despite his skepticism, accepts that some hadith can be traced to the earliest generations. Thus, the Quraniyyun argument overstates the historical problem. The transmission of hadith was shaped by complex social networks, not an unregulated or politically manufactured process.

#### ***On the Claim That the Prophet Prohibited Writing Hadith***

Although a prohibition exists, both classical and modern scholarship interpret it as context-specific. Early scholars such as al-Khaṭṭābī (*Ma'ālim al-Sunan*) and al-Nawawī (in his commentary on Muslim) explain that the restriction served to prevent Qur'anic revelation from being confused with non Qur'anic material during the phase of active revelation.

Other reports show that the Prophet explicitly allowed and even encouraged writing hadith once the risk of conflation had passed. His instruction to 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr, "Write, for nothing comes from me except truth," appears in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* and is rated reliable by later scholars.

The coexistence of permissive and restrictive reports actually strengthens their historical credibility, as Motzki (2000) notes, because such variation is difficult to fabricate uniformly across different regions and schools. The portrayal of al-Bukhārī as a political instrument also lacks support from primary sources. Jonathan Brown (2009) demonstrates that hadith scholars

maintained significant independence from state structures and often challenged official narratives. Therefore, the early prohibition cannot reasonably be used to invalidate the entire hadith tradition, especially given the presence of explicit permissions and the historical context in which the ban operated.

### **Conclusion**

The present study demonstrates that contemporary Quraniyyun discourse such as that found on Quora represents not a new intellectual breakthrough, but rather a rearticulation of old objections that emerged as early as the first Islamic century. While modern Qur'an-only advocates frame their critique through updated idioms and digital rhetoric, their foundational assumptions remain largely unchanged: a denial of the Prophet's interpretive authority, a dismissal of the mechanisms through which the Sunnah was preserved, and a selective reading of Qur'anic verses.

Through a comparative analysis of classical hadith scholarship, modern academic research, and digital Quraniyyun discourse, this study shows that the authority of the Sunnah rests on a multilayered epistemic foundation. The science of *rijāl*, *isnād* criticism, and early documentary practices collectively form a sophisticated system of historical verification unparalleled in pre-modern religious traditions. Far from being an uncritical accumulation of oral reports, the hadith corpus emerged through rigorous scrutiny, cross-regional corroboration, and institutional memory cultivated over generations.

The Quraniyyun argument that the Qur'an alone provides exhaustive legal guidance is not supported by either textual or historical evidence. The Qur'an's granting of normative authority to the Prophet, its assignment of an explicatory role to him, and the demonstrable reliance of the earliest Muslim community on Prophetic practice collectively indicate that the Qur'an cannot be operationalized as law without the Sunnah. Likewise, the critique of "late codification" overlooks substantial manuscript evidence from the *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām ibn Munabbih to early personal scrolls that firmly situates hadith writing within the first Islamic century.

Claims concerning the prophetic prohibition of writing hadith also fail to appreciate its historical context: the temporary precaution to avoid mixing Qur'anic revelation with non-revelatory material. Once the Qur'an was safely compiled, documentation of hadith not only became permissible but was actively encouraged. Classical and contemporary scholarship aligns in interpreting the ban as contextual rather than normative.

Analysis of Quora's digital architecture reveals that algorithmic filtering, upvote-based visibility, and the absence of scholarly gatekeeping produce an environment where simplified or poorly substantiated religious arguments thrive. In such spaces, Quraniyyun discourse gains traction not necessarily due to intellectual rigor, but because of accessibility, rhetorical appeal, and algorithmic reinforcement.

Ultimately, this study concludes that the Sunnah preserved through a robust historical methodology is indispensable for understanding and implementing the Qur'an. The Quraniyyun position collapses under both textual scrutiny and empirical evidence. While its re-emergence in digital platforms is sociologically intelligible, it does not present a credible alternative to the deeply rooted epistemic framework of the Islamic tradition. The science of *rijāl* and the broader hadith sciences continue to serve as a critical apparatus that secures the continuity, coherence, and integrity of Islamic law and practice in the modern world.

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