

Intra-Religious Rivalry on Hadith Exposition in Ilorin Emirate, Nigeria

Waliyullahi Adeola Adeyemi (Corresponding Author)

Department of Islamic Studies.
Al-Hikmah University.
Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
adeyemiwaliyullahi@alhikmah.edu.ng

AbdulRahman AbdulGafar Olayinka

Department of Islamic Studies.
Al-Hikmah University.
Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
agafaroganija@gmail.com

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Abstract

Divergent views on Hadith exposition had been in existence since the Prophetic era. However, the Prophet resolved a myriad of theological and juristic differences among his Companions. The later generation experienced accretions due to strange ideology and sectarianism. Ilorin emirate Muslims had a similar experience of factionalism arising from divergent approaches to Hadith corpuses. The study explores the stages of Hadith development in Ilorin, consequences of intra-religious rivalry among Muslims and approach of the Ilorin Muslim factions to Hadith interpretation. The article appraises four selected Hadiths relating to theological and juristic polemics to curtail sectarian intolerance arising from the emirate. The article adopts an analytical method to unravel the polemics and relies on archive materials and oral interview for data collection and discussion. The article reveals that indoctrination of young scholars in Ilorin emirate had significantly influenced their Hadith exposition. Experts in the field of Hadith and Muslim preachers are enjoined to avoid sentiments in Hadith analysis.

Keywords: Prophetic era; Companions; intra-religious rivalry; Hadith; factionalism

Introduction

Intra-religious rivalries had been a global issue that threatens the harmony and peaceful co-existence of Muslim denominations in every community, including Ilorin. Islam enjoins unity and abhors factionalism as entrenched in Qur'anic verse below:

As for those who split up their religion and
became sects, you have no concern with them.
Their affair is only with Allah, then He will
inform them of what they did.

(Al-'An'am: 159)

However, man cannot avoid conflict in its entirety.¹ Muslims, like other religious adherents, are facing political and doctrinal differences.² Since the Hadith is the second source of Islamic legislation, the Prophet was saddled with the onus of explaining it to his Companions. Scholars over the world have shown interest in Hadith explanation for ages due to its connection to safeguarding the Prophetic mission from distortion and interpolation. However, the orientalist had made rigorous research to either appraise or discredit the sanctity of Hadith. Despite the effort of the traditionists to sieve the wheat from the chaff, Hadith has become the main cause of factionalism in Yoruba speaking states in Nigeria, especially the Ilorin emirate.³ This religious hostility has become so prevalent to the extent that some Muslim clerics had begun to exchange disparaging comments on social media.

Moreover, there was no period since the Prophet's demise that Muslims have not disagreed over Hadith interpretation. Despite the fact that the *Sahabah* witnessed the Prophet, they occasionally disagreed over some Prophetic instructions which

¹ Adedamola Blessing Adegoke, and Lilian Nnenne Akaholu, "Religious Conflict and Development in Nigeria: The Prospects and Challenges," *ACU Journal of Social Sciences* 1.1 (2022), 4.

² Saliu Alabi, "Dawah (Propagation) and Conflicts Among Clerics in Ilorin Emirate: Implication for Intra-Religious Harmony," *Wukari International Studies* 6.2 (2022), 22.

³ Adeyemi Adeola Waliyullahi & Akinwale Adelodun Teslim, "Polemical Discourse on *Hadith* Matn Analysis in Southern Nigeria," *KWASU Journal of Religious Studies* 2.2 (2018), 64.

rarely result in factionalism.⁴ In response to Allah's directive in which reads:

O you who believe, if a reprobate brings you news, verify it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be regretful for what you did.
(Al-Hujurat: 6).

The *muhaddithun* later developed the science of Hadith to retain the authentic narrations ascribed to the Prophet.⁵ Consequently, Ilorin emirate scholars, like other cities, have recognised the science of Hadith. However, the science of Hadith criticism and analysis has turned into religious rivalry among Muslim scholars and students⁶ in Ilorin emirate. The rivalry over Hadith exposition has worsened the disputes among them to the extent that even laymen engage in defenceless debates. Unequivocally, some scholars have started to disparage prominent Hadith literature like *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* as well as reliable Hadith reporters like Abu Hurayrah and Ibn 'Umar. The article therefore unearths the polemics on selected Hadiths through the lens of Muslim factions in Ilorin emirate. The article employs a theoretical analysis of the opposing views to establish the validity of the position upheld by the warring parties.

Evolution of Hadith in Ilorin Emirate

Hadith attained the status of the second source of Islamic legal system after Muhammad's call to Prophethood; however, it was used in the Qur'an to denote the last revelation, a legendary report and a secret conversation.⁷ The traditionists viewed Hadith as the saying, action, tacit approval, manners, physical attributes and stories of the Prophet.⁸ Other words used for Hadith are *khobar*, *athar* and *sunnah*. The preservation of Hadith has gone through

⁴ Bilal Philips, *The Evolution of Fiqh* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 1990), 48.

⁵ Waliyullahi and Teslim, "Polemical Discourse," 65.

⁶ Waliyullahi & Teslim, "Polemical Discourse," 64.

⁷ Bilal Philips, *Usul al-Ḥadīth* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2007), 3.

⁸ Jamaal al-Din M. Zarabozo, *The Authority and Importance of the Sunnah* (Denver: Al-Basheer Publication and Translation, n.d), 24.

the stages of recording, transmission and codification in Islamic epoch. Al-Ilory posited that the only Hadith specialist in Ilorin was *Shaykh* Abu Bakr Alore (d.1910) who earned *ijazah* (authorisation of scholarship) on *Sahihan* from Makkah and Madinah during the pilgrimage of the pioneer Muslim pilgrims in Ilorin emirate.⁹ However, Hadith studies had been developed afterwards through four stages as below:

Foundation Stage

From the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, owing to inadequate Hadith specialists in Ilorin, the early Ilorin scholars like *Shaykh* Muhammad Belgore (d.1913) and *Shaykh* Abdullah Badende (d.1921) established Islamic schools where Hadith was taught alongside other branches of Islamic Studies.¹⁰ However, the effort of ‘*ulama*’ on Hadith was limited to the purposes of recording, textual analysis as well as sermonising with little consideration of its authenticity.¹¹ Thus, there were numerous weak and fabricated Hadiths in circulation in this period. Consequently, most acts of worship were based on either weak or unfounded traditions which led to heretical practices in their acts of worship.

Flowering Stage

In the late 20th century, the prevailing condition of Hadith in the previous generation prompted the then scholars who had a dearth of knowledge on Hadith science to start criticising the widespread weak and fabricated Hadith to sieve the wheat from the chaff. This took different dimensions based on the methods adopted by the scholars. However, the first Hadith critic in Ilorin was *Shaykh* ^cAli Jabata,¹² who was known as *Alfa Aladisi* throughout Ilorin emirate due to his frequent Hadith citation during his radio programmes

⁹ Adam Abdullah Al-Ilory, *Lamaḥātul-Ballūr fī Mashāhīr Ulamā’ Ilorin* (Kaherah: Maktabatul-Adabī, 1982), 62.

¹⁰ Uthmān Muḥammad Mustapha Kannike et al., “Creation and Sustenance of an Islamic Dynasty in Ilorin Emirate, A Reflection of the ‘Ulama’ Political and Religious Sagacity,” in *2022 Conference on Islam in Nigeria (COIN)* Vol. 11, edited by Islamic Welfare Foundation (IWF), 13, November 2022, www.iwf.com.ng.

¹¹ Interview with Shaykh Maroof Al-Athary, May 28, 2025.

¹² Waliyullahi & Teslim, “Polemical Discourse,” 66.

on Kwara Radio in the late 80s¹³ as well as the knowledge of Hadith criticism and *takhrij* (sourcing).¹⁴ Thus, the use of Hadith and careful selection of Hadith became more popular among the scholars afterward, especially from the authentic sources such as *Sahihan*. Among the scholars who were known for adopting the Qur'an and Hadith as their bases of *da'wah* were *Shaykh* Dan Maeduka and Honorable Justice Abdul-Muttalib Hanbali between the 80s and the 90s.¹⁵ This has undoubtedly paved the way for the later generation in the area.

Standardisation Stage

Following the efforts of the predecessors in the field of Hadith in Ilorin, the early 21st century witnessed a watershed in Hadith development by Ilorin indigenous scholars. The prominent scholar who took keen interest in Hadith studies at this stage was Prof. Abu Bakr Imam Aliagan of the Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.¹⁶ Other Ilorin indigenous scholars who later bagged their doctorate in Hadith from the Islamic University in Madinah are Dr Abu Bakr Idris and Dr Abdul-Mu'min Eleyinla, while *Ustaz* 'Abdul-Ghaffar Oniwirdi and Abu Malik Ajape bagged their master's degree in Hadith sciences from the same University.¹⁷ Other prominent Ilorin Muslim scholars who contributed immensely to Hadith standardisation include Dr Abdul-Fattah Sarumi who did the *takhrij* (Hadith sourcing) of a book entitled *Mi'atu Hadith* and Dr Ahmad Nafiu Arikewuyo who clarified some misconceptions about Hadiths in his public lectures. Similarly, Prof. Ahmad Abdur-Rahman Kakure usually anchors radio programme on Hadith sciences like the late *Shaykh* 'Ali Jabata.¹⁸

Proliferation Stage

¹³ Interview with Shaykh Maroof al-Athary, May 28, 2025.

¹⁴ Waliyullahi & Teslim, "Polemical Discourse," 66.

¹⁵ Dauda Gambari Yusuph, Habeeb Bolaji Elemosho & Aishat Funmilayo Salman, "An Assessment of the Activities of Selected Halaqātus-Salafiyah in Ilorin Metropolis," *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 11.1(2021), 47-64.

¹⁶ Waliyullahi & Teslim, "Polemical Discourse," 66.

¹⁷ Interview with Shaykh Maroof al-Athary, May 28, 2025.

¹⁸ Waliyullahi & Teslim, "Polemical Discourse," 66.

Due to upsurge of great traditionists in Ilorin, the Hadith learning circles sprang up in the nooks and crannies of the emirate through the efforts of the alumni of Islamic University, Madinah.¹⁹ For instance, Sarumi's *halqah al-hadith* anchored by Dr Abdul-Fattah Sarumi usually holds every Thursday by 8:30 pm. In addition, there were many workshops and symposia on Hadith sciences which have been organised for the benefits of Ilorin indigenes where many books on Hadith sciences have been treated. A typical example of an annual Hadith workshop is the Dawratul-Imam Malik established by *Ustaz* Ibrahim Sulaiman Ajape. The uniqueness of this stage is the scholars' focus on Hadith criticism in their learning circles.²⁰

Inter-Religious Rivalry Among Early Muslims

Rivalry is an inevitable phenomenon due to human ethno-cultural diversity. It is associated with every facet of life ranging from religio-political and economic issues. Intra-religious rivalry could be seen as superiority advocacy within adherents of the same religion. Extremism had been recognised as one of the major causes of factionalism. Islam is a tolerant faith, even with the non-Muslims.²¹ Islam frowns at all forms of sectarian violence in several passages of the Qur'an. It also emphasises the implication of disunity and conflict on the strength of the Muslims.

Paradigms of some differences that transpired among the Companions emanated from the reality of the Prophet's demise, location of his burial, his appointed successor and the Fadak inheritance.²² While tracing the causes of sectarian rivalry in Islam, Mahmud noted that the Muslim sects could be compartmentalised into two; the theological sects, which include the Qadarites, Jabarites and Mu'tazilites, etc. The second categories, being the political sects, are the Shiites and Kharijites.²³ Another form of rivalry revolves around juristic

¹⁹ Adam Yahya Al-Fulani, *Fi Sahih al-Bukhari: Bahthun wa Muraja'ah* (Kaherah: Maktabatu Wahbah, 2016), 10.

²⁰ Interview with Ibrahim Sulaiman Ajape, May 28, 2025.

²¹ A. Rahim, *Islamic History* (Lagos, Islamic Publications Bureau, 2001), 25-26, 48.

²² Mahmud Muhammad Mazru'ah, *Dirasat fi al-Firaq al-Islamiyyah* (Kaherah: Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, 2016), 60-64.

²³ Mahmud, *Dirasat fi al-Firaq al-Islamiyyah*, 17-20.

differences. The research therefore considers these three causes of rivalry among early Muslims as follow:

Political Rivalry

The history has it that the early Muslims did not experience political rivalry throughout the Prophetic period. Qur'an 59:9 testifies to the fact that the people of Madinah were accommodating to the emigrants who fled to them. No internal political dichotomy was recorded in this era as the Prophet strengthened the bond of brotherhood and unity among his Companions to the extent that the Madinites preferred the Makkans over themselves. However, following the assassination of 'Uthman bin 'Affan, an unprecedented rivalry occurred between 'Ali and Mu'awiyah due to the latter's demand from the former to take vengeance from 'Uthman's assailants,²⁴ as opposed to the claim that the rivalry was politically motivated.²⁵ This uncompromising dispute had precipitated the battle of the Camel where almost 20,000 Muslims fell and the battle of Siffin which claimed the lives of almost 70,000 Muslims.²⁶

Sequel to the arbitration endorsed by 'Ali and Mu'awiyah after Siffin, there emerged in Islām two different political parties from 'Ali's forces; the Kharijites and the Shiites; the former proclaimed that arbitration belongs to Allah and declared other Muslims as infidels, while the latter pronounced their unconditional allegiance for 'Ali. It should be noted that these political parties later developed into theological sects.²⁷ Hence, 'Uthman's assassination was considered the genesis of rivalry and factionalism among the early Muslims.

Theological Rivalry

²⁴ Uthman bin Muhammad al-Khamis, *Hiqbah min al-Ta'rikh ma Bayna Wafat al-Nabiyy ilā Maqatal al-Husayn* (Kaherah: Maktabah al-Hady al-Muhammadiyah, 2016), 113.

²⁵ A. Rahim, *Islamic History*, 98.

²⁶ A. Rahim, *Islamic History*, 98-100.

²⁷ A.F Ahmed, *ISL 343: Introduction to Islamic Theology* (s.l.: National Open University of Nigeria, 2022), 68- 97.

Although political rivalry remained the major cause of sectarianism in the early Muslim generation till the end of the Companions' era, different theological sects started to emerge.²⁸ The emergence of early Muslim sects was traced to the contact of other Muslim nations due to territorial expansion. The Muslims had encounter with nations who had different culture, civilization, ideology, religion as well as philosophical thoughts.²⁹ It should be noted that the theological rivalry was due to some existing tensions among the early Muslims. During the Abbasid era, Caliph Ma'mun made Mu'tazilitism the state religion and persecuted those who rejected it. One of the scholars tortured by Ma'mun was Ahmad bin Hanbal.³⁰ Since then, the Muslims had developed different theological sects such as Qadarites, Jabarites, Mu'tazilites, Murjiites etc. Each sect had developed its dogmas regarding Allah's essence, predestination, beatific vision, status of a grave sinner and createdness of the Qur'an.

Juristic Rivalry

In the early Umayyad era, the Muslim jurists were mainly categorised into two schools of Jurisprudence; the Ahl al-Hadith (Traditionist School) and Ahl al-Ra'y (Rationalist School) due to their different approaches to Islamic legal rulings, unprecedented verdicts and geographical locations.³¹ The period thus enjoined flexibility and dynamism in *fiqh* to a large extent.

In the late Umayyad and early Abbasid era, juristic scholarship had flourished through the four *fiqh* Imams, as a result of the support and patronage received from the Islamic rulers.³² Interestingly, there was no rigidity in the views of those Imams nor did their major students portray sectarianism. For instance, Imam al-Shafi'i, a student of Malik was renowned to have formulated his *mazhab* from heterogeneous *fiqh* which includes *mazhab ahl al-Hadith*, *mazhab ahl al-Ra'y* and *fiqh* of Egypt.³³ In 950CE, the juristic debate encouraged by the Abbasid Caliphs later resulted in *mazhab* factionalism, whereby scholars of each

²⁸ M.M. Sharif, *Islamic Philosophy* (Great Britain: Redwood Burn Limited, 1982), 1.

²⁹ Mahmud, *Dirasat fi al-Firaq al-Islamiyyah*, 42-48.

³⁰ A. Rahim, *Islamic History*, 199-200

³¹ Bilal, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 55-57.

³² Bilal, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 60-61.

³³ Bilal, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 63.

School of Law worked tirelessly to standardise their independent *mazahib*, which eventually led to the disappearance of other *mazahib* and leaving the Muslim world with the four Sunni schools of law; Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali.³⁴

After the consolidation of the fundamental principles and foundational books in each *mazhab*, *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) by scholars outside the fundamental principles of their *mazahib* was prohibited.³⁵ Consequently, *taqlid* (dogmatic imitation) crept into *fiqh* and became widely spread among the Muslims which gradually resulted in factionalism among the adherents of each *mazhab* in the middle of 7th century.³⁶ Some jurists held the belief that the gate of *ijtihad* had been closed because all religious issues had been resolved.³⁷ The efforts of *fiqh* scholars therefore, were limited to editing, revising and appraising the works of the early scholars as well as codifying abridged versions of those books for easy memorisation.³⁸

At a point, some *mazhab* fanatics held the belief that these schools of law were divinely part of Islam which every Muslim should belong to one of them and total deviation from them either amount to heresy or apostasy. Thus, the perpetrator should be punished.³⁹ Furthermore, Muslims and their rulers in every respective region adopted a particular *mazhab*, to the extent that *fiqh* dynamism was eroded and lacunas were identified in the absence of Islamic law to answer the contemporary questions. As a result, the need to revive *ijtihad* became paramount to many Muslim reformers such as Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn Qayyim, Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Shawkani, Ahmad bin Abd al-Rahim, etc. Most of these advocates of religious reformation and revivalism were treated with hostility.⁴⁰

Intra-Religious Rivalry and Muslim Factions in Ilorin Emirate

³⁴ Bilal, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 109.

³⁵ Bilal, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 113.

³⁶ Muhammad Shaykh Ahmad Muhammad, *Al-Madkhal li Dirasah al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah* (Al-Khurtum: Maktabah al-Markaz al-Da'wah, 2010), 169.

³⁷ Bilal, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 113.

³⁸ Bilal, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 116.

³⁹ Bilal, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 113.

⁴⁰ Bilal, *The Evolution of Fiqh*, 118.

Due to the presence of social media across the world, the effects of intra-religious rivalry and sectarian intolerance are felt in the modern time than before. Since the causes of intra-religious rivalry are not far-fetched from the aforementioned, the manifestations of these rivalries in the context of Ilorin Muslims are as follow:

Religious Conflicts

Muslim clerics and their loyalists in Ilorin emirate had begun discriminatory ascription to two major factions of Islamic schools; the Markaziyyah and Adabiyyah to assert their religio-political superiority and hegemony. The Markaziyyah and Adabiyyah factional syndrome has influenced the Muslims' religious dispensation to the extent that the office of Mufti has been politicised in Ilorin emirate and other Yoruba speaking states in Nigeria. Thus, some scholars embark on defaming their rivals to relegate their status, while their disciples are also fueling the rifts to gain prominence. According to Alabi, a Markazi cleric called Abdul-Wasiu Jaqmal was arrested for slandering some late Adabi scholars.⁴¹ Moreover, in 2020, an Ilorin indigenous scholar known as Ero Laliannah was alleged to have coerced two Sunni sisters into sexual harassment over the use of *hijab*.⁴² This is because the cleric viewed *hijab* as an emblem of the Sunni women and a threat to the Sufi practices. Even though, *hijab* remains a common attire of the Shiite women in the emirate.

Social Media Abuse

The media has become an accessible platform for *da'wah* dissemination in the contemporary time. Many young scholars had occupied the social media platforms with ceaseless refutations, character assassination and destructive criticisms against their fellow Muslims. Most scholars are busy with this task, thereby leaving the Islamic awareness that will benefit the common Muslims. In order to gain prominence on controversial issues, some Muslim clerics and their disciples are concocting lies by

⁴¹ Saliu, "Dawah (Propagation) and Conflicts Among Clerics in Ilorin Emirate Alabi," 24.

⁴² The Informant 247, "Lady narrates how Islamic cleric Ero Laliannah and others allegedly beat and caged her for using *hijab*," Facebook, July 9, 2020, https://web.facebook.com/theinformant247/posts/video-lady-narrates-how-islamic-cleric-ero-lalijannah-and-others-allegedly-beat-a/2657564594468348/?_rdc=1&_rdt#.

quoting the Qur'ān and Hadith out of context with apparent interpolated legal intents.

Politicisation of *Da'wah*

In order to gain superiority over one another, some scholars are fond of seeking political appointments and campaigning for politicians, even during their Friday pulpit sermons. For instance, a renowned Ilorin scholar called *Shaykh* Sulayman Faruk Onikijipa fell victim of embarrassment for showing his support for the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2019 general elections after the party members were defeated by their opponents.⁴³

Takfir (Declaring Other Muslims as Infidels)

Some fanatical Muslims are accusing others of infidelity due to rejection of their political and sectarian dispositions. Some Sunni sub-sects developed enmity towards another groups and sometimes relate with their fellow Muslims like the People of the Book. For instance, the Jabatiyyah sect in Ilorin emirate, founded by Muhammad °Ali Jabata, considered all other Muslims as infidels and they forbade consuming any animal slaughtered by other Muslims and prohibited prayer observance behind them.⁴⁴ Even though these ideologies are not peculiar to the Jabatiyyah adherents, they are well known with these religious dispositions than other Muslim factions.

Status of Hadith Among Muslim Factions in Ilorin Emirate

Ilorin emirate is predominantly Muslim city with several denominations. These Muslim groups have contributed to intra-religious rifts. The four prominent groups are the Sufis, Shiites, *Jama'ah al-Tabligh* and Sunnis. Ilorin Muslims, regardless of their specific beliefs, accepted Hadith as the second primary source of Islamic legislation, but with different approaches to authenticating it. Therefore, the study analyses the status of Hadith among the aforementioned factions as below:

⁴³ Alabi, *Da'wah (Propagation) and Conflicts*, 16.

⁴⁴ Abd al-Rahman bin Abd al-Wahid, *Mi'at Gawayah Khalafa biha al-Firqah al-Jabatiyyah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (Ilorin, Maktabah al-Salafiyah, 2024), 77-78.

Sufis

The Sufis generally follow the standard adopted by the traditionists to authenticate Hadith. They also recognise the Sunni Hadith literature. However, they believe in mystical methods of narrating and verifying Hadith.⁴⁵ The Sufi methods of Hadith evaluation are *liqa' al-Nabiy* (Direct contact with the Prophet in dream or while awake to receive or verify Hadith) and *tariq al-kashf* (Receiving knowledge through clairvoyance). An example of such Hadith narrated via these methods is the Hadith repeatedly mentioned in *al-Futuh al-Makkiyyah* by Ibn 'Araby which reads: "He who knows himself, knows his Lord."⁴⁶

Nevertheless, from the perception of the orthodox Muslims, the *mu'allaq* (Hadith without sanad) is among the weak Hadiths, because the veracity of its transmitters cannot be verified. The Hadiths narrated through the aforementioned mystical methods also fall in this category. Hence, they are fabricated reports, because their narration from the Prophet cannot be established.⁴⁷ Similarly, the supernatural ability of acquiring knowledge through dream was also claimed by a famous Ilorin Sufi cleric, *Shaykh Muhammad al-Labib*. Al-Ilory surmised that the claim of receiving knowledge through dream is incredible as there is no reliable report from the Prophet to substantiate the claim. Thus, he asserted: "whatsoever is not a miracle for the Prophet cannot be considered a prodigy for the saint."⁴⁸ The modern Sufis usually adopt the orientalist method of Hadith criticism by focusing on the *matn* (content) at the expense of the *isnad* (chain of transmitters).⁴⁹ This can be seen when the Ilorin Muslim cleric called Jaqmal averred that the soundness of Hadith is contingent on the soundness of its content.⁵⁰

Shiites (Twelvers)

⁴⁵ Muhammad bin Idris al-Shafi'i, *Al-Risalah* (Kaherah: Dar al-Gaddi' al-Jadid, 2017), 446.

⁴⁶ Idri M.Ag, and Rohaizan Baru, "The Criticism on Sufi's Hadith Narration Methods," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 7.5 (2017), 448.

⁴⁷ Idri, and Rohaizan, "The Criticism on Sufi's Hadith," 450.

⁴⁸ Al-Ilory, *Lamahat al-Ballur*, 57.

⁴⁹ Al-Fulani, *Fi Sahih al-Bukhari*, 11.

⁵⁰ AbdulWasiu (Jaqmal), "Talení Towa Pelu Anabi Ninu Koto," Facebook, July 16, 2025, <http://www.facebook.com/share/v/16dKARKkFa/>.

For the Shiites, Hadith includes traditions from the Prophet and the twelve impeccable Imams.⁵¹ To the Twelvers, the Imams occupy the status similar to that of the Prophets as they were saddled with the continuity of the Prophetic mission.⁵² Unlike the Sunnis, the Twelvers held that the reports of the Imams are similitudes of the Qur'an. In this regard, the Twelver traditions are considered authentic without necessarily relying on a chain of transmission.⁵³ This implies that the verdicts of the Imams are binding on the Shiite laity like the Qur'an injunctions.⁵⁴

To the Shiites, Hadiths were written in two stages: first, a book written by ʿAli bin Abi Talib under the Prophet's instruction called *Sahifah al-Jamiʿ*, the Twelver first book of *Shari'ah*; second, the *Usul*, comprising 400 Hadiths from ʿAli bin Abi Talib to Hasan al-ʿAskari.⁵⁵ They categorise Hadith as *sahih*, *hasan*, *muwaththaq*, and *daif*, rejecting only *daif*, (traditions that do not emanate from the twelve Imams) as legal proof, including narrations from the Companions, *tabi'un* (successors) and Sunnis, due to their rejection of ʿAli's Imamate.⁵⁶ Moreover, the four most reliable Shiite Hadith collections are *al-Kafi*, *al-Istibsar*, *al-Tahzib* and *Man la Yahduruh al-Faqih*.⁵⁷ Al-Ilory argued that the Shiites used to elevate their Hadith collections above others.⁵⁸ This is due to the revered status of the twelve Imams in Shiism.

Jama'ah al-Tabligh

The *Tabligh* movement is closer to the Sufis in their approach to Hadith evaluation. The founder of the movement, Muhammad Ilyas, was a Sufi who believed in clairvoyance.⁵⁹ While they do

⁵¹ Gefi Melyana Saputri, Mokhammad Priyo Jatmiko, and Ulul Lyatin, "Hadith Studies from the Shia Perspective: Characteristics, Validity and Literature of Shia Hadith," *Jurnal Studi Hadis* 9.1 (2023), 174.

⁵² Saputri, Jatmiko and Lyatin, "Hadith Studies," 175.

⁵³ Saputri, Jatmiko and Lyatin, "Hadith Studies," 175.

⁵⁴ Saputri, Jatmiko and Lyatin, "Hadith Studies," 176.

⁵⁵ Saputri, Jatmiko and Lyatin, "Hadith Studies," 177.

⁵⁶ Saputri, Jatmiko and Lyatin, "Hadith Studies," 178-179.

⁵⁷ Abd al-Rahman bin Sa'd al-Shithri, *'Aqa'id al-Shi'ah al-Ithnay 'Ashariyyah* (Kaherah: Dar al-Kutub wa al-Wathiq al-Qawmiyyah, 2006), 74.

⁵⁸ Adam Abdullah al-Ilory, *Usul al-Mazahib wa al-Fiqh wa al-Tashri'* (Lagos: Dar al-Nur Printing Company, n.d.), 31.

⁵⁹ Muhammad bin Nasir al-'Arini, *Kashf Shubah Ahl al-Dalal wa Kitab al-Tabligh Fada'il al-'Amal* (Riyadh: Firshah Maktabah al-Malik Fahd al-Wataniyyah Athnaha al-Nashr, 2014), 93.

not have unique criteria for Hadith authentication, they are fond of quoting weak and unfounded Hadith in their mosque and peripatetic preaching as enshrined in their revered Hadith book entitled *Fada'il al-A'cmal*. In Ilyas's exposition of the book contents, he strongly asserted; "it entails sound, weak and fabricated Hadith ..."⁶⁰ However, some scholars provided plausible excuses for permitting weak reports in encouraging meritorious deeds.⁶¹

Sunnis

The Sunnis are those who adhere to the Qur'an and Hadith and they are sometimes referred to as *ahl al-hadith* for prioritising Hadith in interpreting the Islamic law. They value independent reasoning and prioritise religious texts. Unlike the Sufis, they adopt the traditional method of Hadith evaluation.⁶² Some examples of voluminous Sunni Hadith literature were written by *Shaykh* Muhammad bin Nasir al-Din al-Albani and *Shaykh* 'Ali bin Adam al-Ityubi. They follow the traditional method of grading Hadith into *sahih*, *hasan* and *da'if*. They believe that, the criteria for authenticating Hadith are relating to both content and chain of transmitters. These criteria are encapsulated as continuity in the chain of authorities ('ittisal al-sanad), uprightness and retentiveness of the reporter ('adalah wa tamam al-dabt) as well as absence of anomalies (shuzuz) and hidden defect ('illah). *Hasan* is above the conditions of a weak Hadith, while *da'if* is a tradition that is below the conditions of *hasan*. Only *sahih* and *hasan* are considered reliable legal proofs, though some scholars allow weak Hadith for meritorious acts with stringent conditions.⁶³

Polemics on Selected Hadiths Among Ilorin Emirate Muslims

This segment analyses some Prophetic traditions that have contributed to intra-religious rivalry among Muslim factions within the research locale.

⁶⁰ Al-'Arini, *Kashf Shubah*, 106.

⁶¹ Al-'Arini, *Kashf Shubah*, 116.

⁶² Al-Fulalni, *Fi Sahih*, 10.

⁶³ Muhammad bin Salih al-Uthaymin, *Sharh al-Manzumah al-Bayquniyyah* (Kaherah: Maktabah al-Hady al-Muhammadiyah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 2013), 27-30.

Ja'far's Martyrdom and Consolation of the Bereaved Family

عن عبد الله بن جعفر قال: لما جاء نعي جعفر قال رسول
الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم: اصنعوا لآل جعفر طعاما فقد
أتاهم ما يشغلهم أو أمر يشغلهم

Narrated Abdullah bin Ja'far who said: When news of the death of Ja'far was brought, the Messenger of Allah said: Prepare food for the Ja'far's family, for there has come to them that which is keeping them busy or something which is keeping them busy.⁶⁴

Death is inevitable for every mortal. Islam sees death as a transition from ephemeral to eternal life. When a Muslim passes away, it is an obligation for his fellow Muslims to console his bereaved family. This condolence visit alleviates their grief through empathy.⁶⁵ The Prophet offered condolence to some bereaved families to inculcate the practice in his Companions and relatives. Besides, it is highly encouraged that Muslim neighbours and relatives prepare meals for the bereaved family as part of their condolence visit.

Despite the unambiguous instruction given to the Companions to prepare meals for Ja'far's bereaved family in the Hadith text, the scholars in Ilorin emirate had engaged in rivalry and juristic polemics over the cultural practice of convening at the residence of a bereaved Muslim after the 7th day of his demise for congregational prayer, tribute and get-together to beseech Allah's mercy for the deceased. This practice is common in Ilorin emirate and its environs. The uncompromising dispute centers on whether it is permissible for the deceased family to prepare meals for their visitors on the 7th day funeral ceremony. This funeral gathering is traditionally known as *fida'* (atonement).

⁶⁴ Muhammad bin Yazeed al-Qazwini, *English Translation of Sunan Ibn Majjah*, trans. Nasir al-Din al-Khattab (Riyadh: Maktabah Dar al-Salam, 2007), Hadith No: 1610, Vol. 3, 451.

⁶⁵ Abu Bakr Jabir al-Jaza'iri, *Minhaj al-Muslim* (Kaherah: Sharkah al-Quds li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 2008), 233.

Yusuf cited al-Ilory to have opined that since prayers benefit the deceased, it is legally permissible in this context to organise *fida'* at the residence of the bereaved family and to present meals to the visitors on behalf of the deceased. Al-Sayuti was said to have espoused this opinion.⁶⁶ However, al-Ilory held another view that considered *fida'* as one of the heretical practices introduced by the early Yoruba Muslim scholars to proselytise people into the fold of Islam.⁶⁷ The proponents of *fida'* argued that Q53:39 must not be construed as prohibiting praying for the deceased Muslim as the message of the verse refers to the infidels.⁶⁸ Hence, it is irrational to argue against the practice due to copious proofs encouraging righteous acts on behalf of a deceased Muslim. Another scholar added that the verse represents *shar' man qablana* (previous law), which has been abrogated in this nation.⁶⁹ Moreover, the proponents of *fida'* cited the Hadith below:

Asim bin Kulaib narrated from his father that an Ansari man said: We attended a funeral with the Messenger of Allah and I saw the Messenger of Allāh by the graveside, instructing the gravedigger: Make it wide by his feet and make it wide by his head. When he came back, he was met by a man who brought an invitation from a woman. He came, and the food was served, and he put out his hand, and the people put out their hands and ate. Our fathers saw the Messenger of Allah, chewing a morsel in his mouth, and then he said: Is it not the meat of a sheep that was taken without its owners' permission.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Yusuf Badmas Olarewaju, and Yusuph Dauda Gambari, "The Thoughts of Shaykh Adam Abdullahi al-Ilory (1917-1992) on Islam and Cultural Practices among Yoruba Muslims in Nigeria," *IMU Journal of Human Sciences* 5.1 (2023), 24.

⁶⁷ Adam Abdullahi al-Ilory, *Al-Islam fi Nayjiriyya* (s.l.: s.n., n.d.), 143-144.

⁶⁸ Abdullah bin Ibrahim Ajikobi, *Tahrir al-Burhan fi Kashf Shubhah Tawdih al-Bayan* (Ilorin: Aksod Design, 2020), 63.

⁶⁹ Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr al-Misri, *Tasdid al-Ara' fi Masail al-Ta'ziyah wa al-Ihdad wa al-Du'a'* (Ilorin: Dar al-Salam Printing and Publication, 2020), 67.

⁷⁰ Sulaiman bin Ash'ath, *English Translation of Sunan Abu Dawud*, trans. Yaser Qadhi (Riyadh: Maktabah Dar al-Salam, 2008), Hadith No: 3332, Vol. 4, 62-63.

According to the proponents of *fida'*, the above narration justifies that the Prophet had once attended a funeral ceremony as the narrator was reported to have said, *he was met by a man who brought an invitation from his wife*. Thus, they upheld that this narration permitted *fida'*. However, al-Misri has refuted this opinion, quoting al-Ahwadhi that the author of *Mishkat* erred in the Hadith text. This is because the third person singular pronoun which suggests invitation was omitted by Ahmad in his *Musnad*. Since *fida'* meal is a category of *ṣadaqah*, it is unlawful for the Prophet to eat from such a meal.⁷¹ Al-Misri juxtaposed *fida'* practice with *‘asha’ al-walidayn* (the parents' dinner), a posthumous banquet usually organised by a bereaved child for his late parents in Arabia.⁷² He added that *‘asha’ al-walidayn* is heterodox (*bid‘ah*), while *fida'* is detestable (*makruh*). Al-Misri further claimed that the latter view was upheld by the mainstream jurists. In contradistinction to his view, he submitted that *fida'* practice in the present Yoruba society has become an avenue to violating the Islamic precepts,⁷³ while al-Ilory held that some scholars later declared it heretical.⁷⁴ Regarding the aforementioned Hadith on Ja‘far’s martyrdom, al-Misri declared it inauthentic as one of its transmitters called Khalid bin Sarah al-Makhzumi is *majhul al-hal* (unknown).⁷⁵ Nonetheless, he averred that Q5:2 espoused preparing meals for the bereaved family⁷⁶ and if the report was proven authentic, it does not clearly prohibit the bereaved family from preparing meals for their visitors after being relieved of their grief.⁷⁷ He buttressed this view with the proof below:

Narrated Sa’d bin ‘Ubadah who said: I said: O Messenger of Allāh, my mother has died; shall I give charity on her behalf? He said: Yes. I

⁷¹ Ibrahim Nur al-Din, *Tasdid al-Ara’ fi Masail al-Ta’ziyah*, 40-41.

⁷² Ibrahim Nur al-Din, *Tasdid al-Ara’ fi Masail al-Ta’ziyah*, 44-45.

⁷³ Ibrahim Nur al-Din, *Tasdid al-Ara’ fi Masail al-Ta’ziyah*, 42.

⁷⁴ Adam Abdullah al-Ilory, *Al-Islam wa al-Taqlid al-Jahiliyyah* (Kaherah: Maktabah Wahbah, 2012), 88.

⁷⁵ Ibrahim Nur al-Din, *Tasdid al-Ara’ fi Masail al-Ta’ziyah*, 39.

⁷⁶ Ibrahim Nur al-Din, *Tasdid al-Ara’ fi Masail al-Ta’ziyah*, 35.

⁷⁷ Ibrahim Nur al-Din, *Tasdid al-Ara’ fi Masail al-Ta’ziyah*, 39.

said: What kind of charity is the best? He said:
Providing drinkable water.⁷⁸

The above Hadith is weak⁷⁹ as al-Zahabi held that its chain of transmitters is unconnected between Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab and Sa'd bin 'Ubadah. In spite of the weak status of the tradition, al-Misri argued that the Prophet's permission of providing water indicates the best form of charity and not a restriction.⁸⁰ Hence, the proponents of *fida'* argued that since there is no explicit proof regarding the conduct of prayer for the deceased, it is therefore correct to organise prayer for the deceased.⁸¹ They argued that the Prophet was reported to have said: "When a man dies all his good deeds come to an end except three: perpetual charity, beneficial knowledge and a righteous son who prays for him."⁸² Thus, the Hadith also formed the basis of the *fida'* proponents' argument.

Contrary to the foregoing, the antagonists of *fida'* ceremony argued that since Islam believes that every act of worship is indefeasible, any form of *'ibadah* that is not sanctioned by Allah and His Messenger is void as the latter warned: "whoever introduces something into this matter of ours that is not part of it will have it rejected."⁸³ Hence, the practice of *fida'* is heretical as the Prophet had prescribed condolence visit for his Companions.⁸⁴ In a bid to relief their grief, he enjoined the Muslims to prepare meals for the bereaved family as he said: "Prepare food for Ja'far's family..."⁸⁵ Thus, they upheld that organising get-together by the bereaved family after burial is akin to the culture of mourning the dead in the Pre-Islamic era.⁸⁶ They added that the ways to seek forgiveness for the deceased are described below:

⁷⁸ Ahmad bin Shu'aib al-Nasa'i, *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, trans. Muḥammad Muhsin Khan (Riyadh: Dar al-Salam Publishers and Distribution, 2007), Hadith No: 3694, Vol. 4, 376.

⁷⁹ Al-Nasa'i, *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, Vol. 4, 376.

⁸⁰ Ibrahim Nur al-Din, *Tasdid al-Ara' fi Masail al-Ta'ziyah*, 45.

⁸¹ Ibrahim Nur al-Din, *Tasdid al-Ara' fi Masail al-Ta'ziyah*, 79.

⁸² Al-Nasa'i, *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, Hadith No: 3681, Vol. 4, 371.

⁸³ Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Riyadh: Dar al-Salam Publishers and Distribution, 2007), Hadith No: 1718, Vol. 4, 497-498.

⁸⁴ Dawud Muhammad al-Salih al-Zubayr, *al-Ta'liqat al-Mufidah 'ala Risalah al-Ruh la Tamut* (Ilorin: Abu Abeeat Prints Media, 2010), 75-77.

⁸⁵ Al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn Majjah*, Hadith No: 1610, Vol.3, 451.

⁸⁶ Akbar Shah Najeebadi, *The History of Islam* (Riyadh: Dar al-Salam International Publishers and Distributors, 2000), 74-75.

Narrated ‘Aishah that the Prophet said: There is no deceased person for whom a number of Muslims reaching one hundred offer the funeral prayer, all of them interceding for him, but their intercession for him will be accepted.⁸⁷

Based on the above, the antagonists of *fida’* argued that doing the opposite of the Prophet’s recommendation by preparing meals by the bereaved family is similar to *niyahah* (wailing) in its technical sense. Contrary to the *fida’* proponents’ view, Ibn Hajar held that Khalid bin Sarah al-Makhzumi was a truthful and reliable reporter which justifies the soundness of the Hadith on Ja‘far’s martyrdom.⁸⁸ Ahmad further graded him as *thiqah* (trustworthy). Since opposing *fida’* ceremony does not contradict praying for the deceased,⁸⁹ the perpetual rewards of the deceased were explicit in the *Sunnah*.⁹⁰ Hence, the Hadiths cited by al-Suyuti for permitting funeral ceremony are either weak or unfounded. Since al-Ilory and al-Misri held that funeral ceremony is *bid‘ah* (heterodox) like the case of ‘*asha’ al-walidayn* in Arabia, it equally justifies the prohibition of *fida’* as it was not sanctioned by the Prophet when he lost his wife and children. Furthermore, al-Misri’s claim that the mainstream jurists considered *fida’* as *makruh* (detestable) is inaccurate as their argument implied that the act is *al-makruh al-tahrimi* (prohibited). This is because the word *makruh* is likewise used in Q17:38 to describe some prohibited actions. Al-Ahwadhi quoted al-Qarih to have said:

⁸⁷ Al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No: 947, Vol. 2, 479.

⁸⁸ Ahmad bin ‘Ali bin Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *Taqrib al-Tahzib*, Narrator No: 1638 (Kaherah: Sharikah al-Quds li al-Tasdir, 2008), 182.

⁸⁹ Al-Zubayr, *al-Ta’liqat al-Mufidah*, 72.

⁹⁰ Al-Zubayr, *al-Ta’liqat al-Mufidah*, 44-53.

واصطناع أهل البيت الطعام لأجل اجتماع الناس عليه بدعة
مكروهة بل صح عن جرير رضي الله عنه كنا نعدّه من
النياحة وهو ظاهر في التحريم⁹¹

The practice of organising posthumous get-together by the bereaved family is a detestable heresy as Jarir affirmed that the Prophet's Companions considered it as a form of wailing which is apparently forbidden.

Based on the above, the proponents of *fida*' considered funeral ceremony as heresy.⁹² Additionally, it is rational to apply the rule of blocking the means to evils to redress the practice. Ibn Fudi was a vanguard of this opinion. He posited that the practice of preparing meal by the bereaved family to serve their visitors on the 7th day after the burial is heretical. He further quoted al-Madyuni to have said that the people's practice of passing a night at the residence of the bereaved family is akin to dead mourning of the pre-Islamic era.⁹³ By and large, the situation of the funeral ceremony in Ilorin emirate and Yoruba speaking states in Nigeria is synonymous with marriage solemnisation. This was the opinion of al-Ilory.

Anas's Tradition and the Culture of Greeting with Genuflection

عن أنس بن مالك قال : قال رجل: يا رسول الله! الرجل
منا يلقي أخاه أو صديقه أينحني له؟ قال: لا قال: فليزمه
ويقبله قال: لا، قال: فيأخذ بيده و يصفحه، قال : نعم.

Anas bin Malik narrated that a man said: O Messenger of Allah! When a man among us meets his brother or his friend should he bow

⁹¹ Muhammad Abd al-Rahman bin Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, *Tuhfah al-Ahwaz Sharh Jami' al-Tirmizi*, Vol.4 (s.l.: Dar al-Fikar li al-Tiba' wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', n.d.), 77.

⁹² Ibrahim Nur al-Din, *Tasdid al-Ara' fi Masail al-Ta'ziyah*, 42.

⁹³ Uthman bin Fudi, *Ihya' al-Sunnah wa Ikhmad al-Bid'ah* (s.l.: Abdullah al-Yassar al-Tijjani Publishing House, n.d.), 88-99.

to him? He said: No. He said: Should he embrace him and kiss him? He said: No. He said: Should he take his hand and shake it? He said: Yes.⁹⁴

Islam, like other world religions, accentuates the culture of respecting elders. One of the Prophet's divine missions was to perfect good morals.⁹⁵ It is incumbent upon every Muslim to respect his fellow brothers in faith and the younger ones towards the elderly ones.⁹⁶ Greeting is given a paramount position in Islām.⁹⁷ Qur'anic 4:24 makes replying Islamic greetings a compulsory act that attracts spiritual rewards. However, the Islamic manner of greeting is seemingly conflicting with the Yoruba people's culture.⁹⁸ In Ilorin emirate, the practice of bowing and kneeling while greeting is a prominent culture and failure to do so for the elders is considered as arrogance.⁹⁹ Over decades, many Muslim reformists in Nigeria had preached against this culture. For instance, Ibn Fodio was noted to have condemned it in Northern Nigeria and he declared it as a pre-Islamic culture.¹⁰⁰ In Southern Nigeria, al-Ilory had prohibited the culture¹⁰¹ including the late *Shaykhs* Kamalu al-Din al-Adabi, Ahmad Alaye and Abd al-Ghaniy Aboto in their public preaching. Despite the revivalist *da'wah* approach of the aforementioned renowned scholars, the issue of genuflecting while greeting lingers Sunni-Sufi divides in Ilorin emirate. The bone of contention revolves around Anas's tradition analysis.

The proponents of greeting with genuflection argued that the tradition of Anas was the major report relied upon by the

⁹⁴ Muhammad bin Isa al-Tirmizi, *Jami' al-Tirmizi*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Riyadh: Dar al-Salam Publishers and Distribution, 2007), Hadith No: 2728, Vol.5, 112-113.

⁹⁵ Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad* (Kaherah: Ibdā' li al-'Ilam wa al-Nashr, 2019), Hadith No: 273, 72.

⁹⁶ Ash'ath, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Hadith No: 4943, Vol. 5, 330.

⁹⁷ Muhammad bin Ismail, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Riyadh: Dar al-Salam Publishers and Distribution, 1997), Hadith No: 6234, Vol. 8, 142-143.

⁹⁸ Olarewaju, and Gambari, "The Thoughts of Shaykh Adam," 20.

⁹⁹ Olarewaju, and Gambari, "The Thoughts of Shaykh Adam," 21

¹⁰⁰ Fudi, *Ihya' al-Sunnah*, 216.

¹⁰¹ Olarewaju, and Gambari, "The Thoughts of Shaykh Adam," 21.

antagonists.¹⁰² They further articulated that the Hadith is graded as *munkar* (unreliable solitary report) due to a reporter called Hanzalah al-Sadusi who had been declared a weak reporter by Ahmad bin Hanbal, Yahya bin Ma'in and Yahya al-Qahtan.¹⁰³ They added that the Hadith content and its chain of transmission are both weak as hugging, kissing and kneeling were permitted by the Prophet in other authentic reports.¹⁰⁴ The proponents of genuflection argued that another tradition relied upon by the antagonists was the report of Mu'az recorded by Abu Da'wud.¹⁰⁵ Al-Misri posited that the tradition of Mu'az graded *hasan* could not be acceded to as there was no historical antecedent to support Mu'az's sojourn to Syria during the Prophet's lifetime as evident in his journey to Yaman.¹⁰⁶

Yusuf added that Ibn Kathir and al-Zahabi upheld that Mu'az was only sent to Yaman by the Prophet.¹⁰⁷ So, al-Misri averred that even if the report was said to have prohibited genuflecting, it is not suffice to condemn Yoruba greeting culture as the report is peculiar to the Syrian people who aimed at idolising their kings and priests.¹⁰⁸ Surprisingly, the proponents agreed with the antagonists that the Prophet prohibited his Companions from bending for him to dissuade them from imitating the People of Book.¹⁰⁹ They added that the Arabs are not aware of genuflecting as a manner of greeting one another.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, they held that the Companions knelt before the Prophet in the tradition of Anas which reads:

Narrated Anas bin Malik: One day Allah's Messenger came out all (before the people) and 'Abdullah bin Huzafah stood up and asked (him) Who is my father? The Prophet replied,

¹⁰² Yusuph Dauda Gambari, and Oniye Olayinka Ibrahim, "An Examination of Salafiyah Scholars' Discourse on Kneeling and Bending as Manners of Greeting in Islam," *IJUM Journal of Human Sciences* 5.2 (2023), 87.

¹⁰³ Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr al-Misri, *Kashf al-Ghita' 'amma fi Ba'di al-Ara' min al-Akhla'* (Ilorin: Dar al-Salam Printing and Publication, 2019), 55-57.

¹⁰⁴ Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr, *Kashf al-Ghita'*, 59-60.

¹⁰⁵ Ash'ath, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Hadith No: 2140, Vol. 2, 549-550.

¹⁰⁶ Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr, *Kashf al-Ghita'*, 48.

¹⁰⁷ Gambari, and Ibrahim, "Salafiyah Scholars' Discourse," 9.

¹⁰⁸ Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr, *Kashf al-Ghita'*, 60-61.

¹⁰⁹ Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr, *Kashf al-Ghita'*, 62.

¹¹⁰ Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr, *Kashf al-Ghita'*, 62.

Your father is Hudzfah. The Prophet, told them repeatedly (in anger) to ask him anything they liked. ‘Umar knelt down before the Prophet and said thrice, We accept Allah as (our) Lord and Islam as (our) religion and Muhammad as (our) Prophet. After that the Prophet became silent.¹¹¹

From the above, the proponents of genuflection justifies that ‘Umar knelt down for the Prophet. They claimed that any kneeling that is not meant to idolise a person is permitted.¹¹² Similarly, they argued that Abu Talhah had once knelt down before the Prophet to shoot arrows in defence of the Prophet in the battlefield.¹¹³ Additionally, they averred that prostration (*sujud*) under the *Shari‘ah* involves the use of seven specific parts of the body stated in Ibn ‘Abbas’s tradition, which could not be met while kneeling alone.¹¹⁴ They cited some *mufasssirun* to have opined that prostration with the intent of greeting is permissible, while Ibn Kathir posited that *sujud al-tahiyah* (bending while greeting) which was upheld by the previous nations had been abrogated by saying *salam* (Islamic greetings) in this nation.¹¹⁵ So they said that since respect is undefined by Islam, people could adopt their diverse culture of greetings in consonance with the legal maxim which states: “custom is authoritative.”¹¹⁶

The antagonists of bending while greeting held that the Anas’s Hadith was graded *hasan* due to other corroborative proofs by al-Nawawi, al-Tirmidzi, Ibn-Hajar and al-Albani after a thorough examination of the alleged reporter called Hanzalah al-Sadusi recorded in its chain of transmitters.¹¹⁷ Since the Hadith is considered reliable by some traditionists, denouncing bowing while greeting cannot be overruled.¹¹⁸ Likewise, it is shallow to deny the authenticity of Mu‘az’s tradition due to absence of

¹¹¹ Ismail, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No: 93, Vol. 1, 111-112.

¹¹² Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr, *Kashf al-Ghita’*, 63.

¹¹³ Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr, *Kashf al-Ghita’*, 65.

¹¹⁴ Gambari, and Ibrahim, “Salafiyah Scholars’ Discourse,” 91.

¹¹⁵ Gambari, and Ibrahim, “Salafiyah Scholars’ Discourse,” 85.

¹¹⁶ Ibrahim Nur al-Din al-Zubayr, *Kashf al-Ghita’*, 68.

¹¹⁷ Abd al-Fattah Abd al-Wahhab Sarumi, *Hukm al-Inhina’ ‘inda al-Tahiyah* (Ilorin: Dar al-Salam li al-Nashri wa al-Tawhiyah, 2024), 34-35.

¹¹⁸ Ajikobi, *Tahrir al-Burhan*, 239.

historical evidence to substantiate the incident. Unlike Hadith literature, most historical sources had crooked chains of transmitters.¹¹⁹ Hence, Prophetic report is the yardstick for verifying historical sources, not vice versa. They added that since Islamic rulings embody universality, the reason why the Prophet prohibited bending for his Companions was to block the means to hero worship. They further analysed the Hadith of Mu'az as follows:

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Abi Awfa who said: When Mu'az bin Jabal came, he prostrated to the Prophet, who said: What is this, O Mu'az? He said: I went and saw them prostrating to their bishops and patricians (i.e. aristocrats), and I wanted to do that for you. The Messenger of Allah said: Do not do that. If I were to command anyone to prostrate to anyone other than Allah, I would have commanded women to prostrate to their husbands...¹²⁰

Based on the above, they argued that the word *sujud* (prostration) connotes bending as the text entails the manners of greeting.¹²¹ They argued that there is no explicit tradition that stated that the Companions knelt down for the Prophet to honour him.¹²² Rather they knelt before the Prophet due to unusual circumstances.¹²³ Since any pronounced statement takes precedence over the inferred meaning in Islamic legal system, Abu Talhah's kneeling to shoot arrow in war could not serve as a basis for kneeling while greeting. Hence, his kneeling in warfare only describes his posture while defending the Prophet. Rather, it is a similitude of bending to pick up some fallen items on behalf of another person or coercing a child to kneel down due to punishable offence in school or at home.

They insisted that since Qur'an 41:37 prohibits prostrating for the sun and the moon, it implies that bending for any creation

¹¹⁹ Al-Khamis, *Hiqbah min al-Ta'rikh*, 14.

¹²⁰ Al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn Majjah*, Hadith No: 1853, Vol. 3, 63.

¹²¹ Ajikobi, *Tahrir al-Burhan*, 234.

¹²² Ajikobi, *Tahrir al-Burhan*, 244.

¹²³ Sarumi, *Hukm al-Inhina'*, 42.

other than Allah is virtually prohibited. ‘Abd al-Fattah quoted Ibn Manzur to have defined *sujud* as bending. He said: “indeed prostration means bending” and al-Tabari interpreted *sujjadan* (prostrating) in Qur’an 4:154 as bowing.¹²⁴ They held that the Islamic culture of greeting is saying *salam* as entrenched in Qur’an 4:86.¹²⁵ Hence, they surmised that greeting forms an integral part of worship in Islam and not mere culture. They clarified that the validity of any cultural practice is contingent on the provision of the Islamic law.¹²⁶ Although bowing might be endorsed by the laws of the past Prophets, it had been proscribed for Prophet Muhammad’s nation.¹²⁷ Credence to this claim was Ja’far’s response to Negus’s courtiers who rebuked him for not kneeling before the Abyssinian king. So he said, “we were commanded to kneel only to Allah.”¹²⁸ It is clear from the foregoing that kneeling to pay homage to the king was the Abyssinian custom before it was abolished for the Prophet’s Companions. Hence, since kneeling while greeting has been reformed by Islam, any attempt to prove otherwise is baseless.¹²⁹ It is suffice to submit that the proponents’ polemics of bending while greeting is inaccurate¹³⁰ as renowned Yoruba Muslim scholars like al-Ilory,¹³¹ Kamal al-Din al-Adaby and Ahmad Alaye frowned at the culture in their scholarly works and public preaching.

Qays’s Tradition and Denigration of the Prophet’s Companions

في أصحابي اثنا عشر منافقا، فيهم ثمانية لا يدخلون
الجنة حتى يلج الجمل في سم الخياط، ثمانية منهم

¹²⁴ Sarumi, *Hukm al-Inhina*’, 26.

¹²⁵ Sarumi, *Hukm al-Inhina*’, 19.

¹²⁶ Sarumi, *Hukm al-Inhina*’, 22.

¹²⁷ Isma’īl bin Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim* (Kaherah: Dar al-Tawqifiyyah li al-Turath, 2009), Vol. 2, 723.

¹²⁸ Leila Azzam, and Aisha Gouverneur, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad* (s.l.: s.n., n.d.), 30.

¹²⁹ Ajikobi, *Tahrir al-Burhan*, 226.

¹³⁰ Sarumi, *Hukm al-Inhina*’, 64-77.

¹³¹ Sarumi, *Hukm al-Inhina*’, 49.

تَكْفِيكَهُمُ الدُّبَيْلَةُ وَأَرْبَعَةٌ لَمْ أَحْفَظْ مَا قَالَ شُعْبَةُ فِيهِمْ،
وقال عُندَرُ أَرَاهُ قَالَ: فِي أُمَّتِي اثْنَا عَشَرَ مَنَافِقًا...

Among my Companions (followers) there are twelve hypocrites, among whom are eight that will not enter Paradise until a camel passes through the hole of a needle. A flame of fire will be enough for them, and (the other) four. I do not remember what Shu'bah (a narrator) said about them. Ghundar (one of the narrators) said: I rather thought the Prophet said: Among my nation, there will be twelve hypocrites...¹³²

The Companions were the scribes of the Prophets and transmitters of his divine mission. They attained an enviable status in Islam for their meritorious spending in Allah's cause, fighting in the battle and giving preference for the Prophet over themselves; Qur'an 59:8-9 praise the emigrants and the Madinites, while Qur'an 9:100 guarantees their entry into paradise. Even though they were not impeccable, Qur'an 9:117 guarantees their repentance for standing in the Prophet's defence in the hour of hardship. Today, the Shiites and some Sufi scholars in Ilorin emirate had begun to debase the status of the Companions by accusing them of hypocrisy. The Sunnis had in turn started to refute their claims through scholarly write-ups, social media rejoinders and radio programmes. One of the Hadiths that generated the debate is the Qays's tradition.

Unlike the Shiites and some Sufis in Ilorin who held that the above report implies that some Companions were hypocrites, the Sunnis held that the phrase *fi ashabi* does not necessarily refer to the Companions. However, the Shiites insisted that Qur'an 9:102 established the presence of hypocrites among the Prophet's Companions. They therefore categorised the Companions into three; *sahabah al-uzma* (great Companions), *munafiqun* (hypocrites) and pretenders. To the Shiites, a Companion refers to

¹³² Khan, trans., *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No: 2779, Vol.7, 179-180.

a person who met and sat with the Prophet.¹³³ This definition is crooked as it incorporates even the *kuffar* who met the Prophet and fought against him in the battle. Therefore, the Sunnis posited that Islam acceptance and dying upon the Prophetic mission qualifies a person who met the Prophet as a Companion. This criterion of faith excludes the infidels of Arabia from the true meaning of a Companion.

Pertinently, letter *min* (amidst) and *fi* (among) in the Hadith text could be used interchangeably in Arabic syntax as used in Qur'an 62:9 and Qur'an 27:12. They added that there are many other narrations of this Hadith with *min* such as Hadith 6585-6586 in Sahih al-Bukhari.¹³⁴ The Sunnis argued that the word *ashabi* in the Hadith should not be literally interpreted as the real Prophet's Companions as Ghundar clarified that the intended meaning in the text could be interpreted as *'ummatī* (my nation). This is simply because the Arabic lexicographers viewed people living together in a particular place and period as *ashab* (Companions) regardless of their faith. In fact, Qur'an 53:2 addressed the Prophet as *sahib* (Companion) of his nation, even though the people he was sent to were not yet believers. The Sunnis averred that Qur'an 9:56 had clarified that the hypocrites were not among the *sahabah*,¹³⁵ while Qur'an 47:16 affirmed that the hypocrites were deprived of reporting the Prophet's speech. Moreover, the Musnad of Ahmad established that when 'Umar sought the Prophet's permission to behead the hypocrites' leader, 'Abdullah bin 'Ubayy, he replied, "Leave him alone, I feared that people might say that Muhammad is killing his *ashab* (Companions)." The usage of the word *ashab* in this context implies to prevent people from insinuating that he killed his real Companions.¹³⁶ So, the statement itself excludes the hypocrites from his true Companions. It is lucid from the foregoing that the Shiite misconception about the identity of the

¹³³ Shaykh Habibullah Adam al-Ilory, "Awon Hadīth Anabi Sahihu Bukhari, Sahihu Muslim and others," Facebook, December 11, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/17AP6Fy5EE/>.

¹³⁴ Waliyullah Adeola Adeyemi, "A Study of the Shiite Doctrines and Practices in North-Central Nigeria" (A Published Doctoral Thesis, Kwara State University, Maletе, 2024), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. 183.

¹³⁵ Abdur-Rahman bin Ahmad al-Imam, *'An Sahih al-Bukhari* (Ilorin: Imaice Prints and Translation, 2017), 130.

¹³⁶ Salahuddin Khaluq, *Al-Fiqh al-Ifṭirad wa Tatbiqatuhu 'Al al-Nawaz Al-Mu'asirah* (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2015), 100-101.

Prophet's Companions was due to their inadequate definition, thereby interpreting the word *ashab* from a mere linguistic perspective.¹³⁷

Abu Hurayrah's Tradition and the Second Coming of Prophet [ؑ]Isa (Jesus)

عن أبي هريرة، رضي الله عنه، يقول: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: والَّذي نفسي بيده ليوشكن أن ينزل فيكم بن مريم صلى الله عليه وسلم حكماً مقسطاً، فيكسر الصليب، ويقتل الخنزير، ويضع الجزية، ويفيض المال حتى لا يقبله أحد

Narrated Abu Hurairah that Allah's Messenger said, By Him (Allah) in Whose Hands my soul is, surely the son of Maryam (Mary) `Isa (Jesus) I will shortly descend amongst you people (Muslims) and will judge mankind justly by the Law of the Qur'an (as a just ruler) and will break the cross and kill the pigs and abolish the *Jizyah* (i.e., tax taken from the non-Muslims, who are under the protection of the Muslim government). Then there will be abundance of money until nobody will accept charitable gifts.¹³⁸

Even though majority of the world Christians were unanimous on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, some Sufi scholars in Ilorin emirate had rejected the descent of Prophet [ؑ]Isa at the end-time. They upheld that Prophet [ؑ]Isa would not return to this world as Qur'an 33:40 had declared Muhammad as the seal of all Prophets. Despite the recurrent reports affirming the Second Coming of the Christ, the uncompromising debate lingers on whether Prophet [ؑ]Isa would return to life or not. The antagonists of [ؑ]Isa's descent argued that the idea of Jesus's return can never

¹³⁷ Adeyemi, "A Study of the Shiite," 180.

¹³⁸ Ismail, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No: 2222, Vol. 3, 235-236.

be attributed to the Prophet, because it is one of the fabricated traditions that were incorporated in Hadith literature by the Jewish slaves of the Umayyad era. They added that belief in the Jesus's Second Coming was a fairy tale fabricated after his death to renew the Christians' hope to seeing Jesus (sic), which their religious leaders had openly retracted in modern time. Therefore, the antagonists upheld that ^ĊIsa's return is irrational as the Hadith emphasises that he would exterminate pigs and destroy crosses. They further reiterated that the Hadith is conflicting with Qur'an 33:40 which had clearly declared Prophet Muhammad as the seal of all Prophets. They added that the phrase *tawaffaytani* in ^ĊIsa's story in Qur'an 5:117 means to cause somebody to die. Hence, they believe that Prophet ^ĊIss had died and was buried.

The proponents of ^ĊIsa's Second Coming argued that the rejection of Jesus's descent is tantamount to rejection of other eschatological notions pronounced by the Prophet among the major signs of the last hour. The first person to denounce ^ĊIsa's descent in Islamic history was a Jewish man called Ibn Saba' who interpreted the word ma^Ċad in Qur'an 28:85 as the basis for Prophet Muhammad's return to this world. He further reiterated that Muhammad deserves such a divine promise than Jesus Christ.¹³⁹ It is pertinent to note that the Muslim scholars across all ages were unanimous on Jesus's Second Coming.¹⁴⁰ So they said that the basis for the belief in ^ĊIsa's descent is detailed below:

And for their saying: We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah, and they did not kill him, nor did they cause his death on the cross, but he was made to appear to them as such. And certainly, those who differ concerning it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge about it, but only follow a conjecture, and they did not kill him for certain; rather, Allah exalted him in His presence. And Allah is ever Mighty, Wise. And there is none of the People of the Book but

¹³⁹ Najeebabadi, *The History*, 402.

¹⁴⁰ Anonymous, *Silsilah al-Rudud al-'Ilmiyyah 'ala Mudir al-Markaz* (Ilorin: al-Salafi Productions, n.d), 7.

will believe in this before his death; and on the day of Resurrection, he will be a witness against them (An-Nisa:157-159).

From the above, the proponents of ^CIsa's descent upheld that Jesus shall return to life as Muhammad's follower and he will die ¹⁴¹ after fulfilling his divine mission. Qur'an 43:61 established that ^CIsa's descent is surely a major sign of the last hour. Hence, recurrent report on ^CIsa's descent complements one of the divine prophecies in Islamic eschatology.¹⁴² Moreover, since the Qur'an is the parameter for authenticating the stories of the past Prophets, it is myopic to falsify the Prophet's prophecy on ^CIsa's descent due to its rejection by some Christian denominations. It is clear that the rejection of ^CIsa's descent is contrary to the consensus of the majority of the world Christians as the Bible reads:

...this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).

Based on the above excerpt from the Bible's King James' Version, it is clear that the Bible affirms ^CIsa's ascent to the heaven and his descent from it at end-time. Any claim otherwise has to be proven by another abrogating verse. It is suffice to submit that if the ascent of Prophet Muhammad to the seventh heaven could be historically and scientifically proven, it is logical to affirm the ascent and descent of Prophet ^CIsa as Qur'an 53:3-4 established that the Prophet does not speak from his whims. Furthermore, the Ahmadis believe that Ghulam Ahmad is the promised Messiah who will reform the entire world, not Prophet ^CIsa.¹⁴³ It is logical to assert that if the return of Prophet ^CIsa is denied, the killing of Dajjāl and other occurrences at end-time is proven abortive.

Al-Shawkani clarified that the word *tawaffaytani* in Qur'an 5:117 has three meanings in the Qur'an; it could denote death as in

¹⁴¹ Hay'ah Kibar al-'Ulama bi al-Azhar al-Sharif, *Al-Raddu 'ala al-Shubuhah al-Waridah min Nayjiryiya* (Kaherah: Azhar al-Sharif, 2021), 2.

¹⁴² Hay'ah Kibar al-'Ulama, *Al-Raddu 'ala al-Shubuhah al-Waridah*, 2-3.

¹⁴³ Abdullah bin Muhammad al-Ghimari, *Iqamah al-Burhan 'ala Nuzuli 'Isa fi Akhiri al-Zaman* (Kaherah: Al-Maktabu al-Azhariyyah li al-Turath, 2006), 12.

Qur'an 39:42, or sleep, as in Qur'an 6:60 and ascent to the heaven as in Qur'an 3:55. Hence, the third meaning buttressed the contextual notion that Prophet ^CIsa had not died. Rather he was caused to sleep and elevated to live in the heaven. This claim was established by several Prophetic reports.¹⁴⁴ Additionally, the word *mutawaffika* in Qur'an 3:55 does not indicate Prophet ^CIsa's death and resurrection as upheld in Christendom. Rather it is a proof of his escape from it. The Qur'an does not affirm Jesus's crucifixion or killing by the Jews.¹⁴⁵ By and large, the fact that Qur'an 4:159 had prophesied Prophet ^CIsa's death after his Second Coming justifies his ascent to the heaven as a temporary termination of his divine mission on earth.

Conclusion

This paper examined the definition of Hadith as perceived by the traditionists. It also established that the Hadith forms the second basis of Islamic legislation after the divine revelation. The writing provided a detailed account of the developmental stages of Hadith in Ilorin emirate; foundation, flowering, standardisation and proliferation stages respectively. The contributions of Ilorin indigenous scholars to Hadith cannot be overemphasized in the later years of Islamic consolidation in the emirate.

Furthermore, the study had accentuated that the causes of intra-religious rivalry in the past and present time are mainly political, theological and juristic differences. The consequences of these rivalries in relation to Muslim denominations in Ilorin emirate are internal rifts, social media abuse, indoctrination, religious politicisation, intolerance and sectarian partisanship. The perception of the various Muslim factions regarding the Prophetic tradition was evaluated. While the Sufis relied on hallucination and direct contact with the Prophet for Hadith authentication, the Shiites insisted on the supremacy of the Ahl al-Bayt reports. The Sunnis diametrically opposed the two groups with a critical examination of the chain of transmitters without discriminatory

¹⁴⁴ Muhammad bin Ali al-Shawkani, *Fath al-Qadir* (s.l.: s.n.: 1994), 135.

¹⁴⁵ Hussaini Yusuf Mabeera, *Jesus in the Qur'an and Bible* (Sokoto: Sarumedia Publishers, 2010), 37.

selection and endorsement of authentic reports from the Ahl al-Bayt and other Prophet's Companions. However, the Sufis shared similar Hadith evaluation methods with the *Jama'ah al-Tabligh* in terms of endorsing weak and unfounded traditions.

The article analysed the tradition on Ja'far's martyrdom in relation to funeral ceremony in Ilorin emirate. It was observed that the proponents and the opponents of *fida'* considered it heretical, even though the former argued for its permissibility due to the excuse of giving charity on behalf of the deceased. So, the study surmised that the practice has no place in Islam as it is akin to the traditionalists' funeral ceremony in the region. Similarly, the research concluded that the proponents' polemics of genuflecting while greeting are sophistic and speculative. It is holistically evident that the Prophet had abolished the culture before the Companions had their first emigration to king Negus's court in Abyssinia.

Additionally, the paper explored the scholarly polemics on denigration of the Companions in Ilorin emirate. It was concluded that the reason behind the discrepancy between the Shiites and other Muslims was the restriction of the definition of a *sahabi* to its literal meaning. Even though there were pretenders among the Prophet's Companions at the formative years of Islam, the divine revelation had later confirmed their sincere repentance. Regarding the descent of Prophet 'Isa at end-time, the study established that a Jewish man called Ibn Saba' was the first to deny Jesus's descent. So, the paper concluded that the denial of Prophet 'Isa's descent is similarly upheld by the followers of Ghulam Ahmad. Hence, since Jesus's descent belongs to the eschatological notions in Islam, being inquisitive about its reality is tantamount to denial of other metaphysical doctrines professed by the Prophet.

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