The question of whether it is permissible to record, in writing, the utterances of the Prophet, caused a heated debate already in the early period of Islam. The reports concerning the subject are divergent and even contradictory. A scrutiny of these reports may shed some light on the development of social perceptions, in so far as the transmission of hadith is concerned.

Several traditions state that the Prophet permitted some of his Companions to write down his utterances. 'Abdallah b. 'Umar says that he was in the court of the Prophet with a group of Companions; he was the youngest among them. The Prophet said: “Whoever tells lies about me, let him be placed in his abode in Hell.”


Later, Ibn 'Umar asked the people how they transmitted traditions about the Prophet and how they made efforts to report the Prophet's utterances after they heard his words. They laughed and said: "O son of our brother, everything we heard from the Prophet is already recorded with us in writing."  

A similar tradition is reported by Rāfī' b. Khadij: he asked the Prophet whether he would be permitted to write down the utterances heard from him. The Prophet gave his permission and remarked: "There is nothing bad in it," *uktubūhā wa-lā ḥaraj*.  

Abū Hurayra is said to have abstained from recording the utterances of the Prophet. This can be deduced from his statement that there was nobody (scil. from among the Companions of the Prophet -k) who surpassed him in the knowledge of hadīth except 'Abdallah b. 'Amr, for the latter used to write down the traditions while Abū Hurayra did not.  

It is significant that the first tradition permitted by the Prophet to be written in the *ṣaḥīfa ṣādiqa* of 'Abdallah b. 'Amr is said to have been an official letter addressed by the Prophet to the people of Mecca.
The letters of the Prophet seem to have been especially appreciated. This is emphasized in the utterance of Muhammad b. Sirin: 

"Had I decided to write [these things] down [in] a book, I would record in writing the letters of the Prophet."

The letters of the Prophet addressed to kings, rulers, governors and tribal chiefs are the earliest documents reflecting the problems of the nascent Muslim community, the policy of the Prophet towards his supporters and foes, his tactics and his military resolutions.

Mujāhid (d. 104 H) one day visited 'Abdallah b. 'Amr and noticed a scroll under his head. 'Abdallah refused to allow him to peruse the scroll, tamanna'a 'alayya, asserting that it was the saḥīfa ṣādiqa which the Prophet had dictated to him when they were alone.

The servant of the Prophet, Anas b. Mālik, is said to have been in possession of scrolls which contained the utterances dictated to him by the Prophet.

There is a report recorded on the authority of Abū Juḥayfa which mentions a saḥīfa of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalib. 'Alī is said to have asserted that the saḥīfa contained only the prescriptions concerning the payment of the bloodwit, the freeing of prisoners, and the order not to kill a Muslim for (the crime of) killing an unbeliever.

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8 Ibn Sa'd, al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā, VII, 194
9 Al-Dhahabī, Siyār a'lām al-nubalā', III, 58, inf.
10 Al-Rāmhurmuz, al-Muḥaddith al-fāsil, 367, no. 325; and see the references of the editor. And see the tradition iii Bayhaqī's al-Madkhal ila l-sunan al-kubrā, 415, no. 757 with the important correction of majall instead of mikhlāt; and see the references of the editor.
11 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm, I, 71. And see al-Ṭaba'rī, Tafsīr = Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wil ayāt l-qur'ān, ed. Mahmod and Ahmad Shākir (Cairo, 1958), XIII, 135–36, no. 15150, containing the tahrīm al-madīnā. . . . See also Abū Ya'la al-Maṣūlī, Musnad, ed. Ḥusayn Salīm Asad (Beirut-Damascus, 1984), I, 228–29, no. 263; and see the references of the editor and his comments. Al-Suyūṭī, Jam' u l-jawāmī', II, 56, 60, 63.

It is evident that this statement is attributed to 'Alī in order to refute the belief held by some of his adherents that the saḥīfa contained God's decree about the inheritance of the caliphate by 'Alī and his descendants. 'Abdallah b. al-Mubārak al-Marwāzī, al-Juz' al-thābit min musnad abī 'abd al-raḥmān 'abdallāh b. al-mubārak . . . , MS al-Ẓahrīrīyya 18, majmū'a, fol. 121b: . . . fa-qāla: mā 'ahida ilayna rasūlu llāhi, llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam, shay' an lam ya'hadhu ilā n-nās kāffatan. It is not rare to find in a collection of traditions a reutation of a claim put by opponents into the mouth of the claimant; see I. Goldziher, Muslim Studies, II, 114–15.

'Alī is said to have allowed Abū l-Shah to copy from this saḥīfa the injunctions concerning the payment of bloodwit, the payment of charity, ṣadaqa, and other religious obligations; see al-Dhahabī, Siyār a'lām al-nubalā', III, 58; and see the discussion on this subject: Ibn Ḥajar al-'Aṣqalānī, Fathu l-bārī', I, 182–83.

Another case of a piece of writing, a saḥīfa, sent by 'Alī to 'Uthmān is recorded in Ibn Ḥazm's al-Iḥkām fi ṣuṣūlī l-jāhām, ed. Muḥammad Ahmad 'Abd al-'Azīz (Cairo, 1984), I, 396. 'Alī stated that a certain spot to which 'Uthmān sent his tax
Another sahiṣa is said to have been kept in the sheath of the Prophet’s sword. It contained a curse on people who steal the land of their neighbours by changing the boundary markings and a curse on those who deny the favours granted them by forging their genealogy and by attaching themselves falsely to tribal factions.\(^\text{12}\)

Sulaymān al-Yashaḵuri, when staying in Mecca, wrote a sahiṣa dictated by the Companion of the Prophet Jābir b.‘Abdallah. The sahiṣa remained after his death in the house of his mother in Baṣra. She was asked by the people of Baṣra to lend it to them, but she refused. She only allowed some people to read the sahiṣa. Among those who came and read the sahiṣa was the famous Qurʾānic commentator, Qatāda.\(^\text{13}\)

Abū l-Naḍr stated that he memorized this sahiṣa of Jābir b.‘Abdallah with greater concentration than the Sūrat al-Baqara.\(^\text{14}\)

The commentator of the Qurʾān, Mujāhid, is said also to have transmitted traditions from the sahiṣa of the Companion of the Prophet Jābir b. ‘Abdallah.\(^\text{15}\)

Ibn Jurayj is said to have brought a sahiṣa to Hishām b. ‘Urwa and asked him for permission to transmit, on his authority, the traditions heard from him and written down in the sahiṣa. Hishām b.‘Urwa granted him the permission.\(^\text{16}\)

Abū Hurayra seems, at some stage, to have been given the permission to write down the utterances of the Prophet. One day he approached the Prophet and complained that he was forgetting the numerous utterances. The Prophet advised him: “Get help by your right hand,” istaʿīn bi-yāmīnīka, i.e., write down the utterances with your right hand.\(^\text{17}\)
A book of traditions transmitted by Abū Hurayra is mentioned in a report of ‘Ali b. al-Madînî. The book was in the possession of Yahyâ b. Sirîn.\(^{18}\) It was written on old vellum, kitâb fi raqqîn ‘atîiq, and preceded by the sentence: hâdhâ mâ haddathanâ abû hurayra, qâla abû l-qâsim. . .

Every hadîth ended with the sentence hâdhâ hadîth abî hurayra and was separated by a line which was followed by a sentence qâla abû hurayra. . .

Every line of separation was marked by the word ‘îshiratun, surrounded by dots.\(^{19}\)

The servant of the Prophet, Anas b. Mâlik, used to transmit the traditions of the Prophet. When the listeners swarmed around him, he used to bring forth some scrolls and handed them over to the listeners.\(^{20}\)

He said that he had heard the traditions from the Prophet, had written them down, and had read them aloud in front of the Prophet, ‘arađa ‘alayhi, and the Prophet had given his approval to transmit them.\(^{21}\)

Ibrâhîm al-Nâkha‘î admitted that the traditions transmitted by Sâlim b. Abî l-Jâ‘d were more accurate because he used to record them, while he (i.e., Ibrâhîm al-Nâkha‘î) merely memorised them.\(^{22}\)

A tradition recorded by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal says that the Prophet permitted to write down his injunctions concerning the sacred area, the hâram of Mecca, which he issued on his conquest of the city.\(^{23}\)

The traditions about the recording of hadîth at the time of the Prophet vary as to whether the Prophet permitted or prohibited to do that.\(^{24}\)

The Companions of the Prophet were in the habit of circulating the utterances of the Prophet among themselves. Some of them used to write them down, like ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Às.\(^{25}\)

After the death of the Prophet, some of the Companions recorded the traditions, others did not. Ibn Rajab provides us with important in-

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\(^{18}\) Because Muhammad b. Sirîn did not like to keep a book of hadîths in his abode; see al-Fasawî, Al-ma‘rifah wa-l-ta‘rîkh, II, 54, 59.

\(^{19}\) Al-Fasawî, Al-ma‘rifah wa-l-ta‘rîkh, II, 54-55.

\(^{20}\) See above note 10 concerning the emendation by Muhammad b. Sîrîn; see al-Fasawî, Al-ma‘rifah wa-l-ta‘rîkh, II, 54-55.

\(^{21}\) ‘Abdallah b. ‘Adî, op. cit., Muqaddâma, 49.

\(^{22}\) ‘Abdallah b. ‘Adî, op. cit., Muqaddâma, 50.

\(^{23}\) Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, al-Musnad, ed. Ahmad Muḥammad Shâkir (Cairo, 1373/1953), XII, 232–35, no. 7241, and see ibid., the abundant references and notes to this hadîth; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Jâmi‘ bayân, I, 70; al-Râmhurmuzî, al-Muḥaddith al-fâṣîl, 363, no. 314, and see the references of the editor; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalânî, al-Isâba, VII, 202, no. 1090; al-Bayhaqî, al-Makhâlî ilā l-sunani il-kubrâ, 411, no. 745; and see the references of the editor.

\(^{24}\) The different reports are mentioned in Ibn Rajab’s (d. 795 H) Sharh ‘ilalî l-tirmidhî, ed. ‘Subhî l-Sâmarrâ‘î (Beirut, 1405/1985), 49–50.

\(^{25}\) See above, note 6.
formation about the first collections of *hadith*. In the initial period after the death of the Prophet, at the time of the Companions and the generation following the Companions, namely the *tābi‘ūn*, the collections were not divided into chapters according to subject; the purpose of those collections was merely to preserve, in script, the traditions of the Prophet. In the following generation, that of the *tābi‘ī* l-*tābi‘īn*, the collections were arranged according to subject, *sunnifat al-taṣānīf*; some scholars recorded the utterances of the Prophet, others collected the sayings of the Companions.26

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr gives an interesting exposition on the evolution of ideas concerning the writing down of the traditions and utterances of the Prophet. The natural disposition of the Arabs, he says, was revealed by the fact that they preserved the sayings of the Prophet in their memory. . . . They were granted this disposition and were equipped with the gift of an unusual memory; they would not forget what they heard. The men who were endowed with this rare capacity of memory were Arabs, among whom were people like al-Zuhri, al-Sha’bī and Ibn ‘Abbās. Times have changed, however, and people nowadays do not possess this faculty of memory. Had the utterances of the Prophet not been written down, many traditions would have been lost. The Prophet gave permission to write down the knowledge of the traditions, ‘ilm, and a group from among the Companions did so.27

The injunction of the Prophet concerning the recording of *hadith* was formulated in a brief sentence: “Do not write anything on my authority except the Qur’an; whoever has written anything else on my authority should erase it.”28

‘Alī is said to have enjoined people who were in the possession of pieces of writing to erase them. “People perished,” he said, “because

26 Ibn Rajab, op. cit., 50.
they followed the traditions of their scholars and abandoned the Book of their God."\(^{29}\)

‘Alqama and al-Aswad brought a written piece to Ibn Mas‘ūd, asserting that it contains a “good tradition,” ḥadīth ḥasan. But Ibn Mas‘ūd ordered it be erased and said: “The hearts are vessels; keep them for the Qur‘ān only.”\(^{30}\)

One tradition couples the prohibition against recording the Prophet’s utterances with the permission to transmit the stories of the Banū Isrā‘il: Abū Hurayra was sitting in the courtyard of the Prophet with some other Companions and was writing down the utterances of the Prophet when the Prophet came and, looking at their work, forbade them to do that. He gave them, however, permission to tell the traditions of the Banū Isrā‘il.\(^{31}\)

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī is said to have been asked to write down the traditions transmitted by him; he refused and said that ḥadīths should not be set down in masāḥif; the Prophet issued his utterances and the Companions kept them in their memory. The people of ḥadīth should merely keep in memory what the transmitters tell them.\(^{32}\)

The aversion to write down the ḥadīth went together with the aversion to the reading of the Qur‘ān from a written book without keeping the words in memory. A saying of the people of the ḥadīth which won wide circulation was as follows:

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\text{la taqra‘ū l-qur‘āna ‘alā l-muṣḥafyyīn wa-lā taḥmīlū l-i‘lma ‘ani l-ṣaḥafyyīn, “Do not read the Qur‘ān to people who rely on Qur‘ān codices, and do not carry further the ḥadīth knowledge which you obtain from people who use scrolls.”}^{33}\]

\(^{29}\) Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Ḥāmi‘ bayān al-‘ilm, I, 64, sup.

\(^{30}\) Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Ḥāmi‘ bayān al-‘ilm, I, 66, inf.; and see ibid.: Abū ‘Ubayd explains that Ibn Mas‘ūd assumed that the written piece was taken from the People of the Book, ahlu l-kitāb, and did not like to see it.

\(^{31}\) Al-Dhahabi, Miṣān al-‘i‘ṭīḍāl, II, 265, no. 4868. And see the utterance of the Prophet forbidding writing anything on his authority except the Qur‘ān and demanding that ḥadīths already committed to writing be erased, at the same time encouraging people to transmit the traditions of the Banū Isrā‘il. The same utterance warns against transmitting deceitful traditions, which would be punished with torture in Hell. See Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythami, Kashfu l-aṣṭār ‘an zawā‘īḍ l-bazār, I, 108–109, no. 194. And see ibid., I, 109, no. 195. Abū Burda was requested to bring to his father written down traditions, which he had heard from him. The father ordered to erase the written traditions saying: “You have to memorize the traditions as we did when we heard them from the mouth of the Prophet.” Also see the story concerning the traditions written down by Abū Burda and erased by his father: al-Dhahabi, Siyar al-‘āmī l-nubalā‘, II, 280, 287.

\(^{32}\) Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Ḥāmi‘ bayān al-‘ilm, I, 64.

\(^{33}\) I.e., people who read the scrolls, or dictated from the scrolls, without mastering the knowledge of the traditions by heart –k. See al-Rāmhmurūzī, al-Mushadīth al-fāṣil, 211, no. 101; and see the references of the editor; the opinion of Yahyā (b. Ādam)
Mālik b. Anas gave an opinion concerning a trustworthy transmitter, who presented a book of traditions which he had heard, but was unable to keep them in memory. Students of ḥadīth, according to Mālik b. Anas, should disregard this transmitter.\(^{34}\)

Ibn al-Jauzī reports on the authority of Ibn Qutayba a significant explanation for the change in the Prophet's prohibition to write down the ḥadīth. The Prophet initially forbade to write his utterances, but when the sunan increased in number and exceeded the quantity that could be kept in memory, the Prophet allowed to write them down.\(^{35}\)

The high honour accorded to the memorization of ḥadīth goes hand in hand with the low standing of written ḥadīth. Al-Auzā‘ī formulated it in the following saying: “This knowledge, ‘ilm, was an honourable thing when it came from the mouths of men who collected and carried it in memory together with others; when it got written down in books, it lost its light, dhahaba nūruhu, and became the possession of unworthy people.”\(^{36}\)

Hushaym (d. 183 H) gave a succinct definition of the proper people of ḥadīth: he who does not know the ḥadīth by heart cannot be counted as among the people of ḥadīth; such a man comes (to attend the assembly of ḥadīth people –k) with a large book that looks like a document of manumission.\(^{37}\)

It is evident that “a scholar with a large book” is one who dictates ḥadīth to students because he does not know the traditions by heart.

The main argument against recording the utterances of the Prophet was the desire to avoid creating another book, a book of prophetic ḥadīth, for fear that it might be considered equal to the Qur’ān. One of the Companions of the Prophet, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khadrī, was asked by Abū Naḍra to dictate a tradition of the Prophet transmitted by him. He refused, however, arguing that he was not going to transform the dictated utterances into a Qur’ān.\(^{38}\) As mentioned above, orthodox men avoided writing down the collected utterances of the Prophet. Abū Bakr is said to have collected five hundred utterances; after consideration he ordered

\(^{34}\)AI-Khāṭīb al-Baghdādī, al-Kiṣāya li-ilmi l-riwaya (Hyderabad, 1357), 227; and see ibid., 227-29 other stories of ḥadīth scholars who transmitted from books.

\(^{35}\)Ibn al-Jauzī, Akhbār aḥī l-rusūk, 14.

\(^{36}\)Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Jāmī‘ bayān al-‘ilm, I, 68 sup.; al-Bayhaqī, al-Muṣnad, 142, no. 232, and see the references of the editor.


\(^{38}\)Abdallah b. al-Mubārak, al-Muṣnad, 142, no. 232, and see the references of the editor; Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, al-Muṣnad, 142, no. 232, and see the references of the editor.

is indeed of some interest: kānū yuḍa‘ā‘išūna mā yūjada fi l-kutub, “people treated the traditions recorded in books as weak,” Ibid., 212 sup. And see Ibn ‘Adī, al-Kāmil, al-muqaddima, 246. And see this advise in al-Fassāwi’s al-Ma‘rīṣa wa-l-ta‘rīkh, II, 412.

\(^{34}\)Al-Khāṭīb al-Baghdādī, al-Kiṣāya fi ‘ilmī l-riwaya (Hyderabad, 1357), 227; and see ibid., 227–29 other stories of ḥadīth scholars who transmitted from books.
the collection to be burned. 'Umar is said to have intended to write down the traditions of the Prophet; however, he changed his mind fearing that it would bring forth a book in addition to the book of God. One report says that 'Umar wrote to the garrison cities (al-amṣār) enjoining them to erase the records of the traditions written down by some people. 'Umar, who is said to have tried to restrict the number of the traditions reported on the authority of the Prophet, threatened that he would banish Abū Hurayra to the territory of Daus if the latter did not refrain from transmitting a great number of hadith utterances. While transmitting prophetic traditions after 'Umar's death, Abū Hurayra admitted that 'Umar would have severed his head if he transmitted these traditions during his lifetime. 'Umar is said to have enjoined the transmitters of hadith to confine themselves to traditions which have to do with the observance of ritual duties, agillū l-riswāyatā 'an rasūli llāhi ṣallā llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallam ilā fimā yu’malu bihi. Here Abū Hurayra recalls the angry reaction of 'Umar against the transmission of hadiths of the kind narrated by him after the caliph's death.

'Umar's inclination to limit the transmission of hadith was submitted to harsh criticism by Ibn Ḥazm. In a series of arguments based on quotations culled from early collections of hadith and fiqh, Ibn Ḥazm refutes 'Umar's utterances against the transmission of hadith. He also refutes similar utterances of Malik b. Anas, mentioning the fact that Malik himself collected a large number of traditions. In some of his arguments, Ibn Ḥazm goes as far as stating that such restrictions on the transmission of sound hadith are tantamount to kufr. Early transmitters of hadith were divided as to their opinion concerning the reliability of utterances transmitted by Abū Hurayra. 'Abdallah b. 'Umar states that he did not reject any tradition transmitted by Abū Hurayra; “he was courageous, [ijtara'a],” he said, “we were faint hearted

39 Al-Dhahabī, Tadhkīrat al-ḥuffāz, I, 5.
40 See Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Jāmī’ bayān al-'ilm, I, 64; Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, al-Madkhal ilā l-sunānī l-kubrā, 407, no. 731, and see the references of the editor; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Taqyīdu l-'ilm, 49–51; 'Abd al-Razzāq, al-Muṣannaf, XI, 257–58, no. 20484.
41 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Jāmī’ bayān al-'ilm, I, 65.
43 Al-Dhahabī, Siyār aḥlāmi l-nubalā', II, 433.
44 'Abd al-Razzāq, al-Muṣannaf, XI, 262, no. 20496.
Another report says that people used to transmit from the traditions recorded by Abū Hurayra only utterances concerning Paradise and Hell. It is significant that the soundest traditions of Abū Hurayra were transmitted by al-Zuhri. It was, again, ‘Umar who enjoined people who went out to Irāq to reduce the number of traditions which they transmitted.

The scope which traditions should cover was not defined. Sāliḥ b. Kaysan and al-Zuhri worked together collecting traditions on sunan; they collected the sunan of the Prophet. They were not, however, in agreement as to the sunan of the Companions. Sāliḥ b. Kaysan did not consider it appropriate to transmit the sunan of the Companions, as this was not a sunna in his opinion. Al-Zuhri, however, wrote down both the sunan of the Prophet and of the Companions. “He won the day,” says Sāliḥ, “and I lost [dāyyatu].”

There was a need to draw a line between the Qur’ān and the hadith. Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudri warns the transmitters from turning the collected hadiths into a “book,” a kind of Qur’ān; “learn by heart what we transmit as we did with the Prophet,” he said.

Stories about other peoples who collected the sayings and utterances of their prophets, sages, and saints were used as warnings for the believers. ‘Umar asked the Prophet to grant him permission to write down the stories circulated by Jews and Christians, inna nāsān mina l-yahūd wa-l-naṣārā yuḥaddithūna bi-aḥāditha, a-fa-lā naktubu bādāhā. The Prophet refused to give his permission and explained that Jews and Christians had become too deeply involved in writing: “I brought you a faith white and pure; were Moses alive he would have to follow me.”

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46 See al-Dhahabī, Siyar a‘lām, II, 437.
47 Ibid., II, 438.
48 See ibid., II, 438.
51 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Ḫāmi‘ bayān al-‘ilm, I, 64; and compare the report of Abū Burda about his father who erased the traditions transmitted by him, arguing that traditions should be transmitted orally and learnt by heart as he and his generation had done: al-Dhahabī, Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyarī (Cairo, 1957), II, 280, 287 ult.; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Ḫāmi‘ bayān al-‘ilm, I, 65–66.
Knowledge of hadîth should be kept in memory. Al-Khalîl b. Ahmad said in a verse: “Knowledge is not what is contained in a book case, knowledge is only that which is contained in the heart.”  

Ibn `Abd al-Barr explains the reasons which brought about the dislike of writing down hadîth. A collection of hadîth should not be like a Qur’ân, for a collected volume impedes the way of oral transmission. People would then rely on the book and neglect to learn by heart the transmitted knowledge.

A hadîth attributed to ‘Alî b. Abî Talib says that ‘Alî was told that people engaged in hadîth and abandoned the Qur’ân. Then, the angel Jibrîl descended to the Prophet and predicted that his community would fall in temptation after his death and would leave the Qur’ân. When asked about the way of escape, the angel answered: “The revealed Qur’ân”; he repeated this three times.

A similar prediction is recorded on the authority of al-Daḥḥâk: “Time will come,” he said, “when the hadîths will increase until the book of the Qur’ân will be abandoned, covered with dust, with nobody looking at it.”

This warning is given in the traditions attributed to Abû Sa’îd al-Khudrî and other Companions of the Prophet, recorded in al-Khaṭîb’s Kitâb taqyîd al-‘ilm.

It was Shu’ba, a scholar with deep insight and a committed searcher of truth in this field, who spoke out against the activities of the transmitters of hadîth: “It is better to sit in the company of Jews and Christians than to sit with you,” he said addressing these transmitters. He accused them of departing from the recollection of God, dhikru l-lîh, and from prayer, and called upon them to desist from their activities.

54 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Jâmi‘ bayân al-‘ilm, I, 68; and see ibid., the saying of a scholar of hadîth: lâ taktubû fa-tattakilîî.
55 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Jâmi‘ bayân al-‘ilm, I, 68; and see ibid., the saying of a scholar of hadîth: la taktubû fa-tattakilîî.
56 Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Jâmi‘ bayân al-‘ilm, I, 68; and see ibid., the saying of a scholar of hadîth: la taktubû fa-tattakilîî.
57 Scil. by being engaged in learning hadîth –k.
58 Ibn ‘Asâkir, Ta‘rîkh dimashq, (Tahdhib), VII, 348.
59 Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, Kitâb l-zuhd (Beirut, 1398/1978), 213.
60 Taqyîd, 36–40; and see Ibn ‘Asâkir, Ta‘rîkh dimashq, VI, 14: . . . turîdûnâ an taj‘alîhâ maṣâhîfâ . . . . And see the warning of Shu’ba (d. 160 H) stating that hadîth distracts the believers from recalling the name of Allah, dhikru l-lîh, and the obligatory prayers. Shu’ba asks the believers to refrain from busyng themselves with hadîth: Yaḥyâ b. Ma‘în, al-Ta‘rîkh, ed. Ahmad Muhammad Nûr Sayîf (Makkâ al-mukarrama, 1399/1979), II, 255, no. 4276; al-Fasawî, al-Ma‘rîfa wa-l-ta‘rîkh, II, 284; Abû Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahânî, Ḥifyatu l-âuliyya, VII, 156.
61 See al-Shibîlî, Maḥâsin al-wasâ’il, 330: . . . awwal man takallama fi l-rîjâlî shu’ba; and see ibid., the reports concerning the permissibility of examination of the validity of the traditions and the truthfulness of the transmitters, 331
62 Ibn ‘Adî, al-Kâmîl, muqaddîmâ, 125. And see al-Khaṭîb al-Baghdâdî, Mukhtâsar naṣîḥatî ahhî l-hadîth, 31, inf.: . . . mālik b. anas qâla li-bnay akhîhî abî bakrîn wa-
Some scholars, however, pointed out the utility of dissemination of hadith for a better understanding of the Qur'ān and of the ritual practices.

’Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn justifies the study and the transmission of hadith by saying that hadith may serve as a tool to explain many ritual practices not included in the Qur'ān.61

The opinions of the scholars of hadith as to the importance of tradition for the understanding of the Qur’ān and for establishing the prescribed ritual practices are clearly reflected in the report of Abū Naḍra. It is true, said ’Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn, that the prescribed prayers were mentioned in the Qur’ān, but the number of rak‘as in every prayer was only specified in the hadith.62

It was because of the importance of hadith that the believers should be careful not to transmit traditions of dubious transmitters.

The famous scholar of hadith, Shu‘ba, said that one should only record well-known traditions related by well-known scholars, uktubi l-mashhūr ‘aši l-mashhūr.63

The Prophet is said to have told the believers to pay attention as to the persons with whom they talked and from whom they derived their faith, unṣūrū man tujālisūna wa-‘an man ta‘khudhūna dinakum. At the end of time, Satans will appear in the garb of people of hadith, using the formulae hadathanā and akhbaranā; people should, therefore, be cautious and inquire about the names of those persons and their fathers.64

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61Abdallah b. al-Mubārak, Musnad, 143, no. 233; and see references of the editor.

Cf. Ibn ‘Adī, al-Kāmil, Muqaddima, 227–29: “My people will perish for three vices — the ‘asabiyya, the qadarīyya and the transmission of hadith on the authority of an unreliable transmitter,” said the Prophet.

The prediction about forgers and Satans walking in the streets and markets, claiming false knowledge, quoting the isnāds of “reliable” scholars and transmitting forged traditions, reflects, truly, the situation during the period of decline when forgers of isnāds did not hesitate to appear in the market place and disseminate invented traditions.

The flood of traditions circulating in the Muslim community in the early period is said to have aroused the concern of ʿUmar, who tried to curb the activity of these transmitters. According to a report, ʿUmar ordered to detain in Medina three Companions of the Prophet because of their efforts to disseminate the numerous hadiths of the Prophet. The detained persons were Abū Dardā’, Ibn Masʿūd, and Abū Dharr.65

Ibn Ḥazm refutes this report with great vigour.66 ʿUmar, as mentioned above, is said to have enjoined limiting the number of hadiths transmitted by the Companions.67 An utterance attributed to the Prophet recommends reducing the number of transmitted traditions: “It is sinful enough to transmit everything which a man has heard,” said the Prophet.68

In an interesting passage al-Dhahabī draws a line between the old times of the righteous ʿUmar and his own time. In ʿUmar’s time, transmitters were prevented from circulating large amounts of traditions, even though they were people of truth and righteousness, and the hadith itself was reliable. Now people transmit strange traditions and unknown stories, riwāyāt al-ghara’ib wa-l-manākir, provided with long chains of isnād, containing many groundless opinions and mistakes. Some of these people transmit forged traditions, groundless stories, abāṭīl, and untenable doctrines concerning the essentials and ramifications of religious law, al-mustāhfi l-uṣūl wa-l-furū’, stories of asceticism and atrocious and bloody civil wars, malāhīm.69

An early development, connected with the social standing of the scholars of hadith and their ambitious striving to gain recognition and respect in the Muslim community, brought about the appearance of a special branch which originated on the margin of hadith literature: treatises and books examining the reliability of the transmitters of hadith, which contain praises for the righteous and reliable transmitters of traditions.

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65 Al-Dhahabī, Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ, II, 249; al-Dhahabī, Tadhkīrat al-ḥuffāz, I, 7; the list of the detained includes three names: Ibn Masʿūd, Abū Dardā’ and Abū Masʿūd al-Anṣārī. Al-Khaṭṭāb al-Baghdādī, Sharaf ʿashāb al-hadīth, 87, no. 190.
66 Ibn Ḥazm, al-Jākām fi ʿusūl l-aḥkām, I, 316
67 Al-Dhahabī, Siyar aʿlām l-nubalāʾ, II, 433.
68 Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, al-Mustadrak, I, 112; ʿAbdallah b. al-Mubārak, al-Musnad, 10, no. 19, and see the references of the editor; al-Munawwī, Payyūl l-qādir, IV, 551, no. 6236; and see the version in al-Qayrawānī, al-Jāmīʾ, 149 of a similar utterance attributed to Mālik: laysa yaslamu rajulun ḥaddatha bi-kulli mā samāʾa wa-lā yakūnū imāman abadan.
69 Al-Dhahabī, Siyar aʿlām l-nubalāʾ, II, 433.
Compilations dealing with faults, vices and deficiencies of scholars of hadith also came into being. The beginning of this branch of hadith scholarship is traced back to the very early period of Islam.\(^70\)

‘Ali b. al-Madini (d. 234 H) interpreted the utterance of the Prophet: “there will remain a steadfast group of people who will fight for the cause of truth...” as referring to the people of hadith; they care for the implementation of the Prophet’s customs and protect the knowledge, ‘ilm, i.e., the knowledge of hadith. Were it not for their activity, one would not be able to find any trace of the sunan of the prophets in the books of the Mu’tazila, the Jahmiyya, the Râfiḍa, (i.e., the Shi’a –k), and the schismatic ahl al-ra’y.\(^71\) Muḥammad b. al-Munkadir states that the word rāwiya was used exclusively to denote the transmitters of poetry; the transmitter of hadith was named ‘ālim.\(^72\) A significant tradition reported on the authority of the Prophet says that the Prophet named the people of hadith “Caliphs,” successors of the Prophet. “They transmit my hadiths and my sunna and teach them to the people,” the Prophet said.\(^73\) Knowledge of hadith endowed the scholar a high position in society. The hadith scholar al-A’mash explained his success in society in unequivocal terms: “Were it not for the [knowledge] of Qur’ān and hadith, I would have been a greengrocer in Kūfa, selling onions.”\(^74\)

Reading the traditions of the Prophet was considered a kind of worship. According to one tradition the reader of hadith will be granted forgiveness of sins as if he were a reader of the Qur’ān.\(^75\) A gifted and able scholar who memorised 100,000 hadiths, including their isnāds, gained the honorific title al-ḥāfīẓ.\(^76\)

\(^{70}\) See al-Shiblī, Māhāsinu l-wasāʾil fī maʿrifatī l-awāʾil, ed. Muḥammad al-Tūnī (Beirut, 1412/1992), 330-31: ... awwalu man faṭṭasha ‘an amri l-muḥaddithīn wa-jānaba l-duʿafāʾa wa-l-matrūkīn shuʿbatu bnu l-ḥājjāj, ... Some scholars traced back the history of testing the reliability of the transmitters to the Prophet himself; see ibid., 330 inf.


\(^{72}\) Al-Rāhimuruzi, al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil, 180, no. 2.


\(^{75}\) Al-Diyāʾīr bakrī, Taʾrikhu l-khamīs (Cairo, 1283), I, 219, inf.; it is noteworthy that some distinguished scholars got the honourable title amīru l-muʿminīn fī l-hadīth; see ibid.

\(^{76}\) Al-Zurqānī, al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyya, V, 304.
mits forty traditions concerning the sunna, will stand among a chosen group of scholars and fuqahā’ on the Day of the Resurrection. According to some traditions, the reading of hadith is not inferior to the reading of a Qur’ānic sūra. We can even find a tradition which states, outright, that the words of the Prophet, in matters of faith, are on the same level as revelation. Another tradition formulated the standing of the hadith, in relation to the Qur’ān, as a revelation granted to the Prophet by God, being, like the Qur’ān, the Word of God. One tradition says that the reading of a hadith has a reward superior to voluntary prayer and voluntary fasting. The transmitters of hadith should be scrupulous of their ritual purity when communicating traditions. They should act with dignity during transmission and refrain from reporting traditions while walking or standing on a road. Mālik b. Anas and Layth b. Sa’d never touched books of hadith except after attending to their ritual purity.

The initiation of a young scholar in order to join the circle of hadith was a serious event. The mother of Mālik b. Anas dressed him in especially nice clothes before sending him off to attend his first hadith lecture.

The atmosphere of hadith lectures was solemn and serious. The lecture was sometimes accompanied by marks of awe such as sweating and trembling on the part of the transmitter. Being emotionally affected, the transmitter of hadith was often unable to quote the exact words of a tradition, and could only state that the wording is similar, but not

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81 Al-Khaṭṭāb al-Baghdādī, Sharaf, 84–85, nos. 182–85.
83 Al-Zurqānī, Sharḥ al mawahib, V, 304; and see al-Qādi ‘Iyāḍ al-Ḥaṣūbial, al-Ilmā’, 50.
84 Al-Qādi ‘Iyāḍ al-Ḥaṣūbial, Tartibu l-madārik wa-qaṭribu l-masālik li-maʿrifati a’lan madḥhab mālik, ed. Ḥamd Bakīr Maḥmūd (Beirut, 1387/1967), I, 161; and see ibid., I, 155: ‘kānā mālik idhā ḍalala li-l-ḥadīth tawāddā‘a wa-ḍalala ʿalā ṣadri firāshṭi wa-sarrāḥa liḥyatahu wa-tammakkan fa yūlīsī bi-waqaʾirin wa-hayba. Thumma ḥaddathā, fa-qīla lahu fī dhālika, fa-qīla: ʾuḥbūnu ʿal uʿazzima ḥadīthā rasūli ʾl-lāhī . . . . and see ibid., 179.
85 Al-Rāmhurmuzī, al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil, 201, no. 80.
The inability to transmit exactly the traditions was a well-known phenomenon. It is not surprising, then, that the Prophet is said to have given permission to transmit the meaning of the tradition, even if the transmitter added or omitted some expression. One should only be careful not to prohibit a permissible deed or allow a prohibited deed. The high opinion accorded to hadith made it necessary to use special measures in order to eliminate unreliable transmitters, tendentious scholars and even forgers of hadith. The most commonly adopted measure was the isnād, the chain of transmitters. The transmitters, or musnīdūn, had to be noble, sincere, just and truthful people. During the first period of Islam, before the fitna, transmitters of hadith were not concerned about isnād; people were decent and truthful and did not transmit untrue traditions. In the early period of Islam, the respect for a noble and righteous transmitter was so high that a student of hadith did not dare ask the master from whom he had received the tradition. At a later time, people started to inquire about isnāds in order to ensure that those suspected of bid'ā did not infiltrate into the ranks of muḥaddithūn and did not include innovations in their transmission.

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87 Al-Nāṣirī, Maṣfa‘a al-khalīqiyya, 13, ult.: . . . qa‘a: ya rasūla llāhi, innā nasma‘u minka l-haditha wa-lā naqdiru ‘alā ta‘ayatīhi. Fa-qa‘a: lā ba‘sa bihi in zidtum au naqṣatum idhā lam tuḥillī huṣrīman wa-lam tuḥarrīmī ḥālālan wa-aqṣabtumī l-ma‘nā. And cf. al-Fasāwī, al-Ma‘rīfa wa-l-ta‘rīkh, II, 19: ‘Amr b. Dinār used to transmit the prophetic tradition ‘alā l-ma‘nā, while Ibrāhīm b. Maysara used to transmit according to what he heard; this way of transmission is called ‘alā l-lafz; and see the references of the editor.


89 See, e.g., al-Rāhmūnuz, al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣīl, 208 inf.–209 sup.; Ibn ‘Adī, al-Kāmil, al-muqaddima, 194. There were, however, some reservations as to the measures taken with regard to checking the reliability of those constituting an isnād: al-Shāhī states that the evidence of people with sectarian leanings, abāt al-ahuwāl, may be accepted; but the evidence of people of the Shi‘ī khaṭṭāṭiyya should be rejected, because they approve of false evidence, al-shahādatu bi-l-zūr, given by their adherents. See Ibn Ṣalāh, al-Muqaddima, 228–29; but see ibid., the contradictory opinions
stated that were it not for isnād, anyone could say what he wanted. Ibn Abi Farwa, who reported traditions without isnāds, stated that were it not for isnād, anyone could say what he wanted. In particular artificial and forged isnāds which were made to show the veracity or reliability of a hadith, undermined people’s confidence in the voluminous collections of hadith. Yahyā (b. Ma‘īn –k) is said to have invoked against the scholars who quoted complicated traditions with elaborate isnāids: “May God punish these people who take care of the isnād traditions because they have made the people lie.”

The political struggles within the Muslim community, which began a short time after the death of the Prophet, the clashes between the different ideological factions like the Shi‘a and the Khawārij, the rise of the madhāhib, the struggle between the mawālī, and the Arab population—all these factors brought about the development of a rich hadith literature in the very early period of Islam. The events which took place during the life of the Prophet, and in the stormy period after his death, were duly recorded in the books of the sīra, the maghāzi, the ridda and the books of taurih. These books were usually arranged in the form of hadith collections and the different reports were usually furnished with
The prolific collections of hadith recorded a wealth of utterances of the Prophet. A special kind of hadith originated in that period: traditions reporting on the virtues of cities, regions, countries, races, tribes and Islamic personalities. These traditions were contrasted with stories concerning the vices and deficiencies of places, tribes, cities and groups. Cities, regions and tribes vied with one another regarding their relative superiority, and the importance of the prominent personalities associated with them.

In the realm of hadith, the main competing parties were Syria, Irāq, Ḥijāz, the Yaman, Persia and Egypt.94

The tradition of Irāq was especially subjected to criticism. Al-Bayhaqī provides a list of the most admired personalities of Islam who censured the hadiths transmitted by the people of Irāq.95 Al-Zuhri was quite outspoken about the Irāqi hadith: “If you hear an Irāqi hadith discard it again and again.”96 “‘Ali b. Abī Ṭalib addressed the people of Kūfa and bade them to ask about the words of God and the utterances of the Prophet, because aḥlu l-bayt, the family of Abī Ṭalib, were more familiar with the words of God and the utterances of the Prophet, while the people of Kūfa were more familiar with lies about God and about the Prophet.”97 Hishām b.‘Urwa advised Zuhayr b. Muḥammad al-Tamīmī: “If an Irāqi tells you a thousand traditions, throw nine hundred ninety nine of them away and have your doubts as to the veracity of that which remains.”98 Ja‘far al-Ṣadiq relates about his father that he was requested by a dignified and old man in the ḥijr of the Ka‘ba to tell him about the origin of the Ka‘ba. The old man was asked about his residence, and replied that he was from Syria. The father of Ja‘far al-Ṣadiq then said: “When our aḥādīth go to Syria they come back sound, when they go to Irāq they return altered, with additions or omissions.”99 Al-Auza‘ī gave a clear opinion about the differences between the tradition of Syria and al-Madīna and that of Irāq. The Caliphs resided in Syria; when they were in distress, baliyya, they asked the opinion of the scholars of Syria and of Madīna. The aḥādīth of Irāq never went across the walls of their houses, says al-Auza‘ī, and asks: “So when did the scholars of Syria

94 See, e.g., al-Bayhaqī, Ma‘rifatū l-sunan wa-l-āthār, ed. Ahmad Ṣāqr (Cairo, 1389/1969), I, 63–78.
96 Al-Fasawī, al-Ma‘rifa wa-l-ta’rikh, II, 757; and see another version of al-Zuhri’s saying, ibid., 760: idhā waqfahal al-ḥadīth hunāka, ya‘nī l-‘iraq, fa-rādūd bihi.
97 Al-Fasawī, al-Ma‘rifa wa-l-ta’rikh, II, 759.
98 Al-Fasawī, al-Ma‘rifa wa-l-ta’rikh, II, 757.
99 Al-Maqzlī, Kitāb fihi dhikrū mā warada ft būnūnī l-ka‘bati l-mu‘azzama, MS Leiden Or. 560, fol. 162a.
transmit the traditions of the *khawārij* of *‘Iraq*?” 100 The well-known *muḥaddith* Ibrāhīm b. Ṣa‘dī stated that but for the traditions pouring in from the East, which are to be discarded, he would not record *ḥadīth* nor would he allow to write it down. 102 Another *muḥaddith* formulated his opinion about the ‘Iraqī *ḥadīth* in a peculiar way: “If you see Sufyān al-Thaurī, ask God for Paradise, but if you see an ‘Iraqī [scholar –k] ask God’s protection from his wickedness.” 103 Shi‘ī historians provide some reports about the persecutions of the Umayyad Caliphs and their governors against the descendants of ‘Ālī and their adherents. The preachers, *khutabā*, used to curse ‘Ālī on the pulpits according to the orders of Mu‘āwiya. Ziyād b. ʿAbīhi (= Ziyād b. ʿUmayya), Mu‘āwiya’s governor in ‘Iraq, carried out atrocious tortures against the followers of ‘Ālī, cut their hands and legs and put out their eyes with a hot iron. Mu‘āwiya sent letters to the governors in which he ordered them to favour the adherents of ‘Uthmān. He also sent them gifts, and granted them land property. According to the instructions of the Umayyad rulers, the adherents of ‘Ālī were banned from being witnesses in court and were even removed from the list of people entitled to payments from the treasury, the ‘*atā‘*. The governors made it unlawful to circulate the virtues of ‘Ālī, and ordered instead to circulate the virtues of the *ṣaḥāba* while diminishing the position of ‘Ālī and even reviling him. 104 The attacks against the great ‘Iraqī scholar Abū Ḥanīfa were no less malicious. Ḥammād b. ʿAlī Salama states: “No person born in Islam was more harmful to Islam than Abū Ḥanīfa.” 105 ‘Ammār b. Zurayq, a Kūfī scholar, stated: “If you are asked about a religious practice and are not clear as to the right answer, say the opposite of the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfa and your opinion will be right.” 106 When Ḥammād b. Zayd heard about the death of Abū Ḥanīfa he said: “Thank God who swept the interior of the earth with his corpse.” 107 There were, however, some cases in which the ‘Iraqī practice was approved of. When some people discussed in a council whether drinking *nabīdīh* was permissible, the people of ‘Iraq held the view that the drinking of *nabīdīh* was lawful, while those of the Ḥijāz were rigorous and opposed them. The ‘Iraqī scholars quoted the fact

106 Al-Fasawi, *al-Ma‘rīfah wa-l-ta‘rīkh*, II, 277, 785, and see the references of the editor.
that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb approved of drinking nabīḍh because people ate camel’s meat and nothing can help the digestion of this meat better than nabīḍh.¹⁰⁸

A few examples may suffice to expose the cautious attitude of the people of hadīth towards officials, servants in the offices of the rulers and chiefs of tribal factions recognized by the governors, the ‘uṣrafa’. Mālik b. Anas disliked Abū l-Zinād because he was a kāṭib of the Umayyads.¹⁰⁹ Abū ‘Uthmān al-Nahdī was a policeman and an ‘arīf of his people.¹¹⁰ Yahyā b. Ma‘īn asked Abū Zur‘a al-Dimashqī concerning the reliability of Abū ‘Ā‘īdh who was appointed to supervise the collection of taxes. Abū Zur‘a replied that it was permissible to write down Abū ‘Ā‘īdh’s traditions.¹¹¹ The famous scholar of hadīth Hushaym b. Bashīr al-Sulāmī, a righteous and pious person, was a student of al-Zuhrī. He wrote down his traditions when he met him in Mecca, but the piece of writing, the šaḥīfa, was lost and Hushaym transmitted al-Zuhrī’s traditions from memory. He was highly respected as a reliable person; Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī saw the Prophet in a dream. He addressed Hushaym who stood in his presence and greeted him saying, “May God reward you on behalf of my community, jazāka llāhu ta‘ālā ‘an ummatīkhayran.”¹¹² The grandfather of Hushaym, al-Qāsim and the father of the famous scholar Shu‘ba were partners in the building of the palace, qaṣr, of al-Ḥajjāj in Wāṣīt.¹¹³ Abū ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd was a policeman in the police force of al-Ḥajjāj, he was “a sharp thief,” ṣhirīṣ.¹¹⁴ There were, however, some Umayyad functionaries who were righteous and pious. Such a person was ‘Ubaydullāh b. ‘Īyād b. Lāqīt. He was a reliable transmitter of hadīth and had a šaḥīfa which contained traditions. He was in charge of digging a ditch in Kūfa and used to come to the place in order to inspect the work of digging. When a person came to him and asked for the šaḥīfa, he used to

¹⁰⁸ Al-Rāmūhurmuzī, al-Muḥaddith al-fāsīl, 255–57, no. 164. And see Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, Ta‘rīkh, III, 485, no. 2371: al-A‘mash was told about a person who refrained from drinking nabīḍh. “May God curse him, said al-A‘mash; leave him until colic kills him.” And see ibid., III, 396, no. 1923: Burayda b. Sufyān was suspected of drinking wine in Medina. He drank, in fact, nabīḍh, but the people of Medina named the nabīḍh wine, khamr.


¹⁰⁹ Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, Ta‘rīkh, II, 305, no. 1110.

¹¹⁰ Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, Ta‘rīkh, II, 359, no. 2661; and see Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Tahdhibu l-tahdhib, VI, 277–78, no. 546, s.v., ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mu‘īn al-Nahdī: he was an ‘arīf of his people.

¹¹¹ Ibn Shāhīn, Ta‘rīkh asma‘i l-thiqāt, 159 ult.–160 sup., no. 61.

¹¹² Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Tahdhibu l-tahdhib, XI, 59–64, no. 100. Hushaym died in 183 H.

¹¹³ Ibn Shāhīn, Ta‘rīkh asma‘i l-thiqāt, 195, no. 23.

¹¹⁴ Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, Ta‘rīkh, II, 386, no. 4631=IV, 328, no. 4631.
lā taqra'ū l-qur'āna 'alā l-muṣḥafiyān

lend him the piece of writing and thus enabled him to copy the traditions and to read before him the traditions he had copied.\(^{115}\) Some groups of people among them, e.g., the Bedouins, were disliked as transmitters of hadīth. The inferiority of the Bedouins in hadīth is clearly reflected in several utterances attributed to the Prophet or to one of his Companions. They were circulated in the period when the influence of the Bedouin tribes and their military power declined. According to a tradition reported by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, the Prophet forbade Bedouins to marry Muhājirīn women. Al-Ḥasan, however, remarked that if a Bedouin dwells with his Muhājirīn wife in a garrison city, mīṣr, there is nothing bad about that.\(^{116}\) If a Bedouin emigrates from the Arab peninsula, returns to his Bedouin dwellings, and stays there for more than two months, he reverts to his Bedouin status.\(^{117}\) A tradition transmitted on the authority of the Prophet denies a Bedouin permission to give evidence against a man dwelling in a village (or city – k).\(^{118}\) Hospitality is an obligation incumbent upon Bedouins, not upon village people, said the Prophet.\(^{119}\) Commentators of the Qur'ān, in explicating verse 97 of Sūrat al-Tauba: al-aʿrābū ashaddu kufran wa-nifāqan wa-ajdaru allā yaʿlamū ḥudūda mā anzala llāhu ‘alā rasūlihi wa-lillāhu ḥakīmun, express a harsh view of Bedouins. As the verse defines their inferiority in comparison to the believers, the conclusions to be drawn are that they should be denied a share in the booty and revenues of the conquered property, lā ḥaqqa lahum fi l-fay′i wa-l-ghanīma. They are called upon to leave their places and move to the centres of the Muhājirūn; if they do this, they will be granted the rights of the Muhājirūn. If they refuse to move, they will earn the status of “Bedouins of the Muslims,” yakūnūna ka-aʿrābi l-muslimin, and will not receive a share of the booty and revenues. Further, argues al-Qurtubī, they are not permitted to be imāms for sedentary people, ahl al-ḥādira, because of their ignorance of the sunna and the remoteness of the mosques in which their Friday

\(^{115}\) Yahyā b. Maʿīn, Taʾrīkh, II, 381, no. 1305; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, Tahdhīb l-tahdhib, VI, 4, no. 5.

\(^{116}\) Abū Dāwūd al-Sijjistānī, al-ʿArābī, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Sayrawān (Beirut, 1406/1986), XXX, 6:146. And see another aspect of this tradition in Ibn Abī Shaybaʾs al-Muṣannaf, ed. ʿĀmir al-ʿUmarī l-ʿArābī (n.p., n.d.), reprint, IV, 346. Some scholars disliked the marriage of a Bedouin with a Muhājirīn woman, fearing that he would take her out from the mīṣr and lead her back to the Bedouin dwellings.

\(^{117}\) Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, al-Maṣālik l-ʿāliya bi-zawāʾidī i-masānīdī l-thamānīya, ed. Habībū l-Rāḥmān al-ʿArābī (Beirut, 1407/1987), III, 202–203, no. 3257: ... man bāḥā akthara min shahrāyin fa-ḥiyā aʿrābiyatun; and see ibid., no. 3258: ... al-badāwā shahrānī, fa-man zādā fa-huwa taʾarrubun; and see ibid., no. 3259: ... man bāḥā yafā. And see Abū Dāwūd al-Sijjistānī, al-ʿArābī, 175, XLVII, 5.

\(^{118}\) Al-Suyūṭī, Jamʿu l-jawāmiʿ, I, 882: ... lā tajzūzu shahādatu badawīyyīn alā ẓahībi qaryāt.
prayer, al-jum’a, is performed.\textsuperscript{120} The decline of hadith scholarship is described in a statement of al-Auzā’ī, which alludes to the low status of Bedouins: “This knowledge, ‘ilm, was noble through the meetings of (noble –k) men; when this knowledge became embedded in books you can find it with a slave and a Bedouin.”\textsuperscript{121}

Another group of people who were looked down upon were the Nabat, the descendants of the population of the Sawād of ‘Irāq, who worked in tilling the soil,\textsuperscript{122} and evidently made considerable progress in their knowledge of Arabic and hadith. This was watched with dislike by some Muslim scholars. Sufyān al-Thaurī got angry when he saw the Nabats writing down the traditions of the Prophet and the colour of his face changed. When asked about this, he said: “Knowledge [scil. of hadith –k] was with the Arabs and the chiefs of the people. When knowledge [i.e., hadith] leaves them and passes to the Nabat and to the lowest classes of the people, the sifla, the faith of Islam will be distorted.”\textsuperscript{123}

Ibn al-Ḥājj reports that some of the pious ancestors used to weep when they saw the Nabat reading ‘ilm, (i.e., the hadith –k), because knowledge that is acquired by unworthy people would be spoiled.\textsuperscript{124}

The feeling of repugnance towards the Nabat is even traced back to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. ‘Umar is said to have entered the market (evidently of Medina –k) where he saw mostly Nabat. When people later gathered around him, he spoke about the presence of the Nabat in the market and blamed those around him for deserting it, leaving the market to the Nabat. They argued that the conquests which God empowered them to accomplish enabled them to do without markets, \textit{inna llāha ‘azza wa-jalla qad aghnāna ‘anī l-aswāqi bi-mā fataḥa bihi alaynā}. ‘Umar however warned them that if they continued to act in this way their men will be dependent on Nabatr men and their women on Nabatl women.\textsuperscript{125}

A tradition attributed to the Companion of the Prophet, Ibn Mas‘ūd, advised the believers to have nothing to do with the Turks as long as they leave the believers alone, and not to stay in the vicinity of the Nabat because they are the disease of religion, āfatu l-dīn. If they duly pay the jizya, the believers should debase them. If they manifest belief in Islām,
Traditions about the poor contain conflicting views. The utterances of the Prophet about the weak and poor are usually favourable. A tradition attributed to the Prophet says that God caused this community to gain victory, *innamā naṣara llāhu hādhīhi l-ummata*, because of their weak, as they made invocations, prayed and carried out acts of devotion.

A well-known tradition warns against sitting in the company of the sons of the rich, as they constitute a greater temptation than virgins. A respected traditionist is blamed for his relating reports of rich transmitters; he defends himself by stating that he has always tried to establish the righteousness of the reporter.

Listing the vices of the *muḥaddithūn*, Abū Ṭālib al-Makki speaks of scholars who devote their collections to people of honour and wealth while ignoring the poor and the destitute, who are in their view unworthy of this material. Such scholars will be placed in the third layer of Hell. Poverty is a grace of God. The Prophet invoked God and asked Him that people who like the Prophet should not gain property, *māl*, and children; as for the people who hate him, the Prophet invoked God to grant them children and property.

“Poverty reaches people who love me sooner than water running from

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127 Al-Qurtubi, *Tafsīr*, II, 26; and see another version ibid., 27. And see al-Bayhaqī, al-*Sunanu l-kubrā*, III, 345. The Prophet was blamed by one of his Companions for dividing the booty among the poor Muhājirīn, *fuqaraʾ al-muhājīrin*, and he replied: *hal tunṣarUna ilia bi-Ijuʿa/aʿikum*; and see the references of the editor.
128 Shlrawayh b. Shahridar al-Daylāmī, *Firdaus al-akhbar*, V, 209, no. 7628; and see the references of the editors.
130 Abū Ṭālib al-Makki, *Qūṭu l-qulūb*, II, 15
the top of a mountain to its foot,” said the Prophet. The Prophet himself is said to have asked God to be granted the love of the poor and enjoined his Companions to love them. He bade ‘Ā’isha to bring the poor near to her and to show them her love. Sufyān al-Thaurī wrote to one of his friends urging him to love the needy and to help them gain religious and worldly advantages and profits. A tradition transmitted by al-Zuhārī and heard by some of his acquaintances says: “The worst food is the food of the rich.” Al-Zuhārī amended the tradition: The Prophet said, “The worst food is the food of a dinner party.” In another version of this tradition reported by Abū Hurayra, the Prophet added an explanation: “... a dinner-party to which the rich are invited and from which the poor are barred.” The acquaintance, Sufyān, drew a deep breath of relief: his father was a rich man. An additional phrase says: “And he who does not accept the invitation disobeys God.” There were ascetic and pious circles who adopted such favourable traditions about the poor. The poor were chiefs in the council (of ḥadīth -k) of Sufyān al-Thaurī, the rich were humiliated in this council.

The idea that one should memorize the ḥadīth following the manner of the Companions of the Prophet, was strengthened by utterances of ḥadīth scholars who emphasized that one should choose noble people, al-ashraf, as reliable transmitters of ḥadīth. In this spirit was formulated an utterance of Shu’ba: “ Transmit on the authority of nobles, because they do not lie.” Al-Auzārī emphasizes that only knowledge derived from utterances of the Companions, that is to say ḥadīth, is true knowledge; every knowledge not stemming from one of the Companions is, in fact, not knowledge. A similar expression is recorded in the same source on the authority of al-Sha’bī: “Take with both hands what is transmitted to you in the name of the Companions of the Prophet, but piss on any report transmitted on private opinions, ra’y.” The idea that traditions should be transmitted orally and should not be recorded, was


134 Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Taqdimatu l-ma‘rīfā li-kitābī l-jarīh wa-l-ta‘dīl (Hyderabad, 1271/1952), 9'; and see 100 sup.


coupled with the idea that the transmitter should speak the utterances orally, and not read them from a book; he could merely check the text before he recites it in order to avoid mistakes. Reciting the traditions in front of an audience, without relying on a written text during recitation, was an early practice followed in the reading of the Qurʾān. Nevertheless, some scholars held the opinion that the chosen of the community used to read from a written text. This was a common custom and people have had it since the beginning of Islam. Other scholars favoured the practice of reading the Qurʾān orally; al-Ḥasan al-Ḥaṣrī insisted that the Qurʾān should be recited orally, not from a written text, muṣḥaf, as was the practice of Jews and Christians. The recitation of the Qurʾān without references to a written text is linked with a biblical story recorded in the very early Tafsīr of ʿAbd al-Razzāq and known as “The conversation of Moses with God,” the “munājāt mūsā”. Moses came down from the Mount of Sīnā with the Tablets. In the Tablets there was a talk of a people who would be the best one, and Moses asked God to make his people the one chosen. God refused, and said that that grace would be granted to the community of Muḥammad. Another feature of the chosen people would be that their Gospels will be in their hearts, anājitūhum (wa-) ḥikmatuhum fi ʿudārihim. As mentioned, God refused and promised to grant it to the people of Muḥammad.

138 This was the opinion of al-Zuhrī; this was also the opinion of Ibn Sirīn, Yahyā b. Saʿīd and al-Layth b. Saʿīd. See al-Ṭurṭūshī, al-Ḥawāḍith wa-l-bidaʿ, 55.
139 Al-Ṭurṭūshī, al-Ḥawāḍith wa-l-bidaʿ, 55; see also the discussion of the subject in al-Sijistānī’s, Kitāb l-maṣāḥif, Muʾassasat Qurtuba li-l-nashr wa-l-tauzī (Dar Sayf li-l-tibāʿa, n.d.), 189–94.
140 The early ḥadīth scholar, ʿAbdallāh b. Wahb, d. 197 H, records in his al-Jāmīʿ fi ʿilāmī qurʾān, ed. Miklos Muranyi (Wiesbaden, 1992), fol. 1b, ll. 6–16 a significant story of a debate in the mosque of the Prophet concerning the miracles of prophets. The hypocrite ʿAbdallāh b. Ubayy b. Saḥūl asked the Companions about the miracle of the Prophet. The Prophet, encouraged by Jibrīl entered the mosque and quoted ten graces which God granted him exclusively. One of these exclusive graces was the revelation of the Qurʾān. Mūsā, says the Prophet, was granted the Tablets, ʿIsā was granted the Injīl, Dawūd was given the Zābīr. In contradistinction to other prophets, the Prophet was sent to all the peoples of the world and to the jinn as well. Being an ummi, God granted him His Word, the Revelation, wa-inna lāha laqqānti kalāmahu.

140 On this subject, see the important article of J. Sadan, “Some Literary Problems Concerning Judaism and Jewry in Medieval Arabic Sources,” in Studies in Islamic History and Civilization in Honour of Professor David Ayalon, ed. M. Sharon (Jerusalem-Leiden, 1986), 353–98
In contrast to the Jews who recite the Bible from a Book, the people of Muḥammad would recite the Torah keeping it in their hearts, i.e., by memorising it.\(^{142}\) In the second part of the story, recording the commentary on the verse "fa-sa-aktubuhā li-lladhīna yattaqūna, 'Abd al-Razzāq gives the tradition reported by Nauf al-Bikalī.\(^{143}\) When Moses came with a deputation of the Banū Isrā‘īl, God informed him that He intended to place the sakīna in the hearts of the people, make them read the Torah with their tongues, ‘alā zahrī alsinatīhin, and turn the Earth into places of prayer, masajīd — they would pray in every place in which prayer may be performed.\(^{144}\) The Banū Isrā‘īl refused this offer and said that they would only pray in the kanīsa. Further, they said that they were unable to bear the sakīna in their hearts and demanded to put the sakīna in the uṣūl, the Ark of the Covenant; they also refused to read the Taurāh orally, ‘an zahrī alsinatīnā. The grace of God was, therefore, granted to the people of Muḥammad. Moses, disappointed, complained to God saying that the grace and benefits to be granted to the deputation of the Banū Isrā‘īl were given to others. Then Moses asked God to grant him the prophethood of “their people,” but God stated that the Prophet would be “from them,” nabiyyuhum minhum. Moses ultimately asked to be just “one of them,” but was answered by God that he would not reach them, innaka lan tudrikahum, i.e., he would not live long enough to reach the period of Islam.\(^{145}\)

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\(^{143}\) See on him Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Tahdhīb l-tahdīḥ, X, 490, no. 880; and see al-Sam’ānī, al-Ansāb (Hyderabad, 1383/1963), II, 289, no. 557; he was the son of Ka‘b al-Aḥbar’s wife, and belonged to the tabī‘īn.

\(^{144}\) 'Abd al-Razzāq, Tafsīr, II, 238. Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Jami‘u l-bayān ‘an tafsīrī l-qur’ān (= Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī), ed. Mahmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Ahmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo, 1958), XIII, 156, verse 156 of Sūrat al-‘a‘rāf. Qatā‘dā comments that the graces mentioned in the verse will be granted the believers, the followers of the Prophet Muḥammad (157, no. 15205); and see, e.g., 161, no. 15216: “... fa-sa-aktubuhā li-lladhīna yattaqūna” is explicated by Sa‘īd b. Jubayr as referring to the community of the Prophet; Mūsā says: “laytani khulqītu fi ummati muḥammadīn.” Ţabarī records the tradition reported by Nauf al-Ḥimyārī about the delegation of the seventy men of the people of Moses led by him to the meeting place appointed by God. God announced to Moses and the delegation: sa-aj‘alu lakumu l-arḍa masjidan wa-ṣāḥārān, wa-aj‘alu l-sakīnata ma‘akum fi buyūṣikum wa-aj‘alum tqa‘ra‘īna l-taurāt ‘an zahrī qulūbikum, yaqa‘ra‘ahā l-rajulu minkum wa-l-mār‘atu wa-l-hurrū wa-l-‘abdū wa-l-sagīrī wa-l-kabīrī. The delegation refused to pray in an open space and insisted to pray only in their places of prayer, in the kanā‘īs. They refused to read the Torah by heart and insisted to recite the verses of the Book, reading the passages from a written text, lā nūridu an naqqa‘ahā illā nāzara‘īn. God then decided to grant these graces and privileges the people of the Prophet Muḥammad. In another passage recorded on the authority of Nauf (p. 162, no. 15218) Moses wished to be the prophet of the guided community, but God refuted his wish and granted the privileges to the community of the Prophet Muḥammad.
And see the privileges granted the community of Muhammad by God, as recorded in the tradition transmitted by Qatada (d. 118) in 'Ali b. Ahmad al-Wahidi, al-Wasif fi ta'asri l-qur'anu l-majid = Ta'asir al-Wahidi, ed. 'Adil Ahmad 'Abd al-Maujhid, 'Ali Muhammad Mu'awwad, Ahmad Muhammed Sira, Ahmad 'Abd al-GhanI al-Jamal (Beirut, 1415/1994), II, 418.

And see: Ayyub b. Abu Tamima al-Sakhtiyan, (d. 131 H) al-Aryadh, MS Zahiriyya, majmu'a 4/2, (fol. 34a–48b), fol. 41a-b; but this passage of the Munajat musa had been inserted in the MS and is recorded on the authority of Abu Nu'aym (al-Ishafian, d. 430 H); cf. al-MajlisII, Biryar al-anwar, XCIX, 186, no. 1. And see a peculiar Shi'i tradition recorded in Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn al-Hurr's, al-Jawahir al-saniyya fi l-arayadh fi qudsiya wa-l-nabawiyya (Cairo, 1384/1950), 50–51; the tradition is traced to Wahb b. Munabbih. Cf. al-MajlisII, Bihar al-anwar, XCV, 186, no. 27. See also the report of Nauf al-Bikalt in al-Qurtubi's Tafsir, VII, 297–98; cf. ibid., the significant sentence: ... wa-aj'alukum taqra'una fI ta'asri, yaqra'uha al-rajulu minkum wa-l-mar'atu wa-l-ryurar wa-l-'abdu wa-l-Iahairwa·l-kabiru.

See Abu Nu'aym, Hilyat al-aulya', V, 385–86: ... anna musa nasara fi l-taurat, fa-qala: yA rabbi, inni ajidu fi l-taurat ummatan mashahuufum fi yudurihim yulsuna thiyya ahli l-janna ... and cf. al-Munajat al-kubra li-sayyidin musa alayhi I-salat wa-l-salam fi I-akhiram wa-l-wasayfa wa-l-maw'iz (Cairo, 1375/1956), 24, inf.: yA rabbi, inni ajidu fi l-alwahum ummatan anadyithum fi l-yuduri yaqra'una manaqah, fa-j'alhum ummat ...; cf. Munajat musa, MS from the library of the late S.M. Stern, fol. 17a: ... qala musa: yA rabbi inni ajidu fi l-taurat ummatan kitabhum fi sadrihim, yaqra'una zaahir (l) wa-ghayrhum mina l-umami yaqra'una kutubahum natfaran fi l-mashahif, fa-j'alhum ummat ...
The other offer which Banū Isrā‘īl rejected was the permission to pray anywhere on Earth; every place on Earth would be considered a masjid, a place of prayer and prostration.\(^{146}\)

See al-Ṭabarī, *Ṭefsir=Jāmi‘u l-bayān ‘an ta’wālī ayyi l-qur‘ān*, XIII, 123–25, nos. 15132–33; cf. the sentence: ... wa-kūna man qablahum yaqra‘u‘na kūtabahum naẓaran, ḫattā idhā ra‘ja‘u‘iḥā lam yāḥfaṣū shay‘an wa-lam ya‘rifūhu; ... and see ibid., 123, no. 15131: the wrath of Moses was caused by the fact that he found in the Tablets the virtues of another people, not of Banū Isrā‘īl.


The idea that the "whole earth is a place of prayer and prostration," a masjid, for the believer seems to have survived in the Muslim community. It remained similar to the concept of pure faith, free from dependence on sumptuous mosque buildings, erected by kings and rich donors. The idea that a mosque should be a modest building, not put up for profit or for parading luxury, or in order to vie with sanctuaries of other religions, was expressed in a seminar in Cairo in 1989, following the presentation of the Aga Khâm Awards for Architecture. A famous builder and architect, Abdel Wahed al-Wakil was accused of trying to transplant Western and Judaeo-Christian ideas about "sacred art" into Islam. The point made by his critic, the Moroccan Professor Mahdi al-Mandjara, as summarized by Neal Ascherson, was that Islamic architecture was not sacred: the mosque was just a place of praying and teaching. "Islam came to desacralise the material world and to make the immaterial sacred instead." Further, he stated that "politics and reactionary movements were behind the attempt to give the mosque a significance it should not have." The discussion in this seminar is instructive for seeing how the idea that the "whole earth is a masjid," a place of prayer and prostration for the Muslim believer, has lived on to the present day.

The end of the first century of Islam was a period of profound change in the transmission of hadîth. The Umayyad rulers did their best in order to gather around them scholars of hadîth who would support their ideas concerning authority and government control, basing themselves on traditions attributed to the Prophet, whether authentic or forged. The rulers did not refrain from using various stratagems in order to have the hadîths of the Companions of the Prophet recorded. Those who

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The hadîth mentioned above in the version: u'ttu khamasun lam yu'tahunna ahdun qabîk... recorded by Ibn Hâzm, is preceded by a note of the author, who writes: "we are not permitted to follow a religious law, sharî'a, which existed before the Prophet." Ibn Hâzm argues that the prophets preceding Muhammad were sent to their peoples and their prescriptions of the religious law, the sharî'a, were incumbent merely on the peoples to whom they were sent. See Ibn Hâzm, al-Mu'âllâ, ed. Ahmad Mu'hammad Shâkir (Cairo, n.d.), 1, 65, no. 102.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya, Hidayatu l-lâyara fi ajwibati l-yahUd wa·l-na~ara (Beirut, n.d.) 77, ll. 2–3, 84.

Al-Suyûtî, al-Durr al-manthur, III, 125, ll. 4–5.


149 Cf. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Jâmî’ bayân al-‘îm, I, 63: When Zayd b. Thâbit visited the court of Mu‘âwiya, he was asked about a tradition of the Prophet, Mu‘âwiya ordered a man of his court to write down his reply. Zayd b. Thâbit reminded Mu‘âwiya of the Prophet’s prohibition to write down his utterances and Mu‘âwiya ordered the tradition be erased.

Al-Dhahabî, Siyår a‘lâmî l-nubalâ’, II, 431: Marwân ordered a scribe to sit behind a curtain and write down clandestinely the traditions transmitted by Abû Hurayra.
kept company with governors were sharply condemned by pious scholars of *hadith*, who stated that a scholar of *hadith* loses part of his faith when he enters the court of a ruler. There was only one exception: the rule of the pious ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz; the orthodox scholars of *hadith* gladly cooperated with the righteous Caliph. Al-Zuhri says, probably with some satisfaction, that ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ordered to write down the *sunan* of the Prophet; he and others wrote them down, *fa-katabnāhā*, and the written documents, the *dafātir*, were dispatched to the provinces, each province getting a *daftar*.\(^1\) At the same time, the Abbasids developed their claims for the caliphate.\(^2\) It was natural that new elements from among the population were called to take part in the discussion concerning the rights of the different candidates for the rule and control of the Muslim Empire. There were some changes in the way the reliability of different groups of people was evaluated. Orthodox scholars warned that one should be cautious concerning the traditions of poor *muḥaddithūn*. Shu‘ba was the scholar who expressed this in plain words: “Do not record the traditions reported by the poor, because they lie to you.” A note attached to the utterance mentions that Shu‘ba himself was at that time poorer than a dog.\(^3\) It is noteworthy that the critical attitude towards the Bedouins changed entirely. In contrast to the former assertions as to the bad character of the Bedouins, Shu‘ba states that the Bedouins do not lie in questions of *hadith*\(^4\). The Prophet predicted that there would be violent civil wars after his death; the best people in these wars would be the Muslims of the desert, *muslimū ahli l-bawāḍī*, who had no blood on their hands and did not touch forbidden property.\(^5\)

It is evident that an essential change took place in the opinions of the scholars of *hadith* towards the Bedouins. They are the righteous people, untainted by spilled blood or wealth. They, of course,

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\(^1\) Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh dimashq, tahdhib*, VI, 59 inf.: Marwān ordered one of his *mawādir*, Sālim b. al-Zu‘ayzī’s, to write down the utterances of the Prophet transmitted by Abū Hurayra, who was seated behind the throne of Marwān; Sālim carried out the order of Marwān. After a year, Marwān invited Abū Hurayra to his court and asked him about the traditions which he transmitted a year ago; he repeated them exactly. Marwān attempted to test him and sent him a hundred dinars. Later, he sent him a messenger and asked Abū Hurayra to give the hundred dinars back, claiming that he had intended to send them to another person. Abū Hurayra apologized, saying that he had already spent the money, but asked to detract the sum from his payment of *‘aṭā‘*.


\(^4\) Ibn ‘Adī, *al-Kāmil, al-muqaddima*, 247; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥiṣyatu l-auliya‘*, VII, 147, mentions that he was sustained by his nephew and his son in law.


\(^1\) Al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-shāmiyyīn*, II, 394, no. 1562: *sa-yakūnu ba‘dī fitanun shiddānun, khayru l-nāsi fihā muslimū ahli l-bawāḍī lладhīna lā yatanaddauna min dimā‘ī l-nāsi wa-amwallhim sayyān.*
need to obtain the required knowledge of *hadīth*. It is not surprising that al-Zuhri is said to have gone many times to visit the dwellings of the Bedouins to teach them *hadīth*.\(^{155}\) The strong injunction against teaching knowledge of Muslim law to ruffians and people of the lowest classes, formulated in the saying of Makhlūl: "tafaqquhu l-ra‘ā‘i fasādu l-dīn wa-tafaqquhu l-siflati fasādu l-dunyā,"\(^{156}\) totally lost its importance.

The new trend found its expression in the well known saying of al-Zuhri: *qad akrahanā hā‘ulā‘i l-umārā‘* . . . . This saying was given several contradictory interpretations.\(^{157}\) It may, however, be remarked that an expression resembling to some extent that of al-Zuhri, can be traced to an earlier authority. In a story reported by Shahr b. Ḥaushab\(^{158}\) about his journey to Syria at the time of Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya, he mentioned that he met Nauf (obviously al-Bikāli) and ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ. When Nauf noticed ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, he cut short the transmission of a *hadīth* in which he was engaged. ‘Abdallah encouraged him to continue, but Nauf refused, saying ‘Abdallah was a Companion of the Prophet and it was more appropriate that he should transmit traditions. ‘Abdallah said that: "These umārā‘ prevented us from transmitting *hadīth*, *ina hā‘ulā‘i qad mana‘unī ‘anī l-hadīth-ya‘nī l-umārā‘*. When Nauf beseeched him, he agreed to tell those present a *hadīth* about the apocalyptic events preceding the advent of the *Dajjāl*.\(^{159}\)

We have here a phrase reminiscent of al-Zuhri’s expression. The difference in time between the two phrases is interesting: ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ died ca. 70 H. Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Zuhri died in 124 H. ‘Abdallah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ was prevented from transmitting traditions, al-Zuhri had an aversion to writing them down, but was compelled to do it. In both cases we have an interference on the part of the Umayyad umārā‘. The formulation of al-Zuhri’s statement deserves notice: *kunnā nakrahu kitābā l-ilmi ḥattā akrahanā ‘alayhi hā‘ulā‘i l-umārā‘u, fa-ra‘aynā an lā namna‘ahu aḥadān mina l-muslimīn*.\(^{160}\) The logical construction of the statement of al-Zuhri is incoherent: the fact

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\(^{160}\) Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, *al-Madkhal ilā l-sunani l-kubrā*, 409, no. 739.
that the umara\textsuperscript{2} compelled him to write down the hadith does not imply that he had to dictate the hadith to others.\textsuperscript{161}

It would be too simple to suppose that al-Zuhri was angry at the fact that he had to gather traditions for the Caliph. He used to visit the court of the Caliph and received marks of respect and attention at the court. He was highly esteemed as a colleague and the mere mention of a scholar by him was considered a recommendation of that scholar to the Caliph.\textsuperscript{162} The large number of traditions left by al-Zuhri after his death and found in his home and the numerous traditions of al-Zuhri found in the library of Malik b. Anas,\textsuperscript{163} bear evidence to the fact that al-Zuhri wrote down hadith, and not in negligible numbers. The great number of students that he had, and the books of hadith to which he often granted his consent, even without reading the text, imply that al-Zuhri did not refrain from writing and dictating hadith. The construction of the sentence: ... akrahana `alayhi hā'ulā`u l-umara\textsuperscript{3}u, fa-ra`aynā an lā namna`ahu aḥadan mina l-muslimin..., “We had an aversion to the recording of knowledge, i.e., the hadith, until these amirs compelled us to it, and we then considered it right not to prevent anyone of the Muslims to write down hadith” — is rather vague. It is not absolutely clear what the phrase “fa-ra`aynā...” implies. A rare case of this kind is probably the following hadith of the Prophet: “kuntu nahaytukum `an ziyyārati l-qubūr, fa-zūrū l-qubūra, fa-innahā tuzahhidu fi l-dunyā wa-tudhakkiru

\textsuperscript{161} See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Taqyīdu l-`ilm, 107; and see the copious references of the editor. And see Ibn `Abd al-Barr, Jāmī` boyān, I, 77:... istaktabanī l-mulūku fa-aktatabuhum, fa-stahayatu l-lihā idh katababā l-mulūku allā uktabā bi-l-ghayribim. And see ibid., I, 76:... kunnā nakrahu kitāba l-`ilmī hattā akrahānā `alayhi hā`ulā`u l-umard`u, fa-ra`aynā an lā namna`ahu aḥadan mina l-muslimin. And see this version: ‘Abd al-Razzāq, al-Muğannaf, XI, 258, no. 20486. A similar version is recorded in Abū Nu`aym's Ḥiyātu l-auliya\textsuperscript{5}, III, 363: kunnā nakrahu l-kāthā hattā akrahānā `alayhi l-sulūfīn, fa-kartīnā an namna`ahu l-nāsā. And ibid., 363: Abū l-Mu‘āya: kunnā lā naṭma`u an naktuba `inda l-zuhri hattā akhra hīshāmnun al-zuhriyya fa-kataba li-banīhi, fa-kataba l-nāsu l-hadith. Another tradition, ibid., 361, says that Hishām sent al-Zuhri two scribes who wrote down traditions dictated by him for his son during the course of a year.

\textsuperscript{162} See Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, IX, 345, inf.: Al-Zuhri was asked at the court about Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab and gave a favourable opinion about him; when Zuhri came to Medina and greeted Ibn Musayyab, he did not reply. When asked about his uncouth behaviour he answered: “You mentioned me to the Banū Marwān.” The reaction of Ibn al-Musayyab indicates that al-Zuhri was highly esteemed at the court of the Caliph and that the pious Ibn al-Musayyab was vexed about it, fearing that he might be invited to the court. See the comprehensive article of M. Lecker on the political and cultural activities of al-Zuhri, in his “Biographical Notes on Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri,” Sixth International Colloquium: From Jahiliyya to Islam (Jerusalem, 1993).

\textsuperscript{163} See Abū Nu`aym, Ḥiyātu l-auliya\textsuperscript{5}, III, 361 and al-Qāḍī `Iyād, Tartībū l-madārik wa-taqrību l-masadāk li-ma`rifatī a`lām madhhab mālik, ed. Ahmad Bakır Maḥmūd (Beirut, 1387/1967), I, 149. And see Ibn Sa‘īd, al-Ṭabaqatū l-kubrā, al-qismu l-mutammim, ed. Ziyād Muḥammad Maṣṭūr (al-Madīna al-munawwara, 1408/1987), 170; and see the copious references of the editor.
The *fa* in *fa-zūrū* denotes a reversal of the prohibition to visit graves into a positive injunction to visit them. In our case, the order to write *ḥadīth*, which the speaker deplores, is followed by the *fa* of *fa-raʾaynā*, which may be explained: "and as a result of the ruler’s command and of the fact that we were compelled to write *ḥadīth*, we came to the conclusion that we shall not prevent any Muslim from writing of the *ḥadīth*.” The only assumption which may be put forward is that the *ḥadīths* which Zuhrī was bidden to write down for the sons of the Caliph were of an official character. They may have touched upon events which affected peoples’ opinions, such as those connected with the role of some Qurashi enemies of the Prophet who later embraced Islam and became virtuous believers. Other *ḥadīths* which may fall into this category are those that contain unknown injunctions of the Prophet concerning the women and children of enemies put to death, or the Prophet’s injunction against killing hypocrites who pray and utter the *shahāda*, or the behaviour of tax collectors in cases of attempted bribery, or the rules of *jizya* levied from the Zoroastrians. These kinds of traditions seem to be the reason why al-Zuhrī was vexed and decided to change his manner of transmission, permitting every Muslim to write down *ḥadīth*.

A puzzling case of such a tradition is recorded in Ibn Ḥazm’s *al-Iḥkām fi usūl l-aḥkām*. Al-Zuhrī records a document of the Prophet concerning the *ṣadaqa*. It begins with the phrase: “ḥādihi nuskhatu kitābi rasūli lliihi *ṣadaqa*.” The document was in the possession of the family of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Al-Zuhrī provides additional details: The document was read to him by Sālim b. ‘Abdallah b. ‘Umar and he learnt it by heart. This document was copied by ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz from the text of ‘Abdallah b. ‘Abdallah b. ‘Umar and Sālim b. ‘Abdallah b. ‘Umar when he was the amīr of Medina; he then ordered his officials to act according to this document. The later Caliphs continued to order the implementation of the document until Hishām b. Muḥammad b. Hānī ordered to copy the document and to send it to all of his governors and ordered them to act according to the document. Ibn Ḥazm criticizes sharply the fact that this document was granted legal authority. The document is, in fact, a sheet, *ṣahīfa*, not provided with proper *isnāds*. Besides, only eighty years after the death of the

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164 Al-Munāwī, *Fayḍu l-qadīr* (Cairo, 1391/1972), V, 55, no. 6430.
166 See, e.g., Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Tajrīdū l-tamhīd*, 147, no. 468.
170 1, 289–90
171 This is probably a mistake; read: until Hishām ordered Muḥammad b. Hānī ....
Prophet did people begin to act according to this *ṣaḥīfa*. The governors of 'Uthmān followed another document. The governors of 'Alī, of Ibn al-Zubayr and Abū Bakr as well did not act according to this document. The Medinan family of Ḥāzm, ʿāl Ḥāzm, was in the possession of another *ṣaḥīfa*. Thus, one wonders what caused the practice of the iniquitous Walīd and the caliphs who succeeded him, whose practices are not to be taken into consideration, *mīmman lā yuʿtaddu bihi*, (except 'Umar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz), to be regarded as preferable to the practice of Ibn al-Zubayr, of 'Alī, of 'Uthmān and of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddiq. This difference of opinions must be resolved according to the injunctions of the Qurʾān and the practice of the Prophet as proved by traditions with sound *āṣānid*.172 The criticism of Ibn Ḥāzm is an example of strict, un-biased and uncompromising evaluation of a legal practice according to the validity of recorded traditions.

The transition into a new period of ḥadīth transmission is highlighted by a statement of Mālik b. Anas, the student and friend of al-Zuhri. “If knowledge is barred from common people because of the chosen group, the khāṣṣa, the chosen group will not get any good from it, *lām tantašī* bihi l-khāṣṣa,” said Mālik.173 The idea that ḥadīth should be spread and transmitted even by men who know less than those to whom the traditions are transmitted gained wide expression in books of ḥadīth, compendia of taṣawwuf, collections of adab and books of taʾrikh. A tradition of this kind which was in wide circulation in the second part of the second century is: *naqqa l-lāhu imraʾ an*.174

172 Ibn Ḥāzm, al-Ḥikām fī ʿusūlī l-ahkām, I, 289–93; see also the discussion concerning the legality of the practices of the governors in the different provinces of the Muslim Empire. And see, e.g., the information about the various documents concerning the *ṣaḍaqa* in al-Ḥakīm’s al-Mustadrak, I, 390–97.


174 See Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, al-Khutub wa-l-mawāʾiz, ed. Ramaḍān Abī al-Tawwāb (Cairo, 1406/1986), no. 140, 205–207: (the first part of the combined tradition), . . . Zayd b. Thābit — the Prophet: . . . *naqqa l-lāhu imraʾ an sāmīʿa minnā ḥadīthan fa-hamalahu ḥattā yuwalīgīhā huqrahu, fa-rubba ḥāmidī fīqīthin li-afqahā minhu, wa-rubba ḥāmidī fīqīthin layṣa bi-faqqīhin*. “. . . may God illuminate the man who heard from us a hadīth and carried it until he forwarded it to another person, because it often happens that a man carries knowledge of the law to a man who is more familiar with the law than himself, and it often happens that a man who carries knowledge of the law is himself not a man of the law, layṣa bi-faqqīhin”; and see the references of the editor.

Other versions of this tradition: Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Ḫaṭṭī ḫaṭṭī, I, 38–43; II, 27. Ibn Taymiyya, al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddāla dīna l-masth, ed. ‘Alī al-Sayyid Subḥ al-Madanī (Cairo, 1381/1962), III, 132; and see the arguments of Ibn Taymiyya concerning the understanding of the transmitter of the tradition. And see
Ibn Taymiyya, al-Hasanatu wa-l-sayyi'atu, ed. Ḥanān b. Ḥāfiz (Cairo, 1408/1988), 65; and see the references of the editor.

Al-Qāḍī ʿĪyāḍ al-Ṯālibi, al-Bāṭin, 13, 15, li-yuballigha l-shahidu l-ghāʾiba fa-inna l-ghāʾida ʿāsān yuballigha man huwa awʾā lahu minhu; and see the references of the editor Ahmad Ṣaqr. Al-Munāwī, Ṣаqīfah l-qaṣrān al-muṭafiqīn, ed. ʿĪsā b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Beirut, 1410/1989), 1, 11-19; see the references of the editor and his evaluation of the hadīth. Al-Wāqīdī, al-Muḥaddithu l-faqīḥ, 161-66, nos. 3-11; and see the references of the editor.
It is evident that this hadith was well known in the middle of the second century. This is proven by the fact that Abū Yūsuf (d. 182 H) and Mālik b. Anas (d. 179 H) recorded it in their books. One of transmitters of the hadith, as recorded by Abū Yūsuf, is Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī. This is not surprising.

The Banū Isrāʾīl, as already mentioned, heedlessly and stubbornly refused to accept the grace of God to read the Torah by heart; the Torah would then be read by a man, a woman, a free-man, a slave, a boy or an old man. It is startling how the idea that 'ilm may be transmitted by all classes of people was embraced by Muslim scholars. The old idea that hadith should be transmitted only by ashrāf was discarded. The new idea extolled the transmission of hadith by every person in Muslim society, young or old, rich or poor, and is very reminiscent of the grace of God, which was to be granted to Banū Isrāʾīl. A hadith recorded on the authority of Ibn 'Umar says: "The Prophet [s] said: Write down this knowledge from every rich and poor man, from every young or old man. He who abandons knowledge because the man of knowledge is poor or younger than he, let him take his seat in Hell."

The traditions quoted above bear witness to the fact that the idea of hadith being transmitted only by the ashrāf and that its transmission should be controlled by rigorous scholars and honourable transmitters, was gradually abandoned from the beginning of the second century onwards. The transmission of hadiths, edifying stories, stories of prophets and saints, was widely disseminated by the new generations of scholars, among whom the mawālt probably formed the majority.


175 wa-ajalukum taqroʿina l-ṭauratā ‘an ṣahrī ḍulūbikum, yaqrūʿuḥā l-rajulu minkum wa-l-ḥurrū wa-l-ṣaghīrū wa-kabīrū. See al-Qurṭūbī, Taṣfr, VII, 297.

176 Al-Samarqandi, Bustān al-ʿarīfīn, 6: . . . 'an nāʾīn 'an ibn 'umara raḍiyya llāhu 'anhum qala, qaṣṣ aṣīṣū l-lāhī ṣallā llāhū 'alayhi wa-sallam: "uktūbū hādhā l-ʿilm min kullī ghaniyyin wa-faṣīrin wa-min kullī ṣaghīrīn wa-kabīrīn. wa-man tarakā l-ʿilm min aṣīṣīna ṣaḥība l-ʿilmī faṣīrīn au asghāru minhu sinnan fa-l-yātabawwā maqʿadahu mina l-nārī."