

IMAM BUKHĀRĪ'S
METHODOLOGY IN HIS
ṢAHĪH AND HIS USAGE
OF *SĪGHAT AL-JAHL*

SIDDIQA SAIDZADA

INTRODUCTION

Imām Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī’s *ṣaḥīḥ* compilation, his magnum opus, is widely famed for being “The most authentic book after the Book of Allāh Ta‘ālā” and is one of the most important and reliable of all ḥadīth collections. Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*), as a ḥāfiẓ of ḥadīth, sifted through thousands of aḥādīth and selected 7,275 for his compilation. His compilation includes not only authentic narrations comprising of full chains reaching the Prophet (ﷺ), but also includes a number of *mu‘allaq* (suspended) and corroborative aḥādīth, totalling to approximately 1,725. Thus, we can infer that Imām Bukhārī’s objective was both to compile authentic narrations, as well as demonstrate how doctrinal and legal inferences may be drawn from them. For centuries, his *ṣaḥīḥ* compilation has been a central focus of study, scrutiny, and commentary. Researchers observed a pattern of practices that Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) seems to have adhered to and his chapter-headings are said to constitute his fiqh as they serve as a key to the aḥādīth of each chapter. His entire compilation is divided into one hundred *kutub* (books), which are further subdivided into 3,450 *abwāb* (chapters).¹ This article will discuss some of the main practices of Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* relating to *isnād* (chains) and fiqh, and specifically analyse his usage of the *ṣiḡhat al-jahl* (uncertain term) when narrating reports, as well as some examples.

¹ Muḥammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development & Special Features* p.56. (The Islamic Texts Society).

PRACTICES RELATING TO THE ISNĀD

The *tarājim al-abwāb* (chapter-headings) of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* contain various themes. In some cases, they are in full conformity with the Qurʾānic verses and aḥādīth listed under them, while in other cases, they are of lesser significance than the aḥādīth that follow. In the case of the latter, they serve as additional explanation and interpretation for them. Nevertheless, in every chapter, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) kept a certain objective in mind. Below are some of his main practices:

1. He does not usually repeat a ḥadīth with the same chain. Rather, when repeating the ḥadīth he narrates it with a new chain according to the requirement of every chapter. He has, however, related more than twenty aḥādīth comprising of both the same chain and text.

For example:

- Ḥadīth of ‘Abdūllah ibn Mughaffal (*raḍī Allāhu ‘anh*) regarding the ‘bag of fat’ narrated in the Chapters of *Khumus* and *Dhabā’ih*.
- Ḥadīth of Sahl (*raḍī Allāhu ‘anh*) regarding the sacrifice of a large animal, narrated in the chapter of *Ḥajj*.
- Ḥadīth of Anas (*raḍī Allāhu ‘anh*) regarding Umm Ḥārithah, narrated in the Chapter of *Maghāzī* and *Riqāq*.
- Ḥadīth of Anas (*raḍī Allāhu ‘anh*) regarding the story of the two companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) who departed from him on a dark night and were led by two lights which resembled lamps, narrated in the Chapter of *Ṣalāh* and *‘Alāmāt of Nubuwwah*.
- Ḥadīth of Anas (*raḍī Allāhu ‘anh*) regarding *al-Istisqā’*, narrated in the chapter of *Istisqā’* and in the *Manāqib* of ‘Abbās.²

The objectives of Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) in repeating aḥādīth

There were many reasons why Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) repeated the *matn* (text), *sanad* (chain), or both of a ḥadīth. Some of his main objectives for doing this are as follows:

First objective

² ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Hāshimī, *‘Ādāt al-Imām al-Bukhārī fī Ṣaḥīḥihi*, pp. 57-58. (Dar al-Bashā’ir al-Islāmiyyah, 2011).

To remove doubts that may arise regarding the narrators, as some narrators narrated a ḥadīth in full, whilst others have narrated the same ḥadīth concisely. Thus, Imām Bukhārī narrates the ḥadīth at one instance with its full chain and at another concisely in order to remove the doubt that some narrators may be dropping or hiding the names of some of their teachers.

Second objective

To indicate to the various wordings used by the narrators. If a ḥadīth contains a word which the narrators have interpreted differently, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) brings another version of that same ḥadīth as long as it fulfills his criteria, so as to include that additional interpretation for the ḥadīth.

Third objective

To give preference to one chain over the other. For example, if one ḥadīth has been narrated *musnadan* (with a connected chain) to the Prophet (ﷺ) and another *mursalan* (with a chain connected to a Companion or Successor), if Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) prefers the *musnad* (connected chain) over the other *mursal* chain, then he may also narrate the *mursal* chain to show that this chain has no negative effect albeit he has given preference to the *musnad* ḥadīth.

Fourth objective

To repel any doubt regarding the presence of a *ziyādah* (addition) in the *isnād*. For instance, in the case of a narrator hearing a ḥadīth via a shaykh, but then also meeting a person who has heard the same ḥadīth from the same shaykh, and the narrator then choosing to narrate it via both routes. In this situation, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) will relate the ḥadīth with both chains in order to remove the possible doubt that there is an incorrect addition in the chain.

Fifth objective

To clearly show *samāʿ* (that a narrator has heard the ḥadīth), due to his condition of *thubūt al-liqāʾ* (proof of the meeting of narrators). He does this by relating a *muʿanʿan* ḥadīth, and then relating the ḥadīth via another chain which shows clear *samāʿ*.

Sixth objective

To make the ḥadīth appear less rare by bringing more than one chain for it.

Seventh objective

To employ the various analyses of one ḥadīth. Thus, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) relates the same ḥadīth under different chapters with different chains to make use of its different interpretations.

Continuing with his habits relating to *isnād*:

2. He narrates less from his teachers that were *mutakallam fih* (their status was differed upon). When he does narrate from such teachers, he follows the narrations with supporting evidence to strengthen their narrations.
3. He does *ikhtiṣār* (summarises ḥadīth). He had many reasons for doing this, but it was primarily to restrict the content of a *mawqūf* ḥadīth to the *marfūʿ* portion. For example, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) relates the following ḥadīth narrated by ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd (*raḍī Allāhu ʿanh*): “The Muslims did not free slaves as *sāʾibah* (without retaining *walāʾ*), but the people of the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance used to do so.”³ This is the *marfūʿ* portion of the complete ḥadīth which is as follows:

“A man came to ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd (*raḍī Allāhu ʿanh*) and said, ‘I freed a slave as a *sāʾibah* and he has passed away leaving wealth behind, but no heirs.’ ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd (*raḍī Allāhu ʿanh*) replied, ‘Indeed, the Adherents of Islam do not free slaves as *sāʾibah*. Therefore, you are his custodian, and his inheritance is yours.’”
4. He does *iqṭiṭāʿ* (shortens ḥadīth). This is in the instance when one ḥadīth has many sentences that are not linked to one another. Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*)’s habit is that he breaks up a lengthy ḥadīth that has many short parts into various parts, and then narrates them under various chapters to avoid prolixity, although he does occasionally narrate such *aḥādīth* in full too. ʿAllāmah Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (*raḥimahullāh*) authored a book titled, *Jawāb al-Mutaʿannit*, an outstanding work, in which he responded to those who objected upon Imām Bukhārī repeating, summarising, and shortening ḥadīth.

³ Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (6753).

5. When he narrates a ḥadīth from more than one shaykh of his, he narrates the wording of the most recent teacher.
6. When he brings *taḥwīl* (transition in the chain of ḥadīth), he brings the text of the second ḥadīth.
7. He mentions *mutābaʿāt* (corroborators) frequently.
8. He gives preference to *as-sanad al-ʿālī* (shorter chains). The shortest links in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* are the *thulāthiyyāt* (3-link chains), which equal to 20 aḥādīth in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Most of them are from Makkī ibn Ibrāhīm, some are from Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Makhlād, while others are from Khallād ibn Yaḥyā. The longest chain in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* is a *tusāʿī* (9-link chain), of which there is one, in the subchapter of Yaʿjūj and Maʿjūj, in the Chapter of *Fitan*.
9. He frequently narrates via chains which are classified as “*aṣaḥ al-asānīd*” (the most authentic of the chains). Examples include the following:
 - a. Mālik, from Nāfiʿ, from Ibn ʿUmar (*raḥimahumallāh*)
 - b. Zuhri, from Sālim, from his father (*raḥimahumallāh*)
 - c. Nakhaʿī, from ʿAlqamah, from Ibn Masʿūd (*raḥimahumallāh*)
 - d. Zuhri, from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusain, from his father (*raḥimahumallāh*)
 - e. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn al-Qāsim, from his father, from ʿĀʾishah (*raḥimahumallāh*).
10. He does not differentiate between the terms *ḥaddathanā*, *akhbaranā*, *samiʿtu*, and *anbaʿanā*⁴. He has even mentioned this under the chapter of ʿIlm: *Bāb Qawl al-Muḥaddith Ḥaddathanā aw Akhbaranā aw Anbaʿanā*.
11. Wherever he mentions a rare narrator, he sheds more light on their identity by mentioning the narrator’s lineage and country. Imām Ibn Ḥajar indicates to this in his *Fatḥ al-Bārī*.

⁴ When a student received a ḥadīth through *samāʿ* (listening to the teacher), he can convey the ḥadīth to others by using the terms *samiʿtu* (I heard), *ḥaddathanā* (he related to us), or *akhbaranā* (he informed us). When one of the students reads to the teacher, and the teacher listens, the student reading the ḥadīth will use the term *akhbaranā* whilst the other students who are listening will use the term *anbaʿanā*.

12. At one place in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, he has brought a *waw* before the term *ḥaddathanā*, whereas in comparison, Imām Muslim has done this many times. Some scholars have stated that the *waw* is a *ḥarf ‘atf* (particle of conjunction) to the *ḥadīth* that precedes it. Others have suggested that it is a conjunction for the narrations of one shaykh, such that if an author has heard one hundred narrations from the same shaykh, and he wants to narrate one of them besides the first one, he should narrate them as *wa-ḥaddathanā* to indicate that it was not the first *ḥadīth* that he heard from the shaykh. Lastly, ‘Allāmah ‘Aynī (*raḥimahullāh*) has said that this *waw* is for *iftitāḥ* (inception), which can come in the usage of *waw taḥwīl* (conversion) wherein one switches from one chain to another. *Taḥwīl* is normally indicated by a *ḥā*.
13. He brings *mu‘allaq* (suspended) narrations in which the author omits the beginning of a *ḥadīth*’s chain and narrates it directly from someone higher up in the chain such as a Successor, Companion, or the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. There are many reasons why Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) does this, such as for *istishhād* (corroboration) or *bayān al-ikhtilāf* (mentioning difference of opinion), among other reasons.
14. He commences the chapter with a verse of the Qur’ān. For example, such as in the chapter of *Buyū‘*, he brought the verse: {However, if you conduct an immediate transaction among yourselves...}⁵ and the verse: {But Allāh has permitted trade and has forbidden interest.}⁶
15. He commences with the chapter headings, followed by a verse of the Qur’ān, followed by a *muttaṣil marfū‘* *ḥadīth*, and then finally followed by a report of a Companion (*raḍī Allāhu ‘anh*), or a verdict of a Successor (*raḥimahullāh*). At other times, he commences with the chapter heading, followed by a verse of the Qur’ān, followed by a *mu‘allaq* *ḥadīth* or *athar* (report of a Companion or Successor). Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) only follows the second method either when he does not have a *musnad* *ḥadīth* which fits his criteria, or because he has mentioned the relevant *ḥadīth musnadan* (with a connected chain to the Prophet (ﷺ)) in an earlier instance.

⁵ Qur’ān 2:282

⁶ Qur’ān 2:275

16. On rare occasions, he commences with the chapter headings, and follows it by a verse of the Qur'ān only.
17. Usually, he commences with the chapter heading, and only includes a *musnad* ḥadīth.
18. Very rarely, he commences with the chapter headings, and only follows it by a report of a Companion or Successor. There are three possible reasons for this. First, he may not have found evidence that fits his criteria. Second, he may have mentioned the evidence for the chapter elsewhere but intends to test the reader. Finally, it could be that he left the evidence of that chapter with the intention to include it later but passed away before he was able to do so.
19. He brings the chapter heading but does not mention anything under it. Some scholars mention that this may be because the contents of that chapter have recently preceded, or will come up soon, so Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) avoided mentioning anything under the chapter heading as a way of sharpening the mind of the reader.
20. Sometimes, he brings a chapter without a heading. Some commentators explain that this can be regarded as a sub-chapter of the previous chapter, which has been brought separately to answer an objection, provide further clarity on a ḥadīth of the preceding chapter, or to guide the student to extract rulings that correspond to the previous subchapters.
21. He brings a chapter in which the word *al-Bāb* is substituting the statement of the muḥaddith: '*wa bi hādha 'l-isnād*' (also with this chain). An example for this is *Bāb Dhikr al-Malā'ikah*. He brings close to thirty aḥādīth in this chapter until the final ḥadīth of Shu'ayb, from Abū 'z-Zinād, from A'raj, from Abū Hurairah (*raḍī Allāhu 'anh*). Then, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) brought: *Bāb Idhā Qāla Aḥadukum Āmīn* (Chapter: If anyone says *Āmīn*) and followed it with the ḥadīth regarding the angels not entering a house in which there is a picture. Then he brought aḥādīth which did not have the mention of saying '*āmīn*'

until much later. As such, the word ‘Bāb’ in *Bāb Idhā Qāla Aḥadukum Āmīn* is in place of a muḥaddith’s statement: ‘*wa bi hādha ‘l-isnād*’ (also with this chain).

22. He brings a chapter in which the word *al-Bāb* is substituting the statement of the author: ‘*tanbīh*’ (attention), ‘*fā’idah*’ (benefit), or ‘*qif*’ (stop).
23. He does not repeat the chapter-headings except if the heading is indicating to two separate matters. For example, he brought the chapter-heading, “*Bāb Adā’ al-Khumus mina ‘l-Īmān*,” under *Kitāb al-Īmān*, and *Kitāb Farḍ al-Khumus*.
24. He repeats the chapter-heading if it contains a word in which there is a difference regarding its interpretation. For example, the chapter-heading, “*Bāb lā Hāmāh*,” is repeated in two places in the chapter of *Aṭ-Ṭibb*, due to a difference of opinion regarding the word *Hāmāh*.
25. In a chapter that contains more than one ḥadīth, he uses the wording of one ḥadīth to phrase the chapter-heading, and then brings the other ḥadīth with different wording.
26. Sometimes, he phrases the chapter-heading with the words of a ḥadīth that do not correspond to his conditions, or with words that indicate to such a ḥadīth, and then he brings the ḥadīth that does fulfill his criteria to support his chapter-heading. For example, he brings the chapter, “*Bābu ‘l-Umarā’ min Quraish*,” and he indicates to a ḥadīth that is not on his condition. He then brings the ḥadīth, “*Lā yazālu wālīn min Quraish*” which fulfills his criteria in support of his chapter-heading.
27. Very frequently, he brings the chapter-heading as a question. This is often when he does not incline to either opinion that exists within a matter.
28. Wherever he does not incline to an opinion, he brings a neutral and ambiguous chapter-heading.

29. When there is an outward contradiction between two aḥādīth, he resolves the contradiction by the manner in which he phrases the chapter-heading. For instance, in order to reconcile between the ḥadīth, “There is no marriage without a walī (guardian),” and the ḥadīth, “A woman without a husband has more right to her person than her guardian,” Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) brings the chapter-headings: “*Bāb lā Nikāha illā bi-Walī* (Chapter: Nikah is Not Valid Without a Guardian),” and “*Bāb lā Yunkahu ‘l-Abū wa Ghairuhu ‘l-Bikrah wa ‘th-Thayyibah illā bi Riḍāhā* (Chapter: The Father or the Guardian Cannot Give a Virgin or Matron in Marriage Without her Consent).
30. Sometimes, he extracts a ruling in the chapter-heading from various aḥādīth that he brings in the chapter. For example, for the chapter: “*Bāb Hal ‘alā man lam Yashhad al-Jumu‘ah Ghuslun min an-Nisā’ wa ‘ṣ-Ṣibyān wa Ghairihim* (Chapter: Is the Ritual Bath Necessary for Those Who do not Present Themselves for the Jumu‘ah Prayer from the Women and Children),” he brings many aḥādīth. At the end of the chapter, he brings the ḥadīth, “Do not prevent the female-slaves of Allāh from going to the mosques of Allāh,”⁷ despite this ḥadīth not possessing any outward relevance to the chapter-heading. However, when this ḥadīth is coupled with the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Umar (*raḍi Allāhu ‘anh*) before it, “Allow women to go to the mosques at night,”⁸ we understand that since the Prophet (ﷺ) instructed that women be permitted to go to the mosque in the night, it would mean that they were not permitted during the day, thus, attending Jumu‘ah prayer and its ritual bath would have not been necessary upon them.⁹

HABITS RELATING TO THE FIQH

As for his habits relating to fiqh, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) has adhered to extracting juridical points alongside narrating authentic narrations which are fully connected and go back to the Prophet (ﷺ). Through his unrivaled comprehension and profound knowledge, he has extracted many interpretations and verdicts from the aḥādīth. Hence, one sees that he extracted many verdicts from one ḥadīth and separated them under different chapters. Likewise, he has brought the relevant verses of the Qur’ān for support under different

⁷ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (900).

⁸ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (899).

⁹ ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Hāshimī, *‘Ādāt al-Imām al-Bukhārī fī Ṣaḥīḥihi*, pp. 64-86.

chapters, as well as the *mawqūfāt* (statements) of the Companions and Successors, either to indicate which opinion he prefers, to mention the difference of opinion, or to clarify a vague matter.

Moreover, he sometimes does not bring a *musnad* ḥadīth in the chapter and suffices by only mentioning a *mu‘allaq* narration. In many chapters, he narrates abundant aḥādīth whilst in some others, he brings either only one ḥadīth, one verse of the Qur’ān, or nothing additional at all. Consequently, the chapter-headings of Imām Bukhārī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* contains many nuances and subtleties. As a result, this unique methodology has stunned those who have concentrated and carefully observed the chapter headings, so much so that this became a subject of its own, known as “*Fiqh al-Bukhārī fī Tarājimihi*” (Imām Bukhārī’s Jurisprudence in his Chapter Headings).¹⁰

USAGE OF *ṢĪGHAT AL-JAHL* AND *ṢĪGHAT AL-JAZM*

‘Allāmah Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ is the first person who made a distinction between *ṣīghat al-jazm* (emphatic term) and *ṣīghat at-tamrīd* (uncertain term), although he is not the first to coin them. When we look for *ṣīghat al-jazm* and *ṣīghat at-tamrīd* in the books before ‘Allāmah Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ, we do not find scholars making a distinction between them. Furthermore, when we look at the practice of Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) himself, and even those before him, we find that they have not specified *ṣīghat at-tamrīd* for weak narrations, rather, they would use it even for authentic narrations, which would also be used as evidence. Similarly, scholars have not specified certain terms as *ṣīghat al-jazm* to indicate that a narration is authentic unconditionally. Rather, both terms were used interchangeably in most cases. In the following passages, we will take a closer look at Imām Bukhārī’s usage of *ṣīghat al-jazm* and *ṣīghat at-tamrīd*.

Ṣīghat al-Jazm

It has become prevalent among scholars that when Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) narrates a report, specifically those in his *tarājim al-Abwāb*, with a *ṣīghat al-jazm* (emphatic word), it means that the report contains a fully connected authentic chain. This became a predominant view,

¹⁰ *ibid.* pp. 71-72.

and many scholars accepted it. For instance, regarding one of the *ta'liqāt* of Imām Bukhārī, ‘Allāmah Ibn al-Mulaqqin (*raḥimahullāh*) says: “This *ta'liq* is sound because it [*li annahu*] has been quoted with a *ṣiḡhat al-jazm*.”¹¹ The word ‘*li annahu*’ in his statement has come for *ta'līl* (stating the reason), and so ‘Allāmah Ibn al-Mulaqqin is saying that because the report has come with a *ṣiḡhat al-jazm*, therefore it is sound. Moreover, ‘Allāmah Shams ad-Dīn as-Safīrī (*raḥimahullāh*) said:

“The methodology of Imām Bukhārī is that when a *ta'liq* is authentic according to him, he brings it with a *ṣiḡhat al-jazm*, and quotes using the word *qāla*. [In contrast to this], if the *ta'liq* is weak, Imām Bukhārī brings it with a *ṣiḡha at-tamrīd* such as *qīla* or *ruwiya*. Many scholars have explicitly stated that if a ḥadīth is weak, Imām Bukhārī will not say *qāla*, as it is one of the emphatic words, rather, he will say *ḥukiya*, *qīla*, *yuqālu*, which are words of uncertainty.”¹²

However, the correct conclusion is that whichever *ta'liqāt* of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* contain *ṣiḡhat al-jazm*, they are only authentic from Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) himself, until the person whose name Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) mentions. However, from there until the Prophet (ﷺ), it has the possibility of not being authentic and the chain will still have to be investigated. Imām Ibn Ḥajar (*raḥimahullāh*) says, “One must not be deceived by the statement of the one who says that it (the *ta'liq*) is authentic because Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) mentioned it with an emphatic [word], and thus it is authentic in his view because the emphatic word establishes the soundness of it.”¹³ Likewise, in another place he has said, “It has become known from this that his usage of an emphatic word in the *ta'liq* does not indicate to the authenticity of the *isnād*, except solely to the person who he mentions it to. As for those beyond that, then no [it does not establish their soundness].”¹⁴ In conclusion, Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah (*hafīzahullāh*) says, “What has become widespread in the speech of people that the *ta'liqāt* which Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) has narrated with the words of *jazm* are all *ṣaḥīḥ*, is not correct.” As mentioned, it is only *ṣaḥīḥ* until the narrator that Imām Bukhārī mentions, but beyond that the chain requires investigation.

¹¹ Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Kitābal-Badr al-Munīr*, 1:687. (Dar al-Hijrah, 2004).

¹² Shams ad-Dīn as-Safīrī, *al-Majālis al-Wa'ziyyah fī Sharḥ Aḥādīth Khayr al-Bashariyyah* 1:230. (DKI, 2004).

¹³ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, 3:366 (Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Print, 2001).

¹⁴ *ibid* 1:459.

Ṣīghat al-Jahl

Similar to *ṣīghat al-jazm*, it became common among the early scholars that when Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) uses a word of *at-Tamrīd* (uncertainty) or, more accurately, *al-Jahl* (a word of ambiguity), then it unconditionally means that the report is inauthentic. However, as previously indicated, ‘Allāmah Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ (*raḥimahullāh*) is the first person who created a distinction between these terms and their usage. However, we find no scholars of the past adhering to this, neither in theory, nor in practice. In fact, scholars would use both terms interchangeably, and would even use words of *jahl* prior to mentioning authentic narrations. Some examples follow below.

Examples for Ṣīghat al-Jahl Being Used for Authentic Reports

Imām Shāfi‘ī’s Usage

Imām Shāfi‘ī (*raḥimahullāh*) uses *ṣīghat al-jahl* to refer to an authentic narration that comes in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. In his *Kitāb al-Umm*¹⁵, he brings the chapter of *Tashahhud* and says:

فلما روي أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يعلمهم التشهد في الصلاة **وروي** أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم علمهم كيف يصلون عليه في الصلاة لم يجز والله تعالى أعلم أن نقول: التشهد واجب والصلاة على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم غير واجبة والخبر فيهما عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم زيادة فرض القرآن.

“...It has been related that the Prophet (ﷺ) taught the Companions how they should send salutations upon him in ṣalah...”

This ḥadīth comes in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and in two places of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, proving that simply because Imām Shāfi‘ī (*raḥimahullāh*) used *ṣīghat al-jahl* prior to relating the ḥadīth, does not mean that the ḥadīth is inauthentic. Furthermore, it demonstrates how scholars would not create a distinction between the two terms.

Imām Aḥmad’s Usage

¹⁵ Muḥammad ibn Idrīs ash-Shāfi‘ī, *Kitāb al-Umm*, 1:141 (Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1990).

Imām Aḥmad (*raḥimahullāh*) has also used *ṣiḡhat al-jahl* when referring to an authentic ḥadīth. For instance, he brought the following ḥadīth in the musnad of the Kufan narrators, under the ḥadīth of Barā' ibn 'Āzib:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا محمد بن جعفر ثنا شعبة عن عمرو بن مرة قال سمعت بن أبي ليلى قال ثنا البراء بن عازب: أن نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يقنت في صلاة الصبح والمغرب قال أبو عبد الرحمن قال أبي ليس **يروي** عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قنت في المغرب إلا في هذا الحديث وعن علي قوله. [تعليق شعيب الأرناؤوط]: إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين.¹⁶

“...Abū 'Abd ar-Raḥmān said that my father said, ‘It is not related from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he recited *qunūt* in the Maghrib prayer except in this ḥadīth...”

Imām Aḥmad (*raḥimahullāh*) is relating from the Prophet (ﷺ) using *ṣiḡhat al-jahl* even though the ḥadīth is authentic, and Imām Muslim (*raḥimahullāh*) has included it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* via Muḥammad ibn Ja'far from Muḥammad ibn al-Muthannā. Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt (*raḥimahullāh*) has stated in the footnote, “The chain of this narration is authentic according to the criteria of shaykhayn.” In fact, Imām Aḥmad (*raḥimahullāh*) related a *mutawātir* (multiply transmitted) narration in his *Uṣūl as-Sunnah* and used the term *ṣiḡhat al-jahl*. He said, “Belief in seeing [Allāh Ta'ālā] on the Day of Judgement, as it has been transmitted [*ruwiya 'an*] the Prophet (ﷺ) is from the authentic narrations [*aḥadīth ṣiḡḥāh*].”¹⁷

Imām Nasā'ī's Usage

Imām Nasā'ī (*raḥimahullāh*) brings the following ḥadīth in his *Sunan aṣ-Ṣughrā*:

أخبرنا أحمد بن يحيى قال حدثنا أبو نعيم قال حدثنا يوسف بن صهيب قال حدثني عبد الله بن بريدة: أن امرأة خذفت امرأة فأسقطت المخدوفة فرفع ذلك إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فجعل عقل ولدها خمسمائة من الغر ونهى يومئذ عن الخذف قال أبو عبد الرحمن هذا وهم وينبغي أن يكون أراد مائة من الغر وقد **روي** النهي عن الخذف عن عبد الله بن بريدة عن عبد الله بن مغفل.¹⁸

“...The prohibition of throwing pebbles has been related from 'Abdullāh ibn Buraydah from 'Abdullah ibn Mughaffal.”

¹⁶ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad* 18493. (Mu'assasat ar-Risālah, 2001).

¹⁷ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Uṣūl an-Sunnah*, p. 23. (Dār al-Manār as-Sa'ūdiyyah, 1990).

¹⁸ Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb an-Nasā'ī, *Sunan aṣ-Ṣughrā* 8:48 (Maktabatal-Matbū'āt al-Islamiyyah, 1986).

In the above ḥadīth, we find that Imām Nasā'ī (*raḥimahullāh*) is using a *ṣiḡhat al-jahl* to narrate this authentic ḥadīth. This ḥadīth has also been narrated by Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Yūsuf ibn Rāshid, from Yazīd, from the same narrators in the rest of the chain.

Examples like these are many. However, the above three examples from three ḥadīth scholars should suffice in demonstrating how scholars used *ṣiḡhat al-jahl* for authentic narrations too, and did not restrict it to weak narrations. Below, we look at an example of Imām Bukhārī's own usage.

Imām Bukhārī's Usage

Imām Mughultā'ī (*raḥimahullāh*) gives an example of when Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) has used *ṣiḡhat al-jahl* when relating an authentic ḥadīth. In the chapter of *Dhikr al-'Ishā'i wa 'l-ʿAtamah wa man Raʿāhu Wāsiʿan*, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) narrated the following:

باب ذكر العشاء والعتمة ومن رآه واسعا قال أبو هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أثقل الصلاة على المنافقين العشاء والفجر وقال لو يعلمون ما في العتمة والفجر قال أبو عبد الله والاختيار أن يقول العشاء لقوله تعالى ومن بعد صلاة العشاء **ويذكر** عن أبي موسى قال كنا نتناوب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم عند صلاة العشاء فاعتم بها وقال ابن عباس وعائشة أعتم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بالعشاء وقال بعضهم عن عائشة أعتم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بالعتمة وقال جابر كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يصلي العشاء وقال أبو هريرة كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يؤخر العشاء وقال أنس آخر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم العشاء الآخرة وقال ابن عمر وأبو أيوب وابن عباس رضي الله عنهم صلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم المغرب.

In the above example, before relating the ḥadīth of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (*raḍī Allāhu ʿanh*), Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) used the word 'yudhkar' (is mentioned), which is in the passive voice, and is an ambiguous word, i.e., *ṣiḡhat al-jahl*, since the one who has mentioned it is unknown. However, the ḥadīth is authentic. We know this because in another place in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, he has a fully connected chain going to Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (*raḍī Allāhu ʿanh*) via Muḥammad ibn al-ʿAlā, from Abū Usāmah, from Buraydah, from Abū Burdah, from Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (*raḍī Allāhu ʿanh*). Imām Ibn Ḥajar (*raḥimahullāh*) attempted to offer a reason why Imām Bukhārī used *ṣiḡhat al-jahl* and said, "He brought this *taʿlīq* here with *ṣiḡhat at-tamrīd (al-jahl)*, because he did *riwāyah bi 'l-maʿnā* (transmit the meaning of the ḥadīth)."¹⁹ However, this is not accurate as there are many places in which Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) did *riwāyah bi 'l-maʿnā* but did not

¹⁹ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Taghlīq at-Taʿlīq*.297, (Dār al-Islāmī).

use *ṣiġhat al-jahl*. In some cases, he did *riwāyah bi 'l-ma'nā* and used emphatic words. An example for this is the following:

باب لا تقضي الحائض الصلاة. وقال جابر وأبو سعيد عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم تدع الصلاة.²⁰

“Chapter: There is no Ṣalāh to be Offered by a Menstruating Woman. Jābir and Abū Sa‘īd (*raḍī Allāhu ‘anhum*) have said from the Prophet (ﷺ) that she will [have to] leave prayer.”

In the above example, we find that Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) is making *riwāyah bi 'l-ma'nā* by using the *ṣiġhat al-jazm* (*qāla*). From this we understand that Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) did not make a distinction between these terms and did not have an official method concerning their usage. Rather, he would use them casually and in various circumstances.

CONCLUSION

Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) compiled his *Ṣaḥīḥ* compilation originally owing to a remark of one of his teacher’s, Ishāq ibn Rāhuyah (*raḥimahullāh*), who once expressed at one point his wish that someone should compile a book containing only authentic aḥādīth. Thus, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) compiled his *Ṣaḥīḥ* containing not only *musnad* narrations, but also a number of *mu‘allaq* and corroborative narrations. Imām Bukhārī’s objective, alongside compiling authentic narrations, was to demonstrate how doctrinal and legal inferences could be drawn from the narrations. Since he has not penned the principles and habits he adhered to during his compilation, many scholars have made effort to extract these habits by analysing the practical methodology of the imām and the detectable patterns in his book. Several habits of Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*) have been mentioned in the article, and examples were given where elucidation was required.

Lastly, Imām Bukhārī (*raḥimahullāh*), like many scholars of the past, did not have an official usage for emphatic and ambiguous words. He did not specify emphatic words to be used only when narrating authentic and fully connected reports, and likewise, he did not specify ambiguous words with weak reports. He used all these words interchangeably when relating his *ta‘līqāt*.

²⁰ Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Hayḍ, ch. 20.

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