

CRITICISM TOWARDS SHAHRŪR'S CONCEPT OF THE PROPHET'S SUNNAH

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Abstract: This article deals with the concept of Sunnah proposed by Muḥammad Shahrūr and offers a criticism towards his tendency to the denial of the Prophet's Sunnah (*inkār al-Sunnah*). Shahrūr rejects the Ḥadīth and Sunnah as the second source of Islamic law, by reformulating and redefining the concept of Ḥadīth and Sunnah. Shahrūr distinguished between Ḥadīth and Sunnah. According to him, the Ḥadīth is the Qur'ān itself, and the Sunnah has been the practical application (*ijtihād*) of the Prophet to implement what was revealed to him. Shahrūr's rejection and denial of Ḥadīth and Sunnah are based on the argument that all Ḥadīths were filled with the story of Isrā'īliyyāt. The tendency towards *inkār al-Sunnah* represented by Shahrūr is not a completely new idea, since this position was also conceived by several previous figures. However, despite the fact that Shahrūr's *inkār al-Sunnah* as argued on the basis of new approach to Ḥadīth studies, this article reveals that Shahrūr's understanding of, and his tendency to deny, Ḥadīths or Sunnah reflect his opposition against orthodox views on the Prophet's Sunnah.

Keywords: Shahrūr; Ḥadīth; Sunnah; *inkār al-Sunnah*.

Introduction

Ḥadīth or Sunnah (the Prophet's Tradition) is the second source of Islamic law after the Qur'ān, and serves as the explanation of every things mentioned globally in the latter.¹

¹ 'Abd al-Wahhāb Khalāf, *ʿIlm Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Mesir: Maktabat al-Da'wah, n.d.), 36-38.

Scholars often state that the Qur'ān needs Ḥadīth,² as there are many general laws mentioned in the Qur'ān which require detailed explanation from Ḥadīth.³

The problem of understanding the concept of the Ḥadīth is a very important to raise, and has been discussed extensively by scholars as found in various Ḥadīth literature. However, it would be quite interesting to discuss the perspective of Shaḥrūr, who does not have a coherent religious education background, but instead a professor and expert in the field of geology of Civil Engineering.

Shaḥrūr has proposed a new concept of Ḥadīth and Sunnah, and has regarded them as being not the second source of law in Islam. His critical point of view with a strong grammatical analysis leads him to believe that there are no synonymous words (*'adam al-tarāduf*) in Arabic. His distinctive thought on the issue as presented in his scholarly works is worthy to be read and reviewed critically. Shaḥrūr has deconstructed an understanding of the Ḥadīth and Sunnah which has been rooted in the Muslim minds for many centuries. In his view, what was formulated by early (*salaf*) scholars in the past has been a mistake and not relevant for this time.

Based on the background above, this article seeks to investigate the concept of Sunnah (*al-Sunnah*) according to Shaḥrūr. It will further explore Shaḥrūr's work, as Shaḥrūr is remembered for his concept of Sunnah. This study reveals Shaḥrūr's reasons and arguments about Sunnah which includes such definitions as that the Ḥadīth is the Qur'ān, the Sunnah (Ḥadīth) is the words and stories of the Banī Isrā'īl (*Isrā'iliyyāt*), and is the result of the Prophet Muḥammad's intellectual endeavor (*ijtihād*). Therefore, the Ḥadīth is tentative and changing according to the time, and it is possible to be wrong. The focal point of the examination lies in the reasons and contentions in dismissing the Sunnah. In this context, this article argues that the reasons

² Makhūl berkata: "Qur'ān needs Sunnah more than Sunnah to the Qur'ān." See al-Khāṭib al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm al-Riwāyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2006), 19.

³ Mannā' b. Khalīl al-Qaṭṭān, *Mabāḥith fī 'Ulūm al-Qu'rān* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Ma'arif, 1421/2000), 361; Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh Abū Bakr b. al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qu'rān*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1424/2003), 52.

advocated by Shaḥrūr on the concept of Sunnah are problematic, and even not valid, because Shaḥrūr has manipulated the Ḥadīth as an argument, even misunderstood and misinterpreted the language and words of the Qur'ānic verses. In this regard, Shaḥrūr has developed a tendency towards denying the Prophet's tradition (*inkār al-Sunnah*) which will be also critically assessed.

Biography of Muḥammad Shaḥrūr

Muḥammad Shaḥrūr b. Da'b is the full name of Shaḥrūr, or better known as Shaḥrūr. He was born in the city of Damascus, Syria on April 11, 1938.⁴ Shaḥrūr started his academic education in elementary level at the educational institution 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī, Damascus. His secondary education was completed in 1957.⁵ Shaḥrūr then continued his studies in Civil Engineering (*handasah madaniyah*) in Moscow, USSR (now Russia) with a scholarship from the Syrian Government. The Diploma level was taken for five years starting from 1959,⁶ until reaching a Diploma degree in 1964.⁷ In 1968, Shaḥrūr took the Master and Doctoral Program in the field of land and geology at Ireland University. Shaḥrūr obtained his Master of Science degree in 1969 and his Doctoral degree in 1972.⁸

Shaḥrūr is getting interested in Islamic studies, especially since he was in Dublin, Ireland (1970-1980). From then on, Shaḥrūr has begun to study the Qur'ān more seriously with theories and approaches such as linguistic, philosophy, and modern science.⁹

⁴ Ahmad Syarqawi Ismail, *Rekonstruksi Konsep Wahyu Muhammad Syahrur* (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ Press, 2003), 43.

⁵ Muḥammad Shahrūr, *Epistimologi Qur'ani: Tafsir Kontemporer Ayat-ayat al-Qur'an Berbasis Materialisme-Dialektika-Historis*, translated by M. Firdaus (Bandung: Penerbit Marja, 2015), 5.

⁶ Muḥammad Shaḥrūr, *Islam dan Iman: Aturan-aturan Pokok*, translated by M. Zaid Su'di (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Jendela, 2002), xiii.

⁷ Muḥammad Munīr al-Shawwāf, *Tahāfut al-Qirā'ah Mu'āshirah* (Limmasol-Cyprus: al-Shawwāf li al-Nashr wa al-Dirāsāt, 1993), 29-35; Zainal Abidin, *Rethinking Islam dan Iman* (Banjarasin: IAIN Antasari Press, n.d.), 18.

⁸ Abdul Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010), 94; M. Awnul Abid Shah, *Islam Garda Depan; Mozaik Pemikiran Islam Timur Tengah* (Bandung: Mizan 2001), 237.

⁹ Peter Clark, "The Shahrur Phenomenon; A Liberal Islamic Voice from Syria," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 7. No. 3 (1996), 341.

He studied Philosophy of Humanism, Philosophy of Language, especially contemporary linguistics and Semantics of Arabic Language.¹⁰ Shahrūr's controversial thinking cannot be separated from the influence of previous linguistic figures, such as Ibn Fāris, Yahyā b. Tha'lab, Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī, Ibn Jinnī, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, and Ja'far Dakk al-Bāb.¹¹

Shahrūr's works on Islamic studies, particularly related to the Qur'ānic and Ḥadīth studies, include among others: *al-Kitāb wa al-Qur'an: Qirā'ah Mu'āṣirah* (1990), *Dirāsah Islāmīyah Mu'āṣirah fī al-Dawlah wa al-Mujtama'* (1994), *al-Islām wa al-Imān: Manẓūmat al-Qiyām* (1996), *Naḥw Uṣūl Jadīdah li al-Fiqh al-Islāmī: Fiqh al-Mar'ah* (2000), *Tajfīf Manābī' al-Tarhib* (2000), *al-Sunnah al-Rasūliyah wa al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah: Ru'yah Jadīdah* (2012).¹²

However, Shahrūr has been also subject of critical studies, example *Mujarrad al-Tanjīm al-Qur'an li Duktūr Muḥammad Shahrūr* by Sālim al-Jabī, *Tahāfut al-Qirā'ah al-Mu'āṣirah* by al-Ṣawwāf, as well as subject of appreciation as found in *The Shahrūr Phenomenon: a Liberal Islamic Voice from Syria* by Peter Clark. The criticism often leads him to be labeled and accused of being as a Zionist, Marxian, and proponent of *inkār al-Sunnah*.¹³

Shahrūr's Views on Sunnah

In his *al-Sunnah al-Rasūliyah wa al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah* and *al-Kitāb wa al-Qur'an: Qirā'ah Mu'āṣirah*, Shahrūr explains his thoughts about the concept of *inkār al-Sunnah* which include the definition and new interpretation of Ḥadīth. Shahrūr rejects the Ḥadīth as the second source of law and its codification by the Prophet's companions.

¹⁰ Vita Fitria, "Komparasi Metodologis Konsep Sunnah Menurut Fazlur Rahman dan Muhammad Syahrur," *Asy-Syir'ab: Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah dan Hukum*, Vol. 45, No. 12 (Juli-Desember 2011), 1341-1342.

¹¹ Mustaqim, *Epistemologi Tafsir*, 96.

¹² Muḥammad Shahrūr, *Prinsip dan Dasar Hermenutika al-Qur'an Kontemporer*, translated by Sahiron Syamsuddin (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ Prees, 2008); Muḥammad Shahrūr, *Metodologi Fiqh Islam Kontemporer*, terj. Sahiron Syamsuddin, (Yogyakarta: Kalimera, 2015), 547.

¹³ Kurdi et al., *Hermenetika al-Qur'an dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: Elsaq Press, 2010), 288.

Shahrūr stated that the definition of the “first Ḥadīth,” according to the people at the time of the Prophet is the Qur’ān itself (*al-tanzīl al-ḥakīm*), because the word “Ḥadīth” is taken from the verses of the Qur’ān.¹⁴

فَذَرْنِي وَمَنْ يُكَذِّبُ هَذَا الْحَدِيثِ ۖ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“Then leave it (hi Muḥammad) to Me (the affairs) of those who deny this word (al-Qur’ān). Later We will pull them gradually (towards destruction) from a direction they do not know” (al-Qalam [68]: 44).

Shahrūr also stated the meaning of the “second Ḥadīth” in the Qur’ān is a story and news.¹⁵

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ الْجُنُودِ

“Have you come to the news of the naysayers” (al-Burūj [85]: 17).

Thus, Ḥadīth and Sunnah are the stories from the results of the Prophet’s interaction with events in certain situations during his lifetime (historical products). Therefore, the Prophet and his companions did not consider Ḥadīth to be the revelation from God.¹⁶

Shahrūr then asserted that the meaning of the “third Ḥadīth” is “*mā dhahaba ilayh al-nabi*,” which means all forms of prophetic *ijtihād*.¹⁷ Shahrūr argued with a Ḥadīth which reads:

فَإِنَّهُ كَانَتْ فِيهِمُ الْأَعْجَابُ

“In fact they (Banī Isrā’īl) have miracles.”

Shahrūr maintained that the new definition of Ḥadīth consists of three phrases: the first is ordering to hear about the verses of the Qur’ān; the second is urging them to convey what they heard from him about the verses of the Qur’ān (*al-tanzīl al-ḥakīm*) which was revealed to the Prophet; and the third is threatening the person who lied with his tongue then relating him even though he never said it by threatening him (the person who lied) to occupy the place in hell.

¹⁴ Muḥammad Shahrūr, *al-Sunnah al-Rasūliyah wa al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2012), 22.

¹⁵ Ibid., 22.

¹⁶ Shahrūr, *al-Kitāb wa al-Qur’ān*, 546.

¹⁷ Shahrūr, *al-Sunnah al-Rasūliyah*, 22.

There is a misinterpretation of the the definition of Ḥadīth from the two phrases above. Shaḥrūr claims that revelation has two sources after they transfer the command and punishment from the context of the verses of the Qur'ān exclusively to the context of the Prophet's Ḥadīth. In the second phrase, the Prophet's Ḥadīths are all *mudraj* (included words) and very clear from the Prophet's Ḥadīth narrated from Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh written in the *Musnad al-Shāfi'i* (Ḥadīth number 1.177) and the narrations from Zayd b. Aslam in the *Muṣannaḥ 'Abd al-Raḥḥāq* (Ḥadīth number 10.158),¹⁸ which reads:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: «لَا تَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ عَنْ شَيْءٍ، فَإِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَهْدُوكُمْ، وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ» قَالَ: قُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَفُنَحَدِّثُ عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ؟ قَالَ: «حَدِّثُوا وَلَا حَرَجَ، فَإِنَّهُ كَانَتْ فِيهِمُ الْأَعَاجِبُ»

“Narrated from Jābir b. Abd ‘Allah, the Rasulullah said: ‘Do not ask anything to the people of the book, in fact they will not guide you, because they have gone astray,” Jābir said: ‘we said: Hi, Rasulullah what can we tell the story of Banī Isrā’īl?’ Rasul said: ‘tell (the story of Banī Isrā’īl) and you are not sinful (that is okay), Verily they (Banī Isrā’īl) have miracles.”

In this regards, the Ḥadīth will be filled with the stories of isrā’īliyāt (the Biblical stories) which assume that their news is holy news, and accordingly contradicts the testimony of the Prophet Muḥammad that the news from Banī Isrā’īl is false news.¹⁹

Shaḥrūr made the first interpretation of the verse the Qur'ān and stated that neither Ḥadīth nor Sunnah included revelation from Allah. Therefore, he did not consider the term “*al-waḥy al-thānī*” (the second revelation) for the Ḥadīths or Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad. This opinion is built on the interpretation of God's word:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ. إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ.

“And that is not what he said (the Qur'ān) according to the his lust willing. These utterances were nothing but revelations which were revealed (to him)” (al-Najm [53]: 3-4).

¹⁸ Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

Shahrūr argued that the evidence that the Ḥadīth as the second source with the verses of al-Najm above is not justified. This is because the meaning of showing *ḍamir* (pronoun) “*huwa*” in this verse is clearly referred to al-Qur’ān and not to the Prophet Muḥammad. There is no connection between the previous *ḍamir* and the *ḍamir* in the verb “*yantiqu*” which is interpreted as a word that denotes a return to the Prophet. It is in accordance with the nature of the Prophethood that the Prophet was not a determinant of law that could be carried out by the words and the Prophet’s deeds which include his desires as well as the fluctuating state of his soul.²⁰

Shahrūr made a second interpretation of the verse and stated that the Ḥadīth is “*mā dhababa ilayh al-nabi*” which means all forms of prophetic *ijtihad*. As Allah has said, it is as a clear warning to the Prophet when the Prophet’s *ijtihad* could not be tolerated on several occasions or in other words the Prophet committed wrong *ijtihad*.²¹

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى. أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى. وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزْكَى

“He (Muḥammad) was surly and turned away. because a blind man had come to him. Did you know maybe he wanted to clean himself (from sin)” (‘Abasa [80]: 1-3).

In other verses, the Prophet was also reminded by God as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتَ أَزْوَاجِكَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Hi Prophet, why have you forbidden what Allah has made lawful for you; you are looking for the pleasure of your wives? And Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful” (al-Taḥrīm [66]: 1).

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يُثْخِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“It is not appropriate, for a Prophet to have prisoners before he can paralyze his enemies on earth. You want worldly possessions while Allah wants (reward) the after life (for you). And Allah is Mighty, Most Wise” (al-Anfāl [8]: 67).

²⁰ Shahrūr, *al-Kitāb wa al-Qur’ān*, 546.

²¹ Ibid., 546.

Shahrūr made a third interpretation of the verse and asserted that a group of scholars who stated that the Prophet Muḥammad had ordered to collect and record his words to avoid mixing the revelations (the Qur'ān) with Ḥadīth is a weak opinion. Because the Prophet was the first to understand the words of Allah and the Qur'ān that has been guarded by Allah:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

“Truly, We are the ones who sent down the Qur'ān, and truly We really do preserve it” (al-Ḥijr [15]: 9).

With this verse as a proof, Shahrūr argued that the Prophet should have had an idea to assign some companions to write revelations (the Qur'ān) and some others to write Ḥadīth.²²

After the companions finished the collection of the Qur'ān, which started in the period of Abū Bakr until the end of the 'Uthmān b. 'Affān's period, then the *muṣṣhaf* was copied. The collection and writing had been complete, and the present *muṣṣhaf* is the copy of the first *muṣṣhaf*. Then, why did the companions not collect the Ḥadīths at that time as they collected the verses of the Qur'ān after they had free time, that is after collecting and writing the verses of the Qur'ān? Thus when that happens the Ḥadīth will also come to us with a *mutawātir* narrative.

If the Prophet and the companions did not collect and write Ḥadīth for the reason above, it means that the collection of Ḥadīths was unnecessary and unimportant. It can be concluded that the Ḥadīth of the Prophet is a historical product and the Sunnah is not the true word of the Prophet.

It can be understood that if there was no order from the Prophet to collect and codify Ḥadīths, it can be concluded that the Prophet and his companions wanted to confuse Muslims with the absence of codification of Ḥadīth. It means that the Qur'ānic verse in al-Mā'idah [5]: 3 is meaningless. Thus, how is this religion complete if the Ḥadīth as the source of the second law has not been codified? How come the companions have written the Qur'ān but the Ḥadīth has not been codified?²³

²² Ibid., 547.

²³ Ibid., 547.

Shahrūr made the fourth interpretation of the verse and stated that a guideline or method based on an agreed pattern of life then applied to society in order to be easily implemented. As a consequence, the Sunnah changes and transforms, because the Qur’ān explains that the Sunnah is not eternal, even tentative (changing). The Qur’ān mentions as follows (al-Anfāl [8]: 38, al-Hijr [15]: 13, al-Kahf [18]: 55, al-Aḥzāb [33]: 38, Ghāfir [40]: 85, Āli ‘Imrān [3]: 137, and al-Nisā’ [4]: 26):²⁴

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ
الْأَوَّلِينَ

“Say to those who disbelieve: “If they stop (from disbelief), surely Allah will forgive them about their past sins; and if they come back again it will actually apply (to them) the Sunnah (of Allah towards) the former people” (al-Anfāl [8]: 38).

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

“They do not believe it (al-Qur’ān) and indeed the sunnatullah has passed on the people before” (al-Hijr [15]: 13).

Therefore, the concept of Islam as the religion that applies to any time and place (*sāliḥ li kulli zaman wa makān*) would necessarily interact with circumstances and historical stages to produce a particular society and civilization at each era. In this case, the principle of historical civilization can be taken according to the people who interact with it. It is the main reason for the Prophet and his companions in emphasizing their attention to revelation which is a fundamental principle, while the rest is left to humans in the course of time.

In this regard, it would be not correct to define the Prophet’s Sunnah as all things that comes from the Prophet in the form of words, deeds, orders, prohibitions, or agreements. The definition of Sunnah as such does not come from the Prophet himself, and therefore it is subject to discussion, acceptance or even rejection. Such a definition implies that the Prophet and his companions did not have knowledge about the Sunnah as defined above. It is therefore more appropriate to argue that the basis or source of

²⁴ Shahrūr, *al-Sunnah al-Rasūliyyah*, 93-94.

Islamic law is the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, rather than the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.²⁵

Criticism towards Shahrūr's *Inkār al-Sunnah*

Shahrūr's rejection of Ḥadīth as the second source of Islamic law and the concept of Sunnah which changes every time seems worthy of re-examination. It is because in the Ḥadīth there are several sources of Islamic law that are in accordance with what is written in the Qur'ān. Ḥadīth also serves as reinforcing (*ta'kid*) what has been determined by the Qur'ān, as clarifying or explaining (*tabyīn*) what is contained in the Qur'ān, and as determining the laws that have not been regulated or laws that have not been legally enforced in the Qur'ān.²⁶

The first definition proposed by Shahrūr that the Ḥadīth is the Qur'ān itself is comparatively incorrect. The root of the word Ḥadīth (*al-Ḥadīth*) is *ḥaddatha-yuḥaddithu* which means expression or word,²⁷ while, the words or expression referred to al-Qalam [68]: 44 are attributed to the Qur'ān (*kalām Allāh*).²⁸

The meaning of the word “ḥadīth” is the Qur'ān, but it does not mean that the Ḥadīth is the Qur'ān itself. The word “ḥadīth” is used instead of the word “qur'ān,” because at that time the process of revelation (the Qur'ān) was not complete yet. It had not been fully codified and called the Qur'ān because it was still *kalām Allāh* that came down gradually, verse by verse, during the early days of Islam.²⁹ It can also be proven by the category of the al-Qalam [68]

²⁵ Shahrūr, *al-Kitāb wa al-Qur'ān*, 548.

²⁶ Muḥammad Abū Zahw, *al-Ḥadīth wa al-Muḥaddithūn* (Kairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1378), 38-39. Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn b. Muḥammad Sa'īd b. Qādim al-Ḥalāq al-Qāsimī, *Qawā'id al-Taḥdīth min Funun Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, n.d.), 149.

²⁷ Aḥmad Mukhtār 'Abd al-Ḥamīd 'Umar, *Mu'jam al-Lughah al-'Arabīyah al-Mu'ashirah*, Vol. 1 (N.p.: 'Ālim al-Kutub, 1429), 454.

²⁸ Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Yazīd b. Kathīr b. Ghālīb al-Amālī Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī, *Jamī' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān (Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī)*, Vol. 23 (N.p.: Mu'assis al-Risālah, 1420), 561; Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad b. al-Farā' al-Baghawī al-Shāfi'ī, *Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān (Tafsīr al-Baghawī)*, Vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420), 142.

²⁹ Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīm al-Zurqānī, *Manābil al-'Irqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 1 (N.p.: Maṭba' 'Īsā al-Bānī al-Ḥilmī, n.d.), 19; Muḥammad Bakr 'Ismā'īl, *Dirāsāt fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (N.p.: Dār al-Manār, 1419), 10.

that is included into *Makekīyah* (revealed during Meccan period) which means the *sūrah* came down before the prophet's emigration (*hijrah*) to Madinah.³⁰ This verse tells about the situation of the Prophet in Mecca at that time as the opposition from the infidels of Quraysh was quite strong. This verse has been abolished (*nasakh*) by the verses of *al-sayf* (which indicate that Muslims must fight when they are threatened), as mentioned in al-Tawbah [9]: 5, 36, and 41.³¹ The use of arguments have been abrogated (*mansūkh*) for an argument (*ḥujjah*) not allowed in Islam, because the abrogation (*nasakh*) itself is meant as constructing a new law with arguments based on Sharī'ah, and abandoning or canceling the law from the arguments that have been abrogated (*mansūkh*). In this regard, Shaḥrūr's arguments are rejected (*mardūd*) accordingly.³²

The evidence for this matter is that the use of the word "qur'ān" in the Qur'ān has the meaning the Qur'ān itself, which is found in the Medinan chapter (*sūrah Madanīyah*). This also shows that the *sūrah* came down when the Prophet had emigrated to Medina (even though it was in Mecca), such as the verse in al-Baqarah [2]: 185, al-Nisā' [4]: 82, al-Mā'idah [5]: 101, and al-Tawbah [9]: 111.³³

The second definition proposed by Shaḥrūr that the Ḥadīth is a story, news and interpreting as a historical product by relying

³⁰ Abū 'Abd Allāh Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Buhādīr al-Zarkashī, *al-Burbān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1376), 187; Abū al-Qāsim b. Salāmah b. Naṣr b. 'Alī al-Baghdādī al-Muqri', *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-Islāmī, 1404), 183.

³¹ Abū Muḥammad 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Sa'īd b. Ḥazm al-Andalusī al-Qurṭubī al-Zāhiri, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1406), 61. Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Farj 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jawzī, *al-Muṣṣif bi Akfi Abl al-Rasūkh min 'Ilm al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh* (N.p.: Mu'assissat al-Risālah, 1418), 57.

³² Qatādah b. Di'āmah b. Qatādah b. 'Azīz Abū al-Khaṭṭāb al-Sudūsī al-Baṣrī, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh* (N.p.: Mu'assissat al-Risālah, 1418), 6; Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan al-Jizānī, *Ma'ālim Uṣūl al-Fiqh 'Inda Abl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* (N.p.: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1427), 246. Khalāf, *Ilm Uṣūl*, 222. 'Abd al-Mālik b. 'Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Jawinī, *al-Burbān fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1418), 246.

³³ Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Fahm al-Qur'ān wa Ma'ānihi* (Beirut: Dār al-Kindī, 1398), 395. Faḥd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaymān al-Rūmī, *Dirāsāt fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (N.p.: Ḥuqūq al-Tab' Maḥfūzah, 1424), 125.

upon al-Burūj [85]: 17, is not true. It is due to the fact that the root of the word “ḥadīth” is *ḥaddatha-yuḥaddithu* which means speaking, preaching, and informing.³⁴ The meaning of the word “ḥadīth” refers to everything that has been discussed about words and report (news).³⁵

If Shaḥrūr interprets “ḥadīth” linguistically as news, it is in accordance with the original (literal) meaning of the term. However, it is well-known that the definition of the Ḥadīth terminologically or in the science of Ḥadīth is anything (in the form of news) that comes from the Prophet Muḥammad which includes words, deeds, consent and behavior.³⁶ When Shaḥrūr defines or explains the Ḥadīth as stories and historical products regarding the Prophet's interaction with events and certain situations, then it cannot justified. It is because the Ḥadīth contains the words, deeds and behavior of the Prophet which are conveyed in two phrases which include *sanad* (chain of transmission) and *matn* (content).³⁷ Shaḥrūr's definition of the Ḥadīth as stories and news (reports) is not correct, since the meaning of “ḥadīth” in al-Burūj [85]: 17 cannot be used to define the term the Ḥadīth as stories and historical products. In the following verse, Allah reminds the Prophet with news about the events or incidents of people, such as Fir'aun, his people, and the Thamūd. In this regard, Allah chooses the word “ḥadīth” instead of the word “akhbār.”³⁸

³⁴ Nashwān b. Sa'īd al-Hamīrī al-Yamanī, *Shams al-'Ulum wa Dawa' Kalām al-'Arab min al-Kalām*, Vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Ma'āshir, 1420), 1361; Louwis b. Naqula Zāhir al-Ma'lūf, *al-Munjid fī al-Lughab* (Beirut: al-Maṭba'ah al-Kāthulīkiyah, 2010), 121.

³⁵ Umar, *Mu'jam al-Lughab*, Vol. 1, 454; Sa'dī Abū Ḥabīb, *al-Qāmūs al-Fiqhiyah Lughab wa Iṣṭilāḥ* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1408), 79.

³⁶ Muḥammad b. Šālīḥ b. Muḥammad al-'Uthaymin, *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* (Kairo: Maktabat al-'Ilm, 1415), 5.

³⁷ Zayn al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. Rajab b. al-Ḥasan al-Salamī, *Sharḥ Tla al-Tirmidhī* (Yordania: Maktabat al-Manār, 1407), 156.

³⁸ Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-Mundhīr al-Tamīmī b. Abī Ḥatīm al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīm li Ibn Abī Ḥatīm*, Vol. 10 (Saudi Arabia: Maktabat Naẓār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1419), 3414; al-Ṭabarī, *Jamī' al-Bayān*, Vol. 24, 346-347.

The third definition proposed by Shaḥrūr that Ḥadīth is “*mā dhahaba ilayh al-nabi*,” which means all forms of the Prophet’s endeavor (*ijtibād*), and Shaḥrūr’s view that all Ḥadīths are *mudraj* and filled with the words and deeds of Banī Isrā’īl cannot be accepted. Supposedly, those who reject Ḥadīth and Sunnah disregard the Prophet’s Ḥadīth as their argument (*ḥujjah*), but it is ironic that they base their argument to reject Ḥadīth on the Ḥadīth itself.

In this context, Shaḥrūr’s argument against Ḥadīth and Sunnah is based on the Prophet’s Ḥadīth narrated by Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh in the *Musnad al-Shāfi’i* number 1.177 and the narration of Zayd b. Aslam in the *Muṣannaf ‘Abd al-Razzāq* number 10.158. Confirming these books, Shaḥrūr maintains that it can be concluded that the Shaḥrūr who did the Ḥadīth is *mudraj*, since in the *Muṣannaf ‘Abd al-Razzāq* number 10.158 there is no word “*fa innahū kānat fī him al-‘ajīb*” as the following:

عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ قَالَ: قُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَفَنُحَدِّثُ عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ؟ قَالَ: «حَدِّثُوا وَلَا حَرَجَ»

“From Zayd b. Aslam said: ‘we say are we allowed to tell about the Banī Isrā’īl?’ The Prophet said: ‘tell (what you hear) from Banī Isrā’īl and that is okay (no sin)’ (Narrated by ‘Abd al-Razzāq).³⁹

After referring to all the Ḥadīth books, the phrase “*fa innahū kānat fī him al-‘ajīb*” is found in another Ḥadīth or in another book:

عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: «تَحَدَّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ، فَإِنَّهُ كَانَتْ فِيهِمُ الْعَاجِيبُ»

“From Jābir said; Rasul said: “Tell from the Banī Isrā’īl and there is no sin, truly they (Banī Isrā’īl) have a miracle” (Narrated by ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd).⁴⁰

³⁹ Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Razzāq b. Himām b. Nāfiq al-Ḥumayrī al-Yamānī al-Ṣan‘ānī, *al-Muṣannaf ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī*, Vol. 6 (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1403), 110.

⁴⁰ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Ḥamīd b. Naṣr al-Kassī, *al-Muntakhab min Musnad ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd*, Vol. 1, No. 1156 (Kairo: Maktabat al-Sunnah, 1408), 349.

Similarly, the argument of Shaḥrūr about the narration of Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh in the *Musnad al-Shāfi'i* number 1.177 is that the Ḥadīth under debate cannot be found, and even the Ḥadīth number 1.177 is not like different from the Ḥadīth intended by Shaḥrūr. However, the Ḥadīth narrated by Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh can be found in the *Musnad Aḥmad*, but with different text (*matn*):

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: «لَا تَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ عَنْ شَيْءٍ، فَإِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَهْدَوْكُمْ، وَقَدْ ضَلُّوا، فَإِنَّكُمْ إِمَّا أَنْ تُصَدِّقُوا بِبَاطِلٍ، أَوْ تُكَذِّبُوا بِحَقٍّ، فَإِنَّهُ لَوْ كَانَ مُوسَى حَيًّا بَيَّنَّ أَظْهُرَكُمْ، مَا حَلَّ لَهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَتَّبِعَنِي».

“From Jābir Ibn 'Abd Allah, said: The Apostle said: “Do not ask the People of the Book about something, in fact they will not be able to give you guidance, and indeed they have gone astray, then in fact you may justify deceit or may lie truth. Indeed, if Musa was still alive among you, he would not have legalized himself except to follow me” (Narrated by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal).⁴¹

After (*sanad* and *matn* criticism), it can be asserted that the Ḥadīth narrated by 'Abd al-Razzāq is categorized as the Ḥadīth with weak transmitters (*ḍa'if al-sanad*). In the Ḥadīth, there is a narrator from *mursal ṭabī'in* (no mention of the narrator from *ṭabī'in*) between Zayd b. Aslam and Ibn Jurayj, and also *mursal ṣaḥabī* (no mention of the narrator from companions) between the Zayd b. Aslam and the Prophet, since Zayd was a *ṭabī'in* (follower).⁴²

However, the Ḥadīth text (*matn*) of 'Abd al-Razzāq does not contradict with the Prophet's saying that there is a prohibition of asking the People of the Book about Islam or *tanḥīd* (monotheism), because they have misled their religion. Likewise, someone cannot accept news from the People of the Book because their testimony has been rejected.⁴³ However, it is permitted to tell the story about the Banī Isrā'īl as far as it is

⁴¹ Abū 'Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal b. Hilāl b. Asad al-Shaybānī, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, Vol. 22, No. 14631 (N.p.: Mu'assis al-Risālah, 1421), 468.

⁴² Ibid., 468-469.

⁴³ Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ḥajar Abū al-Faḍl al-'Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1379), 292.

known that the story is not a lie; however, it is not allowed to lie about the story of Banī Isrāʾīl, while there are *rukhsah* (relief) in delivering the stories of the Banī Isrāʾīl. However, the delivery of the Israelite stories must be accompanied with transmitters (*sanad*) as there has been long temporal distance to the Banī Isrāʾīl.⁴⁴ It is permitted to tell about only good things, but it is not allowed to deliver bad things and a lie. The Prophet allowed the companions to tell about Banī Isrāʾīl under several conditions, but prohibited the inclusion of the stories about Banī Isrāʾīl into the Ḥadīth.⁴⁵

After scrutinizing the Ḥadīths narrated by ‘Abd Ibn Ḥamīd it can be categorized as the Ḥadīth of *ḍaʿīf al-sanad*, because one of the narrators in the Ḥadīth, al-Rabīʾ ibn Saʿad al-Juʿfī, is a narrator whose identity is unknown (*majhūl ḥāl*).⁴⁶

Basically, the phrase in the Ḥadīth of ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd “*taḥaddathū ‘an Banī Isrāʾīl*” does not contradict with what the Prophet said about conditions as explained above. Meanwhile, the interpretation of the phrase “*fa innahū kānat fihim al-aʿjīb*” regarding to the miracle and strangeness of the story of Banī Isrāʾīl needs to fulfil the conditions put by the Prophet, although the story is about good thing (in line with Islam), not a false story,⁴⁷ and contradict Islamic law. When the story is contradictory to Islam, it will be rejected or considered as *keburafāt* (superstitions).⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Abū Sulaymān Ḥamad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Khaṭṭāb al-Basrī, *Maʿālim al-Sunan Sharḥ Sunan Abi Dawūd*, Vol. 4 (Ḥalb: al-Maṭbaʿah al-ʿIlmiyah, 1351), 187.

⁴⁵ Muḥammad Ashraf b. ‘Alī b. Amīr b. ‘Alī Ibn Ḥaydar Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Abādī, *ʿAnn al-Maʿbūd Sharḥ Sunan Abi Dawūd wa Maʿabū Ḥashiyat Ibn al-Qayyim: Taḥdhīb Sunan Abi Dawūd*, Vol. 10 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 1415), 69.

⁴⁶ Shams al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Uthmān b. Qaymār al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-ʿIṭidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, 1382), 40; Al-Sayyid Abū al-Maʿāṭī al-Nūrī Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Razzāq ‘Id Maḥmūd Muḥammad Khalīl, *Mawsūʿat Aqwal al-Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal fī Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa ʿIlaliḥ*, Vol. 1 (N.p.: ʿĀlim al-Kutub, 1417), 367.

⁴⁷ Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Suwaylim Abū Dhuhbah, *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt wa al-Mawḍūʿāt fī Kutub al-Tafsīr* (N.p.: Maktabat al-Sunnah, n.d.), 107.

⁴⁸ Abū Zakariyyā Maḥyā al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Sharf al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawī*, Vol. 12 (N.p.: n.p., n.d.), 27. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn b. Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn Burhān al-Dīn b. Ḥamzah al-Ḥusaybī al-Dimashqī, *al-Bayān wa al-Taʿrīf fī Asbāb Wurrūd al-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 59.

It is also required not to shake the heart of a Muslim when he hears stories of miracles from the Banī Isrā'īl.⁴⁹

It is important to note, therefore, that Shaḥrūr's accusation that all Ḥadīths are *mudraj* with the story Isrā'īlīyāt is not valid, because Shaḥrūr's arguments on the basis of Ḥadīth are not evident. The first Ḥadīth which is used as an argument is neither found in the Ḥadīth book mentioned by Shaḥrūr nor in other Ḥadīth books. While the second Ḥadīth is considered as a Ḥadīth *mudraj* by Shaḥrūr himself, namely by inserting the text (*matn*) of Ḥadīths from other narrations into the very Ḥadīth which is used as an argument which leads to the manipulation of the evidence. In the discipline of Ḥadīth, such arguments are rejected.⁵⁰

The first interpretation of the verse *al-qur'ān* by Shaḥrūr that neither Ḥadīth nor Sunnah is the revelation from Allah, along with his denial of the term "*al-waḥy al-thānī*" (second revelation) in al-Najm [53]: 3-4, can be regarded as not correct. The interpretation of the verse (linguistically) "*wa mā yanṭiqu 'an al-hawā'*" is "nothing was uttered by the Prophet Muḥammad according to the will of his passions." Meanwhile, the phrase "*in ḥuwa illā waḥy yūḥā*" means "the utterance is nothing but a revelation revealed (to him)". It can also be interpreted that the word "*yanṭiqu*" means what is said by the Prophet Muḥammad. Meanwhile, the word "*ḥuwa*" means "*nuṭqu al-nabī*" or the words of the Prophet Muḥammad, or everything the Prophet said.⁵¹ The translation of all the words "the Prophet's speech" is the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, because the Ḥadīth (Sunnah) is an interpretation of the Qur'ān. Thus, the word "*ḥuwa*" means the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth of the Prophet.⁵² If the meaning

⁴⁹ Abū al-Ḥasan 'Ubayd Allāh b. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām b. Khān Muḥammad b. Amān Allāh b. Ḥishām al-Dīn al-Raḥmānī, *Muru'ah al-Mafatih Sharḥ Mishkāt al-Maṣābih*, Vol. 1 (Benares India: Idārat al-Buḥūth al-'Ilmīyah wa al-Da'wah wa al-Iftā', 1404), 301-302.

⁵⁰ Rif'at b. Fawzi 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, *Tawthīq al-Sunnah fī al-Qarn al-Thānī al-Hijrah Asāsahū wa Ittijāhātihī* (Mesir: Maktabat al-Khanā Najī, n.d.), 296.

⁵¹ Ibrāhīm b. al-Sarī b. Sahl Abū Ishāq al-Zajāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān wa I'rābiḥ*, Vol. 5 (Beirut: 'Alim al-Kutub, 1408), 70.

⁵² Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. Farj al-Anṣārī al-Khazrazī Shams al-Dīn al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān (Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī)*, Vol 13 (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrīyah, 1384), 85; Darūzat Muḥammad 'Azat, *al-Tafsīr al-Ḥadīth*, Vol. 2 (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1383), 78.

of the word “*huwa*” means al-Qur’ān, then the question arises: is what the Prophet said only the Qur’ān? Is the Ḥadīth not the Prophet’s words? Are the words which came out of the mouth of the Prophet not a revelation?

The interpretation of the verse is not the same as Shaḥrūr’s argument, but contradictory. The Prophet could not have said anything wrong, since what he said was an evidence or an argument from Allah. In another commentary it is stated that what was revealed to the Prophet came from Allah, and through the Jibrīl was conveyed to the Prophet. In other words, all the words that came out of the Prophet’s mouth were revelations (not the Prophet’s passions) and that the Prophet’s words were revealed from Allah through Jibrīl (including the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth). This can be proven by the evidence about the incident when the Prophet committed mistake in *ijtihād*, then Allah rebuked the Prophet and provided a solution by revealing the verse related to the incorrect Prophet’s *ijtihād*.⁵³

Shaḥrūr argues that the *ḍamir* “*huwa*” has nothing to do with the word “*yanṭiqu*,” and the meaning of the word “*huwa*” does not refer to the Qur’ān, but contains another meaning. This is because the Qur’ān is the words of the Prophet *verbatim* from Allah, while the word “*yanṭiqu*” means everything that was said by the Prophet. As a result, the word “*huwa*” and the word “*yanṭiqu*” are related to each other, as these explain the meaning and type of words uttered by the Prophet. In this context, the Qur’ān is the words of the Prophet that come from Allah, while the Ḥadīths are the words of the Prophet that come from the Prophet himself.⁵⁴

It can be explained that the words of the Prophet (both the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth) are not based on the will of his desires and have nothing to do with the fluctuating state of his soul. This is in accordance with the explanation of the Qur’ān in al-Ḥashr [59]:

⁵³ Abū Muḥammad Sahl b. ‘Abd Allāh. Yūnus b. Raḥmān b. al-Tustarī, *Tafsīr al-Tustarī*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1423), 156; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*, Vol. 22, 498.

⁵⁴ Abū Muḥammad Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib Ḥammūsh b. Muḥammad b. Mukhtār al-Qaysī al-Qirāwānī al-Andalusī al-Qurṭubī al-Mālikī, *al-Hidāyah ilā Bulūgh al-Nihāyah fī ‘Ilm Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān wa Tafsīrih wa Aḥkāmih wa Jumal min Funnūn ‘Ulūmih*, Vo. 11 (N.p.: Majmū‘ Buḥūth al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah, 1429), 7142.

7,⁵⁵ and the Ḥadīth of the Prophet which is relevant to *asbāb al-nuzūl* (the causes of revelation) of al-Najm [53]: 3-4, implying that all of what the Prophet said (including the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth) is *ḥaq* (truth),⁵⁶ namely:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، فَقَالَ: «اَكْتُبْ فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ إِلَّا حَقٌّ»

“From ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr, said: He said: ‘Continue your writing, then by God, whose soul is in His grasp, nothing comes out of my mouth but only rights (right)’” (Narrated by Abū Dāwūd).⁵⁷

The second interpretation of the verse *al-qur’ān* by Shahrūr that Ḥadīth is “*mā dhahaba ilayh al-nabi*” which means all forms of the Prophet’s *ijtihād* by providing evidence and colliding with the chapter ‘Abasa [80]: 1-3, al-Anfāl [8]: 67 and al-Taḥrīm [66]: 1, seems incorrect. The incident depicted in the chapter ‘Abasa [80]: 1-3 had a specific cause of revelation (*sabab al-nuzūl*). It is known that the revelation of ‘Abasa [80]: 1-3 was related to the coming of the blind Ibn Ummi Maktūm to the Prophet, wanting to be instructed and convert to Islam. The incident occurred when the Prophet was giving direction to the Quraysh leaders to convert to Islam which led the Prophet to ignore or reject the blind. Rejection of the Prophet was marked by the Prophet’s sour face when he saw Ibn Ummi Maktūm (not verbal rejection). The Prophet did not pay attention to what Ibn Ummi Maktūm said because the former still dealt with the Quraysh leaders.⁵⁸ This is in accordance with the Ḥadīth of the Prophet narrated by al-Tirmīdhī.⁵⁹

Likewise, the incident mentioned in al-Anfāl [8]: 67 has *asbāb al-nuzūl*. It is known that al-Anfāl [8]: 67 was revealed because

⁵⁵ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-‘Abbās b. ‘Uthmān b. Shāfi‘ī b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. ‘Abd Manāf al-Qurayshī al-Shāfi‘ī, *Tafsīr al-Imām al-Shāfi‘ī*, Vol. 3 (Saudi Arabīyah: Dār al-Tadmīriyah, 1426), 1329.

⁵⁶ Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl b. ‘Umar b. Kathīr al-Qarashī al-Baṣrī al-Dimashqī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr)*, Vol. 7 (N.p.: Dār Ṭayyibah, 1420), 443.

⁵⁷ Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. al-Ash‘ath b. Ishāq b. Bashīr b. Shadād b. ‘Amr al-Azadī al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Vol. 3, No. 3646 (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-‘Aṣriyah, n.d.), 328.

⁵⁸ Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Shawkānī al-Yamanī, *Fath al-Qadīr*, Vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1414), 467.

⁵⁹ Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā b. Sawrah b. Mūsā b. al-Ḍaḥāk Abū ‘Īsā al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan al-Tirmīdhī*, Vol 5, No. 3331 (Mesir: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalbī, 1395), 432.

there had been disputes among the companions of the Prophet during the war of Badr regarding prisoners. ‘Umar wanted to kill all prisoners of the war that led to the full victory of Muslims. However, Abū Bakr disagreed and wanted to release the prisoners with a ransom of 4000 dinars. The Prophet decided to choose the opinion of Abū Bakr, and ‘Umar responded: “It is not proper for the Prophet to have a prisoner before he can paralyze his enemies on earth”. After that, there came the verse that supported what ‘Umar said, thus the Prophet chose to kill the enemies and prisoners to ensure the victory of Muslims in the battle of Badr.⁶⁰

The incident mentioned in al-Taḥrīm [66]: 1 has also *asbāb al-nuzūl*. Al-Taḥrīm [66]: 1 was revealed when the Prophet had intercourse with his slave wife, Māriyah al-Qibṭiyah at Ḥafṣah’s house, while at that time Ḥafṣah was not at home. Then, she came and objected with what had been done by the Prophet in her house. The Prophet told Ḥafṣah that she (Māriyah Qibṭiyah) was *ḥarām* (forbidden) for me. The Prophet did this to seek the pleasure of the Prophet’s wives by stating that Māriyah Qibṭiyah is forbidden for him.⁶¹

In these verses, there are explanations about the mistakes of the Prophet in his *ijtibād* which are then corrected by Allah through the revelation of the verse which guide to what the Prophet should do. Shaḥrūr’s mistake lies in his rejection of the Ḥadīth by stating that it was the result of the Prophet’s *ijtibād*, by using the evidence from the Qur’ān about the Prophet’s mistake. However, the Prophet’s misdeeds were not something used as the basis for law in Islam. Instead, Allah had rebuked and provided a solution by revealing a verse, thus making the Prophet free from mistakes in his actions.

Shaḥrūr uses the evidence from the Qur’ān or Ḥadīth which indicates that the Ḥadīth is the result of the Prophet’s *ijtibād* which has no relevance to the Qur’ān, or that the Ḥadīth is not based on Allah’s order, or that there is no warning and a solution from Allah through the revelation of the Qur’ānic verses. Therefore, Shaḥrūr

⁶⁰ Abū al-Ḥasan Maqātil b. Sulaymān b. Bashīr al-Azadī al-Balakhī, *Tafsīr Maqātil b. Sulaymān*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth, 1423), 129.

⁶¹ Al-Mālikī, *al-Hidāyah ilā Bulūgh al-Nihāyah*, Vol 12. 7561-7564.

strongly asserts that the Ḥadīth is the result of the Prophet's *ijtihād* himself, not an order from Allah.

The third interpretation of the verse by Shahrūr is that the Prophet and his companions did not consider the Ḥadīth as revelation from Allah. For Shahrūr, it is evident that neither the Prophet nor his companions ordered to collect, write or record Ḥadīths or as the Prophet had ordered to write the Qur'ān on the grounds of avoiding the mixture between revelations, the Qur'ān, and Ḥadīth. This viewpoint of Shahrūr can be said as weak, since the argument used in this regard, al-Ḥijr [15]: 9 is interpreted literally, thus . considering that the Qur'ān is preserved by writing from the beginning is said to be from the Prophet, while the Ḥadīths are not. He also questions why the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth were not written simultaneously or the Prophet assigned his companions to document both the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.

In the interpretation of the chapter al-Ḥijr [15]: 9, the meaning of the phrase “*wa innā labū lahāfiẓūn*” is that Allah keeps the Qur'ān by making it easier for the companions at that time to memorize and recite the Qur'ān, so, the Qur'ān is free from additions, subtractions and deviations.⁶² Based on a historical point of view, one can argue that the Qur'ān was sent down gradually to the Prophet and passed on to Muslims at that time gradually, so the Prophet's Ḥadīth is an interpretation of the Qur'ān. This actually strengthens the statement that the Prophet ordered to write down the Qur'ān and postpone (with a temporary ban) for writing other than the Qur'ān (in this case Ḥadīth) on the grounds that it is to be not mixed. At the beginning of Islam, the Qur'ān was still in the form of *kalām Allāh* (there was no name for the Qur'ān). However, after Islam developed, the name of al-Qur'ān emerged to designate the corpus of collected verses revealed to the Prophet. The terms al-Qur'ān and Ḥadīth originated from the words of the same Prophet: that is, the Qur'ān came down by the words (*verbatim*) from Allah, conveyed through the words of the Prophet, while the

⁶² Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī al-Baghdādī al-Māwardī, *Tafsīr al-Māwardī: al-Nukat wa al-Ujūn*, Vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah, n.d.), 149; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥusaynī al-Ījī, *Tafsīr al-Ījī Jāmi’ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah, 1424), 306.

Ḥadīths were conveyed through the words of the Prophet himself.⁶³

It is important to raise such a question as why the Prophet did not assign some companions to write down the revealed verses and some others to collect and write Ḥadīth that came out of himself at the same time. The Prophet ordered some companions to write the revealed verses on the palm fronds (not yet in the form of *muṣṣhaf*) at that time because the revelation has not been complete yet before the Prophet died (as evidenced by the revelation of the last verse (al-Mā'idah [5]: 3) at the farewell pilgrimage (*ḥajjat al-wadā'*) in the year 10 after *hijrah* (the Prophet died in the year 11 after *hijrah*). The writing of the revealed verses of the Qur'an can be proven by the correction of the writing of Zayd b. Thābit by the Prophet. The Prophet also ordered some companions to write Ḥadīths after Islam spread, but it was not mandatory. The companions with low or weak memorization capacity are encouraged to write down Ḥadīths, while those with high capacity are not.⁶⁴

It is admitted from historical perspective that, the Qur'an was revealed in Arabia, and therefore to a great degree represent the Arab sociological and historical milieu at that time. The Arabs are known as not strong at reading, writing and arithmetic,⁶⁵ they are very good in memory.⁶⁶ In this context, the Qur'an and Ḥadīth of the Prophet have been memorized from the beginning of the Prophetic message. Despite the fact that the companions did not

⁶³ Muḥammad 'Umar Ḥawayh, *Nuẓūl al-Qur'an al-Karīm wa Tārikhib wa mā Yata'allaqu Bih* (Madinah: Majmū' al-Muluk Faḥd, n.d.), 28; Khālīd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī al-Jarīsī, *Mu'allim al-Tajwīd* (N.p.: n.p., n.d.), 20; 'Abd al-Wadūd Maqbūl Ḥanīf, *Nuẓūl al-Qur'an wa al-Ināyah Bih fī 'Abd al-Nabī* (Madinah: Majmū' al-Muluk Faḥd, n.d.), 14.

⁶⁴ Muḥammad Ṭāhir b. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Kurdī al-Makkī al-Shāfi'ī al-Khaṭṭāṭ, *Tārikh al-Qur'an al-Karīm* (Hijāz: Maṭba'at al-Faṭḥ bi Jiddah, 1365), 20-22; al-'Asqalānī, *Faṭḥ al-Barī*, Vol. 1, 210.

⁶⁵ Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr al-Marāghī*, Vol. 28 (Mesir: Shirkat Maktabat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalbī, 1365), 94; al-Yamānī, *Faṭḥ al-Qadīr*, Vol. 2, 287.

⁶⁶ 'Abd al-'Azīm Ibrāhīm Muḥammad al-Maṭ'anī, *al-Shubḥāt al-Thalāthūn al-Muthārah li Inkār al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah 'Arḍ wa Tafnīd wa Naqs* (N.p.: Maktabat Wahbah, 1420), 101; Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haikāl, *Ḥayāt Muḥammad wa Ālih wa Sallam* (N.p.: n.p., n.d.), 31.

write down the Ḥadīths due to their strong memory, there were in fact few companions who wrote the Ḥadīth of the Prophet, such as ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ who gave a title for his work *al-Ṣādiqah*. In addition, the Prophet allowed this companion to write down everything the Prophet said (see Ḥadīth Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal No. 3.646).⁶⁷

It has been recorded in Islamic history that the Prophet ordered his companions to write down Ḥadīths at the time after the conquest of the city of Mecca. The event occurred when the Prophet gave a sermon after the conquest of the city and one of his companions from Yemen, Abū Shah, who was told to write down the Prophet's sermon. The Prophet then ordered his companions to write down the sermon (the prophetic Ḥadīth) for Abū Shah. Many companions were wondered what to write, and therefore one of the companions gave an explanation by writing the Prophet's sermon.⁶⁸ This is in accordance with the Ḥadīth:

حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ: فَقَامَ أَبُو شَاهٍ - رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْيَمَنِ - فَقَالَ: اكْتُبُوا لِي يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: «اَكْتُبُوا لِأَبِي شَاهٍ»، قُلْتُ لِلْأَوْزَاعِيِّ: مَا قَوْلُهُ اَكْتُبُوا لِي يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: هَذِهِ الْخُطْبَةُ الَّتِي سَمِعَهَا مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

“Abū Hurayrah said; Then stood up Abū Shah, a resident of Yemen and said: ‘Hi Messenger of Allah, write for me?’ Rasulullah said: ‘Write for Abū Shah.’ Said, al-Walīd b. Muslim; I asked al-Awza’i: ‘What did he mean by asking me to write it down, hi Messenger of Allah?’ He said: ‘The contents of the sermon he heard from the Messenger of Allah.’”⁶⁹

Abū Shah was a Persian descendant who lived in Yemen, thus his capacity of memorization was not as strong as the Arabs.⁷⁰ This evidence indicates that the writing culture was not from the Arabs because they mostly relied on memorization. The Ḥadīth is a substitute for the new law, because the Ḥadīth that prohibited the

⁶⁷ al-Sibā’ī, *al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā*, 76-78.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 76-78.

⁶⁹ Muḥammad b. Ismā’īl Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Bukhārī al-Ju’fī, *al-Jāmi’ al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar min Umūr Rasūl wa Sunanih wa Ayyāmih (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)*, Vol. 3, No. 2.434 (N.p.: Dār Ṭauq al-Najāh, 1422), 125.

⁷⁰ Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Iṣābah fī Tamyiz al-Ṣaḥābah*, Vol. 7 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1415), 171.

writing of the Qur'ān has been abrogated (*mansūkh*). Therefore, it is then permitted to write Ḥadīth as 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib did with his *ṣaḥīfah*. It was also the case with the inscription of 'Amr b. Ḥazm about *farā'id* (inheritance law), *sunan* al-Nabī (Sunnah of the prophet), *ḍiyāt* and also about Abū Bakr. The prohibition of writing the Qur'ān in early Islam is intended to avoid mixing the revealed Qur'ān with Ḥadīth of the Prophet. However, when examined historically it is relevant to mention that the Ḥadīth about the prohibition of writing other than the Qur'ān was the Ḥadīth of the Prophet in Makkah, while the Ḥadīth that permitted the writing of Ḥadīth was the Ḥadīth of Madinah, as indicated by the time of the event when the Prophet said the Ḥadīth.⁷¹

The mistake made by Shaḥrūr was to equate the conditions during the early days of Islam with the conditions when Islam already developed, as well as the current existing writing techniques, and the patterns, behavior and characteristics of the Arabs in the past and in the present. It is very clear that the Arabs in the past was characterized by their reliance on their memorization, whereas most people today rely upon their writing capacity.

The fourth interpretation of the verses of the Qur'ān carried out by Shaḥrūr is that the Sunnah changes and transforms, since the Qur'ān never explains the eternity of the Sunnah. However, the statement that the Sunnah is tentative is not justified by the Qur'ān.

With regard to al-Anfāl [8]: 38, this verse is often considered as threatening the unbelievers to stop their infidelity. Shaḥrūr has mistaken to mean the word "*maḍat*." This word comes from the word *maḍā-yamḍī* which means *khalā* (go through/pass),⁷² *dhahaba* (go), *ibta'ada* (disappear), *naḥadha* (complete, perform, implement), *istamarra* (continue, forward, skip, repeat).⁷³ However, Shaḥrūr defines the word "*maḍat*" as has been missed or has expired and

⁷¹ Abū Zakariyā Maḥy al-Dīn Yahyā b. Sharf al-Nawawī, *al-Manhaj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj*, Vol. 9 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1392), 129-130; and *ibid.*, Vol. 18, 130.

⁷² Majid al-Dīn Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Fayrūzī Ābādī, *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Mu'assis al-Risālah, 1426 H), 1335.

⁷³ 'Umar, *Mu'jam al-Lughah*, Vol. 3, 2106.

been replaced with a new one. Lexically, the word “*maḍat*” has several meanings and one of the meanings is “has passed,” but it refers to something like what God did to the unbelievers in the past. It can be maintained that the word *maḍat* in this verse can be meant as having passed or has done, while the meaning of the word *istamarra* is continuing and repeating. This verse contains a threat from Allah to the unbelievers if they return to their disbelief, so that Allah will repeat what He has done, that is, destroying the unbelievers.⁷⁴

The misinterpretation made by Shaḥrūr also occurs in the meaning of the word “*khalat*.” This word comes from the word *khalā-yakhlū* which means *maḍā* (go/pass), *dhahaba* (go), *taqaddama* (pass).⁷⁵ According to Shaḥrūr, the word “*khalat*” means pass or has been missed or has expired and was replaced with a new one. Lexically, the word “*khalat*” does have several meanings, and one of the meanings is “has passed” but it refers to something like what God has done (destroyed) to the former people who were unbelievers, and does not mean it “has passed” then being replaced with a new one. The meaning given by Shaḥrūr is not correct, because he takes the verse literally, deviating from the meaning, and even uses the meaning of a synonym that is contradictory to his concept (namely anti-synonymity). The word “*maḍat*” and “*khalat*” have similar meaning: i.e., have passed (have been done or performed by Allah) and will continue or repeat. Therefore, it cannot be interpreted literally.⁷⁶

From these two verses, it is clear that Shaḥrūr has misinterpreted and misconstrued the meaning and intention of the Qur’ānic verses by interpreting them literally and by changing the interpretation that distorts the definition of the Sunnah which is considered as tentative and changing all the time, even though the Sunnah does not change every time.

To a certain degree, Shaḥrūr’s concept of Ḥadīth or Sunnah can be regarded as representing the tendency towards *inkar al-*

⁷⁴ Wahbah b. Muṣṭafā al-Zuhaylī, *al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-‘Aqīdah wa al-Sharī‘ah wa al-Manhaj* (*al-Tafsīr al-Munīr li al-Zuhaylī*), Vol. 9 (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 1422), 321.

⁷⁵ ‘Umar, *Mu‘jam al-Lughah*, Vol 3, 691.

⁷⁶ Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Ṣābūnī, *Mukhtaṣar Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, 1402), 308.

Sunnah (the denial of the Prophet's traditions). This can be seen from his concept or definition that the Ḥadīth is the Qur'ān itself; the Ḥadīth is filled with stories of Isrā'īliyyāt; the Ḥadīth is a form of the Prophet's *ijtihad*. In additions, his tendency to deny the Sunnah can be seen from and his concept: that Sunnah changes, depending upon a particular social and cultural backgrounds. society and produces certain and civilizations at each stage of its era, which is it is to support that Islam is suitable for each time and place (*ṣāliḥ li kulli ḡaman wa makān*), a viewpoint which is not quite valid with regard to the above argument.⁷⁷

Conclusion

It has been generally agreed that Ḥadīths is the second source of Islamic law. However, there emerges a scholar with contrasting viewpoints against this orthodox position, namely Muhammad Shaḥrūr. For some scholars, his criticism against the established view on Ḥadīth and Sunnah represents the tendency towards the denial of the Prophet's tradition (*inkār al-Sunnah*). Shaḥrūr is a contemporary thinker and researcher who rejects Ḥadīth and Sunnah as the second source of law in Islam. His argument is based on the point of view that the Ḥadīth is the Qur'ān itself. Moreover, he states that Ḥadīths are filled with the story Isrā'īliyyāt (the Biblical stories), accusing the Prophet as ignoring the writing and codification of Ḥadīths. However, based on critical scrutiny of sources presented above which includes the verses of the Qur'ān, the narratives of Ḥadīth, exegesis, historical accounts and linguistic works, this article concludes that Shaḥrūr's views and thought on the issue of Ḥadīth are not supported with justified arguments and valid reading and understanding towards the meaning of various Qur'ānic verses.

⁷⁷ Ṣāliḥ al-Dīn Fawzān b. 'Abd Allāh al-Fawzān, *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Thalāthah* (N.p.: Mu'assis al-Risālah, 1427), 272; 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥammād 'Alī 'Umar, *Dīn al-Ḥaḡ* (Saudi Arabia: Wizārat al-Shu'ūn al-Islāmīyah wa al-Awqāf wa al-Da'wah wa al-Irshād, 1420), 80; Faḥd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaymān al-Rūmī, *al-Badāḥiyāt fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Madinah: al-Jāmi'ah al-Islāmīyah, 1417), 11; Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad al-'Uthaymīn, *Tafsīr Juḡ' 'Am* (*Tafsīr al-'Uthaymīn*) (Riyadh: Dār al-Tharayā, 1423), 84.

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