

CHAPTER 4

REVISITING THE SCHOLARS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE AUTHORITY OF *MUTAWĀTIR* ḤADĪTH

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, all the findings are summarised and analysed comparatively to clarify the third research question about any similarity or difference between the perspectives of Muslim scholars and orientalists on the authority of *mutawātir* ḥadīth. Hence, to analyse the comparison of perspectives between both groups of scholars, all the findings presented in Chapter Two and Chapter Three regarding the *isnād*, the existence and the knowledge created by *mutawātir* ḥadīth are reviewed here. Discussions on these perspectives are compiled and summarised in simplified chart forms for easier reference. Then, the findings are analysed and discussed in this chapter to explore their similarities and differences, thus providing a deeper understanding of this study.

4.2 The Similarities and Differences between Scholars' Perspectives on the *Isnād* of *Mutawātir* Ḥadīth

The discussions on the perspectives of Muslim scholars and orientalists regarding the *isnād* of *mutawātir* ḥadīth are compiled and presented in this simplified chart;

Table 4.1: Perspectives on the *Isnād* of *Mutawātir* Ḥadīth

MUSLIM SCHOLARS	ORIENTALISTS
<i>ISNĀD</i>	
• Defined as ḥadīth narrated by many narrators at each level that according to custom it is impossible for them to agree to lie and it is compulsory to be practised without the need to examine the narrators. • Agree that the great number of narrators in the <i>isnād</i> ensures the reliability of <i>mutawātir</i> ḥadīth but had different opinions on the minimum limit number of narrators. - 4, 5, 12, 20, 40 or 70 based on Qur’ān verses but not <i>ṣarīḥ</i> because each is related to specific stories. - 313 men and two women based on the participants in the Battle of Badr. - 10 because less than ten is considered as <i>aḥād</i> and not ‘a lot’. - No certain number because ‘a lot’ is the amount that produces a firm belief in the truth of a story.	• Schacht and Juynboll’s Common Link theory - The single <i>sanad</i> from the Prophet s.a.w until the Common Link is fabricated, that is why the <i>sanad</i> only spread out widely afterwards. • Juynboll’s Single Strand theory - If matched single strands are impossible to be compiled as an <i>isnād</i> bundle, the authenticity to be regarded as <i>mutawātir</i> ḥadīth is questionable. • If the most well-known <i>mutawātir</i> ḥadīth cannot be justified as authentic according to this method, then the whole notion of <i>mutawātir</i> ḥadīth is questionable.

Based on the discussions in the previous chapters and the charts presented, there are a few similarities that can be identified between both of these perspectives. Focusing on the opinions regarding the reliability of the *isnād* of *mutawātir* ḥadīth, one similarity that can be pointed out here is both groups of scholars tend to focus on the number of narrators instead of the reliability of the narrators themselves. Muslim scholars clearly focus on the number of narrators as they agree that a great number of narrators in the *isnād* ensures the authority of *mutawātir* ḥadīth. There is no need to examine the narrators because, as discussed previously in Chapter Two, a *mutawātir* ḥadīth is not required to have *ittiṣāl al-sanad* (connected chain of narrators), *‘adālah wa dabt al-ruwāh* (justice and discipline of narrators), and *‘adam al-‘illah wal-shādh* (without defect and oddity). As mentioned by Dr. Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, *al-tawātur* is not a study about *isnād* which focuses on examining the narrators to determine the status of ḥadīth, either strong or weak, and accepted or not.¹⁵⁴ Thus, Muslim scholars only discuss other details such as the exact minimum limit number of narrators in the *isnād* of *tawātur* narrations as they have slightly different opinions on that matter.

Whereas orientalist, Joseph Schacht and G. H. A. Juynboll argue the *isnād* by questioning the number of narrators through the Common Link theory. Basically, this theory focuses on the possibility of a single path of ḥadīth transmission. In the Common Link theory, both Schacht and Juynboll focus on the number of narrators before and after the Common Link in the *isnād*. The small number of narrators in the single *sanad* before the Common Link compared to the larger number of narrators after the Common Link raises doubts about the authority of the *isnād*. Building on Schacht’s theory, Juynboll argues that the more people transmit a ḥadīth from a narrator, the more

¹⁵⁴ Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ. (2003). *op.cit.*, p. 150.

historicity that moment has. Thus, if a great number of people narrated a ḥadīth from a certain narrator, the more attestation there is that the ḥadīth actually existed at that time.¹⁵⁵ Hence, it can be concluded that when discussing the *isnād* of *mutawātir* ḥadīth, both Muslim scholars and orientalists have one similarity which is they tend to focus on the number of narrators along the chains rather than the reliability of the narrators.

Meanwhile, the difference between their perspectives can be seen in various transmissions of *mutawātir* ḥadīth from other *isnād* or *ṭuruq*. There are numerous transmissions that occurred for *tawātur* narrations since the first *ṭabaqa*, from the *Ṣaḥāba* (Companions) to the *Tābi'īn* (Successor) to the *Tābi' al-Tābi'īn*, and so on until the *Mukharrīj* (the last narrator in the *sanad*) of ḥadīth. The *Ṣaḥāba* have reported ḥadīth from the Prophet s.a.w on different occasions. For Muslim scholars, there is a concept of *Mutāba'āt* or *Shawāhid*,¹⁵⁶ where these other *isnād* or *ṭuruq* are the supporting transmissions either because of the same *shaykh* or the same *lafz* of *matn*. Hence, these various transmissions are considered to strengthen the authority of *mutawātir* ḥadīth because these transmissions involve so many narrators and it is impossible for them to agree on a lie about the ḥadīth they have conveyed and that ḥadīth is guaranteedly the truth.

On the other hand, these various transmissions are regarded as arguments to refute the authority of *mutawātir* ḥadīth by applying the theories of Single Strand and Diving *Isnād* by G. H. A. Juynboll. In the Single Strand theory, if the various *isnād* or *ṭuruq* of *mutawātir* ḥadīth are analysed one by one, there will be *isnād* that consist of unmatched single strands that are impossible to be compiled together as an *isnād* bundle, thus the authenticity to be regarded as a *mutawātir* ḥadīth is questionable. However, it should be

¹⁵⁵ Juynboll G. H. A. (2016). *op.cit.*, p. 352.

¹⁵⁶ See pp. 44-45.

noted here that the use of the term single strand and the term *isnād* bundle is rarely or even never used by Muslim scholars. When doing *i'tibār* or literature research of a ḥadīth, they describe the *ṭuruq* without searching for which single are or are not in the *isnād* bundle.¹⁵⁷

These various transmissions are also considered as ‘Diving *Isnād*’, the alternative chains of transmissions or just a set of unrelated diving chains. They are merely plagiarisms of the Common Link’s *isnād* to make the ḥadīth look more reliable. Juynboll’s perception towards the Diving *Isnād* has swept away the whole facts about either *Mutāba’āt* or *Shawāhid*.¹⁵⁸ Although the concept of *Mutāba’āt* and *Shawāhid* is basically for solitary narration and is rarely used in discussions about *tawātur* narration, this concept is the most suitable to be used for comparison here. In conclusion, various *isnād* in transmitting *mutawātir* narrations which are regarded as support transmissions among Muslim scholars are very likely different from orientalists’, in this case Juynboll, who considered those *isnād* as either fabricated or unmatched to form *tawātur* transmissions.

4.3 The Similarities and Differences between Scholars’ Perspectives on the Existence of *Mutawātir* Hadīth

The discussions on the perspectives of Muslim scholars and orientalists regarding the existence of *mutawātir* ḥadīth are compiled and presented in this simplified chart;

¹⁵⁷ Idri, M. A., & Baru, R. (2018). *op.cit.*, p. 950.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Table 4.2: Perspectives on the Existence of *Mutawātir* Ḥadīth

EXISTENCE	
<i>Mutawātir lafẓī</i> does not exist	
- Majority of scholars believe <i>mutawātir lafẓī</i> is impossible to exist, except only the Qur’ān is narrated in this way. - Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī claims that it is impossible to find a <i>mutawātir</i> ḥadīth or even a ‘<i>azīz</i> ḥadīth. - Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Iraqī states that even the ḥadīth of <i>man kadhaba</i> cannot be considered as <i>mutawātir</i> because most of the <i>isnād</i> are weak, thus it is not eligible to be counted as <i>mutawātir</i>.	Juynboll states that in ḥadīth literature, <i>mutawātir lafẓī</i> is a historiographical criterion which appears never to have had any demonstrable applicability. Thus, this type of ḥadīth is just a confusing and unrealised theory, or in other words, does not exist.
<i>Mutawātir lafẓī</i> exists	
Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī and Qāḍī ‘Iyād ibn Mūsā have the same opinion that the number of <i>mutawātir lafẓī</i> ḥadīth is quite numerous.	None of the opinions from orientalist agree that <i>mutawātir lafẓī</i> ḥadīth exists.

<i>Mutawātir ma'nawī</i> exists but in a small number	
• <i>Mutawātir ma'nawī</i> are numerous because only the meaning of the <i>matn</i> should be the same although with different phrases or events. • Lots of examples for <i>mutawātir ma'nawī</i> can be found in the collections of <i>mutawātir ḥadīth</i>. • But the number is still too small compared to <i>aḥad ḥadīth</i>.	• Juynboll claims <i>mutawātir ma'nawī</i> occurs in limited numbers in an unstandardised manner, but individually, it is not considered as <i>mutawātir</i>.
<i>Mutawātir ḥadīth</i> exists but is not authentic	
• None of the Muslim scholars agree with this opinion. • Muṣṭafā al-A'zamī briefly argues that it is common to answer a question without documenting the evidence used in arriving at the conclusion or without presenting a complete <i>isnād</i> of the <i>ḥadīth</i>.	• Juynboll applies the <i>argumentum e silentio</i> method on both the <i>niyāḥa</i> and <i>man kadhaba</i> <i>ḥadīth</i> which are not recorded in earlier collections, but obviously appear in later collections, thus raises questions that need explanation. • Juynboll still admits the existence of <i>mutawātir ḥadīth</i> in Muslim studies, but he insists that these <i>ḥadīth</i> are not coming from the Prophet s.a.w. or in other words, not authentic.

Focusing on the perspectives regarding the existence of *mutawātir* ḥadīth, both Muslim scholars and orientalist have both opinions, exists and doesn't exist. The opinions are also divided between the existence of *mutawātir lafẓī* or *tawātur* of the text and meaning, and *mutawātir ma'nawī*, or *tawātur* of the meaning only with different texts or wordings. A majority of Muslim scholars believe that *mutawātir lafẓī* narrations do not exist including Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī who points out that it is impossible to find *mutawātir* ḥadīth or even 'azīz ḥadīth,¹⁵⁹ and this opinion is well agreed by Juynboll. While for *mutawātir ma'nawī* ḥadīth, Muslim scholars, for example, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī,¹⁶⁰ and the orientalist, Juynboll share the same opinions that *mutawātir ma'nawī* exists but not in a great number. There are quite numerous narrations categorised as *mutawātir ma'nawī* by Muslim scholars that prove the existence of this type of ḥadīth, but the number is too small compared to *aḥad* ḥadīth. This is slightly similar to Juynboll's opinion that agrees on the existence but only occurs in a limited number of ḥadīth. However, both of these same opinions about the non-existence of *mutawātir lafẓī* and the existence of *mutawātir ma'nawī* are the only similarities found here, even though the reasons behind these opinions are totally different.

Muslim scholars believe that *mutawātir lafẓī* ḥadīth are impossible to exist because they have strictly applied the terms and criteria so that the number of *mutawātir* ḥadīth is very small compared to *aḥad* ḥadīth,¹⁶¹ not to mention *mutawātir lafẓī* because this type of ḥadīth must be narrated using the same wordings, hence there are not so many ḥadīth narrated in this way. Then, it is not surprising that the majority of Muslim scholars agree with this opinion as they believe only the Qur'ān is narrated in this way. Besides, Dr. Ṣubḥī al-Ṣālīḥ explains that one of the reasons this opinion occurs among

¹⁵⁹ Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī. (1988). *op.cit.*, p. 156.

¹⁶⁰ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī. (1994). *op.cit.*, p. 180.

¹⁶¹ Idri, M. A., & Baru, R. (2018). *op.cit.*, p. 950.

scholars might be because of the lack of knowledge about the ways or circumstances of narrators and their desirable traits that it is impossible to agree to lie.¹⁶² Meanwhile, Juynboll who also agrees on the non-existence of *mutawātir lafẓī* has his own reasons as he states that in ḥadīth literature, *mutawātir lafẓī* is a historiographical criterion which appears never to have had any demonstrable applicability.¹⁶³ In short, Juynboll believes that this type of ḥadīth is just a confusing and unrealised theory, or in other words, does not exist.

Regarding the existence of *mutawātir ma'nawī*, both Muslim scholars and the orientalist Juynboll agree on the limited number of narrations. Muslim scholars agree that the number of *mutawātir ma'nawī* narrations is more numerous compared to *mutawātir lafẓī* because only the meaning of the *matn* should be the same. They can have different phrases or even various incidents, thus easier to prove their existence. Besides, some of the narrations claimed by some scholars as *mutawātir lafẓī* ḥadīth are also categorised as *mutawātir ma'nawī* ḥadīth because of the extensive content that had covered the different narrations for some of the phrases.¹⁶⁴ While Juynboll claims that *mutawātir ma'nawī* only occurred in a limited number of ḥadīth in an unstandardised manner, but individually, they are not considered as *mutawātir*.¹⁶⁵ On further discussion in Chapter Three, Juynboll still admits the existence of *mutawātir* ḥadīth in Muslim studies, but he insists that these ḥadīth are not coming from the Prophet s.a.w. or in other words, not authentic. This statement is the result produced by applying the *argumentum e silentio* method in arguing the existence of *mutawātir* ḥadīth. This brings

¹⁶² Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ. (2003). *op.cit.*, pp. 147-148.

¹⁶³ Juynboll, G. H. A. (2001). *op.cit.*, p. 330.

¹⁶⁴ Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ. (2003). *op.cit.*, p. 150.

¹⁶⁵ Juynboll, G. H. A. (1983). *op.cit.*, p. 98.

another difference between the perspectives of Muslim scholars and orientalists regarding the existence of *mutawātir* ḥadīth.

None of the opinions from orientalists agree that *mutawātir lafẓī* ḥadīth exists. Meanwhile, Muslim scholars including Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī and Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ ibn Mūsā agree that the number of *mutawātir lafẓī* ḥadīth is quite numerous as listed in Chapter Two. There are also a lot of examples of *tawātur* narrations that can be found in books or collections of *mutawātir* ḥadīth produced by Muslim scholars. However, the method of *argumentum e silentio* was used by G.H.A. Juynboll to prove the non-existence of *tawātur* narrations. This method was applied to two well-known *mutawātir* ḥadīth, which are ḥadīth *niyāḥa* and *man kadhaba*. By proving the non-existence of both ḥadīth in earlier collections and their appearance in later collections, the whole notion of *mutawātir* ḥadīth is questioned. Hence, all the narrations claimed as *tawātur* by Muslim scholars in most of the ḥadīth collections books are questioned their authority by the orientalists. Yet this method is also argued by other scholars as flawed. A‘zamī argues that it is common to answer questions without documenting the evidence used in arriving at the conclusion or without presenting a complete *isnād* of the ḥadīth.¹⁶⁶

4.4 The Similarities and Differences between Scholars’ Perspectives on the Knowledge Created by *Mutawātir* Ḥadīth

The discussions on the perspectives of Muslim scholars and orientalists regarding the knowledge created by *mutawātir* ḥadīth are compiled and presented in this simplified chart;

¹⁶⁶ Muṣṭafā al-A‘zamī. (2000). *op.cit.*, pp. 219.

Table 4.3: Perspectives on the Knowledge Created by *Mutawātir* Ḥadīth

CREATED KNOWLEDGE	
• ‘Ajjāj al-Khaṭīb - <i>mutawātir</i> ḥadīth is <i>ḍarūrī</i> which requires Muslims to believe and trust as well as accept it without any doubt and therefore compulsory to be practised. • Ibn Taymiyya - one who believes in the authenticity of <i>mutawātir</i> is obliged to believe its veracity and practise its contents. Those who do not yet know should follow those who have agreed on the authenticity. • Muḥammad al-Shabbāgh - knowledge delivered by <i>mutawātir</i> ḥadīth must be <i>ḍarūrī</i> and obtained by sensory observation, thus the narrations are based on certainty, not preconception. • Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ - there is no <i>khilāf</i> between scholars that <i>mutawātir</i> ḥadīth, either <i>lafẓī</i> or <i>ma’nawī</i>, necessitates certainty and definite knowledge.	• Probability Theory by Wael B. Hallaq. • Focuses on <i>mutawātir ma’nawī</i> and claims that this type of narration is nothing more than a collection of <i>aḥad</i> ḥadīth which is readily acknowledged as <i>ẓann</i> and creates <i>nazarī</i> knowledge. • <i>Aḥad</i> is admittedly <i>ẓann</i>, meaning that it engenders in the intellect a probability in the order of 0.51 or higher, but never reaches the level of certainty which is 1.0. • Since <i>aḥad</i> ḥadīth fails to survive beyond the test of probability and is not to be trusted as a historical source, then <i>mutawātir ma’nawī</i> is to be treated precisely in the same manner.

Lastly, regarding the knowledge created by *mutawātir* ḥadīth, as far as this study goes, there is no similarity found between the perspectives of Muslim scholars and orientalist. Unlike previous discussions regarding the reliability of *isnād* and existence of *mutawātir* ḥadīth which have a bigger scope to be discussed, discussions about the knowledge created by *mutawātir* ḥadīth only revolved around the question of whether it necessitates *ḍarūrī* (certainty) and definite knowledge or *naẓarī* (preconception) knowledge and *ẓann* (guesswork). Hence, focusing on the differences between the perspectives, both groups of scholars have different opinions, especially on *mutawātir ma'nawī*. A Muslim scholar, Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ believes that there is no *khilāf* (contradiction) among Muslim scholars that all *mutawātir* ḥadīth, either *lafẓī* or *ma'nawī*, necessitate certainty and definite knowledge.¹⁶⁷ While an orientalist, Wael. B Hallaq applies the probability theory from mathematics to argue that *mutawātir ma'nawī* is nothing more than a collection of *aḥad* ḥadīth, thus regarded as *ẓann* and create *naẓarī* knowledge. His reason is since *aḥad* ḥadīth fails to survive beyond the test of probability and is not to be trusted as a historical source, then *mutawātir ma'nawī* is to be treated precisely in the same manner.¹⁶⁸

However, the majority of scholars agree that *aḥad* ḥadīth are valid binding proofs that must be applied even though an individual *aḥad* narration might not impart 100 % of certainty knowledge.¹⁶⁹ In *Al-Sunnah wa-Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, Mustafā al-Sibā'ī also discusses the *aḥad* narration. He states that to act based on *aḥad* ḥadīth that imparts less than 100 % knowledge is compulsory because, for the most part, it is impossible to arrive at a ruling except through those ḥadīth. Plus, since *ijma'* dictates that *aḥad* ḥadīth must be applied and since *ijma'* imparts absolute knowledge,

¹⁶⁷ Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ. (2003). *op.cit.*, p. 151.

¹⁶⁸ Hallaq, W. B. (1999). *op.cit.*, p. 82

¹⁶⁹ Mustafā al-Sibā'ī. (2003). *op.cit.*, p. 236.

aḥād ḥadīth could be regarded as applied based on 100 % certainty knowledge.¹⁷⁰

Hence, if *aḥād* ḥadīth could be regarded as highly as these and wanted to be used as comparison here, then *mutawātir ma'nawī* is to be treated precisely in the same manner, or more likely better than *aḥād* ḥadīth.

4.5 Conclusion

After analysing comparatively the perspectives of Muslim scholars and orientalist on the three aspects, the *isnād*, the existence and the knowledge created by *mutawātir* ḥadīth, there are a few similarities and differences that can be seen here. For the *isnād*, the similarity is not too obvious compared to its difference. One similarity that can be pointed out is both groups of scholars tend to focus on the number of narrators instead of the reliability of the narrators themselves. Whereas one difference that can be pointed out is how they treated various *isnād* in transmitting *mutawātir* narrations. For Muslim scholars, the various *isnād* are considered as strengthening the authority of the narrations, while for orientalist they are considered as arguments on the authority of the narrations. Based on the analysis of these discussions, the similarity and difference occurred because Muslim scholars generally hold fast to the concept of *mutawātir* which there is no need to examine the narrators, hence the discussion focus on the number of narrators. The similarity and difference also occurred mostly because Juynboll's perspective is greatly influenced by his invented theories and methods which always focus on the possibility of a single path of ḥadīth transmission and the finding of ḥadīth fabrication.

As for the existence, both the similarities and differences between their perspectives are quite obvious. There are similar opinions that *mutawātir lafẓī*

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 239.

narrations do not exist and *mutawātir ma'nawī* narrations do exist but not in a big number. Then there are different perspectives on the existence of *mutawātir lafẓī* ḥadīth because none of the orientalist agree with Muslim scholars' opinions that the number of *mutawātir lafẓī* ḥadīth is quite numerous. Besides, there are also different opinions from orientalist on the narrations categorised by Muslim scholars as *mutawātir* in the books of ḥadīth collections because of its absence in earlier collections. The similarities here might occur because Muslim scholars carefully categorised *mutawātir* into *lafẓī* and *ma'nawī* by strictly following the terms, thus resulting in a greater amount of *mutawātir ma'nawī* and harder to trace *mutawātir lafẓī*. Referring to the discussions about the perspectives of orientalist on the existence of *mutawātir* ḥadīth in Chapter Three, the differences might be the result of the references and sources used by Juynboll in arguing the existence of *tawātur* narrations. He relies on certain sources to reach broad generalisation and relies on the result of certain research but imposes the result on the entire ḥadīth literature. As mentioned before, Juynboll believes that the research on two well-known *mutawātir* ḥadīth may establish a valid evaluation of the *tawātur* concept in general.¹⁷¹

Lastly, regarding the knowledge created by *mutawātir* ḥadīth, there is no similarity found between the perspectives but the difference is obvious. Focusing on *mutawātir ma'nawī*, Muslim scholars believe this type of narration necessitates *darūrī* and definite knowledge while an orientalist, Wael. B Hallaq argues *mutawātir ma'nawī* necessitates *ẓann* and preconception knowledge. The obvious difference between these perspectives occurred because of different principles held by both sides. Muslim scholars have their own principle that *mutawātir* ḥadīth must be accepted with

¹⁷¹. Juynboll, G. H. A. (1983). *op.cit.*, p. 97.

confidence without any doubt and does not require any detailed analysis of the *isnād* and *matn*. While Wael Hallaq holds on to his principle that *mutawātir ma'nawī* is nothing more than a collection of *aḥad* ḥadīth. Therefore, it is hard to find points of similarity between their perspectives.

Generally, the similarities and differences between all the perspectives on those three different aspects occurred because of the aims and objectives of the scholars. Muslim scholars' main purpose is to prove the authority of *mutawātir* ḥadīth to be used as sources of Islamic teaching and avoid forged ḥadīth from spreading among Muslims. Whereas the orientalist's main purpose is to raise questions to argue the authority of *mutawātir* ḥadīth by using their own theories and methods. Hence, their perspectives are mostly shaped based on these objectives. Muslim scholars' perspectives tend to focus on strengthening the reliability of *mutawātir* ḥadīth while the orientalist's perspectives tend to focus on theories invented to argue the validity of *mutawātir* ḥadīth.