

Intellectual Dialogue Between: Renewed "Muhaddith" Al-Imam Ibn Shihab Al-Zuhuri (124 A.H) and Prominent "Orientalist": Goldziher Ignas (1339 A.H)

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Abstract:- Verily, science of hadith is one of the noblest profession comprehended by few among large number of Islamic scholars, however, Imam *Al-zuhuri* was not just one of those professionals but a famous one, he was one the sixth Hadith narrators whom most chains of Hadith passed through them. He devoid and exterminate his life in learning and spreading the authentic Sunnah as well as analyzing the fabricated, weaks Hadiths and criticizing their narrators. Imam *Al-zuhri* was not just a mere scholar, but one of the renewed philanthropic personage who spends a lot on his Hadith students. His trustiness, sureness cast him high reputation which make hadith narrators from different part of the world troops to narrate hadith from him. Imam *Al-zuhri* was a scholar blessed with vigorous memory and same time enjoyed marvelous respect and good relationship with the calipers of Umayyad emperor, this paved him more opportunities to easily spread the knowledge he's blessed with. On other hand, *Goldziher Ignas* - one of the famous orientalist of his days- raised some issues and indictments against this scholar which can lead to overturning and dawn falling the respected status enjoyed by Imam *Al-zuhuri*. The factual stand point of *Goldziher's* argument was not only the personality of Imam *Al-zuhri*, rather, the large number of hadith he had preserved and narrated for the Ummah; because trustiness and sound moralities are pre-requisite for hadith of any narrator to be accepted. Here comes the significance of this paper which is made-up of two parts: first briefly discussed life history of Imam *Al-zuhri* and *Goldziher* while other part aimed at analyzing the accusations linked to *Al-zuhuri* and finally came-up with sound epilogue that can either Exculpate or prove Imam *Al-zuhuri* culprit of the allegations.

I. BRIEF LIFE HISTORY OF IMAM AL-ZUHURI AND GOLDZIHHER

Imam Al-Zhuri:

He is Muhammd bn Muslim bn Ubaidillah bn Abdullahi bn Shihab Al-zuhuri Alqurashy Almadani, Abubakar was his epithet but mostly known as Imam ibn shihab Al-zuhuri.

Imam *Al-zuhuri* was opportune to borne and grown in medina; city of scholars, arose as poor orphan, he learned how to read and write, and committed noble Qur'an with his memory within eighty (80) days, Then, he started seeking knowledge of Hadith and Islamic jurisdiction from famous

scholars of the time among them are: Sa'ed bn Musayeb, Nafi'u maula ibn Umar, Sinan bn Abi Sinan and prominent woman scholar: Amrah bint Abdurrahman.

Gradual time with change, Imam *Al-zuhuri* succeeded his scholars, his travelling hobbies never stop students from following him all around to learn from him, one of his student Ziyad bn sa'ad said to him:

"I admired your hadith but I do not have means to keep on travelling with you around ! he said: just follow me, and I will take your responsibilities".

Among his prominence student are: Ayyub Assakhteyani, Sufyan bn uwainah, Imam Malik bn Anas, Al-layth bn sa'ad e.t.c.

Imam *Alzuhuri* enjoyed sound Islamic creed, and none among Islamic historians attributed any repulsive view to him, he follows the foot-step of his pious predecessors in their creeds, he was recommended by great jurist, leaders and above all his co-professionals in Hadith.

A pious Caliph, umar bn Abdulazees said (to his companions): *"do you go to ibn shihab ? they said yes we do. He said: "go to him, as no one left with the knowledge of Sunnah like him".*

Imam Ahmad said: *"Al-zuhuri has the best Hadith among people (scholars) and his chains of narrations are perfect ones".*

After this blessed life of devotions, learning and teachings, Imam Muhammad bn Shihab Al-zuhuri answered the call of his Lord in the noble month of Ramadan on 124 A.H leaving behind bulky legacy of knowledge specifically in the Sunnah and its narrations.

Orientalist Goldziher:

He is *Goldziher Ignas*, borne on twelve of June 1850, from jewish family in echtolagisenberg, Hungary. He started his studies in Budapest, then he migrated to Berlin in 1864 from where he moved to the university of lestik to meet with his first orientalist scholar Fletcher who was his PhD

supervisor, his thesis was on one the Torah scholar commentary of the middle ages called Tankhum aurshelmi.

Then he was appointed as an assistance lecturer at Budapest university in the year 1872, and after some years of teaching experience and learning he was awarded with scholarship by the Hungary ministry of education to travel abroad to further his education.

With this opportunity, he was able to travel to some eastern countries, he stays sometimes at Egypt, Syrian and Palestine. It was during his staying at Egypt, he was opportune to visit Al-azhar university to gain more Arabic knowledge, and he continue to further his Arabic studies after he went back to Budapest and appointed as one of the head of a department of same university in the year 1907.

Since then, he stays at home and only travel to deliver public lectures and conferences related to orientalism. It was from his home town, Budapest *Goldziher* spend about a quarter of century sending his orientalist researches till his death on 1921 in Budapest.

Goldziher published many book and wrote researches related to orientalism, first was translation of some stories from Turkish language to Hungary language when he was sixteen years old and followed by many researches and publications on Islamic related matters, it was reported that *Goldziher* wrote more than five hundred books and publications.

It is apparent from the life history of *Goldziher*, that, he is man of focused and never taken away by politics rather focused on eastern studies and their knowledge, this make him differs from many orientalist of his days and present times which in turned make him famous of the all.

II. ANALYSING THE ALLEGATION AGAINST AL-IMAM AL-ZUHURI

Anybody who reads through the history of Imam *Al-zuhuri* will found it full of praises and recommendations, and none among the scholars, leaders and historians of his days and after him accused him of any moral misconduct.

This continue to be read throughout the centuries until the days of orientalism, when a famous of such thoughts called *Goldziher Ignas* threw some bunch of allegations against this great scholar and with this *Goldziher* became the source and referee of anybody with such thoughts after him.

The aim of such allegations was to tarnish the image of Imam *Al-zuhuri* leading to annulment of all the knowledge he narrated for the Ummah, and also to paint him black as well as downgrading him to a political client of Umayyad emperor and not a pious and God fearing scholar as others.

The following chapters will bring such accusations and analyzed them thoroughly to ensure that justice is served to whom it due.

First Allegation

Authorising and Attributing of Narrations Not Heard From Him

Goldziher accused Al-imam *Al-zuhuri* of permitting Hadiths not heard from him to be narrated from him, this was one of such dangerous accusations that if found to be true can leads to annulling all narrations made through him as some or most of them are not heard from him.

To affirmed this, *Goldziher* claimed that Ibrahim bn Waleed Al-umawe came with a paper that contained some Hadiths and asked *Al-zuhuri* to permit him narrate those hadith from him and Imam *Al-zuhuri* immediately afforded him with the permissions.

But when this accusation analyzed, it was base on the lack of knowledge of the different hadith narration systems, this type is termed as "Al-ARD" as expatiated by many scholars of the profession like Ibn Salah and many others.

It happen when a student came with the hadiths narrated by his scholar written in a book and gave it to the scholar to review the content and gave him permission to narrate them from him. this type of narration is accepted in the science of hadith.

However, the case with Ibrahim and his master Imam *Al-zuhuri* was not just mere "ARD" but a clear narration of the first order because Ibrahim was one of the students of Imam *Al-zuhuri* as profess by Imam ibn Asakir. also, Imam Ma'amar bn Rashid said:

"I heard Ibrahim bn Waleed Al-Umawe asking Imam Al-zuhuri while reading to him a book, and he said: should I narrate this from you, oh Abubakar ? and he said, yes. Who else other than i can teach you this".

This shows that, Ibrahim seek permissions to narrate the knowledge he acquired and preserved in a book from his master to others, not that he only seek permission to narrate what he never heard from Imam *Al-zuhuri*.

The words of Imam *Al-zuhuri*: *"Who else other than i can teach you this"*

means that nobody have such chains through which those hadiths are narrated other than him, as such He alone can give such permissions.

With the above analysis and explanations, Imam *Al-zuhuri* is free of this allegation and totally exculpated and vindicated of this gross accusation.

Second Accusation

Fabrications to Vindictive and Strengthen Policies of Ummayyad Caliphs

Goldziher accused Imam *Al-zuhuri* of being a tool in vindicating any political stand of Umayyad emperor and ever ready to fabricate Hadith that suit them, citing an example of

a case with caliph Abdulmalik bn Marwan, when he build "dome of the rock" (Qubattu Al-sakhra) in Jerusalem to divert the attention of Iraqis and Syrians from observing Hajj rituals at Makah. and when he asked Imam *Al-zuhuri* for support, he (*Al-zuhuri*) immediately attributed to Abu Huraira (R.A) that the messenger of Allah said: "*Do not undertake a religious journey except to three mosques: this mosque of mine (in medina), the sacred mosque of mecca and the farthest mosque in Jerusalem*".

This serious charge and accusations can be intellectually discussed in some ways as follows:

Careful reading through the history of Imam *Al-zuhuri* recorded in many books of scholars biography, he was described as trustworthy scholar with sound moral behaviors and no where at a time he was accused of lying to common people talk less of relating concocted Hadith to the messenger of Allah.

In addition to that, Imam Ibn Al-asakeer narrated the origin of the relationship between Umayyads' and Imam *Al-zuhuri*, he was first introduced to caliph officially on serious dilemma issue that caliph asked scholars but only got the knowledge with Imam *Al-zuhuri*, hence forth, he drew him close, So, Imam *Al-zuhuri* was a religious associate not a political client.

Also Imam *Al-zuhuri* was not so cheap person inclined with wealth, he was a great philanthropic and generous who spent his wealth on his students and not a materialist. One of his student called Am'r bn dinarr said:

"I have not seen anybody who dinar and dirham (wealth) are devalued to him as Al-Zuhuri".

As for the example cited by *Goldziher*, that Caliphate Abdulmalik bn Marwan build "dome of the rock" (kubattu Al-sakhra) in Jerusalem to divert the attention of people from Hajj and Imam *Al-zuhuri* concocted hadith for him to covered his crime.

This accusations brought by *Goldziher* cannot stand research analysis as it have contradicted historical fact and realities, great Islamic historian such as Imam Adhbari, ibn Asakeer, ibn Atheer, and many others stated that "dome of the rock" (kubattu Al-sakhra) in Jerusalem was built by Waleed bin Abdulmalik not Abdulmalik bn Marwan as alleged by *Goldziher*, and he (Waleed) never build it to divert people from Hajj.

Furthermore, the Hadith claimed to be narrated and fabricated by Imam *Al-zuhuri* was widely known Hadith and was not only narrated from Abu-huraira through Imam *Al-zuhuri*, other scholars narrated the hadith apart from Imam *Al-zuhuri* such as Imam Al-jarir and Imam Ibn Wahab. This vindicated Imam *Al-zuhuri* from fabrication linked to him.

However, Imam *Al-zuhuri* narrated the said Hadith from his scholar Sa'eed bn Musa'yib who in turn narrated the hadith from Abu Huraira (R.A), and Sa'eed was alive when Imam *Al-*

zuhur spread the hadith, why Sa'eed didn't reject or criticize *Al-zuhuri* if he lies against him !

From the far-gone arguments and proofs, it's clear that Imam *Al-zuhuri* never concocted any hadith to please the leaders of Umayyad emperor and linking such to him was mere un-rotted allegation and fallacy aimed at tarnishing his image and his heard achieved status.

Third Allegation

Accepting an Appointed To Be A Judge In The Ummayd Emperor

Once again, *Goldziher* threw at Imam *Al-zuhuri* another allegation, that, He accepted an appointment to be a judge in the Umayyad emperor, while other scholars of the time such as Imam Al-sha'abi rejected such appointment due to their piousness and he considered such from Imam *Al-zuhuri* as lack of asceticism and piousness.

It is apparent that this allegation attacks the morality and devout of this great scholar, and can be analyze as follows:

Verily, Imam *Al-zuhuri* accepted such appointment in the days of caliph Yazid bn Abdulmalik, but, this accusation is intellectually a strange one, as there's nothing wrong for a due scholar to be appointed as a judge, who else -other than scholars- should be nominated to such critical positions! impact, rejecting such positions by all scholars of a time stand condemnable as this leads the whole ummah to astray.

In a real reviews, this should be counted among his great contributions not to be considered among his weak points !

Fortunately, Imam *Al-zuhuri* was not the only one among scholars of the time accepted the job, a renewed pious scholar sulaiman bn habib almuharibi was a judge same time with Imam *Al-zuhur*, why the blame only fall on *zuhuri* ?

Also, the messenger of Allah appointed some pious among his great companions such position, such as Ali bn Abi Talib, Mua'dhz bn Jabal and many others. And such was not considered as a treat to their piousness or as lack of asceticism.

furthermore, from the life history of Imam *Al-zuhuri* as professed in the first part of this paper, we can derived that his appointment was part-time which covers a portion of his life not full-timed one as he was a man with traveling hobbies who keep moving from one place to another spreading the knowledge he was blessed with.

As for Imam Al-sha'abi, who was cited as an exemplary scholar who did not accept such appointment, this cannot stand because he too accepted such appointed later in the days of yazeed bn Abdulmalik. Why blaming Imam *Al-zuhuri* alone.

Generally, appointing a scholar to such a position is not in any way an offensive act as *Goldziher*, the accuser of this great scholar intend to hint on.

Forth Allegation:

He Was Isolated and Force to Write (Fabricate) Some Hadiths

In another effort to nail down and underrate Imam *Al-zuhuri*, *Goldziher* claimed that, Umayyad caliph forced Imam *Al-zuhuri* to write down some Hadiths for their sake, backing this accusation with what was reported from Imam Ma'amar (one of imam *Al-zuhuri* famous student), he said: Imam *Al-zuhuri* said: "*Those leaders forced us to write Hadith*". This showed that he was forced and succumbed to their need in fabrications of some hadiths.

This is also another serious accusation against this great scholar aimed at tarnishing his image, once again this can be discussed as follows:

The sound moral and piousness bestowed on Imam *Al-zuhuri* will never allowed him to succumbed to any kind of intimidation that can led to relating concocted hadith to the messenger of Allah let alone fabricating one himself.

Moreover, he was not such a coward scholar that fears leaders to such level. Imam ibn Asakeer narrated that: Imam Suleiman Ibn yasar once entered to caliph Hisham, and he (Hisham) asked him: "Suleiman who publishes and share the falsehood accusation (against Aisha: R.A)", he (Imam Suleiman) answered: "it is Abdullahi bn Abi Salul (the head of the hypocrite), he (Hisham) said: "you lied, it is Ali bn Abi dalib (R.A)", then Suleiman replied: "Caliph knows better on what he said" later Imam *Al-zuhuri* came in and Caliph Hisham asked him: *Al-zuhuri* who publishes and share the falsehood accusation (against Aisha: R.A), he answered: "it is Abdullahi bn Abi Salul (the head of the hypocrite), he (Hisham) said: "you lied, it is Ali bn Abi dalib (R.A)" then imam *Al-zuhuri* replied: "how dared you ! I lied !, I swear by Allah's name, even if somebody should announce from the heaven that Allah has permitted lying I will never lie, then he said: Urwa bn Al-zubair, Sa'ed bn Al-musayyib, Ubaidullah bn Abdullah and Alqamah bn Al-waqas all narrated to me from Aisha (R.A) that the one who publishes and shares the falsehood accusation against her was Abdullahi bn Abi Salul (the head of the hypocrite)".

How such heroic and fearless scholar that tells the whole caliph at his face the bitter truth in a matter related to Aisha will he be forced to fabricate against the great messenger of Allah !

The truth of the matter was that, the words of Imam *Al-zuhuri* used by *Goldziher* in establishing this allegation were badly distorted.

The true and undistorted story was narrated by Imam Ibn Asakeer through one of the student of Imam *Al-zuhuri* that, the methodology adapted by Imam *Al-zuhuri* in narrating hadith was to narrate them off-hand and so he train his students. but he was later asked and pressured by Caliph Hisham bn Abdulmalik to dictate some hadiths to his sons and let them write, so, he dictate to them about four hundred

hadiths, and allowed them to write.

And immediately after that he came out he called his student and said to them: "*I have banned you from writing hadith, but Those leaders forced us to write Hadith, so come-on write, and he dictate to them the same four hundred hadiths he dictate to the sons of the caliph*".

This is the full version of the story, he was not forced to fabricate new hadiths but was asked and pressured to let some write and he has narrated to others same hadiths and let them write as he let others.

But *Goldziher* cut the long story and only quoted his saying that: "*Those leaders forced us to write Hadith*" thereby giving the story new dimension and bad impression that Imam *Al-zuhuri* was forced to fabricate some hadiths for the leaders of the Umayyad emperor.

Once again, this allegation was dissolve and void as all the above ones.

III. CONCLUSIONS

After this long round of arguments and discussions of the evidences and proofs of the parties in the dialogue, the following epilogue can be derived from the far-gone:

1. That *Goldziher Ignas*, -a famous orientalist of his days- was borne of Jewish family in Hungary and learned Arabic language and later sponsored to some eastern countries to strengthen his skills in Arabic language and to further widen his knowledge on Islamic knowledge.
2. Despite wide knowledge on some Islamic aspect enjoyed by *Goldziher* but he lacks some background elementary on such fields that will make him comprehend some terminologies in such fields, and this him condemn many thing that are commendable in such fields.
3. It is apparent and clear that *Goldziher* was never neutral and impartial in his researches and argument, he usually rush to un-accurate conclusions on many issues, and found to be un-trusted in some of his quotations as he distorted some of them without any slight indications to that. And, this manners and maneuvers gives non-confidence vote in any intellectual researches of any field of learning.
4. That, Imam *AL-zuhuri* was one of the prominent Hadith scholars ever lived, and he was commended and praised by respected personalities of different professions and was never accused of any moral misconduct till when *goldziher* raised some un-rotted allegations on him.
5. That, Imam *Al-zuhuri* was never used as political tools by Umayyad rulers, rather he was a scholar who guides his leaders to doing right and urges them to abstain from evil doings.
6. Imam *Al-zuhuri* was a renewed scholar and philanthropist who keep moving from one place to

another to spread his knowledge, and he treated his student –in respective of their status- with equity and never prefer some of them for their biological or political chances, rather he treat them equally, the more efforts and diligence of any of them the more he derived and gain from him.

7. That, it is not in any way or manners sin or taboo for a due scholar to be a judge in an Islamic emperor, and great ancestors of this Ummah were assign to such positions and was not considered as defective or plainness actions rather they were commended and appreciated. But unfortunate for *Goldziher*, he depict good in the form of blame and vilification.
8. It is apparent from all above, that, Imam *Al-zuhuri* was vindicated and exculpated from all the allegations against him as they are all un-rotted and empty of research methodologies and proofs.

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