

Al-Albani's Critique of Sayyid Sabiq's use of Weak Hadiths in Fiqh Al-Sunnah

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albāni's critique of the use of weak hadiths (*hadith daif*) in Sayyid Sabiq's renowned work *Fiqh al-Sunnah*. Al-Albāni identified several weaknesses, including citing weak hadiths without evaluation, using hadiths with no traceable origin in major *Sunnah* sources, and incorrectly attributing certain hadiths to *al-Sahihain* (al-Bukhari and Muslim). Therefore, this research aims to assess the accuracy of al-Albāni's criticism by analysing six selected hadiths discussed in the chapters on purification (*taharah*) and etiquettes of relieving oneself (*adab qada' al-hajah*). This qualitative study adopts inductive, deductive, and critical analytical methods focused on *sanad* (chain of transmission) and *matan* (textual content) analysis, including *takhrij* (hadith verification) and *i'tibar* (cross-verification of supporting chains). The findings show that some of the hadiths criticised by al-Albāni are indeed weak and cannot be used as evidence in legal rulings, while others, though weak in isolation, have supporting reports (*syawahid* or *mutaba'ah*) that elevate them to the level of *hasan li ghayrih* (sound due to corroboration). The study also finds that Sayyid Sabiq did not explicitly explain his methodological principles regarding the use of weak hadiths, which led to possible misunderstandings in his legal reasoning. Consequently, this study recommends that scholarly use of hadith in legal arguments must be accompanied by critical evaluation of both *sanad* and *matan* to ensure accuracy and reliability in conveying Islamic rulings.

Keywords: Weak hadith (*daif*), Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, al-Albāni's critique, *Takhrij hadith*

INTRODUCTION

Sayyid Sabiq is among the most prominent contemporary Muslim jurists, widely known for his monumental work *Fiqh al-Sunnah*. This book gained immense popularity and has been used as a reference in Islamic educational institutions as well as among the general public. It is highly valued for its systematic presentation of fiqh rulings supported by evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah.

However, the work has also received scholarly criticism, most notably from the contemporary hadith scholar Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albāni, who highlighted several methodological shortcomings in Sabiq's use of weak hadiths. Al-Albāni (2008) argued that Sabiq cited certain hadiths without verifying their status, used narrations that are not found in authentic hadith collections, and attributed some hadiths to *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* incorrectly.

This critique raises an important question about Sayyid Sabiq's methodology in accepting and employing weak hadiths in his legal reasoning. While previous studies have examined the *takhrij* (source tracing) of hadiths in *Fiqh al-Sunnah* (Fransiska, 2015; Nadhirah, 2015), there has not been a comprehensive study assessing the reliability and methodology behind Sabiq's use of weak hadiths.

Thus, this study aims to analyse al-Albāni's critique by re-examining the hadiths he considered weak through *takhrij*, *sanad* analysis, and *i'tibar*, in order to determine whether these hadiths are indeed unacceptable as

evidence or whether they can still be considered valid due to corroborating narrations. This approach aims to provide a balanced and scholarly reassessment of Sayyid Sabiq's effort to construct an accessible and evidence-based Islamic jurisprudence.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative textual analysis approach within the fields of hadith and Islamic jurisprudence. The main objective is to assess the validity of al-Albāni's critique regarding the use of weak hadiths in *Fiqh al-Sunnah* by Sayyid Sabiq. The methodology comprises:

1. Data collection through library research of primary sources, including *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, *Tamām al-Minnah*, and major hadith collections.
2. Inductive and deductive analysis to identify reasoning patterns in both scholars' approaches.
3. Hadith verification (*takhrij*) and *sanad* evaluation — examining possible discontinuities (*inqitā'*), concealments (*tadlīs*), and textual irregularities (*idtirāb*).
4. Cross-verification (*al-i'tibar*) and *mutāba'ah* analysis to evaluate whether a weak hadith can be elevated to *hasan li ghayrih* through supporting chains.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are divided into three categories based on al-Albāni's critique and the present re-evaluation:

1. Weak hadiths that cannot be used as evidence
 - Examples: The hadith on the leftover water of wild animals, and the prohibition of talking while relieving oneself.
 - These narrations have weak chains involving transmitters who are *majhūl* (unknown), *matrik* (abandoned), or affected by *tadlīs* (concealment). Scholars such as al-Shāfi'i, al-Nawawī, and al-Dāraqutnī also classified them as weak. The *syawahid* (corroborating chains) are insufficient to strengthen them.
 - Implication: Such hadiths should not serve as legal proof in *taharah* (purity) matters. Al-Albāni's criticism is valid in these cases.
2. Weak hadiths that can be upgraded to *hasan li ghayrih*
 - Example: The hadith prohibiting urinating in holes or bathing places.
 - Additional *mutāba'ah* and *syawahid* are found; al-Ḥākim traced a supplementary chain, and the concealment (*tadlīs*) by Qatādah is compensated by corroborating reports.
 - Implication: Such hadiths can be accepted as supporting evidence; hence, al-Albāni's critique is not absolute.
3. Authentic hadiths that were wrongly criticised
 - Example: The hadith on not urinating while standing (narrated by 'Ā'ishah).
 - Although the chain includes a weak narrator, Shārik ibn 'Abdullāh, the report is supported by other chains (e.g., *Musnad Ibn Rahuyah*), and the overall meaning remains reliable.
 - Implication: The hadith remains valid due to corroboration; critical assessment should balance *jarh wa ta'dil* (criticism and validation).
4. Lack of explicit methodology in *Fiqh al-Sunnah*
 - Sayyid Sabiq did not state his principles for accepting or rejecting weak hadiths. This absence leads to ambiguity in his legal argumentation and interpretive approach.
 - Implication: Contemporary fiqh writings should explicitly outline hadith evaluation methodology (*takhrij* and *dirayah*) to ensure academic precision.

Table 1. Summary of Key Findings

Category	Example Issue	Status & Justification	Implication
Weak hadiths – invalid as proof	Leftover water of wild animals; prohibition of talking during defecation	Weak chains (unknown or unreliable narrators); confirmed by classical critics such as al-Shāfi‘i and al-Dāraqutnī	Cannot be used for legal rulings; supports al-Albāni’s strict approach
Weak hadiths – strengthened by corroboration	Prohibition of urinating in holes or bath areas	Supported by <i>mutāba‘ah</i> and <i>syawahid</i> ; additional chains cited by al-Hākim	Can be accepted as supportive evidence; al-Albāni’s criticism not absolute
Authentic hadiths misjudged	Prohibition of urinating while standing (‘Ā’ishah’s narration)	Shārik’s weakness compensated by parallel reports; validated by Ibn Rahuyah	Remains reliable through corroboration; requires holistic evaluation
Absence of clear methodology	Lack of explicit principles in <i>Fiqh al-Sunnah</i>	No stated framework for weak hadith usage	Necessitates transparent hadith evaluation in modern fiqh scholarship

CONCLUSION

Al-Albāni’s critique of *Fiqh al-Sunnah* is valid in several aspects, especially when weak hadiths lack corroborating support or when stronger narrations exist. Nevertheless, some of the hadiths he criticised can indeed be elevated to *hasan li ghayrih* through *i‘tibar* and *mutāba‘ah*.

This study underscores the importance of clearly articulating hadith evaluation methodologies in fiqh writings. Incorporating both *takhrij* and *dirayah* disciplines is crucial to ensure that legal derivations are based on authentic evidence and scholarly precision.

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