



Ibn Abī Shaybah’s Methodology in Compiling al-Muṣannaf and Its Position within the Hadith Corpora of Islamic Denominations

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Abstract

al-Muṣannaf by *Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah* (d. 235/849) is among the most significant hadith works in Islamic history. With more than

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37,000 reports covering a wide range of legal, ethical, theological, and historical subjects, it played a crucial role in preserving the narrative heritage of the early centuries. In addition to Prophetic traditions, the collection contains numerous statements by Companions and Successors, and its structure is organized into legal and thematic chapters. This study uses a descriptive–analytical approach to examine the structure and content of the work. The aim is to clarify *Ibn Abī Shaybah*’s methodology in collecting, arranging, and transmitting reports. The study also assesses the status of *al-Muṣannaf* within Sunni hadith corpora and its reception in Shi’a sources. The findings show that *Ibn Abī Shaybah* emphasized unelaborated transmission, detailed *Isnād* citation, thematic arrangement, and the inclusion of diverse materials. He left biographical evaluation, content analysis, and preferential judgment to the reader. This approach makes the work a neutral and foundational source for historical studies and comparative Fiqh, but further analysis is needed for direct juridical use. The high esteem of Sunni hadith scholars for this work and the frequent references to it by Shi’a scholars demonstrate its inter-sectarian relevance and value for comparative scholarship.

Keywords: *Ibn Abī Shaybah*, *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, Hadith compilations, the Hadith Corpora of Islamic Denominations, Methodology.

Problem Statement

120 In Sunni hadith sources, the *Muṣannafāt* hold a distinctive place.

These works, compiled mainly during the first centuries of Islam, gather extensive collections of legal, doctrinal, and historical reports. They arranged this content in thematic chapters and played a foundational role in shaping the Sunni hadith tradition. *al-Muṣannaf* by *Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah* (d. 235/849) stands out as one of the most substantial and influential works. It is noteworthy for both its transmitted material and its methodological features. This influence extends to later sources. *Ibn Abī Shaybah*, one of the eminent hadith scholar of the Kufan School and a teacher of several authors of the *Kutub al-Sittah*, including *al-Bukhārī* and Muslim, drew upon a broad array of teachers and sources in compiling *al-Muṣannaf*, arranging its reports under numerous legal and thematic headings. His criteria for selecting traditions, organizing chapters, treating *Isnāds*, and incorporating the statements of Companions and Successors, as well as his adherence to the principles of biographical evaluation, collectively illuminate his methodology in this monumental work.

Despite the extraordinary significance of the *Muṣannaf*, systematic and methodical analyses of *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s compositional techniques and the position of the work within the Sunni hadith tradition, as well as its echoes in Shi'a hadith literature, remain scarce. This study, therefore, seeks to address the following questions:

- 1) What methods did *Ibn Abī Shaybah* employ in collecting and arranging reports in *al-Muṣannaf*?

2) What is the status of this work within the hadith corpora of both Sunni and Shi'a Denominations?

1. Literature Review

Despite the historical and scholarly importance of *al-Muṣannaf*, specialized and Comprehensive studies on its methodology, narrative techniques, and *Isnād* structures remain limited. Although the work holds a distinguished place among Islamic hadith sources, the lack of detailed research on its legal-hadith method and narrative architecture is evident. This gap highlights the need for more precise, multidimensional analyses of the *Muṣannaf*'s methodological dimensions to better understand its role and influence in the history of hadith and Islamic law. The innovation of the present study lies in its focused examination of the methodology used to compile *al-Muṣannaf*, a topic that has not yet been independently or comprehensively explored. By analyzing the narrative structure, modes of collection, and *Isnād* practices employed in the work, this research seeks to fill a gap in hadith studies and to provide a clearer picture of *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s legal-hadith orientation. In this way, the article contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the scholarly and historical significance of the *Muṣannaf* within both Sunni and Shi'a hadith traditions.

2. The Scholarly Profile of *Ibn Abī Shaybah*

122 *Abū Bakr ʿAbdallāh ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAbsī*, known as *Ibn Abī*

Shaybah, was among the foremost jurists, exegetes, and hadith researcher of the third Islamic century. Born in 159 in Kufa into a family renowned for learning and Qur'ānic recitation (Baghdādī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 10, 66; Dhahabī, 1985: 11, 122) within which he excelled, he pursued advanced study in Basra and Baghdad, benefiting from leading scholars of his time (Ibn Sa'd, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 6, 376). In Baghdad, he held a hadith teaching circle at the Ruṣāfa Mosque and resided there for forty years; some sources also mention his hadith transmission in the Ḥijāz (Baghdādī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 10, 66). He died in Kufa in 235 (Dhahabī, 1985: 11, 122). *Ibn Abī Shaybah* studied with prominent hadith researchers like *Sharīk ibn 'Abdallāh*, *Sufyān ibn 'Uyayna*, *'Abdallāh ibn al-Mubārak*, *'Abdallāh ibn Idrīs*, *Wakī' ibn Jarrāḥ*, *Yahyā ibn Sa'īd Ghaṭṭān*, *'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī* and others (Dhahabī, 1985: 11, 122). His notable students included *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, *al-Bukhārī*, *Muslim*, *Abū Dāwūd*, *Ibn Mājah*, *Baqī ibn Makhlad*, *Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī*, *Ja'far al-Firyābī*, and more (Dhahabī, 1998: 2, 432; Ibn Ḥajar, 1904 AD/1325 AH: 6, 2).

Sunni biographers describe him as a *Ḥāfiẓ* (trustworthy transmitter), a prolific author, and one of the pillars of hadith in his era. *Khaṭīb Baghdādī* ranks him alongside *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, *Yahyā ibn Ma'īn*, and *'Alī ibn al-Madīnī* as one of the four leading authorities of hadith, noting that some thirty thousand people attended his sessions in Baghdad (Baghdādī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 10, 67, 69).

Ibn Abī Shaybah authored works in jurisprudence, exegesis, theology, history, and Qur'ānic studies (Ibn Nadīm, 1926 AD/1326 AH: 471) and he participated in theological debates with the Mu'tazilites and Jahmiyyah (Dhahabī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 17, 230); among his works are *al-Muṣannaḥ*, *al-Sunan fī al-fiqh*, *al-Tafsīr*, *al-Tārīkh*, *al-Fitam*, *al-Ṣiffīn*, *al-Jamal*, *al-Futūḥ*, *al-Īmān*, *al-Adab*, and a *Musnad* (Ibn Nadīm, 1926 AD/1346 AH: 471). *Ibn Hibbān* called him *Mutqan* (highly precise in hadith transmission) (ibid.). *Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī* considered him unmatched in memorization. *Dhahabī* praised his mastery (Dhahabī, 1998: 2, 271, 432). *Ibn Hajar* affirmed his scholarly stature and his contributions to hadith literature (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 11). *Qāsim ibn Sallām* saw him as a pioneer in hadith compilation. *Ṣāliḥ ibn Muḥammad Jazarah* and *'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Kharāsh* also praised his amazing memory (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 11).

3. Introducing al-Muṣannaḥ fī al-Aḥādīth wa al-Āthār

This work is one of the most important Sunni hadith sources from the first half of the third Islamic century. It is arranged according to legal chapters. By collecting many Prophetic traditions, reports from Companions, and statements of the Successors, the book serves as a comprehensive resource for hadith and legal studies. *al-Muṣannaḥ* is *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s largest composition. It was first published in India between 1385 and 1403 AH,

The work contains an extensive collection of reports, varying in authenticity, from sound to weak, rare, and objectionable, placed together without strict selection or filtration. Nevertheless, *al-Muṣannaf* is regarded as a valuable source for hadith and legal scholarship due to its antiquity and preservation of early Islamic narrative material. Along with works such as the *Musnad* of *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* and the *Muṣannaf* of *ʿAbd al-Razzāq* belong to a group of sources that focused primarily on recording and preserving transmitted reports. *Ibn Nadīm* refers to the work under the title *al-Sunan fī al-fiqh* (*Ibn Nadīm*, 1926 AD/1346 AH: 471).

An examination of the *Muṣannaf* demonstrates that, with its 37,943 reports and wide thematic range, it qualifies as a comprehensive hadith collection, as its contents are not limited to a single field, such as law. As the book contains no author's introduction, *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s precise motivation cannot be established; however, it seems likely, similar to other early hadith scholars that his primary aim was to defend the Prophetic Sunnah and preserve the Islamic heritage.

The most recent edition is based on the critical work of *Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt*. It includes extensive editorial improvements. In the introduction, the editor explains that old manuscript copies presented scholarly challenges. These include scribal errors, *Isnād* conflation, and unreliable dates. To resolve these, he produced a carefully revised and newly structured edition. This updated version features corrected mistakes, systematic hadith numbering, and more accurate textual

organization. Researchers now have easier access to this crucial hadith source (cf. Ibn AbīShaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 10).

3-1. Structure of the Book

Early *Muṣannaḥ*-style compilations, such as this book, begin with legal topics, such as ritual purity. They move on to subjects including the call to prayer, prayer, Friday prayer, the two Eid prayers, fasting, almsgiving, pilgrimage, marriage, divorce, and jihad. Beyond legal matters, these works also transmit reports on ethics, etiquette, supplications, the virtues of the Qur'an, the virtues of prophets and Companions, early Islamic history, trials, and tribulations. Thus, this work may be classified among the comprehensive hadith collections, as a *Jāmi'* is defined as a book containing traditions on all major subject areas (Ma'ārif, 2016 AD/1396 SH: 69).

3-2. Efforts of the Modern Editor

Given the scholarly importance of the *Muṣannaḥ*, its editor, *Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt*, undertook extensive work to produce an accurate and scholarly edition. His efforts may be summarized in three main areas: "Correcting manuscript problems, including scribal and typographical errors, disrupted or conflated *Isnāds*, inaccurate dates, textual omissions, and content-related deficiencies; critical comparison and reconstruction by collating the text with reliable hadith sources and reconstructing incomplete passages based on textual and historical evidence; providing supplementary scholarly tools including

systematic numbering of hadiths, improved structural organization, clearer chapter divisions, and the extraction and explanation of Qur'anic verses."

4. Ibn Abī Shaybah's Methodology in al-Muṣannaf

Every author follows particular methods in compiling their works, including how material is collected, categorized, and analyzed. *Ibn Abī Shaybah's Muṣannaf* exemplifies such a defined approach, with a clear methodology for the gathering and arrangement of traditions. The following sections examine key aspects of his method.

4-1. Extensive Thematic Classification of Reports

One structural feature of the work is its use of thematic and conceptual categorization. In this method, traditions related to a shared theme are organized into independent chapters and subchapters. This approach, common among early hadith scholar, served as a foundational principle for structuring hadith texts, facilitating access to traditions on specific topics and enabling comparative and structural analysis.

In thematic classification, the subject headings correspond to the core meaning shared by the group of traditions, such that each chapter reflects a coherent thematic unit. This arrangement not only organizes and gives purpose to the hadith text but also allows the researcher to focus on a single subject and examine its traditions in a detailed and comprehensive manner.

By adhering to this method, *Ibn Abī Shaybah* successfully gathered a wide array of reports under coherent and diverse titles. These thematic categories extend beyond the legal topics of worship and transactions to include moral virtues, the merits and biography of the Prophet and his Companions, Qur’anic exegesis, early Islamic events, social upheavals, and eschatological signs. This broad scope makes *al-Muṣannaf* a key reference for comparative study across different Islamic disciplines. To illustrate the work's thematic range, several examples follow.

4-1-1. The Report on the Prophet’s Leadership on the Day of Resurrection

This noble report vividly depicts the Prophet (PBUH)'s unparalleled status on the Day of Resurrection (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 6, 303). At a time when humanity stands in fear and anticipation of judgment, the Prophet appears in three momentous roles: leader of humankind in that overwhelming scene, spokesman of the Day of Resurrection, articulating the state of the people and guiding the discourse of the gathering, and intercessor, serving as a conduit of divine mercy and refuge for the nations on a day when no other refuge exists.

4-1-2. The Explicit Encouragement of Charity by the Prophet (PBUH)

This narrative, found in the *Zakāt* section of the *Muṣannaf*, recounts an episode from the Prophet’s time containing moral and social lessons. According to *Jarīr*, the Prophet once delivered a sermon

128 urging the people to give charity. The audience responded slowly, and

signs of displeasure appeared on the Prophet's face. Then a man from the *Anṣār* stepped forward and brought a pouch of wealth to the Prophet, inspiring others to follow until expressions of joy appeared on the Prophet's face. At that moment, he stated a principle that became foundational in Islamic ethical thought: "Whoever establishes a good practice will receive its reward and the reward of all who act upon it after him, without their reward being diminished. And whoever initiates an evil practice will bear its burden and the burden of all who act upon it after him, without their burden being reduced." (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 350)

4-1-3. The Report on the Dislike of Drinking from a Green Earthenware Vessel

In this report, *Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī* transmits that the Prophet (PBUH) forbade drinking *Nabīdh* from a vessel known as "*Jarr Akhḍar*." (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 5, 73) The tradition indicates that the prohibition relates to a particular type of container in which the drink may spoil. The report is classified according to its thematic content: "It concerns the Prophet's ruling on beverages stored in specific containers that risk fermentation or corruption. Accordingly, it falls under the hadith categories dealing with rulings on beverages, prohibitions on intoxicating or perishable drinks, and legal matters related to containers and their effects on food and drink."

4-2. Reflection of the Views of the Early Generations (Salaf)

One of the most prominent features of *al-Muṣannaf* is its extensive **129**

reflection of the legal opinions of the early generations, especially the Companions and Followers, Alongside the Prophetic traditions. By collecting the statements and legal verdicts of the earliest jurists, the author has presented a clear picture of the atmosphere of Ijtihād and legal disagreement in the early Islamic period. This makes the work an important treasury for the study of the formation and development of Islamic jurisprudence.

In this book, *Ibn Abī Shaybah*, adopting a descriptive approach with minimal personal intervention, transmits the traditions and statements and strives to gather them from various sources. This method, while preserving the authenticity of transmission, enables researchers to analyze and compare diverse viewpoints regarding various legal, ethical, and social issues. The following are some examples of these cases.

4-2-1. Report on the Non-Permissibility of Fasting While Traveling

In this narration, *Ibn ‘Abbās*, the Companion of the Prophet (PBUH), states, based on the Prophet’s conduct and teachings, that if a person fasts while traveling; their fast will not be accepted (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 281). This perspective not only refers to the legal principle of concession during travel but also highlights the religion’s ease and mercy for its followers in difficult circumstances.

4-2-2. Report on Initiating *Ihrām* by Garlanding the Sacrificial Animal

130 This narration from *‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar*, a Companion of the Prophet

(PBUH), refers to one of the signs of entering the state of *Ihrām* in the pilgrimage ritual (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 127). According to this report, if someone garlands and marks the sacrificial animal, this act is considered equivalent to entering the state of *Ihrām*. It further served as a declaration of the intention for sacrifice and a sign to others that the animal belonged to the pilgrimage rites and should not be used for any other purpose.

4-2-3. Report on Instructing the Dying (*Talqīn al-Muḥtaḍar*)

In this narration, 'Abdullāh ibn Ja'far, a Companion of the Prophet (PBUH), emphasizes the importance of prompting the dying person to utter the testimony of Divine unity in their final moments (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 26, 446). This indicates his firm belief in the effect of one's final words on their hereafter and shows that, in his view, if someone leaves this world proclaiming the unity of God, there is strong hope for their salvation and entry into Paradise.

This narration, besides its doctrinal significance, also has legal relevance, as prompting the dying person to recite "*Lā Ilāha illā Allāh*" is counted among the emphatically recommended acts in Islamic law and is rooted in the practice of the Companions. The inclusion of this report likewise demonstrates *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s attention to the statements of the Companions as part of the authoritative Islamic tradition and a source for deriving religious rulings and knowledge. From this perspective, the view of 'Abdullāh **131**

ibn Ja'far, in this narration, is one example of the approach of the early Muslims toward the etiquette of the dying and the importance of the testimony to God's oneness.

4-3. Attention to Transmitting Traditions with Chains of Narration (*Isnād*) via the Method of Auditory Transmission (*Samā'*)

One notable feature of *al-Muṣannaf's* methodology is *Ibn Abī Shaybah's* attention to transmitting traditions while citing their chains of narration. Emphasis on *Isnād* serves several important functions: first, it increases the credibility of the narration for hadith scholars and jurists, since it allows assessment of the narrators' reliability and the chain's continuity. Second, mentioning the *Isnād* enables contemporary researchers to trace the hadith's transmission path and, when needed, compare and verify it against other versions.

Thus, attention to *Isnād* is not only a methodological element of the book but also part of its scholarly identity, an identity built on trustworthiness in transmission, precision in documentation, and adherence to the scientific standards of the hadith tradition.

From another angle, the mode of transmission is an important factor in assessing the credibility of hadith collections. Examination of the *Isnāds* in *al-Muṣannaf* shows the frequent use of the abbreviation "*Nā*" a contraction of the verb *Ḥaddathanā* (he narrated to us), as well as expressions such as *Ḥaddathanā*, *Akhbaranī*, and *Akhbaranā*.

132 These indicate that the narration was transmitted through auditory

reception (*Samāʿ*), the only method of hadith transmission in the earliest Islamic period.

Moreover, a considerable number of the *Isnāds* in *al-Muṣannaf* are *Muʿanʿan* (using the term "*an*" without specifying how the narration was received), a common form of transmission (Suyūṭī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 138). The following are examples of this.

4-3-1. Report on the Effect of Menstruation on Continuity of the Expiatory Fast for Unintentional Killing

This narration reflects the legal opinion of *Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī* concerning the Expiation for unintentional manslaughter in the case of a mother whose child died while sleeping beneath her. His legal response demonstrates precision in applying the rulings of expiations, and the final part of the narration explains the ruling on the continuation of the expiatory fast in the event of menstruation (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 73).

The *Isnād* in this narration is transmitted fully and continuously. It begins with *Ḥaddathanā Abū Bakr*, which normally refers to *Ibn Abī Shaybah* himself; followed by *Jarrīr ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd*, then *Mughayrah ibn Miqṣam*, and then *Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī*; afterward, *Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī* and *Abū Qilābah* appear as the final links. This continuous and auditory chain demonstrates the author's diligence in recording complete *Isnāds*, thereby increasing the narration's credibility and enabling more precise biographical and legal analysis.

4-3-2. Report on the Exegesis of the Divorce Verse

In this narration, *Ibn Abī Shaybah* transmits an exegetical report from *ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd* explaining the verse on divorce. The narration is transmitted using the auditory formulas "*ḥaddathanā*" and "*nā*," and in content represents an example of legal exegetical reports from the Companions (*Ibn Abī Shaybah*, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 4, 55).

The *Isnād* is transmitted accurately and thoroughly, with narrators whose biographies can be examined. *Baqī ibn Makhḥad* transmits from *Abū Bakr ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Shaybah*, indicating the transmission of this report in a later generation. *Ibn Abī Shaybah* then narrates from his teachers, *ʿAbdullāh ibn Idrīs*, *Wakīʿ*, *Ḥafṣ*, and *Muʿāwiyah*, all of whom narrate from *al-Aʿmash*. The fact that multiple students transmit from a single shaykh indicates the report's fame and credibility. *Aʿmash*, in turn, narrates from *ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd*. This chain is well-structured and continuous from a biographical perspective, demonstrating care in precise transmission.

4-3-3. Report on the Prohibition of Punishing with Fire

In a narration from the work, *Ibn ʿAbbās* refers to an incident in which the Commander of the Faithful *ʿAlī (AS)* punished a group with fire. *Ibn ʿAbbās* disagreed with this action, saying: "If I had been in his place, I would not have burned them," because the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Do not punish with the punishment of God." He added: "But I

religion, kill him."(Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 6, 485)

This narration contains two important points:

- 1) The prohibition of punishment by fire is a form unique to divine punishment;
- 2) The ruling on the execution of the apostate, based on a Prophetic hadith cited by *Ibn 'Abbās*.

The *Isnād* begins with *Ḥaddathanā*, indicating transmission through auditory reception, one of the most reliable early methods. The subsequent use of *'an* links the narrators and shows that the hadith is *Mu'an'an*. The chain begins with *Ibn Abī Shaybah* and ends with *Ibn 'Abbās*.

Despite *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s apparent care in transmitting *Isnāds*, often beginning with formulas such as *Ḥaddathanā* or *Qāla*, examination of the book's chains of narration shows that in some cases this care is accompanied by omissions in the sequence of narrators. Some *Isnāds*, despite beginning with an auditory formula, fall into the categories of *Munqaṭi'* (interrupted) or *Mursal* (missing the Companion) due to the omission of intermediaries between the Follower and the Companion or among the middle transmitters.

For example, the hadith concerning hunting with a trained dog, addressing a legal issue in hunting, contains two distinct rulings (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 4, 232). Although the *Isnād* appears outwardly continuous, the intermediary between *Makhūl* and the end of the chain (the Prophet, PBUH) is missing. Biographical sources show that

Makḥūl, despite being regarded as trustworthy and a major jurist of the Levant (Ibn ‘Asākir, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 60, 215), was known to narrate extensively in a *Mursal* fashion and to transmit from the Prophet and Companions whom he did not meet (Dhahabī, 1985: 5, 155).

This very characteristic has led to the narrations transmitted from him, when not accompanied by a connected and explicit chain to a Companion, being subjected to scrutiny regarding their *Isnād* validity. Another example is a hadith on the virtue of visiting the sick, which, in terms of content, carries noteworthy ethical and spiritual themes (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 444). Examination of its *Isnād* reveals a clear weakness in its chain of transmission. In this *Isnād*, the initial transmitters, *Sharīk ibn ‘Abdullāh* and *‘Alqamah ibn Marthad*, are well-known figures in *Rijāl*, with extensive discussions among hadith critics concerning their reliability. However, in the middle of the chain appears the ambiguous expression "*Ba‘du āl Abī Mūsā al-Ash‘arī*," which severely compromises the reliability of the *Isnād* from the standpoint of authenticity assessment.

The term "*Ba‘du āl*" is a general and vague designation that provides no explicit information about the narrator’s identity, historical layer, or degree of reliability. The use of such expressions, especially in early hadith text, without supporting contextual evidence leads to *Jahālah* (unknown narrator), and thus to the weakness of the chain.

Consequently, the narration becomes, from a technical perspective, **136** part of the *Mursal* or *Mu‘dal* categories, since at least one or two

intermediaries in the chain are omitted or left unidentified. Therefore, although the narration conveys valuable ethical teachings and important exhortative themes, from the perspective of biographical criticism and hadith methodology, it falls short of the criteria for full authenticity. Reliance on it in matters of Ijtihād or legal reasoning requires corroboration through other reliable transmission routes.

Another fundamental critique of this work concerns its relative lack of attention to the reliability and biographical status of narrators in the transmission process. Despite the wide thematic variety of its narrations, the work lacks sufficient precision in distinguishing between trustworthy narrators and those of weaker or unknown status. In many cases, the author simply transmits a narration without any reference to the narrator's reliability, generation, or biographical standing. As a result, alongside reports transmitted by well-known and reliable narrators, the collection also contains narrations from weak, neglected, or criticized transmitters.

Although this approach aligns somewhat with early hadith-writing practices, since many early scholars focused primarily on collection and topical arrangement rather than *Isnād* criticism, such a lack of *Isnād* filtration in a work of this size and importance raises serious questions about its legal and evidentiary reliability. Thus, although *al-Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shaybah is valuable for its rich content and for reflecting early Islamic jurisprudence, its lack of systematic *Isnād* filtration and its silence regarding narrator status constitute major

methodological shortcomings, something that must not be overlooked in interpretive, biographical, and hadith-legal analyses.

For example, one may refer to a report concerning the recitation of specific phrases when leaving one's home. In this narration, attributed to *Ka'b al-Aḥbār*, a Follower of the Prophet's era, he states that if a person utters three sentences upon leaving the house, remembering God, relying upon Him, and acknowledging that there is no power or movement except through His assistance, the devils will be kept away from him (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 6, 26). This report falls under the category of *Maqṭū'* narrations, as it ends with a Follower and does not reach the Prophet (PBUH).

Ka'b al-Aḥbār is a controversial figure in the fields of biographical evaluation and hadith studies. Originally a Jew from Yemen, he embraced Islam during the caliphate of 'Umar and thereafter transmitted numerous reports from earlier scriptures. However, many Shi'i scholars and a number of Sunni scholars have questioned his hadith status and reliability, viewing him as a transmitter of *Isrā'īliyyāt* and even as one who introduced fabricated tales. *Imād al-Dīn Ibn Kathīr al-Dimashqī* writes: "When *Ka'b al-Aḥbār* embraced Islam during 'Umar's time, he would recite traditions from his ancient books for 'Umar. At times, 'Umar listened to him and allowed people to listen to what he possessed, both the true and the false. But this community is more aware and does not need even a single word from

Dhahabī states regarding him: "He attributed many of his own imaginative ideas to the Prophet and passed them on to the people." (Dhahabī, 1985: 3, 490)

Abū Rayyah says: "Through storytelling, he managed to insert fabricated tales into the narratives about the Qur'an." (Abū Rayyah, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 152)

The fact that *Bukhārī* did not include any narration from him in his hadith collection further reflects his diminished hadith status among Sunni scholars.

Another narrator worth mentioning in this context is *Ḥasan ibn Dhakwān* (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 511). Evaluations concerning him are marked by doubt and disagreement. *Ibn Maʿīn* and *Abū Ḥātim* explicitly labeled him "Weak," and *Abū Ḥātim* and *al-Nasāʾī* elsewhere describe him as "Not strong." Ultimately, *Yahyā ibn Maʿīn* referred to him as "*Munkar al-Hadith*," emphasizing his weakness (Ibn Ḥajar, 1899 AD/1320 AH: 2, 276).

4-4. Attention to Multiple Chains with Similar Content in Collecting Narrations

One notable feature of *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s method in *al-Muṣannaf* is his attention to transmitting narrations with diverse *Isnāds* and similar content. He does not confine himself to recording a single narration; rather, he makes an effort to gather narrations through various routes that share closely related or identical content.

This approach not only enhances the credibility of the narrations but also enables researchers to conduct comparative analysis of the *Isnāds* and contents. By forming a "Family" of narrations around a given topic, this method provides a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. Attention to the diversity of *Isnād* demonstrates the breadth of acceptance of a narration among different transmitters, while collecting narrations with similar content helps clarify and refine the meaning and application of the report. The following are examples of this method in *al-Muṣannaf*.

4-4-1. Report on Interpreting Qur'an 4:59

Ibn Abī Shaybah cites two narrations regarding verse 59 of Surah *al-Nisā'*, each with a different chain yet with nearly identical content. Both narrations attempt to clarify the meaning of "*Ulul Amr*" (those in authority). *Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh* identifies "Those in authority" as the people of knowledge and virtue, while *Mujāhid ibn Jabr* sometimes interprets it as the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) and at other times as those endowed with intellect and religious understanding (*Ibn Abī Shaybah*, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 6, 418). Both views emphasize the central role of knowledge and religious understanding in the leadership of the Muslim community. By transmitting these two exegetical reports through independent chains, *Ibn Abī Shaybah* demonstrates his concern for gathering diverse *Isnāds* and converging interpretations, an approach that enhances both the understanding and

4-4-2. Report on Wearing Silk Clothing

In these two narrations, the story of the Prophet (PBUH) gifting a silk garment to the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī (AS) is presented. In both reports, Imam 'Alī (AS) either wears the garment or asks about it, and the Prophet (PBUH) responds: "I do not approve of you, what I do not approve of myself. Use it as head-coverings for the women of your household."

This instruction reflects the Prophet's sensitivity regarding men's attire and his discouragement of garments associated with wealth or feminine adornment (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 5, 151). The difference between the two narrations lies in certain minor expressions and the type of *Isnād*. The first report merely refers to a silk *Hullah*, while the second includes additional details, such as whether it was "Warp" or "Weft" silk, and presents the conversation between 'Alī and the Prophet more directly.

Notably, *Ibn Abī Shaybah* transmits this story through two distinct chains yet with closely aligned content, demonstrating his concern for *Isnād* diversity and thematic consistency, an approach that strengthens the narration's credibility and provides a clearer picture of the event.

4-4-3. Report on Garlanding the Sacrificial Animal as a Sign of Entering

Ihrām

Another example can be found in volume three of the work. There, *Ibn Abī Shaybah* transmits two narrations with very similar content.

The first, from *Ibn 'Abbās*, states: "When a person garlands the

sacrificial animal and intends 'Umrah or Hajj, he has entered the state of *Ihrām*." (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 126)

The second narration, from *Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī*, conveys a similar meaning. Both narrations are transmitted through *Abū al-Aḥwas*, but the subsequent transmitters differ, one passing through *Layth* and the other through *Mughayrah*, with variations in the remainder of the *Isnād*.

This diversity of *Isnāds*, combined with thematic similarity, increases the credibility of the narration and enables researchers to analyze and compare the chains and their content. From a legal perspective, these narrations also serve as a basis for the ruling that garlanding a sacrificial animal signifies the beginning of *Ihrām*. Such a method of transmission not only demonstrates the narrator's precision and organization but also facilitates understanding of the narration and examination of its acceptance among various transmitters.

4-5. Reporting Traditions without Explanation or Commentary

The structure of this work is based on systematically presenting reports and transmitting the hadith texts directly. Thus, the author relies primarily on the transmitted material itself. Accordingly, the traditions are narrated without any accompanying explanation or clarification. *Ibn Abī Shaybah* limits himself to citing the text of each report without offering lexical clarification, legal analysis, resolution of potential contradictions, or discussion of the jurisprudential or hadith-based implications. Although this approach is in harmony with

the common method of early hadith compilations, from the perspective of hadith scholarship and Ijtihād, it reduces the text's immediate usefulness for legal reasoning and analytical study. Therefore, the absence of commentary beneath the reports may be considered a challenge in this work. The following examples illustrate this issue:

4-5-1. The Report on Stoning the Jewish Man and Woman

In this report, the Prophet (PBUH) orders the stoning of a Jewish man and woman accused of adultery. This action reflects the implementation of Islamic penal law in the society governed by the Prophet (PBUH). At the end of the report, it is mentioned that *Abū Ḥanīfa* referred to this narration and held the view that such individuals should not be stoned (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 277). *Ibn Abī Shaybah* neither discusses the reason behind the Prophet's ruling nor explains *Abū Ḥanīfa*'s opposing opinion; nor does he clarify the basis of this disagreement for the reader.

4-5-2. The Report on Praying in the Rest Areas of Camels

According to this hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) permitted prayer in the resting places of sheep and deemed ablution unnecessary after eating their meat. However, in the case of camels, he forbade praying in their resting areas and instructed that ablution be performed after consuming their meat (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 277).

Ibn Abī Shaybah merely transmits the report without offering any **143**

explanation regarding the reason for the differing rulings concerning camels and sheep, nor does he clarify what is meant by the statement that camels were "Created from devils."

4-5-3. The Report of Moses Seeking Rain

In one of the reports transmitted from *Mujāhid ibn Jabr*, a leading Successor, states that when Moses (AS) prayed to God for rain for his people and water descended, he turned to them in anger or sternness and said: "Eat, O donkeys!" God then addressed him: "Do not call my servants donkeys." (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 5, 277)

This report, in the Successors' reports category, makes a profound point about maintaining courtesy when addressing people. Even when the audience is disobedient, ungrateful, or sinful, insulting them is considered inappropriate. What is noteworthy is that the apparent needlessness of analysis or critique here becomes a weakness in *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s method. He transmits the report without offering any explanation or critique, even though the degrading expression attributed to Moses using the word "Donkeys" appears incompatible with prophetic character and the infallible status of God's messengers, especially a great prophet such as Moses, one of the *Ulūl 'Azm*. In both Shi'a and Sunni principles of theology and hadith, such attributions to prophets, if lacking definitive authority, are deemed unacceptable. Moreover, given that the Qur'an itself uses the term

144 *Himār* for Jews in a specific context (al-Jumu'ah: 5), it would have

been necessary for the author to explain the reconciliation between the verse and this report.

4-6. Citing Contradictory Traditions under a Single Heading

Another shortcoming of the work is the collection of contradictory reports under a single heading without analysis, preference, or any effort to reconcile them. In several cases, hadiths with conflicting or divergent implications appear side by side, and the author does not evaluate their content. Although this approach is useful for comprehensive collection, from an academic standpoint, it leaves the researcher with the difficult task of navigating the contradictions. Determining the authenticity or priority of a report requires careful biographical and textual analysis. The following examples demonstrate such instances of contradiction:

4-6-1. Contradictions Regarding Women Attending the Eid Prayer

In the section on the Eid prayer, two consecutive chapters address the issue of women attending the Eid prayer. In these chapters, multiple reports with seemingly contradictory implications are cited without the author attempting to analyze, prefer, or reconcile them. No distinction is made between young and elderly women, nor between conditions of safety and conditions of potential temptation. In the first chapter, several reports indicate not just permissibility but emphatic recommendation for women to attend the Eid prayer; it is reported that the Prophet (PBUH) took his wives and daughters out for the Eid

prayer and instructed other women to go as well. Even if a woman lacked a proper covering, she would borrow a cloak from her sister and join (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 3).

By contrast, in the following chapter, reports state that women's attendance at the Eid prayer is disliked or discouraged, and that certain individuals prevented their families from attending (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 4).

4-6-2. Contradictions Regarding Prayer between the *Tarawīḥ* Breaks

Another example occurs in the topic "Prayer and recitation between the two tarawīḥ pauses in Ramadan." (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 167) The reports he cites exhibit clear conflict.

- Report no. 7728, from *Shu'bah* through *Qatādah ibn Ḥusayn* and *Ḥasan* state that one of the two considered recitation during the interval is disliked, while the other did not, indicating disagreement.

- Report no. 7729, from *Ibn al-Aswad*, states that he himself prayed with the people up to forty *Rak'ahs* and performed twelve extra units between the two breaks. This report indicates not only permissibility but the practice of voluntary prayer in that interval.

- Report no. 7730 states that *ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit* prohibited such prayer between the two breaks and even struck those who performed it, showing strong opposition.
- Report no. 7731 states that *Saʿīd ibn Jubayr* disliked uttering "*al-Ṣalāh*" between the two breaks, indicating

146 a general attitude of restraint in that period. Such contradictions are

presented without analysis, indication of the reports' strength or weakness, or any reconciliation. The researcher is therefore compelled to conduct an independent biographical and legal study that demonstrates *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s purely compilatory approach and the absence of an analytic method in organizing these chapters.

4-6-3. Contradictions Regarding the Time of Qur'anic Revelation

In this collection, significant differences emerge regarding the timing of the Qur'an's revelation and that of other scriptures. Some reports, such as those from *Ibn 'Abbās*, emphasize a single, comprehensive descent of the Qur'an from the highest heaven to the lowest heaven during Ramadan, after which its gradual revelation to the Prophet began (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 6, 144). This view posits an initial complete heavenly transmission followed by gradual earthly revelation. In contrast, other reports mention that the Qur'an was revealed over a specific number of nights in Ramadan, commonly listed as twenty-four consecutive nights (ibid.). These reports describe a sequential, phased revelation in segments during the nights of Ramadan. In these same narrations, the revelations of other scriptures, such as the Torah, Psalms, and Gospel, are described with varying durations, indicating diverse perspectives and the absence of a unified view regarding the timing of the descent of the sacred texts.

These contradictions in the transmitted reports reflect the diversity of narrations and the differing understandings of the transmitters and **147**

hadith scholars regarding the manner and timing of the descent of revelation. *Ibn Abī Shaybah*, without providing explanation, synthesis, or analysis, places these accounts side by side. Although this approach offers noteworthy comprehensiveness, it may leave the reader uncertain about the subject's precise understanding and the selection of the most reliable report.

4-7. Attention to Historical Reports in the Selection of Traditions

One of the strengths of *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s methodology in this book appears to be its close alignment with the historical accounts and events of early Islam. The author carefully gathers narratives of major historical events, especially the decisive battles of that era. This harmony not only enhances the scholarly value of the work but also enables the reader to better understand the virtues and prominent role of the Prophet's Companions, particularly the Commander of the Faithful ('Alī (AS)), within the real context of history. This meticulous research approach makes the book a reliable and valuable reference in historical and narrative studies. It also shows that the author effectively used sound historical sources to present a clear and well-supported portrayal of the personality and actions of the Commander of the Faithful. Several examples of such reports follow.

4-7-1. The Report of the Debate between the Prophet (PBUH) and *Abū Jahl*

This narration describes one of the significant moments of confrontation
148 between the Prophet (PBUH) and *Abū Jahl*, one of his greatest

enemies. With arrogance and pride, *Abū Jahl* told the Prophet to desist from his mission, but the Prophet calmly and firmly forbade him. *Abū Jahl*, who believed himself superior to everyone, claimed that no one greater than him existed who could call him out or challenge him. But the divine response came through Gabriel, the angel of revelation, a response that demonstrated a boundless power surpassing all human arrogance. Gabriel declared that if the call, to which *Abū Jahl* referred, namely, divine punishment and God's command, were to be given, the angels of punishment would descend upon him with such severity that no escape would remain (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 331).

This report not only illustrates the courage and steadfastness of the Prophet in the face of his enemies but also attests to the divine power that supports him and threatens his obstinate foes with chastisement.

4-7-2. The Report of the Commander of the Faithful (AS) Accepting Islam as the First Believer

This narration highlights the lofty status of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (AS) in the earliest days of the Prophet's mission. According to the report of *Zayd ibn Arqam*, 'Alī (AS) was the first person to believe in the Prophet (PBUH) and accept Islam (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 338). At a time when Islam was newly emerging and faced with a difficult and dangerous path, 'Alī (AS), as the Prophet's first supporter, embraced the truth with firm faith and a confident heart. This early acceptance was not only a sign of his courage and sincerity, **149**

but it also became a model for those who would later enter Islam. The narration underscores the exceptional status and irreplaceable role of ‘Alī (AS) in the history of Islam.

4-7-3. The Report of ‘Alī (AS) as the Banner-Bearer of Victory in the Battle of *Khaybar*

This narration reflects the prominent role and special status of ‘*Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib* (AS) in the battles and military leadership of early Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) in this report promises to give the battle standard to a person who loves God and His Messenger, and through whom God will grant victory (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1998 AD/1409 AH: 7, 394). When ‘Alī (AS) undertakes this great responsibility, the Prophet instructs him to stand firm on the battlefield and not look back. This command signifies the importance of trusting in divine assistance and remaining steadfast on the path of truth.

5. The Status of *Ibn Abī Shaybah’s Muṣannaf* in the Hadith Collections of Both Islamic Traditions

5-1. A Major Source for Comparative Fiqh

Due to its extensive compilation of legal opinions and narrations from Companions, Successors, and early jurists, the *Muṣannaf* of *Ibn Abī Shaybah* is considered a highly important source for comparative Fiqh. Using this work, researchers can examine the historical development of Islamic rulings within the framework of diverse legal

schools and viewpoints, analyzing points of difference and agreement. Thus, the *Muṣannaf* is not merely a hadith collection but also a rich resource for understanding jurisprudential parallels and distinctions and for advancing comparative studies in Fiqh.

For example, one may refer to a narration regarding the wording of the Adhān. One point of disagreement between Shia and Sunni traditions concerns the formula and phrases of the *Adhān*. In the *Muṣannaf*, Ibn Abī Shaybah transmits that the adhān was recited as: "*Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar, ash-hadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh...*" and concludes with: "*Lā ilāha illā Allāh, wa-Allāhu akbar*" (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 185). In contrast, in authoritative Shia hadith works, 'Abdullāh ibn Sinān transmits from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) the form of the *Adhān* according to the Prophet's practice, which does not include the closing phrase "*Wa Allāhu Akbar*." (Tūsī, 1945 AD/1365 AH: 2, 59) This apparent difference reflects the distinct foundations for transmitting the Sunnah: "In Imāmī jurisprudence, only narrations that reach the Prophet through the infallible Imams are considered authoritative, whereas in Sunni jurisprudence, the statements of Companions and Successors are also considered valid proofs. Thus, additions or omissions, such as "*Wa Allāhu Akbar*" at the end of the *Adhān*, lack legal authority in Shia Fiqh and are considered innovations, whereas in Sunni practice they may be accepted based on the *Ijtihād* of transmitters and the practice of early scholars."

Another example concerns the recommended ritual bath (*Ghusl*) on special days such as *Eid al-Fiṭr* and *Eid al-Aḍḥā*. A narration in the *Muṣannaf* from Imam ‘Alī (AS) indicates that this practice was regarded as Sunnah among the Successors and Companions (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 500). In Shia jurisprudence as well, these ghusl practices are considered strongly recommended (Ṣadūq, 1943 AD/1363 AH: 1, 507).

5-2. Historical Antiquity and the Value of Its Chains of Transmission

One of the most important features of the *Muṣannaf* that defines its place among hadith collections is its historical antiquity. Written in the first half of the third century AH, it ranks among the earliest compiled Sunni hadith works. Its composition places it close to the era of the Successors and the Successors of the Successors, and many of its transmitters belong to the earliest strata of hadith transmission. Moreover, many of its *Isnāds* include eminent and trustworthy transmitters from that period, lending the work significant credibility from both a biographical and historical perspective. This enhances not only its substantive reliability but also its value as a resource for *Rijāl* studies, historical analysis, and the examination of early hadith movements. Therefore, the antiquity of the work and the relative trustworthiness of its chains of transmission constitute among the

hadith compilations.

For example, consider a narration concerning a sick person's view of illness as a divine test and purification for the believer. This narration is not only ethically instructive but also, from a historical and *Rijāl* perspective, an excellent example demonstrating the antiquity of its chains and the *Muṣannaf's* reliance on early transmitters. The Prophet (PBUH) visited a sick person while *Abū Hurayrah*, who was suffering from fever, accompanied him. The Prophet turned to him and said: "Rejoice! God says: "This fever or illness is my fire with which I afflict my believing servant in this world so that it will be his share of the Fire in the Hereafter." (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 440)

A notable feature of this narration is the antiquity of its *Isnād*. *Ibn Abī Shaybah* transmits it through a chain composed entirely of early transmitters, only a short step removed from the Prophetic era. The presence of transmitters such as *Ismā'īl ibn 'Ubaydallāh* and *Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Ash'arī*, Successors and Successors of the Successors, clearly demonstrate that this hadith was conveyed through the earliest circles of transmission. This structure not only strengthens the report's reliability from a *Rijāl* perspective but also shows that the *Muṣannaf* preserves material that offers the closest possible historical access to the Prophet's time.

Another example is a narration concerning marriage without witnesses. *Ibn 'Abbās* reports that women who surrender themselves to a

man for marriage or sexual relations without observing the required legal conditions, including the presence of witnesses, are described as "*Baghāyā*"—meaning immoral or adulterous women (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 3, 458). The chain of this narration is a striking example of a connected, early *Isnād* that goes back to the first generations of transmission. The presence of transmitters such as *Jābir ibn Zayd* and *Qatādah* link the report historically to the leading Successors and direct students of the Companions. Its connection to *Ibn ‘Abbās* further places the content within the corpus of authoritative statements of the Companions. Thus, the narration not only presents a substantive legal opinion from a major Companion but also exemplifies *Ibn Abī Shaybah*’s reliance on early and authoritative sources.

5-3. The Position of *al-Muṣannaf* in Sunni Hadith Collections

Al-Muṣannaf is regarded as one of the earliest compiled hadith works in the Islamic world, composed at the beginning of the 3rd century AH. Alongside works such as *al-Muṣannaf* of *‘Abd al-Razzāq*, it is considered one of the most important early examples of organizing hadiths into jurisprudential chapters. In this work, *Ibn Abī Shaybah* not only collected a wide range of Prophetic traditions but also transmitted numerous reports from the Companions and Successors. This feature elevates *al-Muṣannaf* beyond a mere hadith book, making it a historical source for tracing the development of Islamic

The method of thematic classification primarily based on legal subjects served as one of the earliest models for organizing hadith materials. This approach was later expanded upon in the compilation of *Sunan* and other Sunni hadith collections. The influence of this work on the Sunni hadith heritage is evident from the frequency with which prominent hadith scholars referenced and transmitted its reports. For example, hadith no. 3 (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 11) is cited in the works of major scholars such as *al-Bukhārī* (al-Bukhārī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 1, 90 and 120), *Ibn Mājah* (Ibn Mājah, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 1, 267), *Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī* (Sijistānī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 1, 7), and *al-Nasā'ī* (al-Nasā'ī, n.d.: 20). Likewise, hadith no. 2096 (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 182) appears in sources such as Ṭabarī (Ṭabarī, 2001 AD/1422 AH: 8, 641), *Dārquṭnī* (Dārquṭnī, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 1, 227), and *Bayhaqī* (Bayhaqī, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 1, 404). Another example is hadith no. 36882 (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 394), which is found in the works of *Ibn Ḥibbān* (Ibn Ḥibbān, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 1, 273) and *Tirmidhī* (Tirmidhī, 1988 AD/1419 AH: 4, 428). Many other examples appear across diverse topics and are reflected in later sources.

This demonstrates that *al-Muṣannaf* was not only a reference in the time of *Ibn Abī Shaybah* but continued to serve as a key source for hadith scholars and jurists in subsequent centuries. Another important feature of *al-Muṣannaf* is that the author does not restrict himself to transmitting only sound (*Ṣaḥīḥ*) narrations. This has made the work a **155**

broad, raw source for *Rijāl* analysis, jurisprudential research, and textual criticism. Unlike some later hadith collections that apply strict authenticity criteria, *Ibn Abī Shaybah* faithfully recorded traditions without filtering, thus providing researchers with an extensive body of hadith–legal data.

Therefore, *al-Muṣannaf* of *Ibn Abī Shaybah* may be considered not only one of the earliest successful attempts at systematic hadith compilation but also a foundational source in Sunni hadith literature, playing a key role in shaping and expanding the discipline of *Fiqh al-Hadith* in Sunni scholarship.

5-4. Reception of *al-Muṣannaf* in Shia Hadith Collections

This work is among the most prominent Sunni hadith collections of the 3rd century AH, distinguished by its comprehensiveness, thematic organization, and record of early Islamic legal, historical, and theological opinions. Although composed within the Sunni hadith tradition, it has also attracted the attention of Shia scholars, who have cited it in their own works. Since many narrations found in the sources of both traditions are attributed to the Prophet, often without rigorous examination of their chains or content, similarities between the two bodies of literature are unsurprising.

Given that hadith collections may be absolute or relative in scope, examples of narrations from *al-Muṣannaf* appear within some relative or topic-based Shia collections. Below are a few examples (cf.

- 1) *Shaykh al-Mufīd*, in *al-Kāfiya fī Radd Tawbat al-Khāṭi'a*, cites a narration from *al-Muṣannaf* showing that *Talḥa* and *Zubayr* outwardly asked Imam 'Alī (AS) for permission to perform 'Umrah, while the Imam understood that their true intent was to head toward Basra, an indication of the insincerity of their motives (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 546; Mufīd, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 14).
- 2) In the same work, *al-Mufīd* cites a well-known hadith predicting that a woman riding a particular camel would depart from Madina that the dogs of Haw'ab would bark at her and that many would be killed around her. This narration is taken as an indication of 'Ā'isha's role in the Battle of Jamal (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 548; Mufīd, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 37).
- 3) In *al-Jamal Wa al-Nuṣra li Sayyid al-'Itra*, *al-Mufīd* records a historical report describing the inconsistency in the behavior of *Talḥa* and *Zubayr*: "They initially urged people to pledge allegiance to Imam 'Alī (AS), but after the killing of 'Uthmān, they opposed him under the pretext of seeking retribution." (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 548; Mufīd, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 143)
- 4) *Shaykh Ṭūsī*, in *al-Ghayba*, cites a report from *Ibn Abī Shaybah* describing the *Dajjāl* as a real being who existed during the Prophet's lifetime and will remain alive until the end of time. He further explores whether the *Dajjāl* may be identified with a creature known as *al-Jassāsa* (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 489; Ṭūsī, 1990 AD/1411 AH: 232).

- 5) Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs, in *al-Tashrīf bil minan fī al-Taʿrīf bil Fitan*, transmits a narration from the Prophet indicating that the *Dajjāl* will emerge from the regions of *Khurasan*, also found in *al-Muṣannaf* (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 494; Ibn Ṭāwūs, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 182).
- 6) Daylamī, in *Ghurar al-Akḥbār wa Durar al-Āthār*, cites a hadith praising teachers of virtue, stating that all beings in the heavens and earth, even the fish in the sea, pray for their forgiveness. A similar narration appears in *al-Muṣannaf* (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 6, 139; Daylamī, 1987 AD/1408 AH: 42).
- 7) Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, in *Ithbāt al-Hudāt bil Nuṣūṣ wal Muʿjizāt*, refers to the well-known report of *Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī* regarding the Battle of *Khaybar*, in which Imam ʿAlī (AS) lifted the gate of the fortress on his shoulder, enabling the Muslims to climb over it; after the battle, forty men could not move the gate (Ibn Abī Shaybah, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 7, 429; Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 3, 549).

These examples clearly demonstrate that despite belonging to the Sunni tradition, *al-Muṣannaf* of *Ibn Abī Shaybah* enjoys recognized historical and narrative value among Shia scholars and theologians, who have used it critically and analytically.

Conclusion

158 *Al-Muṣannaf* of *Ibn Abī Shaybah*, as one of the oldest and most

extensive Islamic hadith works, holds a distinguished place in Sunni hadith scholarship. In both methodology and content, it is a remarkable contribution. This study shows that *Ibn Abī Shaybah*'s method is fundamentally accumulative and transmission-based: he focuses on gathering hadiths and the sayings of the early generations from various teachers, avoiding jurisprudential analysis, *Rijāl* evaluation, or content assessment. He typically transmits narrations with clear audition formulas and connected chains, giving special attention to diverse transmission routes and the preservation of the opinions of Companions and Successors. However, he does not distinguish between strong and weak narrators, and many reports are presented without commentary or indicators of their reliability. This makes direct juristic use of the work challenging and requires supplementary analytical study.

Nevertheless, one of the most significant strengths of this work is its preservation of diverse early Islamic legal views. By collecting differing opinions of the Companions and Successors, it provides a valuable foundation for researching the history of juristic reasoning and comparative Fiqh. Its systematic chapter arrangement, thematic variety, and parallels with later Fiqh structures show its deep influence on the development of Sunni legal organization.

Alongside Prophetic hadiths, *Ibn Abī Shaybah* includes numerous reports on legal disagreements, political and social events of the early Islamic period, and how the early community understood religious

rulings, further enhancing the historical value of the work. On the other hand, the presence of unknown narrators, unresolved contradictory reports, and a lack of explicit acceptance or rejection of narrations are among its methodological shortcomings.

This study also demonstrates that the influence of *al-Muṣannaf* extends beyond Sunni sources; it is traceable in Shia works as well. Scholars such as *Shaykh Muḥīd*, *Shaykh Ṭūsī*, and *Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs* have cited its narrations directly or indirectly. This illustrates the work's scholarly authority beyond sectarian boundaries and its potential role in academic dialogue between the two traditions.

Since *al-Muṣannaf* represents one of the earliest attempts to organize legal hadith material, a comparative study with other early hadith works, such as the *Musnad* of *Aḥmad*, the *Muwattaʿ* of *Mālik*, or the *Muṣannaf* of *ʿAbd al-Razzāq*, may open new pathways for understanding the development of hadith and legal reasoning in the Islamic world.

In sum, despite its limitations in chain and content evaluation, *al-Muṣannaf* is an unparalleled source for historical, biographical, legal, and comparative hadith studies due to its breadth of narrations, historical depth, systematic structure, and record of diverse juristic views. Effective use of this work requires analytical, Rijāl-based, and textual-critical approaches, yet it offers exceptional potential for reconstructing the intellectual and legal environment of the early centuries and serves as a foundation for interdisciplinary research

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