

## The Disputes among Orientalists in Determining the Emergence of the Concept ‘Sunnah of the Prophet’ in Early Islam

Muhammad Shahzad Azad<sup>1</sup> & Dr. Ghulam Husain Babar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Islamabad College for Boys, G-6/3, Islamabad.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Prof. Islamic Studies, PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi.

### Abstract

C. Snouck Hurgrunje, Goldziher and many other orientalists challenged the authority of the Sunnah of the Prophet as second source of Islamic law. But Daniel W. Brown, Juynboll and Schacht raised doubts concerning the very existence of the term ‘sunnah of the Prophet’ in early Islam. The representatives of this group, who challenged the early existence of this term, differed on a large scale and asserted the findings from history contrast to one another’s. Daniel W. Brown fixed the emergence of this term ‘sunnah of the Prophet’ in or after the time of Shafi’i, Juynboll in the year 80 after hijrah or somewhat later. Schacht differed from them and mentioned the year 76 after hijrah as the time when the first certain evidence for the use of the term ‘sunnah of the Prophet’ emerged. He referred to the notes of Margoliouth and the statement of Goldziher that went against the deductions of Schacht and Margoliouth. Margoliouth’s notes actually proved the presence of Prophet’s Sunnah in 35 A. H. Goldziher’s view pointed it out in the earliest time of Islam i. e., in the life of the holy Prophet. M. M. Bravmann disproved the notions of this first group and placed a good number of irrefutable evidences from the holy Qur’an, aḥadith of the Prophet and athar of the companions. He also rebutes Schacht’s claim of the difference between the words sirah and Sunnah. To prove these terms equal and identical with each other, he indicates to various testimonies like the historical evidences of their constant use as undistinguishable from each other, Arabic language and the translations of Lane and Alfred Guillaume of the word sīrah as practice which is the translation of Sunnah too. Orientalists like Mourice Bucaille, Phillip K. Hitti also disagree with Schacht and his group and openly confess that the decisions, practices and examples set by Muhammad were followed by his companions in his very life. Such disputes among orientalists on the existence of the term Sunnah of the Prophet in early Islam unveil the hollowness of their investigations of Islamic literature, culture and languages rather than the invalidity of the concept Sunnah of the Prophet in early Islam.

**Keywords:** Disputes; orientalists; existence of sunnah of the Prophet; early Islam; historical evidences; Qur’an, aḥadith, athar, Arabic language.