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A Critical Study of Disparities in Charity Hadith: An Isnād-cum-Matn Analysis of Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

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Abstract

Objective: This study investigates the wording disparity between the charity (ṣadaqah) hadiths narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, focusing on the expressions “the left hand does not know what the right hand has given” and “the right hand does not know what the left hand has given.” It aims to determine whether this textual variation affects the authenticity, transmission history, and semantic interpretation of the hadith. **Theoretical framework:** The research is grounded in the Isnād Cum Matn (ICM) approach, which integrates transmission-chain criticism with textual analysis to reconstruct the historical development of hadith narrations and identify patterns of textual variation. **Literature review:** Previous studies have predominantly examined hadith authenticity through either isnād criticism or matn analysis independently. Limited scholarship has systematically combined both approaches to explain wording disparities within canonical collections, leaving the historical origins and significance of such variations insufficiently explored. **Method:** This qualitative study employs the Isnād Cum Matn method by tracing transmission routes across pre-canonical, canonical, and post-canonical hadith collections. Comparative analysis of isnād networks and matn variants is conducted to identify the Real Common Link (RCL), evaluate transmission consistency, and examine semantic implications. **Results:** The analysis identifies Malik bin Anas (179H) as the Real Common Link within the transmission network. The dominant wording, “the left hand does not know what the right hand has given,” appears in multiple authoritative transmission routes, whereas the alternative wording preserved in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim is supported by comparatively fewer narrators. The disparity therefore reflects a limited textual variation associated with specific transmission pathways rather than a contradiction or deficiency in authenticity. Both narrations remain acceptable within the broader hadith tradition. **Implications:** The findings reinforce the importance of integrating isnād and matn analysis to produce a more historical, contextual, and systematic understanding of hadith transmission and textual diversity. **Novelty:** This study demonstrates how the Isnād Cum Matn approach effectively explains wording disparities within the two most authoritative Sunni hadith collections by identifying their historical transmission patterns without undermining their authenticity.

Keywords: charity hadith, isnād cum matn, ṣaḥīḥ al-bukhārī, ṣaḥīḥ muslim, hadith textual disparity.

INTRODUCTION

The Qur’an is the primary source of Islamic teachings, while hadith functions as an essential explanatory and normative source within Islamic scholarship [1]. Since the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad were transmitted through various chains of narration, textual variations in the matan may occur across different hadith collections [2], [3]. One important issue in hadith studies is the existence of narrations that convey a similar

theme but differ in wording [4]. In the case of the charity hadith, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī records the wording “the left hand does not know what the right hand has given,” whereas Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim presents a different wording, namely “the right hand does not know what the left hand has given” [4], [5]. This textual disparity raises important questions regarding the process of transmission, possible textual variation, and the semantic, hermeneutical, and legal implications of the hadith within Islamic thought [5].

In classical Islamic scholarship (muhaddisīn), such textual disparities are often addressed through the science of ‘ilm al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl, a methodology for evaluating the credibility of narrators through external (isnād) and internal (matan) criticism [6]. Traditionally, muhaddisīn used methods like tarjih (choosing the stronger hadith) or jam’ (reconciliation) to harmonize conflicting versions of hadith. However, with the development of modern hadith studies, Western scholars such as Joseph Schacht and G. H. A. Juynboll began to approach hadith as a historical phenomenon formed in the post-prophetic period, thereby challenging the notion of hadith as a purely normative source [7], [8].

In response to these critiques, Harald Motzki developed the common link theory and introduced the Isnād Cum Matn approach. This approach focuses on building the common link in the isnād as the main point in the centre of the multiple chains, while also considering the analysis of the matan, see [4], [5]. This approach also shows the relevance of considering both components of the chain of transmission and the text as it unveils some changes in the wordings of the hadith which would otherwise be missed when framed within the classical approach [9]. This method has successfully pinpointed the criteria ‘convergence’ in the transmission, which alone would not lead to the analysis of text’s reliability, and therefore, has successfully contributed to the analysis of the historical viability of hadiths [10].

In analysing these Charity Hadiths, the differences are valuable for the application of Isnād Cum Matn [9]. One of the differences involves the interpretation of the particular forms of symbolism incorporated in the versions. In the Arab Islamic tradition, the right hand is allocated virtue, goodness, purity, and honour. However, the left hand is associated with negative, undesirable attributes [11]. In these texts, the impact of selecting the right or left hand is more than a mere preference of differing description. It signifies the strong cultural attributes surrounding the Islamic text interpretation.

This research studies the difference of the hadiths of charity in Shaykh Al-Bukhari and Shaykh Al-Muslim using Isnād Cum Matn [4], [9]. In this way, the study will not only consider the difference in the texts but also the difference in the isnād and the significance of the muqaddim in the transmission of these hadiths [4]. It is the aim of this study to better appreciate the many scholarly explanations and speculations surrounding the works, particularly the text criticism of these historical and social documents.

This study is significant in modern hadith research, particularly with the growing attempts to evaluate, with some scrutiny, the authority of hadith texts. As evident in the works of both muhaddisīn and orientalist scholars, the study of textual plurality is, in terms of narration, far from being merely an academic pursuit; it also has ramifications pertaining to tafsir and Islamic jurisprudence [12]. Therefore, the study of these alterations in texts and how these alterations affect legal reasoning in both classical and contemporary legal thought is of grave importance. A study of this nature adds to the existing literature and attempts in consultancy to offer historical and relational models in hadith research, thus promising to advance hadith scholarship and, in turn, offer a fresh perspective in fiqh [13].

Therefore, this study contributes to the development and application of the Isnād Cum Matn approach in modern hadith studies. By examining both the transmission chains and textual variants of the charity hadith, this study offers a more systematic explanation

of how wording differences emerge and how such differences may influence the interpretation of hadith within Islamic legal and ethical discourse.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on hadith textual variation has developed through several complementary approaches that examine the relationship between transmission chains, wording differences, and historical context. Classical hadith scholarship generally concentrated on the reliability of narrators and the continuity of transmission, while modern studies increasingly investigate the interaction between *isnād* and *matn* in order to understand how narrations evolved across different collections. Within this broader discussion, charity (*ṣadaqah*) hadiths have attracted attention because they are widely transmitted and frequently used in ethical, educational, and legal discourse. Existing studies commonly compare narrations found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* to identify similarities and differences in wording. These studies often conclude that variations in expression do not automatically indicate weakness, since many hadiths were transmitted through multiple routes and occasionally narrated according to meaning. However, most analyses remain descriptive and focus either on the authenticity of the chain or on linguistic differences in the text. As a result, the historical mechanism that produced particular wording variants is not always explained in a systematic manner [12].

Recent developments in hadith methodology have emphasized the importance of combining *isnād* criticism with *matn* analysis. The *Isnād Cum Matn* (ICM) approach seeks to reconstruct transmission networks while simultaneously examining textual variants across pre-canonical, canonical, and post-canonical sources. Through this integration, scholars can identify dominant and minority readings, trace the spread of specific expressions, and evaluate whether a variation reflects an isolated transmission route or a broader narrative tradition. Such an approach is particularly relevant for charity hadiths that contain subtle but meaningful wording differences between major collections. Despite these methodological advances, studies focusing specifically on the disparity between the charity hadiths in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* remain limited. A focused examination of their transmission routes and textual variants is therefore necessary to clarify the historical origin, semantic significance, and scholarly implications of this wording difference within the Sunni hadith tradition [12].

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach in combination with the *Isnād Cum Matn* (ICM) theory to try and understand the difference in wording in and between two hadiths regarding charity in *Shahih Bukhari* and *Shahih Muslim*. The ICM approach combines the analyses of both the *isnād* (chain of narration) and *matan* (text of the hadith) to understand the differences in the wording. Simply combining the analyses of the *isnād* and *matan* does not go as far back in tracing the origin of the differences in the text of the hadith. This explains why ICM, as a combination approach, is superior to what some may consider the normalised single methodological approach.

The primary sources of this study are the charity hadiths recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. The secondary sources consist of hadith collections containing related variants (*tanawwu'*), such as *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, *Musnad Ahmad*, *al-Muwatta'*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah*, and *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān*.

The practical steps in applying Motzki's theory systematically have been outlined by Abdul Mufid in his work on the methodology of hadith criticism. He proposed five main stages in the implementation of the *Isnād Cum Matn* method: First, collect all variants of the hadith text and their corresponding chains of narration from various primary sources. Second, construct a network of narrations (*sanad* bundle) to identify the common link and partial common link. Third, validate the *matan* to ensure that the

common link is indeed the primary transmitter of the information. Fourth, compare the chains of transmission and the *matan* to uncover the correlations in the transmission process. Fifth, if a strong correlation is found, the original form of the *matan* transmitted by the common link can be concluded, identifying which narrators may have introduced interpolation in subsequent stages of transmission. Since this study attempts to keep track of the transmission process, the particular methodology being used also intends to analyse the differences in the hadiths to determine the varying different versions of the hadith on giving charity [14].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In hadith studies, the *isnād* and *matan* should be analyzed together because both are interrelated in the transmission process. The *isnād* identifies the chain of transmitters, while the *matan* provides evidence of textual variation across different transmission routes. This interrelationship is essential for assessing the authenticity, development, and diversity of a hadith text [15]. Within this framework, the *Isnād Cum Matn* (ICM) approach provides a comprehensive method for examining the relationship between transmission chains and textual variants [16].

The ICM approach enables scholars to compare different transmission chains and examine how variations in the wording of the *matan* correspond to developments in the *isnād* [17]. In this framework, the *isnād* identifies the transmitters of the narration, while the *matan* reveals how textual variants developed across different transmission routes [18]. Together this allows scholars to discover whether changes to wording were caused by changes to the methodology of narration, or whether there were changes to the continuum of the hadith itself.

This aids not just in examining the variations among the hadith but also in considering the variations with the theological and legal implications surrounding the hadith. This is why the *Isnād cum Matn* is also the most important aspect of *Ashāb al-Hadith* studies. This is especially true when looking at the shifts and variations in the hadiths in their *aurāq* across different social, cultural and historical situations. The focus of this study is on the 'ICM' approach to investigate the disparity in the wording of the hadiths on charity in al-Bukhari and al-Muslim, and how this disparity might incite *tafsir* and the application of Islamic legal rules, mainly in the area of *fiqh*, which concerns charity, *zakah*, and other *zakah*, i.e., the Islamic law of charity, and *zakat* [19].

This approach enables us to examine the interrelation of the changes in social values within Muslim communities and the social consciousness surrounding charity and the social awareness of the people of the Islamic faith, particularly in modern social charity practices [15].

Exploration of the Charity Hadiths in Secret

To apply the *Isnād Cum Matn* approach, this study first focuses on the *isnād* component by collecting all transmission chains of the charity hadith from major hadith collections and compiling them into a comprehensive *isnād* bundle. This stage involves gathering all chains of transmission for the charity-related hadith. The major hadith collections are then examined together with their respective chains and compiled into a comprehensive *isnād* bundle. It is important to note that, as Motzki highlights, one of the strengths of the ICM approach lies in its neutrality toward the classification or categorization of hadith collections [5]. All hadith collections, regardless of their periodization, whether pre-canonical, canonical, or post-canonical, as well as their sectarian affiliation, such as Sunni or Shia, are treated equally in ICM research. Therefore, in applying this method, the researcher is required to collect as many transmission chains as possible without limiting the scope to canonical collections or

distinguishing between narrators from the same or different groups. The broader the range of sources consulted, the more comprehensive the isnād analysis becomes.

In this study, an intensive search was carried out across various hadith collections, including pre-canonical, canonical, and post-canonical texts. The search was conducted using tools like Jāmi' al-‘Aḥādīth, Hadits Soft software, Encyclopedia of Hadith, and Jawami' al-Kalim version 4.5. This software was selected for several reasons: First, it is easily accessible online for free. Second, it is very user-friendly, allowing users to search for hadiths by entering keywords. Third, after identifying a hadith number, the researcher can directly verify it in the original texts for further confirmation. Fourth, the software also helps detect variations in narrator names, which is helpful when encountering a narrator named "Abdullah," for example, by identifying which Abdullah is being referred to.

The charity hadiths about secrecy are well-documented in several hadith collections. In pre-canonical collections, one hadith with two transmission chains is found in Muwattho' by Imam Malik, and another is recorded in Musnad Ahmad by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal. In canonical collections, there are three hadiths in Shahih Bukhari, one hadith with four different transmission chains in Shahih Muslim, and additional hadiths in Sunan at-Tirmidhi and Sunan an-Nasa'i. Post-canonical collections also contain hadiths in Shahih Ibn Khuzaimah and Shahih Ibn Hibban.

Dating the Hadith

Following the analysis of the transmission chains of the charity hadith, the next step is dating the hadith. In determining the dating of the hadith using the Isnād Cum Matn theory, the concept of the common link and its derivatives, as proposed by Juynboll, must be applied. This involves identifying the first narrator who transmitted the hadith to at least three of their students [8]. Using the common link theory, it was found that the variation in wording can be attributed to differences in the transmission chains involving different narrators. When historical context is considered, the dating of the hadith is essential to see how different the variations of the text were.

In the study of hadith criticism, the common link (CL) is defined as one of the narrators that receives a hadith from a teacher and disseminates it to several students (three or more) [20]. This individual is of utmost importance to the study of the transmission network, as their inclusion could be a sign of a point of convergence in the isnād that is likely to be a point of divergence in later narrations. Determining the CL first, then the partial common link (PCL), or the students of the CL who received the hadith and retained it, then transmitted it to other students, the next step is to assemble an isnād bundle, which is a representation of the continuity of the transmission chains in a given collection of hadiths. This would enable the scholar to retrace the entire transmission and point out possibilities of divergence in the text. The isnād bundle of the charity hadith about secrecy is presented in Diagram 1.

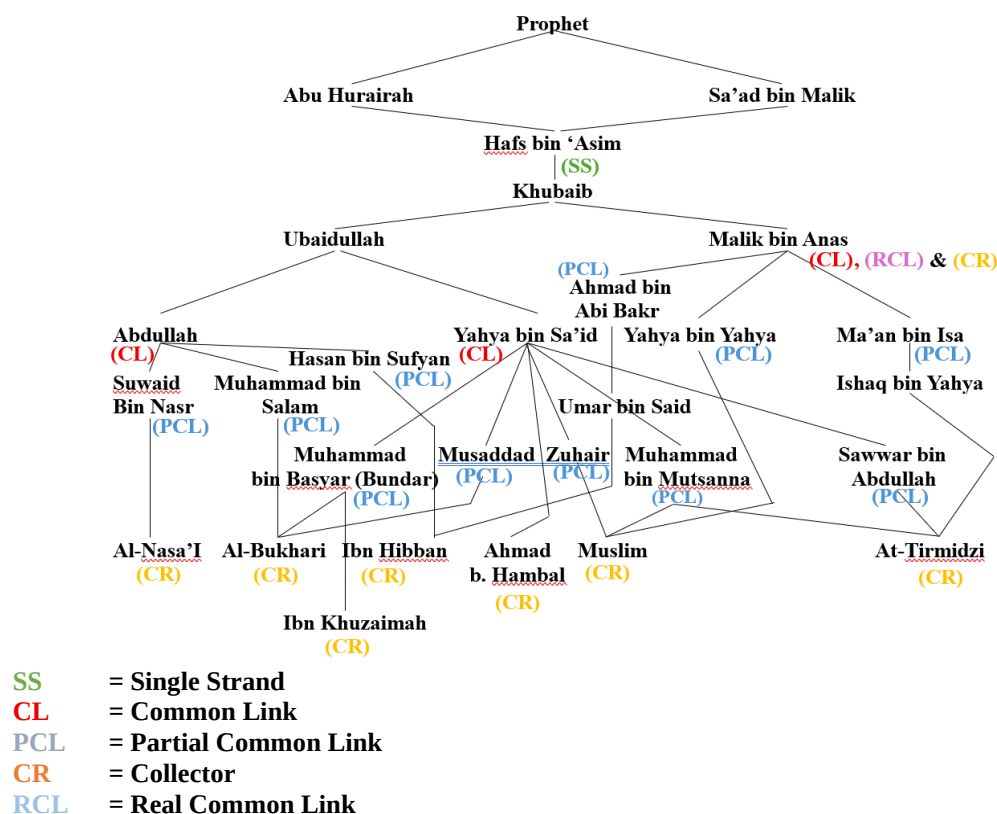


Figure 1. Isnad Bundle of the Charity Hadith About Secrecy

Sanad Analysis of the Charity Hadith in Secret

The charity hadiths about secrecy have been recorded in eight major hadith collections spanning the pre-canonical, canonical, and post-canonical periods. The next step is to analyze the transmission chains in each of these collections to determine whether they are connected with the isnād of other major collections. By doing this, the researcher can identify the common link of the hadith being analyzed. Below is an analysis of the isnād from each major collection, categorized by periodization:

Pre-Canonical

In the pre-canonical hadith collections, the charity hadith about secrecy is found in two books: Muwattho' and Musnad Ahmad. There are two transmission chains for one hadith in Muwattho' No. 2005. The first narration: Malik bin Anas received the hadith from Khubaib bin Abdurrahman al-Anshari, who received it from Hafs bin 'Asim, who, in turn, received it from Abu Hurairah, who got it directly from the Prophet Muhammad. The second narration differs in the chain of the companion; Hafs bin 'Asim received the hadith from Sa'ad bin Malik (Abu Sa'id al-Khudri) [21]. Meanwhile, in the Musnad Ahmad collection, Hadith No. 9665 is as follows: Ahmad bin Hambal received the hadith from Yahya bin Sa'id, who got it from Ubaidullah bin 'Umar, from Khubaib bin Abdurrahman, from Hafs bin 'Asim, from Abu Hurairah, from the Prophet Muhammad [22].

Canonical

The charity hadith about secrecy is found in four canonical hadith collections: Shahih al-Bukhari, Shahih Muslim, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, and Sunan an-Nasa'i. There are three transmission chains in Shahih al-Bukhari. The first narration, Hadith No. 660: Imam al-Bukhari received the hadith from Muhammad bin Basyar, from Yahya bin Sa'id, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah [23]. The second narration, Hadith

No. 1423: Imam al-Bukhari received the hadith from Musaddad, from Yahya bin Sa'id, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah [23]. The third narration, Hadith No. 6806: Imam al-Bukhari received the hadith from Muhammad bin Salam, from Abdullah, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah [24].

In Shahih Muslim, there is only one hadith, No. 1031, which includes four transmission chains [25]. The first narration: Imam Muslim received the hadith from Zuhair bin Harb, from Yahya bin Sa'id, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah. The second narration: Imam Muslim received the hadith from Muhammad bin al-Mutsanna, from Yahya bin Sa'id, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah. The third narration: Imam Muslim received the hadith from Yahya bin Yahya bin Bukair, from Malik bin Anas (Imam Malik), from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah. The fourth narration: Imam Muslim received the hadith from Yahya bin Yahya bin Bukair, from Malik bin Anas (Imam Malik), from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Sa'ad bin Malik (Abu Sa'id al-Khudri) [26].

Next, this hadith is also found in Sunan at-Tirmidhi No. 2391, where he lists one hadith with four different transmission chains. The first narration: Imam Tirmidhi received the hadith from Ishaq bin Musa, from Ma'an bin 'Isa, from Malik bin Anas, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah. The second narration: Imam Tirmidhi received the hadith from Sawwar bin Abdullah, from Yahya bin Sa'id, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah. The third narration: Imam Tirmidhi received the hadith from Muhammad bin Mutsanna, from Yahya bin Sa'id, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah. The fourth narration: Imam Tirmidhi received the hadith from Ishaq bin Musa, from Ma'an bin 'Isa, from Malik bin Anas, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Sa'ad bin Malik (Abu Sa'id al-Khudri) [26].

In Sunan an-Nasa'i No. 5380, this hadith has only one transmission chain: Imam Nasa'i received the hadith from Suwaid bin Nasr, from Abdullah, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah [27].

Post-Canonical

In post-canonical collections, two transmission chains of the hadith are found in Shahih Ibn Khuzaimah and Shahih Ibn Hibban. In Shahih Ibn Khuzaimah Hadith No. 358, Imam Ibn Khuzaimah received the hadith from Bundar, from Yahya bin Sa'id, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah [28]. In Shahih Ibn Hibban, there are two transmission chains: The first narration, Hadith No. 718, Imam Ibn Hibban received the hadith from Hasan bin Sufyan, from Hibban bin Musa, from Abdullah, from Ubaidullah, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Abu Hurairah [29]. The second narration, Hadith No. 3640, Imam Ibn Hibban received the hadith from Umar bin Said, from Ahmad bin Abi Bakr, from Malik, from Khubaib, from Hafs, from Sa'ad bin Malik (Abu Sa'id al-Khudri) or from Abu Hurairah [30].

Below is a comparison of the transmission chains presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of the Sanad

Sanad	Book	Narrator 1	Collector
- وحدثني عن مالك عن خبيب بن عبد الرحمن الأنصاري عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة أنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم (2005) - وحدثني عن مالك عن خبيب بن عبد الرحمن الأنصاري عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي سعيد الخدري أنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم (2005)	Al Muwattho'	Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (74H) and Abu Hurairah (57H)	Malik bin Anas (179H)
حدثنا يحيى عن عبيد الله قال حدثني خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي	Musnad Ahmad	Abu Hurairah	Ahmad bin Hambal (241H)

هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال (9665)			
1. حدثنا محمد بن بشار بن دار قال حدثنا يحيى عن عبيد الله قال حدثني خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال (660) 2. حدثنا مسدد حدثنا يحيى عن عبيد الله قال حدثني خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال (1423) 3. حدثنا محمد بن سلام أخبرنا عبد الله عن عبيد الله بن عمر عن خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال (6806)	Shahih Bukhari	Abu Hurairah	Imam Al-Bukhari (256H)
• حدثني زهير بن حرب حدثنا يحيى بن سعيد عن عبيد الله أخبرني خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم (1031) • حدثني محمد بن المثنى عن يحيى القطان عن عبيد الله أخبرني خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم (1031) • حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى قال قرأت على مالك عن خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي سعيد الخدري أنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم (1031) • حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى قال قرأت على مالك عن خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة أنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم (1031)	Shahih Muslim	Abu Hurairah and Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri	Imam Al-Muslim (261H)
• حدثنا الأنصاري حدثنا معن حدثنا مالك عن خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال (2391) • حدثنا الأنصاري حدثنا معن حدثنا مالك عن خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي سعيد أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال (2391) • حدثنا سوار بن عبد الله العنبري قال حدثنا يحيى بن سعيد عن عبيد الله بن عمر حدثني خبيب عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم (2391) • حدثنا محمد بن المثنى قال حدثنا يحيى بن سعيد عن عبيد الله بن عمر حدثني خبيب عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم (2391)	Sunan Tirmidzi	Abu Hurairah and Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri	Imam At-Tirmidzi (279H)
أخبرنا سويد بن نصر قال أنبأنا عبد الله عن عبيد الله عن خبيب بن عبد الرحمن عن حفص بن عاصم عن أبي هريرة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال (5380)	Sunan Nasa'I	Abu Hurairah	Imam An-Nasa'I (303H)
نا بشار، نا يحيى، أخبرنا عبيد الله بن عمر، حدثني خبيب بن عبد الرحمن، عن حفص بن عاصم، عن أبي هريرة، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال (358)	Shahih Ibn Khuzaimah	Abu Hurairah	Imam Ibn Khuzaimah (311H)

• أَخْبَرَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ سَفْيَانَ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا جَبَّارُ بْنُ مُوسَى، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ، عَنْ خُبَيْبِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ حَفْصِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ (718) • أَخْبَرَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ بْنُ سَنَانَ، أَخْبَرَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ، عَنْ مَالِكٍ، عَنْ خُبَيْبِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ حَفْصِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ، أَوْ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ (3640)	Shahih Hibban	Ibn	Abu Hurairah and Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri	Muhammad Ibn Hibban (354H)
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From the analysis of the isnād above, three CL (Common Link) narrators were identified from various transmission chains of the hadith, namely: Malik bin Anas (179H), Abdullah bin al-Mubarak (181H), and Yahya bin Sa'id (198H). Malik bin Anas transmitted the hadith to three of his students: Ahmad bin Abi Bakr, Yahya bin Yahya bin Bukair, and Ma'an bin 'Isa; Abdullah bin al-Mubarak transmitted the hadith to three of his students: Suwaid bin Nasr, Muhammad bin Salam, and Hibban; while Yahya bin Sa'id transmitted the hadith to six of his students: Muhammad bin Basyar (also known as Bundar), Musaddad, Zuhair, Muhammad bin Mutsanna, and Sawwar bin Abdullah. Therefore, all the students of the above-mentioned CL are referred to as PCL (Partial Common Link). Based on the placement of the CL and PCL from the mapping of the diagram and the transmission chain table above, it can be concluded that the earliest CL in the chain is Malik bin Anas (179H). Therefore, the position of the RCL (Real Common Link)—a term introduced by Motzki to differentiate the CL in the Isnād from the CL resulting from the interconnection of the sanad and matan—is Malik bin Anas. He serves as the CL, RCL, and CR (Collector) of the charity hadith about secrecy.

Analysis of the Matan of the Charity Hadith About Secrecy

The problem in this study lies in the matan of the Shahih Muslim hadith, which states, "And a person who gives charity secretly, such that his right hand does not know what his left hand has given" [25]. This appears to be contradictory to the hadith found in Shahih Bukhari, which states, "And a person who gives charity secretly, until his left hand does not know what his right hand has spent." This matan is similar to the strengthening of 13 transmission chains scattered across 6 major hadith collections. Among the many transmission chains from various major hadith collections, only one supports the matan of Imam Muslim, which is the narration from Imam Ibn Khuzaimah. However, he also stated in his matan that the version of "his right hand does not know what the left hand has given" is a narration from sources other than Yahya bin Sa'id. Therefore, this matan is traced back to Yahya bin Yahya bin Bukair, who received the hadith from Imam Malik bin Anas.

This can be seen in the matan of Shahih Ibn Khuzaimah as follows:

ورجل تصدق بصدقة أخفاها لا تعلم يمينه ما تنفق شماله، ورجل ذكر الله خاليا ففاضت عيناه «قال لنا بNDAR مرة» امرأة ذات حسب وجمال، فقال إني قال أبو بكر: هذه اللفظة لا تعلم يمينه ما تنفق شماله قد خولف فيها يحيى بن سعيد فقال: من روى هذا الخبر غير يحيى، لا يعلم شماله ما ينفق يمينه

It means: "A person or man who gives charity and hides it, so that his right hand does not know what his left hand has given, and a man who remembers Allah in solitude, his tears flowing." Bundar said to us again, "A woman with noble lineage and beauty, then she says, 'Indeed, I...'" Abu Bakr said, "This wording, 'the right hand does not know what the left hand has spent,' is the distinguishing feature of the narration from Yahya bin Sa'id. Meanwhile, scholars who narrate the hadiths from sources other than Yahya state, 'His left hand does not know what the right hand has spent.'"

Although the origin of the disparity in the wording of the charity hadith about secrecy has been explained above, where the narration stating “the left hand does not know what the right hand has spent” comes from sources other than Yahya bin Sa’id, there is still an inconsistency that needs attention. The inconsistency lies in the fact that Ibn Khuzaimah narrated this hadith through a chain of transmission originating from Bundar (Muhammad bin Basyar), the same teacher as Imam Bukhari’s chain, but the matan he included is more closely aligned with the wording narrated by Imam Muslim. This creates an inconsistency in the narration by Imam Ibn Khuzaimah. Therefore, the researcher suspects that the problematic matan related to “the left hand does not know what the right hand has spent” comes from Yahya bin Yahya bin Bukair. This is because only the chain of Yahya bin Yahya bin Bukair leads to Imam Muslim in his Shahih, and Imam Ibn Khuzaimah clarifies the origin of this disparity in matan, even though he does not explicitly mention the sanad other than that of Yahya bin Sa’id.

To facilitate understanding of this hadith's disparity, the researcher presents excerpts of the matan from each of the major hadith collections in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Matan

Matan	Book	Narrator 1	Collector
ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها حتى لا تعلم شماله ما تنفق يمينه (2005)	Al Muwattho’	Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri (74H) and Abu Hurairah (57H)	Malik bin Anas (179H)
ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها لا تعلم شماله ما تنفق يمينه (9665)	Musnad Ahmad	Abu Hurairah	Ahmad bin Hambal (241H)
ورجل تصدق أخفى حتى لا تعلم شماله ما تنفق يمينه (660) ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها حتى لا تعلم شماله ما تنفق يمينه (1423) ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها حتى لا تعلم شماله ما صنعت يمينه (6806)	Shahih Bukhari	Abu Hurairah	Imam Al-Bukhari (256H)
ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها حتى لا تعلم ما تنفق شماله (1031)	Shahih Muslim	Abu Hurairah and Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri	Imam Al-Muslim (261H)
ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها حتى لا تعلم شماله ما تنفق يمينه (2391)	Sunan Tirmidzi	Abu Hurairah and Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri	Imam At-Tirmidzi (279H)
ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها حتى لا تعلم شماله ما صنعت يمينه (5380)	Sunan Nasa’I	Abu Hurairah	Imam An-Nasa’I (303H)
ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها لا تعلم يمينه ما تنفق شماله (358)	Shahih Ibn Khuzaimah	Abu Hurairah	Imam Ibn Khuzaimah (311H)
ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها حتى لا تعلم شماله ما تنفق يمينه (718) ورجل تصدق بصدقة فأخفاها حتى لا تعلم شماله ما تنفق يمينه (3640)	Shahih Ibn Hibban	Abu Hurairah and Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri	Muhammad Ibn Hibban (354H)

CONCLUSION

This study critically analyzed the wording disparity in the charity hadith about secret giving between Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim using the Isnād Cum Matn (ICM) approach. The analysis shows that Malik bin Anas (179H) functions as the Real Common Link (RCL) in the transmission network of this hadith. The matan comparison indicates that the wording found in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, namely “the right hand does not know what the left hand has given,” is supported by fewer transmission routes than the more dominant wording found in other major collections. This finding suggests that the disparity should not be understood simply as a contradiction or as evidence of weak transmission, but as a limited matan variation that can be explained through a careful examination of the isnād and matan together. Thus, the ICM approach provides a useful framework for identifying the relationship between transmission routes, textual variation, and the historical development of hadith wording.

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Author Contributions

Yazeed Ghinan Abdullah conceptualized the study, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. Yusuf Rahman supervised the research, refined the theoretical framework, validated the findings, critically reviewed the manuscript, and approved the final version for publication after comprehensive evaluation and revision.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no financial, institutional, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the design, implementation, analysis, interpretation, or publication of this research. All findings are presented objectively and solely for academic and scientific purposes.

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