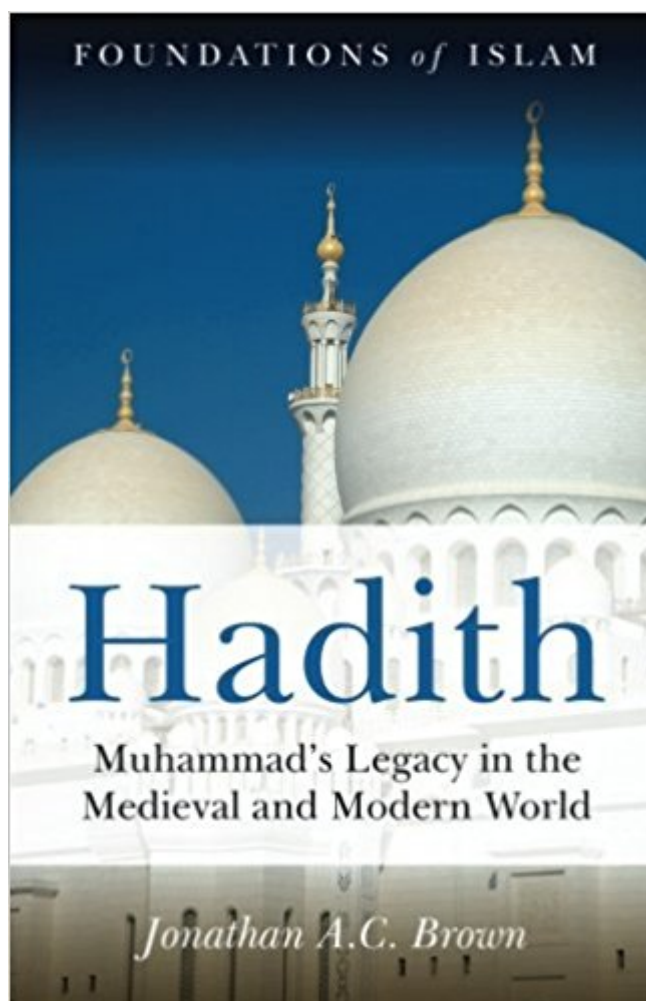


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Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy In The Medieval And Modern World



Synopsis

Contrary to popular opinion, the bulk of Islamic law does not come from the Qur'ân but rather from hadith, first-hand reports of the prophet Muhammad's words and deeds, passed from generation to generation. However, with varying accounts often only committed to paper a century after the death of Muhammad, Islamic scholars, past and present, have been faced with complex questions of historical authenticity. Informative and accessible, this wide-ranging introduction provides a detailed exploration of the collection and criticism of hadith and examines the controversy surrounding its role in modern Islam. Complete with a glossary, extensive bibliography, and helpful diagrams, Hadith is perfectly suited to students, scholars, and the general reader interested in this critical element of Islam. Jonathan A.C. Brown is Assistant Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Washington, Seattle. He is the author of *Muhammad: A Very Short Introduction*.

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Customer Reviews

This is one of my favorite books of all time, because it's a great book on one of my favorite areas of

Islamic studies. Hadith criticism. Jonathan Brown investigates the methods and uses of hadith and its criticism that developed in the Islamic world during the crucial first several centuries of Sunni and Shi'i Islam. As the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w proclaimed his message in a society primarily oral in nature, where genealogies and poetry were passed on word to mouth and Arabic itself did not have a fully functional script, the primary vehicle of transmitting the Prophet's words was a very flawed one: Oral transmission. As we all know, word to mouth is probably one of the worst ways to transmit messages and histories. Scholars needed some way of actually finding out whether the Prophet actually said something, from the mounds of false claims. Given the paramount importance the Muslims placed on the word of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) after the Qur'an- it became common among disingenuous folk to put words in the Prophet's mouth in order to give legitimacy to political, theological and sectarian agendas. The words of the Prophet were in danger of being lost altogether. So how did a Muslim hadith critic combat this? Brown ventures to show that Hadith criticism is a very common-sense approach to the history. There's a three-tier process a critic goes through when trying to apprehend the authenticity of a statement of the Prophet he hears from a transmitter. 1. Demand a source. The transmitter should be able to give a full "isnad", a chain of narration between the transmitter to the Prophet himself, illustrating the path of transmission the report took. 2. Check the chain of narration.

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