

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Sirah Narratives in Early Muslim Historiography

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ABSTRACT

Based on the importance of Sirah, this article is prepared to analyse a few vital aspects of its early sources. This significant topic needs to be addressed in order to examine relevant issues such as the beginning of the writing of Sirah and its development, factors that led to development of the writing of Sirah, the distinguished styles used by classical historians in producing their works, and the methodology of historiography applied. The understanding of the development process of the writing of Sirah at its early stage is necessary since it forms a basis and main platform for the complete understanding of Sirah master pieces and the methodology of the writing of Sirah, which continues to spread from time to time since its early period. It would also avoid false allegations on the authenticity of the authorities. Since the scope of the discussions on the earlier sources of Sirah is too broad, it is intended in this article to only focus on the main source until the third century of Hijrah. The sources which will be discussed in this article are books that analysed Sirah and Maghazi. During this period, the writing of Sirah had spread expansively after it had reached the glorious period in the middle of the second Hijrah. The selected historians were those from Medina as they had played an important role in the writing of Sirah compared to the historians from other places.

Keywords: *Narratives, Sirah, early, Muslim, historiography.*

Introduction

According to Faruq Hamadah (1989), the main sources of Sirah can be divided into two parts namely, primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources are Quran and Hadith, which their authenticity and authority are undisputable. The secondary sources are books and writings of the Muslim experts which relate to Sirah such as books on Shama'il, books on Dala'il al-Nubuwwah, books of Sirah and Maghazi and historical books written in chronological order such as Kitab Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk by Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, Kitab al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh by 'Izz al-Din b. al-Athir and Kitab al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Abu al-Fida' b. Kathir.

Sirah originates from the word Sayr. Literally, Sirah means Sunnah, situations or journey (Al-Zawi, 1971). The observations on the products of the classical writings mirrored that the word Sirah refers to the life or the biography of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). Nevertheless, the writing of Kitab Sirah Mu'awiyah wa Bani Umayyah by 'Awanah b. al-Hakam (d. 147AH./764AD.) shows that the word Sirah was not focused merely on the life of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). In the early stage, the word Sirah was often connected with the word Maghazi which means the battles that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) had taken part in. Nevertheless, in the context of the Islamic historiography, the scope for the word Maghazi was wider, to include the life of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) before Islam and the period after his appointment as Rasul. Consequently, the word Maghazi was regarded as a synonym to Sirah (Al-Duri, 1960).

The Beginning of the Writing of Sirah:

The writing of Sirah commenced from the period of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) with the emergence of some of his companions who wrote about him. Abu Rafi' Mawla Rasulullah (d. 36AH./656AD.) wrote in a note regarding the method of Solat (prayer) and other Ibadah that were performed by the Prophet (p.b.u.h). The note was reserved by Abu Bakr b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-Harith b. Hisham (Thabit, n.d.). Sahl b. Abi Hathmah al-Madani al-Ansari (d. 41AH./661AD.) also wrote on the life of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) including Maghazi that he took part in. Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Waqidi (d. 207AH./822AD.), one of the prominent historians took Sahl's written reports from Muhammad b. Yahya b. Sahl b. Abi Hathmah (Al-Waqidi, 1964). The written reports of

Sahl b. Abi Hathmah was also extracted by the later historians such as Muhammad b. Sa'd (d. 230AH/844AD.) in the Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, Ahmad b. Yahya b. Jabir al-Baladhuri (d. 279AH/892AD.) in the Kitab Ansab al-Ashraf and al-Tabari in the Kitab Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk (Mustafa, 1981).

'Abd Allah b. 'Amru b. al-'As b. Wā'il b. Hāshim (d. 63AH/682AD.) did write in one notebook, which was called Sahifah al-Sadiqah regarding the Hadith which he himself heard from the Prophet (p.b.u.h) (Ibn Sa'd, n.d.). Besides, he also possessed several small collections of notes about the early history, Maghazi and the biography of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) (Azmi, 1968). Another companion who wrote about Sirah was 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas (d. 68AH/687AD.). He had made efforts to write about Maghazi that had been taken part by Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and the related Quranic verses to the Maghazi. He had reported about the actions taken by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) by asking questions to Abu Rafi'.

Thus, notwithstanding that the efforts to compile the events related to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) had clearly taken place informally and was mixed up with the writing of the Hadith, it is believed that the writing of Sirah had commenced in the early stage of Islam. The essence of this phenomenon is that it has clearly shown the awareness on how important the Sirah was among the early Islam community. Since its initial stage, Sirah had been taught by the scholars at that particular time in the Medina Mosque as what was done by 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas. The affection towards the Prophet (p.b.u.h) led them to record Sirah for the sake of the next generation.

The Relationship between Sirah and Hadith:

Some of the historians stated that the efforts of writing Sirah emanated as a method of writing the Hadith and later on transformed as a knowledge that possessed its own discipline (Al-Dhahabi, 1985). This statement seems admissible based on the following factors:

- i) The same field of study; both field of Sirah and Hadith concentrated on words (Aqwal) and conducts (Af'al) of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). Nevertheless, Sirah covers wide aspects as it includes all matters related to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) such as his Nasab (genealogy) and descendants. This includes all activities done by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) in his life before and after Bi'thah. Besides, it also covers the life of the companions, the Jihad to promote Islam and the unity of the Arab tribes under the rule of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) (Ibn Hisham, n.d.).
- ii) The method of revealing; at the early stage both fields were conveyed through Riwayāt shafahiyyah (oral) before they were written and compiled (Khudar, 1993).
- iii) The methodology of Isnad (the chain of transmitters); the historians at the early stage applied the method of Isnad to ensure the authenticity of the history reports. This method was also utilized by the Muhaddithun in order to affirm the status and position of the Prophet's Hadith.
- iv) The writing of Sirah at the early stage was initiated by the Muhaddithun who were also the historians as was stated above. This was followed by several scholars such as Sa'id b. al-Musayyib al-Makhzumi (d. 94AH/712AD.), 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwam (d. 94AH/712AD.) and Abu Fadal al-'Abd Allah b. Ka'b b. Malik al-Ansari (d. 97AH/715AD.). Their methodology in narrating the Hadith of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and writing Sirah was similar as they arranged them by commencing with the chain of Isnad and then followed by Matan. The difference that can be seen is that when narrating the Hadith, they were more concerned with the chain of Isnad and the narrators. When writing Sirah, they loosened the requirements of Isnad and paid more attention to the life of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) compared to Hadith that are related to the rulings of Islam.

The Historians from the First Century of Hijrah until the Third Century of Hijrah:

Medina was the great institution of knowledge as it was the place where the writing of Sirah arose. It had placed the foundation for the writing of Sirah. At the meantime Medina was considered as the main source for Sirah reports. It also functioned as the place where Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) demonstrated his way of life and his relationship with the various communities. Consequently, the historians from Medina were found to be greatly influenced by the affairs and events connected to the Prophet (p.b.u.h) until they were known as Historians of Sirah and Maghazi (Al-Jamal, 1987). They had started the writing of Sirah based on the Prophet's Hadith and all affairs connected to him.

'Urwah b. al-Zubayr (d. 94AH/712AD.) was one of the famous historians who wrote about Sirah. This can be seen from his letters to Khalifah 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan as reported by Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310AH/922AD.). His name was stated approximately 79 times in the Kitab Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk which described his position as the early main reference ('Ali, 1954). His narrations were considered accurate as most of them were taken from the great scholars at that time such as 'A'ishah b. Abu Bakr, Usamah b. Zayd, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, and 'Abd Allah b. 'Amru b. al-'As. Besides, he also referred to the written sources. He was regarded as the reliable scholar (Al-Mizzi, 1992). He avoided himself from any political activities or involved in any political movement of his brother, 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr in the opposition towards Bani Umayyah. Thus, his report was considered as 'Adil as it did not side any parties. The narration of

‘Urwah about Sirah covers the period of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) before Bi‘thah and the period after Bi‘thah when the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was in Makkah and Medina. Among of his narrations are:

- i) The event of the chest operation (Shaq al-Sadr) that occurred on the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) as a preparation to hold the challenge and heavy task and responsibility.
- ii) The situation where the Prophet (p.b.u.h) preferred sit alone (Tahannuth) in the cave of Hira’ before his appointment as a Rasul. The revelation of Surah al-‘Alaq and the intention of Waraqah b. Nawfal to assist him in spreading Islam.
- iii) The migration to Habashah that had taken place as a result of the oppression on the minority Muslims. Habashah was selected as the place to migrate because of it’s just and fair rulings and the country was not regarded as a strange place as it was a Quraysh commercial centre during the Jahiliyyah.
- iv) The brave action taken by ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud by reading several Quranic verses from Surah al-Rahman in public until he was beaten.
- v) The migration of Muslims to Medina after the execution of the treaty of al-‘Aqabah. The strategy taken by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) during the migration.
- vi) Sariyyah (the military expedition) ‘Abd Allah b. Jahs and the defamation that occurred after the battle.
- vii) The battle of Badr, which had taken, place due to the efforts done by the Quraysh to obliterate the Muslims (Al-Tabari, 1987).
- viii) The battle of Bani Qaynuqa’. After the battle, Bani Qaynuqa’ were chased from Medina and their property was taken as a result of their breach of the treaty between the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) (Al-Waqidi, 1964).
- ix) The battle of Khandaq that had taken place as the result of the efforts of the Jews Bani Nadir who instigated the Arabs to fight against Muslims.
- x) The battle of Bani al-Mustaliq and the event of Hadith al-Ifk. The role played by al-Munafiqun in their plan to slander ‘A’ishah and Safwan b. al-Mu‘attal al-Sulami.
- xi) The treaty of Hudaibiyyah that was executed between the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and the Quraysh for the long term benefit of Islam.
- xii) The battle of Mu’tah, which had demonstrated the clash between the power of Islam and the foreign power of Byzantine.
- xiii) The opening of city of Makkah as the Quraysh had breach the treaty of Hudaibiyyah (Al-Tabari, 1964).
- xiv) The fighting of several Arabian tribes which had caused the battle of Hunayn and the battle of Ta’if.
- xv) The Emissary of the Prophet’s letters to the several of the tribes in the Peninsular of Arab for dakwah (Al-Baladhuri, 1966).
- xvi) The military expedition of Usamah b. Zayd and the demise of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) (Ibn Hisham, n.d.).

The above are the basic narration about Sirah as was presented by ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr. Then it was spread by the later historians. Consequently, he was considered as the pioneer of the writing of Sirah. Eventhough his narrations were considered as too brief and most of them were not elaborated or explained the events that had occurred, it remain as a guidance and main draft in the writing of Sirah. His writing applied the Isnad methodology and consisted of the verses of Holy Quran and thus it was clearly shown the influence of Islam. The main consideration which motivated ‘Urwah on writing and studying Sirah was his awareness towards the importance of Sirah which contained various guidance and teachings. He understood comprehensively the meaning of the Surah Yusuf verse 111 which means: ‘There is, in their stories, instruction for men endued with understanding. It is not a tale invented, but a confirmation of what went before it, a detailed exposition of all things, and a guide and a mercy to any such as believe’. ‘Urwah was also felt that Sirah was very vital in order to understand Quran and the Hadith because of its potential to explain and examine the events that were stated by the said both sources.

This is where the role of the scholars becomes important in order to analyse the historical facts that were brought by ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr. For instance, ‘Urwah has indirectly mentioned about the power of Islam when he reported the brave action taken by ‘Abd Allah b. Mas‘ud by reading several Quranic verses from Surah al-Rahman in public until he was beaten. The righteousness, piety and strong faith of the Muslim minority at the early period of Islam had proven the real power in Islam. The strong spiritual virtue possessed by them had assisted them to defend the religion and later on spread it to the people of Mecca. The strength of Islam is the spiritual strength and faith of its followers. Thus, the real power in Islam is not depending on the quantity of Muslims but it certainly depends on their quality.

The steadfast writing of Sirah was continued later by Muhammad b. Muslim al-Zuhri (d. 124AH./741AD.) who was from Tabi’in group in Medina. His appearance was more presentable as he had given full concentration to write each narration that he obtained. For about 45 years, al-Zuhri himself had spent his life collecting the Hadith and in the meantime he learnt a lot in order to gain more knowledge. This was clearly shown in his ordinary routine from Hijaz to Sham. al-Zuhri had applied the comprehensive method in his research on history to obtain the accurate information about the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) by comparing the narration between the events or interviewing those experts who were considered as eligible in case there existed

conflicts of facts. The most important source of al-Zuhri was Quran and authentic Hadith. The narrations of 'A'ishah b. Abu Bakr and Anas b. Malik were also his important sources on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) while the reports of 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr functioned as his main references about the battles that had been taken part by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) (Al-Sakhawi, n.d.).

The outline of his writing of Sirah commenced by the introduction of the period before Islam and its connection to the socio-politics, religion and cultural situation of the Arabs before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). Al-Zuhri (1981) mentioned about the important events that occurred in the life of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) at Makkah such as the revelation of the Wahyu, the process of dakwah and the migration to Medina. During the period of the Medina, he also mentioned the historical events in a chronology such as the battles, the opening of the city of Makkah, the Prophet (p.b.u.h) representatives to foreign countries, the dakwah efforts and Wufud (the trip comprised of the Arabs tribes) for the agreement with the Prophet (p.b.u.h). al-Zuhri did also mention the activities of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) which included social, economics and religious activities. He ended his discussion about Sirah by the demise of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h).

al-Zuhri had spread and widened the meaning of Sirah by not only focusing on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) but to also include the life of the companions and their involvement in spreading Islam. al-Zuhri remained his determination as Muhaddith who was concerned about the Isnad when narrating the Sirah. Nevertheless, there were occasions where he loosens the requirements of Isnad. This means when he wrote reports on history, al-Zuhri did not practise the methodology of al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil as what was done by him when reporting Hadith. He introduced and acquainted the different methods of Isnad of those Muhaddithin i.e. Isnad al-Jam'i.

Isnad al-Jam'i means the collaboration of several riwayat which forms as one complete and comprehensive riwayat and it is begin with one particular Isnad only. It was intended to avoid the repetition of Isnad which affect the comprehensive and smooth narration of a particular narration of Sirah. Besides the Quranic verses, al-Zuhri did include the poems at several places in his reports. This shows that the tradition of delivering poems was regarded as remarkable heritage and culture which cannot be ignored in the writing of Sirah at that time. Nevertheless, al-Zuhri did not apply them as a point of argument or a proven fact of a particular event.

The main factor that motivated al-Zuhri to write Sirah was his awareness that Sirah was necessary in the religious field and it was also one of the knowledge that can enrich and strengthen the faith (Al-Dhahabi, 1980). Moreover, his intention was to record the experience of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) to the next generation and explain several vital aspects of the Prophet's life. al-Zuhri had pointed out the real picture of the event as he was a reliable Muhaddith. He regarded a particular event that had taken place as part of a divinely ordained plan beside the own human causes. This can be clearly seen when he touched on the battles such as Ghazwah Badr. al-Zuhri had also demonstrated his arguments by providing several elaboration and explanations from the historical point of view such as supporting the treaty of Hudaibiyyah for the long term benefits of Muslims at that particular time.

It is interesting to note that in the narration of al-Zuhri there was a discussion on Jews in Medina. It can be understood that the conflicts that often occurred were because of the bad behaviours of the Jews. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was not pleased with them not because of they were Jews but because of their hatred towards Islam. al-Zuhri stated that the great enemy of Islam was Munafiqun. They were not only caused disputes such as in the battle of Uhud and the event of Hadis al-Ifk but they also influenced the Jews Bani Nadir to fight against the Prophet (p.b.u.h) until they were chased out from Medina to Khaybar. Besides writing about Sirah such as Kitab Mashahid al-Nabiyy, al-Zuhri also produced Kitab al-Qaba'il al-'Arabiyyah al-Shamaliyyah, Kitab Nasab Quraysh and Kitab Asnan al-Khulafa'. Nevertheless, these efforts did not reach today's generation except some parts or paragraphs that were extracted by Muhammad b. Ishaq, Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Waqidi, Ahmad b. Yahya b. Jabir al-Baladhuri, al-Tabari and Ibn Sayyid al-Nas ('Ali, 1964).

It can be seen from the reports of al-Zuhri that the power in Islam would be strengthened by the corroboration on two factors i.e. the quality of Muslims and political power. This can clearly be seen in the period of Medina. The Muslims at that particular of time gained victory in the battles of Badr and Khandaq and in most of the battle because of these two factors. Their righteousness had led them not only to the success and victory but also had assisted them in their personality and at the same time abolished the tribal sentiments.

The writing of Sirah later reached its glorious time with the presence of Muhammad b. Ishaq (d. 151AH.) who produced Kitab al-Mubtada' wa al-Mab'ath wa al-Maghazi. His ability was well known compared to the earlier historians as he was knowledgeable and learned. He possessed a universal knowledge and capable to gather information from various sources. He was able to arrange the data in a good order. His writings clearly mirrored his wide and comprehensive understanding about Sirah compared to the earlier historians. This was due to the facts that his writings included the history of the earlier Prophets and the life of the companions which was arranged chronologically. Even though Ibn Ishaq received great criticisms from some of the Muhaddithun, his contributions and role played in developing the field of Sirah was considered as one of the most undeniable fact when he obtained recognition from al-Zuhri and Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafi'e (Ibn

Khallikan, 1974). Since most of the Hadith scholars were in favour of him, these allegations which question his authority need to be re-assessed.

The book that was produced by Ibn Ishaq was divided into three parts namely; al-Mubtada', al-Mab'ath and al-Maghazi. The part that discussed thoroughly about Sirah was al-Mab'ath which included the life of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) in Makkah until the first century of Hijrah. Another part of al-Maghazi conveyed the life of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) until his demise. Ibn Ishaq delivered the facts of histories chronologically and was arranged in order with the suitable topics and had the plot of the story. He had contributed a lot in providing names who were involved in an event such as the companions who attended at the treaty of al-'Aqabah. The sources of Ibn Ishaq in producing his books were from the oral and written materials.

Nevertheless, there were arguments towards him regarding his writings that were not concentrating on Isnad and he just stated the poems without differentiating between the false and the true. In short, the first argument was rebutted through the study of his works in thoroughly as it had proved that Ibn Ishaq utilised the complete method of writings when delivering the narration. His detail research on the application Isnad was varied based on the period, category, and the importance of the narration that were stated. In the next part of al-Mubtada' which discussed on the unknown accurateness of the classical histories and were not related to the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) or his family, Ibn Ishaq did not paid much attention on the application of Isnad. Most of his Isnad were Maqtu' in nature. Isnad Maqtu' or Munqati' is where the chain of the companions as narrators ceased to exist. For instance, when he discussed the development of the Cristianity in Najran (Ibn Hisham, n.d.).

Nevertheless, when he narrated about the events that related to the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and his family, Ibn Ishaq had discussed them in full care in the application of Isnad such as the digging of the well of Zamzam. The conscientious of Ibn Ishaq in the application of Isnad reached the maximum stage whenever he discussed the events that occurred in Islam and those related to the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) such his appointment as a Rasul. Here Isnad of Ibn Ishaq stopped at 'A'ishah who was in the same period with the Prophet (p.b.u.h). Nevertheless, in the events of the battles, Ibn Ishaq was more interested with the application of *Isnad al-Jam'i* which was intended to summarise the chain of narrators. For instance, in the battle of Bani Mustaliq (Ibn Hisham, n.d.). Regarding the poems that were questioned on their authenticity, Ibn Ishaq had admitted and he merely conveyed the poems which were brought before him by the poem readers. His intention was not to prove the authenticity of the events but to function as an entertainment and symbol of attraction in his writings of Sirah as what was done by 'Urwah and al-Zuhri (Adham, 1964).

Thus, it was clear that the controversy about him was more with the relationship with Muhaddithin whom their methodology differed from the historians. Nevertheless, this did not affect the credibility of Ibn Ishaq in his writings of Sirah because most of the scholars accepted his narration such as Sufyan b. 'Uyaynah, Abu Zur'ah al-Dimishqi, Shu'bah b. al-Hajjaj, al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah.

Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Waqidi (d. 207AH.) later wrote several books related to Sirah such as Kitab Azwaj al-Nabiyy, Kitab al-Tarikh wa al-Maghazi wa al-Mab'ath and Kitab Wafat al-Nabiyy (Ibn al-Nadim, 1985). Nevertheless, he was more famous and known through his book on Kitab al-Maghazi. Based on this book, the Prophet (p.b.u.h) had participated in 27 battles (Maghazi) and embarked about 47 military expeditions (Saraya). In general, the battles that occurred had pictured the clash between the power of Islam and the four main i.e. Quraysh, Jews, the Arabs tribes and the foreign power such as Byzantine and Persian.

Clearly, the battles initiated by Muslims were defensive and not offensive in nature. The Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) had participated in four battles and sent about 4 military expeditions before the battle of Badr. The intention of sending the military expedition very often was to exhibit to Quraysh that Islam now had the strength and not as weak as in the previous time when Islam was oppressed. It was also to remind the enemies that Islam will fight against those who wanted to demolish Islam. An expedition by expedition was initiated to show that the power of Islam would continue till the end and this had raised the fearness of the enemies in Madinah (such as Munafiqun and Jews) or outside Madina. Besides, its intention was to know the new areas that can create a new route between Medina and other places and set up treaties with the Arab tribes (Al-Khatib, 1985).

This book explained that the battle of Badr and Uhud mirrored that Quraysh had the intention to destroy Islam but failed to do so. The victory in the battle of Khandaq was regarded as the shift period for the power of Islam to continue spreading without huddles by the Quraysh until the execution of the treaty of Hudaibiyyah and the opening of city of Makkah. The ambush on the Bani Qaynuqa', Bani al-Nadir and Qurayzah was initiated by the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) after the Jews breach the treaty and regularly created havoc. No room for compromise with them after several attempts and opportunity given. The battles of Tabuk dan Mu'tah had shown the efforts of dakwah Islamiyyah which had spread at the international level. The book of al-Waqidi was not only focusing on the battles but also include the administration of the Medina city. For instance, the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) had appointed Ibn Umm Maktum al-Ma'isiy, to replace him for 14 times during his absence from Medina. Thus, it was clear that the battles in Islam were part of the dakwah Islamiyyah.

'Abd al-Malik b. Hisham (d. 218AH.) later on wrote about Sirah via his works, *Kitab al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*. This kitab was the book of Ibn Ishaq which was modified by Ibn Hisham. He made several amendments such as adding and summarising the narration and pointed out his own opinion regarding a particular event. Until now, this book is still function as a main reference about Sirah. Muhammad b. Sa'd (d. 230AH.) also wrote about Sirah in his *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*. It discussed the period of childhood of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and his teenage until the migration to Medina. Several topics that had been discussed by him in the period of Medina were the battles, the efforts of spreading Islam and his credibility as the Exemplar.

Conclusion:

The above discussion clearly exhibits the early sources of Sirah which later on developed by historians and remain as the main references. Most of the scholars stated that the writing of Sirah had reached its glorious period when the books of *Kitab al-Mubtada' wa al-Mab'ath wa al-Maghazi* written by Ibn Ishaq were produced. This is based on factors as stated above and most of the later writing of Sirah does refer to his narration. Nevertheless, it is undeniably that the other historians had played an important role in developing the writing of Sirah. Among others are Sa'id b. al-Musayyib (d. 94AH.), al-Qasim b. Muhammad b. Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (d. 107AH.), Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 114AH.), 'Asim b. 'Umar b. Qatadah (d. 120AH.), Shurahbil b. Sa'd (d. 123AH.), Yazid b. Ruman al-Asadi (d. 130AH.), Abu al-Aswad Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman (d. 131AH.), 'Abd Allah b. Abu Bakr b. Hazm (d. 135AH.), Musa b. 'Uqbah (d. 141AH.), Ma'mar b. Rashid (d. 153AH.), Najih b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sindi (d. 170AH.), Ziyad b. 'Abd Allah al-Bakka'i (d. 183AH.) and Salamah b. al-Fadl al-Abrash al-Ansari (d. 191AH.).

The classical historians realised the significant of Sirah in their life and the life of the Ummah. This is evidently by their conducts and cares to write all the deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) which include the events since his birth until the demise. Nevertheless, the discussions were concentrated on the historical events and were not connected to the current issues. By virtue of the changing of time and period, the writing of Sirah was developed and was connected to the current issues. For instance, most of the writing of Sirah based on *al-Shama'il* and *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah* emerged after the middle century of second Hijrah as written by Abu Zur'ah 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Karim al-Razi (d. 264AH.), Abu Dawud al-Sijistani (d. 275AH.), al-Tirmidhi (d. 279AH.), Abu Muhammad 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Ja'far bin Hayyan (d. 369AH.) and Abu al-'Abbas Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Mustaghfari (d. 432AH.). al-Qadi 'Iyad Abu al-Fadl b. Musa (d. 544AH.) did write *Kitab al-Shifa bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Mustafa* to answer the allegations and false accusations towards the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). The writing of Sirah continues until today.

The authority of the books that were discussed above cannot be neglected as most of the scholars had recognised and accepted them as the main sources of Sirah. Nevertheless, most of the orientalist writers endeavoured to question the credibility of the books. At this point, it is necessary to understand the early sources of Sirah in order to avoid the false accusation and to preserve the Islamic heritage from being desecrated.

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