



BANGABANDHU MEMORIAL LECTURE

(Second)

31 October 2022 ♦ IIUC Auditorium, IIUC

Title of the Lecture

**The Ḥadīth : Preservation
and Development**

Speaker

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi

Organized by

**Bangabandhu Research Center for Islam and
Interreligious Dialogue (BRCIID)
International Islamic University Chittagong**



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Bangabandhu Research Center for Islam and Interreligious Dialogue (BRCIID)

The Bangabandhu Research Centre for Islam and Inter-religious Dialogue (BRCIID) is designed by International Islamic University Chittagong Trust (IIUCT) in order to contribute to the original humanitarian welfare intention of world religions particularly of Islam through a deeper and mutual understanding of the great religions of the world. This centre is being initiated at the auspicious moment of the Celebration of Golden Jubilee of Independence of Bangladesh and the 100th Birth Anniversary of the father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This glorious moment with its breadth and depth demands critical reflections on the historical evolution of various religious communities particularly that of historically distinctive Bengali Muslim community as well as on the Bangabandhu's life-long pursuit for non-communitarian and humanitarian ideals.

From a cursory observation it is evident that Bangladesh has an intrinsic relationship with Islam. This relationship is particularly characterized by the ideals of humanity, tolerance and justice propagated by medieval Muslim spiritual pioneers. Their deep care, apprehension and empathy for people irrespective of race, caste and religion have marked the very core of the personality of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Shāikh Mujibur Rahman. In the possible widest sense, the Liberation War of 1971 conceived his twin ideals of non-communitarianism and humanitarianism. As a person, he adhered to the religion of Islam very fondly and sincerely, but he had deep sympathy and respect for the people of all religions. The people of all communities, including Muslim-Hindu-Buddhist-Christian participated in the War of Liberation at his call.

A deep religious crisis is being experienced world-wide due to the loosening soundness of all religions owing to the thick encrustation of time-old outdated customs and usages around the pure doctrinal virtues, people's reliance on a monolithic and literalist interpretation of the scriptural texts and the adoption of a particular interpretation as a wholesome ideology for the redemption of the world. On the top of it, the unprecedented scientific and technological development of this information age has blinded a great major-

ity of human race to the virtues of morality and religion even though a deep-seated religious feeling resides at the core of every human heart. To reclaim these, we have to make a call to deluded and derailed literalist and truculent, peaceful and dialogue-loving people to the fold of moral and spiritual values. Thus, material facilities of religions have to be broadened.

The scriptural texts of great religions are invaluable treasures of wisdom and doctrinal aphorisms. They are deeply interspersed with ethical principles. The design of the Research Centre, therefore, envisages introducing the scholarly appraisal of these scriptural ethical principles.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, it has been observed throughout the world with dismay and apprehension that there is a serious lack of mutual understanding between the perspectives of two peoples or communities; i.e., between the religious and the atheist, between a Muslim and a Hindu, between a believer and an agonistic etc. The centre will work to foster respect for one another through dialogical initiatives. The more we understand one another's religious perspective, its innate values and resultant traditions; the better will be our ability to work together.

The aims and objectives of the Centre:

- (a) The Centre would be an ideal platform for disseminating scholarly ideas of Islam and other religions. In this regard, it will open the door for dialogue for creating just and fair societies locally and globally. People regardless of race, region, belief and religion will get the opportunity to exchange their views in dialogical initiatives, lectures, conferences, seminars and symposia;
- (b) The Centre shall organize lectures, conferences, seminars and symposia; In Particular, the Centre shall organize Bangbandhu Memorial Lecture at regular intervals.
- (c) The Centre shall publish books, monographs and pamphlets;
- (d) The Centre shall establish a good research library;
- (e) The Centre shall establish contact with similar centres, institutes and other organizations in and outside Bangladesh;
- (f) The Centre shall institute scholarships, fellowships etc. for promotion of research;
- (g) The Centre will execute any other function to be decided upon later keeping the aims and objectives of the Centre in view.

The Ḥadīth: Preservation and Development

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi

Before I discuss the preservation and development of ḥadīth, I want briefly to explain the distinction between ḥadīth and sunnah. People tend to confuse these terms. Certainly, they overlap but they are distinct. ‘Sunnah’ as a technical term means the path in worship and religious affairs that was established by the Prophet, peace be upon him, and then pursued by the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the rest of the Companions, and the leading figures in the generations that followed them.

Ḥadīth as a technical term means a report of the words spoken by the Prophet, peace be upon him, or a report of his actions, what he approve tacitly, his personal characteristics or other matters concerning his character and manners and preferences which it is beneficial for the believers to know and emulate.

How are sunnah and ḥadīth connected? Is there a historical relationship, such that one precedes or follows the other? Or is it an explanatory relation such that one elaborates the other? From one viewpoint the relation between them is that of general to specific. In this way, some of the sunnah is also ḥadīth, while some ḥadīth are also sunnah. In other words, ḥadīth could be considered broader than sunnah in one sense, while sunnah could be broader than ḥadīth in another.

Much of what is reported concerning the Prophet’s statements, actions, approvals, or descriptions actually comprise ḥadīth, not sunnah. On the other hand, much of what has been passed on by the early generation of jurists of various regions, in terms of practices concerning prayer, charity, pilgrimage, edicts and rulings, comprise sunan (the plural of sunnah), some of which is not found in ḥadīth or differ from ḥadīth in some way however slight.

An example of sunnah is what Mālik relates from Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl from Anas b. Mālik who said: I prayed behind Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān,

and none of them recited bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm when they began their.¹ Bukhārī and Muslim, as well as other experts of ḥadīth, also related this.² It is additionally supported by a ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah in which he reports that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: God says: ‘I have divided the prayer into two halves between Myself and My servant, and for my servant is what he asks for.’ When the servant states, ‘Praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds,’ God replies, ‘My servant has praised me . . .’³

Another example of sunnah is what Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī relates in the Muwaṭṭa’: I heard Mālik say concerning fasting six days after the ‘Id al-Fiṭr following Ramadan, ‘I have not observed any person of knowledge and understanding fast these days, and no report of that has reached me from any of the early authorities. Rather, the people of knowledge considered the practice makrūh (reprehensible) fearing that it would become an innovated practice or that ignorant ones would add to Ramadan that which did not belong to it.’⁴

Yet another example is that Abū Dāwūd relates from Ṭawūs, who said: I asked Ibn ‘Umar about praying two rak‘ahs before maghrib salah and he replied, ‘I have not seen anyone in the era of the Prophet, peace be upon him, pray these.’⁵ Abd al-Razzāq⁶ relates in his Muṣannaf from Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī who said: ‘Neither Abū Bakr, nor ‘Umar, nor ‘Uthmān ever prayed two rak‘ahs before maghrib.’⁷

Examples of ḥadīth (which vary from sunnah) include what was related by Nasā’ī in his Sunan: Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abd al-Ḥakam informed us from Shu‘ayb: Layth informed us: Khālīd informed us from Sa‘īd b. Abū Hilāl from Nu‘aym al-Mujmir, who said:

I prayed behind Abū Hurayrah, and he recited bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm and then recited al-Fātiḥah until he reached ghayri al-maghḍūbi‘alayhim walā al-ḍāllīn, after which he said: Āmīn, and the people

¹ Muwaṭṭa’: Kitāb al-ṣalāh—Bāb al-‘amal fī al-qirā‘ah.

² Sahih Bukhārī: Kitāb al-adhān—Bāb mā yaqūlu ba‘da al-takbīr; Muslim: Kitāb al-ṣalāh—Bāb ḥujjah man qāla lā yujharu bi al-basmalah.

³ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Kitāb al-ṣalāh—Bāb wujūb qirā‘at al-Fātiḥah fī kulli rak‘ah.

⁴ Muwaṭṭa’: Kitāb al-ṣiyyām. For elaboration, see my article ‘Fasting Six Days of Shawwal’, UK: Al-Salam Institute. [<https://alsalam.ac.uk/shawwal/>]

⁵ Sunan Abī Dāwūd: Kitāb al-ṣalāh—Bāb al-ṣalāh qabl al-Maghrib.

⁶ Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī (d. 211/826) was an early ḥadīth scholar of Yemen and author of many works, of which only the Muṣannaf survived.

⁷ Muṣannaf Abd al-Razzāq: Kitāb al-ṣalāh—Bāb al-rak‘atayn qabl al-Maghrib.

also said: *Āmīn*. And every time he prostrated he said: *Allāhu Akbar*, and whenever he got up from sitting after two rak‘ahs, he said: *Allāhu Akbar*. And he said at the end of the prayer after *salām*, ‘By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, my prayer most closely resembles that of the Prophet among you.’⁸

Another example is that which Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: *Yaḥyā b. Ayyūb*, *Qutaybah b. Sa‘īd* and *‘Alī b. Ḥujr* all reported to me: from *Ismā‘īl*: *Ibn Ayyūb* said: *Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far* related to us: *Sa‘d b. Sa‘īd b. Qays* related to me from *‘Umar b. Thābit b. al-Ḥārith al-Khazrajī* from *Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī*, (God be pleased with him) who related to him that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: ‘Whoever fasts Ramadan, then follows that with six from [the month of] *Shawwāl* would be as if he fasted for a lifetime.’⁹

Yet another example is what Muslim narrated: *Shaybān b. Farrūkh* narrated to us: ‘*Abd al-Wārith* narrated to us from ‘*Abd al-‘Azīz* (and he is *Ibn Suhayb*) from *Anas b. Mālik* who said: When we were in *Madinah*, the moment the *mu‘adhdhin* made the call to the *maghrib* prayer, the people hastened to the pillars of the mosque and prayed two rak‘ahs with the result that any stranger coming into the mosque would think that the obligatory prayer had been observed owing to the number who were praying then.’¹⁰

Another is what *Bukhārī* relates: *Abū Ma‘mar* related to us: ‘*Abd al-Wārith* related to us from *Ḥusayn* from ‘*Abdullah b. Buraydah* who said: ‘*Abdullah al-Muzanī* related to me from the Prophet, peace be upon him, who said: ‘Pray before the *maghrib* prayer.’ He said it three times, and at the third, he added, ‘for whoever wants to do so fearing that people would take it as a *sunnah*.’¹¹

⁸*Sunan al-Nasā‘ī*: *Kitāb al-iftitāḥ*—*Bāb qirā‘at bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*.

⁹*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: *Kitāb al-ṣiyām*—*Bāb istiḥbāb ṣawm sittah min shawwāl ittibā‘an li Ramaḍān*. Should the question arise, it should be noted that the chapter headings of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* are not from *Imām Muslim* but added by later commentators, such as *Nawawī*, and do not necessarily reflect *Muslim*’s conclusions.

¹⁰*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: *Kitāb ṣalāh al-musāfirīn wa qaṣrihā*—*Bāb istiḥbāb rak‘atayn qabl ṣalāh al-Maghrib*. Also related in *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*: *Kitāb al-ṣalāh*—*Bāb al-ṣalāhilā al-ustuwānah*; *Kitāb al-adhān*—*Bāb kambayna al-adhān wa al-iqāmah*.

¹¹*Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*: *Kitāb al-tahajjud*—*Bāb al-ṣalāh qabl al-Maghrib*; *Kitāb al-i‘tiṣām bi al-kitāb wa al-sunnah*—*Bāb nahy al-nabī‘ alā al-taḥrīm*.

Preservation of Ḥadīth

It has become a widespread belief among certain scholars and researchers that the ḥadīth were preserved only after the second century. This represents a gross misunderstanding of history. This misunderstanding may have been motivated in part by the report of Bukhārī in which the Caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (d. 101/720) wrote to Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm:¹² ‘Search out the ḥadīth of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and write them down, for I fear the decline of knowledge and scholarship.’¹³

The truth is that ‘Umar was seeking to gather and collect ḥadīth reports from the memories and personal writings of scholars into one compilation, as we will expound on later. Prior to this period of formal and official (i.e., state supported) documentation, ḥadīth reports were preserved through memory and various written collections. It should be known that preservation and official documentation are two different matters.

Preserving Ḥadīth Through Memorization

Arabs were known for their strong memories, to the point that many of them became renowned for accurately preserving their lineage for generations, some of them even the lineage of their camels and horses. They were known for memorizing long poetic odes as well as stories and anecdotes. When Islam came to them, these same faculties were employed for the preservation of the reports of their Prophet, peace be upon him, which represented the foundation of their faith and source of their guidance. They used to listen to his words and speeches and ask him when something was not clear to them. They did this in compliance with the Qur’ānic command: ‘Ask the people who possess knowledge if you do not know.’¹⁴

Inquiry is the key to learning. Zuhri (d. 124/742)¹⁵ stated: ‘Knowledge has many treasures which are only opened by inquiry.’¹⁶ Abū al-‘Āliyah (d.

¹²Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. Ḥazm al-Anṣārī was a jurist of the Followers whom ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz appointed as judge and governor of Madīnah. He died in 120 AH at the age of 84 during the reign of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik.

¹³Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī: Kitāb al-‘ilm—Bāb kayfa yuqbaḍu al-‘ilm. This is a mu‘allaq, or isnād-less, report, which represents a lower-rank of soundness among the corpus of Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī.

¹⁴Qur’ān 16:43, 21:7.

¹⁵Great ḥadīth expert of Madīnah who was among Mālik’s teachers and counted among the six pillars of ḥadīth (madār al-ḥadīth) among the junior Followers.

90/708)¹⁷ used to say to his neighbour: ‘Ask me questions and write down my ḥadīth reports, before you start searching for them from others and not finding them.’¹⁸ Ibn Sīrīn used to say: ‘Know that knowledge is locked away and the keys (to opening it) are asking questions.’¹⁹

Most of the senior Companions were well-known to have memorized ḥadīth, including the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, Ibn Mas‘ūd, Ubayy b. Ka‘b, ‘Ā’ishah, Mu‘ādh b. Jabal, Abū al-Dardā’, Ibn ‘Umar, Abū Hurayrah, Ibn ‘Abbās, Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, Jābir b. ‘Abdullah, and Anas b. Malik. There were also many who memorized ḥadīth from later generations, from among whom I will share some illustrations of their renown for memorization.

Ḥammād b. Zayd (d. 179/795)²⁰ relates from ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd from Abū al-Zu‘ayzi‘ah the secretary of the Umayyad governor Marwān b. Ḥakam that Marwān asked Abū Hurayrah to narrate ḥadīth while secretly having them written down from behind a curtain.²¹ Later on, after some time, they tested him by asking him to repeat those ḥadīth while the secretary sat behind the curtain again. He was found to repeat all the ḥadīth without adding or omitting anything, even narrating the ḥadīth in the same order as before. Imām Dhahabī commented, ‘This is real memory.’²²

Hishām b. ‘Ammār related that al-Walid related to him from Sa‘īd that the Caliph Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik asked Zuhrī to dictate ḥadīth to some of his (Hisham’s) sons. Zuhrī dictated 400 ḥadīth reports from memory. After leaving the Caliph, Zuhrī sought out other ḥadīth students and dictated to them these same reports. After a month or so, Zuhrī met the Caliph Hishām again, who complained that he had lost that writing in which he had Zuhrī’s ḥadīth recorded. Zuhrī said, ‘Don’t worry,’ and asked for paper and dictated those reports again. Hishām later found his first book, and, after comparing the dictated reports, commented ‘He did not miss a single letter.’²³

¹⁶ Al-Rāmahurmuzī, *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil*, pg 360.

¹⁷ Abū al-‘Āliyah al-Riyāḥī Raff’ b. Mahrān of Baṣrah (d. 90/708) was a noted early Qur’ānic scholar who read the Qur’ān to Ubayy, Zayd b. Thābit, and Ibn ‘Abbās. It is even said that he recited to ‘Umar. Those who recited to him included Shu‘ayb b. Ḥabbāb, Rabī’ b. Anas, and A‘mash.

¹⁸ *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil*, pg 360.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ḥammād b. Zayd was a Persian-origin ḥadīth expert of Baṣrah, Iraq.

²¹ Abū Hurayrah did not like his ḥadīth to be written down.

²² al-Dhahabī, *Ṣiyar al-‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol 2, pg 598.

²³ al-Fasawī, *Al-ma‘rifah wa al-tārīkh*, vol 1, pg 640.

Mughīrah b. Miq̄sam al-Ḍabbī (d.133/750)²⁴ stated: ‘It never happened that my ears heard something and then I forgot it.’ Dhahabī comments on this: ‘By God, this is real memory and retention, which doesn’t come from studying a book multiple times in order to present it, only to stumble over it, and then having to re-study it in order to memorize it again, only to forget it, or most of it, yet again.’²⁵

Abū Bakr b. Shādhān relates that Abū Bakr the son of Abū Dāwūd was visiting Sijistān²⁶ for some business. When he was asked to narrate ḥadīth, he responded that he did not bring his books. They insisted by saying: ‘Does the son of Abū Dāwūd need books?’ This excited him and he eventually obliged and ended up narrating 30,000 ḥadīth from his memory. Some in Baghdad were jealous and hired a courier for six dinārs to go to Sijistān and write a copy of all the ḥadīth that were dictated, and bring them back to Baghdad to compare them with the originals in the possession of ḥadīth experts. Abū Bakr states that they found only six mistakes, three of them his own and three from his teacher (who had dictated them wrong).²⁷

There is also an interesting anecdote that reveals the extent of this phenomenon of memorizing ḥadīth among even laypersons. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201)²⁸ relates in his work *al-Adhkiyā* that Naṣr b. ‘Alī al-Jahḍamī of Baṣrah stated:²⁹

I had a neighbor who was a party crasher (ṭufaylī),³⁰ and he was one of the best-looking and best-spoken people, and the best-perfumed and most

²⁴ Great jurist, ḥadīth scholar, and junior Follower from Kūfah, who was a student of Ḥammād, Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī, Sha‘bī, and Mujāhid. He was blind and known for his perfect memory of what he heard.

²⁵ *Siyar*, vol 6, pg 11.

²⁶ There are two accounts of this story referencing a visit to either Isfahan or Sijistān, but the former is correct.

²⁷ Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar*, vol 13, pg 224-5.

²⁸ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad was a Ḥanbalī jurist, scholar and judge from Baghdad who happens to be probably the single most prolific author in our tradition, as Dhahabī affirmed: ‘I have not known anyone amongst the scholars to have written as much as he did.’

²⁹ An analysis of this incident served as the inspiration for al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s humorous work *Al-taṭfīl wa ḥikāyat al-ṭufayliyyīn*, translated by Emily Selove as *The Art of Party-Crashing in Medieval Iraq*.

³⁰ The art of party-crashing earned its name from Ṭufayl b. Zallāl, a famous figure of the Ghaṭafān clan in Kūfah who used to attend parties uninvited, for which he became famous and became known as ‘Ṭufayl al-‘arā’is’ (‘Ṭufayl of the parties’). The notion of party crashing was thus named after him. It is also said that his father would carry food out from parties, so

finely-dressed as well. It was his custom to follow me when I was invited to a gathering, and people did honours to him on my account because they assumed that he was my friend.

Now it came to about that Ja'far b. al-Qāsim al-Hāshimī, prince of Baṣrah, wanted to celebrate the circumcision of one of his sons, and I said to myself, 'I'm probably going to get an invitation from the prince, and this man is probably going to follow me again. By God, if he follows me this time, I'm really going to teach him a lesson!'

And I was like that right up until the arrival of the messenger with the invitation.

No sooner had I put on my robe and stepped out the door than I saw the party-crasher waiting for me by the gate of his house, ready to go. I set off, and he followed me. After we entered the prince's house, we sat for a while, and then the food was called for and tables brought, and everybody was pressed around the table because there were so many people.

I proceeded to one of the tables with the party-crasher at my heels, but just as he reached out his hand and began to grab the food, I said: 'Durust b. Ziyād related to us from Abān b. Ṭāriq from Nāfi' from Ibn 'Umar that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, 'He who enters a gathering to which he was not invited and eats their food enters as a thief and leaves as a looter.'

When he heard that he said, 'By God, I thumb my nose at you, Abū 'Amr! And there is not one man among this crowd but thinks that you just insinuated something about him! Aren't you ashamed to talk like that at the very table of one who feeds the people, and to play the miser with food that isn't even yours? And aren't you ashamed to cite the unreliable ḥadīth transmitter Durust b. Ziyād on the authority of Abān b. Ṭāriq, who is unreliable as well? And yet on his authority you pass judgments that go against the Prophet himself—for the thief's punishment is cutting of the hands and the looter's is as the imām sees fit—but according to this ḥadīth related to us by Abū 'Āṣim al-Nabīl, on the authority of Ibn Jurayj, on the authority of Abū al-Zubayr, on the authority of Jābir, that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: Food for one is enough for two, and food for two is enough for four, and food for four is enough for eight. And this is a sound isnād.'

this notion was named after the father (zallah). Thus, party-crashing came from the son, sneaking food out from the father.

Naṣr b. ‘Alī said, ‘I was dumbfounded, and no reply came to my mind. When we left the party, he crossed to the other side of the street after he had been walking behind me, and I heard him say:

‘He who thinks to begin a war and suffer no harm: think again!’³¹

Preserving the Ḥadīth through Writing

Not everybody is endowed with strong reiterative memories, and so the majority of people must rely on writing for their knowledge. Mu‘āwiyah b. Qurrah stated: ‘Whoever does not write knowledge down will never be considered a true scholar.’³² Isma‘īl b. ‘Abd al-Malik relates: ‘I was sitting with ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ when someone came and narrated a ḥadīth, and he immediately informed his son to write it down.’³³ Sufyān al-Thawrī relates from Maṣūfūr that he said to the great jurist Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī: ‘The ḥadīth of Sālim b. Abī Jadd are more complete than yours.’ He replied: ‘That is because he used to write them down.’³⁴

Ḥadīth were written down in the time of the Companions, and even in the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him. The Qur’ān is filled with reference to or mention of reading (qirā‘ah), writing, and the pen. The Prophet did stop his Companions from writing down his ḥadīth in the early days of Islam lest they should muddle his words with the words of the Qur’ān. However, when the Qur’ānic style and its unique manner of expression became more established in the hearing of the Muslims he allowed them to write down ḥadīth.

There is an abundance of evidence that prove the writing of ḥadīth in his lifetime. The Prophet sent letters and documents to neighbouring kings and to his governors and officials. Many of these contain details of zakat and hudud (such as the rules of qīṣāṣ and blood money). Also, some of his sermons were written down. Abū Hurayrah reports the following: When God granted victory to His Prophet over the people of Makkah, he stood up among the people and, after praising God and glorifying Him, said: ‘Surely, God had

³¹ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Taṭfīl*, vol 1, pg 126-7. Translation taken from *The Art of Party-Crashing*, pg 114-7.

³² Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*: Tarjumat Mu‘āwiyah; Sunan al-Dārimī: Muqaddimah—Bāb man rakhaṣa fī kitābat al-‘ilm.

³³ *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil*, pg 371.

³⁴ Sunan al-Dārimī: Muqaddimah—Bāb man lam yara kitābat al-ḥadīth.

prevented the elephants from entering Makkah, and now has given authority to His Messenger and the believers over it. Fighting was previously forbidden for anyone before me and was made permissible for me for a part of the day, and it will not be allowed for anyone after me. Its game should not be chased, its thorny bushes should not be uprooted, and picking up its fallen things is not allowed except for one who makes public announcement for it. He whose relative is murdered has the option either to accept a compensation for it or to retaliate.’

‘Abbās said, ‘Except idhkhir (a type of grass), for we use it in our graves and houses?’ The Prophet affirmed: ‘Except idhkhir.’ Abu Shāh of Yemen stood up and said, ‘O Messenger of God, write it for me!’ The Prophet ordered, ‘Write it for Abu Shāh.’

Al-Walīd b. Muslim, a sub-narrator in the isnād asked Awzā’ī, ‘What did he mean when he said, ‘Write it for me’? He replied, ‘This sermon which he had heard from the Prophet.’³⁵

The Companions had personal compilations (ṣaḥīfah, plural ṣuḥuf) in which they wrote down ḥadīth, and many of these continued to circulate in later generations.³⁶ Many of these were discovered and published, such as the Ṣaḥīfah of Hammām b. Munabbih. Dhahabī writes in his biography that ‘he was the author of that sound ṣaḥīfah which he wrote from the reports of Abū Hurayrah and consisted of 140 reports which Ma‘mar (d. 153/770)³⁷ narrated from him. This has been published numerous times, including the following editions:

- Ṣaḥīfah Hammām b. Munabbih. Edited by Dr. Muḥammad Ḥamīdullah. Damascus: Majallat al-Majma‘ al-‘Arabī. 1954.

³⁵Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī: Kitāb al-‘ilm—Bāb kitābat al-‘ilm; Kitāb fī al-luqaṭah—Bāb kayfa tu‘arrafu luqaṭatu ahl Makkah; Kitāb al-diyāt—Bāb man qutila lahū qatīl; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Kitāb al-Ḥajj—Bāb taḥrīm Makkah waṣaydiḥā wa khalāhā wa shajariḥā wa luqaṭatihā.

³⁶ Many Companions and Successors were known to have kept written compilations known as ṣaḥīfah collections, which survived for many years but were mostly absorbed into later compilations. These early ad hoc collections, written on papyrus, parchment and early materials, followed no uniform pattern or methodology, and were primarily memory aids for their writers, containing skeletons of ḥadīth, often mixed with supplications and notes. Emphasis at this stage was mostly on oral transmission. At least 50 Companions were known to have possessed such collections. —Dr. Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*.

³⁷Ma‘mar b. Rāshid was an early ḥadīth scholar from Baṣrah whose most famous student was ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī.

- Şahîfah Hammām b. Munabbih. Paris: Islamic Center of Paris. 1979.
- Şahîfah Hammām b. Munabbih ‘an Abī Hurayrah. Edited by Dr. Rif‘at Fawzī ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Cairo: Maktabah al-Khānjī. 1406/1985.
- Al-Şahîfah al-Şahîḥah: Şahîfah Hammām b. Munabbih. Edited by ‘Alī Ḥasan al-Ḥalabī. Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī. 1407/1986.

There was also a well-known şahîfah of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Bukhārī relates through Sha‘bī from Abū Juḥayfah that he asked ‘Alī if he had any book. ‘Alī replied, ‘No, except for Allah’s Book, the understanding that is bestowed upon a Muslim individual, and this şahîfah.’ He was asked, ‘What is in this şahîfah?’ ‘Alī replied, ‘The rules of blood-money, ransom for captives, and the law that no Muslim is killed in retaliation for a disbeliever.’³⁸

Al-Şahîfah al-Şādiqah was the personal collection of ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āş. Bukhārī relates through Wahb b. Munnabih from his brother that he heard Abū Hurayrah say: ‘There was no one with more ḥadīth from the Prophet than I, except for ‘Abdullah b. ‘Amr, for he used to write, and I did not use to write.’³⁹ This work earned its title (‘the Truthful Collection’) because ‘Abdullah wrote these reports from the Prophet himself, and thus it was the most trustworthy reporting from him. This collection was so dear to ‘Abdullah that he used to say, ‘Nothing from this world entices me except for the Şādiqah (the şahîfah I wrote from the Prophet, peace be upon him,) and Waḥṭ (the land my father ‘Amr b. al-‘Āş gave in charity)’.⁴⁰

Sa’d b. ‘Ubādah al-Anşārī also had a şahîfah. Tirmidhī relates through Rabī‘ah b. Abī ‘Abd al-Raḥmān from Suhayl from Abū Şāliḥ from his father from Abū Hurayrah, who said: ‘The Prophet passed judgement based upon an oath along with a single witness.’ Rabī‘ah said: A son of Sa’d b. ‘Ubādah said to me: ‘We found in a book of Sa’d that the Prophet passed judgement based upon an oath along with a single witness.’⁴¹

‘Abdullah b. Abī Awfā also possessed a şahîfah. Bukhārī relates through Mūsā b. ‘Uqbah from Sālim Abī al-Naḍr that ‘Abdullah b. Abī Awfā

³⁸Şahîḥ Bukhārī: Kitāb al-‘ilm—Bāb kitābat al-‘ilm; Kitāb al-jihādwa al-sayr—Bāb fakkāk al-asīr.

³⁹Şahîḥ Bukhārī: Kitāb al-‘ilm—Bāb kitābat al-‘ilm.

⁴⁰Sunan al-Dārimī: Muqaddimah—Bāb man rakhaşa fī kitābat al-‘ilm.

⁴¹Tirmidhī: Kitāb al-aḥkām ‘an rasūlillāh—Bāb māja’ afī al-yamīn ma‘a al-shāhid.

wrote—which I read myself—that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: ‘When you meet them, be steadfast.’⁴²

In addition, there were written collections of Samurah b. Jundub⁴³, Abū Rāfi‘ the client of the Prophet,⁴⁴ Abū Hurayrah,⁴⁵ Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī,⁴⁶ and Jābir b. ‘Abdullah. As for Jābir’s ṣaḥīfah, Ma‘mar relates that Qatādah once asked Sa‘īd b. Abī ‘Urūbah to hold the Qur’ān open while he reviewed sūrah al-Baqarah. After reciting the sūrah without a single mistake, Qatādah commented, ‘I have memorized Jābir’s ṣaḥīfah even more firmly than I memorized sūrah al-Baqarah, for it used to be read out to him.’⁴⁷

In the generation of the Followers (tābi‘ūn), many individuals became known for ḥadīth such as ‘Alqamah, Aswad, ‘Ubaydah b. ‘Amr al-Salmānī, Masrūq, Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī, ‘Āmir al-Sha‘bī, Sa‘īd b. Jubayr, Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab, ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr, ‘Ubaydullah b. ‘Abdullah b. ‘Utbah b. Mas‘ūd, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Muḥammad b. Sīrīn, Muḥammad b. Jabr, Rajā’ b. Ḥaywah, ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ, Nāfi‘ the freed slave of Ibn ‘Umar, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl, and Hishām b. ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr.

⁴² Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī: Kitāb al-jihād wa al-sayr—Bāb al-ṣabr‘inda al-qitāl. It is also found in fuller form in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī: Kitāb al-jihād wa al-sayr—Bāb al-jannah taḥta bāriqah al-suyūf; Kitāb al-jihād wa al-sayr—Bāb kāna al-nabī idhā lam yuqātil awwala al-nahār akhkhara al-qitāl; Kitāb al-jihād wa al-sayr—Bāb lā tamannaw liqā al-‘aduww; Kitāb al-tamannī—Bāb karāhiyah tamannī liqā al-‘aduww; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Kitāb al-jihād wa al-sayr—Bāb karāhah tamannī liqā al-‘aduww.

This ḥadīth is related through a letter from ‘Abdullah b. AbīAwfā to ‘Umar b. ‘Ubaydullah, which Sālim the secretary of ‘Umar happened to read. Ibn Ḥajar comments that this proves the validity of mukātabah (written correspondence) as a form of ḥadīth transmission, because Sālim had not heard this ḥadīth from ‘Abdullah but read it in his letter. Nawawī goes even further to say that the majority of scholars of all disciplines affirmed the validity of mukātabah and ijāzah (permission), and the fact that both Bukhārī and Muslim related this ḥadīth lends support to that.

The full ḥadīth reveals that the Prophet in one of his battles delayed the march of his army until the sun declined and delivered the following address before marching out: O people! Do not actively seek to face the enemy (in battle) but ask God to save you, and if you do face the enemy, then be steadfast. Know that Paradise lies under the shades of swords! O Allah! Revealer of the Book, Mover of clouds, and Vanquisher of the confederates, defeat them and bestow victory upon us.

⁴³ Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol 4, pg 236.

⁴⁴ Al-Khaṭīb, *al-Kifāyah fī ‘ilm al-riwāyah*, pg 330.

⁴⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi‘ bayān al-‘ilm waḥḍihī*, vol 1, pg 324.

⁴⁶ Manuscript: Maktabah Shahīd ‘Alī, Turkey. See Dr. Ṣubḥī al-Sāmūrā‘ī’s introduction to al-Ṭībī’s *sal-Khulāṣah fī ṣūl al-ḥadīth*.

⁴⁷ Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol 7, pg 229.

Among the junior Followers, there were six individuals whose ḥadīth comprised the bulk of the circulating ḥadīth isnāds: Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī of Madīnah (d. 124/742), ‘Amr b. Dīnār of Makkah (d. 126/744),⁴⁸ Qatādah b. Di‘āmah al-Sadūsī of Baṣrah (d. 117/735),⁴⁹ Yaḥyāb. Abī Kathīr (d. 129/747) of Baṣrah,⁵⁰ Abū Ishāq al-Sabī‘ī (d. 127/745) of Kūfah,⁵¹ and Sulaymān b. Mahrān al-A‘mash of Kūfah (d. 148/765).⁵²

Many Muslims began to travel widely in order to seek out ḥadīth, beginning with the Companions. This phenomenon only strengthened with time. Jābir travelled for one month on his mount to hear one single ḥadīth. He travelled to Jerusalem to hear ḥadīth from Abū al-Dardā’. Makḥūl traveled to Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Arabia to hear ḥadīth. Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab (d. 94/715).⁵³ They used to travel continually day and night, just to hear a few, or

⁴⁸ Great Makkan scholar who inherited the position of the muftī of the Ḥaram after ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 115/733). His greatest student was the muḥaddith of Makkah Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah.

⁴⁹ Being blind since the age of four, he was an authority in four sciences: tafṣīr, history, fiqh and ḥadīth. Once he read Sūrah al-Baqarah to a student who was holding a mushaf, without a single mistake, and told his student, “I heard all the ḥadīth of Jābir from his Ṣaḥīfah once and knew them as well as I know this sūrah.” According to one estimation that consisted of 400 ḥadīth. Qatādah came to learn from Sa‘īd b al-Musayyab the senior Follower of Madīnah, and after four days, Sa‘īd pushed his chest and said, ‘O blind one, leave me, for you have taken all my ḥadīth and not left any!’ Qatādah was the teacher of Abū Ḥanīfah, Sufyān al-al-Thawrī and Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah among others. He died of the plague in Wāsiṭ.

⁵⁰ He was a pious scholar of Baṣrah, considered by Shu‘bah and Imām Aḥmad to be more knowledgeable than Zuhrī. Ibn Ḥibbān reports that whenever he attended a funeral, he would not eat or speak for some time. He had witnessed Anas b. Malik praying in the Ḥaram. He spent ten years seeking knowledge in Madīnah and used to say, ‘Knowledge cannot be attained with bodily comfort.’

⁵¹ Born 34/35, he met many Companions but narrated ḥadīth from senior Successors. ‘Alī ibn al-Madīni counted 300 teachers for him. He was known for extensive worship, completing recitation of the Qur’ān every three days. He was the most knowledgeable person in the reports and jurisprudence of ‘Alī and Ibn Mas‘ūd, so much so that it was said, ‘Sitting with Abū Ishāq was like sitting with ‘Alī.’ He even remembered a khutbah of ‘Alī from his childhood. He became blind in later life and suffered from weaker memory but was still deemed reliable with rare mistakes.

⁵² Client of the Asad clan, he was a leading scholar of Kūfah in knowledge, practice, piety, and worship. He was a proficient expert and had broad-ranging knowledge. He became blind in later life. He was cheerful with his Qur’ān students and slightly harsh with the ḥadīth students, with many interesting anecdotes related from him in this regard. Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah said: ‘A‘mash was the most knowledge of people in Qur’ān, ḥadīth and fiqh.’ Wakī‘ said: ‘A‘mash has not missed the opening takbīr of the prayer in over seventy years.’ Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān used to say: ‘He was a supreme scholar of Islam.’

⁵³ Son-in-law of Abū Hurayrah who was deemed by Imām Aḥmad and others as the single greatest figure among the generation of the Followers.

even a single, ḥadīth. Eventually, this became a widespread practice. The best work documenting these travels is al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's al-Riḥlah fī ṭalab al-ḥadīth.

A manifestation of the diligence in preserving ḥadīth was the practice of reviewing ḥadīth with others after hearing them from a teacher. 'Aṭā' relates: We used to hear ḥadīth from Jābir, and after we left, we would review them with one another. We found that Abū al-Zubayr was the best of us in preserving ḥadīth.⁵⁴

'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Mājishūn relates from Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd: I asked my father Sa'd b. Ibrāhīm: 'Why has Zuhrī surpassed you?' He replied: 'Zuhrī used to attend the classes in the front rows and never in the back ones. He used to discuss lessons with students, not ignoring even the youngest or oldest student, or anyone in between. Afterwards, he would knock on the doors of the people of Madīnah, not leaving anyone behind, young or old, including men, women and children, and even the ladies within their tents.'⁵⁵

Formal Documentation of the Ḥadīth:

'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote to his governor in Madīnah Abū Bakr b. Ḥazm, as previously mentioned, asking him to begin writing ḥadīth as he feared the decline of scholarship and learning.

Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī played an unprecedented role in spreading ḥadīth with meticulous preservation of chains and texts, and complete mastery over knowledge. His written collections survived in the libraries of the Umayyad rulers. Ma'mar b. Rāshid reported that when al-Walīd was killed, many books containing Zuhrī's ḥadīth reports were brought out from his libraries and transported on the back of many animals due to their great number.⁵⁶ In this manner, Zuhrī laid the path for those who followed him in the second Hijrī century.

Those who were most prominent in authoring works of ḥadīth included the following: Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Jurayj of

⁵⁴ Al-Khatib, al-Jāmi' li akhlāq al-rāwī, vol 1, pg 238.

⁵⁵ Al-Ramahurmuzi, al-muhaddith al-fāsil, pg 360-1.

⁵⁶ Ibn 'Asākir, Tarīkh Damishq: biography of Ma'mar. Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol 2, pg 389.

Makkah (d. 150/767),⁵⁷ Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq of Madīnah (d. 150/767), Ma‘mar b. Rāshid of Yemen (d. 153/770),⁵⁸ Sa‘īd b. Abī ‘Urūbah of Baṣrah (d. 156/772), Abū ‘Amr ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Awzā‘ī of Syria (d. 157/774),⁵⁹ Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Dhi‘b of Madīnah (d. 158/775),⁶⁰ Rabī‘ b. Ṣabīḥ of Baṣrah (d. 160/777),⁶¹ Shu‘bah b. al-Ḥajjāj of Baṣrah (d. 160/777),⁶² Sufyān al-Thawrī of Kūfah (d. 161/778), Layth b. Sa‘d of Egypt (d. 175/791),⁶³ Hammād b. Salamah of Baṣrah (d. 167/783),⁶⁴ Imām Mālik b. Anas of Madīnah (d. 179/795), ‘Abdullah b. al-Mubārak of Khurāsān (d. 181/797),⁶⁵ Hushaym b. Bashīr of Wāsiṭ (d. 188), Jarīr b. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd of Rayy (d. 188), ‘Abdullah b. Wahb of Egypt (d. 197/813),⁶⁶ Sufyān b.

⁵⁷ Better known as Ibn Jurayj, from his Byzantine grandfather Georgios, he was a great scholar who studied with ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ for 18 years, and also with ‘Amr b. Dīnār, Muḥāhid, and others. His students included the historian al-Wāqidī and Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah.

⁵⁸ Persian-origin ḥadīth expert of Baṣrah who settled in Ṣan‘ā’, Yemen.

⁵⁹ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Awzā‘ī was a great jurist of the Levant (born in Syria, settled in present-day Lebanon) and founder of a legal school that did not ultimately survive.

⁶⁰ Better known as Ibn Abī Dhi‘b, he was a pious scholar of Madīnah considered to be on a par with Imām Mālik and, according to Imām Aḥmad, even close to Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab in stature. Imām Shāfi‘ī commented that he did not regret missing out on any teacher except for Layth b. Sa‘d and Ibn Abī Dhi‘b. His teachers included ‘Ikrimah and Zuhri (though he was not considered reliable in the ḥadīth of Zuhri). He was extremely generous towards everyone, not criticizing anyone and allowing all to sit in his assemblies. Because of such associations, he was falsely accused of having Qadari beliefs. He was extremely devout, fasting on alternate days and praying during the night. His clothing and food were humble, and he survived for days on bread and oil. His student al-Wāqidī remarked that if he were told that the Day of Judgement were tomorrow, he would not have changed a thing. He used to memorize his ḥadīth, not relying on books. He was bold and did not fear advising rulers to their face, including Abū Jafar al-Manṣūr. He died in Kūfah.

⁶¹ Ḥadīth expert of Baṣrah who related from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn, ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāḥ. He was reportedly the first person to organize ḥadīth writing into chapter divisions. He participated in the courageous sea conquest of the Indian city of Bārbad under the general ‘Abd al-Malik b. Shihāb al-Misma‘ī during the reign of the ‘Abbāssid ruler al-Mahdī (775—785). The victorious Muslim army was afflicted with scurvy, a disease that commonly afflicted poorly nourished sailors, causing 1,000 deaths in their ranks, including that of Rabī‘.

⁶² Shu‘bah b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/777) was a prominent ḥadīth scholar of Iraq who was one of the first to earn the title the “King of Ḥadīth” (*amīr al-mu‘minīn fil ḥadīth*). When he died, Sufyān al-Thawrī remarked that ḥadīth itself had died.

⁶³ He was a great jurist and ḥadīth scholar of Egypt about whom Imām Shāfi‘ī famously said: ‘Layth was more knowledgeable than Mālik.’

⁶⁴ Muftī of Baṣrah and ḥadīth expert who was the teacher of Sībawayh.

⁶⁵ A noble scholar of ḥadīth and fiqh from the early generations, author of numerous beneficial works, known for great piety, worship, and courage. He died after returning from battle with the Byzantines in 181.

⁶⁶ Great Egyptian jurist who was a student of Imām Mālik and loyal proponent of his fiqh in Egypt and throughout the world.

‘Uyaynah of Makkah, Wakī‘ b. al-Jarrāḥ of Kūfah (d. 197/813),⁶⁷ and ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī of Yemen (d. 211/827).⁶⁸

Those who followed them in the following generations included the great ḥadīth experts such as Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), Ibn Abī Shaybah (d. 235/849),⁶⁹ Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, ‘Alī b. al-Madīnī, and the authors of the six canonical ḥadīth works. These works are documented in detail in Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dehlawī’s *Bustān al-muḥaddithīn*—which I had the honor of editing and translating into Arabic from Persian⁷⁰—and Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Kattānī’s *al-Risālah al-mustaṭrifah*, among others.

Compilation of the Books of Ḥadīth:

Around a century after the death of the Prophet, Muslims recognized the need to compile the sayings and practice of the Prophet, peace be upon him, into reliable written texts, so that they could be saved from alterations and improper additions, even fabrications. In this way, the teachings of the Messenger, peace be upon him, also became a book, or series of books. Again, as God willed, the Community has unanimously accepted the wisdom of that. There are many collections of the ḥadīth of the famous Companions, Followers and those after them. Among them are those which have been widely circulated among the scholars.

They are several classes:

1-The first among them are those which by consensus deemed to be the most sound books. They are: *Muwatta* of Imam Malik (d. 179 AH), *Sahih* of Imam Bukhari (d. 256 AH) and *Sahih* of Imam Muslim (d. 261 AH).

⁶⁷Wakī‘ b. al-Jarrāḥ was a renowned scholar of Iraq known for his great piety, prodigious memory, and aloofness from the rulers, who was a student of Abū Ḥanīfah and Sufyān al-Thawrī, and, later, the teacher of Shāfi‘ī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal among others.

⁶⁸ Persian-origin ḥadīth expert who lived in Yemen and was a student of Ma‘mar b. Rāshid (d. 153/770). He authored the famous *Muṣannaf* ḥadīth collection, and his students included Yaḥyā b. Ma‘īn, Imām Aḥmad, and ‘Alī al-Madīnī.

⁶⁹Abū Bakr ‘Abdullah b. Muḥammad b. Abī Shaybah was great ḥadīth scholar of Kūfah. He inherited the teaching position of ‘Abdullah b. Mas‘ūd in the masjid. After Ibn Mas‘ūd, it was occupied by ‘Alqamah, followed by Ibrāhīm, followed by Manṣūr, followed by Sufyān al-Thawrī, followed by Wakī‘ and then Ibn Abī Shaybah.

⁷⁰ London: Turath Publishing. 1428/2007.

2- Next to them are: Sunan of Abu Dawud (d. 275 AH), al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH), al-Nasa'i (d. 59 AH), Ibn Majah (d. 273 AH). They contain sound (sahih), good (hasan), weak (da'if), munkar and even a few fabricated ḥadīths.

3- The third class are those books which have lax conditions of soundness like Sahih of Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 AH), Sahih Ibn Hibban (d. 354 AH) and al-Mustadrak of al-Hakim (d. 405 AH). They consist of a great deal of da'if, munkar and even fabricated hadiths.

Besides them there are hundreds of collections, which contain much useful information about the Prophet and details of religion. But they have mixed sound and non sound information.

The first class are the collection of sound and reliable ḥadīth. However, the methodology of their compilers should be understood properly. For sometimes they use some information which does not itself qualify as sound by their strict criteria; but they use them for support or to clarify some technical or other problems in the main parts of the hadith, and this information needs to be handled more carefully. Here, I am going to present a brief introduction of this first category, namely the Muwatta' and the two saḥīḥs.

Al-Muwatta'

The Muwatta' of Imam Malik (93-179) is the earliest among these three. Over a long life, Imam Malik polished and perfected it. The Muwatta' is the most authentic record of the lived practice of Islam, the fiqh, of the people of Madinah. Madinah, as the city of the Prophet, the rightly guided caliphs and the best jurists and scholars of Islam, deserved that the practices of its people should be recorded and preserved. Imam Malik made every effort to connect those practices to the Qur'an, to the most sound of Prophetic ḥadīth, and to the judgements and rulings of the rightly guided caliphs, other Companions, and the best of those who followed them in doing good.

Imam Malik was particularly concerned to include the most sound and authentic reports. That is why Imam Shafi'i said: 'There is no book on the face of the earth after the Book of God more sound than al-Muwatta'. One of the isnads of al-Muwatta', namely Malik from Nafi' from Ibn 'Umar is

honoured by Imam Bukhari and many others as ‘the golden chain of narration’.

This authenticity of al-Muwatta’ that made scholars from all over the world travel to Madinah and learn it from Malik himself. There is no school of Islamic law that has not been influenced by the Muwatta’. Imam Abu Hanfiah’s great student, Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Shaybani, stayed in Madinah for three years and learnt al-Muwatta’ from Malik, and later narrated it. His version is still preserved and has been published many times. Imam al-Shafi’i learnt it by heart and then came to Madinah to study it with Malik himself. Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal did not meet Malik, but he received al-Muwatta’ from ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Mahdi and others who narrated it from Malik, and Ahmad included its hadiths in his al-Musnad. Imam Bukhari received al-Muwatta’ from many of his teachers who were students of Malik, and he included in his *ṣaḥīḥ* the version of ‘Abdullah b. Yusuf al-Tinnisi, ‘Abdullah b. Maslamah al-Qa’nabi and others. Imam Muslim included the version of Yahya b. Yahya al-Tamimi al-Naysaburi and parts of ‘Abdullah b. Maslamah al-Qa’nabi. Abu Dawud included the version of ‘Abdullah b. Maslamah al-Qa’nabi. And so on. Thus the strength and truth of book has flowed into all the books of and about the Sunnah that were composed after it.

Besides the traditions, Imam Malik discusses issues of fiqh, and mentions the opinions of the people of Madinah and his own arguments. In this way al-Muwatta’ can be considered also as the first book of fiqh. In those cases where there is no ḥadīth, Imam Malik follows the practice of the people of Madinah. Sometimes, he prefers the practice (‘amal) over a khabar wahid (singleton report). As he used to say: ‘a thousand from another thousand is stronger and safer than one from one.’ There are also a very few cases where Imam Malik has included a ḥadīth in al-Muwatta’ but he does not rule by it. Upon being asked about this, he said: ‘the reason I included the ḥadīth in my book, even though I do not follow it, is that the people should know that I left (i.e. did not follow) it knowingly. Otherwise people might have blamed Malik for not knowing the hadith in question.’

Since Imam Malik only included the ḥadīths of Madinah, the book lacks many other hadiths. However, there are a few ḥadīths from other cities, from the people who travelled to Madinah and Malik could trust them and learn from them. The Companions had settled, in the time of ‘Umar and later, in Kufah, Basrah, Syria and Egypt and they taught people the sunnahs that they knew. Imam Malik does not have many of the ḥadīths that record those sunnahs. According to Imam Shafi’i, Imam Malik lacks around thirty ḥadīths

that are relevant for legal rulings. This is a point for which Imam Malik was criticized by his contemporary, the great Egyptian mujtahid Imam al-Layth b. Sa`d, and by the people of Iraq and others.

Later, the fear grew that, if this way of following the practice of their own cities continued - as Malikis followed Madinan practice, and Hanafis followed Kufan practice - then Islam might become divided into different regional versions. That is what led Imam `Abd al-Rahman Ibn Mahdi to emphasize the importance of hadith, and to affirm that a practice is to be considered authoritative for all Muslims when it is supported by a ḥadīth with an unbroken chain of narration going back to the Prophet. This idea was further developed by Imam al-Shafi`i, then by other people of ḥadīth.

Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim are the most prominent among those who established the strictest rules to verify ḥadīths, and they did so to the highest standards of rigorous, professional scholarship. As I said, Imam Malik's Muwatta' had compiled reports that were already of this standard, and so they flowed into the later ṣaḥīḥ collections of ḥadīths.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari:

The Ṣaḥīḥ of Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256) has for over 1200 years held its reputation as the most reliable resource for those who want to know how the Qur'an is to be understood and lived. That is, this ṣaḥīḥ is the most reliable record of how God's Messenger, peace be upon him, understood and explained and put into practice every aspect of the mission entrusted to him. We all know that Imam al-Bukhari lived his whole life as an Islamic scholar of the utmost piety and the utmost professionalism. He never compromised his standards for judging a report about the Prophet as ṣaḥīḥ, or less than that, or the opposite of that. He never relaxed his vigilance and concern for how a report might be understood and applied to shape the rules and norms of Muslim life. These are matters well-known and accepted by near universal consensus among Sunni Muslims. What is not well-known is the how and why this is so. Muslims generally do not have a clear, concrete grasp of how he went about the task of recording, compiling and arranging, out of a huge mass of available material, those hadiths that were definitely ṣaḥīḥ and of which the

umma had need. I cannot mention all those details in this short treatise, but nevertheless I shall two major characteristics of his book⁷¹:

Bukhari's criteria for selection of the most sound ḥadīths– the criteria that he applied when choosing to include a ḥadīth or exclude it, and when placing the ḥadīths in the final arrangement of his compilation. His consistency in the application of his criteria. How some people, including scholars in modern times, misunderstood his methods. The good and the bad among critiques of Bukhari's work.

Bukhari's understanding of the meanings of the ḥadīth and deriving sunnahs and legal rulings from the ḥadīth. During the 'Abbasid period, fiqh shaped the way hadīths were classified and ordered: Bukhari was able to rise above the preoccupations and preferences of the jurists and understood the ḥadīth in a much broader and deeper way than either they did or contemporary scholars specialized in ḥadīth disciplines.

Here, I want to give you a little taste, a sip or two, from the ocean of Bukhari's profound knowledge and judgement about Prophetic ḥadīths. As I said, he combined the utmost professionalism with the utmost piety. What that combining means is that he never lost sight of the purpose of what he was doing; he did not put rules and procedures ahead of the goal the rules and procedures were designed to serve. To understand this, imagine a nurse in a hospital who has to serve lunch to an elderly patient. The nurse brings the lunch and places it on the table and wheels the table over to the patient. A little while later the nurse comes back and, seeing the food untouched, says "Not hungry, dear? Never mind. Perhaps you'll want to eat by tea-time", and then takes the food away. The nurse has not taken the trouble to find out if this patient is able to feed himself, perhaps is even too ill to explain his need. That is an example of following a procedure without caring about the purpose for it. When Imam al-Bukhari applied his criteria for judging the soundness of reports, he did so for every single report individually, and looked into every aspect of the relevant information that might not be covered by merely mechanical application of the criteria. He took responsibility and used his judgement, informed as that judgement was by his vast knowledge of ḥadīths and their narrators and the relationships within and across the overlapping chains of narrators. Here are a couple of examples:

When it comes to the ḥadīths of the famous teachers of ḥadīth, Bukhari accepts their ḥadīths only through those students who had accompanied them

⁷¹ Those who are interested in learning more about the methodology of Imam Bukhari in his Ṣaḥīḥ, they may consult my work 'Madkhal ila Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari'.

for a long time and were known to be accurate of memory and with good understanding of what they memorized. For the ḥadīths of al-Zuhri he usually depends on Malik ibn Anas, Sufyan ibn `Uyaynah, Ma`mar ibn Rashid, Shu`ayb ibn Abi Hamzah, Yunus, `Uqayl and few others. But Bukhari accepts hardly any ḥadīth of al-Zuhri from al-Layth, because he knows that al-Layth did not accompany al-Zuhri over a long period.

Bukhari's thorough research about ḥadīth narrators included knowing and understanding ḥadīths which they had preserved well. He accepts from them only those ḥadīths and not the rest. For example, Ma`mar is an imam, and he narrates many ḥadīths from A`mash who was one of the six pillars of ḥadīth. However, because Ma`mar did not preserve the ḥadīths of A`mash so well, Bukhari does not record any ḥadīth with this isnad. Yet, we find, some people not only accept the ḥadīths of Ma`mar from A`mash but also classify them as "sahih on the condition of Bukhari". No doubt Ma`mar and A`mash are both among the principal narrators in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari, but this particular link, Ma`mar from A`mash, did not satisfy Bukhari's conditions.

There are some frequently occurring isnads in Sahih al-Bukhari, for example: al-A`mash --Abu Salih-- Abu Hurayrah. It is said that A`mash heard one thousand ḥadīths from Abu Salih. Even so, Bukhari does not narrate all the ḥadīths with this isnad because, in some of them, he is not convinced that A`mash got them directly from Abu Salih: he has reasons to think that that there must be a missing link which is not known. Yet, again, we find many contemporary scholars, when they see a ḥadīth with this isnad that Bukhari has excluded from his Sahih, rushing to classify it as "sahih on the condition of Bukhari".

The science of ḥadīth is highly sophisticated, with general rules and sub-rules of procedure, and rules for when one rule is applied in preference to another. It requires extensive command of all the relevant information, then responsible reflection before judgement in each case individually. That is the degree of excellence that Imam Bukhari achieved in the work he did that has come down to us as his ṣaḥīḥ.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim:

It is true that, in respect of the soundness of the ḥadīth selected Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari is generally preferred over Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. However, there are certain technical points and professional qualities for which Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim is preferred over Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari. Imam Muslim (d. 261) follows the general method of ḥadīth experts in organizing and ordering his material. This makes

his compilation more useful and practical for the student of ḥadīth to grasp the methodology he uses and why, than Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari, which has a mix of orientations, to categories of fiqh as well as ḥadīth, so that the same ḥadīth (or parts of ḥadīth) will be dispersed under different fiqhi headings.

What makes it easier to follow Muslim's methodology is that he wrote a preface in which he explained his conditions. He divided the narrators into three classes:

Those who are the highest in their honesty, truth, strength of memory, accuracy and consistency. Their ḥadīths are categorized as sahih/sound.

Those who are not as strong in accuracy and consistency but share the same qualities of honesty and truth as the first class.

Those who have some weakness in accuracy and consistency, or about whom there has been some accusation of imperfect moral integrity.

Imam Muslim relies on the ḥadīths of the first class of narrators and does not leave out any of their ḥadīths. The ḥadīths in Sahih al-Bukhari are mostly from this class of narrators. As for the ḥadīths of the second class of narrators, Muslim selects the best from them as support texts for the narrations of the first class, but he is very clear that he never relies on the ḥadīths of this second class of narrators. This means that if there is a ḥadīth that is only found among narrators from the second class of narrators, Muslim will not include it in his Sahih. As for the ḥadīth of the third class of narrator or people lower than that, Muslim does not accept anything from them and has not included anything of their ḥadīths in his book.

If there is any problem in either the isnad or the *matn* (text) of the ḥadīths of the first class of narrators, Muslim explains it as fully as necessary.

Muslim starts every chapter with the isnads of the first class, and arranges them in a proper order. If one of the isnads has someone more famous for his expertise, Muslim will begin with his isnad. If all of them are equal in that respect then he will order them by: preferring the isnad of narrators from the same town over the isnad of those where students and teachers belong to different towns; preferring the isnad of a family line over isnads where the people are not from the same family; preferring the higher (shorter) isnad over the lower (longer).

After compiling the isnads of the first class of narrators he will bring the isnads of the second class, which he mentions as support. The supportive isnads (*mutaba`at*) are two types: complete support (*mutaba`ah tammah*) and incomplete (*mutaba`ah qasirah*). If the support is from beginning to end of the

isnad, then it is mutaba`ah tammah, otherwise it is mutaba`ah qasirah. In his order of presentation Muslim begins with mutaba`ah tammah, followed by mutaba`at qasirah.

Muslim is also very accurate in narrating every ḥadīth in its precise wording, while pointing to differences in wording among the narrations presented.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim has been served by several commentaries, the most famous being those of Qadi `Iyad and Imam al-Nawawi. However, these commentaries are mainly concerned with matn not isnad in the Ṣaḥīḥ, and in important respects they have failed to understand the methodology and technical critique deployed by Muslim in his selection and arrangement of ḥadīths. Accordingly, neither of these commentaries is able to defend Muslim's work against the criticism made of his compilation, of what he includes or excludes. Again both those commentaries have added chapterization and chapter headings to Muslim's compilation – something that Muslim himself did not do. In doing that, they have preferred an argument that suits the thinking of jurists rather than ḥadīth specialists and, secondly, altered the priorities that Muslim accorded to certain narrations over others.

It is important to understand the methodology of Imam Muslim in his Ṣaḥīḥ, otherwise we fail to appreciate the greatness of the work.⁷²

⁷² Those who are interested in learning more about the methodology of Imam Muslim in his Sahih, they may consult my commentary on the book, or at least the introductory of the volume.

Interview with Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi*

Mr. Sarwar Alam : As'salamualaikum!

Thank you very much for coming! We are so happy to bring you here. You are now sitting at Bangabandhu Research Centre for Islam and Inter-religious Dialogue (BRCIID) at IIUC. So, let me ask you some formal questions. We will get some answers and insights from you. We are starting with your life. Sir, can you tell us about your early life? In this respect, some of the aspects have been covered by Carla Power in her beautifully written book.

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : Oh! You have read this book.

Mr. Sarwar Alam: And the educational background and the influences that you have received from your teachers?

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : Bismillahhir Rahmanir Rahim.

First, I am [actually] very grateful to the university that they invited me to attend this silver jubilee celebration of 25 years, [you know] passing of the establishment of the university and I'm very grateful for that. I am also thankful to Mr. Sarwar for this interview. Insha'Allah, it will help people to understand me and my work and also my relationship with Bangladesh.

My name is Mohammad Akram Nadwi. I was born in a village in the district of Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, India. And you know, Jaunpur really has a very strong relationship with Bangladesh. Mawlana Qiramat Ali Jaunpuri was from Jaunpur and I visited his house as well. I am friends with his family.

* The interview was conducted at Bangabandhu Research Center for Islam and Interreligious Dialogue (BRCIID) at IIUC on 31 October 2022.

I was born there and then I studied in some Madrasahs of Jaunpur and as well as my primary education was started there. I studied Farsi (Persian language) for two years and also studied some Arabic in different Madrasahs and some English language as well. Then I went to Darul Ulum Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow where I did my Alimiyah, basically a course like BA or something like that. I completed my Alimiyah in 1981 and I passed Fadhila (specialisation) in Hadith sciences in 1983 and then I did a 1-year course on Islamic thought as well. So, I have spent 6 years at Nadwatul Ulama for study purposes. After completion of my study, I was immediately appointed as a teacher there. And I taught there for 6 years and in 1991, I was sent by Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi to Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies as a research fellow which is a part of the University of Oxford.

I did some research on the Intellectual and Social history of the Muslim world and focused basically on that of the Indian subcontinent which was you know India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. So I read the history of these regions many times and literature written on all major sources like Arabic, Urdu, and Persian languages that had covered the beginning of Islam in the region to our time. Alhamdulillah, I am fairly aware of all Madrasahs and Centers of Islamic learning in these areas. I continued at the center for nearly 25 years. Then I became very busy with teaching and other tasks. In this regard, I have established a College, Cambridge Islamic College.

We also have Al-Salam Institute because there are many students at Oxford, Cambridge, and many universities who want to learn about Islam. This should be encouraged and attempts must be taken to facilitate learning Arabic Language and let them become Alim. We can teach only on Sundays and facilitate them becoming an Alim. So, Alhamdulillah, we have started very successfully and have been continuing near for 20 years and [we are] very successful in many ways, and 3400 people from all over the world studied and became Alim and Alima. And what we do [is] we don't distinguish between men and women. And all of them can study at the same time. Now there are women who are Alima and the men who are Alim and we started a course for Fatwa to both men and women and [created] facilities to become Mufti and study together. Actually, we don't distinguish between any group, any Muslim even for the non-Muslims, they can study. So, we have different [types] of people there.

There are nearly 75 books in Arabic, Urdu, and English languages [that have been authored by me], and [I have done] some translation from the Persian language into Arabic and I studied and got ijaza from nearly 1000 people. Now, I am writing the biography of them which is coming soon Insha'Allah in the Arabic language, and among those, the most important, you know, Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (Rahmatullahuta'la). So, certainly, I follow his moderate way to combine between [you know] Islamic way and also to learn from our time. He was really a soft person and he wanted

to unite all Muslims. He doesn't like to be segregated. That's why my classes at Oxford are very successful. Muslims from any group can come, and attend and it is a place where people from all identities and all groups can attend. People from Bangladesh and even from here [Chattoram] attended my classes and from Pakistan or Arab land or a Salafi or Hanafi or Maliki or Shafi/Deobandi, anybody will be welcomed.

Mr. Sarwar Alam : Thank you, Sir. Let me go to the second question. You wrote about Women scholarship in Hadith studies; Among the Muhaddithat volumes, which volume is devoted to 12th-century Hadith scholarship?

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : So, as you know I did this research for nearly 15 years. When I started, I was thinking it would be something small, but Alhamdulillah, it grew up and there is so much information until now I keep getting more information but I stopped. You know, it is from the time of the prophet (SAAS) until our time. So, the first volume is just the Introduction and the second one is about the family of the Prophet (SAAS), and the women of the family of the prophet (SAAS), and few volumes are about the companions, female companions, and the second generation, third generation, fourth generation. Now, you are asking me a question: which one is about the 12th century? So, it is kind of difficult to tell from memory because I wrote so many volumes. But I think it could be the 20th volume or something like that.

Mr. Mehedi Hasan : I am particularising the question. It's about the female teachers of Ibn Taymiyyah. Can you tell us about that?

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : Sure!

I can tell you about this particular period but my book covers this topic in greater detail.

Mr. Mehedi Hasan : Because, you know, I follow you on YouTube Channel, particularly Salam Institute's. You talked about Ibn Taymiyyah and Imam Ghazali and you have a particular approach to deal with these people, their way of dealing with the conflict between Aql and you know Wahi. That's why we want to know about them.

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : You know, in that period, Hadith Science was very much strong in Syria and women were very active [in this regard] and basically,

the number of female experts on Hadith in that period was more than in any period after the companions. You know, that period can be designated as the richest period in the history of the women scholarship in the Muslim world, especially, you know, for books like Bukhari and all other Hadith collections, the woman had got the highest isnad. The best teachers in this regard in all the biggest centers of Syria like Al Jamia Muzaffari, Jamia Umawi, and also in Egypt, were women. One of the teachers of Ibn Taymiyyah was Fatima al-Batayahiyyah. She died there in 711 A.H. So, she was a teacher like a person like Ibn Taymiyyah. And as a teacher of all those giant people, she had a very good isnad and was ranked after Bukhari. She came for Hajj and what happens in those days, you can't travel to [you know] other places. If people want to study with Fatima, you have to go there [in Syria]. But, the easy thing was to meet people in the hajj. So whenever a teacher used to go for the hajj, all the Ulema took the opportunity and tried to benefit. She came for hajj and that turned out to be an important phenomenon. The experts on the Hadith and Ulema, in general, tried to benefit from her presence during the Hajj season. One of the girls - she came from Morocco - Mushayed as Sabdi said, "I came to Madina and I found Fatima al-Batayahiyyah, the expert of the Hadith of Syria. She is in Madina. So, I became very happy and I came to the mosque of the Prophet of Mohammad (SAAS) to study with her. She was sitting at the mosque of the Prophet of Mohammad (SAAS), next to the grave of the Prophet (SAAS)" and you know, we can't sit. You know, she was not sitting next to the feet of the Prophet (SAAS), but she was sitting next to the head of the Prophet (SAAS). Whenever she felt tired, she leaned to the grave of the prophet (SAAS). And Ulema were learning and nobody was making any noise or sound to point out the fact of so much respect for her at those classes and she would write Ijaza (Certificate) with her own hand for everybody. She was one of the top people of the time of Taymiyyah (R.A). Similarly, during the time of Ibn Taymiyyah, there was another woman; her name was Fatima Binte 'Abbas al-Baghdadiyya. She used to come and discuss with Ibn Taymiyyah and also debated with many renowned scholars of her time. She was the one who won the debate with Ulema. And one thing about her had been mentioned by the historian Ibn Kathir. Ibn Kathir saw her and attended her classes at the same time. So, Ibn Kathir, the great historian said, this woman was able to do so much reform for Muslim society in Syria and Egypt that men were unable to do. Men of such calibre like Ibn Taymiyyah and the best people of our history had tried the reform, but this woman did more than all of them. He [Ibn Kathir] said, she did those reforms that men were unable to do and sometimes she used to do this at the Minbar of mosques of Syria. She used to sit on Minbar and in front of everyone present there, she used to give lectures and nobody stopped her.

You know, in our time, we can't imagine women sometimes even attending the mosque and there were [ample examples were there in the history in this regard]. And society never interfered in this regard because that was an Islamic tradition. They know it was

lawful. In our times, you can't imagine women actually even attending the mosque. In our times, for almost 500 hundred years, women have been stopped from coming to the mosque and now people say this is Islam. This is not Islam. In Islam, women used to be more active. Even Christian people admitted at Oxford to me that Islam is the only religion [because of your research we know that] where women have been instructed to be active and that started from the beginning.

Now they are writing that all the religions, they really ruined women and none observed their responsibilities towards women except Islam. Their research at Oxford will show that Muslim Ummah has been always active. So, Alhamdulillah, this is good that Ibn Taymiyyah's time was one of the research times for Muslim women.

Mr. Sarwar Alam : Let me go to another question. How did Hadith scholarship help in shaping mediaeval Indian Islamic tradition in the Sultanate and Mughal period respectively?

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : Hadith scholarship generally, not women Hadith scholarship? Right?

So, one thing you have to keep in mind is that the people who have a state or kingdom, what are their requirements and necessities? They need real code to organise society. They need code, law and they need people who can guide them [you know] [in their ruling] and [to provide expertise in devising] rules. That was Islamic fiqh, Islamic law at that time. So, the rulers have always been interested [you know] in adopting Islamic law [for getting success and gaining support from lay subjects]. You know, different people studied fiqh; there can be a plot at the court; people can be mufti, they can be judges, they can teach people how to regulate life.

That's why, in the court of the Turkish Empire, and Abbasid Empire, the most prominent post will be allocated to those who study fiqh. People who studied Hadith used to get some jobs, but generally, they would do it for the sake of Allah. That we have to keep in mind.

So, when Delhi was established as the most important city for the new kingdom, in this new place the rulers' first courage in learning fiqh. There were so many fuqaha in the madrasas in Delhi and even in Bengal as well. Everywhere! Then after that Hadith comes. Hadith always comes as a reform because hadith is going back to the legacy and praxes of the Prophet of Mohammad (SAAS); it is not a part of the code; not a part of the law.

So, one of the most important madrasa was established in Sonargaon by Sheikh Sharfuddin Abu Tawwama, was not a small madrasa. But a large madrasa like college with hostel facilities and people from all over the Muslim world used to come and stay there and learn. That's why it is an important place. In Gujarat, there were some experts on Hadith from the beginning. One of them was 'Ala al-Din 'Ali ibn 'Abdul al-Malik al-Din al Muttaqi Borhanpuri; then comes the name of Abdul Buhayeb al-Muttaqi, Mohammad Tahir al-Pattani. Inside, there have been more people even before that. In Delhi, the first major Muhaddith was Sheikh 'Abd al-Haqq and [we have] a good biography of him and I translate it into Arabic. I know about his life; he is the first major one. And he did a lot of work. But, the one who actually made India a center for Hadith was somebody came 100 years after that. He was Shah Wali Allah Dehlawi. He studied Hadith and went to Hejaz and was introduced to Ulema there and established Madrasa and wrote books and he actually made India, the centre of the hadith all over the world. People from Hejaz, Najd, Central Asia, Syria... from anywhere, they used to come there for the next 200 years. India remained the center of Hadith science [during that period]. But for 200 years, they have not had any center for learning Hadith equal to India.

Mr. Mehedi Hasan : Related to Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlawi, you translated Shah Abdul Aziz's Book Bustan al-Muhaddithin into Arabic. So, my question: Was there any shifting between the Hadith scholarship of the 18th century that means during the time of Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlawi and Shah Abdul Aziz during the time of the British period, any differences between, any shifting that happened between these two periods?

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : Very good question. This really [means] many people don't understand this shift. But MashaAllah, your question is very good. Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlawi, you know is not only a Muhaddith, but he was also a great thinker and he understood the Islamic system much more greatly than anybody else. So, he wanted to bring unity among the Muslims and also he knew the differences between the Islamic fiqh, the rules, and their minor ones. So the centers should be the Quran and the Hadith. So, he got to the center Quran and Hadith and for all other fiqh, we can say, he was very soft. You know, for Hanafi madhab, Maliki madhab, Shafi'I, Hanbali madhab, and for him, all were evident. And, sometimes he prefers this opinion and sometimes that opinion. So, he is someone who tried to unite the Muslim world. But when Shah Abdul Aziz came, he didn't spend so much time with his father.

When Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlawi died, Abdul Aziz was 16-17 years old. So, he studied with other people, and also India has changed. He became more like [adopt-

ing] the Hanafi way of thinking. Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlawi was more broadly like Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Majah. But, in Shah Abdul Aziz you can see more madhab and school, that's why he is more popular among the hanafis. Hanafi people respected Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dehlawi more than Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlawi. Actually, one of the Hanafi scholars wrote Shah Wali Allah Muhaddith Dehlawi was confused. So, I said he was not confused; you're confused. Just you can't understand him.

Then after Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dehlawi, things further declined. What happened then? When a new madrasa was established, they became more defensive; their thinking, you know:

British have come and they want to change Islam...this thinking. All are suspicious. They don't want to think, understand, or ask questions; they just follow blindly, because they are scared their Islam will be lost. This mentality [actually] was a big mistake and that happened in India during that period. So, now Ahl al-Hadith have their own madrasa; they refute Hanafi.

Hanafi-Deobandi madrasa refutes Salafi and refute the Barelvi. It was all refutation and defending; no thinking; no fresh thing until the Darul Ulum Nadwatul Ulama was established.

You can't do this. Why don't you establish a madrasa for science, thinking, and understanding? Why are you always rejecting and refuting people? This one refutes this one... all are until now bearing the same mentality. Whenever you say something, they first show this mentality. So, do something nice about what we are. In fresh thinking, people are facing difficulties because people want to follow someone blindly.

When we think, only a few of us can do it. So, that advice will be something really limited [in creating impacts] like Ibn Taymiyyah comes and [calls for fresh] thinking but how many will follow it? Imam Ghazali spoke of Ijtihad and not to follow taqlid, i.e., blindly following someone... Thinking is always the most difficult task.

Mr. Mehedi Hasan : I have another question; that one is: Is it possible to ignore the impact created by, you know, British colonialism on the whole body politic of the Indian subcontinent? This ultimately, you know, influenced the Hadith scholars as well, and was it possible to ignore this fact for those people like Shah Abdul Aziz or after the people that followed him or the founder of the Deoband movement?

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : I have seen this [pattern in the] history wherever Muslims have had difficulty and whenever they loss their power and they start think-

ing, Hadith scholarship always improves [during that conditions].The best [tradition of] scholarship of Hadith in Syria was [boosted up] when crusaders come and they occupied Palestine. That was the time when hadith science started to grow in Syria. They started to think...we have been punished by Allah... let's go back to the sources Quran and Sunnah, Hadith teaching. When the British came, no doubt Muslims had lost their power, but they deserve... you know, fighting, small states and all these things. So, now the British came...order, system...and you know, they brought for India... certainly, they had their interest. Everybody does fight for their own interest. But Muslims would benefit from that. You know, we did not have as many madrasas in India during the Mughal Empire, but we had enough during the British period. We didn't have so many Ulema before as we had at that time. The books written in that British period were more than any period, printing press... this thing and that thing. But Muslims should have used it properly.

The British had no interest, you know, to solve your internal problem. So, when we fought each other they might love that. But if you were united, why would they mind that? That was not for political purpose/power. Why had you cut unity in the religion? You know, when you are united for political purposes, you get freedom. Why Muslims won't unite for religious freedom?

I really think we should not blame anybody. The people during the time of Ibn Taymiyyah...they didn't blame the crusaders... rather on... it was our weakness. So, now let's get back. So, similarly, you know, the British... every ruler wants his/her interest. So, we should do what interests us, that is we should do those sciences and things...and move forward.

Mr. Sarwar Alam : Thank you, sir!

We have the last question. You worked with Dr. Masudul Alam Chowdhury of Bangladesh in 1992. And we have come across that both of you have a joint article on Islamization. Here, you're invited by IIUC...this university and you know that IIUC had been founded within the scope of a vast programme initiated under the broad program Islamization. So, how do you assess the philosophy, achievements, and failures of Islamization?

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : You know, Masudul Alam Chowdhury was at Oxford with us... with me for 1 year. Alhamdulillah, a very good and hardworking person since then we never met him. I think, you know, people always improve their thinking...So, my thinking for a long time has been changed. My thinking on the issue is that when we say Islamization, it simply means something not Islamic. To make

non-Islamic into Islamic. You know, Allah has made everything halal and lawful. All the food is halal except some are haram. All sciences are Muslim sciences...why do you think that way...Does Christian say that there is a thing like Christianization of knowledge or Jews? You know, from where philosophy comes? Did Muslims think of the Islamization of Greece? You know, they never knew this word. It is our word. What happens in those sciences can be [considered as] wrong...it could be wrong if its source is non-Islamic and you are correcting all the time... Even Islam in fiqh... there might be something wrong and you have to correct it. So, Islamization of fiqh, Islamization of hadith. Hadith has inaccurate information, you have to correct it. Fiqh has wrong things, you correct it. Similarly, natural sciences...social sciences... this discipline consists of wrong things, you correct it.

But, don't say Islamization of this or by doing this, you are dividing knowledge, i.e., between Islamic and non-Islamic. Knowledge is one unity. Knowledge is knowledge...human knowledge.

It is beneficial for the people... whatever harmful you can refute it .There could be something harmful even Ulema might have some problems, we have to correct those. For the idea of Islamization of knowledge, I don't agree. Maybe in the past, I had something positive about that.

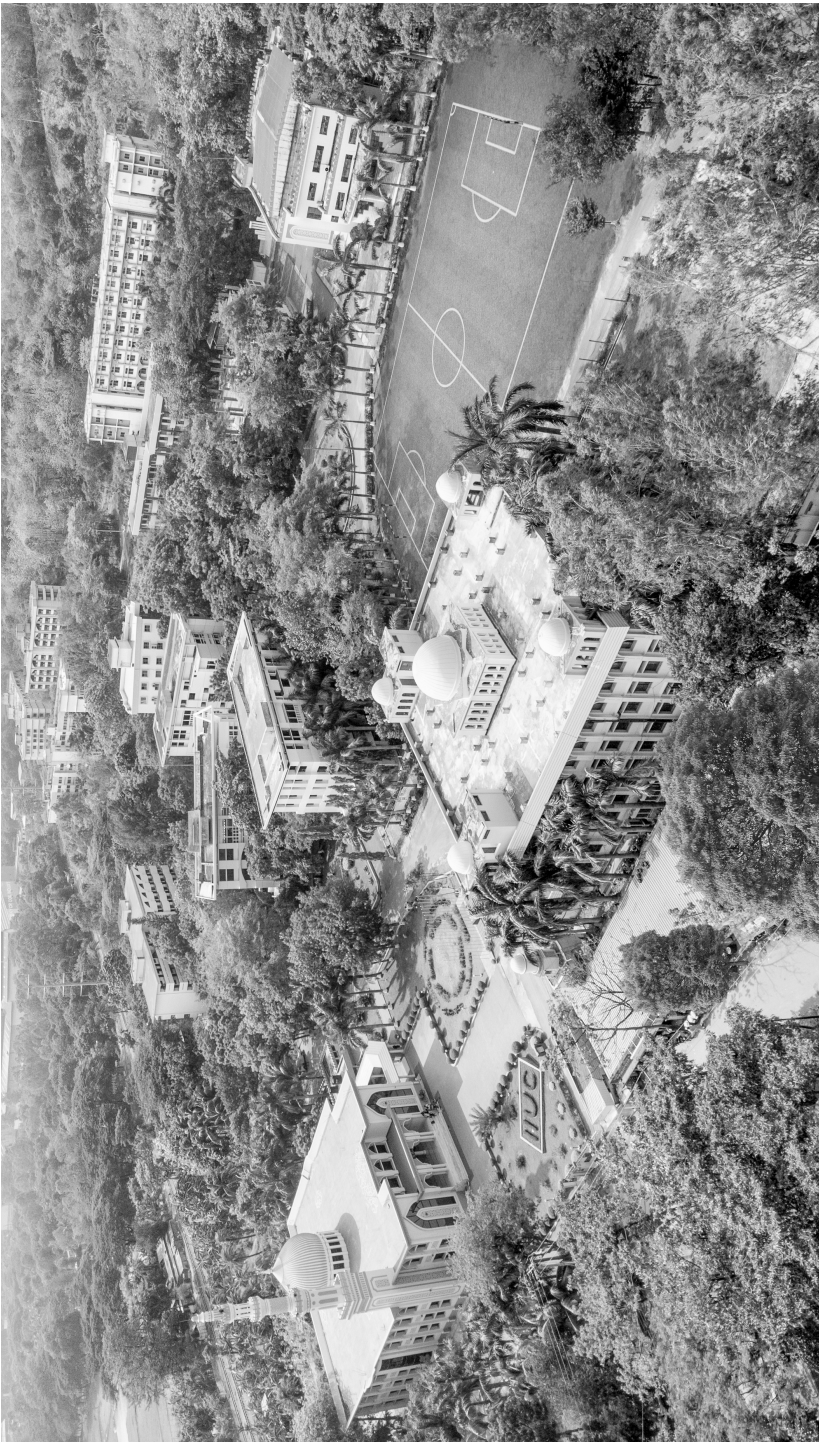
Mr. Eftekhar Uddin : So, the question is, say this University has been established with a view to impart Islamic knowledge. So, maybe Islamization... the term, the terminology is problematic. So, what is your perspective on establishing a kind of University like IIUC?

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi : You know, I really think that... if you look in the history of Islam Muslims... [they] have never distinguished between secular knowledge and Islamic knowledge.

The Madrasa college produced all the officials for Mughal Empires, all the officials, everybody judges, Kadi, and scientists. People who built the Taj Mahal where did they study? In Madrasa.They did not come from Europe and America. They produced their all Islamic, 90% curriculum of Madrasa used to be secular.10% used to be Islamic.This is 10% hadith, tafsir. After completion then people used to I want to go to Muhaddis, I want to become faqih .90% used to be secular where you know study language where you know study philosophy,logic, and astronomy .You know all engineering everything you studied in the same Madrasa mathematics they should be the best people make astro this and that all that.That what I want really like in our times certainly those science has developed in Europe better much better than Islam. Let's take benefit from



that. If something wrong people will read Quran, Sunnah you know there is something wrong you correct it, that I want to use unity of the knowledge, this unity wants you to do as you have that so many departments and have all the departments but at the same time people studying in the different faculties are Muslims and they want to pray, they worship their lord. So, you could be a doctor, a medical doctor, and better than an Alim in Ibada. So it doesn't stop you. So I don't think there is a distinction between secular sciences and Islamic sciences. The difference will be if people don't worship Allah. So that could be a good Muhaddit but could not be a good believer. You know this matter but we should really think that all are Islamic. All science is Islamic, there is no difference. And if something is wrong then correct it but don't make a distinction between Islamic and non-Islamic. That is the wrong thing, that what always happens is that your university is called an Islamic university, basically people should understand Islam inclusively.



A Brief Profile of the Speaker



Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi is a world-renowned Islamic scholar, thinker, and the Principal and Co-Founder of Al-Salam Institute, who was born in Jaunpur, India in 1963. Dr. Nadwi received advanced studies in the discipline of Islamic Studies at Nadwat al-Ulama (Lucknow, India) and studied there with many towering scholars like Allamah Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and completed Ph.D. in Arabic Literature from Lucknow University. Then he was awarded a Research Fellowship at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies and worked there for many years. Dr. Akram Nadwi is a polymath and one of the widely recognized and revered authors of the Muslim world and authored nearly 75 books in Urdu, Persian, Arabic, and English language while he has Ijaza (licences) from around 1000 scholars. His prolific writings and publications include translations, editions of Arabic texts, and original monographs on Islamic law, the Qur'an, and Hadith sciences. He is also the author of *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam*, a monumental 43-volume biographical dictionary that chronicles the lives of 10,000 female Hadith scholars and narrators over the past 1400 years. Dr. Nadwi was awarded the Allama Iqbal Prize for his significant contribution to Islamic thought.







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