

The Imams of Hadith

Lessons primarily from
Shaykh Navaid Aziz

Adapted by
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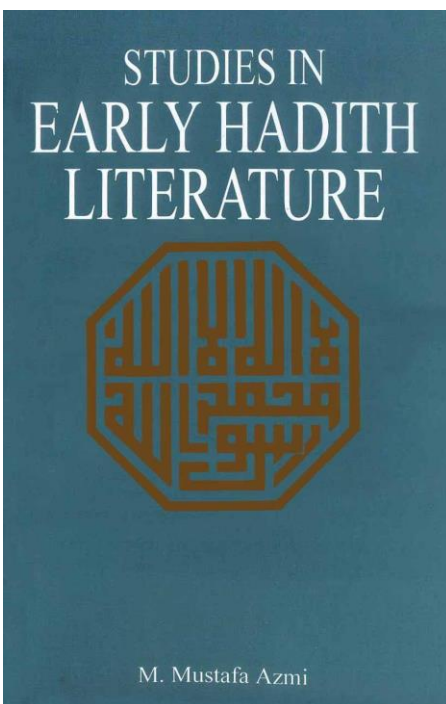
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Prologue - The Early Compilers and Narrators of Hadith

Thanks and praise be to Allah, Lord of the Universe, The Most Gracious and The Most Giving. May our efforts to share our knowledge be rendered by Allah's rahmah. Every one of us understands that Rasulullah SAW's hadiths are the second most authentic source of knowledge, both for our temporal work and the hereafter, right after the Quran al-Azim. Knowing its importance, there is no reason for us not to learn and disseminate the knowledge of hadith, even more so when there are some quarters in Islam beginning to give little to no priority to religious knowledge such as hadiths. Things become worse when there are some groups in our religion put who aside completely all of the hadiths, accusing of not only their inauthenticity, but also their irrelevancies. May Allah protect us from falling prey to such fallacy and may Allah guide all of us to the straight path. Aameen.

In this series of tazkirah sections, we are InshaAllah going to discuss a great amount of hadith compilations which have been known as the Six Canonical Books (*Kitab as-Sittah*). These works were made by Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam at-Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Dawud, Imam an-Nasa'i and Imam Ibn Majah. Before we have their hadith compilations discussed, it appears wiser if we mention the first generation of sahabahs or people who have narrated the hadiths, especially the ones that are known to have narrated many hadiths under their authorities.

There are seven people who were known to have narrated many hadiths, and the first amongst them is Abu Hurairah who had nearly 6000 hadiths narrated under his authority. He is followed by Sayyidatina Aisha, with more than 2200 hadiths, followed by Ibn Umar who had close to 2000 hadiths, then followed by Ibn Abbas with around 1660 hadiths, and followed by Anas ibn Malik and Jabir ibn Abdullah who had narrated more than 1000 hadiths respectively. The last person who should merit our attention is Abu Sa'id who had close to 1000 hadiths narrated under his authority.



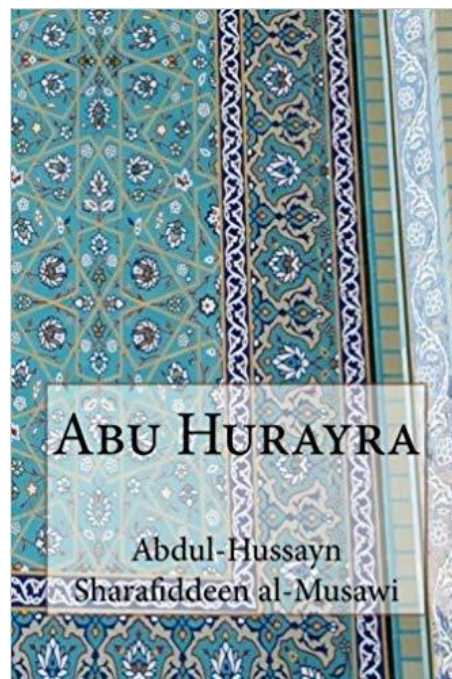
(Studies in Early Hadith Literature, by M. Mustafa Azmi)

Of course, there were many great imams who continued narrating these hadiths in between the sahabahs' generation and the Six Great Imams of Hadith's generation, which has a gap of 160 years. We might have known some of these informations about them. Before we discuss about them, let us have a brief introduction for each of these 7 respected people who are known for their narrations. Abu Hurairah, Sayyidatina Aisha, Ibn Umar, Ibn Abbas, Anas, Jabir and lastly Abu Sa'id al-Khudri.

Let us start with Abu Hurairah who has close to 6000 hadiths narrated under his authority. He was from the tribe of ad-Dawsy from Yemen and later migrated to Medina in 7H, immediately after the Khaybar Campaign. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, among other things, mentioned that although it is true that he migrated to Medina in 7H, that does not mean that he converted to Islam in those years and only knew about Islam and hadith in 3 ½ years. Not many people know that he had converted long before the Ansars (Bani Aus and Bani Khazraj) themselves converted to Islam.

The chieftain of the ad-Dawsy clan, Amir ibn Tufayl had converted in the middle years, if not the early years of the Da'wah period. Being the chieftain, Amir ibn Tufayl had effectively converted his tribe, and there were about 80 households of the ad-Dawsy clan which converted to Islam under his hands, a few years before the big migration to Medina. Wallahua'lam. This might explain why he was able to narrate so many hadiths, close to 6000 hadiths, of course, added by other factors such as his perseverance and Rasulullah SAW's du'a on his success in hadith narrations.

Rasulullah SAW's third wife and also the mother of believers, Sayyidatina Aisha RA was amongst the knowledgeable female of the time. She benefited from her proximity between her and Rasulullah SAW. Through such closeness, we are able to know many informations from Rasulullah's private life, not only with his family, more importantly with his wives. Through Sayyidatina Aisha's student, Amira bint Abdurrahman, and also Aisha's nephew, Urwah ibn Zubayr, Rasulullah SAW's sayings (hadith) continued to be learned and later reached the Six Great Imams of Hadith, before the hadith finally came to our knowledge. Aisha RA died in 58H during Muawiyah's caliphate.



(*Abu Hurayra*, by Abdul Hussayn Sharafiddeen al-Musawi)

Ibn Umar was the son of Umar ibn al-Khattab who was known for his asceticism, night prayers (Qawwama), and fasting (Sawwama). Born 10 years before Hijrah, he began by participating in the Battle of Uhud, and only concentrated on knowledge and hadiths in his later life. He was known for his politically neutral stance during when there were political disagreements here and there. He died in 74H during Abdul Malik ibn Marwan of Bani Umayyah's reign.

Ibn Abbas was born 3 years before Hijrah, and when Rasulullah SAW wafat, he was just around 13 years old. During his youth, his intelligence was observed by Rasulullah SAW. Rasulullah SAW once made a du'a for his intelligence, especially in the field of Quranic interpretation or Tarjuman Quran. He also remained apolitical and died in 69H in the area of Ta'if. The remaining three sahabahs who had many hadiths narrated under them were among the Ansar generation.

Anas stayed with Rasulullah SAW since his early life. He served and learned from Rasulullah SAW directly, and was given a du'a for his longevity and to be blessed with many children, as well as to stay in the path of truth. He lived a long life and was blessed with many children. He died in 95H, when Imam Abu Hanifah was just 15 years old.

Jabir ibn Abdullah had a unique story with the Prophet SAW. In one of his journeys after a war campaign, on their way back to Medina, Rasulullah SAW slowed down his camel, noticing that someone was left behind at the back, and it was Jabir. Many of the conversations between Rasulullah SAW and Jabir were about business. Many of them are used for jurisprudence purposes, even until today.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri was known for his religiosity and piousness. He was born 10 years before Hijrah and he too lived a long life. During the Harra' episode in 63H, when Medina was severely attacked by the army of Yazid, Abu Sa'id was in the city of Medina, experiencing just how bad the attack was. He hid in a cave and waited until the battle was over and died in 74H.

Before we end, let us mention a few important names among the Tabi'in (Successors) and Tabi'i at-Tabi'in (Successors of the Successors) who later benefited from the Six Great Imams of Hadith. They include Ibn Mubarak, Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, and Sufyan Ibn Uyaynah. Other than that, there were also great fuqahas in Medina, who were also known as the Seven Fuqahas of Medina. They include:

1. Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib
2. 'Urwah Ibn Az-Zubayr Ibn Al 'Awwam
3. Sâlim Ibn 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar
4. Al Qâsim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr
5. Abû Salama Ibn 'Abdur Rahman Ibn 'Awf
6. Sulaymân Ibn Yasâr
7. Khârijah Ibn Zayd Ibn Thabit.

InshaAllah, with some background information on the early compilations and narrations of hadith, in the next section, we will begin to discuss the first of the Six Great Imams of Hadith, who is none other than Imam al-Bukhari himself. May Allah SWT grant barakah for our efforts, Aameen.

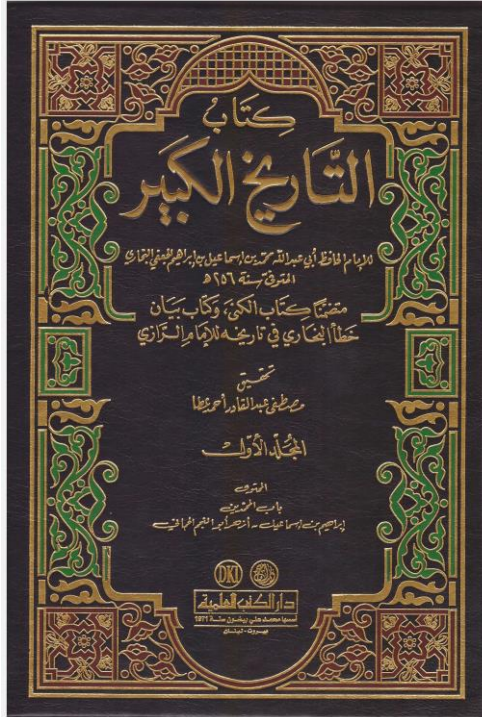
Imam al-Bukhari (Part 1) - Unique Biography

May we together be under Allah's continuous rahmah and mercy, Aameen.

The best way to introduce a person, especially a learned person such as Imam al-Bukhari is by mentioning both his short biodata and his parents' character. Imam al-Bukhari had the title or nickname Abu Abdillah, and his real name was Muhammad ibn Ismail ibn Ibrahim ibn Mughirah ibn Bardizbah al-Ju'fi. There is no information implying that he was married, and he chose the name Abu Abdillah to get barakah from one of the two names which Rasulullah indicated as the best names for men, Abdullah and Abdurrahman. He was regarded as al-Ju'fi because his grandfather Mughirah was converted to Islam by the ruler of his time, al-Yemeni al-Ju'fi.

It was a tradition for any tribe to belong to the tribe which converted them into Islam. Imam al-Bukhari was born in Bukhara, therefore he was commonly addressed as Imam al-Bukhari. He was born in 12/13 Syawwal 194H, and therefore he was one of the successors of the successors (Tabi'in at-tabi'in) based on the agreement made by ulamas which stated that those who were born before 220H were considered tabi-in at-tabi'in, Wallahua'lam.

Let us talk about his parents. His father, Ismail died when Imam al-Bukhari was just at the age of 3. Ismail was a scholar of hadith who had the opportunity to meet the Great Imams such as Imam Malik, Hammad, Ibn Mubarak, etc. He was known for his piety, especially his stringent characteristic towards coins as a merchant in order to guarantee its purity. One ulama during Ismail's time passed by him and asked on his legacy and he soughtedly responded that by Allah, he testified that every income he had had gone through conscious efforts to confirm its purity. Most of the story about Imam al-Bukhari's father was written by Imam al-Bukhari himself in one of his monumental works, at-Tarikh al-Kabir.



(At-Tarikh al-Kabir, by Imam al-Bukhari)

Imam al-Bukhari had written widely and influentially on many topics. While his work al-Jami' as-Sahih is commonly known, his other important work, at-Tarikh al-Kabir, mentions the story of his father narrations of hadiths.

There is no clear information that Imam al-Bukhari was committed with any jobs, partly because he inherited not only big chunks of dinar and dirham, but they were also pure and clean wealth. Let us now talk about his mother who was known as Abadiyah (good in worship). She was obviously a very caring lady. Little is known about her biodata but there were 2 tragic events which occurred when Imam al-Bukhari was just at the age of 3.

First, as we've already discussed, his father, Ismail died. Second, for an unknown reason, Muhammad ibn Ismail lost his eyesight. Being a mother, obviously her heart broke. However, she realised that through Allah SWT, she can ask may her son's ability to see be given back. For 3 long and arduous years of successive nights, except when there was darurah, his mother constantly and consistently performed night prayer and asked for her son to be able to see again. With Allah's rahmah, she met Ibrahim AS

in her dream, informing that Allah will return his son's eyesight. To her great astonishment and thankfulness to Allah, Muhammad regained his ability to see.

This story should inform us that we should put our trust on Allah SWT, and if we consistently make effort to perform du'a, InshaAllah Allah SWT will answer our du'a. In fact, du'a is an important ibadah in our religion. Imam Nawawi in his al-Arba'in (40 Hadiths), as mentioned by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, included 2 extra hadiths (42 hadiths altogether) because of his love towards hadiths, and the last hadith was concerning the importance of making du'a.

The story of Imam al-Bukhari's parents should inform us that if we want our children to be good Muslims, we as parents should set the best possible example for them. InshaAllah, we will discuss about Imam al-Bukhari's early life, especially on his patience and miraculous ability concerning the learning and memorising of hadiths. He had been exposed to such knowledge from an early age by Waki' ibn Jarrah, whom he learned from passionately. He participated in halaqah's (gathering of knowledge) made by a teacher named ad-Dahili. In those days, the teachers demonstrated their knowledge and intelligence by not even looking at their notes.

There was a moment when the young al-Bukhari corrected his teacher by insisting that Abu Zubayr never narrated hadiths from Ibrahim, as the teacher mentioned. He asked the teacher to have a look at his notes, which he did not bring to the halaqah. The correct person who narrated the hadith from Ibrahim was Ibn Zubayr ibn Adi instead. To his great astonishment, after checking his notes later, the 11 years old kid was absolutely right.

At the age of 16, Muhammad and his brother Ahmad, together with his mother journeyed to Makkah to perform hajj. His heart became attached to Makkah and Medina when he discovered that knowledge was everywhere, obviously because ulamas from all over the world was centered there, near saturation. With his mother's permission, he stayed in the land of Hijaz for a long period of time, in search of knowledge.

At the age of just 18, he published his first book on the verdicts or rulings made by the sahabahs and the successors. It was in this book that Imam al-Bukhari tried to understand the way the sahabahs and the successors think and understand issues before the rulings were passed down.

Before we end, let us discuss on of his leisure time activities which can also be said as a hobby; archery.



(Archery and Horseback Riding)

There are many narrations pointing to the 3 sport activities which were recommended by Rasulullah SAW; swimming, archery and horseback riding. Wallahua'lam. Archery in particular, teaches us on the importance of focus if we want to achieve our target.

We might have heard or read hadiths mentioning about swimming, archery and horseback riding in hadiths which ulamas mention as marfu' (directly from the Prophet SAW) or mawquf (from the companions).

The hadith is as follows:

The Prophet (S) said “Any action without the remembrance of Allah is either a diversion or heedlessness except four acts: walking from target to target (during archery practice), training a horse, . . . , and learning to swim.”

(Reported by al-Tabarani on good authority)

Archery was Imam al-Bukhari’s favourite sport which, according to his friend, Muhammad ibn Hatim, Imam al-Bukhari had never missed his marks except for only twice. Through such sport, we learn that focus is of utmost importance, practice makes perfect, and perseverance is the key to success. All these characteristics were implemented by Imam al-Bukhari.

Obviously, there are a lot more which we can discuss about Imam al-Bukhari, and a section is perhaps just enough to scratch the surface of the deep ocean. InshaAllah, we will have another two sections on him. We ask Allah SWT to continue endowing us with strength and perseverance, as well as focus so that we can continue with our tazkirah, Aameen.

With that, we shall end this section.

Imam al-Bukhari (Part 2) - Gifted Memory

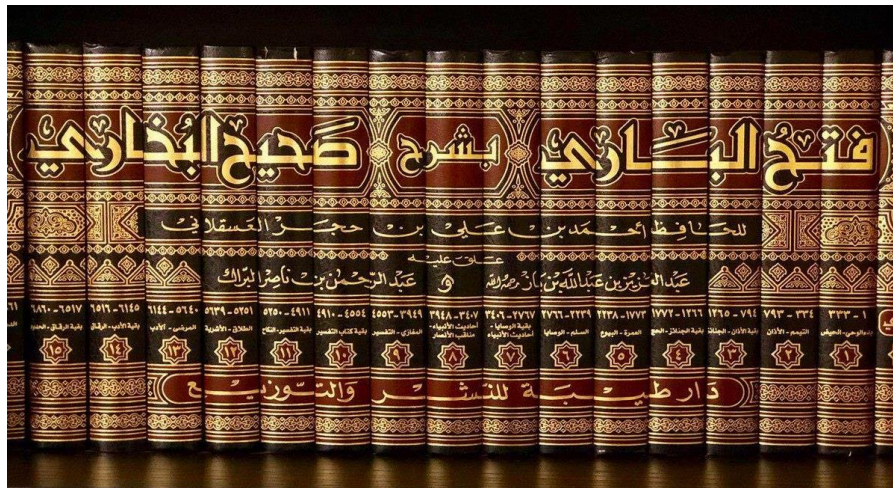
We are grateful to Allah SWT for His knowledge and blessings, and we ask His forgiveness for our shortcomings in carrying out this tazkirah, Aameen.

We ended the previous section talking about Imam al-Bukhari's favourite sport; archery. We have discussed the benefits archery has to offer; focus, perseverance and practicing. InshaAllah, in this section, we will bring our attention to the man's knowledge and akhlaq, and how other ulamas praised him.

Obviously, Imam al-Bukhari was a man of a different pedestal. The great commentator of Sahih al-Bukhari, Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (773H-852H), once said, "if you want to open the door of praises for Imam al-Bukhari, you will find an ocean which knows no shore. For the record, the monumental book authored by Imam al-Bukhari, known as al-Jami' as-Sahih or Sahih al-Bukhari has been interpreted and dissected by many great ulamas, in which Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani was one of them. Ibn Hajar's book, Fathul Bari has been widely and influentially written and read from his era until today. In fact, we know many details on the Sahih al-Bukhari to such length and perspective due to the Great Imam, Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani.

One of the praises came from Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (the Great Fuqaha), who said that he had never seen such a great person in the land of Khorasan. Imam Ali al-Madini (The Great Imam of Hadith) who Imam al-Bukhari humbled himself to due to his great knowledge, was always praised by Imam al-Bukhari. However, Imam Ali al-Madini said "Forget about me. Imam al-Bukhari is a person with "light", and I will never see such a person again". Qutayba ibn Sa'd, the teacher of the Six Muhaddithin (Bukhari, Muslim, at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, an-Nasa'i, Abu Dawud) once said that "I have sat with the Great Fuqahas. Ascetic and great worshippers they are. However, I've never encountered such an amazing person like al-Bukhari."

The individuals we've mentioned here are on a different level altogether. They were gurus during Imam al-Bukhari's time, and the gurus of Imam al-Bukhari himself.



(Fathul Bari, by Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani)

In the Fathul Bari of Imam al-Asqalani, there was a discussion on the teachers of Imam al-Bukhari, which, according to Shaykh Navaid Aziz, are divided into 5 groups. Generally, three of them were Imam al-Bukhari's pregeneration (sahabah, tabi'in, tabi'i at-tabi'in). The other two groups were his contemporaries and a group that was junior to him (young, isnad (chain of narrations) and knowledge).

If we can still recall, InshaAllah, Imam al-Bukhari had read Waki' ibn Jarrah's book when he was still a kid, and from the book, he learned that he must learn from 3 layers of people if he wants to be a great muhaddithin (seniors, contemporaries and juniors). According to Shaykh Navaid Aziz, his strong motivation to compile hadiths became hardened in his early 20's. Imam al-Bukhari, at some point in his life, mentioned that he had memorised 300,000 hadiths. However, he found out that a massive part of it (200,000) were found to be Dha'if. It should be noted that many categories of hadiths such as Sahih, Hasan, Dha'if, and Maudhu were later inventions, particularly devised by Imam at-Tirmidhi to help the ummah understand and appreciate the beauty and benefits of hadith.

Stories about his ability to memorise hadiths had spread in the Persian land, particularly in Iraq. Most people thought that it must be a fraud if someone claimed to have such a memory, memorising up to 300,000 hadiths. According to some narrations, in one of the great mosques of Baghdad, Imam al-Bukhari was summoned to prove his ability to memorise hadiths, as claimed by many. 10 great teachers prepared 10 hadiths each, totalling to 100 hadiths, all of which they have either changed or mixed up the chain of narrators or even the matan or content of the hadith. Each of them narrated the hadiths and asked Imam al-Bukhari if he knew or memorised those hadiths. Many people had gathered in the mosque, and to their great surprise, Imam al-Bukhari said that he has never heard of such hadiths, even though many people thought that those hadiths were quite common.

For the record, in hadith knowledge traditions, a statement will be considered a non-hadith not only if the matan is incorrect or confusing, but also if the chain of narrators is mixed up or wrong. One by one Imam al-Bukhari explained that he has never heard of such hadiths before because the hadiths which the 10 great teachers presented were wrong when it comes to the arrangement of the chain of narrators. Not only did Imam al-Bukhari repeated all the hadiths with the supposed and correct chain of narrators, he even mentioned what should be the right order for them.

Afterwards, they admitted that the person which they thought was a fraud not only could memorise everything in the 100 hadiths perfectly, but he instantly can detect the changed or manipulated chains of narrations which they've purposely arranged to confuse Imam al-Bukhari. This event raised Imam al-Bukhari's status to a very high pedestal amongst the muhaddithin of his time. Many people would gather with him to gain knowledge and benefit from the miraculous man.

One may want to know how he studied and compiled the hadiths. His close friend who had been with him for about 14 years, Muhammad ibn Hatim, mentioned that Imam al-Bukhari hardly slept at night, and every night he

would wake up 15-20 times, lighting a candle to check the hadiths which he had compiled.



(Night Ibadah)

All great sahabahs were known for their night prayers. In fact, there are many surahs which praise such ibadah, such as in Surah As-Sajdah verse 16, and Imam Bukhari was known for not only his night ibadah, but also night studying and checking of hadiths.

Surah As-Sajdah verse 16 explains the high spiritual character of a person who hardly sleeps at night, hoping for Allah's redha and worrying of Allah's punishment. The verse is as follows:

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

They arise from [their] beds; they supplicate their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend.

Stories about him also mention that it was in Imam al-Bukhari's habit that he would try to finish one third of the Quran (1/3) every night so that he could finish the whole Quran in 3 nights, while he would recite the whole Quran

for his daytime ibadah. It should be clear to us that he had also memorised the entire Quran, cover to cover. When he was asked about his motivation in completing the Quran recitation, he said that there are hadiths which say that Allah SWT will answer our du'a if we complete the recitation of the whole Quran. His memory was so strong that whenever he was to read a book, he had to cover the other page of the book, worrying that the knowledge and informations from the other page would overlap and get mixed with the information from the page he was reading.

Shaykh Omar Suleiman mentioned that there is a possibility that Imam al-Bukhari's experience of being blind for 3 years had strengthened his other senses and transformed his brain. Allah SWT obviously must have a deep reason to make someone blind or deaf or deformed in any way whatsoever. Wallahua'lam.

One important story pertaining Imam al-Bukhari's conscious effort to make his heart innocent is his journey on a ship. It was known to one of the passengers of the ship that Imam al-Bukhari had 10,000 dirham with him (somewhat equivalent to USD100,000). The man plotted to steal the money with a mischievous plan. When night approached, the man shouted "I've been robbed!" multiple times. A manhunt began, supposedly searching for the "thief". The mischievous man pointed to Imam al-Bukhari and Imam al-Bukhari was searched, but nothing was found on him. After plenty of effort, the man realised that his plot had failed.

As the ship reached its destination, the man persistently asked Imam al-Bukhari for an explanation. Imam al-Bukhari said that he had thrown the 10,000 dirham off the ship and into the ocean. He added that if the man wanted the money, he can try to dive into the ocean and search for it. Imam al-Bukhari explained that he had a big mission to compile and teach the Prophet SAW's sayings, therefore he did not want to be involved with anything bad that could tarnish his name, since anything inflicted on him will be inflicted to the sayings of the Prophet which he would compile. He continued that if Allah wanted to give him 10,000 dirham, Allah can give it

to him at anytime. This shows his great belief and philosophy in Qada' and Qadr.

InshaAllah, before we round up the whole section, we will highlight some of his important works, and in the next section, we will InshaAllah focus our attention to the second best kitab after the Quran, the al-Jami' as-Sahih compiled by al-Bukhari. The following are some of his monumental works:

- Al-Jami' al-Sahih (Sahih al-Bukhari)
- Al-Tarikh al-Kabir
- Al-Jami' al-Kabir
- Kitab al-Fawa'id
- Al-Tafsir al-Kabir
- Kitab Qadhaya al-Sahabah wa al-Tabi'in

May Allah SWT bless us with strength so that we can study Imam al-Bukhari's great works, at least Sahih al-Bukhari. May Allah pardon our shortcomings and mistakes and bless us with His mercy and allow us to enter His Jannah without account.

Imam al-Bukhari (Part 3) - Jealousy

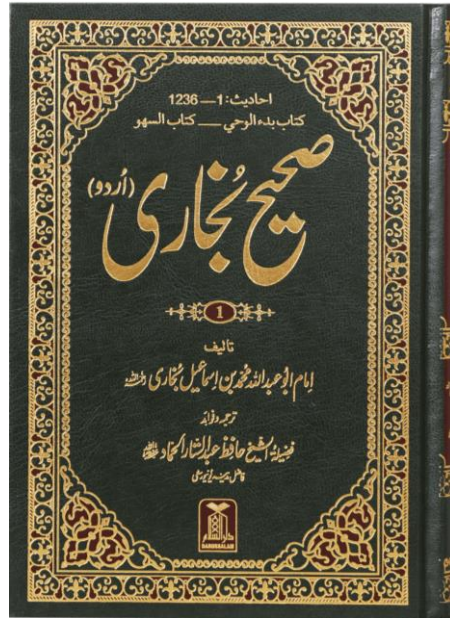
Thanks and praises be to Allah SWT, The Lord of the universe for His blessings and mercy. May we be guided to the straight path. In this section, InshaAllah, we will bring our attention to Imam al-Bukhari's legacy in the hadith tradition, via his Sahih al-Bukhari. We will also try to discuss some important events prior to his death.

To understand Sahih al-Bukhari, we should obviously start from his well-known guru, Ishaq ibn Rahwayh whose knowledge and piety was just as excellent as the other Imams of jurisprudence such as Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam Syafi'e, and Imam Ahmad. It is said that his fiqh rulings was so sharp and right on point. However, not only did he not live longer, but he did not have students to carry his teachings forward. There are 2 important issues which lingered in the ummah during those days. The first one was concerning Dh'aif and fabricated hadiths while the second was concerning the issue of whether the Quran was created.

Let us discuss the first story in which Ishaq ibn Rahwayh said that he wished that someone would make effort to gather and compile only the authentic hadiths. As if something had whispered it to him, Imam al-Bukhari felt that he should be the one to gather the hadiths, and the vision was suddenly settled in his heart. He made a resolution and this became his lifelong project. Other factors also inspired Imam al-Bukhari to compile the authentic hadiths. He had a dream of seeing flies coming closer to the Prophet SAW's face. He made effort to fend off the flies, and the dream he had he shared to his guru, Ishaq ibn Rahwayh. He was told that he would be the one to protect and preserve the Prophet's sayings (hadiths), therefore solving the issue of weak hadiths.

As a footnote, Imam al-Bukhari had memorised 300,000 hadiths, which, according to him 200,000 were Dha'if. He began to compile the authentic hadiths in the Nubuwwah Mosque in Medina, in the area called Raudhatul Jannah (Raudhah) or the Garden of Paradise. Everytime he wanted to place authentic hadiths into his compilation, he would perform Solah al-

Istikhara, and in general, he compiled 7700 authentic hadiths in his Sahih al-Bukhari



(Sahih al-Bukhari / Al-Jami' as-Sahih, by Imam al-Bukhari)

The format and presentation of the book is extremely unique. Casual reading would not make the readers be able to get some of the important, if not hidden messages of the book. Most of the information about the intended message of Imam al-Bukhari in the book, which we have gathered today has been based on Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's careful and deep reading of the book. InshaAllah, we will demonstrate some of the unique qualities of Imam al-Bukhari's great compilation.

Some of us may be familiar with the first hadith compiled by Imam al-Bukhari under the chapter of Wahyu (Revelation), since it is a pretty common hadith and is very well-known. The hadith is about intention.

The hadith is as follows:

عَنْ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا
الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّةِ وَلِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ

وَرَسُولِهِ فَهَجَرْتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا
يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَتَزَوَّجُهَا فَهَجَرْتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ

Verily, deeds are only with intentions. Verily, every person will have only what they intended. Whoever emigrated to Allah and His Messenger, then his emigration is for Allah and His Messenger. Whoever emigrated to get something in the world or to marry a woman, then his emigration is for whatever he emigrated for.

Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 54, Grade: [Muttafaqun Alayhi](#)

If we still remember, Imam Nawawi had also chosen this hadith as the first hadith of his compilation of 40 Hadiths (al-Arba'in). How is this hadith unique? The 3 points below explain the least of the uniqueness of the hadith Firstly, without the intention of purifying our hearts when studying Sahih al-Bukhari, by putting it as the first hadith, readers should be able to understand that no benefit can be derived without the proper intention set in our heart.

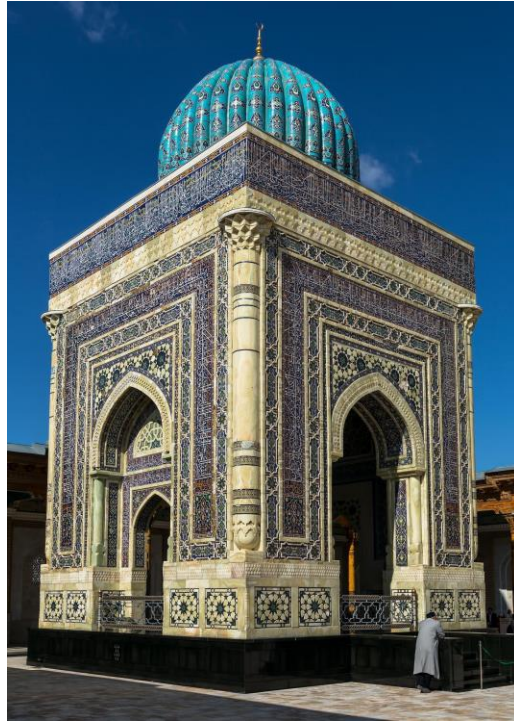
Secondly, why is the chapter on Wahyu but the hadith is on intention? Imam al-Bukhari chose all of the narrators (6) of the hadith on intention from those who were from the land which the revelations were revealed (Makkah and Medina). For the record, this hadith was recorded under the authority of Umar ibn al-Khattab and the chain of narrators were Alqamah ibn Waqqas, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim at-Taymi, Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari, Sufyan ibn Uyayna, Abdullah ibn Zubayr or "al-Humairi" before it reached Muhammad ibn Ismail. All of them were obviously from the land of Wahyu.

Thirdly, While many narrators in the chain could have been taken by Imam al-Bukhari, he only chose from those who belonged to the Quraisy lineage (Abdullah ibn Zubayr "al-Humairi"). The reason is very obvious. He chose to take the baton from the clan the Prophet SAW belonged to. The Abdullah ibn Zubayr here should not be confused with Abdullah ibn Zubayr ibn al-Awwam whose mother was Asma' bint Abu Bakr.

InshaAllah, we shall now turn our discussion towards the unhealthy episode of 2 fitnas which involved Imam al-Bukhari at the end of his life. After many years being abroad, he planned to come back closer to his hometown in Bukhara, Turkistan. However, he took a stop for quite a while in Nishapur. Nishapur is a land where hundreds of ulamas were produced.

During his time, the great muhaddithin, Yahya ibn Yahya az-Zuhli and his son, Muhammad ibn Yahya were respected ulamas in that particular town. The presence of Imam al-Bukhari was obviously welcomed by many, including Yahya ibn Yahya. In fact, Yahya ibn Yahya had foreseen that he was going to have someone who can continue his legacy. Yahya ibn Yahya had put trust in Imam al-Bukhari more than in his own son. Being the son and a rather respected ulama, he found himself being side-lined and began to find ways to tarnish Imam al-Bukhari's reputation (it should be noted that in some narration, Yahya ibn Yahya himself found that his position and influence was being tarnished by the presence of Imam al-Bukhari. Therefore, He had plotted to tarnish Imam al-Bukhari's reputation).

As explained by Shaykh Navaid Aziz, Muhammad ibn Yahya could not find any fault in Imam al-Bukhari. Imam al-Bukhari was not known for committing sins and fahsya, but only known for being knowledgeable and pious. Earlier in our discussion, we mentioned about 2 issues which lingered in the ummah in those days; weak hadiths and the status of the Quran.



(Khartank in Samarkand)

Imam Bukhari was buried in Samarkand, located in Uzbekistan.

For the record, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal sacrificed his life to oppose the Mu'tazilah doctrine which said that the Quran is a makhluk (creation). All Sunnis believe that the Quran is Allah SWT's speech, therefore it cannot be a makhluk. Muhammad ibn Yahya asked his men, some even said he literally paid his men, to ask about the controversial issue to Imam al-Bukhari, expecting a slip of the tongue. Unlike the previous ulamas and Imams, when he was faced by the question, Imam al-Bukhari did not practice tawaqquf (not explaining further), but instead he continued to explain that yes the Quran is Allah SWT's speech, but the recitation that we make when reading it is makhluk. This had sparked a controversy and Imam al-Bukhari was leveled as heretic (deviated) and an innovator.

Muhammad ibn Yahya pushed on the issue to the limit with his influence and the infrastructure which he had. He managed to galvanise people to support him to the point where everyone in Nishapur was on his side. However, individuals such as Imam Muslim, who was once the student of Yahya ibn Yahya and Muhammad ibn Yahya as well as Muhammad ibn

Salamah stuck firm with Imam al-Bukhari. Knowing that the plot was orchestrated by Muhammad ibn Yahya, Imam Muslim sent back the 9 volumes of hadiths and knowledge he had gathered from Muhammad ibn Yahya.

Imam al-Bukhari decided to go back to his hometown, Bukhara, and it can be assumed that his mother must have passed away and there was no information about his brother, Ahmad. He began to teach hadiths in a mosque. The Amir in Bukhara was from the az-Zuhli family, Khalid Ahmad az-Zuhli. He summoned Imam al-Bukhari to come to the Ruler's Court to teach his sons hadith. Imam al-Bukhari refused to go to the court, explaining that an individual should humble themselves to get knowledge.

The skirmish continued between Imam al-Bukhari and Khalid ibn Ahmad az-Zuhli, and Imam al-Bukhari was asked to leave the city. He received a letter from a relative in Samarkand, and he planned to move over there. In the beginning of Ramadhan in the year 256H, he began to find that this world was so stressful and congested and made du'a to Allah to take him away from it. Throughout the Ramadhan, he spent his time on nothing but ibadahs and in the night of Eid al-Fitr, he passed away. His janazah was prayed during the Zuhr of Eid al-Fitr and his body was buried in Samarkand.

Muhammad ibn Hatim, his close friend and also his scribe, and Imam Muslim continued the legacy of Imam al-Bukhari. In fact, many of Imam Muslim's hadiths were knowledge he had gathered from Imam al-Bukhari. We thank Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim and also Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani for giving us the opportunity to learn and understand the words of Rasulullah SAW, not the words which are deviated, but the words which are guaranteed to be authentic. May Allah SWT bless all of them and their families as well.

Imam Muslim (Part 1) - A Strict and Smart Person

May we be guided by Allah SWT. Aameen. We are now moving on to the second Imam of hadith which we are going to discuss in this series, Imam Muslim, who was known as a very great companion of Imam al-Bukhari besides being a good student of him.

His real name is Abu al-Ḥusayn ‘Asakir ad-Din Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjaj ibn Muslim ibn Ward ibn Kawshadh al-Qushayri an-Naysaburi. He was 12 years younger than Imam al-Bukhari (born in 206H) and was regarded as a tabi'i at-tabi'in. Just like Imam al-Bukhari's father Ismail, Imam Muslim's father Hajjaj was also a scholar of hadith. At an early age, Imam Muslim had already been exposed with religious knowledge, especially on hadith, and his interest and enthusiasm in learning religious knowledge multiplied when he was at the age of 14, performing umrah together with his father. Upon seeing many gatherings of knowledge (halaqah), his heart became wide open and his mind became curious, and was thinking of becoming a teacher in a halaqah one day.

In some sense, there are many similarities between Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim, especially on his zeal and aspiration of being great in hadith authenticity projects. Not many details were recorded concerning Imam Muslim. In fact, according to Shaykh Navaid Aziz, in chapter 12 of Imam az-Zahabi's book concerning the biography of Imams, there were only 20 pages of discussion regarding Imam Muslim, while the discussion of Imam al-Bukhari was written for more than 50 pages. Many of Imam Muslim's stories were found in Imam Ibn Hakim's work (d. 405H).



(Tawwaf around the Kaaba)

Tawwaf is part of the pillars of Umrah. We should learn from Imam Muslim's parents who spend their time, money and energy for their children to get exposed with the halaqah of knowledge ever since an early age (14). Through such experience, children can get exposed to the land of the Prophet SAW and the sahabahs RA, hence guiding their interest towards Islamic knowledge and tradition. Wallahua'lam.

Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani who died in 386H mentioned 4 physical appearances of Imam Muslim which is important to be mentioned here. First, he had a straight back when he sat firmly and confidently. Such posture is very important for those who want to lead discussions or present ideas. We know many Imams who were serious about their image and character when gathering for knowledge. Imam Malik, for instance, was known for his proper attire with his special headwear, just like a king making a decree.

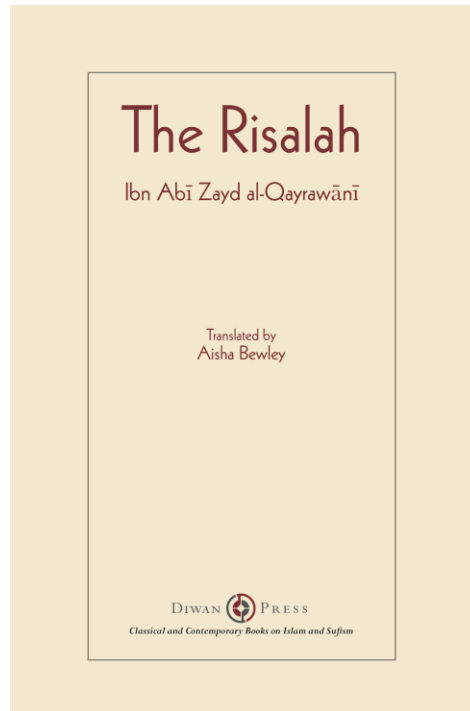
Second, Imam Muslim was also known for his visible white hair. In those days, and even to this day, the presence of white hair symbolises maturity and knowledgeability, admired by some. We know how Rasulullah SAW himself began to have white hair at the early age of around 40, and Anas ibn Malik, one of his helpers documented the case of Rasulullah SAW's white hair in his compilation.

Third, Imam Muslim was also known for his long and floppy beard, another symbol of maturity and knowledgeability. It is said that he would always stroke his beard when in deep thought, and as we know, growing beard is part of the sunnah in Islam, obviously because Rasulullah SAW had grown his beard.

Fourth, Imam Muslim had a certain style of wearing his turban, in which he would leave the tail of the turban long and hanging behind him. Usually, the desert people would use the tail part of the turban to cover their faces and protect them from sand whenever the wind is blowing. Rasulullah SAW was known for wearing a certain cloth to cover his head everytime he goes out. Not much is known about Imam al-Bukhari's physical appearance, unlike Imam Muslim.

The fact that Imam Muslim has a kunya "Abu al-Husayn" meant that he got married. He also worked to get some money in order to survive. He worked as a small trader and sold dates, nuts, and honey. He was put down and criticised simply because he taught hadith even while in the market. Such character (still teaching hadith while busy selling and buying) can be interpreted in multiple ways. Some scholars of his time discredited him because for them, religious knowledge, especially hadiths should be taught at proper places, particularly in the mosque.

Imam Muslim cared less of the criticisms and continued with his style for quite some time. However, later scholars interpreted Imam Muslim's approach as a sign of honesty, sincerity, and seriousness. He knew that he had to survive, but at the same time, he did not want the opportunity to spread hadith to be wasted unnecessarily due to his financial commitment.



(*The Risalah*, by Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani)

In this book, the author commences with uṣūl ad-dīn – the roots of the dīn – a survey of the vital Muslim worldview, proceeding then through purification and the acts of ‘ibadah, the ordinary transactions such as marriage, divorce, buying and selling and so forth, and concluding with chapters of a general and miscellaneous nature.

InshaAllah, we will discuss another 3 aspects related to Imam Muslim. They are about his teachers and students, the fitna involving Imam al-Bukhari and Muhammad ibn Yahya, and some of his important books, excluding Sahih Muslim, which we will only discuss in the next section. One interesting note on Imam Muslim’s hadith works is that he never mentioned his direct teacher, Imam al-Bukhari’s name in his compilation of Sahih Muslim.

There were some reasons to this, which some of them may be deemed controversial. One of the obvious reasons is that most of Imam al-Bukhari’s teachers were also his teacher. They were accessible to Imam Muslim. Not only was their age gap only 12 years, but both of them also spent their productive life in Nishapur.

The Six Imams of Hadith (Bukhari, Muslim, at-Tirmidhi Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah) set or learned from the hand of Qutayba ibn Sa'id, as we have discussed in a previous section. Other great Imams such as Muhammad ibn Bashir, also commonly known as al-Bindar, was also the teacher of Imam Muslim and the other 5 imams as well. Imam Muslim, in fact, had a book discussing about Imam Ahmad's response to many questions which he had proposed. Yahya ibn Ma'in, Ali ibn Madini, and Ishaq ibn Rahwayh were the same teachers who taught both Imam Muslim and Imam al-Bukhari.

Interestingly, Imam at-Tirmidhi, as well as Ibn Khuzaymah, another great muhaddithin, learned under the guidance of Imam Muslim. One of his students was also Ibn Abi Shayba. Imam Muslim had also been the student of Muhammad ibn Yahya az-Zuhli, one of the great imams in Nishapur. However, when the fitna against Imam al-Bukhari over the issue of the createdness of the Quran, (Halaqul Quran) became rampant, with his cold and clear eyes, he realised how resolute, sincere and authentic Imam al-Bukhari stood over the issue. According to Imam al-Bukhari, the Quran is the speech of Allah, but the recitation we do is makhluq. During his life, in defending this issue, Imam Ahmad forcefully told the ummah that the only phrase which can be found in the Quran on this matter is "Tanzil al-Quran" or "Anzal al-Quran" which means that the Quran was sent down.

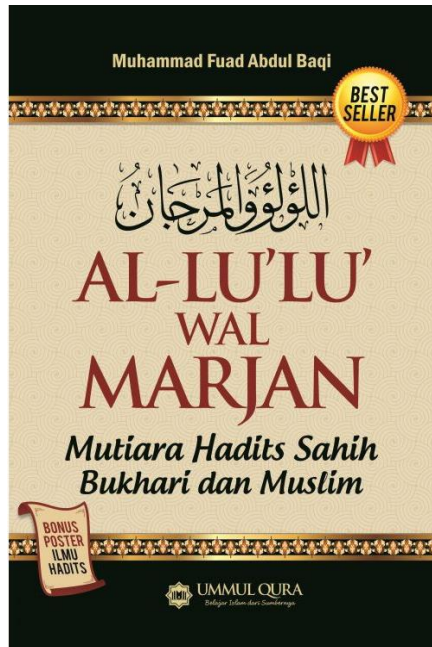
When Muhammad ibn Yahya's plot to tarnish Imam al-Bukhari's reputation was exposed, Imam Muslim, together with Muhammad ibn Salamah stood firmly on the side of Imam al-Bukhari. 9 volumes of knowledge which Imam Muslim had learned from Muhammad ibn Yahya were sent back. InshaAllah we will elaborate more on Imam Muslim's monumental work, the Sahih Muslim in the next section.

Imam Muslim (Part 2) - The Strength of the Sahih Muslim

In this section, focus will be given specifically, but not entirely to Imam Muslim's monumental work, Sahih Muslim. To begin with, let it be clear to us that Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim are two books which are in their class of its own, unlike the other 4 great books of hadith by Imam at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah. Shaykh Navaid Aziz mentioned that Sahih Muslim should be regarded as the third authentic book, next to Sahih al-Bukhari, which is the second. The only authentic book, in which not only the content has been completely preserved, but also every single words in it, is the Quran itself. We are going to provide some other information as well, such as Imam Muslim's relation with Imam al-Bukhari.

imams of the past understood Imam Muslim's character. In those days, there were discussions and comparisons made on the uniqueness of Sahih Muslim and Sahih al-Bukhari respectively. Imam Muslim was known for has been known for his knowledge of more than 300,000 hadiths, which some of them he had compiled in his Sahih Muslim. Obviously, this number is huge. Nevertheless, Imam al-Bukhari, on the other hand has been known for his knowledge of over 600,000 hadiths, and even memorised 300,000 of them.

The kitabs of Sahih Muslim which we have today are books which have been modified by Imam Nawawi in his al-Minhaj. It is true that the Sahih Muslim hadiths have been organised systematically, moving from topics to topics. However, It was Imam Nawawi who inserted the chapter headings to visually separate the hadiths based on their topics. For instance, we might notice the chapter of Kitab al-Tauhid, but this chapter could not have been seen in the original work and was inserted to make it more accessible to students of knowledge. Contemporary great muhaddithin, Muhammad Fu'ad al-Baqi (1882-1968), an Egyptian scholar, had done a great service of standardising the numbers of each hadiths.



(*Al-Lu'lu' uwal Marjan*, by Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul Baqi)

This had to be done because there is an obvious issue of repetition in the compilation of hadiths when both Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim made attempts to make their explanation clearer over certain issues. We might have learned that there are only 5620 hadiths in Imam al-Bukhari's compilation without repetition, and 3333 hadiths in Sahih Muslim. This is the *Hidbah* or great service done by Muhammad Fu'ad al-Baki. Why did Imam Muslim not include Imam al-Bukhari as one of the narrators of hadiths in his compilation, knowing that Imam al-Bukhari was a direct teacher to him?

There are 3 most common explanation given by past ulamas, which were also mentioned by Shaykh Navaid Aziz. First of all, nearly all of Imam al-Bukhari's teachers were also Imam Muslim's as well. Names such as Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Yahya ibn Ma'in, Ali al-Madini, and Ishaq ibn Rahwayh were great teachers of both of them. In the tradition of hadith narration, the fewer the number of sanad (narrators in the chain of narrators), the better. By not including Imam al-Bukhari in the chain of narrators, Imam Muslim, in many of the hadiths he had compiled had the same status as Imam al-Bukhari's, as far as the number of narrators in the chain of narrators is

concerned. Imam Muslim has only 3 other narrators between him and Rasulullah SAW because of that reason as well.

Secondly, the reason as to why Imam al-Bukhari was excluded in his compilation is a bit controversial, and this is based on what some of the past ulamas said, explained by Shaykh Navaid Aziz. It was known that Imam Muslim had a very sharp character, and would not tolerate with things which he disagreed with, if he was sure with his position. Imam al-Bukhari, on the other hand, was known for his stringent and strict methodology when it comes to narrations of hadith. One of the stringent criteria which was disagreed by Imam Muslim was the fact that any narrators, to make them valid, they must not only be known to have been alive at a certain time, but they must be known to have met the previous and next narrator without doubt. How was such a criteria made? According to Imam Muslim, this was too much. Hence, he excluded Imam al-Bukhari in his compilation, wallahua'lam.

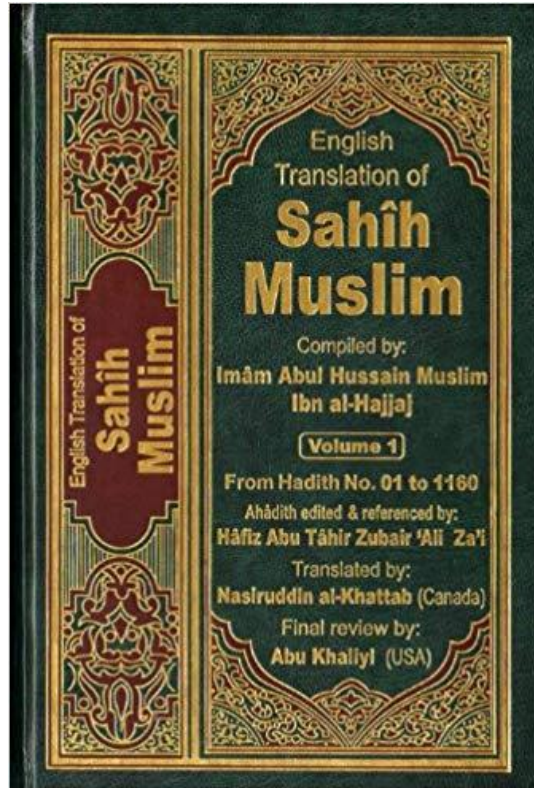
The third explanation is quite straightforward. Imam Muslim did not repeat those which had been made clear by Imam al-Bukhari in his compilation. Of course, there are things which Imam Muslim had to repeat, and these fall under the umbrella of *Mutafaqqun Alayhi*, which means hadiths which are in both Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Those which are not *Mutafaqqun Alayhi* are different, mostly in terms of the chain of narrators. Like Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim had also been praised by his teachers.

We have mentioned how the 6 great imams of hadith were taught by Qutayba ibn Sa'id and Muhammad ibn Bashir or al-Bundar. Al-Bundar once said that there are 4 great muhaddithin in his time; Abu Zur'ar-Razi who was also a teacher of Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim, Muslim al-Nishapuri, Abdullah ibn ad-Darimi Samarkandi, and Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. Al-Bundar then said that only al-Nishapuri and al-Bukhari will be renowned in the field of hadith. What makes Sahih Muslim more preferable compared to Sahih al-Bukhari?

Those who learn hadith would mostly start with Sahih Muslim instead of Sahih al-Bukhari. This is so partly because Imam Muslim started with a clear introduction in his book, mentioning the condition and status of hadith, methodology of narrating hadith, and the criterias set on how to criticise or disparage certain hadith. On the contrary, Imam al-Bukhari started his book with the first hadith on “deeds are by intention”, which is loaded with abstract contents, only later unpacked by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani in Fathul Bari.

Secondly, Imam Muslim organised his hadiths, moving from topic to topic, which later was further simplified by Imam Nawawi. This book is much easier to be followed compared to Imam al-Bukhari’s presentation of hadith. Although there are chapter headings, the hadiths put in were many and repetitive. Another advantage which Sahih Muslim has is on *Mu’allaqat*; hadiths together with the list of narrators. Nearly all of the hadiths in Sahih Muslim (except 10) were presented together with the chain of narrators, while in Sahih al-Bukhari, the opposite can be seen. Finally, the arrangement of Sahih Muslim is much easier to be followed because there are less repetitive hadiths.

Nevertheless, for an expert of guru who use these hadith materials as a source of reference, Sahih al-Bukhari is much more superior, without even taking account of the level of authenticity.



(Sahih Muslim, by Imam Muslim)

There are several important points left before we discuss about his death. Imam Muslim reminded us in the introductory part of his Sahih Muslim on the importance of who we get our religious knowledge from. This is to say that we must identify the background of not only the guru, but where the guru received the knowledge and information from as well. In our current context, Shaykh Yasir Qadhi said that we should look for ulamas such as al-Shawkani from Yemen, and Shah Waliullah from India. If there are evidence that our guru's knowledge can be traced back to them, then we might have a good reason to learn from the guru. However, it should be noted that it doesn't mean that our selection is limited to these 2 only.

In general, there are 2 fitnas or controversial issue surrounding Imam Muslim during his time. The first involved the fitna of Halaqul Quran which mainly involved Imam al-Bukhari, but Imam Muslim was also a part of the story. Muhammad ibn Yahya az-Zuhli, in one of his halaqah, in which Imam Muslim was one of the participant, strongly said that whosoever in this halaqah believes that the Quran is a makhluq, please leave the gathering.

Obviously, Imam Muslim was not stupid and was able to understand Muhammad ibn Yahya's point. Muhammad ibn Yahya then pointed to Imam Muslim. Knowing of his sharp character, not only did he leave the halaqah forever, but he also sent back 9 volumes of the knowledge which he had acquired from Muhammad ibn Yahya. He then cut Muhammad ibn Yahya's narrations from Sahih Muslim.

The second fitna involved Imam Muslim and Imam al-Bukhari too. According to some ulamas, this issue should not be conceived as too serious. We have discussed how Imam Muslim had cut Imam al-Bukhari's name from his compilation of hadiths due to disagreement over the criteria of validity and reliability of the chain of narrators.

InshaAllah, before we end this section, let us know the end of his life. In 261H, he died at the age of 55. In one of his gathering, a man came to inform him of one authentic hadith (content and narrator). This hadith was never heard by Imam Muslim. He was so shocked because from all the many hadiths which he had listened to, memorised, and analysed; he had never come across this particular hadith. He went back home and locked himself in his library, refusing anyone disturbing him, even his wife. Being a loving and responsible wife, she did not want her husband to lock himself in without food, hence she provided him a huge container of dates.

It is said that in every hadith which he checked, Imam Muslim took one date to eat. Since he had thousands and thousands of hadiths to check, he might've eaten thousands of dates as well. He was found dead with his face facing the manuscript of hadiths with a mountain of date seeds next to him. People assumed he died because of the amount of potassium he took from the dates, which damaged his heart, Wallahua'lam. Whatever the case, the man reached the end of his life concentrating on hadith and left a great legacy with many books, in which Sahih Muslim is one of them.

May Allah SWT give barakah for his works and bless him and his family.
May Allah SWT give barakah for our work and bless us and our family as well. Aameen.

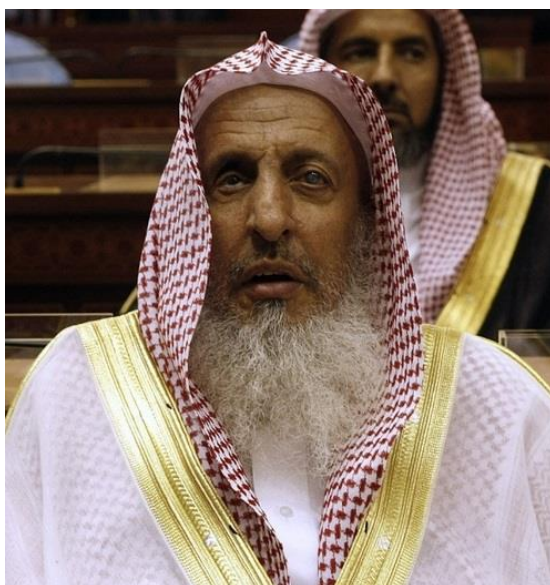
Imam at-Tirmidhi (Part 1) - The Gifted Memory and Ad-Darir (The Blind)

May Allah SWT open the floodgates of rahmah for ourselves and our family, Aamin. We are moving to the third Imam in our tazkirah on great Muhaddisins, beginning with Imam al-Bukhari RA, Imam Muslim, Imam at-Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i and finally Ibn Majah. Imam at-Tirmidhi or Abu Isa Muhammad ibn Isa as-Sulami ad-Darir al-Bughi at-Tirmidhi came from the region of Khurasan, like Imam al-Bukhari.

Born during the late 209 or early 210H, he had a huge passion on religious knowledge, particularly in the traditions of Hadith narrations. Although his father was unlike Imam al-Bukhari or Imam Muslim's father, who were hadith scholars, he himself gradually but surely developed his ability and was given the status of the great compiler of hadiths, just like the two previous Imams. His title or Laqab is Abu Isa. There are many discussions by past ulama' over the impermissibility of someone using a name such as Abu Isa. This is so because as we know, Nabi Isa AS had no father. Therefore, a Laqab such as Abu Isa might imply that such name was used by the father of Isa AS, wallahua'lam.

InshaAllah through time, we will explain the name of Abu Isa, but for now, let us look at what Imam Ibn Hakim said about Imam at-Tirmidhi or Abu Isa. Among other things, Imam Ibn Hakim who died in 405H, said that there are no other great man whose knowledge and zuhud is equal to Imam al-Bukhari RA except for Abu Isa. He turned blind and spent the last years of his life as a blind ulama'. There are at least three things that we can learn from Imam Ibn Hakim, who is known for his book, Mustadara' as-Salihin which discusses and adds some important hadiths left by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim in their collections respectively.

The first thing that we know is that Imam at-Tirmidhi is a very knowledgeable individual. Secondly, we also know that the name of Abu Isa continues to be referred to by other ulama' without hesitation. Thirdly, we know that Imam at-Tirmidhi spent many last years of his life being blind.



(Shaykh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah al-Shaykh)

This is not a picture of Imam at-Tirmidhi, obviously, but the current Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah Al Shaykh (blind). Imam at-Tirmidhi became blind for the most of his later life due to his love for knowledge, which made him cry a lot. The previous Grand Muftis of Saudi Arabia were also blind, and they were Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Al ash-Sheikh and Abdul Aziz ibn Abdullah ibn Baz.

It is said that one of the reasons of his blindness was due to his knowledge. He would always cry due to his love for knowledge. Little is known about his early life, except for when he performed umrah, his heart strongly attached himself to the world of religious knowledge, especially in Makkah and Medina. He was known as at-Tirmidhi because he was born in Tirmidhi, a place now known as the Surxondaryo Region, Uzbekistan.

Let us discuss a bit about the issue of the name of Abu Isa. It is said that Rasulullah SAW once talked to a man with the name of Abu Isa. Rasulullah SAW said, "Did you not know that Isa AS had no father?". He repeated this three times. Ulama' had different interpretations over this hadith. Some say that this hadith is a clear indication that the name of Abu Isa is highly disliked, if not impermissible in Islam.

However, some ulama' said that Rasulullah SAW in his statement, was only testing the sahabahs knowledge. The statement did not imply anything on impermissibility, Wallahua'lam. Obviously, Imam at-Tirmidhi himself knew why he used the Laqab of Abu Isa, despite many stories describing its usage. Umar Ibn al-Khattab reprimanded one of his sons who intended to use the name of Abu Isa. Mughirah Ibn Shubab at-Thaqafi also used the name of Abu Isa. Umar advised Mughirah by saying, "Didn't you know that Rasulullah SAW preferred names such as Abu Abdillah?", implying that Mughirah shouldn't take the Laqab of Abu Isa. In other narrations, Mughaira responded to Umar by saying that the Laqab of Abu Isa was given to me by Rasulullah SAW himself, Wallahua'lam.

One great imam of hadiths, who was also a student of Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim, Ibn Umami Syaiba had a specific chapter discussing about the name of Abu Isa in the Islamic tradition. Like Imam al-Bukhari RA, Imam at-Tirmidhi had a strong memory. There was an occasion where he planned to meet an old teacher in Makkah. One of the reason is to get as many hadiths from the teacher, so that he can cut the intermediaries (narrators between himself and the teacher).

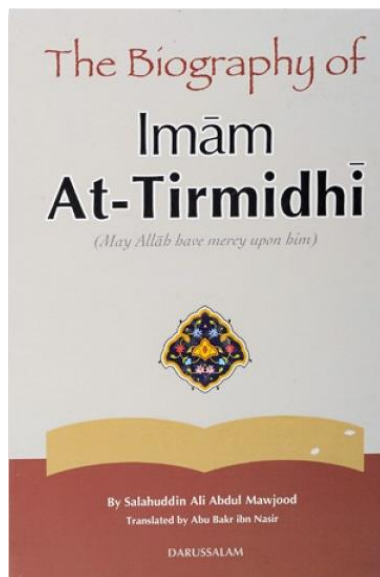
It should be informed here that the caliber of Muhaddisin were judged among other things, based on the number of narrators between himself and Rasulullah SAW. We know that Imam al-Bukhari had about 24 hadiths which only have three narrators between him and Rasulullah SAW. Imam at-Tirmidhi, due to his age only managed to get one hadith, in which there are three narrators between himself and Rasulullah SAW. Imam at-Tirmidhi was 16 years younger than Imam al-Bukhari and four years younger than Imam Muslim.

Whatever the case, Imam at-Tirmidhi tried to make sure his other hadiths that he compiled must have as minimum narrations as he possibly could. He had promised with the teacher that he would come to see him during Asar to bring two volumes of his hadith which he narrated indirectly from the old teachers. As he reached his residence, he noticed that the two volumes that he had was not in the residence. As he searched high and

low, he decided to bring two empty books to bring to see the teachers simply because he did not want to break the promise he made to see the teachers during Asar. The teachers asked him to narrate the hadith.

Imam at-Tirmidhi opened his empty books and narrated many hadiths from page to page with his memory. Obviously, the teachers were aware of the empty books and continued to allow Imam at-Tirmidhi to speak. After many hours of hadith narration, the teachers asked him to stop. “Did you read it from your memory? And did you practice it before?”. Imam at-Tirmidhi replied yes for the first question and no for the second.

The teachers were astounded, “I cannot believe that you can memorize them unless you have seriously practiced it”. The teachers gave Imam at-Tirmidhi another 40 hadiths. This hadiths were the Gharib, in which the sanad and content is difficult and complex. Immediately after the teacher finished reading the hadiths, Imam at-Tirmidhi immediately repeated the 40 hadiths without fail. This miracle explains that not only he had the ability to memorize things with his eye, but also through listening, which are two different skills altogether.



(The Biography of Imam at-Tirmidhi, by Salahuddin Ali Abdul Mawjood)

May Allah SWT give us the ability to memorize things, especially the Quran and hadith very much like Imam at-Tirmidhi and Imam al-Bukhari, Amin. Many of us know that Imam at-Tirmidhi had come up with his monumental work, Sunan at-Tirmidhi which is a compilation of hadith which concerns Fiqh which InshaAllah we will discuss in the next section. We will focus our attention to discussing about the important teachers of Imam at-Tirmidhi. We begin with Imam al-Bukhari RA and Imam Muslim not only as a companion but also as a teacher. Not only did Imam Muslim benefitted a lot from his teachings, he only managed to narrate one hadith from Imam Muslim. The hadith is about seeing the hilal (crescent moon) signifying Ramadhan. However, many hadiths, especially the ones concerning fiqh was gathered from Imam al-Bukhari.

Imam al-Bukhari and Imam at-Tirmidhi had a special relationship. After all, both of them came from the same region of Khurasan and had close hometowns. Imam al-Bukhari praised Imam at-Tirmidhi. In fact, as he praised his teacher Ali al-Madini, he would also praise Imam at-Tirmidhi, in which he would say, "I benefitted more from you more than you benefitted from me." Interestingly, Imam al-Bukhari himself narrated two hadiths from Imam at-Tirmidhi. Proud of it, in his compilation he would say "My teacher narrated hadiths from me, the hadiths are as follows," Wallahua'lam. The great Imam of hadiths who taught the six Imams, (Bukhari, Muslim, at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah), Qutaybah Ibn Sa'id and Muhammad Ibn Bashar who was properly known as al-Bindar, imparted their knowledge significantly to Imam at-Tirmidhi.

We are going to discuss in the next section how the teachers had influenced his knowledge as well as his compilation and arrangements of the hadith in the Sahih at-Tirmidhi. Imam at-Tirmidhi spent years of his life being blind. Rasulullah SAW said that those who have lost their two will enter Jannah. The sahabahs thought that "two" meant daughter and son but Rasulullah SAW said that it was their eyes (eyesight). The hadith is as follows:

Rasul Allah (sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam) said: "Allah said, 'If I deprive my slave of his two beloved things (his eyes) and he remains patient, I will let him enter Paradise in compensation for them.'"

[Sahih al-Bukhari]

Imam at-Tirmidhi died in 279H at the age of 68, leaving behind his magnum opus, The Sunan at-Tirmidhi. May Allah SWT grant Jannah to Imam at-Tirmidhi as well as those who are tested with blindness. With that, we end this section.

Imam at-Tirmidhi (Part 2) - Sunan at-Tirmidhi and Shama'il Muhammadiyah

We are now moving to our discussion on the second part of Imam at-Tirmidhi's biography, and in this section, will try to provide some information on two of his major works, Sunan at-Tirmidhi and Shama'il Muhammadiyah. It is important for us to mention that as far as age and seniority is concerned, Imam Abu Dawud was much senior and older than Imam at-Tirmidhi. Nevertheless, his reputation and caliber, especially when his Sunan at-Tirmidhi was judged, ulamas always mention or put at-Tirmidhi third, after Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim.

The word Sunan refers to a collection which focuses on fiqh or jurisprudence in Islam. The word Jami' usually refers to a collection or compilation which covers multiple aspects and topics. Imam at-Tirmidhi's book has both of these components in his hadith compilation. His Sunan at-Tirmidhi is also known as Jami' at-Tirmidhi, and is in many ways a great work, although the hadiths he collected were only 3,956. Ulamas regard Sunan at-Tirmidhi as a great encyclopedia, a manual accessible to all ummah.

This is so because firstly, Imam at-Tirmidhi combined both of Imam al-Bukhari's and Imam Muslim's method. While Imam al-Bukhari provided a chapter heading, he did not organise the hadiths in specific sections, and more often than not, it has a lot of repetitions. While it is true that Imam Muslim, on the other hand, organised the hadith according to topics, he did not put chapter headings to completely separate them. It was only later that Imam Nawawi organised the hadiths and put chapter headings in Imam Nawawi's work al-Minhaj. By combining both methods, Imam at-Tirmidhi's work stands as the best work accessible.

Secondly, Imam at-Tirmidhi provided further explanations for words which were uncommonly used. Thirdly, he also made further explanations on narrators who were less known. We have mentioned that in his Sunan at-Tirmidhi, the focus is more specific, mostly on fiqh such as taharah, solah,

fasting, etc. With such organisation, and with the help of explanations on certain terms and background of narrators, it is not strange if some ulamas say that Imam al-Bukhari's and Imam Muslim's work are only good for experts but Imam at-Tirmidhi's work is better for the interest of new students and even the advanced students of hadith.

In his work, Imam at-Tirmidhi also discussed the view of the past jurists on their verdict on certain rulings concerning fiqh. It is true that we already have a bunch of fiqh ulamas such as Imam Malik and Imam Syafi'e, but Imam at-Tirmidhi's work is so monumental because it has both the aspects of fiqh and hadiths in one product. Another important feature of this work, as mentioned by Shaykh Navaid Aziz, is his collection of hadith number 3235 which no other compilations have discussed about it, despite of its authenticity. The hadith is as follows:

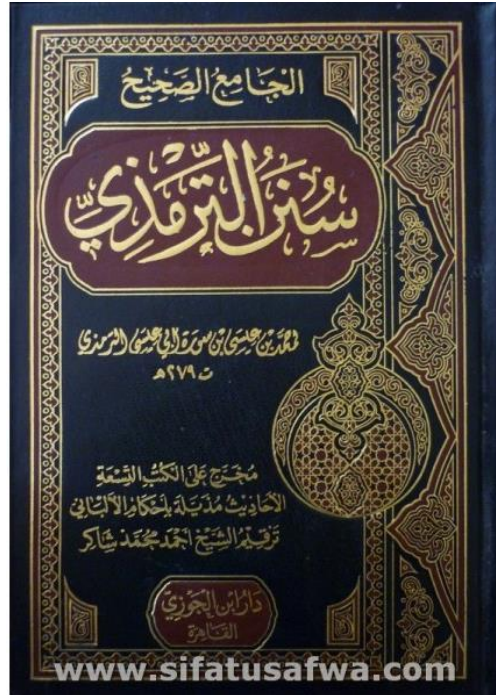
Narrated Mu'adh bin Jabal [may Allah be pleased with him]:

"One morning, the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) was prevented from coming to us for Salat As-Subh, until we were just about to look for the eye of the sun (meaning sunrise). Then he came out quickly, had the Salat prepared for. The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) performed the Salat, and he performed his Salat in a relatively quick manner. When he said the Salam, he called aloud with his voice saying to us: 'Stay in your rows as you are.' Then he turned coming near to us, then he said: 'I am going to narrate to you what kept me from you this morning: I got up during the night, I performed Wudu and prayed as much as I was able to, and I dozed off during my Salat, and fell deep asleep. Then I saw my Lord, Blessed and Most High, in the best of appearances. He said: 'O Muhammad!' I said: 'My Lord here I am my Lord!' He said: 'What is it that the most exalted group busy themselves with?' I said: 'I do not know Lord.' And He said it three times." He said: "So I saw Him place His Palm between my shoulders, and I sensed the coolness of His Fingertips between my breast. Then everything was disclosed for me, and I became aware. So He said: 'O Muhammad!' I said: 'Here I am my Lord!' He said: 'What is it that the most exalted group busy themselves with?' I said: 'In the acts that atone.' He said: 'And what are they?' I said: 'The footsteps to the congregation, the gatherings in the Masjid after the Salat, Isbagh Al-Wudu during difficulties.' He said: 'Then what else?' I said: 'Feeding others, being

lenient in speech, and Salat during the night while the people are sleeping.'
He said: 'Ask.' I said: 'O Allah! I ask of you the doing of the good deeds, avoiding the evil deeds, loving the poor, and that You forgive me, and have mercy upon me. And when You have willed Fitnah in the people, then take me without the Fitnah. And I ask You for Your love, the love of whomever You love, and the of the deeds that bring one nearer to Your love.'" The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said: "Indeed it is true, so study it and learn it."

Although the hadith is very long, the meaning is very straightforward. We have no plans of discussing the hadith in detail, except a few issues which ulamas have discussed about. First, the possibility of seeing Allah The Almighty, which majority of ulamas say that it is not possible except for Rasulullah SAW in special circumstances. Second, there are many discussion on the list of important deeds which we should perform such as going and staying in the mosque, giving food to people, as well as performing night prayers, wallahua'lam.

What is important for us to discuss here is that it was through the geniusness of Imam at-Tirmidhi, we gain benefit from hadiths of different category, from those which are Sahih to those which are Hasa, Dha'if and even Maudhu'.



(Sunan at-Tirmidhi, by Imam at-Tirmidhi)

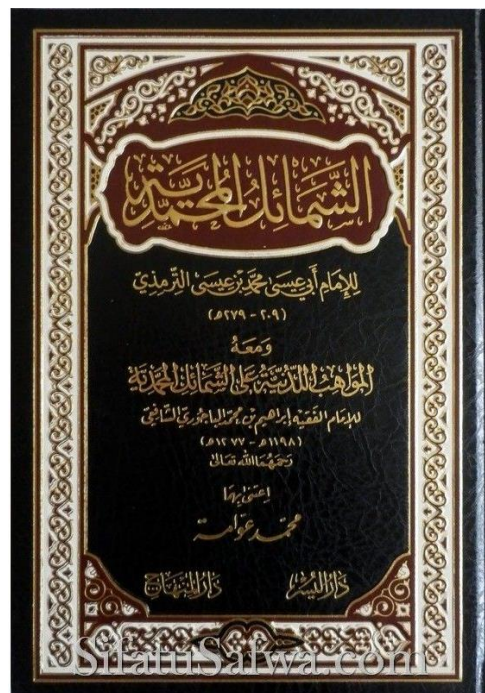
The previous compilations such as by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim, have two general categories of hadith, authentic and not authentic. Hadith 3235 which we have mentioned here falls under the category of Hasan, which means that it is authentic because hadiths which are Sahih and Hasan are classified as authentic.

Something strange in the world of hadith narration is that when the great imam of hadith from Andalusia, Ibn Hizam, mentioned that Imam at-Tirmidhi's compilation of hadiths was Majhul (cannot be accepted). Subsequent ulamas found it very awkward. The great imam of Andalusia was unable to recognise the important value of Imam at-Tirmidhi's work. Ibn Kathir, Ibn Hajar, az-Zahabi, and many others provided their own comments to support Imam at-Tirmidhi's work. Some even said something like, "How can we reject a work which explains to us that the sun provides light (factual statements)?", wallahua'lam.

One such explanation of the strange remark was made by Imam Ibn Hizam was that it was due to the huge distance between Cordova to Nishapur,

information on hadiths were not disseminated well, unlike today, since we have the internet. In Ibn Hizam's interest to protect hadith, he did not want to recognise a work by a person he did not know. Wallahua'lam.

InshaAllah, we will now look at Imam at-Tirmidhi's work on Shama'il Muhammadiyah. In general, there are two types of narrations concerning the Prophet SAW. One is in the form of stories of politics and wars, commonly called Maghazi, while the other pertains Rasulullah SAW's character, appearance, belongings, etc. known as Shama'il.



(Shama'il Muhammadiyah, by Imam at-Tirmidhi)

We can always learn from what some ulamas or ustadhs may talk from Maghazi seerah or Shama'il seerah. Most of the Shama'il seerah were taken from Imam at-Tirmidhi's work, Shama'il Muhammadiyah. Many close sahabahs or relatives such as Sayyidina Ali and Anas ibn Malik narrated about the Prophet's character.

There was one story during the big migration when the Prophet SAW and Abu Bakr met a lady names Umm Ma'bad. From Umm Ma'bad's narration, we learned not only the Prophet's appearance, but also his characters.

Below is what she explained about the Prophet SAW:

I saw a man, pure and clean, with a handsome face and a fine figure. He was not marred by a skinny body, nor was he overly small in the head and neck. He was graceful and elegant, with intensely black eyes and thick eyelashes. There was a huskiness in his voice, and his neck was long. His beard was thick, and his eyebrows were finely arched and not joined together. When silent, he was grave and dignified, and when he spoke, glory rose up and overcame him. He was from afar the most beautiful of men and the most glorious, and close up he was the sweetest and the loveliest. He was sweet of speech and articulate, but not petty or trifling. His speech was a string of cascading pearls, measured so that none despaired of its length, and no eye challenged him because of brevity. In company he is like a branch between two other branches, but he is the most flourishing of the three in appearance, and the loveliest in power. He has friends surrounding him, who listen to his words. If he commands, they obey implicitly, with eagerness and haste, without frown or complaint.

From this narration, we know the physical appearance of the Prophet SAW, how he talked and how he was when he was silent. To be a good Muslim, we should learn to emulate such characters. The Shama'il has been translated into many languages, and has been used mostly to teach the ummah on how to develop a good akhlaq. Among the details of the Prophet that we can learn from Umm Ma'bad's hadith are that the Prophet SAW was handsome and had a fine figure. The Prophet was grave when he was silent and dignified, while when he spoke, glory rises up and overcomes him. His speech was also articulate and sweet instead of petty or trifling. Therefore, we should try to emulate these characters of the Prophet SAW whenever we can. The Maghazi hadiths are used to explain to the world how Islam was at its formative stage, especially in Makkah, and how it developed in another three stages; from Hijrah until Hudaibiyah, from Hudaibiya to Fathul Makkah, and from Fathul Makkah to the Prophet SAW's passing.

There are 399 narrations of hadith in the Shama'il, divided into 50 chapters. May Allah grant us strength, so that InshaAllah one of these days, we can have a tazkirah on the Shama'il Muhammadiyah. With that, we end this section. May Allah SWT forgive our shortcomings. Aameen.

Imam Abu Dawud (Part 1) - The Great Relationship between Mentor and Mentee

We are now moving to another great imam of hadith whose ancestry is quite different compared to the other imams, such as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim and Imam at-Tirmidhi.

His name is Abu Dawud or Sulayman ibn al-Ash'ath ibn ishaq ibn Bashir ibn Surrah al-Azdi as-Sijistani. The laqab Abu Dawud was used by him not because he had a son named Dawud, but because Prophet Sulayman (Solomon) AS's son was Dawud (David) AS. He was from an Arab clan which was based in Yemen, the al-Azdi clan. Sijistani is an area where he was born, at the southern part of Afghanistan and at the border of Pakistan. Like many other imams, he too wrote many books such as Sulasatul Ahmad ibn Hanbal and his most widely known book, Sunan Abu Dawud.

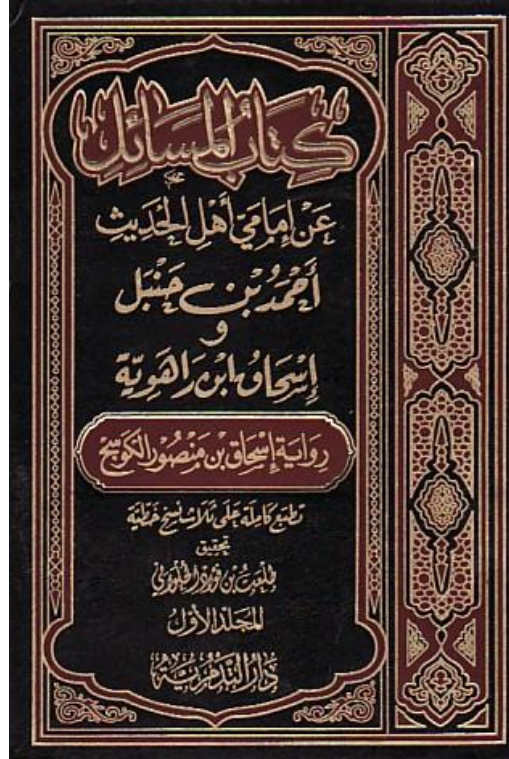
We have mentioned in our previous discussion that seniority wise, he was much older than Imam at-Tirmidhi. Born in 202H, just 8 years younger than Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Abu Dawud was around 8 years older than Imam at-Tirmidhi. Although we have mentioned that in terms of Sahih hadiths, Imam at-Tirmidhi had the upper hand compared to Imam Abu Dawud, which is why we discussed him first, it does not mean that Sunan Abu Dawud is less important. In fact, the Sunan has been widely and influentially used by ulamas to discuss about jurisprudence and fiqh benefits.

Since at an early age, he had developed a passion for hadith, and his brother, Muhammad was known as a great scholar of hadith during his period of life. At the age of 18, Imam Abu Dawud travelled to Baghdad, seeking for knowledge. Although he was unable to meet the guru he planned to learn from, he benefited from the vast knowledge of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal who was a giant when it comes to hadith in Baghdad, together with Yahya ibn Ma'in.

We will discuss how close of a relationship was developed between Imam Abu Dawud and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, but let us first discuss another great guru who taught all of the 6 Great Imams of Hadith. We have already mentioned Qutayba ibn Sa'id and al-Bindar or Muhammad ibn Bashir on how knowledgeable they were and how the 6 Great Imams of Hadith benefited from them.

The third imam who should also merit our attention is Muhammad bin Musanna, who was also known as Abu Musa, and had also taught the 6 Great Imams of Hadith, in which Imam Abu Dawud even provided a special comment for him. Among other things, Imam Abu Dawud said that although al-Bindar had many hadiths to share, narration wise, Abu Musa had the upper hand over al-Bindar, therefore students can get benefit much easier from Abu Musa's skill and approach. The relationship between Imam Abu Dawud and Imam Ahmad was so close and intimate to the point that the next generation of ulamas mentioned that Imam Abu Dawud resembled even the looks and appearance of Imam Ahmad.

Interestingly, Imam Ahmad resembled the looks and appearance of Waqif ibn Jarrah who resembled Sufyan ibn Qusairi who resembled al-Mansur who resembled Ibrahim Nakha'i who resembled Alqamah ibn Waqqas who resembled his teacher, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud in his conducts and characters. Ibn Mas'ud, although known for his small stature physically, he was also known to have resembled Rasulullah SAW's character and conduct. The point that we want to make here is that when ulamas say the student resembles the teacher, ulamas are more interested to discuss about the visibility of the light of knowledge which appeared on their faces, not in terms of their physical looks and body.



(Kitab al-Musnad, by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal)

If we are able to notice, in the line of Abu Dawud's teachers, from Imam Ahmad to Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, we might notice great luminaries such as Waqi' ibn Jarrah, in which Imam al-Bukhari had learned from through his work. From the work of this Waqi' ibn Jarrah, Imam al-Bukhari learned that in order to be a great scholar of hadith, one must not only learn from someone senior and their contemporaries, but also from someone junior from him. If Imam al-Bukhari learned or narrated 2 hadiths from his junior, Imam at-Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Dawud would be so proud because there are hadiths that Imam Ahmad himself took or learned from Abu Dawud. This informs us that not only do muhaddithin of the past, in order to raise their caliber, tried to cut as many narrators as they could so that they can be closer to Rasulullah SAW, as far as the chains of narrators are concerned, but the senior had no qualms of learning or taking hadith from someone junior.

We have mentioned earlier that Imam Abu Dawud had a compilation on his questions on many subjects to Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal. One of the

questions which was commonly discussed by ustadhs was about a pregnant Christian lady who passed away and was married to a Muslim husband. The question was where should she be buried, knowing that the fetus in her womb would potentially be a Muslim. In response to Imam Abu Dawud's question, Imam Ahmad explained the strongest opinion in which the following principles apply: It is better to give non-Muslim rights in cases which we are unclear rather than allowing their rights to be taken away from.

Instead of burying the non-Muslim in a non-Muslim burial area, Imam Ahmad mentioned that it would be better that she was to be buried at the end most of the Muslim burial ground instead. Imam Abu Dawud has been praised by many ulamas, not only of the past, but even contemporary ulamas. Musa ibn Harun, for instance, mentioned that Imam Abu Dawud was created by Allah SWT in this world for hadith and was created, in the next world, for paradise. Other ulamas mentioned that the knowledge of hadiths was too easy for Imam Abu Dawud, just like how bending a metal was so easy for the Prophet Dawud AS.



(Location of Basrah)

Basra was known as a place with great ulamas and sufis such as Hasan al-Basri (20H-110H). It was also in this city that Imam Abu Dawud

devoted his time and life to teach hadith until the end of his life, and his body was buried in this city.

He had many great students. His sons, Abdullah, in particular, together with other great narrators such as Ibn Dassah, Ubay ibn al-Jurri, and Imam at-Tirmidhi himself. There was a controversial issue which was recorded concerning Imam Abu Dawud and his son, Abdullah, who was also his top student. It is said that Imam Abu Dawud once said to not learn from his son because he was a liar. It is unclear how and why such a statement might or might not have been uttered, but his son Abdullah was known for his own caliber and was always with his father.

He was known for his poems on theology or aqidah. According to Shaykh Navaid Aziz, the contents of the poem might not be accepted by certain groups. In order to damage the credibility of Abdullah ibn Abu Dawud's works, the statement from Abu Dawud which says to not learn from his son since he was a liar might have been fabricated. Contemporary ulamas of hadith, Imam Abdur Razaq bin Abdul Muhsin al-Abbad, when examining this case, discovered that those who narrated the story were amongst those who had no caliber and were suspicious in their stories. Most of the time, Imam Abu Dawud lingered in Baghdad meeting with the giants in hadiths, not only Imam Ahmad, Ishaq ibn Rahwayh, but also with Ali al-Madini and Yahya ibn Ma'in.

In one occasion, when Imam Abu Dawud was busy with his ibadah and salah, a man from the king's castle, who was the brother of the caliph came to visit him. Ibn Jabir (Imam Abu Dawud's servant) attended the man and brought him to Imam Abu Dawud. Imam Abu Dawud was asked to go to Basra because it needed more gurus and Baghdad had been blessed and jammed with plenty. The man also wanted Imam Abu Dawud to teach their children, but in private. Just like Imam Malik and Imam al-Bukhari, as well as many other imams who strongly believed that people should humble themselves to knowledge, while agreeing to go to Basra and teach the children, Imam Abu Dawud refused to give private lessons to the family of

the king. He went to Basra and started developing his halaqah until he was old and died in Basra in 275H.

InshaAllah, in the next section, we will discuss some of his contributions, primarily on his work Sunan Abu Dawud itself. May Allah SWT forgive our shortcomings and bless us with His knowledge and hidayah, Aameen. With that, we end this section with Tasbih Kaffarah.

Imam Abu Dawud (Part 2) - Sunan Abi Dawud and Letter to the Makkan People

We ended the last section discussing how Imam Abu Dawud had been summoned to move from Baghdad to Basra, since Baghdad was already packed with many great teachers while Basra was dying in need of gurus with high calibre such as Imam Abu Dawud. In this section, we are going to explain some of the important message from Imam Abu Dawud's monumental work, Named Sunan Abi Dawud.

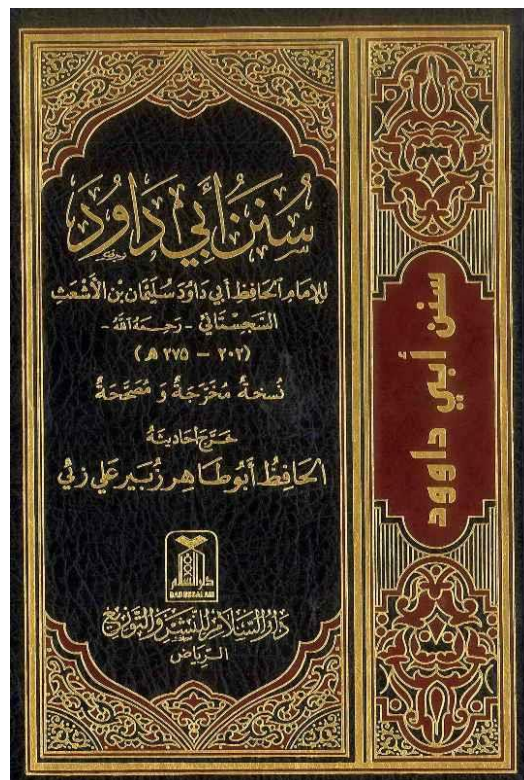
Before we do so, let us refresh our memory on how close the relationship between him and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal had been built and how Imam Abu Dawud posted many fiqh questions to his guru Imam Ahmad, and compiled those questions as a separate work called, "Questions to Imam Ahmad". Actually, his student, Ubay ibn al-Juri (wallahua'lam) had a similar relationship to Imam Abu Dawud, the way Imam Abu Dawud was with Imam Ahmad. Nevertheless, Ubay al-Juri was more interested in issues concerning *Ilal* or hidden defects in hadiths.

Hidden defects can happen because no specific mention of concerning the full name of the narrators can be found or because of the strange arrangement of sentences in the hadith. As an example, the narrator can be Abdullah or Amru or Malik, in which two of them are known as Ibn Dinar. This is a common defect which obviously will not harm the contents of the hadith. For the record, this Ubay al-Juri should not be confused with the great muhaddithin, al-Jurri.

Imam Abu Dawud, just like Imam Ahmad, had very strong principles concerning individual opinion versus weak hadiths. To them, the hadith may be weak because of certain issues regarding the narrator, but because it is a hadith, individual opinion should be secondary to what has been learned as a hadith. In fact, between Qias (analogy) and weak hadiths, they preferred weak hadiths instead. Besides Sunan Abi Dawud, other important works of Imam Abu Dawud include *Kitab al-Radd Ala Ahl al-Qadr* (Book in Reply to the People of Qadr), which explains about the importance of

aqidah or theology of the Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah as opposed to those who heavily rely on logic to get close to The Almighty God. Obviously, Imam Abu Dawud was always on the side of Imam Ahmad on the issue of the Quran's createdness which became a theological debate against the Mu'tazila group.

Let us discuss about the Sunan Abi Dawud. We have mentioned that the work sunan implies that the compilation carries a heavy dose of fiqh discussions and legal benefits for the ummah. Imam Abu Dawud himself explained the contents of his sunan in his other work, titled *Risalah Ila Ahl al-Makkah* (The Letter to the People of Makkah).



(Sunan Abi Dawud, by Imam Abu Dawud)

There are a few objectives of Sunan Abi Dawud. First, Imam Abu Dawud wanted all discussions concerning fiqh hadiths to be placed into one work, which was his sunan. It should be understood that fuqahas such as Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Syafi'e, Imam Malik, as well as Imam Ahmad, used many hadiths as well as the Revelations before the rulings on certain

issues were proposed. What Imam Abu Dawud intended to do was, by having one book, the students of knowledge would no longer have to search hadiths concerning fiqh from different sources.

Second, aspects of the objectives of Sunan Abu Dawud were to collect and compile the best hadiths, which he said to be the sound hadiths concerning the fiqh of ibadah or worship. Sound here does not mean Sahih, and it should be noted that during Imam Abu Dawud's time, the categorisation developed by Imam at-Tirmidhi was yet to be widely followed. The categories which we are talking about here are Sahih, Hasan, Dha'if, and Maudhu'.

The concept of solah here means that the hadith is strong, if not authentic enough to be used as a proof to make the fiqh rulings of certain ibadahs valid. Shaykh Navaid Aziz mentioned that the hadiths which were compiled by Imam Abu Dawud were not authentic hadiths, and he took the case of Solah at-Tasbih as an example. It is said that only Imam Abu Dawud narrated on the importance of Solah at-Tasbih (in his Sunan Abu Dawud hadith 1297), which is not available in the compilations of other imams before him. However, this hadith is known to be a weak hadith Imam at-Tirmidhi later explained on this hadith further.

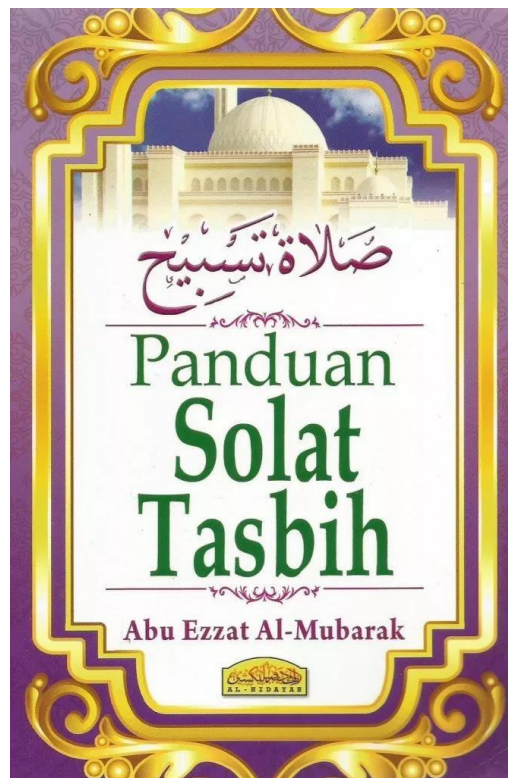
The third explanation of Imam Abu Dawud on his sunan concerns the narrators of the hadiths, in which although the hadiths he quoted were Dha'if, knowing that its strong benefit or virtue in ibadah, it is important for us Muslims to learn and practice the hadiths. The burden of responsibility on following Dha'if hadiths do not lie on those who follow them, but those who narrated them. Concerning the hadith on Solah at-Tasbih, below is the chain of narrators, beginning with Abdurrahman ibn Bishr

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ بَشْرِ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ النَّيْسَابُورِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا
مُوسَى بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ، حَدَّثَنَا الْحَكَمُ بْنُ أَبَانَ، عَنْ عِكْرَمَةَ،

عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ
لِلْعَبَّاسِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ

The fourth thing which Imam Abu Dawud stressed on on his sunan was that even though the hadiths which he quoted were not authentic, none of the hadiths which he compiled were abandoned by majority of the ulamas. Therefore, there is a good explanation or argument for us to learn and practice the hadiths.

How many of such hadiths (non-authentic) was compiled by Imam Abu Dawud in his sunan? Imam Abu Dawud said that he had compiled 500,000 hadiths, and out of those hadiths, he took 4800 hadiths which concern fiqh rulings on ibadahs into his book.



(Panduan Solat Tasbih, by Abu Ezzat al-Mubarak)

One of the unique compilation of Imam Abu Dawud concerns the topic of Solah at-Tasbih. Ulamas say that it was mainly through Imam Abu

Dawud's compilation that we know how to perform Solah at-Tasbih, even though it is known that the hadith which the Imam referred to was Dha'if. Wallahua'lam.

We have discussed that in terms of seniority, by rights we should discuss Imam Abu Dawud before we discuss Imam at-Tirmidhi. However, since the authenticity of hadiths is not the major concern of Imam Abu Dawud, we discussed him after Imam at-Tirmidhi, who gave stronger emphasis on the authenticity of hadiths. According to Imam Abu Dawud, from 4800 hadiths which he had compiled, the following four hadiths are just enough to summarize the whole hadiths that he had heard. They are:-

- *Innamal a'malu binniyat* (actions are judged by its intentions).
- Leave aside matters that do not concern us,
- Do not do other things that we do not want to be done to us, and lastly
- What is haram is clear to us, and what is halal is also clear to us.

The four hadiths tells us about our religion, in which half of our religion concerns akhlah or character. Imam Abu Dawud's model of four hadiths reminds us of Imam an-Nawawi's 40 hadiths. More importantly, Imam Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani's four hadiths on akhlaq. The four hadiths of Imam Abu Dawud is interestingly available in Imam an-Nawawi's 40 hadiths. Two of his hadiths are in the four hadith of Imam Ibn Abi Zayd. Imam Abu Zayid focuses on how Muslims can develop their excellent characters. The four hadiths are:

- Leave aside matters that do not concern us.
- Do not do to others the things we do not want to be done to ourselves.
- Speak goodness or otherwise remain silent.
- Don't become angry

Whatever the hadiths compiled by the ulama', we can obviously deduce that half of Islam is akhlak or good character. Shaykh Navaid Aziz

mentioned that those with knowledge will look ugly if they have bad akhlak and vice versa. We have discussed Abu Dawud's top student who was his own son, Abdullah. Some ulama' even favoured his son than his father. The benefits that Abdullah gained through his close company of his father were many. Some of them include the fact that he can narrate hadiths and pass Abu Dawud's name, because in many places, they were together learning the hadiths.

In today's Sunan of Imam Abu Dawud, it comprises of 5274 hadiths instead of 4800 hadiths mentioned by Abu Dawud. Interestingly, if not surprisingly, the one that we have today is compiled by his other student, Ibn Dassah. Why it had more than it should is because there were many students who had compiled the hadiths together with the important compilation of Ibn Dassah. Some hadiths might contain Mukarrarat (repetition). Since Imam Abu Dawud only mentioned the important versions or parts of the hadith (Syahid). There are always cases where his students compiled the longer versions of the hadith. All of this led to the original 4800 hadiths to expand up to 5274 hadiths that we now have today, wallahua'lam.

Imam Abu Dawud's contribution is so immense, that even during his last day he still continued to teach. He died in 16 Syawal, 275H in Basra. May we obtain benefit from the discussion of Imam Abu Dawud's sunan, and may Allah SWT bless his soul and also bless our soul and our family's souls altogether, Amin. With that, we end our discussion.

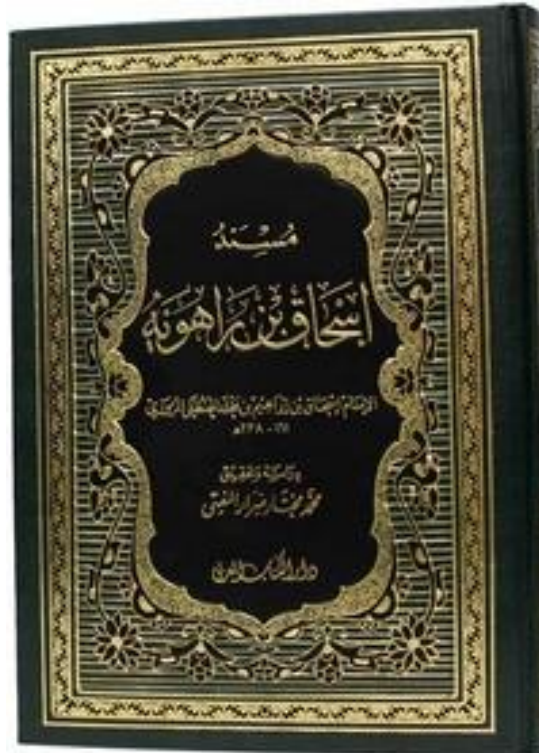
Imam an-Nasa'i (Part 1) - Learning and Traveling

Previously, we ended the section on the first four imams of hadiths, in which the sources and information concerning them are generally and widely available. The remaining imams, Imam an-Nasa'i and Imam Ibn Majah's informations and knowledge pertaining to them are not only hard to find, some of them are vaguely explained if not unexplained.

In this section, we will only be able to include some of the information mentioned passingly by Shaykh Navaid Aziz in his discussions of the previous four imams. Imam an-Nasa'i was born in 214H (or in some narrations 215H), in an area called Nasa' in Khurasan, a city known as Turkmenistan today. His name is Abu Abdurrahman Ahmad ibn Shu'ayn ibn Ali ibn Sinan an-Nasa'i al-Khurasani. Little is known about his parents, but like many great imams, he had also been exposed to religious knowledge at a young age, especially in the fields of hadith. Most of his earliest knowledge were gathered from Nasa' through local preachers, up until the age of 15, where he was exposed to the knowledge of hadiths and the Quran.

He began memorizing the Quran at an early age as well. Among his many teachers, the same teacher that taught the six Imam, (Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, an-Nasa' and Ibn Majah) should be mentioned here. The three were Qutaybah Ibn Said, Muhammad Ibn Bashir or al-Bindar, and Muhammad bin Muthanna or Abu Musa. He sat with Qutaybah for more than a year. Before traveling to Baghdad, Kufah, Makkah and Medina, as well as Egypt. In fact, he lived his life and did his teachings most of the time in Egypt. Many of the great Muhaddisin such as Ishaq Ibn Rahwayh, Ishaq Ibn Ibrahim and al-Harith Ibn Miskin, were also his teachers. It is said that Imam al-Bukhari had met 1080 teachers, while Imam Abu Dawud met 500 teachers. Imam an-Nasa'i also had a huge amount of record sitting and meeting with teachers. His work, Sunan an-Nasa'i continues to be referred until today. InshaAllah, we will try to detail it in the next section.

Among the six Muhaddisin, two are known as Sahihain (Bukhari and Muslim) with their Sahih compilations, while the other four were known as Sunan Arba'a (The Four who discuss their hadiths with Jurisprudence Implications for Fiqh Benefits).



(Musnad, by Imam Ishaq ibn Rahwayh)

We will discuss his important role, especially in Egypt. As expected, to fully utilize his knowledge on hadiths, he had halaqahs in Egypt. He was not only known to be good with his teachings, but his ability to memorize thousands of hadiths has raised his title as the Huffaz of Hadiths. There are many students that benefit from him, including the great theologian Jaafar at-Tahtawi. For the record, there are at least four important Imams in Aqidah which differs in their approach. Jaafar at-Tahtawi was known for his rational approach in Aqidah, as opposed to Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal who was known for his traditional or close to literal approach, Wallahua'lam.

Somewhere in between the Imam's Aqidah was Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi. Shaykh Hamza Yusuf mentioned names such as

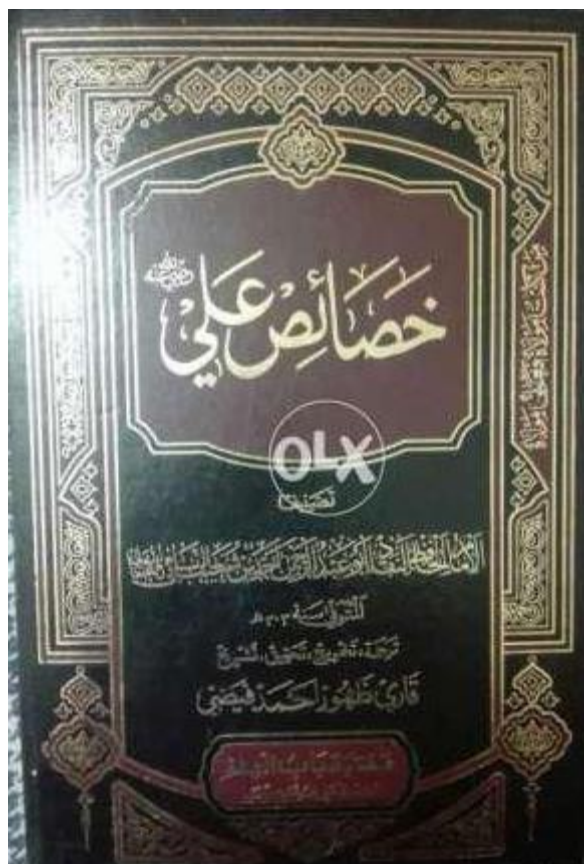
Rabiatul Adawiyah and Hasan al-Basri were among the important luminaries in the theological teachings. Imam an-Nasa'i was married to four wives. Only one of his son, Abdullah, was known to be active in continuing to narrate the hadiths from his father. Imam an-Nasa'i himself had his top student, Abu Bakar al-Sunni, in which many of the hadiths from him that we learn today had continued to be narrated by Abu Bakar. Another interesting role concerning Imam an-Nasa'i was his participation in war. During his time, Egypt was at war with other countries. Imam an-Nasa'i was not only known for his intellectual wit, but also his warrior spirit.

There are many hadiths which discuss on the importance of jihad, both inner and outer jihad, which involves fighting against nafs and the enemies of Islam. One such example is compiled by Imam al-Bukhari and the hadith is as follows:

Allah's Apostle was asked, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah and His Apostle (Muhammad). The questioner then asked, "What is the next (in goodness)? He replied, "To participate in Jihad (religious fighting) in Allah's Cause."

Sahih al-Bukhari Vol.1, Book 2, No.25

Not only was Imam an-Nasa'i compiling and teaching hadiths, he was also the great Fuqaha and is known for his Ijtihad. One of his books pertaining Fiqh was al-Manasiq which he benefited a lot from Imam as-Syafi'e's ruling in Fiqh.



(Khasais Ali, by Imam an-Nasa'i)

Imam As-Syafi'e was born in 150H. When Imam an-Nasa'i was born in 214H, Imam as-Syafi'e had died 10 years prior. He was a mujtahid, which meant that he made judgments and declared fatwa in any new or old issues which require new interpretations. Some ulama', including Ibn Taymiyyah, said among other things, that Imam an-Nasa'i had mastered many aspects of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal's Jurisprudence. When Imam an-Nasa'i made Ijtihad, they used both Hanbali and Syafi'e approach. Imam an-Nasa'i's students include:

- 1 - Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Salamah Al-Azdi
- 2 - Ahmad ibn Muhammad Al-Hashimi (known as Ibn As-Sunni)
- 3 - Sulaiman ibn Matir Al-Lakhmi At-Tabarani
- 4 - Abu Ja'far At-Tahawi
- 5 - Abu Uthman An-Naysaburi
- 6 - Hamzah ibn Muhammad Al-Kinani

7 - Abu Jafar Ahmad ibn Ismail An-Nahhas An-Nahawi

There are many narrations about his death and also his grave. It is said that he migrated to Damsyik to teach his knowledge. Damsyik was not only known for the vast majority of Sunnis, it is also known for its strong loyalty towards Muawiyah Ibn Abu Sufian who had contributed to many aspects of economic development and also religious dissemination. Although Mu'awiyah died two centuries prior to Imam an-Nasa'i (60H), his influence was still strongly felt in Damsyik, simply because not only was he the governor, he was also the first king of the Umayyad Empire based in Damsyik.

According to one story, the people of Damsyik requested Imam an-Nasa'i to write a book on how great Mu'awiyah was, knowing that Imam An-Nasa'i had made a book on how great Sayidina Ali RA was. Knowing that Imam an-Nasa'i did not respond the way that they expected, meaning that he declined their request, they became upset with Imam an-Nasa'i. It is said that when Imam an-Nasa'i became "sarcastic" about the idea of writing a book on Muawiyah, the people there were enraged and harshly beat him until he was severely ill. It is said that he wanted to go to Makkah. Soon after he reached Makkah, he passed away.

Ad-Daraqutni and some other ulamas mentioned that Imam an-Nasa'i died in Makkah and his body was buried between Safa and Marwa. Another narration mentioned by Imam az-Zahabi stated that Imam an-Nasa'i traveled to Baitul Maqdis and died in an area called Ramlah, Palestine. Whatever the case, ulamas have agreed that he died on Monday, 13th Safar 303H, leaving his work as his legacy, Sunan an-Nasa'i.

Before we discuss his Sunan an-Nasa'i in the next section, let us have some information concerning Imam an-Nasa'i's physical look and nature. As has been mentioned by an institution called Darulkautsar, by the person who has provided some information on the six imams of hadith, Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Shaybah, we can at least mention 3 things about Imam an-Nasa'i.

He was a very good-looking man with a reddish skin colour. Since he had great akhlaq, his knowledge as well as his looks complement each other and appear more magnificent. Like many other great ulamas, he was also known for his Qiyam al-Layl, recitations of the Quran, and obviously his knowledge on hadiths. He practiced Prophet David AS' fasting style, fasting on alternating days.

With this information having been discussed comes the end of this section.

Imam an-Nasa'i (Part 2) - A Story of Sunan an-Nasa'i

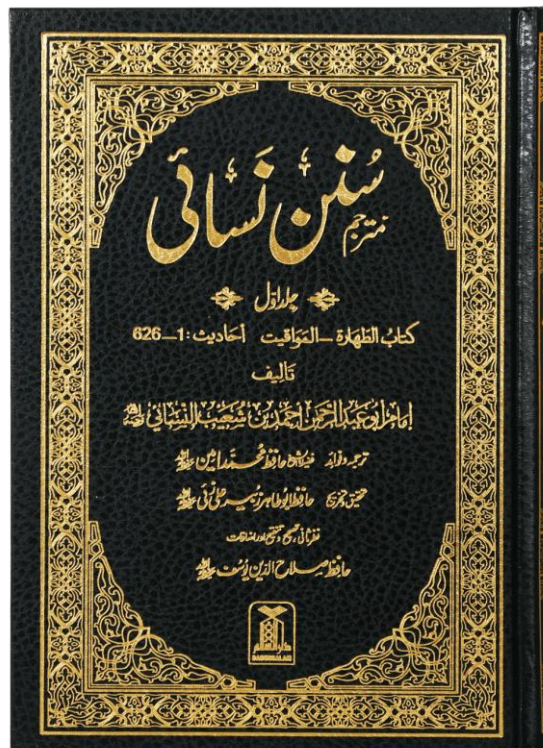
InshaAllah, we will continue our series of tazkirah by resuming our discussion on Imam an-Nasa'i. In this section, we will give more attention to his most well-known work, Sunan an-Nasa'i. In the previous section, we have mentioned the role of Abu Bakr ibn Ahmad as-Sunni's brilliant effort of continuing to narrate Imam an-Nasa'i's work, because the Sunan an-Nasa'i that we have today is partly the effort of Abu Bakr, compiling the hadiths in a rather systematic manner.

There are 2 opposing history about Sunan an-Nasa'i, and InshaAllah, we will start with discussing the one which is always referred to by most ulamas, ustadhs and ustadhahs. Imam an-Nasa'i had given his best to come up with the finalised version of his Sunan from the one called al-Kubra into the one called al-Sughra. The Sunan an-Nasa'i which we commonly see today is the al-Sughra version, sometimes called al-Muntajab or al-Mukhtar (The Selection).

Sunan an-Nasa'i is sometimes regarded as the third sahih book after Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. When he first collected the hadiths, he compiled them under his great book called al-Kubra. He presented the book to the Amir of Egypt so that the work can be benefitted from by the ummah. The Amir asked him whether he had made certain that the compilation which he presented was completely authentic (sahih). Being the honest man he was, Imam an-Nasa'i said that some of them are Sahih while some others are Hasan, and the rest are pretty much in the similar case. The Amir then asked him to present to him only the authentic ones. Hence, Imam an-Nasa'i came up with the tediously selected hadiths which are authentic to be put into his new work called al-Sughra, which is also known as Sunan an-Nasa'i.

We have mentioned that he had benefited from many gurus, including the 3 teachers who taught all six of the great imams of hadith. The teachers we are referring to are Qutayba ibn Sa'id, Muhammad ibn Bashir or al-Bindar, and Muhammad ibn Muthanna or Abu Musa. Imam an-Nasa'i had also

benefited directly from Imam at-Tirmidhi and Imam Abu Dawud. In fact, there were debates among the later ulamas about the name of Abu Dawud which was mentioned in Sunan an-Nasa'i. They debated whether the name referred to Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn al-Ash'ath as-Sijistani. This is because there were many people with the name Abu Dawud in those days, and upon further investigation, the Abu Dawud mentioned in Sunan an-Nasa'i is indeed Abu Dawud as-Sijistani. There were also discussions on whether Abu Abdurrahman or Imam an-Nasa'i did meet Imam al-Bukhari. Although some scholars said he did, the majority said that it was very unlikely.



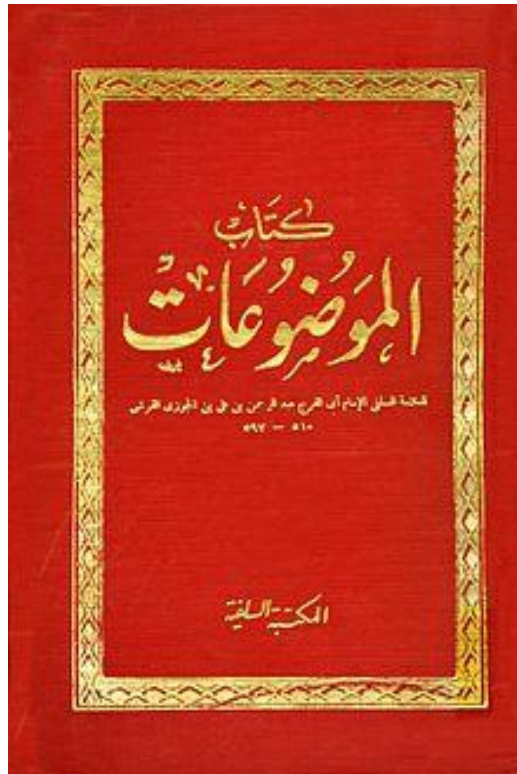
(Sunan an-Nasa'i, by Imam an-Nasa'i)

His first book, al-Kubra, is hardly available, although some say that in certain regions such as India, such book might still be available. In this section, whenever we mention Sunan an-Nasa'i, we will be referring to al-Sughra. However, if names such as al-Munziri and al-Mizi are referred to in Imam an-Nasa'i's work, most likely the discussion is referring to the book al-Kubra, which was the work which had not been meticulously selected

from in order to validate its authenticity. Later ulamas such as Abu Farash al-Jawzi (510H-597H) (not to be confused with Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya), in his book al-Maudhu'at al-Kubra, a book on hadiths which are Maudhu, mentioned that there are 10 hadiths in Imam an-Nasa'i's work which were Maudhu'. This had created a lot of debates among ulamas on the authenticity of al-Sughra compiled by Imam an-Nasa'i.

Such comments on the authenticity of hadith compilations are not unusual nor new in the hadith world. The great imam of hadith ad-Daraqutni, who earned the title of the Ninth Imam of Hadith (after the Six Great Imams of Hadith, and number 7 and 8 being Imam Ahmad and Imam Malik), even mentioned on the issue of authenticity of Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim's compilations of Sahih hadiths respectively. According to ad-Daraqutni, there are at least 32 hadiths in Sahih al-Bukhari and at least 200 in Sahih Muslim which do not meet completely with the regulation of authenticity of hadiths. However, later great ulamas such as Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (773H-852H) and Ibn Kathir (701H-774H), as mentioned by Shaykh Navaid Aziz, explained that there was nothing serious in the issue of authenticity in those two Sahih compilations, as commented by ad-Daraqutni. Therefore, Muslims should not get confused by Imam ad-Daraqutni's comments.

The same goes to Imam an-Nasa'i's al-Sughra or Sunan an-Nasa'i. Although Abu Farash al-Jawzi mentioned about the 10 Maudhu' hadiths found in his work, Imam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti (849H-911H) made a similar comment to al-Maudhu'at and Sunan an-Nasa'i in which he said, among other things that the Sunan made by Imam an-Nasa'i is a great book and Muslims should benefit from it.



(Al-Maudhu'at, by Abu Farash al-Jawzi)

All the ulamas of hadith had done a great job compiling these hadiths. However, it is still true that some of the hadiths might have the elements of Dha'if or even Maudhu'. Therefore, it is the responsibility of later ulamas to perform what is called tahqiq (correction) or takhrij (connection) and also tarjih (compare strength of hadiths to apply into rulings). Such kinds of works were done by Abu Farash al-Jawzi in his work called al-Maudhu'at.

In general, ulamas agree that to say that there is no issue in Sunan an-Nasa'i and that all of the hadiths compiled are Sahih is not exactly correct, but to say that there are Maudhu' hadiths in the book and that the work should not be looked as a great compilation is also not correct. In general, Imam as-Suyuti only said that Sunan an-Nasa'i has Sahih, Hasan and Dha'if hadiths in the compilation. We, as laymen should not try to judge the works of great imams. In fact, we should always remember the importance of us to not try and talk about something we are not even sure of, let alone when it involves hadith.

There was a hadith which mentions that people who lie about the Prophet SAW in any ways will go to hell. The hadith is as follows:

*The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Telling lies about me is not like telling lies about anyone else. Whoever tells lies about me deliberately, let him take his place in Hell."
(Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1229)*

Another hadith with similar message is as follows:

*The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:
"Whoever narrates a hadeeth from me that he thinks is false is one of the liars." (Narrated by Muslim)*

InshaAllah, we have learned something from our discussion, and before we end our discussion on Imam an-Nasa'i, let us list down some of his important works, which is as follows:

As-Sunan ul-Kubra
As-Sunan us-Sughra/Al-Mujtaba
Al-Khasa'is
Fada'ilus-Sahabah
Al-Manasik

InshaAllah, in the next section, we shall discuss the last imam among the six which we will discuss in this series. With that, we end this section.

Imam Ibn Majah (Part 1) - Rehlah 'Ilmiah (Journey In Search of Knowledge)

InshaAllah, in this section, we will discuss the last of the Six Great Imams of Hadith, Imam Ibn Majah.

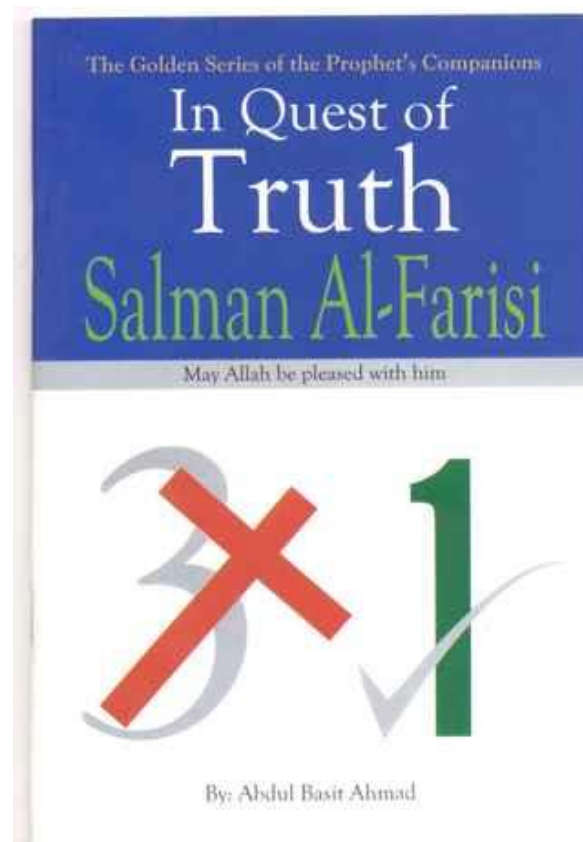
Some ulamas, ustadhs or ustadhahs might arrange the discussions of the imams differently, according to the level of the authenticity of hadiths they have compiled or according to the chronological order of their birth date. Those who discussed chronologically would start with Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam Abu Dawud, Imam at-Tirmidhi, Imam Ibn Majah and lastly Imam an-Nasa'i. However, in our discussion, we follow how it is commonly discussed, which is based on the level of authenticity of the hadiths they have compiled, which begins from Imam al-Bukhari to Imam Muslim, Imam at-Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Dawud, Imam an-Nasa'i and lastly Imam Ibn Majah.

Like our discussion on Imam an-Nasa'i, which majority of the idea was not from Shaykh Navaid Aziz, our discussion on Imam Ibn Majah will also come from different available sources. Informations on Imam Ibn Majah are not only scanty like Imam an-Nasa'i's, some of the ideas and points were vaguely expressed if not left unexplained. We will InshaAllah improvise our discussion as we continue to gather more informations and explanations concerning the Six Great Imams of Hadith. Imam Ibn Majah's real name was Abu 'Abdillah Muḥammad ibn Yazid ibn Majah al-Rab'i al-Qazwini. He was born in 209H, 6 years older compared to Imam an-Nasa'i and 15 years younger than Imam al-Bukhari.

Qazwin was initially the eastern area of Iraq, but now it is within the region of Iran. All of the imams of hadith we've discussed, except Imam Abu Dawud as-Sijastani were non-Arabs. They were Musta'rab (non-Arabs with Arabic culture when their land was exposed with Arabic influences). Historically, Qazwin had been opened by the caliph Uthman RA, in which, a sahabah under the name Barrad ibn Azim was tasked to be the Amir, and therefore the message of Islam was spread.

Like many muhaddithin, Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yazid or Ibn Majah had been exposed to Islamic knowledge, especially hadiths, at a young age. He learned from a local ulama, Ali ibn Muhammad at-Tanabasi before travelling to various lands, seeking for knowledge. Rehlal 'Ilmiah (travel or journey in search of knowledge) is a common practice of great ulamas of the past, and even now. We know how Imam al-Bukhari, Imam an-Nasa'i, and in fact all of the Six Great Imams of Hadiths were known for their practice of Rehlal 'Ilmiah.

It should be noted that Salman al-Farsi also came from the Persian region, travelling in search of the truth. He stayed at one place after another, converting from Zoroastrianism to Christianity, and at some point into Judaism, before his heart finally settled to Islam under the tutelage of Rasulullah SAW.



(In Quest of Truth: Salman al-Farisi, by Abdul Basit Ahmad)

From the worship of fire in Persia to Christianity in Syria, to the guiding light of Islam in the desert of Arabia; such was the journey of Salman Al-Farisi (R.A) as he set out in search of the truth. He abandoned a life of wealth, security and luxury in favor of seeking knowledge of His Lord, Allah. His life was a manifestation of the Prophet statement: "Whoever travels upon a path seeking to acquire knowledge, then Allah will facilitate for him a path to Paradise." Such were also the travels of the Six Great Imams of Hadith

At the age of 18, Ibn Majah began to travel to all important and knowledge-packed areas in Baghdad, Makkah, Medina, Egypt as well as in the area of Bilad al-Sham, which includes Jordan and Palestine. It is known that he managed to meet many great ulamas, including the student of Imam Malik in Medina and the student of Imam al-Layth in Egypt. Imam Malik was the student of Nafi' who learned from Ibn Umar, the great sahabah. Imam al-Layth was known for his great knowledge, to the point where Imam Syafi'e himself praised Imam al-Layth's credibility as higher than other Imams of fiqh, although he was unable to meet Imam al-Layth himself. This journey was so important because this was the period when he collected the hadiths for his work as he travelled, and as he collect them, he straight away organised them in his book which was later known as Sunan Ibn Majah.

Imam Ibn Majah differs from Imam al-Bukhari in terms of their method of compilation. As for Imam al-Bukhari, he compiled the hadiths only when he had mastered the entire knowledge. The story of Rehlal 'Ilmiah should remind us of the great sahabah, Jabir ibn Abdullah who travelled from Medina to Damsyik just to collect 1 hadith from a sahabah, Abdullah ibn Unays.

He (Abdullah ibn Unays) said, `I heard the Messenger of Allah say:

«يَحْشُرُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَوْ قَالَ: الْعِبَادَ عُرَاةً
عُرْلًا بُهْمًا»

(Allah will gather the people — or His servants — on the Day of Resurrection, naked, uncircumcised and Buhman.) I (Jabir ibn Abdullah) asked, 'What is Buhman' He said,

لَيْسَ مَعَهُمْ شَيْءٌ، ثُمَّ يُنَادِيهِمْ بِصَوْتٍ يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ بَعْدَ كَمَا
يَسْمَعُهُ مَنْ قَرَبَ: أَنَا الْمَلِكُ، أَنَا الدَّيَّانُ لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ
النَّارِ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ النَّارَ وَلَهُ عِنْدَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَقٌّ حَتَّى
أُقِصَّهُ مِنْهُ، وَلَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ
وَلَهُ عِنْدَ رَجُلٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَقٌّ حَتَّى أُقِصَّهُ مِنْهُ حَتَّى
اللُّطْمَةَ»

(They will have nothing with them. Then a voice will call out to them that will be heard by those far away just as easily as it will be heard by those near: "I am the Sovereign, I am the Judge. None of the people of Hell should enter Hell if he is owed something by one of the people of Paradise, until I have settled the matter, and none of the people of Paradise should enter Paradise if he is owed something by one of the people of Hell, until I settle the matter — even if it is only the case of a slap.") We said, 'How will that be, when we have come before Allah barefooted, naked, uncircumcised and having nothing with us' He said,

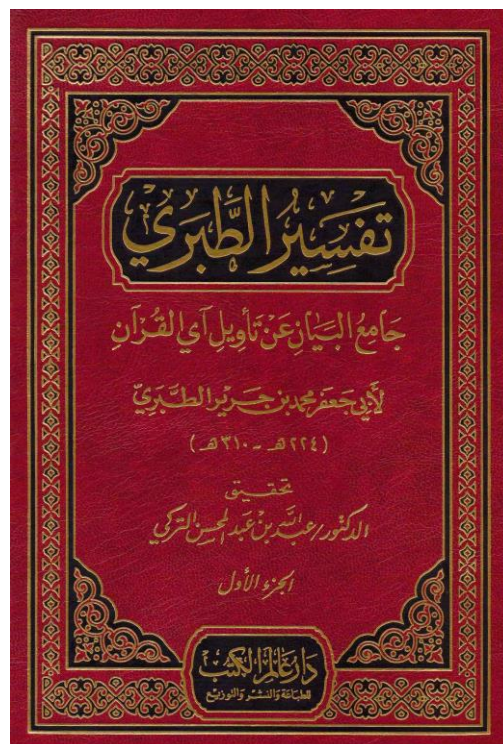
«بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ»

(By [merit for] good deeds, and [recompense] for evil deeds.)

There are many achievements of Imam Ibn Majah which he got from this journey. Not only did he manage to collect 4,000 hadiths which some were generally different from earlier compilations of previous imams, he also

made a conscious attempt to get the closest chains of narrators as he possibly could. In fact, it was from his work called Sulasat Ibn Majah that we know of Imam Ibn Majah's choosing of short chains of narrators of hadiths. From his journey, not only did he become a master of hadiths, but he was also known to have made 2 more works other than Sunan Ibn Majah.

The first was Tafsir Al-Qur'an (The Exegesis of the Quran) which not many ulamas were capable of producing during his time. Qadarullah, the book did not survive and was lost in time and space.



(Tafsir at-Tabari, by Imam at-Tabari)

Long before Imam at-Tabari was producing his work on the exegesis of the Quran, Imam Ibn Majah had developed his reputation in the area of tafsir al-Quran. There are many reports which strongly indicate that not only did Imam Ibn Majah had a book on the history of hadith, he also had a monumental work just as good as at-Tabari's work, if not better. Although the book was lost in time and history, the narrations on the book are still available in one form or another. Wallahua'lam.

We might be familiar of Tafsir Al-Quran by at-Tabari who was just slightly younger than Imam Ibn Majah himself. Imam at-Tabari died in 310H. Another of Imam Ibn Majah's important work, Kitab at-Tarikh concerns history, in which he discussed the stories of sahabahs, especially those who narrated hadiths. Wallahua'lam.

His teacher, Ali ibn Muhammad at-Tanabasi, died in 233H when Imam Ibn Majah was just around the age of 24. Obviously, he had many teachers in his list, and among them were renowned scholars such as Jubarah ibn Mughallis, Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaibah, Nasr ibn Ali an-Nishapuri, Abu Bakr ibn Khallad al-Bahili, Muhammad ibn Bashir, Abul-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad Tanafisi, and Ali ibn Mundhir and Abu Zur'a ar-Razi. Abu Zur'a ar-Razi was the teacher which he trusted the most, and his book Sunan Ibn Majah which we will InshaAllah discuss in the next section had been presented to Abu Zur'a for examination before Imam Ibn Majah had the confidence to announce it as an important work.

Just like the other imams, he too had many students, some of his important students include Ali ibn Abdullah al-Falani, Ibrahim ibn Dinar al-Jarshi, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Qazvini, Hafiz Abu Ya'la al-Khalili, and Abu Amr Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hakim al-Madani al-Isfahani. After travelling a lot and accumulating a gargantuan amount of knowledge, he spent most of his time in al-Qazwin, and later died in 273H at the age of 64, although some narrations say that he died in 275H. Wallahua'lam.

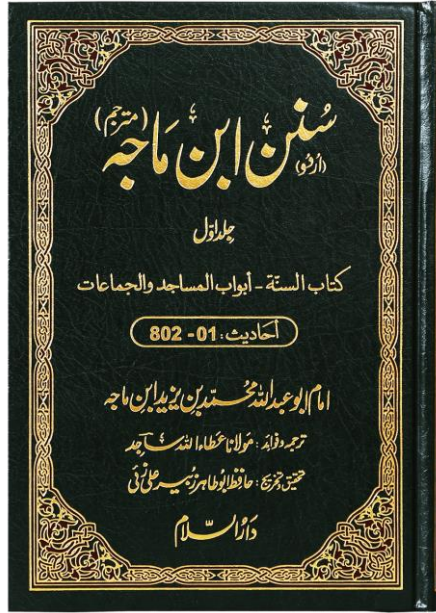
InshaAllah, in the next section, we will continue our discussion specifically on his book, Sunan Ibn Majah. May Allah SWT forgive our shortcomings and may Allah SWT increase our knowledge and Iman. Aameen.

Imam Ibn Majah (Part 2) - Sunan Ibn Majah

InshaAllah, in this section, we will end our discussion on the life and one of his most well-known work of Imam Ibn Majah, the great imam from Qazwin, Iran. We have discussed many aspects of him, such as his passion for knowledge, the process of knowledge collecting in his *Rehlah Ilmiah*, his teachers and his *murid* and also some of his works. We have mentioned that from many of his works, ulamas grouped them into three important ones: the exegesis of quran, the history of sahabas and narrators (tarikh), and the one that is standing until today, Sunan Ibn Majah. InshaAllah we will discuss about the Sunan and some issues concerning it.

The Sunan was grouped under the *Kitab as-Sittah* (The Six Canonical Hadith Compilations), obviously because it added a new knowledge and collection to the earlier hadiths compilation, both by Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim and also by Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi and an-Nasai. There are about 4,000 hadiths compiled in the Sunan in which more than one third of it were new additions to the hadiths in the previous five books. The collection was based from his *Rehlah Ilmiah* in many regions which we have discussed in the previous section.

There were some ulamas who mentioned that he made efforts to search for knowledge not only in the Arab land, but he went further up, reaching up to Constantinople. As he came back from his hometown in Qazwin, he organized and compiled his works and presented it to the great ulama of his time, Abu Zur'a ar-Razi for inspection purposes. Among the remarks given by Abu Zur'a were, if the book was given to others, people would no longer refer to other materials. However, there are about 30 hadiths which required clarification, implying there are problems with the 30 hadiths. Whatever the case, many ulamas such as Abu Ya'la, Ibn Kathir and az-Zahabi provide some good comments together with some criticism.



(Sunan Ibn Majah, by Imam Ibn Majah)

The interesting part of the Sunan is that it begins with the importance of following the footsteps of Rasulullah through sunnah practices. The Sunan was praised for its systematic organization of the chapters. From about 4,000 hadiths, Imam Ibn Majah divided them into 1,500 chapters and many of the hadiths were discussed in terms of its meaning and the benefits of fiqh that we can derive from the hadiths. It is important for us to note the difference between the four sunan books (Abu Dawud, Tarmizi, An-Nasai and Ibn Majah) with the two sahih or authentic books by al-Bukhari and Muslim. The sunans are books that direct the readers' attention on the importance of jurisprudence or fiqh benefits which we can obtain from the hadiths which the imam had collected and compiled.

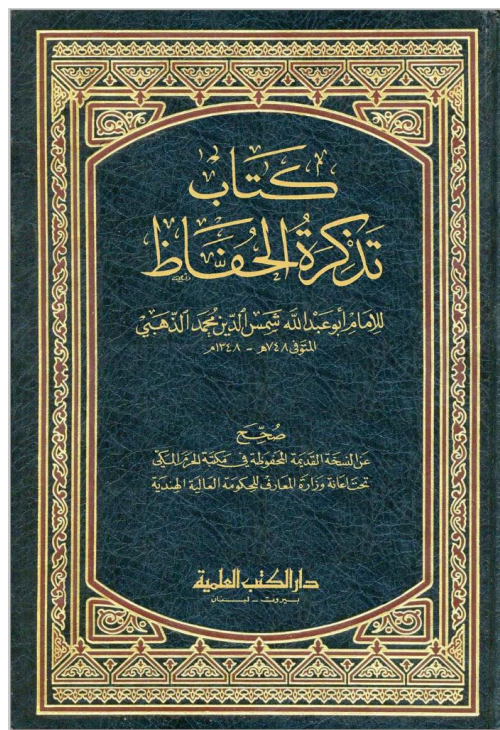
The authenticity of the hadiths was not the prime objective in the minds of the four imams of sunan, but instead how rulings can be made from the hadiths themselves. The Two Sahihs (Sahihain) are completely different because what was important for Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim was to compile only sahih hadiths to act as the most reliable references for the ummah. Hence, the possible problem of Dha'if hadiths in the 4 sunan, including Sunan Ibn Majah should be expected.

Sunan Ibn Majah is commonly mentioned as the last book of *Kitab as-Sittah* simply because of the amount of Dha'if hadiths found inside it is many and obvious. Contemporary ulama, Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul Baqi has done the great service to meticulously check the authenticity of these compiled hadiths. We have discussed how he explained that the total quantities of hadiths compiled in Imam al-Bukhari's al-Jami' as-Sahih without repetition were only 5620. For the record, in many discussions, we might have heard of ustadhs or ustadhahs saying that the quantity of hadiths collected by Imam al-Bukhari was around 7000 to 9000. According to Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul Baqi, the total amount of Ibn Majah's collection of hadiths is 4341, in which the additions (Zawa'id) are 1339 hadiths, and from this number, 328 was said to be Sahih, 99 Hasan, 613 hadiths are Dha'if and 99 Maudhu' hadiths.

Actually, the issues of Dha'if and Maudhu' hadiths in the Sunan of Ibn Majah was not at all new. InshaAllah, we will discuss this issue at the end of this section. What we want to highlight now is that why were great works such as the al-Muwatta' made by Imam Malik or Musnad Imam Ahmad were not regarded as part of the Six Canonical Works.

This debate, especially on Imam Malik's al-Muwatta' had been discussed by many ulamas in the early 6th century of Islam. In fact, some of them said that judging from the problem of the Dha'if hadiths in the Sunan of Imam Ibn Majah, it was more proper to regard the superiority of al-Muwatta'. While it is true that al-Muwatta' is a great work, majority of the contents were already available in other sunans, especially in the *Sahihain*. Furthermore, *al-Muwatta'* is a compilation of the works of the earlier compilers, wallahua'lam. Therefore, the next generation of ulama took into account not only the jurisprudential benefits of Sunan Abdul Majah but the new hadiths collected which could not be found in the other compilations.

Concerning the problem of Dha'if and Maudhu' hadiths in the Sunan, Imam az-Zahabi, for instance, in his book *Tazkirat al-Huffaz*, discussed some of the problems.



(Kitab Tazkirat al-Huffaz, by Imam az-Zahabi)

This includes Abu Zur'a ar-Razi's comment discussed earlier. If Abu Zur'a was true in his assessment, which gives huge credit to Sunan Ibn Majah and mentioned that only 30 hadiths required clarification, then the thirty hadiths should be the only problematic hadiths. We have discussed how the contemporary scholar Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul Baqi highlighted that 613 hadiths in Sunan Ibn Majah were Dha'if. This problem should not be exaggerated because when the ulamas of the past had done their job, it is important for the subsequent ulamas to inspect their work. This process is called Tahqiq. We should not be worried. In fact, we should be thankful to Imam Ibn Majah, since now we have the opportunity to read his works.

Another contemporary ulama, Shaykh Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani had done a great job to concentrate more on Dha'if hadiths instead of authentic ones, not only in Sunan Ibn Majah but also in other sunans. We pray that we can benefit from Ibn Majah's work, knowing that how knowledgeable (Alim) Imam Ibn Majah was and also how truthful (thiqah) he was. May Allah SWT give us the strength to do that.

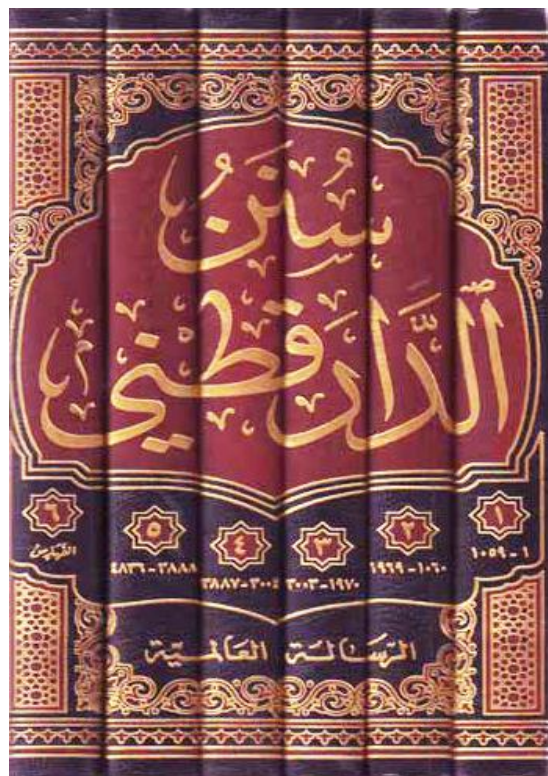
Imam Ibn Majah lived for 64 years, as he was born in 209H and died in 273H. Of course, the death of Imam Ibn Majah instigated loss to the ummah and there was even a poem written for his memorial which said that his death had shaken the throne of knowledge, wallahua'lam. His brothers, Abu Bakr and Abdullah, and his son Abdullah were among the important family members who did the service during his burial.

With that, we end this section on Imam Ibn Majah. May Allah bless Ibn Majah and his family, and bless us and our family as well. Aameen.

Epilogue - Kitab at-Tis'ah and Contemporary Discussions of Hadith

Only through His guidance and blessings we are able to reach the last section of our tazkirah, concerning the imams of hadith. In the introductory section of this series of tazkirah, we have explained the need for us to give priority to the knowledge on hadiths and the discussions on them. We have also discussed the seven pioneers of hadith who had narrated many hadiths under their authorities. They were Abu Hurairah, Sayyidatina Aisha, Ibn Umar, Ibn Abbas, Anas ibn Malik, Jabir ibn Abdullah and Abu Sa'id al-Khudri. In this concluding section, we might want to share some concepts which probably isn't known by many, which is on the nine muhaddithin who have books on hadith. We will also mention the contemporary discussions on hadith.

When ulamas mention the 9 canonical books (kitab at-tis'ah), obviously they are referring to the first six Great Imams of Hadith, Imam (Bukhari, Muslim, at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah).



(*Sunan ad-Daraqutni*, by Imam ad-Daraqutni)

To make it 9, the other 3 imams are Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and his hadith book, Musnad, Imam Malik and his work al-Muwatta, and Imam ad-Daraqutni and his book Sunan ad-Daraqutni. We might be familiar with Musnad Imam Ahmad, in which he had collected and compiled the hadiths into 45 volumes plus another 5 volumes on index and appendix. In his great work, Imam Ahmad organised the hadiths which he had compiled based on the authority of sahabahs, from Abu Bakr downwards. In volume 45, Imam Ahmad discussed about the sahabiyyat (women companions) in Islam, and the hadiths they narrated.

Al-Muwatta' by Imam Malik was probably the first organised compilation of hadiths in Islam. In fact, many hadiths in the great books made by Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim benefited a lot from al-Muwatta'. While Imam Malik died in 179H, Imam Ahmad died in 241H. Ulama had also discussed which one was the 7th book, between Imam Malik's al-Muwatta' and Imam Ahmad's Musnad. Majority agreed that Imam Ahmad's Musnad was to be placed as 7th.

The 9th on the list was Imam ad-Daraqutni. Imam ad-Daraqutni's real name was Abul-Hasan 'Ali ibn 'Umar ibn Ahmad ibn Mahdi ibn Mas'ud ibn al-Nu'man ibn Dinar ibn 'Abdullah al-Baghdadi al-Daraqutni. He was born in 306H and died in 385H. In his work, he explained that there were 32 hadiths which did not meet the level of authenticity, and he also mentioned that there were 200 hadiths with the similar issue in Imam Muslim's work.



(Shaykh Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani)

In 20th century, there was a great muhaddithin, a white man from Albania, Shaykh Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani, whose work is just as comparable to not only ad-Daraqutni's, but in many ways with the 4 sunans of the imams (at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah). To a certain extent, his work also carries the ability of Imam Bukhari's and Imam Muslim's works. He died in 1420H (1999).

While his findings and discussions are important, the next great ulamas such as Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and Imam Ibn Kathir mentioned that there were no big issues on those hadiths compiled by Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim. Such discussions are only useful for those ulamas whose expertise is on hadith. As laymen, we should just concentrate on the benefit which we can get from the hadiths, InshaAllah. Obviously, there are many great ulamas after ad-Daraqutni such as Imam al-Asqalani (Fathul Bari) and Imam an-Nawawi (al-Arba'in).

We want to end our discussion by highlighting a contemporary muhaddithin whose contribution in the hadith world is so magnificent. The person we are referring to is Shaykh Nasiruddin al-Albani. He was born in 1333H and died in 1420H, from the land of Albania and belonged to a religious family.

His father was the Grand Mufti of the land. He migrated to Syria when their country became secularised, just like Turkey under Mustafa Kamal al-Tartuk. He then began to learn religious knowledge and hadith seriously. He was amongst the selected few white men who were so significantly successful in Islamic studies during his time. From his work, he separated Sahih hadiths from the Dha'if hadiths, particularly in the 4 sunans, (at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah).

May Allah SWT bless his soul and his family, and may Allah bless ourselves as well. May we be granted with the knowledge of hadith so that we can be better Muslims, following the footsteps of Rasulullah SAW to get closer to Allah SWT. Aameen.

Before we end the series, we want to give our appreciation to Shaykh Navaid Aziz for the informations on the Great Imams of Hadith, especially Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam at-Tirmidhi and Imam Abu Dawud. With that, we shall end this section, which also marks the end of the series.