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First Edition: June 2007

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Tel: 00603 7710 9750 Fax: 7710 0749
E-mail: darussalm@streamyx.com

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E-mail: essalam@essalam.com

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صحيح مسلم

English Translation of

Sahîh Muslim

Volume 1

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*In the Name of Allâh,
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© **Maktaba Dar-us-Salam, 2007**
King Fahd National Library Catalog-in-Publication Data
Al-Imam Muslim
Sahih muslim./ Al-Imam muslim- Riyadh-2007
624p, 14x21 cm
ISBN: 9960-9919-0-3 (set) 9960-9919-8-9 (Vol.1)
1-Al-Hadith II-Title
235.1dc 1428/2360
Legal Deposit no.1428/2360
ISBN: 9960-9919-0-3
9960-9919-8-9 (Vol.1)

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Publisher's Foreword

Islam has given two reliable pathways for the guidance of mankind. One of them is the clear Verses of Qur'ân while the other, quite consistent with the first, is what we call *Sunnah* or *Hadîth*.

To explain and interpret its basic and brief teachings, Qur'ân has itself mentioned the need for *Sunnah* and the Prophet's model lifestyle. The latter explains the former. The *Sunnah* is an indispensable guide to understand the commandments and passages of Qur'ân. Without *Aḥādîth*, the entire faith and the entire *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) will become no better than a riddle. It is to be noted that the wealth of expository material relating to *Shari'ah*, as found in *Aḥādîth*, was also given to the Prophet ﷺ by Allâh through the archangel Gabriel (Jibra'il). This is why Qur'ân is called Revelation Recited (*Wahy Mathu*) while the *Hadîth* is called Revelation Unrecited (*Wahy Ghair Mathu*).

The Arabic word *Hadîth* means: conversation, account, narrative, report, and also novel or modern. But as a technical term, however, it means the deeds, utterances, circumstances and matters of Allâh's Messenger ﷺ or, in other words, whatever has come down to us concerning Allâh's Messenger ﷺ and his mission (through his Companions and their followers). *Hadîth* is also called *Sunnah* (Tradition), *Akḥbâr* (information, report, communication, and message) and *Athar* (track, trace, sign, mark). *Hadîth* may be verbal, or practical or just tacit (that is, when the Prophet ﷺ did not object to some thing, thereby giving his tacit approval). However, some include even the Prophet's *Shamâ'il* (his physical descriptions, natural disposition and habits) under the general heading of *Hadîth*.

The authority of *Hadîth*, its truth and its position in *Shari'ah* is indisputable. The proper art of writing began soon after the Prophet ﷺ began his mission. The Verses of the Revelation "Who has taught by the pen,"^[1] and "Nûn; by the pen and by what they write (therewith),"^[2] gave impetus to the art of writing during the era of the Prophet ﷺ. The people of Arabia who boasted of a retentive memory and their ability to reproduce with accuracy what they

^[1] *Al-'Alaq* 96:3.

^[2] *Al-Qalam* 68:4.

committed to memory now began to set down what they learnt in writing. We have come to know from varied sources that the scribes of Qur'ân totalled more than fifty in numbers. As for the narration and recording of *Ahâdîth*, a much wider and more elaborate system evolved in the succeeding ages.

The things being set down in writing, in addition to Qur'ân, during the Prophet's era were: official letters of the Islamic state, the Prophet's letters, the State constitution, the Prophet's sermons, treaties, deeds of gift, writs guaranteeing security, census, writs of manumission of slaves, names of governors and officials appointed for different regions and provinces, state instructions and guidelines, details of revenues and expenditures of *Baitul-Mâl* (Exchequer), and the *Ahâdîth* based on what the Companions saw the Prophet ﷺ do or heard him say. All these documents, written down with great care and accuracy, make an invaluable treasure. Moreover, we have authentic details that prove the Companions recorded *Ahâdîth* carefully and responsibly.

On many an occasion did the Prophet ﷺ instruct his Companions to put in writing what he said. For example, the Farewell pilgrimage sermon was set down in writing at the request of Abu Shah of Yemen.

These traditions dating back to the era of the Prophet ﷺ, and his Companions set in motion a trend that continued during the successive generations of Muslims till an elaborate science of *Hadîth* blossomed forth with many technical terms like *Riwâyah* (narration), *Dirâyah* (cognizance), *Al-Jarhu wat-Ta'dil* (Science of Validation of *Ahâdîth*), terms that gave a scientific dimension to this branch of knowledge ensuring the safeguarding, preservation, and interpretation of *Ahâdîth*. The Biographies of Narrators (*Asmâ'ur-Rijâl*), a branch of *Hadîth* sciences, holds a prominent place among the arts and sciences developed by mankind. It is about this branch of knowledge that German Orientalist Dr Springer, while editing *Al-Ishâbah fi Tamizis-Şahâbah*, remarked: "No nation in the past or in modern times ever invented an outstanding science like *Asmâ'ur-Rijâl* that provides information about five hundred thousand Muslims."

Of course, we concede that the enemies of Islam, hypocrites and liars fabricated some *Ahâdîth* in an attempt to spread them. But, then, the *Hadîth* scholars goaded by faith and endowed with keen observation, knowledge, and comprehension, while using scientific methods of inquiry, challenged and eliminated those fabrications from the treasure of (genuine) *Ahâdîth*. No doubt, it was a notable achievement worthy of praise in the annals of human knowledge. Here is an incident illustrating the scholars' achievement in this field:

The Abbasid caliph Hârûn Rashîd (170 AH-193 AH) had a disbeliever arrested for fabricating *Ahâdîth* and ordered his execution. The disbeliever said to the king: "O Commander of the Faithful, how will you deal with those four

thousand *Ahâdîth* I have already fabricated, making lawful things unlawful and the unlawful lawful although not a word in those *Ahâdîth* was ever spoken by Allâh's Messenger." Thereupon, the king retorted: "O enemy of Allâh, how can you escape from Abû Ishâq Fazâri and 'Abdullâh bin Mubârak? They will sieve them out and eliminate them letter by letter."

It is a well-known fact that the painstaking efforts of scholars gave *Ahâdîth* a high degree of reliability next to Qur'ân. When the *Ahâdîth* had been read over carefully, revised, corrected and expounded in the light of the principles of *Hadîth* sciences like *Jarh* (invalidation), *Ta'dil* (validation), and *Asmâ'ur-Rijâl*, the stage for the recording of *Ahâdîth* was set. Thanks to the exhausting efforts of *Hadîth* scholars and their deep sense of responsibility, the Muslim nation got, in addition to *Şihâh Sittah* (the Sound Six books of *Hadîth*) a vast treasure that included *Musannafât* (*Hadîth* compilations according to subject-headings), *Jawâmi'* (comprehensive books of *Ahâdîth*), *Sunan* (collections of legal and doctrinal *Ahâdîth*), *Masânid* (*Hadîth* compilations according to complete chains), *Ma'âjim* (compilations arranged according to names of Companions or regions or names of teachers of compilers), *Mustadrakât* (compilations of *Ahâdîth* meeting the conditions of other compilers but not found in their books), and *Mustakhrâjât* (compilations containing *Ahâdîth* of other compilers with different chains of narration), the manuscripts of which – numbering in thousands – researched, edited and furnished with explanatory and marginal notes, exist even today in international libraries attracting the attention of research scholars. Anyhow, among those compilations, the six canonical books of *Ahâdîth* (*Şihâh Sittah*) rank as the centerpiece.

I have a wish since long to present the Sound Six (*Şihâh Sittah*) translated into modern English in such a way as to list the inferences and gainful conclusions drawn from each *Hadîth* to remove any misgiving and misunderstanding, satisfying the mind and soul, and reinforcing the faith. With this noble cause in view, Darussalam has solicited the services of several learned scholars and researchers who are working with zeal on the translation of the Sound Six and writing commentaries on them.

All the *Ahâdîth* of this collection have been documented, referenced and traced by the great research scholar, Hâfiz Zubair 'Ali Za'î.

'Abdul-Mâlik Mujâhid

Servant of Qur'ân and *Sunnah*

Director,

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Note: One thing I want to mention is that in these collections, the original Arabic texts of the *Aḥādīth* contain complete chain of narrators while in translation, for the sake of simplicity, only the name of the first narrator is mentioned who narrated the *Hadīth* from the Prophet ﷺ.

As regards the collection, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, the readers will find three numbers with each *Hadīth*. The first one in brackets is introduced by Darussalam. It begins with the first *Hadīth* and continues to the last. The second number denotes the *Hadīth* number according to the various books mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. If this number is to be written for reference, then the name of the book must be written with it, for example if you see chapter 2, it is cited as: [2]1-(1), Here the [2] is serial # introduced by Darussalam, '1' is the first *Hadīth* of this chapter, and '(1)' is the number given by Fuwâd 'Abdul Bâqi. This number is used mainly while giving references like, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: 3*; or *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Hadīth : 3*. In this system, with each new *Hadīth*, Fuwâd 'Abdul-Bâqi allotted a new number, while the other versions of the same *Hadīth* with different chains have been given without any number.

A Life Sketch of Imâm Muslim

Preserving the Revelation

Allâh, the Most High, sent Revelation through His Messengers to different peoples at different times for their guidance, but none of their peoples clung to the Revelation sent to them tenaciously enough to be able to keep it in its pristine purity. Through the entire history of mankind, none other than Muslims guarded, by grace of Allâh, the Revelation received by them and preserved it intact, both by committing it to memory and in writing. In addition to the Revelation— the Qur'ân, Muslims did the same with *Aḥādīth* of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ which is also known as Unrecited Revelation. In order to protect and keep it safe, they evolved a unique system that made any type of tampering or interpolation impossible. This system of guarding and preserving, evolved by grace of Allâh, rules out, by its very nature, every likelihood of omission or neglect.

Preserving The Qur'ân (Revelation Recited)

Allâh said:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾

“Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr* (i.e., the Qur'ân) and surely We will guard it (from corruption).”^[1]

The Qur'ân was revealed to a Messenger who was unlettered. His people (*Ummah*), too, were mostly unlettered. The Qur'ân was revealed, little by little, a few Verses each time, making it easy to commit it to writing as well as memorizing. Moreover, since this Revealed Guidance was for all mankind and for all times, one could not benefit by it fully or act by it unless it was easy to remember and easy to understand. So Allâh made it easy:

﴿وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ﴾

“And We have indeed made the Qur'ân easy to understand and remember; then is there any that will remember (or receive admonition)?”^[2]

^[1] *Sûrat Al-Hijr* 15:9.

^[2] *Sûrat Al-Qamar* 54:22.

Just as the Qur'ân, before it was revealed to mankind, had been on honoured, exalted, Preserved Tablet in the hands of noble and righteous angels, so did the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, charge revered, righteous and honest scribes, memorizers and reciters from among his own Companions to preserve it.^[1]

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, promised, in clear terms, a similar reward to the later generations: The similitude of the one who recites the Qur'ân and takes care of it is that of one who keeps the company of honoured, righteous scribes (i.e. angels).^[2] There were among the foremost Companions as well as among other Companions who would recite the Qur'ân from memory. Later on, when Abû Bakr ؓ prepared the canonical copy of the Scripture, unanimously acknowledged to be correct as to script, spelling and arrangement of chapters, he called memorizers and reciters of Qur'ân from among the Companions to bear witness as to the authenticity and correctness of each chapter and each Verse and each word of the Qur'ân. It is to be noted that the script they used to write the Qur'ân with, has ever endured across centuries to this day, even though their style of writing differs sometimes from the standard principles of writing in vogue today, yet another manifestation of popular reverence for the scribes of the Divine Revelation.

In order to transcribe the Revelation with integrity, the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, trained his scribes. Zaid bin Thâbit ؓ says: "I used to write down the revealed Verses....when I had finished writing, he ﷺ would ask me to read it to him. If the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, detected an error, he would correct it. Only then did I communicate it to others."^[3]

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, also forbade scribes writing anything they heard from him into the text of the Qur'ân. The purpose was to keep the Qur'ân pure and unmixed, clear of extraneous things.^[4]

The Qur'ân was recited again and again, prayer after prayer, before the congregation of worshippers. The Companions used to recite it themselves as well as hear it from each other. This practice began from the very first day of the Revelation and has been continuing ever since. Even today there are hundreds of thousands of people who remember the Qur'ân by heart and recite it in public day and night. This rules out any doubt as to the accuracy of the Qur'ân. There is absolutely no likelihood of any addition or diminution, tampering or alteration or interpolation in the text of the Noble Qur'ân as it was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ.

^[1] See *Jâmi'ul-Bayân* 30/69.

^[2] *Sahîh Al-Bukhârî: Hadîth* 4937.

^[3] *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer* by Aṭ-Ṭabarânî 5/142, *Hadîth* no. 3889.

^[4] *Sahîh Muslim: Hadîth* no. 7510.

More astonishing than these measures were those that Allâh Himself took to secure the Qur'ân. In the whole cosmos an intensive network of tight security was laid by divine command. Right from heaven to earth, angels were placed on guard to prevent devils from eavesdropping or overhearing until it reached the heart of Allâh's Messenger. The *jinn* (genii) were made powerless to do any mischief, according to their own confession:

﴿وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَهَا مُلَيْتَ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَبًا ۗ ﴿٨﴾ وَأَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقْعَدًا لِّلسَّمْعِ فَمَن يَسْمَعِ الْآنَ يَحِذْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا﴾

"And we have sought to reach the heaven; but found it filled with stern guards and flaming fires. And verily, we used to sit there in stations, to (steal) hearing, but any who listens now will find a flaming fire watching him in ambush..."^[1]

At the end of the chapter of *Jinn*, Allâh says:

﴿عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهَرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ۗ ﴿٦١﴾ إِلَّا مَن أَرَادَ مِن رَّسُولِ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْمَعُ مَن بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ۗ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَّيَعْلَمَنَّ أَن قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رِسَالَتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا﴾

"(He Alone is) the All-Knower of the *Ghaib* (Unseen), and He reveals to none His *Ghaib* (Unseen). Except to a Messenger (from mankind) whom He has chosen (He informs him of the Unseen as much as He likes), and then He makes a band of watching guards (angels) to march before him and behind him. He (Allâh) protects them (the Messengers)], till He sees that they (the Messengers) have conveyed the Messages of their Lord (Allâh). And He (Allâh) surrounds all that which is with them, and He (Allâh) keeps count of all things (i.e. He knows the exact number of everything).^[2]

Preservation of *Hadîth* (Revelation Unrecited)

As for the *Hadîth* (which is, Revelation Unrecited), Allâh charged the *Ummah* to preserve it. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, said: "May Allâh make the man flourish who hears from me a *Hadîth*, commits it to memory and then communicates it (to others)."^[3]

^[1] *Sûrat Al-Jinn* 72:8,9.

^[2] *Sûrat Al-Jinn* 72:26-28.

^[3] *Jâmi' At-Tirmidhî, Hadîth* no. 2656.

No *Ummah* in history has so successfully preserved the sayings of its Messenger as the Muslims have. Indeed, none has given a fraction of that care to its revealed book which the Muslims gave to the preservation of the sayings and actions of their Messenger ﷺ. In the whole history of mankind, there has never ever been an example similar to the system evolved by Muslims to preserve the *Hadīth* and *Sunan* of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.

The Verses of the Qur'ān were committed both to memory and to writing as they were revealed but the sayings of Allāh's Messenger were committed to memory only and, later, communicated to those not present at the moment. Documents and necessary instructions were written for those who needed them, at the Messenger of Allāh's bidding. For example, Imām Bukhārī relates that Abū Shah ؓ, a Companion living in Yemen, requested the Messenger for a written copy of the sermon he had delivered on the day of the conquest of Makkah dealing with the inviolability of Makkah and with the blood-money. The Messenger said: "Write (it) down for Abū Shah."^[1]

When the system of writing the Qur'ān had developed well and stabilized, the Companions were allowed to note down all the sayings of the Messenger of Allāh, ﷺ, without distinction. 'Abdullāh bin 'Amr ؓ narrates: "I used to note down each and every thing I heard from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and liked to memorize it. The Quraysh said to me: 'You write down everything you hear from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. The Messenger of Allāh is a human being. He speaks both in anger and pleasure'. So I stopped writing. I told the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, about it. He replied: 'Write. By the One in Whose Hands my soul is, nothing comes out from my mouth except the truth.'"^[2]

Basis of the *Ummah's* greatness and honour

The Muslims broke free from the shackles of color, race and tribal prejudices and began to organize themselves into a great brotherhood which, in the course of two or three decades, became a super power of their times. They were the very people who had been paupers and wretched just a few years ago but were now the rulers of the most fertile regions of the world. Abū Hurairah ؓ, the most prolific narrator of *Ahādīth*, says about himself: 'I grew up as an orphan, migrated as a poor man, labored for Bint Ghazwān in exchange for food enough to fill my stomach and a pair of shoes; I would sing to quicken the pace of camels as they rode on and gather wood as they dismounted. Praise be to Allāh who made faith the basis (of honor and greatness) and Abū Hurairah a

[1] *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī, Hadīth* no. 6880, *Sahīh Muslim: Hadīth* no. 3305

[2] *Al-Mausū'ah Al-Hadīthiyya (Musnad Ahmad)* 11/59. The chain of narration is authentic and its narrators are trustworthy.

chieftain.^[1] He was also appointed governor of Al-Madīnah and during the reign of Marwān bin Al-Hakam worked as his deputy in Al-Madīnah.

It is quite obvious that this great revolution in human history, inspired by unparalleled wisdom enshrined in the Qur'ān, owed itself to the lifestyle of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, who had set a model for his Companions. The Qur'ān and the sayings and actions of Allāh's Messenger became an inalienable part of the Companions' lives. They were given the responsibility to remember the *Ahādīth* and communicate them to others. Hence, in this new social setup, the most honored among them were those who modelled their lives on the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, and taught others the same. Each Companion became a repository of knowledge, a virtual academy by himself. Masses thronged to them, listened to *Ahādīth*, and sought guidance and knowledge from them. The closer a Companion was to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, or the more one remembered his sayings, the greater his stature as a reference-guide.

Many a person eager to seek knowledge would travel long distances and come from far-off places to the Mothers of the Believers, especially 'Āishah ؓ, to hear *Hadīth* from them and receive answers to their many questions. Great care was taken not to let anyone, even if he be a Companion, relate a *Hadīth* on the authority of Allāh's Messenger ﷺ, unless it was *Mahfūz* (Conforming).^[2] For example, Abū Mūsā Al-Ash'arī ؓ narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, had said that one should seek permission to enter a house and, in case one does not receive a response, one should turn back. 'Umar ؓ asked him to bring a witness. Abū Mūsā went to a place where the *Anṣār* used to gather. He asked them if anyone of them could bear witness. They offered to send the youngest of them, Abū Sa'eed Al-Khudhri ؓ. He came and testified that the *Hadīth* was genuine.^[3]

It is to be noted that 'Umar ؓ did not doubt Abū Mūsā's narration, but he did so as a matter of principle and precaution.

Even in the times of monarchy following the era of the Caliphate, the Companions would narrate the *Ahādīth* of Allāh's Messenger to the common masses as well as the rulers. None could dare restrain preachers admonishing people through the sayings of the Messenger of Allāh because the society, especially the Companions, could never keep quiet over any attempt to hide the sayings of Allāh's Messenger, come what may. Abū Dharr Al-Ghiffārī ؓ, on seeing the rulers' dislike for those monitoring their conduct or narrating the *Ahādīth* of Allāh's Messenger, said openly: "If you place a sharp-cutting sword on

[1] *Tadhkiratul-Huffāz*: 1/29.

[2] *Hadīth* whose narrator is trustworthy and does not contradict another narrator more trustworthy than himself. It is the antonym of *Shāth* (Contradicting).

[3] *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī*, no. 2062.

it (pointing to his nape) and I felt that I could narrate a *Ḥadīth* I had heard from Allāh's Messenger ﷺ before the sword could pierce my neck, I would do so.'^[1]

Zeal to acquire knowledge

Faith depends on the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. In those times, knowledge was synonymous with the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. Moreover, learned scholars were honored and revered. They were the polestars and reference-guides for the people, a fact that produced a universal impulse to acquire knowledge. Towards the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century of the *Hijra* calendar, caravans of *Ḥadīth* students on their way to centers of learning were a common sight. Mosques and houses of teachers became schools of learning. Sometimes, students numbered hundreds and even more. Pen, inkpot and paper in hands, their occupation was to hear *Aḥādīth* and note them down. Often a teacher would narrate *Aḥādīth* from memory while someone, often a pupil, would have also a transcript copy of the *Aḥādīth* in front of him. In this process of learning, memorization and writing went together, the latter a means of ratification. In this process, the listener would write the word *Haddathana* (he narrated to us) followed by the name of the teacher followed by the chain of narrators (*Sanad*).

Sometimes, a person other than the teacher used to read out the collection of *Aḥādīth*. In this case, the listener would write the *Ḥadīth* beginning with the word *Akhbarana* (he informed us).

If a teacher spotted a talented student, he would give him permission to narrate his collection of *Aḥādīth* without his having listened to all those *Aḥādīth* first. This form of permission was known as *Munāwalah* or *Ijāzah* (licence or permission). In such a case, he would narrate or write those *Aḥādīth*, beginning the chain of narration with the word *Anba'ana* (he informed us).^[2] *Ijāzah* was a kind of permission, oral or written, given by teacher to student authorizing him to relate some particular book or books of the teacher or his Sound narrations. According to the system of *Munāwalah* or *'Arḍh*, an expert *Ḥadīth* memorizer, in order to benefit by the teacher, would present a written collection (of *Aḥādīth*) to him. The teacher would review and check it and, when he was sure it contained only the *Aḥādīth* narrated by him, would say to the student: 'I know the collection you gave me. I recognized its contents. They are my own narrations from my teachers (*Sheikhs*). You may narrate them on my behalf.' Imām Ḥākim says that the *Ḥadīth* scholars (*Muḥaddīth*) of Al-Madīnah, Makkah, Kūfa, Syria, Egypt, Khorāsān and other places gave this kind of permission to their students.

^[1] *Sahīh Al-Bukhārī, Kitābul-'Ilm, bābul-'Ilm qablal-qaul wal 'amal.*

^[2] *Jāmi'ul-Usool li Ibn Kathīr: 39.*

Imām Mālik was once asked whether he had directly listened to all the *Aḥādīth* he narrated. He replied: 'Some of them were those I listened to directly from my *Sheikhs*, and some I received through *'Arḍh* (*Munāwalah*). Anyhow, we believe that the latter is in no way inferior in quality than the former.'^[1]

Perfect system of preservation

All these methods of learning and teaching *Aḥādīth* prove that, right from the beginning, great care was taken to safeguard and preserve the *Aḥādīth*. Even during the era of Allāh's Messenger ﷺ, measures were taken to preserve *Aḥādīth*, the Unrecited Revelation, by writing as well as by memorization. There is no nation on the whole earth that can match the way the Muslims memorize the Qur'ān. Great scholars of the world are wonder-struck how the Qur'ān remained preserved in the memory of countless men across centuries. Today those who remember the Qur'ān by heart number in the millions. There has never been a tradition in any community to memorize their basic book of faith nor did they ever have the courage to do so. It is the Muslim people alone whose ancestors evolved a system of preserving the Qur'ān as well as *Aḥādīth* over the centuries, a system that inspires awe and respect.

How the Companions preserved the sayings of Allāh's Messenger perfectly well is best illustrated by an example. Of all the Companions, the most prolific narrator of *Aḥādīth* was Abū Hurairah who died in 58 AH. Young Companions like Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Jābir and Anas ؓ narrated *Aḥādīth* on the authority of Abū Hurairah and, according to Imām-Bukhārī, the *Tāba'in* (followers of the Companions) who narrated from him during his lifetime numbered over eight hundred.^[2] Among his pupils was Hammām bin Munabbah who penned down all the narrations of Abū Hurairah. If we compare the collection of Hammām with the authentic *Aḥādīth* narrated by others at different times in the course of half a century, we find no difference between them. For as long as half a century, Abū Hurairah kept on repeating his *Aḥādīth* from his memory in the same words.

Comparison and Evaluation of *Aḥādīth*

This system of memorizing and writing continued to strengthen further and still further over the years. The *Tāba'in* heard the *Aḥādīth* from the Companions, memorized them, and recited them to groups of students who had themselves listened those *Aḥādīth* from the different pupils of the Companions and *Tāba'in*. They would compare the wordings of different narrators and verify them. In the

^[1] *Jāmi'ul-Usool li Ibn Kathīr, 1:43.*

^[2] *Tadhkiratul-Huffāz 1/28,29.*

course of this process, they came to know what texts of the *Ahâdîth* had the greatest number of supporters from among those who had heard from the Companions and *Tâba'in*, what narrator is lone in what narration, and the reason thereof. There may be several reasons. For example, the teacher may have a weak memory in his old age. But, if most of his pupils during his old age related the same *Hadîth* like those who studied under him in his early years, the blame would fall on some sub-narrator. Moreover, frequent visits to centers of learning also revealed to students of *Ahâdîth* the qualities of narrators: who had a high stature as to uprightness, trustworthiness, strength of memory, honesty, integrity and character, who is reasonably satisfactory, and who is weak in one or more than one foregoing qualities.

In case a *Hadîth* does not exist in the collections of high-grade narrators but it has been narrated by more than one narrator belonging to a lower grade with an authentic chain of sub-narrators, such a *Hadîth* shall be accepted by virtue of the fact that it has been endorsed by more than one *Maqbûl* (Accepted) narrator.

Ever since the age of *Tâba'in*, *Hadîth* students considered it necessary to write down, along with the chains of narrators, the views, comments and opinions of *A'immah* and *Huffâz* of *Ahâdîth* about the sub-narrators and other necessary things. You will note that every notable *Hadîth* scholar (*Muḥaddith*) collected not only the texts and the chains of narration but also composed books about each preceding sub-narrator, his habits and other characteristics. Details will soon follow.

Based on this rich information, there developed a consensus over the classes (*Darajât*) of narrators and, consequently, by agreement of scholars, narrators were divided into classes. Since this academic work was carried on with openness, transparency and a spirit of pure inquiry, research and scholarship of highest standard, it became impossible for anyone to hide one's bias for any particular viewpoint, dishonesty or negligence. Some who tried to circulate narrations of their own liking or interpolated words of their choice into Sound *Ahâdîth* were soon uncovered and their counterfeit coins put out of circulation. Just as in an open and free market, counterfeit coins are soon detected, so was each attempt to circulate fabricated *Ahâdîth* in this open field of academic research detected and foiled and the face of the fabricator unmasked. Proofs against fabricators were collected and records against them prepared. These records will remain till the Day of Judgment for the benefit of research scholars.

The goal of each *Hadîth* student was to hear, write and relate *Ahâdîth* coming down from narrators of the highest possible level (*Tabaqa*)^[1] with a minimum

[1] Narrators and collectors of *Hadîth* are classified into two main categories: 1) Era category, that is, according to the period in which they lived as well as the degree to which they were in touch with the renowned scholars of their times, the purpose being to discover the

number of sub-narrators. Students vied with each other vigorously to achieve this goal. Hence, any claim as to the trustworthiness or uprightness of a sub-narrator was put to the severest test. Any claim about a sub-narrator being higher (more trustworthy) than the other was met with strong challenge; hidden defects in the narration were sought out, every narration was very closely examined from every conceivable aspect, and every attempt was made to uncover even the slightest hidden defect in the chain of narration or text. It is these defects which are technically known as '*Ilal* in the *Hadîth* sciences and many a book has been compiled on this subject. In this field every one was free to raise objection just as the other one was quite equally free to defend with arguments, semantic or syntactical evidence or context (*Qarînah*) and witnesses. And according to this science of critical evaluation of *Ahâdîth*, each narration was accepted or rejected purely on its merit.

In this field, excellence was not based on color of skin or race or country. The scepter could go to Quraysh or a kinsman of Allâh's Messenger ﷺ but the kingdom of *Hadîth* sciences belonged to Ath-Thawri, 'Abdullâh bin Mubârak, Moḥammad bin Ismâ'îl Al-Bukhârî, and Muslim bin Ḥajjâj An-Nîshâpûrî.^[1] It is to be noted that 'Abdullâh bin Mubârak was of Turkish descent,^[2] Moḥammad bin Ismâ'îl was of Persian descent, from Bukhârâ,^[3] while Muslim bin Ḥajjâj an inhabitant of Nîshâpûr.^[4] This became possible because the *Hadîth* science was an open arena in which everyone had a right to compete with others, the verdict being in the hands of the majority of the participants.

Al-Imâm Muslim

Al-Imâm, Al-Ḥâfiz, Al-Ḥujjah 'Abul-Ḥussain Muslim bin Al-Ḥajjâj bin Ward bin Koshâdh Al-Qushayrî An-Nîshâpûrî was born in 202 or 204 or 206 AH in Nîshâpûr and educated in the same town. He heard *Ahâdîth* the first time, at age eighteen, from Yaḥya bin Yaḥya Tamîmî. In 220 AH he went on pilgrimage to Makkah where he heard *Ahâdîth* from 'Abdullâh bin Salamah Qa'nabi, the most revered pupil of Imâm Mâlik and the principal teacher of Imâm Muslim.^[5] In Kûfa, he heard *Ahâdîth* from Aḥmad bin Yûsuf and a host

continuity of the chain of narrators; 2) Reliability category, that is, the relative reliability of the narrators with respect to their retentive powers, moral character, political affiliation, fame or lack of it and their philosophical leanings. They are placed in classes of descending order like *Thiqah* (Trustworthy), *Ṣuddûq* (Truthful) etc. Terms like Level and Class are interchangeable, used to denote any of the two categories.—Translator

[1] *Tadhkiratul-Huffâz, Muḥaddamah*: 4.

[2] *Sir A'lâmun-Nubalâ'*: 8/379.

[3] *Sir A'lâmun-Nubalâ'*: 12/391.

[4] *Sir A'lâmun-Nubalâ'*: 12/558.

[5] *Sir A'lâmun-Nubalâ'*: 12/558 and *Tadhkiratul-Huffâz*: 1/281.

of other teachers. In addition, he also heard from nearly 220 teachers in Makkah, Al-Madīnah, 'Irāq and Egypt. The system of hearing *Aḥādīth* in those times consisted in hearing and writing down *Aḥādīth* along with their chains of narration.^[1]

Among the renowned teachers of Muslim were Al-Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Aḥmad bin Mundhīr Qazzāz, Ishāq bin Rahwiyah, Ibrāhīm bin Sa'eed Jawhari, Ibrāhīm bin Mūsā, Abū Ishāq Rāzī, Aḥmad bin Ibrāhīm, Ishāq bin Mūsā Anṣārī (Abū Mūsā) Ismā'īl bin Abū Owais, Ḥarmala bin Yahya (Abū Ḥafs Tajībī) Ḥasan bin Rabī' Burānī, Abū Bakr bin Abū Shaiba, Ya'qūb bin Ibrāhīm Dawraqī, Abū Zur'ah Rāzī, Yahya bin Ma'een and other *Huffāz*.^[2]

The circumstances of his death, as recorded in *Tārīkh Baghdād* and *Sīr A'lāmun-Nubalā'*, are very strange indeed, and show his excessive passion for the science of *Ḥadīth* and his inordinate zeal for inquiry and research in this field. According to Aḥmad bin Salamah, a gathering was held to benefit by the knowledge of Imām Muslim. There he heard a *Ḥadīth* which he had not heard before. When he came back home, he lit a lamp and told his family not to allow anyone to enter his room. His family told him about a gift they had received, a basketful of dates. He told them to bring it to him. Immersed in his search for that particular *Ḥadīth*, he kept on eating the dates, one by one, while he was absorbed in his search for the *Ḥadīth*. By early morning, he found the *Ḥadīth* but the basket was empty. It was for this reason, it is said, that he fell sick and died.

Imām Muslim's business was in the district of Khān Maḥmash but the main source of his livelihood was his landed estate in the suburbs of Nīshāpūr. Imām Ḥākim said that he had seen his grandchildren (from his daughters). They told him that their father who had seen Imām Muslim in Khān Maḥmash described the Imām as a man of perfect stature, fair-complexioned, with a gray beard, a corner of his turban dangling on his back between his shoulders.^[3]

He died on the evening of Sunday, the 24th of Rajab, 261 AH. He was buried the next day in Nīshāpūr.^[4]

Written works

The following are the important works of Imām Muslim as mentioned by Ḥākim and other *Ḥadīth* scholars:

[1] *Sīr A'lāmun-Nubalā'*: 12/561.

[2] *Tadhkiratul-Huffāz liḥ-Dhahabī*.

[3] *Sīr A'lāmun-Nubalā'*: 12/570.

[4] *Al-Ḥiṭṭah Fī Dhīkr Aṣ-Sahāḥ As-Sittah*: 286

1. *Al-Asāmī wal kunā*
2. *Kitāb Aṭ-Ṭabaqāt*
3. *Kitāb Al-Wahdān*
4. *Kitāb Al-Afrād*
5. *Kitāb Al-Aqrān*
6. *Kitāb Awlād As-Ṣahābah*
7. *Kitāb Afrād Ash-Shāmiyyīn*
8. *Kitāb Mashāikh Mālik*
9. *Kitāb Mashāikh Ath-Thaurī*
10. *Kitāb Mashā'ikh Shu'bah*
11. *Kitāb Man Laisa Lahu Al-Irāwin-Wahīd*
12. *Kitābul-Mukhadōrumīn*
13. *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt At-Tāba'in*
14. *Kitāb Al-Musnadil-Kabīr 'Alar-Rijāl*
15. *Kitāb Al-jāmi' 'Alal-Abwāb*
16. *Kitābul-Musnad Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ*
17. *Kitāb Ḥadīth 'Amr bin Shu'aib*
18. *Kitāb At-Tamyīz*
19. *Kitābul-'Ilal*
20. *Kitāb Suwālāt Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal*
21. *Kitāb Awhām Al-Muhaddīthīn*
22. *Kitāb Al-Intifā' Bi Ahbis-Sabā'*

The foregoing are the important works of Imām Muslim, not a complete list of his writings.

Distinguishing features of *Saḥīḥ Muslim*

According to Ḥāfiz Ibn 'Asākir and Imām Ḥākim, Muslim wanted to divide his book, *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, into two parts, the first part containing sound *Aḥādīth* transmitted by narrators of the First Level (*Ṭabaqah*) and the second part containing sound *Aḥādīth* transmitted by narrators of the Second Level but he could only complete the first part before his death. This means that *Saḥīḥ Muslim* is a work of his later years. A look at his works reveals that he worked with great devotion on the transmitters of *Aḥādīth* and wrote many books on that subject. His works listed above, from 1 to 13, are an example. Likewise, he collected *Aḥādīth* and narrators in various formats (14 to 17) and wrote books (18 to 21) exclusively on erroneous impressions (*Awhām*) and defects ('*Ilal*'). His last book dealing with juristic issues is a good illustration of his written works.

Sahîh Muslim is the culmination of his skill. All the works preceding it were, in fact, a preparatory ground, the foundation of his work yet to come because a book like *Sahîh Muslim* could not be written without a complete mastery over the biographies of narrators, texts, and defects (*'Ilal*). In those times *Hadîth* students were in search of a book containing narrations dealing with rituals, commandments, punishment and reward, what to do and what not to do, the sayings of Allâh's Messenger ﷺ concerning them, the narrations occurring in the authentic books of *Sunan*, their chains of narrations accepted by scholars, grouped together in a well-ordered way, in a single work, not too long, and yet enabling one to dispense with other books in matters of faith, their proper comprehension, thinking, and deduction.^[1]

Imâm Muslim felt the *Ummah* was in need of such a book. As he pondered over the importance and benefits of such a book, he resolved to compile a relatively short and well-arranged work out of a vast treasure of authentic *Ahâdîth*.

Criterion of selection

Imâm Muslim made it very clear that the narrations coming down to us from the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, have been divided into three sections. They cover three classes (*Tabaqât*) of narrators. He also said that he wanted to avoid repetition as best as he could except when it is necessary to repeat the whole text or part thereof in order to remove an *'Illa* found in the chain of narration or to describe an additional understanding.

"In the first section we want to list *Ahâdîth* clear of all defects and other things (other things meaning other technical weaknesses), that is, *Ahâdîth* whose narrators are considered very strong and very careful while narrating, their narrations (when compared with one another) do not vary nor (the facts and details) mixed up, things often found in case of other narrators."^[2]

"After listing the *Ahâdîth* of such narrators, we will turn to the *Ahâdîth* of those narrators whose memory and skill are less than that of those belonging to the first section. Anyhow, in such people, though lesser in rank than those in the first section, no defect has been identified. Truth and devotion to knowledge are the qualities common in them, like 'Aṭâ' bin Sâ'ib, Yazîd bin Abû Ziyâd, Laith bin Abû Sulaym, etc. They are known for their knowledge and piety but the narrators of the first section rank higher, in skill and care, than those mentioned above. As for those who are considered as Accused (*Muttaham*) or their narrations (though fair in themselves) are Denounced (*Munkar*) and wrong, we have nothing to do with them."^[3]

[1] *Muqaddama Sahîh Muslim*: 4.

[2] *Muqaddama Sahîh Muslim*: 4.

[3] *Muqaddama Sahîh Muslim*: 5.

These are the points Imâm Muslim has himself mentioned in his preface to his book with respect to his criterion of selection.

But every scholar of *Hadîth* sciences has understood and described the method of Imâm Muslim in his own way.

Imâm Hâkim and Imâm Baihaqî have clearly stated that Imâm Muslim based his compilation of Sound *Ahâdîth* (*Sahîh*) on the narrations belonging to the First Level (*Tabaqa*) but he passed away before he could compile the *Ahâdîth* of the Second Level narrators.^[1]

Imâm Baihaqî, quoting Imâm Muslim's companion Ibrâhîm bin Moḥammad bin Sufyân, said, quoting an authentic source: 'Imâm Muslim had composed three separate books: one being *Sahîh*, the second a collection of *Ahâdîth* from 'Akrama, Ibn Ishâq and those of the same class, and the third a collection of narrations from weak transmitters.'^[2]

But the commentator of *Sahîh Muslim*, Qâḍî 'Ayâḍ disagreed with Imâm Hâkim and Imâm Dâraquṭnî and opined: Imâm Muslim has brought all the three levels, which he had mentioned, in his book. I have looked into his book closely, scrutinized his division (and found that) he had dropped the Fourth Level as he had himself said.^[3]

It should be noted that Imâm Muslim spoke of three levels or three classes and clearly stated that he would drop the third class while Qâḍî 'Ayâḍ claimed that Imâm Muslim had dropped the Fourth class, attributing this claim to be the statement of Imâm Muslim himself.

In other words, Qâḍî 'Ayâḍ has split up the two classes of Imâm Muslim into three classes, his fourth class being the third one according to Imâm Muslim.

Imâm Tha'labî, while giving his opinion, after quoting Qâḍî 'Ayâḍ, also mentions the four classes. He says: "He (Imâm Muslim) took *Ahâdîth* from the First class and from the Second one except a few of the latter which he did not like. Then, from the Third class he took *Ahâdîth*, which are not many, as corroborating evidences and follow-ups. If he had included *Ahâdîth* from this class in his *Sahîh*, the book would have been twice as voluminous as it is now and his book, due to the inclusion of such *Ahâdîth*, would have slipped down from the rank of *Sahîh*. The people of this class are 'Aṭâ' bin Sâ'ib, Laith bin Abû Ziyâd, and others like them. He did not take *Ahâdîth* from these people except after he had taken a basic *Hadîth* (that is, after a *Hadîth*, the basis of which existed in the First class)."^[4]

[1] *Sharḥ An-Nawawî, Muqaddama*: 1/45.

[2] *An-Nikat 'Ala Kitâb Ibnus-Salâh*: 1/434.

[3] *Akmâul-Mu'allim Bi Fawâ'id Muslim*: 1/86.

[4] *Sir A'lâmun-Nuḅalâ*: 12/575.

It is clear from Imâm Tha'labî's statement that he also took Imâm Muslim's First class for two classes and took Imâm Muslim's Second class narrators like 'Atâ' bin Sâ'ib, Yazîd bin Abû Ziyâd and Laith bin Abû Sulaym for the Third class, and testified that Imâm Muslim had taken only a few *Ahâdîth* of those narrators as corroborating evidence and follow-ups only when basic narrations from the First class had already been listed.

Does it not prove exactly what Imâm Muslim had already said in his preface that the *Ahâdîth* of 'Atâ', Yazîd and Laith who belong to the Second class according to Imâm Muslim and to the Third class according to Qâdî 'Ayâd and Tha'labî's, did not occur as basic *Ahâdîth* in *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim*? Does it not also prove what Imâm Hâkim, Imâm Baihaqî and, later on, Hâfîz Ibn Hajar have already said that *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim* contained, basically, the *Ahâdîth* of the First class? Do both the groups of *Ummah* holding two divergent opinions not acknowledge jointly that *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim*, like *Ṣaḥîḥ Bukhârî*, consist of authentic *Ahâdîth*? Hâfîz Ibn Hajar, after explaining it in detail in *An-Nukat*, said: "The matter became unclear and ambiguous to Qâdî 'Ayâd and his followers (An-Nawawî)..."^[1]

All the foregoing details about the methodology followed by Imâm Muslim have been noted with reference to the viewpoints of the venerated *A'imma* of *Ḥadîth*. All these persons, despite their divergent views on the Levels of narrators, concur that the basic *Ahâdîth* of *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim* and, in fact, even the corroborating *Ahâdîth* and their follow-ups are authentic, all of them.

Some contemporary scholars who are strongly biased for their particular juristic schools, on finding their practices in conflict with the *Ahâdîth* of *Bukhârî* and *Muslim*, try to exploit the differences of opinions of our worthy *A'imma* of old, which were purely of an academic nature, as a means to challenge and raise objections to the *Ahâdîth*, and the collections of authentic *Ahâdîth*, of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, and create doubts about them. They also tried to get the Islamic University of Al-Madînah somehow pass a so-called research thesis asserting falsely that in *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim* every first *Ḥadîth* in each chapter is authentic while those that followed it were listed by Imâm Muslim only to hint at some hidden defects in them and that those hints, according to the thesis writer, can be discerned by outstanding memorizers (*Huffâz*) of *Ahâdîth*. It is surprising, indeed, that none of the commentators of *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim*, *Ḥadîth* scholars and jurists including Qâdî 'Ayâd ever pointed out that all the *Ahâdîth* following the first *Ḥadîth* in each chapter had such and such defect or weakness. On the contrary, the whole *Ummah* is unanimous that all the *Ahâdîth* of *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim* are authentic, no matter whether they occur first or in the middle or at the end of a chapter.

[1] *An-Nikat 'Ala Kitâb Ibnus-Ṣalâh*: 1/434.

According to *Imâmul-Ḥarmain* Abul-Ma'âlî Abdul Mâlik bin Mohammad Al-Juwainî, scholars of *Ḥadîth* sciences are unanimous that the attribution of *Ahâdîth* in the authentic collections of *Bukhârî* and *Muslim* to Allâh's Messenger ﷺ, is absolutely certain.^[1]

That is also the opinion of Ibnus-Ṣalâh, the *Imâm* of the methodology of *Ḥadîth* sciences.^[2] The unanimity over this point has also been mentioned by Ibnul-Athîr.^[3] Rather, Imâm Abû Naṣr 'Ubaidullâh bin Sa'eed bin Hâtîm As-Sujzî (d. 444 AH), speaking about *Ṣaḥîḥ Bukhârî*,^[4] and *Imâmul-Ḥarmain* Abul-Ma'âlî Abdul Mâlik bin Mohammad Al-Juwainî, speaking about both *Al-Bukhârî* and *Muslim*, remarked that if a person said on oath that the *Ahâdîth* considered by *Bukhârî* and *Muslim* as authentic are really so and that their attribution to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, is right, his oath is flawless and that no atonement is obligatory on him.^[5]

In every age scholars of *Ḥadîth* sciences took notice of the evil campaign of casting doubts about *Ahâdîth* or collections of *Ahâdîth* and laid bare those deceitful tactics.^[6]

The *Ummah* is unanimous over the authenticity of *Ṣaḥîḥ Bukhârî* and *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim*. Anyhow, all this while, scholars have been wrangling which of the two has precedence over the other. Imâm An-Nawawî, the commentator of *Muslim*, says: Scholars concur that next to Qur'ân, the most authentic books are *Ṣaḥîḥ Bukhârî* and *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim*. The *Ummah* has accepted them as such. *Ṣaḥîḥ Bukhârî* is more authentic, more profitable, and better in open and hidden perceptions. It is true that Imâm Muslim benefitted by Imâm Bukhârî and used to say that he was matchless in *Ḥadîth* sciences. All in all, *Ṣaḥîḥ Bukhârî* has precedence over *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim*. That is the right view and that is the opinion of the majority of the scholars and the experts in the *Ḥadîth* sciences.

Imâm Abû 'Alî bin Husain Nishâpûrî and some scholars of the *Maghrib* (the Muslim countries of North Africa) give precedence to *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim* but the majority of scholars insist that it is *Ṣaḥîḥ Bukhârî* which should be given precedence. Abû Bakr Ismâ'îlî, the great *Imâm*, *Hâfîz* and jurist, has explained it, with arguments, in his book *Al-Madkhal*.^[7]

[1] *An-Nikat*: 1/377.

[2] *Muqaddama Ibnus-Ṣalâh*: 40.

[3] *Jâmi'ul-Uṣool*: 1/41.

[4] *Muqaddama Ibnus-Ṣalâh ma'a At-Taḥayyud wal-Idhâh*. pp 38, 39.

[5] *Al-Iḥtîṭah Fee Dhîkr As-Ṣaḥâḥ As-Sittah*, p 232.

[6] See *Minhâjul-Imâm Muslim* by Raṣî' bin Hâdî Al-Madkhalî, formerly Head of *Sunnah*, Department of Higher Studies, Islamic University of Al-Madînah.

[7] *Sharḥ Muslim lln-Nawawî, Muqaddama*: 1/35.

Of course, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* has some distinguishing features peculiar to it. It was for those distinguishing features of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* that some give it preference over *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*.

Imâm Nawawî says: "Imâm Muslim is peerless in one very beneficial characteristic, namely, he listed a *Ḥadīth* only in one place, proper to it, mentioning its several chains of narration and its different wordings. This makes it easy for a student to view the *Ḥadīth* in all its different facets and thus benefit by it. The several chains of narration, mentioned by Imâm Muslim for a single *Ḥadīth*, only increases a student's trust in the relevant *Ḥadīth*."^[1]

This is, in fact, a great achievement of Imâm Muslim. He lists a *Ḥadīth* along with its chain from one of his teachers and then goes on listing the chains of other teachers. Then, again, in case of a higher chain, he lists the chains of other narrators from one or several teachers and, in the case of the highest part of the chain, if a *Ḥadīth* was narrated by more than one Companion, he lists all the narrations, each with a separate chain. If a student reviews all the chains listed by Imâm Muslim for a single *Ḥadīth*, it becomes clear that Imâm Muslim did not confine himself to narrating a *Ḥadīth* from any one of his teachers and then continuing up to his earliest teacher but that he wrote down a *Ḥadīth* from several transmitters of that *Ḥadīth* from a single teacher. Imâm Muslim heard a *Ḥadīth* from a teacher and then heard the same *Ḥadīth* from different teachers at different times in order to ascertain whether those different teachers narrated the same *Ḥadīth* in the presence of different people at different times with the same wording. If he found no discrepancy, he considered those narrators to be accurate and reliable and their narrations to be authentic and sound. In the same way, he also checked the narrations of the teachers of his teachers by comparing their chains with those of other narrators. He went even further and collected the narrations of the students of the different Companions reporting from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, compared them with each other, ascertained and verified them, and then, finally, selected only those which appeared to be perfect, precise and accurate. Such utmost care is impossible for any court in any lawsuit with any number of witnesses.

Even the slightest difference in wording or chain of transmission like the difference between *Haddathana* and *Akhbarana* has been recorded and preserved by Imâm Muslim. He recorded even the slight difference in the text of a *Ḥadīth*. Thus it is that the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imâm Muslim became a peerless collection of authenticated *Aḥādīth*.

^[1] *Sharḥ Muslim lin-Nawawî, Muqaddama: 1/34.*

Unbroken chain of authentication

The authentic *Ḥadīth* collections of *Bukhārī* and *Muslim* were excellent with respect to both the chains of transmission and the texts as well as their general utility in that they gave guidance in almost all walks of life. These collections won the praise and acclaim of *Ḥadīth* scholars so much so that they themselves produced works containing the same *Aḥādīth* as found in the collections of both *Bukhārī* and *Muslim* but with their own, independent chains consisting of a lesser number of sub-narrators, and named their works *Mustakhraj*. The *Mustakhraj* (literally, meaning 'extract, excerpt or partial copy') works containing the same *Aḥādīth* with the same words, but with chains of narrators a degree or two lesser in rank, corroborated the *Aḥādīth* of *Al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim* and, in effect, testified that other chains of narration also substantiate what *Bukhārī* and *Muslim* had attributed to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. This wonderful system of validation and authentication continued for centuries.

The following are the names of some of the leading *Ḥadīth* scholars who produced *Mustakhraj* works on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*:

1. Abū Bakr bin Moḥammad bin Rajâ' (d. 286 AH).
2. Az-Zâhid Abū Ja'far Aḥmad bin Ḥamadân Al-Hîrî (d. 311 AH).
3. Abū 'Awânah Ya'qûb bin Ishâq Al-Isfarâyînî (d. 316 AH).
4. Abûl-Walîd Ḥassân bin Moḥammad Al-Faqîh (d. 344 AH).
5. Al-Imâm Abū 'Âlî Al-Masterjasî (d. 365 AH).
6. Abū Ḥâmid Aḥmad bin Moḥammad Ash-Shârkî Al-Harawî (d. 369 AH).^[1]
7. Abū Bakr Moḥammad bin 'Abdullâh bin Zakariyya Al-Jouzaqî (d. 388 AH).^[2]
8. Abū Bakr Aḥmad bin Moḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Khawârizmî Al-Barqânî (d. 425 AH).
9. Abū Nu'aim Aḥmad bin 'Abdullâh bin Aḥmad Al-Asbâhânî (d. 430 AH).^[3]

It is clear from the foregoing evidence that no neutral person with a sound mind can ever accept the objections being hurled continuously by the deniers of *Aḥādīth* motivated merely by rancour, malice and prejudice.

The total number of *Aḥādīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) collection of Muslim (without counting the repetitions) is four thousand. Counting the repetitions, they total seven thousand two hundred and twenty five.^[4] Imâm Muslim made this selection out of three hundred thousand *Aḥādīth*.

^[1] *Sîr A'lâmun-Nubalâ': 16 / 291, 292.*

^[2] *Sîr A'lâmun-Nubalâ': 12 / 569, 570.*

^[3] Op. cit., marginal note: 12 / 570

^[4] *Al-Hittah Fî Dhikr Aṣ-Ṣaḥāḥ As-Sittah*, p. 232.

It is to be noted that the number, three hundred thousand, does not mean three hundred thousand narrations or texts of narrations. Counting can best be understood by the following example: if a *Tâbi'î* narrates from a Companion of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, it is counted as one *Hadîth*. If two *Tâbi'în* narrate (the same *Hadîth*) from him, they are counted as two *Ahâdîth*. Similarly, if the students of *Tâbi'în* narrate the same *Hadîth* from them, the number of *Ahâdîth* will increase still further, the number increasing as the number of transmitters. So three hundred thousand *Ahâdîth* mean only three hundred thousand narrations, each with a different chain. Ignorance of this counting method often gives rise to a lot of misunderstanding.

Imâm Muslim welcomed criticism

The works of *Hadîth* scholars were very transparent. Their writings were scrutinized minutely, word by word, and this continues to this day. Imâm Muslim put his *Ṣaḥîḥ* before the great experts and students of *Hadîth* sciences of his times. In his own lifetime, copies of his *Ṣaḥîḥ* spread far and wide and a cycle of critical appreciation of his work began. Among his critics were the distinguished *Hadîth* scholars of his times including his own teachers.

Sa'eed Al-Bardha'î says: "Someone brought a copy of *Ṣaḥîḥ Muslim* to Al-Imâm Abû Zur'ah. He went through it. As he came across the narration of Asbâṭ bin Naṣr, he commented: 'Oh, how far it is from being sound.' As he glanced over the narration of Qaṭan bin Naṣîr, he remarked: 'It is a high tide (sweeping along with it all the rubbish).' When he saw the narration of Aḥmad bin 'Eisa, he pointed to his tongue (as if he wanted to say that he also narrated fabricated *Ahâdîth*). Then he remarked: 'Does he (Imâm Muslim) narrate from such people and drop (high-ranking) narrators like Ibn 'Ajlân. He gives a chance to innovators (deniers of the authority of *Ahâdîth*) to blame *Hadîth* scholars and say that their *Ahâdîth* are not authentic.'"^[1]

According to *Tadhkiratul-Huffâz*, Abû Zur'ah Al-Imâm *Hâfizul-'Aṣr* Ubaidullâh bin 'Abdul-Karîm bin Yazîd Ar-Râzî was a great *Hadîth* scholar of his times. In memorizing *Ahâdîth*, intelligence, devoutness, sincerity and acts of piety, he was counted among the matchless. His own teachers collected *Ahâdîth* from him and narrated them. Great scholars like Imâm Muslim, his cousin *Ḥâfiz* Abû *Hâtim*, Imâm *Tirmidhî*, Ibn *Mâjah*, *Nasâ'î*, Abû *Dawûd*, Abû 'Awânah, Sa'eed bin 'Amr Al-Bardha'î, Ibn *Hâtim*, *Moḥammad* bin Al-*Hussain* Al-Qaṭṭân were his pupils. Imâm *Bukhârî* said that Aḥmad bin *Ḥanbal* told him: When Abû Zur'ah came to our house as a guest, my father said: 'Young man, the discourse you had with the *Sheikh* is, in fact, a reward from Allâh for

my voluntary prayers. According to San'ânî, Abû Zur'ah is to us (that is, to *Hadîth* scholars) like Aḥmad bin *Ḥanbal*.^[1]

In the light of his teacher's critical remarks, Imâm Muslim moved to explain his standpoint. Bardha'î said that he went to Nishâpûr and informed Imâm Muslim of Abû Zur'ah's comments on his work. He replied: "Took only those *Ahâdîth* from narrators like Asbâṭ, Qaṭṭân and Aḥmad bin 'Eisâ which had already existed (in the compilations of *Ahâdîth*) from trustworthy narrators. I took from people like Asbâṭ because their *Ahâdîth* had a lesser number of sub-narrators while those of the trustworthy narrators had a relatively large number of sub-narrators. The *Ahâdîth* in my collection are known, with chains of trustworthy narrators."

Later on, Imâm Muslim went to see Ibn Wârah, a famous *Hadîth* scholar.^[2] He made the same comments as those made by Abû Zur'ah. This shows that the observations of the experts were similar. Imâm Muslim explained his point of view and remarked: I said that the *Ahâdîth* are authentic. I did not say that the *Ahâdîth* I did not include in my book (like those of Ibn 'Ajlân and others) are weak. Ibn Wârah was satisfied and read out his narrations to Imâm Muslim.^[3]

Since Imâm Muslim's narrations were supported with both high and low chains, he welcomed the criticism of his book by Abû Zur'ah, his teacher and the greatest *Hadîth* scholar in those times, and put his book in front of him. Imâm Muslim expunged from his book each *Hadîth* which Abû Zur'ah pointed out to be defective or objectionable for some reason (even though Imâm Muslim disagreed with him) and documented and referenced only those *Ahâdîth* (that is, listed the *Ahâdîth* with the same chains of narrations) which Abû Zur'ah considered to be sound and free from every defect or weakness. After taking so much precaution and exercising so much discretion, he became sure that if experts of *Hadîth* sciences tried to select *Ahâdîth* based on the most authentic possible chains of narration for as long as two hundred years, they could not rely upon *Ahâdîth* other than those listed by him in his authentic collection.^[4]

^[1] *Tadhkiratul-Huffâz*: 2/106.

^[2] A great and trustworthy memorizer of *Ahâdîth*, Abû 'Abdullâh *Moḥammad* bin *Muslim* bin 'Uthmân bin Wârah Ar-Râzî was a student of Abû 'Āsim, Al-Faryābî, Abû Nu'aim, and Abul-Mughîrah 'Abdul-Quddûs and one of the teachers of Imâm An-Nasâ'î and Imâm Al-Bukhârî. Bukhârî, in his compilations other than *Ṣaḥîḥ*, took narrations from him. Abû Bakr bin Abû Shaibah said: 'I never saw a person who knew *Ahâdîth* by heart better than Ibnul-Furât, Ibn Wârah and Abû Zar'ah. According to Bukhârî, there was none like Abu *Ḥâtim*, Abû Zar'ah and Abû Wârah.

^[3] *Sir A'lâmun-Nubalâ'*: 12/571.

^[4] *Sir A'lâmun-Nubalâ'*: 12/568.

^[1] *Sir A'lâmun-Nubalâ'*: 12 / 571.

The works of Imâm Bukhârî and Imâm Muslim were not accepted just for their great technical skills. Rather, they were accepted because the rules and the methodologies they adopted were critically reviewed and then each *Hadîth* they had listed was reviewed and probed critically and vigorously in the light of their own rules. And this critical work continued, unabated and with great vigour, for centuries.

Among his critics were Imâm Dârquṭnî, Imâm Ḥâkim and several other scholars expert in the Science of Validation (*Al-Jarḥ Wat-Ta'dîl*). In the meanwhile, a vigorous criticism continued, supporting and opposing him. Even today, there is no bar on criticism of his works. As a result of this criticism and counter-criticism, all the *Hadîth* scholars of the Orthodox Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence are unanimous that the authentic collections of Bukhârî and Muslim are correct, next to the Qur'ân, and the ascription of the sayings and acts mentioned therein to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, is right.^[1]

May Allâh help us preserve the *Aḥâdîth* as well as act by them, diffuse the light of *Sunnah* far and wide, grace the endeavours of scholars, servants and students of *Hadîth* with His acceptance. Amen.

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Introduction by Imâm Muslim

In the Name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allâh, the Lord of the Worlds, and the (blessed) end is for those who achieve *Taqwa*. May Allâh send blessings and peace upon Muḥammad, the Seal (Last) of the Prophets, and upon all the Prophets and Messengers.

You – may Allâh have mercy on you – were inspired by your Creator to research and find out about the reports that have been narrated from the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ about the teachings, rules, and regulations of Islam, and what they say about reward and punishment, exhortations and warnings, and other issues, along with the chains of narration with which they were narrated and circulated among the scholars. You wanted – may Allâh guide you – to have them written down and compiled in one place, and you asked me to write them down in a brief manner in this book, without too much repetition, because you thought that too much repetition would distract you from your goal of understanding them and deriving knowledge from them. What you asked me to do – may Allâh honor you – I went back and thought about it, and the consequences of it, which are going to be good and beneficial, if Allâh wills. When you asked me to take on this task, I thought that if I managed to do it, and was able to complete it, the first one to benefit from it would be myself in particular, before anyone else. This is so for many reasons, which it would take too long to explain here. But in brief, I would say that presenting a few of these reports in a proper manner is easier, than dealing with many of them. This is especially so for an ordinary man who does not have deep knowledge and would not be able to distinguish between them except, with the help of others. As this is the case, it is better to aim at writing down a few authentic reports rather than many which are unsound.

However, it is hoped that there may be some benefits in writing down a large number of reports and compiling those that are repeated, for the elite among the people, those who have been blessed with some knowledge and understanding, and the familiarity with their causes and reasons. That type of a person, if Allâh wills, would be able to deal with a lot and will benefit from the compilation of a large number of reports. But for ordinary people who do not share the knowledge of the elite, there is no point in their handling a large number of *Aḥâdîth* when they are unable to understand a few.

^[1] *An-Nikat li Ibn Hajar*: 1/371-379.

So we will start writing what you have asked us to write — if Allāh wills — based on a condition which I will tell you about, which is that we are going to examine all the reports that have been narrated from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and divide them into three categories of narrators, without any repetition, unless there is a topic where repetition cannot be avoided because another report has additional material, or a different chain that may support a report that has some fault. Moreover the additional material, which is needed, may be dealt with as a separate *Hadīth*. In that case we have to repeat the *Hadīth* which has additional material, or refer to the additional material while narrating one *Hadīth* only, whenever possible. But referring to the additional material may be difficult, in which case it is easier and beneficial to repeat the *Hadīth*.

The first category: Here we will introduce reports that are safer from fault than others, and purer, in that their narrators are righteous people in the narration of *Aḥādīth*, reliable in what they reported, in whose narrations no severe differences are found in, nor erroneous confusion, as may be the case with many *Muḥaddīthīn* as is evident from the *Aḥādīth* they narrated.

So we will write down the reports of this type, and follow that with the reports in whose chains there are some people who are not known for their good memory and reliability, unlike those in the first category, on the basis that even though they are of a lower status than the first, they are still known to be truthful and knowledgeable, such as ‘Atā’ bin As-Sā’ib, Yazīd bin Abī Ziyād, Laith bin Abī Sulaim, and other narrators like them.

Although they are known among the scholars for the knowledge and honesty that we have described, others among their peers who are better known for their reliability and ability to narrate properly are higher in status and knowledge than them, because this is a higher level according to the scholars.

If you compare those three whom we have named, ‘Atā’, Yazīd and Laith, with Mansūr bin Al-Mu’tamir, Sulaimān Al-A’mash and Ismā’īl bin Abī Khālid in their reliability in narration and their righteousness in it, you will see that they are different and do not even come close. There is no doubt among the people of *Hadīth* about that, because the soundness of memory and proper transmission of *Hadīth* by Mansūr, Al-A’mash and Ismā’īl is well known to them, whereas it is not known at such a level in the case of ‘Atā’, Yazīd and Laith.

Similarly, if you compare peers such as Ibn ‘Awn and Ayyūb As-Sakhtiyānī with ‘Awf bin Abī Jamīlah and Ash’ath Al-Ḥumrānī, who were companions of Al-Ḥasan and Ibn Sīrīn, just as Ibn ‘Awn and Ayyūb were companions of theirs, you will see a big difference between the first two and the last two in virtue and soundness of transmission, even though ‘Awf and Ashath are not regarded as untruthful and insincere by people of knowledge, but still their case is that of the level we described them according to the people of knowledge.

We have given these as examples by name, only to explain to those who have no knowledge of how the scholars put people in different categories, so that a man of high status will not be underestimated and a man who is of lower status in terms of knowledge will not be overestimated, and each will be given his rightful position.

It has been mentioned that ‘Āishah, may Allāh the Most High be pleased with her, said: “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ commanded us to give people their rightful status.”

Based on what we have mentioned above, we will compile the reports narrated from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ which you have asked of us.

With regard to the reports that have been narrated from people whom the people of *Hadīth*, or most of them, consider accused, we will not waste our time by narrating their *Aḥādīth*; such as ‘Abdullāh bin Miswar, Abī Ja’far Al-Madā’inī, ‘Amr bin Khālid, ‘Abdul-Quddūs Ash-Shāmī, Muḥammad bin Sa’īd Al-Maṣlūb, Ghiyāth bin Ibrāhīm, Sulaimān bin ‘Amr Abū Dawūd An-Nakha’ī, and others of their ilk who were accused of fabricating *Aḥādīth* and making up reports.

Similarly, with regard to those whose narrations are mostly *Munkar* or mistaken, we refrained as well from narrating their *Aḥādīth*.

The sign of *Munkar* in the *Hadīth* of a *Muḥaddīth* is if his narration is compared to a *Hadīth* narrated by one of the people who has a good memory and is of good character, the reports are different and they have hardly anything in common. If most of the reports narrated by a person are like that, then his narrations will not be used.

Among this category of *Muḥaddīthīn* are: ‘Abdullāh bin Muḥarrar, Yaḥya bin Abī Unaisah, Al-Jarrāh bin Al-Minhāl Abū Al-‘Aṭūf, ‘Abbād bin Kathīr, Iḥsain bin ‘Abdullāh bin Ḍumairah, ‘Umar bin Ṣuhbān and others like them who narrate *Munkar* in *Aḥādīth*. We do not bother with their *Aḥādīth* nor pay any attention to it.

Because of the ruling of the people of knowledge - which is known from their schools of thought - with regard to accepting a *Hadīth* that has been transmitted by only one person, that if his report agrees with some of the narration of the trustworthy among the people of knowledge, and those who have good memories, and his narration is otherwise in agreement with them upon scrutiny, then when this is the case, if he narrates some additional material that is not narrated by his companions, the additional material will be accepted.

But if you see someone relying on a scholar like Az-Zuhrī, with his great knowledge and large number of companions who excelled in transmitting his

Hadīth and the *Hadīth* or others, or like Hishām bin ‘Urwah - for their *Aḥādīth* are well known and shared among the scholars, and their companions transmitted their *Hadīth* with no dispute - and he narrated from one or both of them a number of *Hadīth* which are not known to any of their companions, and there are no other *Ṣaḥīḥ Aḥādīth* to support them, then it is not permissible to accept the *Hadīth* from this type of a person. And Allāh knows best.

We have explained something about the way of the people of *Hadīth*, and what anyone who wants to follow their way should do. We will discuss it more - if Allāh wills - in many places in this book, when discussing *Mu‘allal* (deficient) reports as we come to them, in places where it is appropriate to comment, if Allāh the Most High wills.

After that - may Allāh have mercy upon you - were it not for what we have seen of the bad conduct of many of those who have appointed themselves as *Hadīth* scholars, who should have cast aside the *Da‘īf* (weak) *Aḥādīth* and *Munkar* reports, and who did not limit themselves to the well known *Ṣaḥīḥ* reports which have been transmitted by trustworthy narrators who are known for their truthfulness and honesty, so that much of what they tell the common folk who have no knowledge is not right and is transmitted by people who are not approved of, and whose reports are criticized by the *A‘imma* of *Hadīth* such as Mālik bin Anas, *Shu‘bah* bin Al-Ḥajjāj, Sufyān bin ‘Uyaynah, Yahya bin Sa‘īd Al-Qaṭṭān, ‘Abdur-Raḥmān bin Mahdī and other *A‘imma* - then we would not have taken on this mission of distinguishing good reports from bad and writing them down, as you have asked us to do.

But because of what we have mentioned about the people spreading *Munkar* reports with *Da‘īf* (weak) and unknown chains, and their narrating them to the common folk who do not recognize what is wrong with them, we felt motivated to respond to your request.

In the Name of Allāh, the Most
Beneficent, the Most Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Chapter 1. The Obligation Of Narrating From The Trustworthy And Ignoring The Liars; And The Warning Against Telling Lies About The Messenger Of Allāh ﷺ

(المعجم ١) - (بَابُ وَجُوبِ الرَّوَايَةِ
عَنِ الثَّقَاتِ وَتَرْكِ الْكُذَّابِينَ، وَالتَّحْذِيرِ
مِنَ الْكُذْبِ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ)
(التحفة ١)

You should know, may Allāh guide you, that it is obligatory for everyone who can distinguish between authentic and unsound reports, and between trustworthy and accused narrators, not to narrate any report unless he is sure of the correctness of the narration and honesty of their narrators, and to avoid those which are narrated by accused narrators and the stubborn among the people of *Bid‘ah* (innovation).

The evidence that what we are saying is what is required, is the saying of Allāh, Blessed be He and Most High: “O you who believe! If a *Fāsiq* (liar — evil person) comes to you with any news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you become regretful for what you have done.^[1] And His, Most Sublime and Most Praised saying: ...Such as you

وَاعْلَمَ - وَفَقَّكَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى - أَنْ
الْوَاجِبَ عَلَى كُلِّ أَحَدٍ عَرَفَ التَّمْيِيزَ بَيْنَ
صَحِيحِ الرَّوَايَاتِ وَسَقِيمِهَا، وَثِقَاتِ
النَّاقِلِينَ لَهَا مِنَ الْمُتَهَمِينَ - أَنْ لَا يَرْوِيَ
مِنْهَا إِلَّا مَا عَرَفَ صِحَّةَ مَخَارِجِهِ وَالسَّنَاةَ
فِي نَاقِلِيهِ، وَأَنْ يَتَّقِيَ مِنْهَا مَا كَانَ مِنْهَا
عَنْ أَهْلِ التُّهْمِ وَالْمُعَانِدِينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْبِدْعِ.

وَالدَّلِيلُ عَلَى أَنَّ الَّذِي قُلْنَا مِنْ هَذَا
هُوَ اللَّازِمُ دُونَ مَا خَالَفَهُ، قَوْلُ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ
وَتَعَالَى ذِكْرُهُ: ﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنْ
جَاءَكَ فَاْسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا
بِجَهْلَةٍ فَتُصِيبُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ تَنِيمِينَ﴾
[الحجرات: ٦]. وَقَالَ جَلَّ تَنَاوُهُ:
﴿مِمَّن رَضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ﴾ [البقرة:

^[1] Al-Hujurat 49:6.

