

بين الحديث والفلسفة

# Between Ḥadīth and Philosophy

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سلسلة إملاء الخاطر | Imlā al-Khāṭir Series



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جميع الحقوق محفوظة

## Imlā al-Khāṭir Series

In this series, which he names *Imlā al-Khāṭir* (literally, “dictation of thoughts”), Dr Mohammad Akram Nadwi follows in the tradition of the Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Ṣayd al-Khāṭir* and shares with the world his reflections on a variety of topics ranging from theology to law, history to heart softeners, philosophy, education and more. Composed in a casual, conversational style consisting of questions followed by their brief answers (each portion predicated by *qālū/qultu*, “they said”/“I responded”), he utilizes therein the highest level of Arabic, reflecting his love of the language and his extensive expertise in Arabic grammar and rhetoric. These short but poignant reflections are part of the *balāghah* genre and tradition of Arabic literature. It should be noted that these translations, done by his senior students, serve as a guide and can never fully match the style, tone and eloquence of the original Arabic. Also note that Dr Akram does not necessarily review each translation and is not responsible for any errors, improper word choices, or the likes, that are an inevitable part of the translation process.

## Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi is a world-renowned scholar of Indian origin who has resided in England for an extensive time. After receiving in-depth training to an advanced level in the traditional Islamic disciplines at the famous Nadwat al-Ulama seminary in Lucknow, India, and receiving a PhD in Arabic literature from Lucknow University, he became a research fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, where he conducted research for a number of years on a variety of topics, including Ḥadīth and Sufi orders in India. He has published widely in Urdu, Persian, Arabic and English, including translations (like his work on Shāh Waliullah, *Bustan al-Muhaddithin*), editions of Arabic texts (such as a renowned critical edition of *Usul al-Shāshī* in Ḥanafī jurisprudence), and original monographs on Islamic law, female ḥadīth narrators and such figures as Abū Ḥanīfah and Sayyid Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi. His groundbreaking work, yet to be published, is an encyclopedic 40-volume documentation of the legacy of female scholarship in the Islamic tradition. He co-founded the Al-Salam Institute in 2006 where he continues to serve as Principal and Senior Lecturer.

## Introduction

*The tension between reason and revelation as a source of knowledge has manifested itself repeatedly and persistently throughout the annals of Islamic intellectual thought, particularly in the field of kalām (scholastic theology). Reason was deemed to be based on a set of rational precepts, derived from a predominantly Hellenistic tradition, whereas revelation was transmitted and not rationally known. This 'aql-versus-naql divide surfaced in later times in the forced comparison between ḥadīth as a set of transmitted reports—often presumed to be fallible—and philosophy as a set of intellectually derived principles, generally considered reliable and certain. In this monograph, Dr Akram clarifies the fallaciousness of this comparison and the true differences between both.*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

## بين الحديث والفلسفة

بقلم: محمد أكرم الندوي

أو كسفورد

قالوا: يَبِّ لنا الفرق بين الحديث والفلسفة مميزا بينهما تمييزا، قلت: لقد والاكم توفيق من راكم إذ أهمكم هذا السؤال، فإنه مطلب خطير حقيق بأن يعار له الانتباه، وقد تمخض إهماله أو إغفاله عن تخليط فاحش عند كثيرين، ركبو المغمضات وتجروا على الأباطيل والسفاهات، فعاملوا الحديث معاملة الفلسفة، ووضعوا الفلسفة موضع الحديث، ووزنوا هذا بميزان ذلك، ووزنوا ذلك بميزان هذا، ولم يهتدوا إلى الفصل بين الخبر والنظر سييلا، وأنى للحق أن يمحص ثابتة أركانه وموطدة دعائمه إذا التبست الموازين واشتبهت المعايير وجُملت المقاييس.

قالوا: لقد خفي علينا أمر هذا التخليط ضارين في العشاء وموضعين في الغلواء، فعرفنا الحديث والفلسفة، وقفنا على الحق الجلي وأبن لنا وجه اليقين، قلت: الحديث نوع من الخبر، وهو إخبار الرجل بحقيقة رآها بعينه أو سمعها بأذنه، فالخبر هو المروي من الحقائق، والحقائق إما مرئية أو

مسموعة أو معلومة بحاسة من الحواس، والفلسفة ما يتوصل إليه الرجل بقياس يمارسه أو عملية استنتاجية يزاولها، والفيلسوف لا يخبر عما سمعه بأذنه أو رآه بعينه، وإنما يخبر عما رآه بعقله وفكره.

قالوا: أخبرنا بالفرق بين طريقة التثبت من صحة الخبر والتوثق منها، والطريقة الموصلة إلى إصابة الرأي والفلسفة، قلت: الطريق إلى تحقيق صحة الخبر أن يكون المخبر صادقا أميناً في نقل ما رآه أو سمعه وضابطاً له متقناً، فالخبر الصحيح إذن نقل الحقيقة على ما هي نزيهة عن كذب أو خطأ ووهم، والطريق إلى التأكد من صحة الرأي هو أن يكون منطقياً ومحضاً من مقدمات رتبت ترتيباً خاصاً، فما يراه الفيلسوف ليس حقيقة، وإنما هو فهمه للحقيقة واستنتاجه منها.

قالوا: اضرب لنا أمثلة تميظ اللثام عن القضية وتزيل الالتباس، قلت: إذا قال رجل: يقول الله في كتابه: "هو الله أحد"، و"أليس الله بأحكم الحاكمين"، فهذا خبره عما قرأه في كتاب الله، والمطلوب أن يكون صادقا في نقله، وإذا قال آخر: "الله واجب وجوده"، أو قال ثالث: "الوجود واحد غير منقسم إلى واجب وممكن"، أو قال رابع: "الحاكمية أخص خصائص الألوهية"، فهذه الأقوال كلها فلسفات، والمطلوب من قائلها أن يكونوا منطقيين فيما يقولون، وأن يقرروا استنتاجاتهم ببراهين عقلية ومقدمات علمية.

وإذا قال رجل: هاجر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم مكة إلى المدينة فهذا خبر، وإذا قال آخر: "إنه هاجر ليؤسس دولة" فهذه فلسفة، ودليل هذا غير الدليل الأول، وإذا روى واحد عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: "والله الذي لا إله غيره إن أحدم ليعمل بعمل أهل الجنة حتى ما يكون بينه وبينها إلا ذراع، فيسبق عليه الكتاب فيعمل بعمل أهل النار فيدخلها، وإن أحدم ليعمل بعمل أهل النار حتى ما يكون بينه وبينها إلا ذراع، فيسبق عليه الكتاب فيعمل بعمل أهل الجنة"، فهذا خبر، وإذا قال قائل: إن الإنسان مجبور مسير، لا إرادة له ولا مشيئة، فهذه فلسفة.

قالوا: فما التخليط الذي أشرت إليه؟ قلت: هو تخليط المتكلمين، وكثير من المتصوفة والفقهاء، وعامة العقلايين من أذئاب المستشرقين والمتطفلين على موائد الكدرة الدنسة، ردوا أحاديث على أساس أنها غير منطقية، وإن كانت صحيحة لدى حفاظ الحديث متوفرة فيها شروط صحة الخبر متعاضدة، فمنهم من مجد أحاديث في الصفات أو في الأمور الغيبية على أساس أنها لا تتفق مع قواعدهم الموضوعية، ومنهم من أنكر أحاديث لأنها تخالف أقيستهم وكلياتهم وأصولهم، ومنهم من تبرأ من أحاديث لأنها تعارض مذاهبهم المصطنعة وأهواءهم والرهبانية التي ابتدعوها والغلو الذي سرقوه أو استعاروه من غير ملة أهل الإسلام.

وقد حسنت أولئك الأقوام أو صححت أخبارا لصحة معانيها ومضامينها أو حسنها، وإن كانت ضعيفة الأسانيد أو واهية أو موضوعية، ومن تفلسف

هذه الطوائف قولها: إن هذا الحديث ضعيف إسنادا صحيح معنى، فهذا من وزن الخبر بميزان الفلسفة، وهو قول سخيّف رديء من أسخف الأقوال وأردئها، فإنه ليس لأحد أن ينسب إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قولاً إلا من طريق إسناد صحيح مقبول لدى أئمة هذا الشأن من الحفاظ المتقنين الجهابذة الأثبات، وكون كلام صحيحاً معناه أو حسناً لا يجعله حديث النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فكم من حكم رويت عن الفلاسفة والحكماء بل والأنبياء والمرسلين، ولم ينطق بها النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فلا ننسبها إليه لكونها حكماً عالية ومعاني صحيحة، واستفاض عنه "من يقل علي ما لم أقل فليتبوأ مقعده من النار"، وهو قوله تعالى في كتابه "ومن أظلم ممن افترى على الله كذباً"، ولا ريب أن من افترى على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقد افترى على الله.

قالوا: فما تقول في نقد المتنون؟ قلت: كلمة حق أريد بها الباطل، نشرها المستشرقون واستسلم لها المغرورون المخدوعون من المسلمين عمداً أو خطأ، وفلسفوا الحديث، واتخذوا نقد المتنون ذريعة لرد ما لا يوافق أهواءهم ولا تستسيغهم أذواقهم المريضة السقيمة، وهم مشتتون في هذا النقد المزعوم تشتت أغراضهم ونزعاتهم وخبيث نواياهم، فيرد هذا "المفكر" مجموعة من الأحاديث، ويرد ذلك مجموعة أخرى، متعارضة أفكارهم متناقضة مناهجهم، ساخرين من العلم والهدى ولاعبين بالعقول وذوي الألباب والنهي.

قالوا: أو ليس أهل الخبر والتاريخ قد يردون أخبارا على أساس استحالتها أو غرابتها؟ قلت: بلى، قالوا: فما للمحدثين لم يعرفوا هذا الأصل؟ قلت: قد عرفوه وطبقوه تطبيقا يبعث أهل العلم على العجب ويزيدهم ثقة بأصول المحدثين وتمكنهم من فهم تمكننا يبلغ حد المعجزات والخوارق، فقد ضعفوا أحاديث على أساس غرابتها ونكارتها، ولكنهم لم ينحرفوا عن الجادة فلم يتفلسفوا كما تفلسف غيرهم، وقلما تجدون حديثنا صحيح الإسناد، ومتمنه غريب أو منكر، وما حدثت الغرابة في حديث صحيح أو النكارة إلا لخطأ يعرض لبعض الرواة أو وهم، ومن الذي لم يخطئ قط أو لم يوهم، وما أندر هذه الأخطاء، وما أضل هذه الأوهام، وإن كان في بعضها تأويل للعلماء سائغ.

قالوا: ابسط لنا القول في نقد المتون لدى المحدثين، قلت: سأعرض له في مقال آخر إن شاء الله تعالى، واحفظوا ما قدمت لكم واعين له، ولا تستعجلوا لغيره إن كنتم من المثبتين طالبي الحق ولسبيله متبعين.



# Between Ḥadīth and Philosophy

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They asked: Clarify for us the real difference between ḥadīth and philosophy.

I replied: Success from your Lord has drawn close to you if you are indeed concerned with this question. It is a dangerous but worthy quest, whose neglect for many produces a gross absurdity, makes them fall into stupor and risks great falsehood and folly. They deal with ḥadīth as philosophy and place philosophy in the position of ḥadīth, weighing this with the scale of that and vice versa. Thus, they are not able to find any real way to distinguish reports from philosophical speculation. And how can the truth possibly clarify the firmness of its pillars and the sturdiness of its foundations when the scales are muddled, the parameters confused and the standards unknown?

They said: We are confused about this issue of absurdity, and we are shooting in the dark, enthusiastically. So please do acquaint us with ḥadīth and philosophy, bringing us to the clear truth and explaining it to us with certainty.

I replied: Ḥadīth is essentially a type of report, which is a person's informing others of the reality of that which he saw with his own eyes or heard with his own ears. Accounts are reported from realities, and realities are either seen, heard or otherwise known through the senses. Philosophy, on the other hand, is attained by practicing analogical reasoning or pursuing the process of deductive reasoning. The philosopher does not inform based upon what he has heard with his own ears nor seen by his own eyes, but rather, through what he has "seen" through his own reasoning and thought processes.

They said: Inform us of the difference between the process of ascertaining the veracity of a report and the process of arriving at a correct view or philosophy.

I replied: The way to verify the soundness of a report is to ascertain that the informer (the source of the report) is:

1. truthful and trustworthy in what he has seen or heard, and
2. precise in that reporting.<sup>1</sup>

The sound report therefore is the transmission of a reality in a way that is free of untruths, mistakes or whims.

The path to validate the soundness of a philosophical view, on the other hand, is to verify that it is logical and attained from certain premises arranged in a particular order. What the philosopher posits is not reality itself but rather, his own understanding of that reality and his deduction therefrom.

They asked: Provide us examples that will lift the veil from the issue and remove the confusion.

I replied:

When a person states, “Allah says in the Qur’ān, *He Allah is One*;<sup>2</sup> and *Is not Allah the best of judges?*”<sup>3</sup> then this is his report from what he has read in the Book of Allah. What is required from him is simply that he be truthful in his reporting.

When another says, on the other hand, that “Allah is necessarily existent”; or “Existence is one without being divided into necessary and possible”; or yet another says, “The right to rule is the most particular distinction of Godhood,”<sup>4</sup> then these are all philosophical statements. And what is required from their speakers is that they be logical in what they say and

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<sup>1</sup> These correspond to the two mainstay requirements for accepting a ḥadīth narrator according to the principles of ḥadīth sciences: moral uprightness (‘adālah) and accuracy (ḍabt). Specifically, in this context, it means that he has a basic level of moral fortitude to ensure that he is truthful about his reporting, as well as the ability to be precise and not mistaken in his reporting (either through a proficient memory or efficient and accurate written notes).

<sup>2</sup> Qur’ān 112:1.

<sup>3</sup> Qur’ān 95:8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ulūhiyyah*, or “Godhood,” is the concept of God’s exclusive right to be worshipped.

determine their deductions through rational evidences and intellectual precepts.

When a person says that the Prophet migrated from Makkah to Madīnah then that is a report. When another says that he migrated in order to establish a state, then that is a philosophical statement whose proof is not the same as the proof of the first [statement].

When someone narrates from the Prophet that he said:

“By the One, besides Whom there is no other god, verily one of you performs the actions of the people of Paradise until there is but an arm’s length between him and it, and that which has been written overtakes him, and so he acts with the actions of the people of the Hellfire and thus enters it; and verily one of you performs the actions of the people of the Hellfire, until there is but an arm’s length between him and it, and that which has been written overtakes him and so he acts with the actions of the people of Paradise and thus he enters it.”<sup>5</sup>

then this is a report. But if one says that a human being is compelled and driven, without any desire or will of his own, then this is philosophy.

They asked: What is the absurdity that you alluded to?

I replied: It is the absurdity of the scholastic theologians, many Sufis and jurists, most of the rationalist followers of the Orientalists,<sup>6</sup> and those intruding on their stained and dirty tables. They reject ḥadīth on the basis that they are not logical, though they be sound according to ḥadīth experts, having fulfilled abundant and multiple conditions for the soundness of reports. Some of them reject the ḥadīth concerning Divine Attributes and unseen matters on the basis that they contradict their forged principles. Some reject ḥadīth that contradict some of their own deductions, principles and precepts. Others absolved themselves of ḥadīth because they clash with

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<sup>5</sup> Well-known ḥadīth related by Bukhārī and Muslim, the two most authentic and authoritative ḥadīth collections.

<sup>6</sup> Orientalist is the term used to denote Western scholars of the East, or “Orient,” though it is used primarily for those who studied the Muslim and Arab world through Eurocentric lens.

their artificial schools of thought, their whims, the monasticism they invented, or the extremism they stole or borrowed from outside the Muslim nation.

Those people have authenticated some reports because of the soundness or uprightness of their meanings and content, though they may be weak or fabricated in their chains. From the philosophizing of this group is their statement: "This ḥadīth is weak in chain but sound in meaning."<sup>7</sup> This represents the weighing of reports with the scale of philosophy. It is a silly and vile statement, in fact one of the worst. It is not the right of anyone to attribute any statement to the Prophet except through a sound chain of transmission that is acceptable to the leaders of this discipline: the capable, brilliant and reliable experts of ḥadīth. A statement being sound in meaning does not make it a ḥadīth of the Prophet. How many insightful statements were narrated from philosophers and wise men, or even from the other Prophets and Messengers, and yet our own Prophet did not utter them? We do not attribute these to the Prophet by virtue of their being from the highest wisdoms or from the soundest meanings. It has been abundantly narrated from him that he said: "Whoever attributes to me that which I did not say, let him take his seat in the Fire."<sup>8</sup>

And there is the statement in His Book: And who is more unjust than the one who invented a lie upon God?"<sup>9</sup>

There is no doubt that the one who lied upon the Prophet has lied against God.

They asked: What do you say concerning the criticism of texts?

I replied: This is a statement of truth by which falsehood is intended. Orientalist scholars popularized it, and many misled and naïve Muslims surrendered to it, deliberately or unintentionally. They philosophized ḥadīth

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<sup>7</sup> This is a common statement and sentiment found among many contemporary Muslim scholars and teachers, even in some Islamic universities.

<sup>8</sup> This represents, according to ḥadīth scholars, the most authentic ḥadīth report on record. It is widely and multiply narrated from the Prophet, through more chains and routes than any other ḥadīth. It is related by Bukhārī among others.

<sup>9</sup> This appears at least 9 times in the Qur'ān: 6:21, 6:93, 6:144, 7:37, 10:17, 11:18, 18:15, 29:68, 61:7.

and took the idea of textual criticism as a means to reject that which didn't correspond to their whims and that which wasn't agreeable to their ill and diseased tastes. Moreover, they are divided in this alleged critique according to their various aims, inclinations and evil desires. So one "thinker" rejects one portion of ḥadīth narrations, while another rejects an entirely different portion, with clashing thought processes and conflicting methodologies. They belittle knowledge and guidance, playing with their own intellects and those of others.

They asked: Did not the scholars of reports and historians reject many reports on the basis that they were impossible or unlikely?

I replied: Of course.

They asked: So why didn't the ḥadīth scholars know this principle?

I replied: They knew it well and implemented it practically, in a manner that amazed the people of knowledge and reinforced their confidence in the principles of the ḥadīth experts as well as their overall craft, with a confidence that approached the level of miracles. They considered some ḥadīth weak based upon their solitary or contradictory nature, but they did not deviate from objectivity nor did they philosophize matters as others had done. Few are the ḥadīth that are ṣaḥīḥ<sup>10</sup> in their chains while being strange or contradictory in their meanings. Whenever such a matter is found in a ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth it is usually due to a mistake or false assumption on the part of some of the narrators. And who is the one who has never made a mistake or an assumption? These mistakes are exceedingly rare and these assumptions extremely few, even though in some of these instances there are explanations that satisfy some scholars.

They said: Expand for us the matter of textual critique among ḥadīth experts.

I replied: I will expound on that in another article if Allah the Exalted wills it, so take what I have presented to heart consciously and do not be hasty towards other matters, if you are from the verifying seekers of truth and the followers of its path.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ* is the technical ḥadīth term to refer to sound and authentic ḥadīth.