

أصول الحديث على المذهب  
الحنفي

**Principles of Ḥadīth in  
the Ḥanafī School**

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سلسلة إملاء خاطر | 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

*One of the modern misconceptions that has surfaced recently is the notion that the Ḥanafī school of fiqh has its own set of principles for accepting or rejecting ḥadīth reports, separate from those of the experts of ḥadīth. Mirroring the age-old ahl al-raʿy—ahl al-ḥadīth divide, Dr. Akram exposes the fallacy of this idea and clarifies that there is only one uniform discipline of ḥadīth accepted by all, though some details of its principles could be, and have been, subject to differences.*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

## أصول الحديث على المذهب الحنفي

بقلم: محمد أكرم الندوي

أو كسفورد

قالوا: قد أخذنا منك الحديث وأصوله بسطا وتفصيلا، ممهدا لنا المسائل والقواعد ومبيّرا لها تيسيرا، ومناقشا اختلافات الأئمة الأثبات والحفاظ المتقين وآراءهم في التصحيح والتضعيف والجرح والتعديل، ومقارنا بين التزامات المتقدمين وتعهداتهم في منهجية منسمة بالاستقامة والانضباط والسداد، وبين تسيبات المتأخرين وانفلاتاتهم في فوضوية ممزوجة بالحيث والاضطراب والاختلال، فنشكرك على ما أسديت إلينا من نصح وبذلت لنا من معروف، داعين لك بأحسن جزاء من ربنا وأوفاه. قلت: لِنحمد مولانا الذي أنعم علينا بعلم من لدنه وفهم من دون استحقاق منا ولنسأله المزيد في تقوى ورشاد وحسنة في الدنيا وحسنة في الآخرة وفوز بجنات النعيم، وهو الرزاق المنان.

قالوا: قرع أسماعنا حدوث نظرة جديدة في الصناعة تدعى أصول الحديث على المذهب الحنفي، ووددنا لو قرّبتنا لنا تقريبا. قلت: بسما سألتموني،

صحبتوني هذه المدة الطويلة، ولم تدركوا موقفي من هذه البلبلات التي تثور كرياح أو أعاصير، ثم سرعان ما تنطفئ وتخمد خودا، أو لا تشمؤون من هذه المستحدثات رائحة الطائفية البغيضة والعصبية المنتنة؟ أو لا تلمسون جورها عن مجميع العلم والمعرفة، وطغيانها على سنن الحق والصواب؟

قالوا: تطرق إلى هذا الموضوع علماء أحناف. قلت: قد تخطئ المستحدثات من الأقوال والمستغربات من الآراء الانتباه فيفتتن بها عوام الناس، ثم يتعدى الداء إلى الخواص دون أن يفطنوا لما وراءها من تشويه للظواهر والمفاهيم، وإفساد للعقول والأفكار، وإلغاء للمقاييس والموازن.

قالوا: قد اكتسبنا منك الأفكار الصائبة والآراء السديدة في العلوم والفنون والآداب، فأوقفنا على المولدات الزائغات فنكون منها على توقٍ واحتراس.

قلت: إن الدعوة إلى صياغة أصول الحديث ودراستها على المذهب الحنفي تبيي بجهل بمعنى الحديث والفقه والأصول.

قالوا: بين لنا هذا الجهل رافعا عنه ستار التعمية والغموض، قلت: سأفعل، فاعقلوا عني القضيتين التاليتين مستوعبين لهما استيعابا:

الأولى: أن الحديث والفقه موضوعان مختلفان، فالحديث خبر وتاريخ، والفقه فلسفة ورأي، وللحديث معايير للتوثق منه والتثبت فيه، وللفقه موازينه للتوصل إلى إصابته وسلامته من الخطأ والزلل، ولقد زاع من

خلط بينها ولبس تلبيسا، وسبق أن كتبْتُ مقالا عن الفرق بين الحديث والفلسفة، فراجعوه منعمي النظر فيه مدققين.

الثانية: أن لكل علم وصناعة أصولا وضوابط مختصة بذلك العلم وبتلك الصناعة، مستقلة عن سائر الانتماءات والاتجاهات، ومنتحرة عن المذاهب والأذواق، ومن السخيف المزري بأولي الأبصار والنهى أن يدرس النحو على مذهب الأطباء، وعلم الطب على مذهب النحاة، والرياضيات على مذهب الفقهاء، والفقه على مذهب الرياضيين، وهلم جرا.

قالوا: قد وعينا ما قلتَ مدركين همك إدراكا، فزدنا بيانا. قلت: اعلموا أن صحة الحديث تعتمد أمرين: الأول أن يتناقله الثقات عصرا بعد عصر وجيلا إثر جيل، والثاني أن الثقات إذا اختلفوا فيه إسنادا أو متنا، نقصانا أو زيادة رجحنا حديث بعضهم على بعض حسب تفاوتهم في الإتقان أو العدد، ويسمى المرجوح شاذا، وقد يسمى منكرا، فإذا اختلف مالك وابن عيينة في حديث عن الزهري، رجحنا حديث مالك لقوته في الرواية عن الزهري، ولكن إذا تابع ابن عيينة أصحاب الزهري الثقات من أمثال عقيل ويونس ومعمر وشعيب، رجَّحنا حينئذ العزيز على الغريب.

قلت: هذا هو المقياس المتبع في توثيق الأخبار لدى المحدثين والمؤرخين من المسلمين وغيرهم، لا اختلاف بينهم في ذلك، وقد ورد عن أئمة المذهب الحنفي ما يؤكد خضوعهم لهذا المقياس، فقد روى سفيان الثوري

أن أبا حنيفة كان يأخذ بما صح عنده من الأحاديث التي يحملها الثقات (الانتقاء لابن عبد البر ص 262)، وقال أبو يوسف القاضي: "عليك من الحديث بما تعرفه العامة، وإياك والشاذ منه" (الرد على سير الأوزاعي ص 24).

قالوا: فأمط لنا الستار عن خطأ المؤلفين في أصول الحديث على المذهب الحنفي، قلت: أخطأوا في الأمرين جميعاً، قالوا: ماذا تعني بالأمرين؟ قلت: تصحيح الحديث، والترجيح عند الاختلاف. قالوا: دلنا على وجه خطئهم في الأمرين.

قلت: أما الأمر الأول فإنهم ظنوا أن الحديث الصحيح في المذهب الحنفي تختلف شروطه عن طريقة المحدثين، فمثلاً يرى المحدثون الإرسال قادحاً في الصحة، بينما لا يره الحنفية قادحاً. وقلت: هذا الرأي ليس منشؤه اختلاف المذاهب الفقهية، وإنما مرده إلى أن أهل الحديث والخبر يبذلون جهدهم في التوثق من اتصال السند، فإن السند إذا كان منقطعاً لم يُعلم الساقطُ أَعْدَلُ هو أم غير عدل؟ موصوف بالضببط والإتقان أم راكن إلى الغفلة والتساهل والسهو والنسيان، والإرسال انقطاع، فرد أكثرهم الحديث المرسل، وذهب بعضهم إلى أن المرسل عنه إذا كان صحابياً معروفاً فإنه غير قادح، وقد يعبرون عن ذلك بإرسال كبار التابعين ممن عرف من عاداتهم أنهم لا يرسلون إلا إذا بلغهم الخبر من وجوه تفيد العلم، واتبع ذلك كبار الأئمة في المدينة والكوفة في القرون المشهود لها بالخبر،

قال الجصاص الرازي: "وأيضًا من علمنا من حاله أنه يرسل الحديث عن  
لا يوثق بروايته ولا يجوز حمل العلم عنه فهو غير مقبول المراسيل عندنا،  
وإنما الكلام منا فيمن لا يرسل إلا عن الثقات الأثبات عنده" (الفصول في  
الأصول " 155/3). وهذا رأي وجيه، والأوجه منه أن نبالغ في التوثق من  
الاتصال في أخبار النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فليست الرواية عنه  
كالرواية عن غيره، وهو رأي الإمامين محمد بن إسماعيل البخاري ومسلم  
بن الحجاج ومن حدا حدوهما من أهل هذا الشأن، أنزل الله عليهم  
شآبيب رحمته ورضي عنهم وأرضاهم.

وأما الأمر الثاني فإنهم ظنوا أن اختلاف الثقات بعضهم عن بعض لا يؤثر  
في أحاديثهم جميعًا صحة وضعفًا، أي أن الشذوذ ليس علة عندهم، وقد  
يقبلون الشاذ، ويردون المحفوظ. قالوا: وهل لهم أدلة في هذا القبول  
والرد؟ قلت: نعم، يردون الصحيح إذا خالف القرآن أو السنة المتواترة أو  
المشهورة أو القواعد الكلية المعلومة في الدين أو الإجماع أو موجبات  
أحكام العقول. ويقبلون المرجوح إذا تأيد بشيء من الأدلة المذكورة  
متعاضداً به، قالوا: ألم تقتنع بما ذهبوا إليه واختاروا؟ قلت: لا، قالوا: ولم؟  
قلت: إنه ليس من أصول الحديث في شيء، وسأوفيه شرحاً وإيضاحاً في  
مقالي عن أصول الفقه إن شاء الله تعالى.



# Principles of Ḥadīth in the Ḥanafī School

By Dr Mohammed Akram Nadwi  
Oxford, UK

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They asked: We have learned from you ḥadīth and its principles in exhaustive detail. You have laid out for us its rules and principles in an easy manner and detailed for us the differences of the trustworthy scholars and proficient experts, along with their views in authentication and weakening of ḥadīth narrations. You have drawn comparisons for us between the positions of the earliest scholars—along with their methodological commitment to diligence, precision, accuracy and consistency—and the carelessness of the later scholars, with their chaotic and mixed up assertions, full of bias, inconsistencies and discrepancies. We are grateful to you for your counsel to us and your efforts for the sake of our good. We pray for you to receive the best and most complete reward from our Lord.

I replied:

Let us praise our Master who favored us with His knowledge and blessed us with understanding without our deserving it. Let us ask Him for more of piety, guidance and goodness in this life and the Hereafter, as well as success in the gardens of bliss, for He is Ever-Giving and Ever-Bestowing.

They said: Please bring to our ears something new concerning the craft known as the principles of ḥadīth according to the Ḥanafī school of law, in order to familiarize us with it.

I replied: What a terrible request this is! You have accompanied me for so long and have still not understood my position with respect to this confusion that rises like the winds and hurricanes, before quickly dying down and fading away. Do you not smell in these innovations the stench of hateful, partisan prejudice? Don't you perceive its injustice and departure from the well-known path of knowledge and awareness, and its transgression to the paths of truth?

They said: The Ḥanafī scholars have preceded us to this topic.

I replied:

These innovated statements and strange views have grabbed attention and tempted the masses of people, and then the disease has exceeded that, moving on to affect the learned without them being aware of what lies behind them in terms of distortion of notions and concepts, corruption of mind and thought, and the disruption of the balance and standards.

They said: We have gained from you the correct thinking and positions in the sciences, arts and etiquette, but still find ourselves facing deviant and alien thoughts and need to be wary and protected from them.

I replied:

The call to the formulation of the principles and study of ḥadīth according to the Ḥanafī school betrays an ignorance of the meaning of the terms *ḥadīth*, *fiqh* and *principles*.

They said: Clarify for us this ignorance and lift the veils of confusion from us.

I replied:

I will do so. Understand from me the following two issues, comprehending them completely:

1. Know that ḥadīth and fiqh are two separate topics. Ḥadīth is report and history, whereas fiqh is philosophy and reasoning. Ḥadīth has standards to ascertain and verify its reports, while fiqh has criteria to arrive at a correct or sound position free of errors and mistakes. Those who muddle these two concepts deviate and become confused. Previously I have written an article on the difference between ḥadīth and philosophy, which you may refer to and study meticulously.<sup>1</sup>
2. Know that every science and craft has principles and parameters specific to that discipline and craft, which are independent from biases and different perspectives, free of affiliation to schools and such sensitivities. It would be foolish and shameful for people of

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<sup>1</sup> Nadwī, Dr. Mohammad Akram. "Between Ḥadīth and Philosophy." Imlā al-Khāṭir Series. UK: Al-Salam Institute, 2018.

intellect and reason to study grammar based upon the way of the doctors, or the science of medicine on the principles of the grammarians, or mathematics on the way of the jurists, or fiqh on the school of mathematics, and so on.

They said: We have understood what you have said and have comprehended your concerns, so tell us more.

I replied:

Know that the soundness of ḥadīth is dependent upon two matters: first, that it is transmitted by trustworthy people, from one era to another, one generation to another; and second, when a ḥadīth—*isnād* or *matn*—from trustworthy narrators is differed upon, either by a deficiency or excess, we would prefer the ḥadīth of some of them over others according to the degree of precision or their numbers. We refer to the rejected one as anomalous (*shādh*),<sup>2</sup> or sometimes detested (*munkar*).<sup>3</sup> When Mālik and Ibn ‘Uyaynah differ in their narrations from Zuhrī, we would prefer the narrations of Mālik due to his greater strength as a narrator from Zuhrī. But when Ibn ‘Uyaynah agrees with other more reliable students of Zuhrī, like ‘Uqayl, Yūnus, Ma‘mar and Shu‘ayb, in that case we accept the greater number over the lesser.

I said:

This is the standard that is observed in verifying reports for the ḥadīth scholars and historians, Muslim and others, with no difference between them. What has been narrated from the scholars of the Ḥanafī school is that they followed this very standard. Sufyān al-Thawrī narrates that Abū Ḥanīfah used to accept the sound reports of the trustworthy narrators [See *al-Intiqā’*, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr/262]. Abū Yūsuf the judge said, “Take ḥadīth which are known by the majority, and be wary of the anomalous reports.” [al-Radd ‘alā Siyar al-Awzā’/24].

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<sup>2</sup> A *shādh*, or anomalous, narration is one that is otherwise sound but conflicts with stronger narrations.

<sup>3</sup> A *munkar* narration, like the anomalous one, conflicts with stronger evidences, but contains deeper, less benign, contradictions with often negative connotations or meanings.

They said: Expose for us some of the errors of the authors on the subject of ḥadīth principles of the Ḥanafī school.

I replied: They have erred in two matters.

They asked: What are those two matters?

I replied: The authentication of ḥadīth reports (taṣḥīḥ) and the process of preferring differing reports (tarjīḥ).

They asked: Show us how they erred in these two matters.

I replied:

In the first matter, they believed that the principles of sound ḥadīth in the Ḥanafī school differ from those of the ḥadīth scholars. So, for example, they claimed that ḥadīth scholars see mursal ḥadīth (a Successor<sup>4</sup> narrating ḥadīth directly from the Prophet without naming the Companion) as having a defect in soundness, whereas Ḥanafī scholars did not see it as a defect.

I also said:

The origin of this view is not in the differences of the schools of fiqh, but its underlying factor is the fact that the scholars of ḥadīth and reports exerted their efforts in verifying the continuity of the isnād, because if there were any missing link in the isnād, it would not be known if that unknown narrator was trustworthy or otherwise, characterized with precision and accuracy or inclined to negligence, laxity, forgetfulness or mistakes. And since a mursal ḥadīth is disconnected in its chain, most ḥadīth scholars rejected such ḥadīth. Some of them, though, held the position that if a major Companion is the one quoting the Prophet without directly hearing it from him, then there is no defect at all. From that they extrapolated that the mursal ḥadīth of senior Successors who were known for narrating only sound reports was also accepted. This view was adopted by the senior scholars of Madīnah and Kūfah from the generations upon which goodness was witnessed.

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<sup>4</sup> The Tābi'ūn, Followers or Successors, are the generation of Muslims that learned from the Companions.

Jaṣṣāṣ al-Rāzī<sup>5</sup> said: And from our knowledge of his state<sup>6</sup> is that he narrates *mursal ḥadīth* from those who are unreliable, and so it is not allowed to take knowledge from him, and his *mursal ḥadīth* are not acceptable to us. But our view about those who are known to narrate *mursal* narrations only from those who are trustworthy and reliable [is that their *mursal* narrations are acceptable]. [See *al-Fuṣūl fī al-Uṣūl* 3/155]

This is a prominent view, but more acceptable than that is that we should strive excessively in determining the veracity of *isnād* continuity in Prophetic reports, for narrating from him is not like narrating from anyone else. This was the view of the two *Imāms* Muḥammad b. *Ismāʿīl* Bukhārī and Muslim b. *Hajjāj*, and those that imitated them from this discipline. Allah revealed on them showers of His mercy, may He be pleased with them.

As for the second matter, they believed that the differences of some of the trustworthy narrators does not affect their *ḥadīth* narrations as a whole—so anomalous narrations are not a defect for them—for they sometimes accepted anomalous narrations and rejected more preserved narrations.

They asked: Do they have any proof in this?

I replied:

Yes, they would reject sound reports if they were to contradict the *Qurʾān*; the mass-transmitted or widespread *sunnah*; the fundamental, known matters in religion; consensus; or the dictates or rules of reason. And they would accept less prominent reports if they were confirmed or supported by any of the aforementioned evidences.

They asked: Are you convinced by their arguments?

I replied: No.

They asked: Why not?

I replied:

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<sup>5</sup> Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ was an early *Ḥanafī* scholar who died in 370/942.

<sup>6</sup> He is speaking about a particular narrator whose identity is not important to our context, and hence not included.

Because this is not from the principles of ḥadīth at all. I will explain this in full clarity in my article on the principles of fiqh, God the Exalted willing.