

المنهج الصحيح لتدريس الحديث  
النبوي الشريف

**The Right Pathway to  
Studying Ḥadīth**

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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-‘Ulamā’ 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, *Bustān al-Muḥaddithīn*), editions of Arabic texts (such as a renowned critical edition of Uṣūl 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 Nadwī. 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 right pathway to studying Prophetic ḥadīth is the subject of much debate, especially in light of the sheer volume and complexity of the ḥadīth corpus. Dr. Akram points out that there was a historical duality that occurred around the 5<sup>th</sup> Hijrī century, with ḥadīth being transformed from being treated as historical reports that required scrutiny to sacred texts requiring due reverence. This led to a laxity in the community which undermined sound knowledge, and continues to do so today.*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

# المنهج الصحيح لتدريس الحديث النبوي الشريف

بقلم: محمد أكرم الندوي

أو كسفورد

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قالوا: ما لك تعيب منهج تدريس الحديث النبوي الشريف في عامة المدارس ذمًا له في غير لين ولا هوادة؟ قلت: أعيبه طاعنًا فيه لاحقًا، لإخطائه الهدف المرجو منه مزورًا عنه ازورارا. قالوا: ما الهدف المرجو منه؟ قلت: تلقى أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم القرآن الكريم منه والسنة مباشرة بدون واسطة، يعونها ويتفقهون فيها ويعملون بها، فلما جاء التابعون أخذوا القرآن كما أخذه الصحابة رضي الله عنهم، حافظيه ومقيمه، واختلفوا عنهم في تعاملهم مع السنة اختلافًا بينا، لأنها أصبحت خبرًا ينقل وتاريخًا يتداول قبل أن تكون سنة تطبق تطبيقًا، فعنوا أو لا بالبحث عن صدق رواية الحديث واستقامتهم وضبطهم له واتقانهم، وسعوا ثانيًا في تفقهه والعمل به، وتبعتهم على ذلك الأجيال التالية إلى القرن الرابع، وكلما بعد العهد وزادت الوسائط وكثر الرجال اشتد أمر التنقيش

والتنقيب، فالهدف المرجو من تدريس الحديث أمران: عملية التوثق من صحته، ثم تفقهه والعمل به.

قلت: أهل الناس في القرون المتأخرة الأمر الأول ساهين عنه متغافلين، وأحدثوا تجريد المتن من أسانيدها، وعزل المضامين عن مصادرها التي تحال عليها، والتي تعتمد عليها صحتها اعتمادا، واستوى تعاملهم مع القرآن والسنة استواء تعاملهم معها في عصر الصحابة، بفارق أن الصحابة قرنوا بين أمرين متماثلين، وهؤلاء سووا بين أمرين متضارين، فأصاب أولئك وأخطأ هؤلاء.

قالوا: اشفنا بياننا. قلت: ظهرت في القرن الخامس بدعة معاملة الأحاديث معاملة النصوص المقدسة دون وضعها موضعها من الخبر والتاريخ، ولاسيما منذ أن ألف الإمام محيي السنة أبو محمد الحسين بن مسعود بن محمد الفراء البغوي (433-516هـ) كتابه المصايح مجردا عن الأسانيد، وأقبل كسالى الناس عليه، فتلاه علماء حدوا حدوه، وتكاثرت الكتب المجردة، وتفاقت الرزية، وأمست الأحاديث تدرس نصوصا كنص القرآن، وركز الطلبة وشيوخهم على متونها ومعانيها مستثقلين أسانيدها ومتناسين خطورة شأنها، غير مهتمين بالتوثق من صحتها، ولا مهتمين إلى الفرق بينها وبين القرآن الكريم المحكمة آياته والغنية نصوصه عن مثل هذا التوثيق.

قالوا: هذا كان تيسيرا منهم للمبتدئين، فإذا تقدموا درسوا سنن أبي عيسى وأبي داود مع أسانيدهما، ودرسوا غيرهما من السنن، ثم ارتقوا إلى دراسة الصحيحين والموطأ. قلت: هذا التدرج لم يصح مسارهم، لأنهم قد درسوا تلك الأحاديث من دون أن يحققوها صحة وضعفا، وثبت في نفوسهم تعظيمها، فلما درسوا أصول كتب السنة غاب عنهم أمر التوثيق، ومروا بها مرور الكرام، وعم في الناس إجلال كل ما انتشر باسم الحديث وتمجيده، وتسارعوا إلى قبول الضعاف والشواذ والمناكير والواهيات والموضوعات، شاحنين بها صحفهم وكتبهم، وحاشين بها خطبهم وكلماتهم، ووقع فيها الكبار، وزل بها الأعلام، ولم يسلم منها إلا قليل بل أقل قليل، وكان من تقديسهم للكنوز المروية والذخائر المتناقلة أن لم يستسيغوا معنى ضعف الحديث وشذوذه ونكارتة، واحتالوا لتوثيق كل ضعيف وشاذ ومنكر وواه بل وموضوع متشبهين بكثرة الطرق وتشعب الوجوه، فاختلط الحابل بالنابل، وصار الضعيف صحيحا وحسنا، والشاذ محفوظا، والمنكر معروفا، والواهي والموضوع مستأنسا بهما غير مستغربين ولا مستوحشين.

قالوا: فما المنهج الصحيح؟ قلت: هو الذي كان عليه التابعون ومن بعدهم حتى القرن الرابع، وهو تناول الحديث بجزأيه الذين لا يتجزآن:

الأول دراسة الأسانيد: أي أن لا يعامل الحديث معاملة الفلسفة، ولكن يعامل معاملة التاريخ والخبر، والتاريخ يحال فيه على مصادره ويولى فيه

بالبحث عن صدقه وتحقيقه تحقيقاً، والخبر لا يقبل حتى يفصل السليم منه عن رديئه ويحص تمحيصاً.

والثاني دراسة المتون، أي أن يعنى بوعي مضمون الحديث وتفقهه والعمل به رابطاً إياه بكتاب الله تعالى، مبيناً له بياناً، وموفقاً بينهما توفيقاً.

فإذا جمع الطالب بين الأمرين نشأ على التمييز بين القرآن والحديث، وأن الحديث يجب فيه التوقي والحذر، وهذا التوقي لازم لصحة العلم، وهو الذي كان عليه سلف هذه الأمة، واعلموا أن تجريد الحديث من أسانيده خطأ جسيم لا تزال الأمة تعاني من خطره، وقد سبق لي مقالان يساعدان في هذا الجانب: أحدهما "بين الحديث والفلسفة"، والثاني "تقاصر العلماء عن منهج أهل الحديث".

قالوا: فأخبرنا بأي كتاب يبدأون، وكيف يتدرجون؟ قلت: يجب أن يبدأوا بالموطأ للإمام مالك رحمه الله تعالى رواية يحيى بن يحيى الليثي، ويعالجوا دراسة أسانيده دراسة متعمقة، ويحققوا منهج مالك في الحذر من قبول الحديث، ويشغلوا بمتونه دراسة وعي وفهم وعمل به، فإذا أتموا الموطأ آتين على جوانبه كلها باشروا جامع أبي عيسى تقصياً لمباحثه الإسنادية والفقهيّة، ثم درسوا صحيح مسلم وصحيح البخاري دراسة واعية للأسانيد والمتون كلها، ويطبق هذا المنهج نفسه على سنن أبي داود والنسائي وابن ماجه.

ويجب عليهم أيضًا أن يدرسوا مقدمة صحيح مسلم وعلل الترمذي وأشياء من الرسالة للإمام الشافعي، وكتاب معرفة علوم الحديث للحاكم، وكتب الخطيب البغدادي، وعلل ابن أبي حاتم، وعلل الدارقطني، وتاريخ البخاري، وأشياء أخرى.

قالوا: يستغرق ذلك وقتًا طويلًا. قلت: هذا هو شأن العلم، كله جدّ وعمل، وإنما يوفق إليه من لا شأن له إلا هو، ولا همّ له إلا هو.

قالوا: فما رأيك في دراسة رياض الصالحين، وبلوغ المرام، ومشكوة المصابيح؟ قلت: هو المنهج الخاطئ الذي حذرتكم منه، وهو الذي حرف في العقول والأفكار معنى الحديث وشوّهه تشويهاً، ولا أنكر أن في دراسة الكتب المجردة بعض النفع للعوام الذين ليسوا بطلاب لعلم الحديث ولا هم بمنزلة الخواص.

قالوا: أو ليست كتب الفقه مجردة عن الأسانيد؟ قلت: كلامي في تدريسها مثل كلامي السابق في الحديث، بل أعنف وأقسى، قالوا: فألقه علينا، قلت: سأفرد بيانه في مقال، فانظروا فيما قدمت لكم واصبروا إن كنتم على طريق الحق سائرين، وعلى اتباع منهج البحث والتحقيق حريصين.

# The Right Pathway to Studying Ḥadīth

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They asked: Why is it that you vociferously denounce the manner of teaching the noble Prophetic ḥadīth in most of the religious seminaries today?

I replied:

Yes, as a matter of fact, I do criticize this approach quite heavily for its mistakes in turning away from the expected aim.

They asked: And what is that expected aim?

I replied:

## Historical Pathways to Ḥadīth Study

The Companions of the Prophet received the Noble Qur'ān from him as well as his Sunnah (religious practice) directly without intermediary. They supported these two sources, understood them deeply, and practiced them. When the next generation of Successors came, they took the Qur'ān just as the Companions had done so, preserving it and establishing it. Yet they explicitly differed from the Companions in their treatment of the Sunnah, for the simple reason that the Sunnah had now become reduced to transmissions of reports and circulation of chronicles, prior to it becoming an implemented practice. So they strove first to verify the truthfulness, uprightness, accuracy and precision of the transmitters of ḥadīth; and only after that, to understand and practice these ḥadīth. Successive generations followed this practice of theirs up until the fourth century. As the Prophetic era was becoming more distant and the levels of intermediaries were increasing even further, adding to the sheer number of transmitters, the task of scrutiny and investigation became more dire. So the expected aim in teaching ḥadīth is two basic matters: determining the veracity of reports and then, understanding and practicing them.

I also said:

In latter generations people became lax and negligent in the first task, and even for the first time began to strip the texts of ḥadīth from their isnād chains. In doing that, they removed the contents from the very sources upon which they rested and which determined their veracity. So their treatment of the Qur'ān and Sunnah became the same as that of the era of the Companions, with the difference being that the Companions had combined two similar matters, while these latter generations were combining two conflicting matters. The earlier ones were correct while the latter were mistaken.

They asked: Can you clarify that further?

I replied:

### **Ḥadīth as Sacred Texts**

The fifth century saw the rise of the new practice of treating the ḥadīth reports like sacred texts rather than historical reports, especially when Imām Muḥy al-Sunnah Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd b. Muḥammad al-Farrā' al-Baghawī (433—516 AH) authored his book *al-Maṣābīḥ* stripped from isnād. Initially those who were lazy accepted that, and then the scholars followed suit, until stripped books began to multiply and the damage became grave. Ḥadīth now began to be taught as texts that were similar to the Qur'ānic text. Ḥadīth students and their teachers focused only on the ḥadīth contents and their meanings, while deeming their isnāds cumbersome and forgetting their critical role. They were less concerned with verifying authenticity, and did not distinguish between ḥadīth texts and the Noble Qur'ān, whose verses were clear and whose text was free of the need for verification.

They said: This was actually a way of making things easier for the beginners, who would then further their studies by examining the Sunan works of Abū 'Īsā, Abū Dāwūd and others along with their chains, and then move on to the two Ṣaḥīḥ collections and the Muwaṭṭa'.

I replied:

This pathway of study was not the correct one for them, because they had studied those ḥadīth without verifying their weakness or authenticity, until these reports had become established and sanctified in their minds. And when they eventually did get to a study of the foundational books of the Sunnah, the matter of verification was already lost for them, such that they treated all these reports with sanctity and reverence. Among the masses, they perpetuated reverence for all that was spread in the name of ḥadīth and hastened to accept all such reports, even those that were slightly weak, contradictory, extremely weak, and even false and fabricated. These reports began to fill their pages and books and adorn their speeches and words. Even great scholars fell into this, and very few were those who managed to be protected from this.

Part of their reverence for these treasure troves of narrations was not fully accepting the notion of weakness or conflict in these reports. They resorted to accepting the veracity of every weak, conflicting and defective report—even fabricated ones—clinging to the multiplicity of their routes of transmission as justification. Everything ultimately became muddled, to the extent that weak reports became deemed as sound (ḥasan and ṣaḥīḥ). Anomalous, conflicting (shādh) <sup>1</sup> reports became sound (maḥfūz), and rejected (munkar)<sup>2</sup> reports became accepted (ma'rūf). They even became accommodating towards fabricated and baseless reports instead of regarding them as detested or loathsome.

They asked: So what is the correct method for studying ḥadīth?

I replied:

## **Qur'ān as Sacred Text, Ḥadīth as Historical Reports**

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<sup>1</sup> A shādh, or anomalous, narration is one that is otherwise sound but conflicts with stronger narrations. In such a conflict the stronger narration is referred to as preserved (maḥfūz) and is accepted over the one of lesser strength.

<sup>2</sup> A munkar narration, like the anomalous one, conflicts with stronger evidences, but contains deeper, less benign, contradictions with often negative connotations or meanings. The converse of that, i.e. the strong narration that it is conflicting with, is referred to as ma'rūf, or accepted.

The correct method is that which was practiced by the Successors and those that came after them until the fourth century, which was to receive ḥadīth with its two essential and inseparable parts:

1. The study of its isnād (chain of narrators): To not approach ḥadīth as philosophy but as historical reports, which are always referenced to their sources whose veracity is then investigated thoroughly. Historical reports are never accepted until you fully examine them in order to separate the sound from the baseless ones.
2. The study of its matn (text): to examine the content of the ḥadīth in order to deeply understand its meaning and to practice it, all of this by linking it with the Book of God in complete clarity and fully reconciling between these two sources.<sup>3</sup>

When the student combines these two matters in this way, he comes to the right way of differentiating between the Qur'ān and ḥadīth: that additional precaution is required with ḥadīth. This precaution is essential to realizing sound knowledge, and this was the approach of the predecessors of our ummah. Know that stripping ḥadīth reports of their isnād is an error of grave proportions which continues to afflict the ummah. I have previously authored two articles which can help in this regard: "Between Ḥadīth and Philosophy"<sup>4</sup> and "the Neglect of the Scholars from the Way of the People of Ḥadīth."

They asked: Can you let us know which book they should begin with, and how to proceed after that?

I replied:

They must begin with the Muwaṭṭa' of Imām Mālik through the transmission of Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī,<sup>5</sup> along with a deep study of its isnāds in order to

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<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān and Sunnah.

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <https://drabuzayd.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/difference-between-hadith-and-philosophy.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The Muwaṭṭa' of Imām Mālik of Madīnah (d. 179/795) was one of the first ḥadīth works compiled in the Islamic tradition and remains one of the most authentic works. It represented a subclass of the Muṣannaf genre of ḥadīth works, which were basically topically arranged fiqh-oriented ḥadīth works that represented the first organized works of Islamic scholarship. The Muwaṭṭa' is transmitted by many

realize the methodology and caution of Mālik in accepting ḥadīth, and examining its contents for comprehension and application. When they complete the Muwaṭṭa' following all of these aspects, they should proceed to the Jāmi' of Abū 'Īsā<sup>6</sup> also studying its isnāds and meanings. They then move on to study Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, examining their chains and meanings. And then this same methodology is applied to the Sunan of Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah.

It is also essential for them to study some other seminal works such as the Muqaddimah of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, the 'Ilal of Tirmidhī, some portions from the Risālah of Imām Shāfi'ī, Ma'rifah 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth of Ḥākīm, the works of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādāī, the 'Ilal of Ibn Abū Ḥātim, the 'Ilal of Dāruquṭnī, and the Tārīkh of Bukhārī.

They said: But that would consume so much time!

I replied:

This is what knowledge is: nothing other than exertion and struggle. Only those are blessed by it who have no other concern and no other preoccupation.

They asked: What is your opinion on studying *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, *Bulūḡ al-Marām*, and *Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ*?

I replied:

This is the very same wrong approach which I warned you from. This is exactly what distorted the minds and thoughts of the people the true

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famous students of Mālik throughout the world, with slight variations based on when they studied with Imām Mālik (as his work was evolving). The version Dr. Akram is recommending to start with is that of his famous student Yahyā of Andalus (d. 234/848), who was one of the last students of Mālik to visit him in Madīnah. He popularized the work in Muslim Spain and contributed to the consolidation of the Mālikī school of jurisprudence in Andalus and North Africa. His version was popular in the West and served as the basis for Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's renowned commentary.

<sup>6</sup> The Jāmi' is a comprehensive ḥadīth compilation inclusive of not only legal rulings, but also additional topics such as tafsīr, aqīdah and heart softeners. The reference here is to the work of Imām Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad b. 'Īsā Tirmidhī (d. 279/892).

meaning of ḥadīth. I am not denying that in the study of isnād-stripped books there is some benefit for the masses who are not students of ḥadīth.

They asked: Are not the books of fiqh stripped of isnād?

I replied:

My thoughts on studying fiqh would be the same as my preceding thoughts on studying ḥadīth, only even harsher.

They asked: Please enlighten us.

I replied:

I will devote a separate article to this, but look into what I have presented thus far and persist upon it if you desire traversing the path of truth and following the way of research and verification.