

تقاصر العلماء عن منهج أئمة
الحديث

**Departure of Scholars
from the Way of the
Ḥadīth Imāms**

By Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi

Translation by Dr. Abu Zayd

سلسلة إملاء الخاطر | Imlā al-Khāṭir Series



AL-SALAM
INSTITUTE

A Centre for Arabic and Islamic Sciences

Oxford . London . Online

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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, *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 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

Building on his articles looking at the intersection of ḥadīth and fiqh, this monograph examines some crucial insights into ḥadīth which are required to not confuse the two enterprises. Specifically, he sees the two broad sources of attaining knowledge as being historical reports (in which you are informed of information from someone else) and intellectually derived views, termed philosophy (in which you essentially derive your own information). Ḥadīth reports fall under the former and require their own set of rules for verification, while fiqh, and most other disciplines, fall under the latter and require a different approach. In another monograph, Dr. Akram defended the school and approach of the early scholars of jurisprudence and demonstrates how their approach was later distorted and wound up being misunderstood as a result of blurring these lines. In this one, he examines mistakes made by scholars in their approach to ḥadīth.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

تقاصر العلماء عن منهج أئمة الحديث

بقلم: محمد أكرم الندوي

أو كسفورد

قالوا: نحضر دروسك فتنهنا على صنوف من أخطاء العلماء في تعاملهم مع السنة النبوية وتقاصرهم عن استيعاب منهج أئمة الحديث، فأخبرنا عن أصل الغلط ومأثي الخلل، قلت: يجمعه أمران: ما وقع فيه عامة العلماء، وما وقع فيه الخاصة منهم، قالوا: ما الذي عمّمهم جميعاً؟ قلت: شيئان. قالوا: ما هما؟ قلت:

الأول: عدم تقصيرهم لمعنى التصحيح والتضعيف، ومرده إلى إغفالهم طبيعة الحديث غير واعين لها ولا منتبهين إليها انتباهها، فإن الحديث خبر وتاريخ، ولن يتوصل إلى إدراك حقيقته وتناول مغزاه إلا من اضطلع من علم التاريخ رواية لأحداثه وتحليلاً لها ونظراً في أسبابها ووجوهها وعللها، وقد كان أئمة الحديث متمكنين من علم التاريخ في براعة ورسوخ، تأملوا آثارهم ومحادثاتهم ومناظراتهم تدلّكم على صدق مقالتي وإصابتي للحق، فليحيى بن معين، وابن المديني، وأحمد بن حنبل،

والبخاري، ومسلم، والنسائي، وابن أبي حاتم وغيرهم كتب في التاريخ والرجال، وألف البخاري التاريخ قبل أن يعمل الصحيح، والأخبار تدخل فيها الأخطاء والأوهام والزيادات والإدراجات والأكاذيب والأباطيل وسائر البلايا، فبذل الأئمة قصارى والتوقي الذي لم يبلغه قوم من أهل العلم، وقد أحسن أولئك الأعلام إذ صنفوا الأحاديث إلى صحاح وحسان وضعاف ومناكير وواهيات وموضوعات، وألفوا كتب العلل التي تشهد بحذوقهم في شأنهم وإتقانهم له، وسبقهم الناس في هذا المضمار وتفوقهم عليهم تفوقا واضحا.

ولا يخفى أن من حفظ مسألة أو مسألتين من مسائل الفقه لا يسمى فقيها، وأن من تداول قضية أو قضيتين من قضايا المنطق لا يدعى منطقيًا، وأن من كسب درهما أو درهمن لا يحسب غنيا، وهو أمر لا غموض فيه ولا حاجة إلى أن ينبه عليه، ولكن عامة العلماء لم يلاحظوا هذا الفرق بين الرواة، فسووا بين المتخصصين وبين من روى خبرا أو خبرين، وكم من أحاديث انفرد بها غير المتخصصين واستغربها الجهابذة بل وأنكروها نالت قبولا بين العلماء، حدثوا بها ورووها في كتبهم، ومنهم تلقفها العوام، ومن ثم اشترط أئمة الحديث شروطا في الرواة من الضبط وطول ملازمة الشيوخ وممارسة هذا الفن، واعتنوا اعتناء كبيرا بمخالفة الرواة بعضهم بعضا في النقل، وانفراد بعضهم عن بعض، وحكموا عليهم بقوة الضبط وخفته والغفلة فيهم، ووصفوا كثيرا من الأخبار بالغرابة

والشدوذ والتكارة، وتجد المتأخرين أعلوها إلى الصحة والحسن بناء على تعدد طرقها واشتهارها بين الناس.

وكذلك الذين طرحوا الأحاديث من أجل المخالفة فيها لم يعرفوا طبيعة هذا العلم، فقد يكون الخبر يقع الاختلاف في أجزائه مع كون أصل الخبر صحيحاً، وكمن أحاديث ثابتة وهي في كتابي البخاري ومسلم، ووقع اختلاف في بعض تفاصيلها، فجمع العلماء المتابعات والشواهد، وعرفوا مواضع الخطأ فيها، واحتجوا بالمحفوظ منها، قال الإمام ابن تيمية رحمه الله تعالى في مقدمته في أصول التفسير ص 28:

"والمقصود أن الحديث الطويل إذا روي مثلاً من وجهين مختلفين، من غير مواطأة امتنع عليه أن يكون غلطاً، كما امتنع أن يكون كذبا؛ فإن الغلط لا يكون في قصة طويلة متنوعة، وإنما يكون في بعضها، فإذا روي هذا قصة طويلة متنوعة ورواها الآخر مثلاً رواها الأول من غير مواطأة امتنع الغلط في جميعها، كما امتنع الكذب في جميعها من غير مواطأة. ولهذا إنما يقع في مثل ذلك غلط في بعض ما جرى في القصة، مثل حديث اشتراء النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم البعير من جابر؛ فإن من تأمل طريقه علم قطعاً أن الحديث صحيح، وإن كانوا قد اختلفوا في مقدار الثمن. وقد بين ذلك البخاري في صحيحه."

الثاني: نظرهم إلى السنن كمصدر لهذا الدين مستقل، وإغفالهم أنها بيان لكتاب الله تعالى، تفصل مجمله وتشرح مشكله، فوقعوا في

أخطاء، ويشبه خطأهم خطأ من أفرد الشرح عن المتن، أو البناء عن الأصل، قال العلامة عبد الحميد الفراهي في التكميل في أصول التأويل ص:34

"فمنهم من اطمأنوا بالأحاديث بعد النقد كأكثر أصحاب الروايات لما علموا أن كلام النبي لا بد أن يوافق بالقرآن وهكذا كلام الصحابة بكلام النبي. ووجدوا في الأحاديث فسحة. فجعلوها أصلاً لثقة الخطر فيها وفسروا القرآن بها، حتى أن أصبح زمام القرآن بيد الحديث، فقل اعتناؤهم بفهم معاني القرآن، وأولوه إلى ما يخالف آياته. وكان عليهم أن يأولوا الأحاديث إلى القرآن. فإني رأيت كم من روايات متضادة حسب الظاهر توافقت حين أولناه إلى القرآن."

قالوا: ما خطأ الخاصة؟ قلت: خطأهم أنهم لم ينظروا في طبيعة كلام الأنبياء فأنزلوها إلى كلام الناس، وأكبر من أخطأ في ذلك صنفان من العلماء:

المتكلمون الذين حملوا الأحاديث على آرائهم الكلامية والعقدية، يأخذون من الأحاديث ما يوافق آراءهم ويرفضون ما يخالفها، يضرّبون بعضها ببعض، فالتدرية يقبلون أحاديث وينكرون أخرى، والحبرية يقبلون أحاديث وينكرون أخرى، وجرت على الشاكلة نفسها طوائف أخرى، مفرقين بين أقوال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من عند أنفسهم، ولو اتهموا عقولهم لوجدوا أن الأحاديث متوافقة منسجمة، وأن آراءهم هي التي تفتقر

إلى إصلاح ما فيها من الفساد، ورتق ما فيها من الفتق، وسد ما فيها من الخلل.

والفقهاء الذين عاملوا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم معاملة المفتين، وأحلوا أحاديثه محل الفتاوى ومسائل فقهية، مع أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من أبعد الناس عن استعمال مصطلحات القوم.

قالوا: فما توصينا؟ قلت: أوصيكم أن تطالعوا كتب التاريخ، واطلعوا على مناهج المؤرخين، ثم تدبروا كتاب الله تعالى وابعثوا في السنن على أنها بيان له، واستأنسوا كلام الأنبياء، فلا تحملوا الأحاديث على مسائل علم الكلام والفقه أو سائر الآراء، والزموا مراجعة كتب الرجال والعلل بمعنى النظر فيها عسى أن يفتح عليكم من هذا العلم الجليل المبارك.

Departure of Scholars from the Way of the Ḥadīth Imāms

By Dr. Mohammed Akram Nadwi
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They asked: We attend your lectures and you point out all sorts of scholarly mistakes in the treatment of the Prophetic sunnah and the failure to fully grasp the approach of the Imāms of ḥadīth. So please inform us of the roots and origins of this fault and error.

I replied:

There are two matters: that which most scholars fell into and that which only some of them did.

They asked: What affected most of them?

I replied: Two matters.

They asked: What are they?

I replied:

Need to Treat Ḥadīth as Historical Reports

First, there is failure to fully discern the meaning of ḥadīth authentication, whose underlying factor goes back to not apprehending the real nature of ḥadīth. Ḥadīth is basically a historical report, and you cannot arrive at an understanding of its reality or depth without familiarity with the discipline of history: through examining and analyzing reports of its events and occurrences, and keeping in view the causes, multifold dimensions and subtle deficiencies of those reports. The Imāms of ḥadīth were thoroughly and utterly proficient in the science of history. Contemplate their reports, discussion and discourse, and you will indeed find my claim to be truthful and correct. Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, Ibn al-Madīnī, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasāʾī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and others wrote on history and biographies.

Bukhārī wrote on history before working on his Ṣaḥīḥ. Reports can often be contaminated by mistakes and errors, insertions and additions, fabrication and falsehood, and other types of deficiencies. These Imāms exerted their efforts in distinguishing and scrutinizing them with precision and proficiency. They reached the furthest extents of caution and diligence in their treatment of narrations, such that scholars of no other discipline managed to reach. Those luminaries did well to classify ḥadīth into ṣaḥīḥ (sound), ḥasan (fair), daʿīf (weak), munkar (rejected), and mawḍūʿ (fabricated); and authored great works on ʿilal (hidden defects of reports) which bore witness to their skill and proficiency in this craft, while yet others even surpassed them and excelled over them in this domain.

Not All Narrators are the Same

It is quite obvious that memorizing one or two legal rulings does not make one a jurist, nor does dealing with an issue or two of logic makes one a logician, nor possessing one or two dirhams makes one rich. This matter is self-evident and does not even deserve to be pointed out. At the same time, unfortunately, most scholars did not observe this crucial difference for the narrators of ḥadīth. They deem equivalent those who were specialists and those who narrated a report or two. How many reports were narrated solely by non-specialists while seasoned experts deemed them suspicious or even rejected them, and yet they attained acceptance among scholars who began to narrate them in their books until the public took them fully? For that reason, the Imāms of ḥadīth stipulated for a narrator conditions such as accuracy, prolonged tutelage under their teachers, and proficiency in this discipline. They were particularly attentive to the discrepancies among narrators, especially when one of them differed from others in a solitary manner. They ruled on the strength or weakness of the accuracy of narrators. They frequently described reports as gharīb (solitary), shādh (anomalous), or munkar (rejected),¹ while later scholars frequently elevated

¹ These are all ḥadīth categories that reflect a report differing from others in some way. Gharīb is a neutral judgement on the isnād being solitary (narrated by one or relatively few narrators), while shādh refers to a report, otherwise sound in chain, that conflicts with stronger, or larger group of, chains. Munkar is a weak report that conflicts with stronger ones and is thus more firmly rejected.

these same reports to ṣaḥīḥ or ḥasan based upon the multiplicity of their chains or their being widespread among people.

Recognizing Intra-Narration Mistakes

Similarly, those who reject entire ḥadīth due to such conflicts fail to recognize the nature of this science. A report could fall into discrepancy in one of its peripheral portions while its core remains sound. How many sound reports are found in the books of Bukhārī and Muslim while they have minor discrepancies in some of their portions? So scholars compiled supporting and witnessing reports for these discrepancies, which they sought to point out with these reports. For evidencing purposes, they intended to rely on only the established portions of these narrations. Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, God have mercy on him, says in his introduction to the Principles of Tafsīr:

The point here is that when a lengthy ḥadīth is narrated through two different chains without collaboration, then it cannot be a mistake or lie. A lengthy story cannot be one big mistake, but parts of it can contain errors. Therefore, if a person narrates a long and detailed story, and another narrates the exact same story without collusion then both stories cannot be a mistake, just as they cannot be lies. As such, mistakes which occur can be within certain portions of the story, like the ḥadīth in which the Prophet, peace be upon him, bought a camel from Jābir. Whoever contemplates the different chains of this ḥadīth will realize that the ḥadīth is authentic, even though the narrations differ concerning the exact price of the camel. This is also explained by Bukhārī in his Ṣaḥīḥ.²

Individual Sunnahs and Ḥadīth are Not Sources of Religion

The second mistake of most scholars was their view of specific sunnah practices as independent sources for this religion, and their forgetting that they were explanations of the Book of God which delineate its generalities and expound on its difficulties. So they fell into mistakes which resemble the error of those who divorce commentaries from their original texts or a

² Pg. 94-5. Ibn Taymiyyah, Introduction to the Principles of Tafsīr. Birmingham, UK: Al-Hidaayah Publishing & Distribution Ltd.2009.

structure from its foundation. The erudite scholar 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Farāhī states in *al-Takmīl fī Uṣūl al-Ta'wīl*:

From them were those, like most people of narration, who were satisfied with ḥadīth despite scrutiny, because they realized that since the speech of the Prophet must agree with the Qur'ān, and the speech of the Companions with the speech of the Prophet, they found in ḥadīth great latitude. So they made it a foundation due to their lack of comprehension and used it to explain the Qur'ān, until the reigns of the Qur'ān began to be taken by the hands of ḥadīth. They cared little to understand the meaning of the Qur'ān but began to explain it with that which contradicted its verses. They should have, rather, understood ḥadīth in light of the Qur'ān. Contradictory narrations would have become harmonious if we were to understand them by referring them to the Qur'ān.

They asked: What is the error that only some scholars fell into?

I replied:

Danger of Treating Prophetic Speech Like Ours

They failed to comprehend the nature of Prophetic speech but relegated it to the speech of ordinary men. The worst offenders in this regard were two types of scholars:

1. The theologians who applied ḥadīth to their theological and creedal views, accepting some ḥadīth which agreed with their views while rejecting those that clashed with them. They began to pit ḥadīth narrations one against another. So the Qadarite (advocates of free will) accepted some ḥadīth and rejected others, while the Jabarites (predeterminists: advocates of divine destiny) did the same. And even others followed them in this manner, differentiating between the statements of the Prophet, peace be upon him, on their own. Were they to exercise their minds, they would realize that the Prophetic ḥadīth is harmonious and congruous, while their own conflicting views were the ones that needed to be sorted out, separating the sound from the deficient, and the correct portions from the mistakes.

2. The jurists who treated the Prophet as a legal scholar (muftī) and converted his ḥadīth to legal verdicts (fatwā) and religious rulings, while the Prophet himself was the furthest person from utilizing the terminology of these individuals.

They asked: How would you advise us then?

I replied:

The Way Forward

I advise you to study the books of history and learn the approach of historians. Then you should contemplate over the Book of God, and then the Sunnah as an explanation of the Book. You should be familiar with the speech of the prophets and not treat ḥadīth as matters of theology, fiqh or other views. You should adhere to consulting the books of biographies (rijāl) and hidden defects (‘ilal), examining them deeply so that perhaps God may open for you some of this noble and blessed knowledge.