

السنة والحديث

Sunnah and 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-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 conceptual differences between sunnah and ḥadīth.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

السنة والحديث

بقلم: محمد أكرم الندوي

أو كسفورد

قالوا: ما معنى السنة؟ هي في الاصطلاح الطريقة التي سنّها النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وانتهجها في العبادات وسائر أمور الدين، ثم استمر عليها الخلفاء الراشدون المهديون وسائر الصحابة، ومن خَلَفَهُمْ من أُمَّة التابعين وأتباعهم.

قالوا: ما معنى الحديث؟ هو الخبر المتضمن قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أو فعله أو تقريره أو صفة من صفاته أو شأنًا من شؤونه.

فما النسبة بينهما؟ نسبة التطابق أو نسبة التباين؟ قلت: لا هذه ولا تلك، وإنما النسبة بينهما نسبة العموم والخصوص من وجه، فبعض السنن حديث، كما أن بعض الحديث سنة، فالحديث أعم من السنة من وجه، والسنة أعم من الحديث من وجه، فما روي من كثير من أقوال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وأفعاله وتقريراته وصفاته حديث وليس بسنة، وما

توارثه الفقهاء في الأمصار في القرون المشهود لها بالخير من كثير من الطرق المتبعة في الصلاة والزكاة والحج والأفضية والأحكام سنن، وما هي بالأحاديث والأخبار.

قالوا: ائت لنا بمثال. قلت: الأمثلة كثيرة منتشرة في كتب الحديث والفقهاء، قالوا: اشرحها لنا بأمثلة متقابلة تميز بينهما تمييزاً، قلت: من أمثلة السنة: ما رواه مالك عن حميد الطويل عن أنس بن مالك أنه قال: قمت وراء أبي بكر وعمر وعثمان فكلهم كان لا يقرأ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم إذا افتتح الصلاة. وقد أخرجه الشيخان وغيرهما من أئمة الحديث، ويؤيده حديث أبي هريرة أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: قال الله تعالى: قسمت الصلاة بيني وبين عبدي نصفين ولعبدني ما سأل، فإذا قال العبد: (الحمد لله رب العالمين) قال الله: "حمدني عبدي".

ومنها ما رواه يحيى بن يحيى الليثي في الموطأ، قال: سمعت مالكا يقول في صيام ستة أيام بعد الفطر من رمضان: إني لم أر أحداً من أهل العلم والفقهاء يصومها، ولم يبلغني ذلك عن أحد من السلف، وأن أهل العلم يكرهون ذلك ويخافون بدعته وأن يلحق بربهم ما ليس منه أهل الجهالة والجفاء لو رأوا في ذلك خفته عند أهل العلم ورأوهم يعملون ذلك.

ومنها ما أخرج أبو داود عن طاووس قال: سئل ابن عمر عن الركعتين قبل المغرب فقال: ما رأيت أحداً على عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يصليهما، وأخرج عبد الرزاق في مصنفه عن إبراهيم النخعي

رحمه الله قال: لم يصل أبو بكر، ولا عمر، ولا عثمان، الركعتين قبل المغرب.

ومن أمثلة الحديث: ما رواه النسائي في سننه، قال: أخبرنا محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد الحكم عن شعيب، حدثنا الليث، حدثنا خالد عن سعيد بن أبي هلال، عن نعيم المجرم قال: صليت وراء أبي هريرة، فقرأ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، ثم قرأ بأم القرآن... وقال في الأخير: والذي نفسي بيده إني لأشبهكم صلاة برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.

ومنها ما رواه مسلم في صحيحه، قال: حدثنا يحيى بن أيوب وقتيبة بن سعيد وعلي بن حجر جميعاً عن إسماعيل قال ابن أيوب حدثنا إسماعيل بن جعفر أخبرني سعد بن سعيد بن قيس عن عمر بن ثابت بن الحارث الخزرجي عن أبي أيوب الأنصاري رضي الله عنه أنه حدثه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: من صام رمضان ثم أتبعه ستاً من شوال كان كصيام الدهر.

ومنها ما رواه مسلم، قال: حدثنا شيبان بن فروخ حدثنا عبد الوارث عن عبد العزيز وهو ابن صهيب عن أنس بن مالك قال: كنا بالمدينة فإذا أذن المؤذن لصلاة المغرب ابتدروا السواري فيركعون ركعتين ركعتين حتى إن الرجل الغريب ليدخل المسجد فيحسب أن الصلاة قد صليت من كثرة من يصلحها، وما رواه البخاري، قال: حدثنا أبو معمر حدثنا عبد الوارث عن الحسين عن عبد الله بن بريدة قال حدثني عبد الله المزني

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال صلوا قبل صلاة المغرب قال في الثالثة لمن شاء كراهية أن يتخذها الناس سنة.

قالوا: إذا عارض حديث سنة فأيهما يقدم؟ قلت: السنة تقدم على الحديث، فما أوردنا من أمثلة السنن يربح على الأحاديث التي أتبعناها. قالوا: أو ليس يستلزم ذلك تكذيب الأخبار الصحيحة أو ردها من دون مسوغ؟ قلت: لا، لأن السنة هي بيان كتاب الله، وهي الطريقة المستمرة المتوارثة جيلا عن جيل في القرون المشهود لها بخير، والأخبار والأحاديث المعارضة للسنن مما صحت تحتمل النسخ أو الخطأ أو نوعا من التأويل.

قالوا: وهل نص أئمة الهدى على ما ذهبت إليه؟ قلت: نعم ففي ترتيب المدارك 44/1: قال مالك: رأيت محمد بن أبي بكر بن عمرو بن حزم، وكان قاضيا، وكان أخوه عبد الله كثير الحديث، رجل صدق، فسمعت عبد الله إذا قضى محمد بالقضية، قد جاء فيها الحديث مخالفا للقضاء، يعاتبه، يقول له: ألم يأت في هذا حديث كذا؟ فيقول: بلى، فيقول له: فما لك لا تقضي به؟ فيقول: فأين الناس عنه؟ وفيه: قال ابن المعذل: سمعت إنسانا سأل ابن الماجشون: لم رويتم الحديث ثم تركتموه؟ قال: ليعلم أنا على علم تركناه"، قال ربيعة: ألف عن ألف خير من واحد عن واحد، وروي مثل ذلك عن إبراهيم النخعي ومالك بن أنس رحمهم الله تعالى.

قالوا: من الناس من جعل السنة والحديث مترادفين؟ قلت: قد فعل ولم يصب، فأخل بالفقه ومنهج الفقهاء إخلالا بينا. قالوا: بين لنا ذلك بيانا شافيا. قلت: قد فعلت في مقالي "بين الحديث والفقه".

قالوا: هل نحتاج إلى الحديث لتوثيق السنن؟ قلت: نعم، فكلما نسب الناس سنة إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أو أصحابه أو من بعدهم وجب أن يوثقوه بأنواع من التوثيق، ومنها طريق المحدثين، واعلموا أن توثيق السنن لا يقتصر منهجه على طريق المحدثين، وقد أوضحت ذلك في مقالاتي السابقة.

Sunnah and Ḥadīth

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They asked:

What is the meaning of sunnah? The technical meaning of the term is a way or practice that was established and pursued by the Prophet, peace be upon him, and then by the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the rest of the Companions, and the leading figures in the generations that followed them.

And what is the meaning of ḥadīth? Technically, it is a report comprised of the words of the Prophet, peace be upon him, or of his actions, tacit approvals, characteristics or other personal matters.

And what is the real connection between them? Is it a successive, sequential relationship, or an explanatory one in which one elaborates on the other?

I replied:

It is neither. The relation between them, from one respect, is that of specification (i.e. general versus specific). Some of the sunnah is ḥadīth, while some ḥadīth is sunnah. So ḥadīth is broader than sunnah from one aspect, while sunnah is broader than ḥadīth from another. Much of what is narrated concerning the Prophet's statements, actions, approvals or descriptions are ḥadīth and not sunnah. And much of what was passed on by the jurists of the various regions among the early generations, in terms of followed practices concerning prayer, charity, pilgrimage, edicts and rulings, are sunnah but not ḥadīth or reports.

They asked: Can you give us an example?

I replied:

Examples are abundant and widespread in the books of ḥadīth and fiqh.

They said: Please explain with alternating examples that would distinguish the two notions properly.

I replied:

3 Examples of Sunnah

An example of sunnah is what Mālik relates from Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl from Anas b. Mālik who said: I prayed behind Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, and none of them practiced Basmalah¹ when they began their prayers.² Bukhārī and Muslim, as well as other Imāms of ḥadīth, also related this. It is additionally supported by a ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah in which he reports that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: God says: “I have divided the prayer into two halves between myself and my servant, and for my servant is what he/she asks for. When the servant states, ‘Praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds,’ God replies, ‘My servant has praised me . . .’”³

Another example [of sunnah] is what Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī relates in the Muwaṭṭa’: I heard Mālik say concerning the six days of fasting after the Eid al-Fiṭr following Ramadan, “I have not observed any person of knowledge and understanding fast these days, and such a report has not reached me from any of the early authorities. And the people of knowledge considered the practice makrūh (detested) fearing that it would become an innovated practice or that ignorant ones would add to Ramadan that which did not belong to it.”⁴

Yet another example is that Abū Dāwūd relates from Ṭawūs who said: I asked Ibn ‘Umar about praying two rak’ahs before Maghrib and he replied,

¹ According to the author, the term *basmalah* refers to the act of reciting God’s name in the beginning of any act, usually done with the phrase: *bismillāhi-rraḥmāni-rraḥīm* (“With the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful”). Therefore, the term “reciting basmalah” as is commonly used is incorrect since it considers *basmalah* to refer to the phrase rather than the act. Hence, I have translated “practiced basmalah.”

² Muwaṭṭa’ Imām Mālik: Kitāb al-ṣalāh (Book of Prayer). Bāb al-‘amal bil-qirā’at (Chapter: Actions in recitation).

³ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Kitāb al-ṣalāh (Book of Prayer). Bāb wujūb qirā’at al-fātiḥah fī kulli rak’ah (Chapter: Obligation of reciting al-Fātiḥah in every rak’ah). The sunnah of no basmalah in the beginning of the prayer is supported in this ḥadīth by the fact that the phrase is not mentioned here, although this ḥadīth contains a detailed line-by-line conversational summary of al-Fātiḥah in the context of prayer.

⁴ Muwaṭṭa’ Imām Mālik: Kitāb al-ṣiyām (Book of Fasting). Bāb jāmi’ al-ṣiyām (Chapter: The one who combines the fast).

“I have not seen anyone in the era of the Prophet, peace be upon him, pray these.”⁵ ‘Abd al-Razzāq relates in his Muṣannaf from Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī who said: “Neither Abū Bakr, nor ‘Umar, nor ‘Uthmān ever prayed two rak’ahs before Maghrib.”⁶

3 Examples of Ḥadīth

Examples of ḥadīth include what was related by Nasā‘ī in his Sunan: Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abd al-Ḥakam informed us from Shu‘ayb: Layth informed us: Khālid informed us from Sa‘īd b. Abū Hilāl from Nu‘aym al-Mujmir, who said: I prayed behind Abū Hurayrah, and he practiced basmalah and then recited al-Fātiḥah . . . And he said at the end, “By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, my prayer most closely resembles that of the Prophet among you.”⁷

Another example is that which Muslim narrated in his Ṣaḥīḥ: Yaḥyā b. Ayyūb, Qutaybah b. Sa‘īd and ‘Alī b. Ḥujr all reported to me: from Ismā‘īl: Ibn Ayyūb said: Ismā‘īl b. Ja‘far related to us: Sa‘d b. Sa‘īd b. Qays related to me from ‘Umar b. Thābit b. al-Ḥārith al-Khazrajī from Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, God be pleased with him, who related to him that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “Whoever fasts Ramadan, then follows that with six from [the month of] Shawwāl would be as if he fasted for a lifetime.”⁸

Yet another example is what Muslim narrated: Shaybān b. Farrūkh narrated to us: ‘Abd al-Wārith narrated to us from ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (and he is Ibn Suhayb) from Anas b. Mālīk who said: When we were in Madīnah, the moment the Mu‘adhhdhin made the call to the sunset prayer, the people hastened to the pillars of the mosque and prayed two rak’ahs with the result that any

⁵ Sunan Abū Dāwūd: Kitāb al-taṭawu‘ (Book of Voluntary Deeds). Bāb al-ṣalāh qabl al-maghrib (Chapter: Praying before Maghrib).

⁶ Muṣannaf ‘Abd al-Razzāq: Kitāb al-ṣalāh (Book of Prayer). Bāb al-rak’atayn qabl al-maghrib (Chapter: Two rak’ahs before Maghrib).

⁷ Sunan al-Nasā‘ī: Kitāb al-iftitāḥ (Book of Opening). Bāb qirā‘at bismillāh al-rahman al-raḥīm (Chapter: Reciting “In the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful).

⁸ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Kitāb al-ṣiyām (Book of Fasting). Bāb istiḥbāb ṣaum sittat ayyām min shawwāl ittibā’an li ramaḍān (Chapter: Recommendation of fasting six days in Shawwāl following Ramadan).

stranger coming into the mosque would think that the obligatory prayer had been observed owing to the number who were praying then.⁹

Another is what Bukhārī relates: Abū Ma'mar related to us: 'Abd al-Wārith related to us from Ḥusayn from 'Abdullah b. Buraydah who said: 'Abdullah al-Muzanī related to me from the Prophet, peace be upon him, who said: "Pray before the Maghrib prayer." He said it three times, and in the third, he said, "For whoever wants to do so." He said so because he did not like the people to take it as a sunnah.¹⁰

When Ḥadīth Clashes with Sunnah

They asked: If a ḥadīth clashes with a sunnah, which of them do we prefer?

I replied: The sunnah takes priority over ḥadīth. The examples we related of the sunnah are prioritized over the ḥadīth that we have reported.¹¹

They asked: Does that not necessitate that we reject sound reports without justification?

I replied:

No, because the sunnah is an elaboration of the Book of God and the continuing, inherited tradition passed on one generation to another, among the golden centuries. Ḥadīth and reports that conflict with the sunnah, despite their authenticity, carry the possibility of being abrogated, containing errors or an alternate interpretation.

They asked: Did any of the guided Imāms speak of this?

⁹ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Kitāb ṣalāh al-musāfirīn wa qaṣrihā (Book of the Prayer of the Traveler and its Shortening). Bāb istiḥbāb rak'atayn qabl ṣalāh al-maghrib (Chapter: Recommendation of two rak'ahs before Maghrib prayer).

¹⁰ Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī: Kitāb al-i'tiṣām bil-kitāb wal-sunnah (Book on Holding Fast to the Book and the Sunnah). Bāb nahy al-nabiyy 'alā al-taḥrīm illā mā tu'raf ibāḥatuhu (Chapter: The forbidding of the Prophet makes something forbidden unless its permission is known).

¹¹ It can be summarized that in Shaykh Akram Nadwi's view, as expressed through the three examples he chooses, is that the basmalah in prayer, fasting six days of Shawwāl and praying two units before Maghrib are *not* sunnah, though there are individual ḥadīth reports that support them.

I replied:

Yes, for in *Tartīb al-Madārik*, Mālik states: I have seen Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr b. ‘Amr b. Ḥazm, who was a judge and whose brother ‘Abdullah happened to be a ḥadīth scholar and a truthful person. I saw that whenever his brother Muḥammad issued a verdict which happened to clash with a ḥadīth, ‘Abdullah would criticize him by saying, “Hasn’t there come such a ḥadīth on this issue?” Muḥammad would reply, “Yes.” ‘Abdullah would ask, “So why do you not base your verdict on it?” Muḥammad would reply, “Where do the people stand in relation to this?”

Ibn al-Mu‘addal says on this issue: I heard a person ask Ibn Mājishūn, “Why do you sometimes relate a ḥadīth but not act upon it?” He replied, “So it would be known that I am upon inherited knowledge.” Ibn Rabī‘ah said: “A thousand from a thousand is better than one from one.” Something similar is related from Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī and Mālik b. Anas, God be pleased with them both.

They asked: There are people that consider ḥadīth and sunnah to be synonymous.

I replied:

They have done so but are not correct. They have greatly harmed fiqh and the way of the jurists.

They asked: Explain that to us clearly.

I replied: I have already done so in my article, “Between Ḥadīth and Fiqh.”¹²

They asked: Do we need ḥadīth to verify the sunnah?

I replied:

Yes. Whenever people ascribe a sunnah to the Prophet, peace be upon him, or his Companions, then it is obligatory to verify that with various means, which include the methodology of the ḥadīth scholars. But you should know

¹² Nadwī, Dr. Mohammad Akram. “Between Ḥadīth and Fiqh.” *Imlā al-Khāṭir Series*. UK: Al-Salam Institute, 2018.

that the way of verifying a sunnah practice is not only limited to the way of the ḥadīth scholars, which I have clarified in my previous articles.