

## Introduction to the Sciences of *Ḥadīth*

Not all the necessary and important issues in *Ḥadīth* can be covered by this brief introduction: that would require a separate and independent work. The following brief sketch of the gathering and compilation of *Ḥadīth* is presented, giving an idea of the stages through which the priceless treasure of the Prophetic *Ḥadīth* has passed during thirteen centuries in reaching us. It also indicates who those pure souls were who dedicated their entire lives to transmitting these treasures of wisdom and guidance to future generations, and who would even risk their lives in this path if required.

### 2.1 THREE METHODS OF PRESERVING *HADĪTH*

The *Aḥādīth* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ have reached us through three reliable methods:

1. The practice of the Ummah.
2. Written memory-aids and compilations.
3. Memory-aided narration and transmission, i.e. the continuous sequence of study and teaching.

## 2.2 FOUR PHASES OF HADĪTH PRESERVATION

In this sense, the total period of collection and arrangement, and of composition and compilation of *Hadīth*, can be divided into four phases.

### 2.2.1 *The First Phase: From the Prophetic era to the end of the first century hijri*

In this phase, the details of the preservers of *Hadīth* and of written memory-aids and compilations are as follows:

#### 2.2.1.1 Famous Preservers of *Hadīth*

##### **The Companions (Ṣaḥābah, ﷺ)**

1. Abū Hurayrah 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ṣakhr, ﷺ, d. 59 H, aged 78, 5374 narrations. His students reach 800 in number.
2. 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās, ﷺ, d. 68 H, aged 71, 2660 narrations.
3. 'Ā'ishah Ṣiddīqah, ﷺ, d. 58 H, aged 67, 2210 narrations.
4. 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar, ﷺ, d. 73 H, aged 84, 1630 narrations.
5. Jābir b. 'Abdullāh, ﷺ, d. 78 H, aged 94, 1560 narrations.
6. Anas b. Mālik, ﷺ, d. 93 H, aged 103, 1286 narrations.
7. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, ﷺ, d. 74 H, aged 84, 1170 narrations.

These are the majestic Companions who preserved more than a thousand *Aḥādīth* each. Apart from them, 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, ﷺ, (d. 63 H), 'Alī, ﷺ, (d. 40 H) and 'Umar, ﷺ, (d. 23 H) fall into the category of those Companions whose narrations number between five hundred and a thousand each.

Similarly, Abū Bakr, ﷺ, (d. 13 H), 'Uthmān, ﷺ, (d. 36 H), Umm Salamah, ﷺ, (d. 59 H), Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, ﷺ, (d. 52 H), Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, ﷺ, (d. 32 H), Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, ﷺ, (d. 51 H), Ubayy b. Ka'b, ﷺ, (d. 19 H) and Mu'ādh b. Jabal, ﷺ, (d. 18 H) have narrated between one hundred and five hundred *Aḥādīth* each.

The Followers (*Tābi'in*)

Besides the Companions, the period of those senior Followers cannot be forgotten: those by whose wealth of selfless and sincere efforts, the Ummah of Muḥammad will be enriched with the treasures of the *Sunnah* until the Day of Judgment. Some of these seniors are introduced as follows:

1. Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib, ؓ. He was born in Madīnah in the second year of the reign of al-Fārūq [i.e. 'Umar], d. 105 H. He took the knowledge of Ḥadīth from 'Uthmān, 'Ā'ishah, Abū Hurayrah and Zayd b. Thābit, ؓ all.
2. 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr, ؓ. He is regarded as one of the outstanding people of knowledge in Madīnah. He was the nephew of 'Ā'ishah, and narrated *Aḥādīth* mostly from his honourable maternal aunt. He also had the honour of being the student of Abū Hurayrah and Zayd b. Thābit. Many people of knowledge, including the likes of Ṣāliḥ b. Kaysān and Imām al-Zuhrī, were amongst his students. He died in 94 H.
3. Sālim b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar, ؓ, is counted amongst the Seven *Fuqahā'*<sup>4</sup> of Madīnah. He took the knowledge of Ḥadīth from his illustrious father and other Companions. His students included Nāfi', al-Zuhrī and other famous Followers. He passed away in 106 H.
4. Nāfi', freed slave of 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar ؓ. He is the special student of 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar ؓ, and the teacher of Imām Mālik, may Allah have mercy on him. The traditionists regard this chain of narration (Mālik from Nāfi' from 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar ؓ from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as the "Golden Chain". He passed away in 117 H.

## 2.2.1.2 Written Legacy of the First Phase

1. *Ṣaḥīfah Ṣādiqah*. This was compiled by 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ ؓ, d. 63 H, aged 77. He had a special inclination

4. Or jurists, literally "men of understanding".

towards writing and compilation. Whatever he heard from the Prophet ﷺ, he would write down, and had permission from the Prophet ﷺ to do so.<sup>5</sup> This compilation consisted of about a thousand *Aḥādīth*, and remained preserved amongst his family for a period; it can now be found in full within the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad, may Allah have mercy upon him.

2. *Ṣaḥīfah Ṣaḥīḥah*, compiled by Hammām b. Munabbih (d. 101 H), one of Abū Hurayrah's famous students who used to write down the narrations from his illustrious teacher. Manuscripts of this work are found in the libraries of Berlin and Damascus. Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal has included this entire *ṣaḥīfah* in his famous *Musnad* under Abū Hurayrah's section.<sup>6</sup> A few years ago, the document was published in Hyderabad through the efforts of Dr. Hamidullah; it consists of 138 narrations. This *ṣaḥīfah* is a subset of the totality of Abū Hurayrah's narrations, and most of its narrations are also found in Bukhārī and Muslim, with similar wording and no significant differences.
3. Another of Abū Hurayrah's students, Bashīr b. Nuḥayk, also compiled a collection of *Ḥadīth*. Upon parting from Abū Hurayrah, Bashīr recited it to his teacher and received the latter's approval.<sup>7</sup>
4. *Musnad* of Abū Hurayrah ﷺ. Copies of this were written during the time of the Companions. One of these copies was in the possession of the father of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān (d. 86 H), the governor of Egypt. He wrote to Kathīr b. Murrah, "Write down those *Aḥādīth* that you have from the Noble Companions, but there is no need to send the narrations of Abū Hurayrah, since we have those with us in written form."<sup>8</sup> A copy of the

5. *Mukhtaṣar Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm*, pp. 36-37.

6. See *Musnad Aḥmad*, Vol. 2, pp. 312-8. For details, see the preface to *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām b. Munabbih*, ed. Dr. Hamidullah.

7. *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm*, Vol. 1, p. 72; *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Vol. 1, p. 470.

8. Preface to *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām*, p. 50, quoting from *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa'd*, Vol. 7, p. 157.

*Musnad* of Abū Hurayrah, written by the hand of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah, exists in a library in Germany.<sup>9</sup>

5. *Ṣaḥīfah* of ‘Alī ؓ. Through Imām Bukhārī’s description, we know that this collection was quite bulky.<sup>10</sup> Points related to *zakāt*, the sanctity of Madīnah, the Sermon at the Farewell *Hajj* and the constitution of the Islamic amirate were recorded therein.
6. The written form of the Prophet’s Sermon, ؐ. On the occasion of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet, ؐ, ordered Abū Shāh of Yemen to record in writing his detailed sermon, upon the latter’s request.<sup>11</sup> This sermon consisted of important explanations regarding human rights.
7. *Ṣaḥīfah* of Jābir ؓ. The narrations of Jābir b. ‘Abdullāh ؓ were compiled in written form by his students Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110 H) and Sulaymān b. Qays al-Shukrī.<sup>12</sup> This collection covered the rites of *Hajj* and the Sermon of the Farewell *Hajj*.
8. Narrations of ‘Ā’ishah *Ṣiddīqah* ؓ. The *Aḥādith* of ‘Ā’ishah ؓ were recorded in writing by her nephew and student, ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr ؓ.<sup>13</sup>
9. *Aḥādith* of Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ. There were a number of collections of the narrations of ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās ؓ. Sa‘īd b. Jubayr (may Allah have mercy on him), the Follower, was one of those who used to compile his narrations in written form.<sup>14</sup>
10. The *Ṣaḥīfahs* of Anas b. Mālīk ؓ. Sa‘īd b. Hilāl (may Allah have mercy on him) says that Anas b. Mālīk ؓ used to bring out his written notes and show them to us, saying, “I heard these statements personally from the Messenger of Allah, ؐ.

9. Introduction to *Tuhfat al-Aḥwadhī Sharḥ Tirmidhī*, p. 165.

10. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-I’tisām bi’l-Kitāb wa’l-Sunnah*, Vol. 1, p. 451.

11. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 20; *Mukhtaṣar Jāmi‘ Bayān al-‘Ilm*, p. 36; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 439.

12. *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Vol. 4, p. 215.

13. *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, p. 183.

14. *Sunan al-Dārimī*, p. 68.

After recording them in writing, I confirmed them by reading them back to him.”<sup>15</sup>

11. ‘Amr b. Ḥazm ؓ. When the Prophet ﷺ was sending him to Yemen as governor, he gave him a written code of instructions. He not only preserved this letter, but included other Prophetic statements alongside it, thus compiling a significantly-sized book.<sup>16</sup>
12. The treatise of Samurah b. Jundub ؓ. This was inherited by his son, and was a very large treasure of narrations.<sup>17</sup>
13. *Ṣaḥīfah* of Sa’d b. ‘Ubādah ؓ, the Companion who knew how to read and write from the *Jāhiliyyah* period.
14. The writings of Nāfi’ ؓ. Sulaymān b. Mūsā narrated that ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar ؓ would dictate and Nāfi’ ؓ would record what he said in writing.<sup>18</sup>
15. Ma’n narrated that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abdullāh b. Mas‘ūd brought out a book before him and took an oath, saying that it was written by the hand of his father, ‘Abdullāh b. Mas‘ūd ؓ.<sup>19</sup>

Were the process of investigation and verification to be continued, many more such examples and instances would be found.

In this phase, the Noble Companions (*Ṣaḥābah*) and Senior Followers (*Ṭabī‘ūn*) concentrated on writing down the contents of their own memories. In the second phase, the work of collection and compilation increased and widened. As well as their own information, the collectors of *Ḥadīth* met with the people of knowledge in their city or area and also consolidated their narrations.

15. Preface to *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām*, p. 34, quoting from Khaṭīb Baghdādī. Cf. *Mustadrak Ḥākim*, Vol. 3, p. 574.

16. *Al-Wathā‘iq al-Siyāsiyyah*, p. 105. Also Dr. Hamidullah, quoting from Tabarī, p. 104.

17. *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* of Ibn ‘Aṣār, Vol. 4, p. 236.

18. Dārimī, p. 69. Cf. Preface to *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām*, p. 45, quoting from *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa’d*.

19. *Mukhtaṣar Jāmi‘ Bayān al-‘Ilm*, p. 37.

2.2.2 *The Second Phase*

This second phase ends around the middle of the second century *hijrī*. In this phase was produced a large group of Followers who absorbed the literature of the first phase into wider compilations.

2.2.2.1 *Compilers of Hadīth*

1. Muḥammad b. Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124 H). He is one of the outstanding *muḥaddithūn* of his time, and gained knowledge of *Hadīth* from the following illustrious personalities: from the Companions, 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar, Anas b. Mālīk and Sahl b. Sa'd رضي الله عنه; from the Followers, Sa'id b. al-Musayyib, Maḥmūd b. Rabī' and others. His students included Imāms of *Hadīth* such as Imām Awzā'i, Imām Mālīk and Sufyān b. 'Uyaynah. In 101 H, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz ordered him to gather and collect *Aḥādīth*. Apart from him, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz also instructed the governor of Madīnah, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Ḥazm, to record in writing the treasure of *Hadīth* possessed by 'Amrah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Qāsim b. Muḥammad. ('Amrah was one of the distinguished students of 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, and Qāsim b. Muḥammad was the latter's fraternal nephew - 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها had personally supervised their upbringing and education.)<sup>20</sup> This was not all, for 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz further issued a special directive to all people of authority in the Islamic lands to gather and compile all sources of *Hadīth*. As a result of this, volumes upon volumes of *Aḥādīth* were sent to the seat of the Caliphate in Damascus. The Caliph of the time distributed copies of these to every corner of the empire.<sup>21</sup> After Imām Zuhri's compilation of a collection of *Hadīth*, other people of knowledge of this era also began to work on recording and compiling *Hadīth*. The following personalities achieved the honour of being amongst the forerunners in this regard.

20. *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* of Ibn Ḥajar, Vol. 7, p. 172.

21. *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, Vol. 1, p. 106. *Mukhtaṣar Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm*, p. 38.

2. 'Abd al-Malik b. Jurayj (d. 150 H), in Makkah;
3. Imām Awzā'ī (d. 157 H), in Syria;
4. Ma'mar b. Rāshid (d. 153 H), in Yemen;
5. Imām Sufyān Thawrī (d. 161), in Kufa;
6. Imām Hammād b. Salamah (d. 167 H), in Basra; and
7. Imām 'Abdullāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181 H), in Khurasan.
8. Imām Mālik b. Anas (b. 93 H, died 179 H). After Imām Zuhri, the distinction of compiling *Hadith* in Madīnah was achieved by him. He learnt from Nāfi', Zuhri and other outstanding people of knowledge; his teachers reached 900 in number. By way of his overflowing spring, thousands of thirsty seekers of the *Sunnah* were quenched in the Hijaz, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt and Africa. His students included such famous personalities as Layth b. Sa'd (d. 175 H), Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181 H), Imām Shāfi'ī (d. 204 H) and Imām Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189 H).

#### 2.2.2.2 Written Legacy of the Second Phase

1. *Muwatta'* of Imām Mālik. In this phase, many collections of *Hadith* were compiled, amongst which Imām Mālik's *Muwatta'* occupies the highest rank. Compiled during the period 130-141 H, it has a total of over 1700 narrations, of which 600 are *marfū'* (narrations from the Prophet ﷺ), 228 are *mursal* (where a Follower quotes the Prophet directly without naming the Companion), 613 are *mawqūf* (statements of the Companions), and 285 are *maqtū'* (statements of the Followers).

The following are the names of some of the other compilations from this phase.

2. The *Jāmi'* of Sufyān Thawrī (d. 161 H).
3. The *Jāmi'* of Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181 H).
4. The *Jāmi'* of Imām Awzā'ī (d. 157 H).
5. The *Jāmi'* of Ibn Jurayj (d. 150 H).
6. *Kitāb al-Kharāj* of Qādī Abū Yūsuf (d. 182 H).
7. *Kitāb al-Āthār* of Imām Muḥammad (d. 189 H).

In this phase, the *Aḥādīth* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the *āthār* of the Companions and *fatāwā* of the Followers used to be arranged in the same collection. However, it was always made clear whether a statement was that of a Companion or Follower, or the *Hadīth* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

### 2.2.3 The Third Phase

This phase starts around the second half of the second century *hijrī* and extends until the end of the fourth century.

#### 2.2.3.1 Distinguishing Features of the Third Phase

The distinguishing features of this phase are as follows:

1. *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet, ﷺ, were compiled separately to the *āthār* of the Companions and statements of the Followers.
2. Separate compilations of reliable transmissions were prepared. In this way, after investigation and verification, the works of the second phase were absorbed into the bulky books of the third phase.
3. Not only were narrations gathered in this phase, but in order to preserve the knowledge of *Hadīth*, the noble *muḥaddithūn* laid the foundations of over a hundred sciences related to *Hadīth*. Until today, thousands of books have been written on these sciences. May Allah accept their effort and grant them the best reward on our behalf!

#### 2.2.3.2 The Sciences of *Hadīth*

In concise terms, some of these sciences are introduced here:

1. *Asmā' al-Rijāl* (Names of the Narrators). In this science, the situations of narrators, their dates of birth and death, details of their teachers and students and journeys seeking knowledge, and the verdicts of *Hadīth* experts regarding their reliability (whether reliable or unreliable) are recorded.

This science is extremely vast, very beneficial and highly interesting. Even some bigoted Orientalists were not able to avoid admitting that, as a result of this science, the biographies of 500,000 narrators have been preserved. This distinguishing feature is one in which the Muslim nation is unrivalled.<sup>22</sup>

Numerous books have been written in this science, of which some are:

- a. *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* by Imām Yūsuf al-Mizzī (d. 742 H), the most important and authoritative work in its field.
  - b. *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, commentator on Bukhārī. This work is in twelve volumes, and has been published from Hyderabad-Deccan.
  - c. *Tadhkirat al-Huffāẓ* by ‘Allāmah Dhahabī (d. 748).
2. *Mustalah* or *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* (“Terminology or Foundations of *Ḥadīth*”). In the light of this science the principles and conditions relating to the authenticity or weakness of *Aḥādīth* come to be known.<sup>23</sup> The most famous book in this field is *‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, also known as *Muqaddimah Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, written by Abū ‘Amr ‘Uthmān b. al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 577 H). In the recent past, two books on *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth* have been produced:
- a. *Tawjīh al-Nazar* by ‘Allāmah Ṭāhir b. Ṣāliḥ al-Jazā’irī (d. 1338 H);
  - b. *Qawā’id al-Taḥdīth* by ‘Allāmah Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī (d. 1332 H). The former is distinguished by its breadth of coverage, the latter by its excellent arrangement.
3. *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* (“Rare words in *Ḥadīth*”). In this science, linguistic analysis of difficult words occurring in *Aḥādīth*

22. Introduction to *al-Isābah*, English ed., Springer, Calcutta, 1864.

23. See a brief discussion on the classification and terminology of *Ḥadīth* in the later pages of this Introduction.

has been carried out. Famous works in this field are *al-Fā'iq* by 'Allāmah Zamakhsharī (d. 538 H) and *al-Nihāyah* by Ibn al-Athīr (d. 606 H).

4. *Takhrīj al-Ḥadīth* – Through this science, the original sources of narrations found in famous books of *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, *taṣawwuf* and *'aqā'id* are traced. For example, the *Hidāyah* by Burhān al-Dīn 'Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Marghīnānī (d. 592 H) and *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* by Imām Ghazālī (d. 505 H) contain many narrations without a chain of narration or reference. Now, if someone would like to find out the grade of authenticity of these narrations and which major works of Ḥadīth they are found in, they should refer to *Naṣb al-Rāyah* by Ḥāfiẓ Zayla'ī (d. 792 H) and *al-Dirāyah* by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī (d. 852 H) for the former, and to *al-Mughnī 'an Ḥaml al-Asfār* by Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī (d. 806 H) for the latter.
5. *Al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'ah* ("Fabricated Aḥādīth"). In this field, the people of knowledge have compiled independent books into which *mawḍū'* (fabricated) narrations have been sifted out. In this regard, *al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'ah* by Qāḍī Shawkānī (d. 1255 H) and *al-La'ālī' al-Maṣnū'ah* ("Artificial Pearls") by Ḥāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī (d. 911 H) are most prominent.
6. *Al-Nāsikh wa'l-Mansūkh* ("Abrogating and Abrogated Ḥadīth"). In this field, *Kitāb al-I'tibār* by Imām Muḥammad b. Mūsā Ḥāzimī (d. 784 H aged 35) is the most famous and authoritative.
7. *Al-Tawfiq bayn al-Aḥādīth* ("Reconciling Aḥādīth"). In this science, the correct explanation is given of those narrations which are apparently mutually contradictory or conflicting. The first to discuss this field was Imām Shāfi'ī (d. 204 H), and his treatise is famously known as *Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*. Another beneficial book in this field is *Mushkil al-Āthār* by Imām Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321 H).
8. *Al-Mukhtalif wa'l-Mu'talif* ("Narrators with similar names"). In this science, special attention is given to those narrators whose names, bynames, nicknames and names of fathers, grandfathers or teachers are similar, leading to the possibility of a person unfamiliar with these matters to become

embroiled in error. In this field, the most comprehensive book is Hāfiz Ibn Hajar's *Ta'bir al-Munabbih*.

9. *Atrāf al-Hadith* ("Phrases from *Hadith*"). Through this science, it is possible to find out the narrator and reference of phrases from *Hadith*. For example, if someone remembers a sentence from *Hadith* such as "Actions are only by intention," and wishes to know the complete narration and its sources and narrators, then recourse must be had to this science. In this field, the book *Tuhfat al-Ashraf* by Hāfiz Mizzi (d. 742 H) is very detailed, comprising an index of all narrations in the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah* ("Six Authentic Books"). Hāfiz Yūsuf Mizzi spent 26 years compiling this book, and completed it after extremely difficult toil. Today's Orientalists have taken a leaf out of books such as these and compiled indexes of *Hadith* in a rather new fashion. For example, *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* ("Key to the Treasures of the *Sunnah*") was published in English and its Arabic translation was published in Cairo in 1934. Now, there is another comprehensive index compiled under the name *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras*, of which twenty parts have been published so far.<sup>24</sup>
10. *Fiqh al-Hadith* ("Jurisprudence of *Hadith*"). In this science, the secrets and wisdoms in *Aḥādith* related to legal rulings are unveiled. On this subject, one can benefit from the book *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'in* of Hāfiz Ibn Qayyim (d. 751 H) and *Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah* of Shāh Waliullāh of Delhi. Apart from these, the people of knowledge have also devoted separate compilations to different aspects of life. For example, in the area of transactions, *Kitāb al-Amwāl* ("Book of Wealth") by Abū 'Ubayd Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224 H) is well-known, and in the issues related to land, *'ushr*, *kharāj* (land-tax) etc., the best work is *Kitāb al-Kharāj* by Qādī Abū Yūsuf. Therefore, study of the following works can establish the authority of the *Sunnah* as a source of Law and expose the misconceptions spread by the rejecters of *Hadith*:

24. The latest encyclopaedias of *Hadith*, in both printed and electronic form, now have vast indexes of *Hadith* narrations. – Trans. Note

- a. *Kitāb al-Umm* by Imām Shāfi'ī
- b. *Al-Risālah* of Imām Shāfi'ī
- c. *Al-Muwāfaqāt* by Abū Ishāq Shātibī (d. 790 H)
- d. *Ṣawā'iq Mursalāh* by Ibn Qayyim
- e. *Al-Ihkām* by Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī (d. 456 H)
- f. The introduction to *Tarjumān al-Sunnah* (Urdu) by Mawlānā Badr-i-'Alam Mirthī
- g. *Ithbāt al-Khabar* by my respected father, Mawlānā Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-Sattār Ḥasan 'Umarpūrī (d. 1916/1334 H aged 34)<sup>25</sup>
- h. *Sunnat kī Ā'ini Haithiyat* ("The Constitutional Status of the *Sunnah*") by Mawlānā Sayyid Abul A'lā Mawdūdī.
- i. *Inkār-e-Ḥadīth kā Manẓar aur Pas Manẓar* ("The Background and Context of Ḥadīth-Rejection") by Iftikhar Ahmad Balkhi is also interesting and informative. So far, two parts of it have been published.
- j. A while ago, 'Allāmah Muṣṭafā Sibā'ī began an extremely beneficial series of articles on the authority of Ḥadīth in *Risālah al-Muslimūn*, Damascus. This has been translated into Urdu by my colleague Malik Ghulam 'Ali, and published as a booklet named *Sunnat-e-Rasūl ṣalla'LLāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*.

The following works on the history of the science of Ḥadīth and related topics are models of comprehensiveness and benefit: the introduction to *Fath al-Bārī* by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar; *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa Ahlih* by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr al-Andalusī (d. 463 H); *Ma'rifah 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* by Imām Ḥākim (d. 405 H); and the introduction to *Tuhfat al-Aḥwadhī* by the muḥaddith Mawlānā 'Abd al-Raḥmān Mubārakpūrī (d. 1353 H/1935). In the works of the recent past, this book is a masterpiece in terms of its comprehensiveness and benefit. Similarly, the introduction

25. It was during the lifetime of my esteemed grandfather, Mawlānā Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-Jabbār Muḥaddith 'Umarpūrī (d. 1334/1916) that the Ḥadīth-rejection *fitnah* of Maulvī 'Abdullāh Chakrālwi reared its head. My respected grandfather began a series of beneficial refutations and researched articles in his monthly *Diryā' al-Sunnah* at the time.

to *Fath al-Mulhim* by Mawlānā Shabbīr Aḥmad ‘Uthmānī and *Tadwīn-i-Hadīth* (in Urdu) by the late Mawlānā Manāẓir Aḥsan Gīlānī are jewels in their breadth of information.

### 2.2.3.3 The Compilers of *Hadīth* in the Third Phase

The following is an introduction to the outstanding and well-known compilers of *Hadīth* and reliable works of this phase:

1. Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (b. 164 H, d. 241 H). His most important compilation is known as *Musnad Aḥmad*, and [it] comprises 30,000 narrations. In its twenty volumes, every *Hadīth* worth mentioning has been included. Instead of arrangement by subject, all narrations by a particular Companion are arranged in one place. The work of arranging this book by chapter and subject was begun by the learned father of Ḥasan al-Bannā, Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Sā‘atī. So far, 14 volumes have been published. The famous scholar of Egypt, Aḥmad Shākīr, is also working on this. Until now, almost 15 parts have been compiled.
2. Imām Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī (b. 194 H, d. 256 H). His year of birth equates to *ṣidq*<sup>26</sup> (“truthfulness”), and his year of death to *nūr* (“light”). Of all his works, Imām Bukhārī’s most important and authoritative book is *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Its full name is *al-Jāmī‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad al-Mukhtaṣar min Umūr Rasūl Allāh ṣalla‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa ālihi wa sallam wa ayyāmih* (The Comprehensive, Authentic, Fully-Traced Abridgement from the Matters of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, and his Days), and took sixteen years to compile. The number of students that studied the *Ṣaḥīḥ* directly with Imām Bukhārī reached 90,000. Sometimes, the audience in one sitting would reach 30,000 in number. In such a

26. This equivalence is worked out according to the *Abjad* numerical system, where the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet take numerical values ranging from 1 (*alif*) to 1,000 (*ghayn*). – Trans. Note

gathering, the number of people conveying words to the audience would exceed 300. The total number of *Aḥādīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is 9,684. If repeated narrations, *ta'liqāt* (narrations without *isnād*), reports from the Companions and *mursal Aḥādīth* are omitted, the number of *marfū'* narrations is 2,623. Compared to other *muḥaddithūn*, Imām Bukhārī kept his criteria for accepting narrators very high.

3. Imām Muslim b. Ḥajjāj Qushayrī (b. 202 H, d. 261 H). Imām Bukhārī and Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal are amongst his teachers, and Imām Tirmidhī, Abū Ḥātim Rāzī, and Abū Bakr b. Khuzaymah are counted amongst his students. His book *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* is regarded as most outstanding in terms of its excellent arrangement.
4. Imām Abū Dāwūd, Ash'ath b. Sulaymān Sijistānī (b. 202, d. 275 H). His most important work is famous by the name of *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, and comprehensively gathers narrations mostly regarding legal rulings. It is a brilliant source for juristic and legal issues, and consists of 4,800 *Aḥādīth*.
5. Imām Abū 'Isā Tirmidhī (b. 209 H, d. 279 H). In his *Jāmi' Tirmidhī*, different *fiqhī* positions are explained in detail.
6. Imām Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb Nasā'ī (d. 303 H). His work is called *al-Sunan al-Mujtaba*.
7. Imām Muḥammad b. Yazīd ibn Mājah Qazwīnī (d. 273 H). His book is famous by the name of *Sunan Ibn Mājah*.

Apart from *Musnad Aḥmad*, the other six books in the terminology of the *muḥaddithūn* are known as the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah* ("Six Authentic Collections"). Some of the people of knowledge include the *Muwatta'* of Imām Mālik amongst the *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah* instead of *Sunan Ibn Mājah*. Apart from these, many other beneficial and comprehensive compilations were produced in this phase, but there is no scope here for going into details of those.

The collections of Bukhārī, Muslim and Tirmidhī are known as *Jāmi'* ("Comprehensive Works"), i.e. they include *Aḥādīth* about beliefs, worship, manners, transactions and many other topics.

The works of Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī and Ibn Mājah are known as *Sunan* ("Traditions"), i.e. they mostly have narrations related to practical matters of life.

#### 2.2.3.4 Grades of *Hadīth* Books

With regards to authenticity and strength, the *muḥaddithūn* have graded all books of *Hadīth* into four levels:

1. *Muwatta'* Imām Mālik, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. With regards to the authenticity of their chains of narration and reliability of transmitters, these three books occupy the highest station.
2. The *Sunan* collections of Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī. Some of the narrators in these books are below those of the highest grade in terms of reliability. However, they are nevertheless regarded as reliable. *Musnad Aḥmad* is also included in this category.
3. The *Sunan* works of Dārimī (d. 225 H), Ibn Mājah, Bayhaqī and Darāquṭnī (d. 385 H), the books of Ṭabarānī (d. 360 H), the works of Ṭahāwī (d. 321 H), the *Musnad* of Imām Shāfi'ī, and the *Mustadrak* of Ḥākim (d. 405 H). In these books, every type of narration is found, including weak as well as authentic ones. However, the majority of narrations are reliable.
4. The works of Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī (d. 310 H), Khaṭīb Baghdādī (d. 463 H), Abū Nu'aym (d. 403 H), Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571 H), Daylamī (author of *Musnad al-Firdaws*, d. 509 H), *Kāmil* of Ibn 'Adī (d. 365 H), the compilations of Ibn Mardawayh (d. 410 H), Wāqidī (d. 207 H) and the works of other authors such as these are included in this category. These compilations are a collection of "ripe" as well as "rotten" material, and even include many fabricated narrations. Public preachers, historians and Sufis mostly depend upon these books. However, with careful sifting, precious gems can be extracted from them, acceptable for presentation.

2.2.4 *The Fourth Phase*

This begins around the fifth century *hijrī*, and continues even today.

## 2.2.4.1 Types of Work in this Phase

At the beginning of this phase, the style of compilation of the third phase had reached its conclusion. Since then, the details of the work that has been done during this long period is as follows:

1. Important books of *Hadīth* had commentaries and marginal notes written upon them, and were translated into other languages.
2. In the sciences of *Hadīth* mentioned earlier, many works were produced and commentaries and abridgements were made based upon them.
3. The people of knowledge have compiled beneficial books by selecting *Aḥādīth* from the works of the third phase, according to taste or necessity. Some of these are:
  - a. *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* ("The Niche of Lamps") by Walī al-Dīn Khaṭīb Tabrīzī. This gathers narrations related to beliefs, worship, transactions, character, manners and the Resurrection and Judgment.
  - b. *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* ("Gardens of the Righteous") by Imām Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥya b. Sharaf al-Nawawī, commentator on *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim (d. 676 H). This is a selection of *Hadīth* mostly related to character and manners. At the beginning of each chapter, Qur'ānic verses related to the subject have also been mentioned, and this is the important distinguishing feature of this book. It has the same style of compilation and arrangement as that of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.
  - c. *Muntaqā al-Akḥbār* ("Selection of Reports") by Majd al-Dīn Abū'l-Barakāt 'Abd al-Salām b. Taymiyyah

(d. 652 H), the grandfather of the famous Shaykh al-Islām Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H). A commentary on this work in eight volumes has been written by Qāḍī Shawkānī, with the name *Nayl al-Awtār* ("Achieving the Aims").

- d. *Bulūgh al-Marām* ("Attaining the Objective") by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852 H), commentator on *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*. This contains *Aḥādīth* mostly related to worship and transactions. The commentary in Arabic, *Subul al-Salām* ("Paths of Peace"), flowed from the pen of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-San'ānī (d. 1182 H). Another commentary, *Misk al-Khitām* ("Musk of the Seal"), was compiled in Persian by Nawāb Siddīq Ḥasan Khān (d. 1307 H).

Most of these works were translated and published in Urdu, quite some time ago.

#### 2.2.4.2 The Science of *Ḥadīth* in Undivided India

The first person to shine the candle of the science of *Ḥadīth* in undivided India was Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dehlawī b. Sayf al-Dīn Turk (d. 1052 H). After him, the lifelong sacrifices and strenuous efforts of Shāh Waliullāh (d. 1176 H) and his children, grandchildren and inspired students led to the Light of the *Sunnah* shining brightly in this land. *And the earth shall shine by the light of its Lord.*<sup>27</sup>

Since Shāh Waliullāh, may the Mercy of Allah be upon him, the sacred work of preparing and publishing translations, commentaries, and selections of *Ḥadīth* has continued to this day. It is hoped that this work, *Intikhāb-e-Ḥadīth* ("Selection of *Ḥadīth*"), will also be a link in this chain.

It is a favour from Allah that the author of this collection achieves the good fortune of imitating the servants of *Ḥadīth*, otherwise, where is this humble servant compared to those great

27. *Sūrah al-Zumar*, 39: 69.

souls who devoted their entire lives to collecting and spreading the *Ḥadīth* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ?

*I love the righteous, without being of them:  
Perhaps Allah will grant me righteousness.*<sup>28</sup>

By consulting the above survey of the science of *Ḥadīth*, it can be gauged that from the Prophetic era until today, there has never been a period when the chain of writing and transmitting *Ḥadīth* has been interrupted. This is that chain of knowledge whose day is bright and its night is also full of shining lights and illuminating lamps. [As is related in an authentic *Ḥadīth*:] its night is like its day.

Between the beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and present-day students of *Ḥadīth*, there is a chain of 23 or 24 teachers. On the following pages, following the way of the *muḥaddithūn*, the *sanad* (chain of transmission) of the author of this book is presented diagrammatically, bringing some 1,400 years of the chain of narrators of *Ḥadīth* right before the eyes. *And their cry will always end with: "All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the entire Universe".*<sup>29</sup> *Our Lord! Accept this from us; You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing!*<sup>30</sup> *My Lord, dispose me that I may give thanks for the bounty that You have bestowed upon me and my parents, and dispose me that I may do righteous deeds that would please You, and also make my descendants righteous. I repent to You, and I am one of those who surrender themselves to You.*<sup>31</sup>

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28. This is a couplet attributed to Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, as it occurs in his *Diwān*. In one version, the lines continue thus:

*I hate the one whose trade is in vice,  
Although we’re involved in the same business!* [Trans. Note]

29. *Sūrah Yūnus*, 10: 10.

30. *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2: 127.

31. *Sūrah al-Aḥqāf*, 46: 15.

## 2.3 ḤADĪTH TERMINOLOGY

*Ḥadīth*: The sayings, actions and approvals<sup>32</sup> of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are known as *Ḥadīth*.

*Aṭhar*: The saying or action of a Companion is known as *aṭhar* (pl. *Āṭhār*)

*Sanad*: The chain of narrators of a *Ḥadīth*.

*Matn*: The text of a *Ḥadīth*.

*Mutāwatir* report: The narrators are so many in each stage that it is ordinarily impossible for them all to agree upon a lie. There are several types of *tawātur*:

- i. in every era, transmission and narration continue for generation after generation, widely and generally, e.g. the Majestic Qur'ān;
- ii. practical *tawātur*, e.g. the prayer times, and the basic forms of *adhān* and *ṣalāt*;
- iii. *tawātur* in *isnād*, e.g. the *Ḥadīth*, "He who invents a lie upon my authority, let him prepare his seat in the Fire", has over a hundred narrators in just the generation of the Companions, and, similarly, the narration about the Finality of Prophethood;
- iv. *tawātur* in meaning: i.e. the common content of numerous narrations reaches the level of *tawātur*, e.g. the miracles of the Prophet, raising hands in supplication, etc. (from the introduction to *Fath al-Mulhim*).

*Aḥad* (pl. *āḥād*) or *wāḥid* report: The number of narrators does not reach the level of being *mutāwatir*. *Ḥadīth* scholars divide this into three categories:

- a. *mashhūr*: where the number of narrators is never less than three, after the stage of the Companions;

32. Approval (*taqrīr*) means that something was done in the presence of the Prophet, and he did not forbid it.

- b. *‘azīz*: where the number of narrators is at least two in every stage;
- c. *gharīb*: where there is only one narrator in any stage.

*Marfū‘*: A Ḥadīth attributed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

*Mawqūf*: A narration attributed to a Companion, i.e. his/her saying or action.

*Muttaṣil* (continuous): There is no reporter missing from the chain of narration.

*Munqati‘* (discontinuous): Opposite of *muttaṣil*.

*Mu‘allaq*: One or more narrators are omitted from the beginning of the *sanad*, or the entire *sanad* is omitted. The act of omission is called *ta‘liq*.

*Mu‘dal*: Two or more consecutive reporters are missing from a *sanad*.

*Mursal*: No Companion is mentioned between a Follower (*Tābi‘ī*) and the Prophet ﷺ.

*Shādhḍh* (peculiar): A narration where a reliable narrator contradicts a stronger narrator. The narration of the stronger narrator is known as *mahfūẓ* (preserved).

*Munkar* (rejected): If a weak reporter contradicts a reliable reporter, the former’s narration is called *munkar* (rejected); the latter’s is called *ma‘rūf* (approved).

*Mu‘allal* (subtly flawed): A narration that has a hidden defect, such that only experts in the science of Ḥadīth can detect it, e.g. erroneously making a *mawqūf* narration *marfū‘* or vice-versa.

*Ṣaḥīḥ* (genuine, authentic): a narration that satisfies the following conditions:

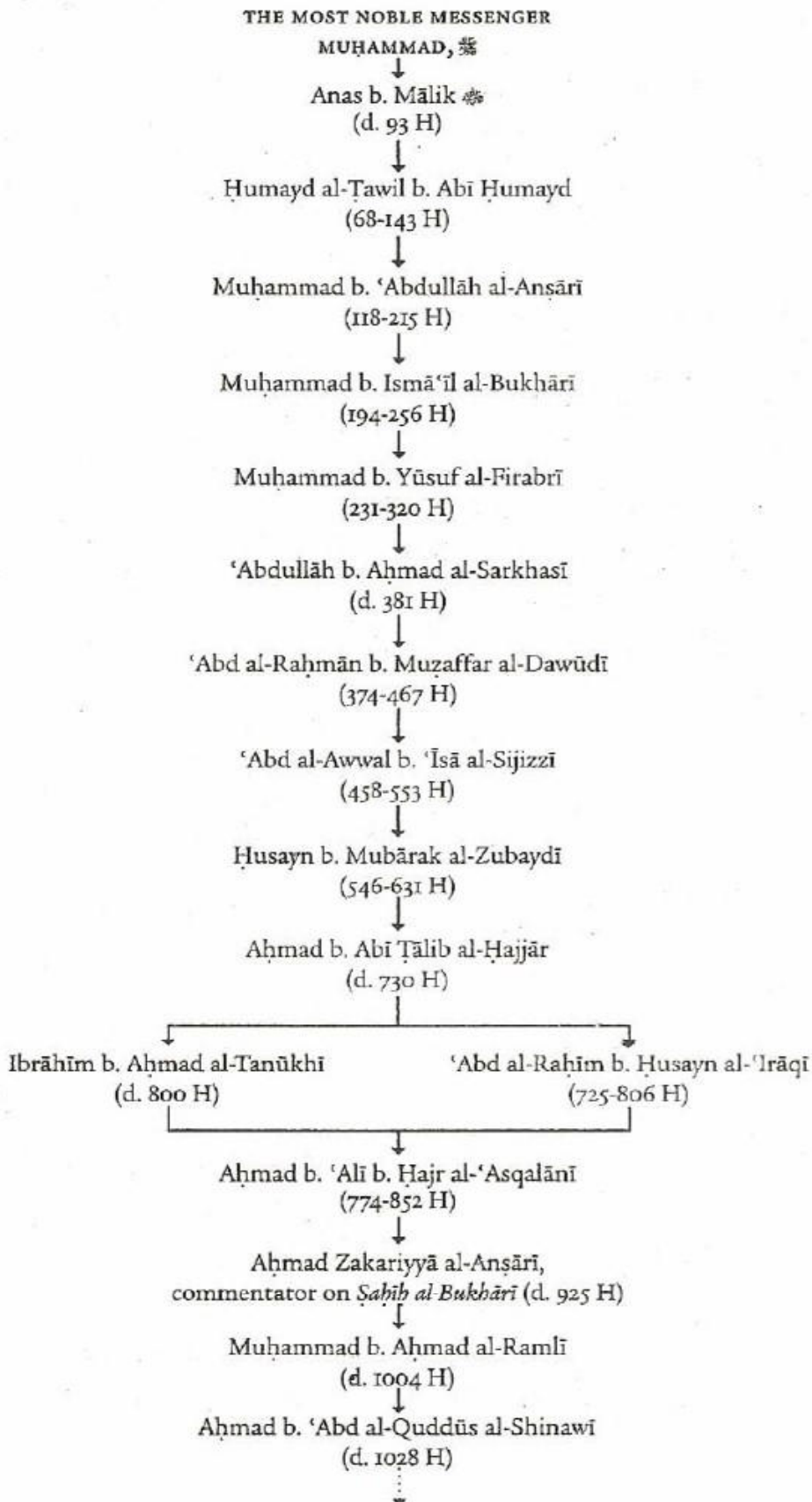
- a. the chain is *muttaṣil* (continuous);
- b. the reporters are trustworthy, i.e. reliable based on their biographies and character;
- c. their memory is sound;

- d. the narration is not *shādhah*;
- e. the narration is not *mu'allal*.

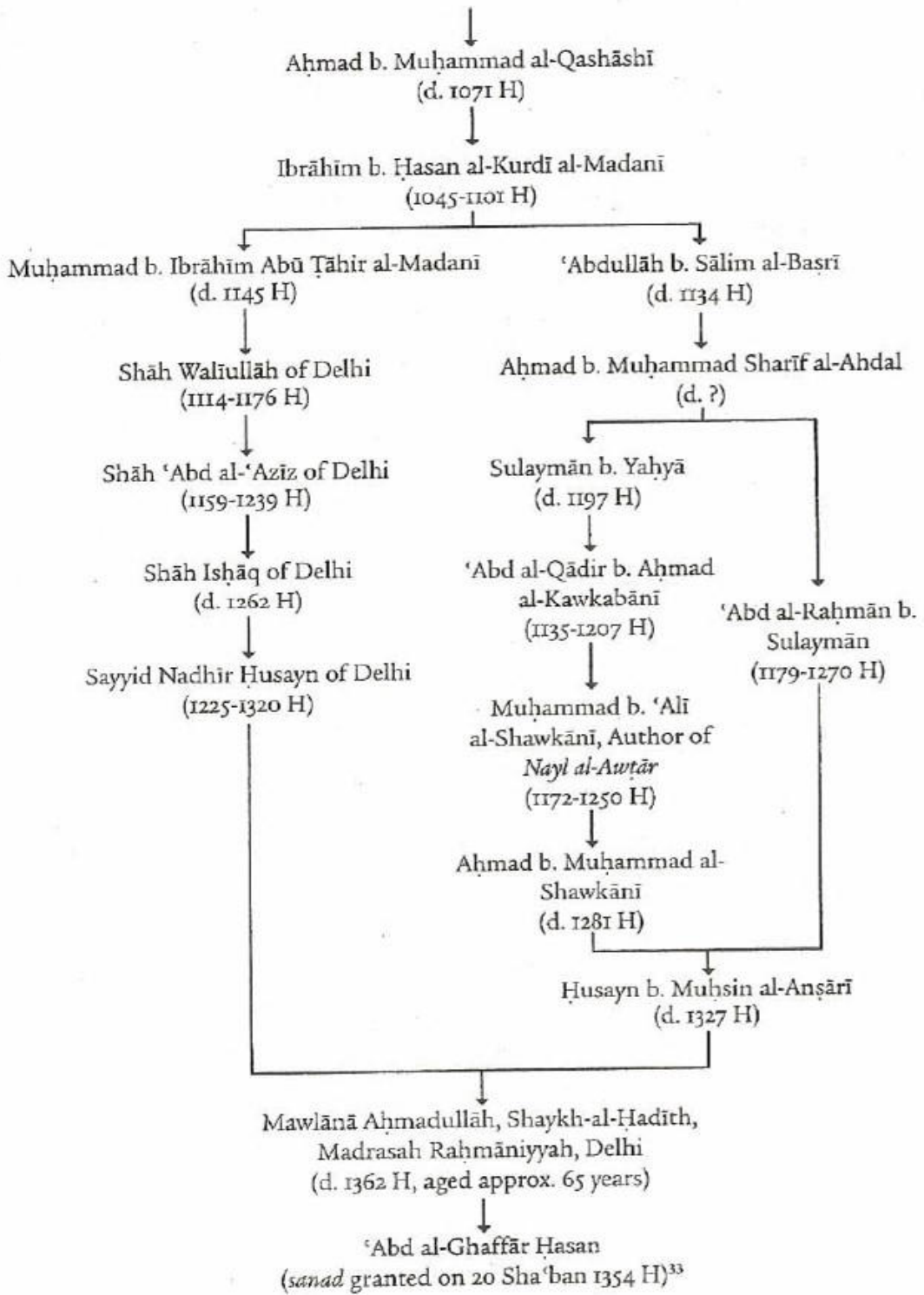
*Hasan*: A narration that satisfies the conditions of *ṣaḥīḥ*, except that the narrators are of a slightly lesser grade with regard to memory. If such a *ḥasan* narration is supported by another *ḥasan* narration, it is known as *ṣaḥīḥ li ghayrihi* (*ṣaḥīḥ* due to external support).

*Da'if* (weak): A narration that does not meet the conditions of *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*. Several *da'if* narrations can collectively rise to the level of *ḥasan li ghayrihi* (*ḥasan* due to external support), with the condition that the weakness is not due to corruption in the character and morality of the reporters (*Qawā'id al-Taḥḍīth*, p. 90). The most unreliable level of weakness is that where the reporters' own *taqwā* is suspect; such a narration is called *mawḍū'* (fabricated).

2.4 A TREE OF ḤADĪTH TRANSMISSION



# THE WAY OF THE PROPHET



33. Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghaffār Ḥasan taught thousands of students from over eighty countries around the world and granted the *isnād* and *ijāzah* (chain of transmission with permission to teach) to many of them. They include his own sons and scholars of *Ḥadīth*, Suhaib Hasan and Suhail Hasan, and Prof. Khurshid Ahmad of the Pakistan Senate, amongst other luminaries. I was therefore extremely honoured to receive the *isnād* and *ijāzah* myself from my grandfather on 14th Muharram, 1421 (20th April, 2000). – Trans. Note

## 2.4.1 Clarifications

1. The respected teacher Mawlānā Aḥmadullāh (may Allah have mercy upon him) took knowledge of *Ḥadīth* from two famous *Ḥadīth* teachers of his time: a) Mawlānā Sayyid Nadhīr Ḥusayn, and b) ‘Allāmah Ḥusayn b. Muḥsin al-Anṣārī. The former is a pupil of the respected Shaykh Ibrāhīm b. Ḥasan Kurdī via four intermediaries; the latter via six. The son of Qādī Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Shawkānī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, took knowledge of *Ḥadīth* from both his respected father and from ‘Allāmah ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaymān, who benefited fully and directly from his father Sulaymān b. Yaḥyā. Thus, the number of intermediaries between the respected Shaykh Ḥusayn b. Muḥsin Anṣārī and Ibrāhīm b. Ḥasan Kurdī is five instead of six. The *isnād* chains of Mawlānā Sayyid Nadhīr Ḥusayn and ‘Allāmah Ḥusayn b. Muḥsin Anṣārī meet above at Ibrāhīm b. Ḥasan Kurdī.
2. Only the *sanad* of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* is presented here as a “Tree of *Ḥadīth* Transmission”. Besides this there are other chains for other important sources of *Ḥadīth*, for details of which there is insufficient space here. There are numerous chains of narration from Imām Bukhārī to the Prophet ﷺ. Here, just one of the minimum-length chains is given.
3. Apart from Mawlānā Aḥmadullāh, the writer of these lines has also studied some of the books of *Ḥadīth* with Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Nigranhsāwī, Mawlānā Muḥammad Surtī and Mawlānā ‘Ubaydullāh Raḥmānī Mubārakpūrī. He has also had the opportunity to benefit briefly from Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥaddith Mubārakpūrī, commentator on *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*.

All praise is due to Allah, by Whose Favour righteous actions are completed.

17th Jumādā al-Ūlā 1376 H  
30th December 1956

‘Abd al-Ghaffār Ḥasan