

The *Science* of
Ḥadīth
and the *status* of
Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

Transcript of speech by
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at Madina Academy, Dewsbury

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The Science of Ḥadīth and the status of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

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TRANSLITERATION NOTE

The transliteration of Arabic names and terms into English follows the well-established scheme shown below.

ا aa or ā	ز z	ق q
ب b	س s	ك k
ت t	ش sh	ل l
ث th	ص ṣ	م m
ج j	ض dh	ن n
ح ḥ	ط ṭ	ه h
خ kh	ظ ḏ	و oo or ū, w (consonant)
د d	ع ʿ	ي ee or i, y (consonant)
ذ th	غ gh	ء ʾ
	ف f	

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Foreword

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All Praise be to Allah and peace and blessings
be upon His chosen servants

On 17 July 2021, Madina Academy, Dewsbury hosted its 3rd completion of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī programme for the graduating students of the Alimah course. For this special occasion I had invited my respected teacher Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Mufti Shabbir Ahmad دامت برکاتہم. Prior to the final lecture on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī I requested my friend Dr Mufti Yusuf Shabbir to address the participants which consisted of many scholars and seekers of knowledge in English.

Dr Mufti Yusuf Shabbir during his speech covered several themes including the status of Imam Bukhārī, the codification and evolution of Ḥadīth collections, the scrutiny of Ḥadīth scholars and the importance of Asānīd (chains of transmission).



This speech has now been transcribed by Usman Seedat, a student at Jamiatul Ilm wal Huda, Blackburn, UK. Some minor amendments have been made for clarity and readability and some references have been added in the footnotes.

May Allah accept this work and make it beneficial and a source of guidance.

“This is not at all difficult for Allah” (14:20).

—Mawlānā Khalil Ahmed Kazi
Madina Academy
Dewsbury, England
12th September 2022
15th Safar 1444

The *Science* of Ḥadīth
and the *status* of
Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، الحمد لله رب العالمين، والعاقبة للمتقين،
والصلاة والسلام على سيد الأنبياء والمرسلين، نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه
أجمعين، أما بعد:

My dear respected brothers, friends, colleagues, mothers and sisters,
Assalāmu ‘alaykum wa Raḥmatullāhi Ta‘ālā wa Barākātuh,

It is indeed a great honour and privilege for all of us here today to participate in this noble gathering wherein the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī will be completed by our students, by our girls. This book, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī is a very blessed book, a very noble book. The broad consensus of Muslim scholarship is that after the Qur’ān, which is the speech of Allah ﷻ, the most authentic book is this book.

IMAM BUKHĀRĪ AND THE AUTHORS OF THE SIX BOOKS

The author of this book is Imam Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Bukhārī ﷺ who was born on 13 Shawwāl 194



Hijri, which corresponds to 19 July 810 CE. This is approximately over 1200 years ago; today is 17 July 2021.

Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله was no ordinary person. Our respected teacher Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūnus Jownpūrī رحمته الله, who after teaching Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī for 50 years, mastering Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, living and sleeping within Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, described Imam Bukhārī's birth and thereafter his subsequent life as a miracle of Rasūlullāh ﷺ which manifested not in the life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, but some 184 years later through the birth of Imam Bukhārī who was born in Bukhara.

Bukhara is not Arabian, Bukhara is in Uzbekistan, in Mā Warā al-Nahr (Transoxiana) which was once upon a time the hub of Islamic scholarship. It is the qudrat (power) of Allah ﷻ. Subḥānallāh, it is amazing that a person cannot become a scholar, at least within the Indian subcontinent, until he or she studies the six books of ḥadīth, the Siḥaḥ Sittah, which are from amongst the most authentic of books. The amazing thing is that the authors of all these six books, Imam Bukhārī, Imam Tirmidhī, Imam Nasā'ī, Imam Abū Dāwūd, Imam Ibn Mājah, with the exception of Imam Muslim regarding whom there is a difference of opinion, were non-Arabs. When Allah ﷻ decides to take the work of dīn from someone, then Allah ﷻ does not necessarily look at ethnicity. Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله is from Bukhārā in Uzbekistan, Imam Tirmidhī رحمته الله is from Tirmidh which is in south Uzbekistan, on the border of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Imam Abū Dāwūd رحمته الله is from Sijistān which is in Iran, Imam Nasā'ī is from Nasā' which is in Turkmenistan and Imam Ibn Mājah is from Qazwīn which is in Iran.

Once upon a time, this entire region of Western Afghanistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, all these 'stans' were the hub of knowledge. And even Imam Muslim رحمته الله regarding whom there is a difference

of opinion, some scholars such as Imam Nawawī رحمہ اللہ, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ رحمہ اللہ and others are of the view that he was of Arab descent although he was born in Iran in Naysāpūr. However, our respected teacher Shaykh Yūnūs Sāhib رحمہ اللہ, and prior to him Ḥāfiẓ Dhahabī رحمہ اللہ, were of the view that even Imam Muslim رحمہ اللہ was not of Arab descent, because when you look at his lineage, there is a person in there whose name [Kūshādh] suggests that he was Persian, thus Imam Muslim was of Persian descent.

At that time, scholarship was in Arabia but also in this part of the world and for this great task of preserving the ṣaḥīḥ and authentic ḥadīths of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and compiling a book which was going to be the most authentic of books, Allah ﷻ chose a non-Arab. Until that point, the general view of the scholars was that the Muwaṭṭāʾ of Imam Mālik رحمہ اللہ was from the most authentic of books. In fact, this is also narrated from Imam Shāfiʿī رحمہ اللہ that the most authentic of books is the Muwaṭṭāʾ of Imam Mālik رحمہ اللہ, because at that time Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī did not exist. Imam Shāfiʿī رحمہ اللہ is the teacher of the teacher of Imam Bukhārī رحمہ اللہ. So, for this very noble task, for this collection which was going to be the most authentic book after the Qurʾān, Allah ﷻ chose a person of a non-Arab descent.

IMAM BUKHĀRĪ'S INTELLECT AND EFFORTS

Imam Bukhārī رحمہ اللہ is born, and there are many incidents which the ʿUlamāʾ have written in relation to his early life. His father passing away, him becoming blind, his mother making duʿāʾ to Allah ﷻ and thereafter seeing Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in her dream and thereafter Imam Bukhārī رحمہ اللہ is cured. From a very early age he is very intelligent and his memory is photographic, so much so that on one occasion he was in the gathering of Muḥaddith Dākhilī رحمہ اللہ who was reading a



ḥadīth that Sufyān ʿan (narrates from) Abi al-Zubayr ʿan [narrates from] Jābir. Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله corrected him that no, it is not Sufyān who is narrating from Abi al-Zubayr from Jābir, rather it is Sufyān who is narrating from Al-Zubayr who is Al-Zubayr ibn ʿAdī, and he corrected him. Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله was very young, so his teacher Muḥaddith Dākhilī رحمته الله initially thought that Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله has made a mistake but upon checking the original, he realised that Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله is correct and he was thereby corrected. ¹

Allah ﷻ gave Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله amazing intellect, amazing photographic memory, but just intellect and just photographic memory is not enough. You need to strive, and you need to work hard. A person may be intelligent and very clever but if he does not work hard, does not strive, particularly in the ʿUlūm (sciences) of Sharīʿah, in the ʿUlūm of Qurʾān, ḥadīth and fiqh, the intelligence will have limited impact if the person does not work hard and strive.

Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله, as was the practice at that time, travelled the Muslim world to various places where the ḥadīth scholars were at the time, from Baghdād to Kūfā to Baṣrah to Hijāz and other parts of the Muslim world. Then eventually he returned and passed away not too far from Bukhārā in a place called Khartang which is on the outskirts of Samarqand in Uzbekistan. Now they have also built a mausoleum and a masjid by Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله's grave.

ṢAḤĪḤ AL-BUKHĀRĪ

Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله wrote this book, Ṣaḥīḥ al Bukhārī which is a collection of 7,000 to 9,000 ḥadīths; there is some variation based

1 *Hudā al-Sārī (Muqaddima Faṭḥ al-Bārī)*, vol.2, p.528, Al-Risālah al-ʿĀlamiyyah, 2014/1434.

on different ways of numbering ḥadīths. Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله was موفق من الله [inspired by Allah]. Allah ﷻ had inspired him; for every ḥadīth that he inserted into this book he would perform ghusl, then he would perform two rak‘ah Ṣalāh al-Istikhārah and only after he was satisfied, he would insert the ḥadīth into this book. That means that he performed at least 14,000 to 15,000 rak‘ah of salah and the amount of ghusl that he did exceeded 7,000. This shows the level of importance he gave to the ḥadīths of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his love and devotion to the ḥadīths of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

The most unique aspect of this book is that it was the first collection which comprised of only Ṣaḥīḥ and authentic ḥadīths.

THE TRANSMISSION OF AḤĀDĪTH AT THE TIME OF RASŪLULLĀH ﷺ AND ṢAḤĀBAH رضي عنهم

Prior to this, in the era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, generally the Ṣaḥābah would not write down the ḥadīths. The practice in the era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ was to write down the Qur’ān; there were some scribes, kātibs, who were allocated the responsibility of writing the Qur’ān.

Although, the general practice in the era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ was not to write down ḥadīths, we find some examples of some Ṣaḥābah رضي عنهم who wrote down some ḥadīths. This is why Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه would comment regarding Sayyudinā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās رضي الله عنه that: “He (‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr) has more ḥadīths than me because he would write and I would not write فإنه كان يكتب وأنا لا أكتب”². Although in terms of the ḥadīths that have reached us, we have within our possession more ḥadīths from Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه than ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās رضي الله عنه, but Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه is saying that ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās رضي الله عنه had more ḥadīths than him at that

2 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ḥadīth No. 113, p.41, Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2002.



time because he would write down ḥadīths in the era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. But it so happened, based on the taqdīr [decree] of Allah ﷻ, that in terms of the ḥadīths that have reached us, we have more ḥadīths from Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ although ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās’s ḥadīths in terms of quantity are not little; he is also regarded from amongst those six companions whose ḥadīths have reached us the most.

This does not mean that the other Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ did not have many ḥadīths. For example, we have approximately 16 ḥadīths from Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ which have reached us. One of the reasons for this is that he was cautious in mentioning ḥadīths of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, in addition to the fact that he only lived for two and a half years after the demise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, whilst other Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ, like Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ lived for much longer because they were young in the era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. By virtue of them living longer, they were able to convey more ḥadīths to others and they had students in the thousands, so consequently their ḥadīths have reached us more.

So, in the era of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, this was the general practice, the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ would not generally write down the ḥadīths, so that it does not get mixed and confused with the Qur’ān. But there are some examples like the example of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, the example of the ḥadīth of Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ which you have studied in the Ṣaḥīḥ; it has been transmitted by Imam Bukhārī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ in several places, the Ṣaḥīfah, the small script, the small piece that Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ had which contained some written instructions and ḥadīths therein.

Thereafter, in the era of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ also, generally the practice was not to write down the ḥadīths of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Our tradition, especially in early Islam in the first century, is based on oral transmission, not on written books. Oral transmission is from the heart to the heart, from the tongue to the tongue, from the mind to the mind. Oral transmission was dominant in the first century of Islam, although we find some examples where the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم and Tābi‘ūn wrote down ḥadīths of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. As time passed by, people’s memories started to become weak, and it was felt that we can no longer rely solely on oral transmission, and we need to preserve the tradition.

THE TRANSMISSION OF AḤĀDĪTH AFTER THE FIRST CENTURY AND COMPILATION OF ḤADĪTH COLLECTIONS

It was at the turn of the century that Sayyidunā ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz رضي الله عنه, the pious khalīfah, instructed a great scholar of the time, Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī رضي الله عنه to gather the ḥadīths so that they don’t get destroyed. He embarked on this noble task of collating the ḥadīths from various parts of the Muslim world. He is, in this regard, described as the mudawwin, the codifier, or as the founder of ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth (Science of Ḥadīth). Otherwise, the founder of ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth is Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and also the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم. But it is in this context that he is regarded as the mudawwin and the founder of ‘Ilm al-ḥadīth, because he was the one who was given the responsibility by ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz رضي الله عنه to gather, collate and codify the ḥadīths.

From thereon, the process of writing ḥadīth collections began. Initially, the scholars would gather ḥadīths كيف ما شاء, however they were in terms of their status, or their subject matter; there was no particular attention given within the first stage. This is what happens when you are embarking on a task, in its first stage, you do the basics, and you gather everything. Thereafter, efforts were made to distinguish the



ḥadīths of Rasūlullāh ﷺ from the āthār (statements of Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ and others) and that is where we have the likes of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Prior to that, Imam Mālik رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ gathered ḥadīths and āthār of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ and Ṭabī‘ūn. Imam Aḥmad رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and others wrote masānīd, wherein they collected the ḥadīths of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in order of the Ṣaḥābī narrating the ḥadīth. In the Musnad of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, all the ḥadīths narrated by Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Siddīq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ are together, all the ḥadīths of Sayyidinā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ are together, all the ḥadīths of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān are together and likewise for others. This format has its own advantages and of course also has its disadvantages. If someone just wants to look at the ḥadīths that are transmitted from one Ṣaḥābī, a good book to look at would be the Musnad of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

Also at that time, scholars would write books on standalone subject matters. Like Imam Aḥmad رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ wrote Kitāb al-Zuhd, Imam Wakī‘ ibn al-Jarrāḥ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ wrote Kitāb al-Zuhd, other scholars wrote Kitāb al-Sunnah; all ḥadīth collections on single subject matters.

THE NAME OF IMAM BUKHĀRĪ’S BOOK IS AL-ADAB

This was a dominant practice of ḥadīth scholars at the time that they would write books on single subject matters, and in following that practice, Imam Bukhārī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ whose Ṣaḥīḥ which is an encyclopaedia, which covers all the various branches of faith, wrote Al-Adab which is now commonly known as Al-Adab al-Mufrad. In reality, the name of this book is only Al-Adab. The reason why the word Al-Mufrad has been added is just to distinguish it from the Kitāb al-Adab in his Ṣaḥīḥ, so that people do not think that al-Adab is referring to the chapter of Adab in his Ṣaḥīḥ. The book Al-Adab is a standalone book featuring many ḥadīths which are not found in the Ṣaḥīḥ, including

many ḥadīths that are not Ṣaḥīḥ, some are Ḥasan (agreeable), some are also Da‘īf (weak). The book has become commonly known as Al-Adab al-Mufrad, otherwise the name of the book is just Al-Adab. This is why Ḥāfiẓ Zayla‘ī رحمته الله in Naṣb al-Rāyah does not refer to this book as Al-Adab al-Mufrad. His ta‘bīr (expression) is better, he says that Imam Bukhārī has narrated this in his standalone book on the subject matter of Adab رواه البخاري في كتابه المفرد في الأدب. This is a more precise way of referring to this book, although other scholars like Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī رحمته الله refer to it as Al-Adab al-Mufrad, just to illustrate that it is a standalone book.

So, Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله and other ḥadīth scholars wrote books on single subject matters.

ṢAḤĪḤ AL-BUKHĀRĪ IS AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA

However, Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله was given the tawfīq by Allah سبحانه, to undertake this noble task of writing this Ṣaḥīḥ and differentiating between Ṣaḥīḥ and non-Ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīths, and organising the ḥadīths based on subject matter, beginning with Īmān, ‘Ilm, Ṭahārah, Ṣalāh, Zakāh, Ḥajj, then the mu‘āmalāt, buyū‘ and so on, then Islamic history all the way from pre-humanity, the creation of the Malā’ikah (angels), the creation of Ādam عليه السلام all the way to Muhammad Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and the Ṣaḥābah رضي عنهم, and thereafter chapters of Nikāḥ, chapters of etiquette, Libās [clothing], of ‘Aqā‘id [creed] and various other chapters. This is why our respected teacher Shaykh Yūnus Ṣāḥib would describe Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī as an encyclopaedia موسوعة الإسلام, an encyclopaedia because it is a very comprehensive book that has gathered the ‘Ulūm of Sharī‘ah, of Islam and of the Qur’ān and Sunnah.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CHAINS OF TRANSMISSION

Every ḥadīth that Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله included in this book is authentic and is Ṣaḥīḥ. This is what made his book at the time, and today, unique as it does not include any ḥadīths that may be fabricated or may be very weak or may have some defect therein or some issue therein with its chain of transmission. And this is the final point that I want to touch upon in relation to sanad and asānid, chains of transmission.

Our dīn, my dear brothers and sisters is based on isnād.

الإسناد من الدين
ولولا الإسناد لقال من شاء ما شاء

Imam Muslim رحمته الله has narrated this narration from Ibn al-Mubārak رحمته الله if I recall in his preface to the Ṣaḥīḥ that Isnād is from the dīn, if there was no isnād then people would say whatever they want to say.³

This is what makes our dīn (religion) unique from the other adyān and the other religions. Imam Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī رحمته الله was a great Mālikī scholar from Andalus in Spain. As I said that once upon a time, Uzbekistan and that region was the hub for Islamic knowledge. Similarly, there was a time when Spain, which was ruled by Muslims for 800 years was also the hub of Islamic knowledge. The Mālikī tradition was very strong in Spain and Morocco and great ‘Ulamā’ and scholars came from that region. So, Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī al-Mālikī رحمته الله says that when you mention a ḥadīth or anything then do not behave like the Jews and the Christians, do not mention a ḥadīth without a sanad like the Jews and Christians do not mention the Sanad. This

3 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Muqaddimah, p.9, Dār al-Ṭaybah, 2006.

is the reason for the distortion that has come about within their faith because the Bible that we have today has no Sanad.

Alḥamdulillāh, the entire Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī that we have, the entire Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim that we have, the 25,000 to 30,000 ḥadīth that our girls here have read with their teachers, for every ḥadīth there is a chain of transmission, it is not just in the book, there is a chain of transmission from their teachers to the author. An entire chain of transmission wherein they can say that I heard this ḥadīth from my teacher who in turn heard it from their teacher, who in turn heard it from their teacher, all the way to the authors of the books and from the authors of the books to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Thus, Imam Bukhārī رحمه الله has mentioned his chain prior to each of the 7,000 to 9,000 ḥadīth. For each ḥadīth, there is a separate chain of transmission. Before each ḥadīth, Imam Bukhārī رحمه الله says that I heard this ḥadīth from my teacher who in turn heard it from his teacher who in turn heard it from his teacher who in turn heard it from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Our dīn is based on evidence, based on chains of transmission.

SCRUTINY OF ḤADĪTH SCHOLARS

And every person in the chain is scrutinised. For every name that is mentioned in the chains of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, there are ḥalāt (profiles) and there are accounts written. When were they born? When did they die? Who were their teachers? Who were their students? Where did they study? Who did they study with? How long did they live? Who determined their reliability and their authenticity? Volumes and volumes are written on the profiles of each narrator that is in this book, in this Ṣaḥīḥ.

This is what we need to appreciate and be proud about. Today, many



of our youngsters do not appreciate this. Sometimes, when we go to university, and we study western academia there is a sense of inferiority complex. Many of our graduates go on to study at university and due to the academic style, sometimes they get overwhelmed, an inferiority complex comes in and they start to think that our tradition is not as strong as the western tradition. However, if you look at our tradition, the level to which the ḥadīth scholars went, the care they took in transmitting ḥadīths, in writing ḥadīths, in narrating ḥadīths, in verifying each narrator; it is beyond belief, it is beyond comprehension.

The likes of Ḥāfiẓ Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī رحمته الله who is a student of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah رحمته الله who passed away in the 8th century, he was from Baghdad, he wrote a book Tahdhīb al-Kamāl which has been published in more than forty volumes. This book focuses on one subject matter: all the narrators that are found in the Sihah al-Sittah, in these six ḥadīth books. Their ḥālāt, their profile. Who were they? Who did they narrate from? Who narrated from them? What did the ḥadīth scholars say about them? Where did they pass away? What did they do? This is for each narrator in the chain. This level of scrutiny and this level of detail is something we should be proud of. We should be proud of our heritage. We should be looking down upon at least the process and methodology of other religions and aspects of western academia.

TRADITIONAL MODES OF STUDY VERSUS WESTERN ACADEMIA

Yes, every system has its advantages and “الحكمة ضالة المؤمن” [Wisdom is the lost property of the believer]⁴; we should take good from whichever system that exists. Even though they might not be Muslims, if they have something good to offer, something beneficial to offer, we should take it. The reality of the matter is that in some regards we have discarded our own heritage. So many of the manuscripts that were preserved by non-Muslims exist in the British library, in Paris, in Germany, they were preserved by non-Muslims. And many books were published, books from that region, from that era were published over the past century by non-Muslims, by Orientalists. So yes, if they have something good to offer, we should take it. But we should never look down or think that our tradition, our heritage has holes in it, has gaps in it or has voids in it. If we think that there are gaps and voids, it is not because there are [actually] gaps and voids, it is because of our own deficiency, it is because of our own lack of knowledge or some other form of institutional weakness.

My dear brothers and sisters, I have moved away from the topic of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, but this is a very important point because the general trend within our country is that many of our students and graduates go to university, and that is absolutely fine. You can become a master in any subject, but there is a whole heritage out there. We have a very strong tradition, we need to delve ourselves into that tradition, and if for some reason we have not because of our own deficiencies, then we should not blame but ourselves.

4 *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth No. 2687, pg. 610, Wazārat al-Shu’ūn al-Islāmiyyah wal-Da’wah wal-Irshād, 2002.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CHAINS OF TRANSMISSION CONTINUED

So, this is a very important point regarding isnād, the importance of isnād, the power of isnād and although from the turn of the first century, the ḥadīth scholars started to write books, oral tradition remained the dominant mode for the first few centuries. That is why we find scholars like Imam Bayḥaqī رحمته الله who is a 5th century scholar, a great Shafīʿī scholar who wrote ḥadīth books, but even at that point we find that the ḥadīths that they narrated from Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله in his Ṣaḥīḥ they would make a point within their books of transmitting those ḥadīths with their isnad to Imam Bukhārī رحمته الله and also through other chains. We have the example of Ibn ʿAsākir رحمته الله whose tārikh, Tārikh Dimashq in more than seventy volumes and features ḥadīths, āthār and traditions with his asānīd.

We generally find that within the first few centuries of Islam, most ḥadīth books that were written feature isnad before each ḥadīth. Even thereafter, we find examples of ʿUlamāʾ who wrote books and mentioned asānīd for every ḥadīth until Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

This is the beauty of our dīn and this is why Imam Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabi رحمته الله says that do not forgo, do not forsake isnād and asānīd. When you mention a ḥadīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, make sure that there is an isnād for it. If you are not sure that there is an isnād for it, or that the isnād for it is fabricated, or that it is very weak, then do not mention it.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VERIFYING INFORMATION

Today, unfortunately we live in a society where we have messages circulating on social media, we have ḥadīths circulating sometimes

without any verification whatsoever. Remember the ḥadīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ:

كفى بالمرء كذبا أن يحدث بكل ما سمع

It is sufficient for a person to be regarded a liar if he transmits everything that he hears.⁵

Just because people have sent you a WhatsApp message which has at the end that if you do not forward then this will happen, that will happen, or which has at the end that forward it to get this reward and that reward. No! If you know that it is authentic then you may circulate it. If you do not know its authenticity, or if you are unsure, then do not circulate it because if you do then you will be responsible and you will be sinful. If you forward something which is authentic, but you do not know that it is authentic, even then you will be sinful because you did not know whether it is authentic or not.

SUPPLICATION

May Allah ﷻ give us the tawfīq and the understanding. May Allah ﷻ accept our coming here today. May Allah ﷻ accept the girls that are graduating. May Allah ﷻ make it a means of khayr and barakah for them, for their families, for their progenies and for the entire community here of Batley, Dewsbury and West Yorkshire, the whole UK and the whole entire world. May Allah ﷻ keep us attached with the ḥadīths of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

وصلّى الله وسلّم على سيّدنا
محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين.

⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Muqaddimah, Ḥadīth No.5, p.5, Dār al-Ṭaybah, 2006.*

The Science of Hadith and the status of Sahih al-Bukhari is a transcript of a speech by Dr Mufti Yusuf Shabbir delivered on 17 July 2021 at the 3rd completion of Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī programme for the graduating students of the Alimah course at Madina Academy, Dewsbury. Prior to the final lecture on Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī by Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Mufti Shabbir Ahmad دامت برکاتہم، Dr Mufti Yusuf Shabbir addressed the audience covering several themes including the status of Imam Bukhārī, the codification and evolution of Ḥadīth collections, the scrutiny of Ḥadīth scholars and the importance of Asānīd (chains of transmission).

This speech has now been transcribed by Usman Seedat, a student at Jamiatul Ilm wal Huda, Blackburn, UK. Some minor amendments have been made for clarity and readability and some references have been added in the footnotes.



Madina Academy was established in 2010 to advance Islamic education and promote a greater understanding of Islam. We provide a range of courses and training for adults and children. We offer advice and guidance on issues relating to islam and Muslims, undertake projects and research work and organise regular events and programmes.

