

THE POSITION OF IMAM AL-BUKHARI'S "SAHIH" AMONG HADITH
COLLECTIONS

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Abstract: This article analyzes Imam Bukhari's "al-Sahih" from the point of view of Source Studies, compares it with other books on the Science of hadith, and explains its methods. In addition, the article also highlights other books which were written using "al-Sahih". It also gives information about the place of "al-Sahih" among other hadith collections.

Keywords: Sahih, hadith collections, Mustadrak, Mustakhraj, Musnad, Zavaid, Jame'.

The increasing proliferation of sources related to the science of Hadith led muhaddithun (Hadith scholars) to classify them into various categories according to their subject matter, methodological style, field of focus, and other distinguishing characteristics. Among collections of Hadith, the earliest compilations initially appeared in the *Musnad* format; subsequently, Hadith works of other genres were produced, and over time this scholarly activity developed further, resulting in the emergence of new and diverse types of works.

By the second half of the second century Hijri, *Musannaf* compilations began to appear among Hadith collections. These were collections structured on the basis of presenting Hadiths under headings related to their specific subject matters.

The first scholar to introduce this new methodology was Imam al-Bukhari through the compilation of *al-Sahih*. The complete title of this work is *al-Jami' al-Musnad al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar min Umur Rasulillah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) wa Sunanih wa Ayyamih*. This work is regarded by Muslims as the most authentic source after the Noble Qur'an.

In addition, muhaddithun classified Hadith compilations according to their subject matter and compositional methodology. Imam al-Bukhari's *al-Sahih* is considered a work belonging to the field of *ilm al-riwayah* (the science of transmission).

At this point, it should also be emphasized that Hadith compilations produced through the efforts of muhaddithun may likewise be categorized on the basis of the titles assigned to the works by their respective authors.

Furthermore, since the Hadiths in nearly all compilations were recorded together with their chains of transmission (*isnads*), it would be appropriate to describe them as *Musnad* works. Since the full title of *al-Sahih* is *al-Jami' al-Musnad al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar min Umur Rasulillah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) wa Sunanih wa Ayyamih*, the Hadiths contained therein were transmitted together with their *isnads*, although they were systematically arranged according to subject categories. However, later muhaddithun adopted new methodologies in their treatment of earlier works and, as a result, omitted the chains of transmission in their compilations.

Muhaddith scholars who lived after Imam al-Bukhari utilized *al-Sahih* in various new fields of research and scholarly approaches. One such example is the genre of *Mustadrak* (“supplementary” or “complementary”) works¹.

Hafiz Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahid ibn Ahmad al-Sa’di al-Dimashqi (d. 643/1245), widely known as Diya al-Maqdisi, authored a work entitled *al-Mukhtarah*. Its alternative title is *al-Ahadith al-Mukhtarah mimma lam yukhrijhu al-Bukhari wa Muslim fi Sahihayhima*.

Imam al-Bukhari’s *al-Sahih* was also employed in the *Mustakhraj* methodology². Among those who produced works in this style were Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ibn Ismail Abu Bakr al-Isma’ili al-Jurjani al-Shafi’i (d. 371/981) and Muhammad ibn Abu Hamid Ahmad ibn Husayn ibn Qasim ibn Ghitrif ibn Jahm Abu Ahmad al-Ghitrifi (d. 377/987), as well as others.

Among other scholars who authored works in this field were Muhammad ibn Ya’qub ibn Yusuf Abu Abdullah al-Shaybani al-Naysaburi (d. 344/955), widely known as Ibn Akhram; Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Husayn Abu Ali al-Masarjisi (d. 365/976); Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Ghalib Abu Bakr al-Barqani al-Khwarazmi al-Shafi’i (d. 425/1034); Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Abu Bakr al-Isfahani (d. 428/1037), commonly known as Ibn Manjuyah; Abu Nu’aym al-Isfahani (d. 430/1039); Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abdullah Abu Dharr al-Harawi al-Ansari (d. 434/1043); Hasan ibn Abu Talib Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Ali al-Baghdadi (d. 439/1047), known as Abu Muhammad al-Khallal; and Sulayman ibn Ibrahim al-Isfahani (d. 486/1093), known as Abu Mas’ud al-Mulih. Their works incorporated the two *Sahih* collections³.

Another category of Hadith compilations is known as *Zawaid*⁴. Imam al-Bukhari’s *al-Sahih* was among the earliest works incorporated into this genre as well. However, such works differ from others in that they are not confined to a single book but rather encompass several collections. One example is the work of Imam Mughlatay ibn Qulayj Bakjari al-Hanafi (d. 762/1361), entitled *Zawa’id Ibn Hibban ala al-Sahihayn*.

The remaining works of this category generally included the six authoritative Hadith collections. Among them are works that incorporated Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s *Musnad* as *zawa’id* upon the six canonical collections under the title *Ghayat al-Maqsud fi Zawa’id al-Musnad*. Likewise, al-Bazzar’s *Musnad*, entitled *al-Bahr al-Zakhkhar*, was incorporated as *zawa’id*, resulting in a work entitled *Kashf al-Astar an Zawa’id al-Bazzar*.

¹ In this method, a muhaddith compiles a new work consisting of hadiths that a previous muhaddith did not include in his book despite those hadiths meeting the conditions set by that earlier muhaddith. In other words, a collection in which a muhaddith gathers hadiths not according to his own criteria, but according to the criteria established by a previous muhaddith, is called a *Mustadrak*.

² The word *Mustakhraj* in Arabic means “to extract” or “to derive.” In this type of book, the compiler narrates the hadiths found in the work of an earlier muhaddith – such as the *Sahih* of Imam al-Bukhari – through chains of transmission (*isnads*) that he himself has independently established.

³ Sayyid Abdulmajid Ghawri. *Al-Wajiz fi Ta’rif Kutub al-Hadith*. Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 2009, pp. 233-244.

⁴ The word *Zawa’id* in Arabic means “additions,” “excess,” or “abundance.”

Other scholars also produced *ziyadat* (supplementary additions) to the six authoritative collections. Among the notable examples is the work of Imam Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Abu Bakr al-Kinani al-Busiri (d.840/1436), the author of *Qasidat al-Burdah*, entitled *Ithaf al-Khiyarah al-Maharah bi Zawa'id al-Masanid al-Asharah*. In this work, the *Musnads* of the following ten scholars were incorporated as *zawa'id* to the six authoritative collections: Sulayman ibn Ahmad Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi (d. 204/819), Abdullah ibn Zubayr Abu Bakr al-Humaydi (d. 219/834), Musaddad ibn Musarhad al-Asadi (d.228/843), Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Shaybah Abu Bakr (d.235/849), Is'haq ibn Rahawayh (d. 238/853), Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Abi Umar al-Adani (d. 243/857), Ahmad ibn Mani' al-Baghawi (d. 244/858), Abd ibn Humayd al-Kashshi (d. 249/863), al-Harith ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Usamah al-Tamimi (d. 282/895), and Ahmad ibn Ali Abu Ya'la al-Mawsili (d. 307/919)⁵.

Ithaf al-Khiyarah al-Maharah bi Zawa'id al-Masanid al-Asharah was arranged into 104 books (*kutub*), further divided into chapters, with the traditions cited together with their chains of transmission (*sanads*). The work even identifies whether Hadiths are considered acceptable (*maqbul*) or rejected (*mardud*). Furthermore, in his work *Misbah al-Zujajah fi Zawa'id Ibn Majah*, Imam al-Busiri incorporated *Sunan Ibn Majah* as *zawa'id* upon the other five authoritative collections and included 1,339 Hadiths therein. Another of his works is entitled *Fawa'id al-Muntaqa li Zawa'id al-Bayhaqi*, which likewise constitutes a *zawa'id* compilation upon the six authoritative collections⁶.

In addition, some scholars compiled *Atraf* works for *al-Sahih*⁷. Concerning *Sahih al-Bukhari* specifically, one such work was authored by al-Allamah Nur al-Din Muhammad ibn Abd al-Hadi al-Sindi (d. 1138/1726) under the title *al-Atraf*. Works entitled *Atraf al-Sahihayn* were also composed by Khalaf ibn Muhammad ibn Ali al-Wasiti (d. 400/1010), Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Dimashqi (d. 401/1011), Ubaydullah ibn Shaykh Abu Ali Hasan al-Isfahani al-Haddad (d. 517/1123), and Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani. In addition to these, *Atraf* works were also compiled by combining Imam al-Bukhari's collection with those of Imam Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah⁸.

In general, Imam al-Bukhari's *al-Sahih* was utilized not only in the composition of the Hadith collection types mentioned above but also in the development of other genres of Hadith literature. For example, scholars compiled separate works dedicated specifically to the transmitters (*ruwat*) of *al-Sahih*. However, in many instances, such efforts were undertaken jointly with Imam Muslim's *al-Sahih*. One noteworthy example is the work *Taqyid al-Muhmal wa Tamyiz al-Mushkil* by Abu Ali Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Ghassani al-Andalusi (d. 498/1105), which gained recognition for its focus on the individuals mentioned in the *Sahihayn*.

In conclusion, Imam al-Bukhari's renowned *al-Sahih* occupies a distinctive position among Hadith sources and, following its compilation, served as a foundational source and point of reference for numerous subsequent scholarly works.

⁵ The death date in some manuscript traditions may differ; the dates are retained according to the source text.

⁶ Sayyid Abdulmajid Ghawri. *Al-Wajiz fi Ta'rif Kutub al-Hadith*. Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 2009, pp. 233-244.

⁷ The word *Atraf* means "sections" or "portions." In books compiled according to this method, only a specific part of a hadith is mentioned, while the complete text of the hadith is not provided.

⁸ This statement has been translated while preserving the structure and meaning of the original text.

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