

Shaykh Zia Ur Rahman, as I Knew Him

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The following article is written by Shaikh Zulfiker Ibrahim Memon and at the request of Muslim World Journal, the Shaikh kindly agreed to allow us to independently publish it. The article is originally written on Shaikh Zulfiker's social media pages. You can follow Shaykh Zulfiker Ibrahim Memon on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله وكفى بالله الحمد لله الذي أرسل رسله
شهيدياً، وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، وأشهد أن محمداً عبده ورسوله صلى الله
أما بعد . عليه وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين

All Perfect & Complete Praise with Love and Veneration is
Exclusively for Allāh Alone. May the Praise of Allāh be Exalted for
His final Messenger and seal, Muḥammad (ﷺ), in the most Noble and
Highest of Gatherings, and may His Peace also descend upon him. As
to what proceeds:

**It was narrated on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that
Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) said:**

”قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا الْهَرْجُ فَقَالَ هَكَذَا ”يُقْبَضُ الْعِلْمُ، وَيَظْهَرُ الْجَهْلُ وَالْفِتْنُ، وَيَكْثُرُ الْهَرْجُ“
”بِيَدِهِ، فَحَرَفَهَا، كَأَنَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْقَتْلَ“

“(Sacred) Knowledge will be taken away (by the death of ‘Ulamā’) ignorance [in religion] and afflictions will appear; and harj will increase.” It was asked, “What is harj, Yā Rasūlullāh?” He replied by beckoning with his hand indicating “killing.”¹

It was narrated that:

”هَكَذَا يُدْفَنُ الْعِلْمُ: ابْتِ حَتَّى عَلَيْهِ الثُّرَابُ، ثُمَّ قَالَ لَمَّا دَفَنَ زَيْدَ بْنَ دُ“

“When Zayd b. Thābit was buried Ibn ‘Abbās threw a handful of soil over his grave and said: This is how knowledge is buried.”²

al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ṣalāḥ [d.643 Ah] mentioned the couplet:

“لم يصحبوا نفسه أنفاسه صحبوا ... أهل الحديث هم أهل الدار سول في إن”

“The *ahl al-ḥadīth* are the true followers of the Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) even though they did not accompany him physically they associate themselves with him following him.”³

Today, on the 9th *Dhū al-Ḥijjah* 1441 AH, corresponding to 30th July 2020, after *ṣalāh al-ẓuhr*, our Shaykh, al-‘Allāmah Muḥammad Diyā’ al-Raḥmān al-A‘ẓamī’s son, confirmed that our Shaykh had passed away before the *ṣalāh al-ẓuhr*. The *janāzah* of the Shaykh would be performed in the Prophet’s *Masjid* later on during the day after *ṣalāh al-maghrib*.

Today is a day of extreme sadness.

The *ahl al-ḥadīth* in al-Madīnah, the blessed city of our Prophet (ﷺ), feel that we have become orphans. We would say amongst ourselves, as students of knowledge, who adhere to the *ahl al-ḥadīth* madhhab that in Makkah we have our Shaykh, Waṣī Allāh ‘Abbās and in al-Madīnah we had, our Shaykh Diyā’ al-Raḥmān al-A‘ẓamī [d.1441 Ah]. Words cannot describe how we are feeling.

Our link to our *akābir* [Senior Scholars] of the Sub-Continent, was through these two major Scholars, in the two most blessed and sacred cities of the Muslim world Makkah and al-Madīnah, transmitting back to Shaykh al-Islām Nadhīr Ḥusayn [d.1320 Ah].

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Both these *Mashaykh* are giants in ḥadīth and they have devoted their lives to serve ḥadīth and defend it and call the people to act upon it. Both these Scholars had no influence of any blind-following of any *madhhab* or calling to it, rather they were the continuous product of the legacy of Shaykh al-Islām Nadhīr Ḥusayn Dehlawī. Their madhhab like the *Ḥanafīyyah* and *Ḥanbalīyyah*, was the *madhhab* of *ahl al-ḥadīth*. The people of ḥadīth.

I was blessed by Allāh to study and complete the entire *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* in the Prophet’s (ﷺ) *Masjid* with Shaykh Diyā’ al-Raḥmān al-A‘ẓamī, for which he granted me, *al-ijāzah khāṣah* (specific permission).

We had started *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* and had currently stopped at the Book of *Ṭahārah*, Section: Intercourse Without Ejaculation, Ḥadīth:

219; This was the last ḥadīth he taught before Coronavirus swept the world and forced us into lockdown.

During my studies with the Shaykh on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, the Shaykh and I would discuss the narrators of *al-Bukhārī* and he would tell me to read:

رجال البخاري

Rijāl al-Bukhārī by Kalābādhī [d.380 Ah].

رجال صدیح البخاري

Ḥal Muskilāt al-Bukhārī by al-‘Allāmah Abū al-Qāsim Banārsī [d.1949]

We would discuss in detail the *fiqh* of Imām *al-Bukhārī* [d.256 Ah] and his *manhaj* (methodology) and him being the leading jurist [*sayyīd al-fuqahā*] (سيد الفقهاء) of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* of his time. That which I benefited from in his lessons, in *al-Bukhārī*, was the distinguishing principles he taught us on how the *ahl al-ḥadīth* differed with the *ẓāhirīyyah* and using Imām al-Bukhārī as a prime example.

I compiled over 300 benefits from the Shaykh's lesson just on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* alone. Many of these benefits I read to him personally. When I showed the Shaykh, he expressed his happiness and told me to publish them in Arabic and English.

The benefits can be divided in the following sequence:

1. On the narrators
2. On the text (*matn*)
3. Fiqh rulings derived
4. *Fiqh* of Imām al-Bukhārī
5. The *manhaj* of Imām al-Bukhārī in deriving rulings and refuting others
6. General benefits.

This was also done for *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

Our Shaykh would do frequent comparisons and critique at times of the chapter headings of the great Scholar al-Nawawī [d.676 Ah]. Before we started *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, upon my request at the end of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, our Shaykh was considering what to teach us, he

decided to teach us the great book of fiqh of the madhhab of the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*.

And upon my request we discussed many times the great depth of this book, just covering *fiqh*, where as al-Bukhārī and Muslim were more broad, covering many subjects. The Shaykh decided to write an explanation to it and he showed me many transcripts of it, I would review it with him and he would ask my humble opinion of it.

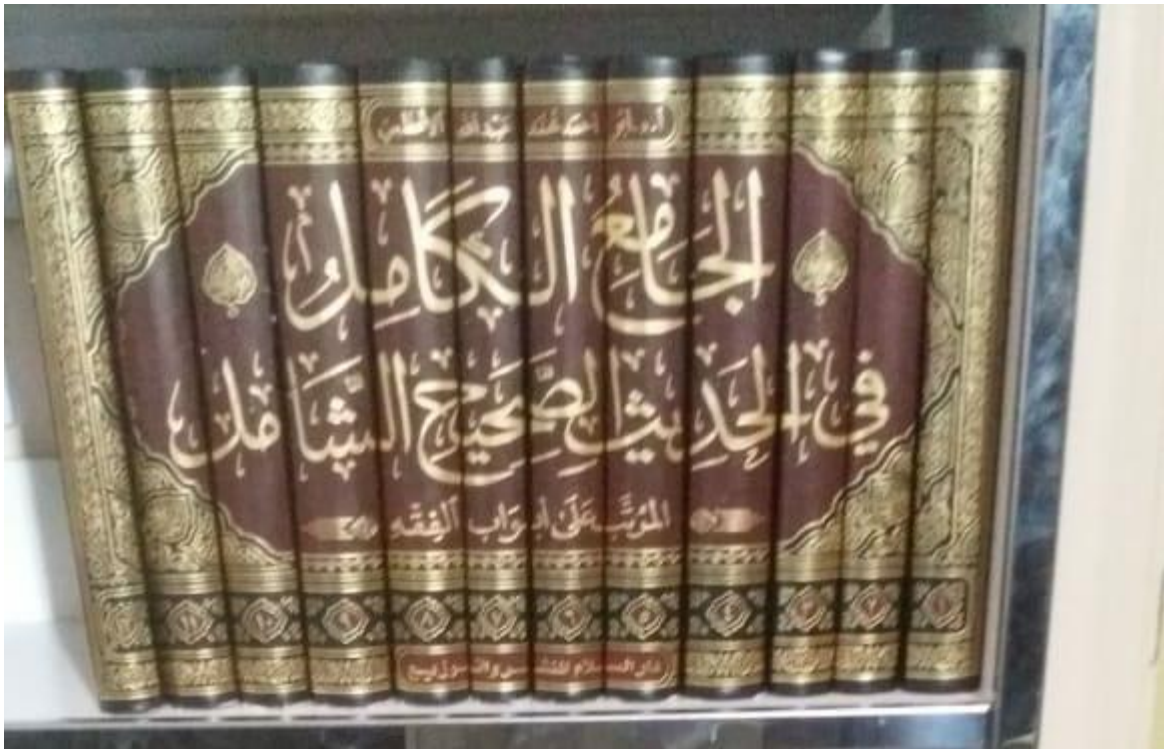
We were preparing the *Ijāzah* for *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* and our Shaykh Ḍiyā' al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī had known that I had read the whole of *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* to his Shaykh in India, al-'Allāmah Ṣahīr al-Dīn Mubārakpūrī [d.1438 Ah], so he asked for a copy of my *Ijāzah* to review the transmission and make an *Ijāzah* for all the students which was once again another honour Allāh had given me.

I had requested the Shaykh to have private lessons with him since he started teaching us *al-Bukhārī* but he would smile and excuse himself and say, 'I have no time, I am too busy, I want to write and complete this before I die.'

I had heard from other professors at Madīnah University that they had also tried convincing the Shaykh to teach them, but the Shaykh was too stern and it would be a miracle if he said yes, as he was too busy in his projects.

Finally after waiting for over 5 years and constantly requesting him, he saw my devotion and allowed me once a week for over two and half hours to study with him.

I started to read the text of al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar [d.852 Ah] '*Nukhbah al-Fikr*' with his explanation '*Nuzḥah al-Nazar Sharḥ fī Tawḍīḥ Nukhbah al-Fikr fī Muṣṭalaḥ Ahl al-Athar*' on *muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth*, while making a comparison of what our Shaykh had written '*Mu'jam Muṣṭalahāt al-Ḥadīth wa laṭā'if al-Asānīd*'.



“Al

Jami' al-Kamil fi al-Hadith al-Sahih al-Shamil” compiled by Shaykh Zia Ur Rahman Azmi

We would read the definitions, make a comparison and hold long discussions. I completed 3 quarters of the book and due to the lockdown we stopped. The amazing thing about these private lessons, I was honoured to have recorded all of them.

In our first lesson, he saw me playing with the recording equipment, he proceeded to ask me what I was doing, I showed him that I was recording the lesson, he smiled and said you will keep this as memories and today they have become the most precious thing I have from him, my interaction with him, one to one.

My memories with the Shaykh are many and I plan to release a detailed biography of our Shyakh as he told me many stories about his personal life in our private meetings.

It is known that the Shaykh did not write references for students, but due to the love and trust he had for me, a student from the University in his final year approached him and the Shaykh excused himself, so the student came to me knowing that I am close to the Shaykh.

I spoke to the Shaykh and he said ‘Do you vouch for him’ I said ‘Yes that which is apparent and he wrote the *tazkīyyah* for that student, al-Hamdu lillāh on my request.

When those who attend my lessons from the UK came I would tell them to attend the Shaykh’s lesson and we, teacher and students, would attend. I would take them to meet the Shaykh, he would express so much happiness that it cannot be described. He once expressed his wish for me to teach ḥadīth and defend it like Shaykh al-Islām Nadhīr Ḥusayn Dehlawī. This was the best du‘ā’ he gave me, Allāh make me like these *ahl al-ḥadīth* scholars.

The absolute distinguishing feature of the Shaykhs lesson was his discussion on the ‘*illah al-qādiyah* and ‘*illah khafiyyah*.

When the Shaykh would get into the issue of *ruwāt* and ‘*illal*, whether it was the ‘*illal* of *isnād* or the *matn*, many of the students who used to attend especially, from the faculty of *sharī‘ah*, would become lost at the advanced nature of discussion.

Following our lessons the students would go to the Shaykh and request he speaks about the *fiqh* of ḥadīth, rather than ‘*illal*. However we graduates of the faculty of ḥadīth would disagree and say to the students of *sharī‘ah* that the Shaykh was the only one able to teach ‘*illal* in such a manner.

Other *Mashāykh* could teach it but not as advanced as the Shaykh. Shaykh Diyā’ al-Raḥmān al-A‘zamī was distinguished in this sense. This was the methodology on how the scholars of ḥadīth in the Sub-Continent teach, with great depth.

On one occasion I went to the Shaykh and requested. As your son I must urge you to carry on teaching in your normal way’, i.e teaching ‘*illal*. Your lessons are unique due to this’. The Shaykh acknowledged this and carried on teaching this way. This was the hallmark of the Shaykh’s lessons, this is what made his lessons unique.

The last occasion I spoke to our Shaykh was before he was admitted in hospital I was researching on a narration that can be found in the book, ‘*Majmū‘ al-Zawā‘id*’ by Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī [d.807 Ah], my research was concluded and its chain was authentic, but I was not confident, whether it met the conditions of al-Haythamī so I discussed

my conclusion with the Shaykh and he concurred with my conclusion, which gave me respite and confidence.

The Shaykhs' most important book which he authored was '*alJāmi' al-Kāmil*' in 12 volumes, which is the first edition, published by *Dār al-Salām*, and it is considered an encyclopaedia of authentic *Ḥadīth*. It took him nearly 20 years to finish this book.

Allāh grant our Shaykh *Jannah* and unite him with Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) and Imām al-Bukhārī in *Jannah*.

Written by the poor, weak, slave of Allāh, hoping for the Mercy of His Rabb: Zulfiker Ibrāhīm Memon: 9th Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1441 AH, corresponding to 30th July 2020. The Prophet's City, al-Madīnah al-Nabawīyyah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

References:

1. Recorded in: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, The Book of Knowledge, Section: Whoever gave a religious verdict by 1 beckoning or by nodding, Ḥadīth: 85, Page: 106, Volume: 1, Published by: Dār al-Salām, Printed in: 1997.*
2. Recorded in: *Muṣannaḥ 'Abd al-Razzāq, The Book of al-Janāzah, Section: Pouring Soil, Ḥadīth: 6580, Page: 376, Volume: 3, Published by: Dār al-Tāṣīl, Printed in: 1432.*
3. Recorded in: *Ṭabqāt al-Fuqahā' al-Shāfi'īyyah, Page 357, Volume: 1.*