

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين



Intro to Usul Al Hadith Lesson 1 Overview

Instructor: Shaikh Omer Khurshid

Further inquiries: Info@talweehacademy.com

www.talweehacademy.com

I. The Concept of ‘Ilm (Knowledge) – Linguistically and Technically

1. Linguistic Definition

The term **‘ilm (knowledge)** is the plural of **‘ilm**, which, in the Arabic language, refers to **understanding, awareness, and certain knowledge**. It is also used in the sense of **conviction and certainty**.

In *al-Qāmūs al-Muhīt*, it is stated:

“‘Alimahu (he knew it), like sami‘ahu (he heard it), means to know; and ‘ilm itself means inner awareness.”

Similarly, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr* defines ‘ilm as:

“Certain knowledge. It is said: ‘alima ya‘lamu when one becomes certain, and it is also used to mean 'knowing' in a general sense.”

2. Technical Definitions

Every term has a lexical definition and a technical definition, that term that has been coined to represent a certain concept, or idea, within different sciences. Sometimes the same term has been recycled throughout different sciences, and it is important to understand the meaning of the term itself. Imam Ghazali mentioned, “Al-alfaazu qawaalibul ma’ani (the word is the outer shell/representation of the meaning)”.

The term ‘ilm (knowledge) has been defined variously by scholars across different disciplines:

- **Theologians** define it as:

“An attribute by which that which is known becomes manifest to the one who possesses the attribute,” or

“A quality that results in definitive distinction not susceptible to contradiction.”

- **Philosophers and logicians** define ‘ilm as:

“The form of a thing that exists within the intellect.”

In general usage, particularly in philosophical and logical discourse, the term ‘ilm encompasses **three meanings**:

1. **Comprehension or cognition (idrāk)** – considered the original and literal usage.
2. **A body of established principles (qawā‘id)** – a metaphorical or transferred usage.
3. **The disposition or faculty (malakah)** enabling comprehension – an attribution of cause to effect.

In the technical parlance of scholars of **compilation and classification (taṣnīf and tadwīn)**, ‘ilm refers to:

“A coherent set of principles and propositions unified by a common subject matter or objective.”

These are typically **universal and theoretical in nature**, though they may also include **particular matters**, such as the **narrative elements of Ḥadīth**.

It is important to note that **‘ilm**, in this context, does **not** refer to the faculty (malakah) by which these propositions are attained, nor merely to the cognitive act of understanding them. Rather, it refers to the **disciplined and codified body of knowledge**, as it is this that is written, compiled, and studied.

II. The Concept of Ḥadīth – Linguistically and Technically

1. Linguistic Definition

The term **ḥadīth** in Arabic means **speech, narration, or report**, regardless of its length or brevity.

- In *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* by al-Jawharī:

“Al-ḥadīth: a report, applicable to both the brief and the lengthy. The plural is **aḥādīth**, a non-standard plural. Al-Farrā’ stated that the singular of aḥādīth is **uḥdūthah**, which then came to be used as the plural of ḥadīth.”

- In *Maqāyīs al-Lughā* by Ibn Fāris:

“The root ḥ-d-th connotes something coming into existence after not having existed. A **ḥadīth** is something new – speech that emerges progressively.”

- Abū al-Baqā’ defines it as:

“A noun derived from **taḥdīth** (to inform), which denotes **narration** or **reporting**.”

The Arabs of the pre-Islamic era used the term “ḥadīth” in this sense, applying it even to events of historical significance, such as their well-known battles, which they termed “aḥādīth.” Hence, idiomatic expressions such as:

“He became an uḥdūthah (a story),” or “He became the subject of public discourse,” gained traction.

2. Technical Definition

The definition of **ḥadīth** varies depending on the field of study:

- **Usūlī scholars (Legal theorists)** define it as:

“The sayings and actions of the Prophet ﷺ.”

This includes his **approvals (taqrīrāt)** – that is, his silence in the face of a particular action or statement by others, when such silence implies endorsement. **Involuntary physical traits** (such as his appearance or natural attributes) are

generally excluded from this definition, as no legal rulings pertain to them. This definition aligns with the methodological concerns of **usūl al-fiqh**.

- **Ḥadīth scholars (Muḥaddithūn)** employ a broader definition:

“Everything attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, whether in the form of words, actions, silent approvals, or personal attributes – both physical and moral.”

This more inclusive definition encompasses much of what is found in **sīrah** (biographical literature), such as the time and place of the Prophet’s birth and other historical details.

As al-Sakhāwī explains in *Fath al-Mughīth*:

“Ḥadīth includes what is attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, whether in speech, action, silent approval, physical description, or even his movements and states—both in wakefulness and sleep.”

Examples of the Various Types of Ḥadīth:

- **Statement (Qawl):**

E.g., *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* – The messenger ﷺ said: “Actions are but by intentions...”

- **Action (Fi‘l):**

E.g., A companion mimics the Prophet’s postures in prayer, saying, “I saw the Prophet ﷺ do so.”

- **Intention or Internal Action (Hamm):**

E.g., The Prophet intends to reverse his cloak during rain as a gesture of seeking divine favor (*Abū Dāwūd*).

- **Silent Approval (Taqrīr):**

Seen when the Prophet ﷺ witnesses or hears something without objecting—indicating permissibility or even commendation.

This could take forms such as:

- **Verbal affirmation** (e.g., “Salman has spoken the truth” – *Bukhārī*)

The Prophet (ﷺ) established a bond of brotherhood between Salman and Abu Darda'. Salman paid a visit to Abu ad-Darda and found Um Ad-Darda' dressed in shabby clothes and asked her why she was in that state.?" She replied, "Your brother, Abu Ad-Darda is not interested in the luxuries of this world." In the meantime Abu Ad-Darda came and prepared a meal for him (Salman), and said to him, "(Please) eat for I am fasting." Salman said, "I am not going to eat, unless you eat." So Abu Ad-Darda' ate. When it was night, Abu Ad-Darda' got up (for the night prayer). Salman said (to him), "Sleep," and he slept. Again Abu- Ad-Darda' got up (for the prayer), and Salman said (to him), "Sleep." When it was the last part of the night, Salman said to him, "Get up now (for the prayer)." So both of them offered their prayers and Salman said to Abu Ad-Darda', "Your Lord has a right on you; and your soul has a right on you; and your family has a right on you; so you should give the rights of all those who have a right on you). Later on Abu Ad-Darda' visited the Prophet (ﷺ) and mentioned that to him. The Prophet, said, "Salman has spoken the truth."

- **Praise** (e.g., angels recording a companion's du‘ā')
- **Mirroring a companion's action** (e.g., joining the prayer after Abu Bakr had begun leading it)
- **Smiling, laughing, or expressing gladness**
- **Silence or non-rebuke**, even in matters of differing interpretations (e.g., companions differing in interpreting a command during the campaign of Banū Qurayzah).

- **Attributes (Şifah):**

Traits can be of two types:

- Physical traits

- Moral traits
 - **Moral traits** (e.g., his generosity during Ramadan – *Bukhārī*).
 - **Physical traits** (e.g., his facial features and build – *Bukhārī*).

Some scholars of ḥadīth have extended the term to include what is attributed to the **Companions and the Followers (Tābi‘īn)** as well.

Al-Ṭibī noted:

“Ḥadīth is more general than merely the Prophet’s words—it includes the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Companions and their successors.”

III. Rationale for Naming it ‘Ḥadīth’

The designation **ḥadīth** aligns closely with its **linguistic root**, and it was a term used by the Prophet ﷺ himself for his own speech.

For example, in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the Prophet ﷺ says:

“I thought no one would ask me about this **ḥadīth** before you, O Abū Hurayrah...”

Similarly, in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, he said:

“Do not write anything from me except the Qur’an. Whoever writes anything else should erase it. And narrate from me, there is no harm in doing so...”

IV. Other Related Terminologies in Ḥadīth Sciences

- **Sunnah:**
Often synonymous with ḥadīth in its broader meaning. Some distinguish between the two, restricting ḥadīth to sayings and actions, while considering **sunnah** to encompass the full scope.
- **Khabar (Report):**
In many contexts, it is synonymous with ḥadīth.

Shaykh al-Islām (Ibn Ḥajar) said:

“In the technical usage of the discipline, *khavar* and *ḥadīth* are interchangeable, whether referring to reports from the Prophet or others.”

Some, however, differentiate:

- **ḥadīth** = report from the Prophet ﷺ only.
- **khavar** = report from others.
- Alternatively, **khavar** = more general; **ḥadīth** = more specific.

- **Athar (Trace)**

The term *athar* is commonly used to refer to a *mawqūf* ḥadīth—that is, a narration attributed to a Companion without reaching the Prophet ﷺ.

However, some scholars have defined *athar* more broadly to include all forms of ḥadīth, whether *marfūʿ* (attributed directly to the Prophet ﷺ) or *mawqūf* (stopping at the Companion).

Among the notable works that utilize the term in their titles are:

- *Kitāb al-Āthār* by Imam Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī,
- *Sharḥ Maʿānī al-Āthār* by Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī,
- *Tahdhīb al-Āthār* by al-Ṭabarī.

These works include both the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ and those of his Companions.

The Meaning and Classification of ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth (Hadith Sciences)

Once the intended meanings of both components in this *idāfa* (possessive construction) are clarified, it becomes evident that the phrase ‘*ulūm al-ḥadīth*’ refers to all forms of knowledge and sciences related to Hadith.

The plural form ‘*ulūm*’ (sciences) rather than the singular ‘*ilm*’ (science) is used to underscore the comprehensive scope of the disciplines that engage with Hadith from its various dimensions—much like how one speaks of the multiple sciences related to the Qur’ān.

These sciences are generally divided into two principal categories:

1. **Riwayat al-Ḥadīth (Transmission of Hadith)**
2. **Dirayat al-Ḥadīth (Comprehension and Criticism of Hadith)**

This classification is attributed to Ibn al-Akfānī in his book *Irshād al-Qāṣid*, a work dedicated to categorizing the various branches of knowledge.

1. Riwayat al-Ḥadīth (Hadith Transmission)

Ibn al-Akfānī defined it as follows:

“The science of Hadith transmission (‘*ilm riwāyat al-ḥadīth*’) is concerned with conveying the words and actions of the Prophet ﷺ through a connected chain of narration (*samā’ muttasil*), along with accurate preservation and precise recording (*dabt* and *tahrīr*).”

Among the most rigorously authenticated collections are:

- *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (may Allah be pleased with them both), followed by the other well-known *Sunan* collections:
- *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *al-Tirmidhī*, *al-Nasā’ī*, *Ibn Mājah*, and *al-Dāraquṭnī*, as well as the famous *Musnads*:
- *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Ibn Abī Shayba*, *al-Bazzār*, and others.

A work such as *Zahr al-Khamā'il* by Ibn Sayyid al-Nās provides a comprehensive account of the Prophetic biography (*sīrah*).

From among the books containing Hadith texts extracted without their chains of narration, one may cite:

- *al-I'lām* by Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, which focuses on legal rulings, and
- *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* by al-Nawawī, which centers on encouragements and warnings (*targhīb wa tarhīb*).

In summary, *riwāyat al-ḥadīth* is concerned with the accurate and connected transmission of Hadiths, their memorization, and meticulous wording.

Benefit: The Distinction Between *Ḍabṭ* (Precision) and *Taḥrīr* (Exact Wording)

Shaykh ʿAwwāmah, in his marginal notes on *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, explains:

“The act of *taḥrīr* (precise articulation) of words is not the same as *ḍabṭ* (grammatical and phonetic accuracy).

Ḍabṭ pertains to the morphological and syntactic accuracy of a word, whereas *taḥrīr* involves adhering strictly to the Prophetic wording as transmitted word-for-word by the narrators.

This discipline serves to prevent a narrator from engaging in the kind of laxity seen among some contemporary preachers, who indiscriminately attribute statements to the Prophet ﷺ or insert unsanctioned words into Hadiths, justifying their actions with phrases like: ‘or as the Prophet ﷺ said.’ Such carelessness must be seriously cautioned against.”

Examples of *Ḍabṭ* (Precision in Form)

In *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī*, after Hadith no. 571, it is stated:

“I heard al-Jārūd say: I heard Wakīʿ say: **Ribʿī ibn Ḥirāsh never told a single lie in Islam.**”

The word *kadhbah* (a lie) is presented here with a grammatical note:

It may be pronounced with a **fatha** or a **kasra** on the letter *kāf*. The fatha (opening) is



preferred, and it refers to a single instance (i.e., "a single lie"), in accordance with the usage in classical Arabic lexicons.

At times, the precision of transmission may only pertain to one of the two accepted pronunciations. For example:

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Hadith no. 1539):

On the authority of Zayd ibn Thābit: “*The Messenger of Allah ﷺ permitted the sale of ‘arāyā (a specific form of barter transaction) to be estimated **by approximation (kharṣ).***”

The word *kharṣ* may be pronounced with a **fatha** or **kasra** on the *khā*’.

Al-Nawawī notes that the fatha is more common.

Al-Qurṭubī explains:

- With *kasra* (خَرَصَ), the term refers to the *object estimated* (i.e., the result of approximation),
- With *fatha* (خَرَصَ), it refers to the *act* of estimation itself.
Al-Zarkashī confirms that the narration here is with a kasra.

Example of *Tahrīr* (Precision in Wording)

In *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī* (Hadith no. 3943):

‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn narrated: “*The Prophet ﷺ died while disliking three tribes: Thaqīf, Banū Ḥanīfah, and Banū Umayyah.*”

In an older Egyptian edition of *Tirmidhī* edited by Aḥmad Shākīr, the wording is “yukrimu”:



٣٩٤٣ — حَدَّثَنَا زَيْدُ بْنُ أَخْزَمَ الطَّائِيُّ . حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْقَاهِرِ بْنُ
شُعَيْبٍ . حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامٌ عَنْ الْحَسَنِ عَنْ عِرَّانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ قَالَ : مَا تَنَاهَى
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ بِكُرْمٍ ثَلَاثَةَ أَحْيَاءَ : ثَقِيفًا ، وَبَنِي حَنِيفَةَ ،
وَبَنِي أُمَيَّةَ .

This is a scribal error; the correct word is: "yakrahu" (he dislikes).

This is supported by the version reported by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* (no. 379), where the wording is:

“And yubghizu (he detested) three tribes...”

The hadith appears in a more extended form in his narration (no. 572):

On the authority of Bajālah ibn ʿAbdah — or ʿAbdah ibn Bajālah — who said:

I said to ʿImrān ibn Ḥuṣayn: “Inform me of the people most detested by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).”

He replied: “Will you keep it confidential until I die?”

I said: “Yes.”

He then said: “The people most detested by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) were: Banū Ḥanīfah, Banū Umayyah, and Thaqīf.”