MISHKĀT AL-MAṢĀBĪḤ: A STANDARD SOURCE BOOK FOR *ḤADĪTH* AND ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

by

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Dedicated to the loving memory of my father who encouraged me to pursue studies in Islam but did not live to share the joy of this fruit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

iv

INTRODUCTION

Ḥadīth literature, which comprises of the sayings and mode of life of the Prophet Muḥammad (*s.a.w.s*), is regarded by Muslims as sacred literature and ranks second in importance to the *Qur'ān* itself. It is recognised as a source of *al-Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law), *al-Akhlāq* (Ethics and Morality), *al-Mu'āmalāt* (human transactions) and other general teachings pertaining to *al-Dīn al-Islāmī* (the religion of Islam). This phenomenon explains why the *Ḥadīth* literature has always played a significant and pivotal role in guiding the Muslims in practically all walks of life.

Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ is, in effect, part and parcel of the vast literary works in the field of *Ḥadīth*. It was originally compiled under the title of *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-Baghāwī (d. 516/1122). This scholar belonged to the Shāfi'ī School of Islamic Jurisprudence and was a noted jurist of that school. He was a prolific writer and wrote on various topics. However, al-Baghāwī is most noted for his work entitled *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*. In this *Ḥadīth* compilation, which was written in Arabic, the *Aḥādīth* (sing. *Ḥadīth*) were arranged under various headings covering a wide range of topics.

However, what is apparent in this work is the total omission of the full *isnād* (chain of narrators) of each *Ḥadīth*. This means that he only recorded the names of the *Ṣaḥabah* (*r.a.*) (Companions of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*)) through whom each of the *Ḥadīth* included in his work could be traced. He found nothing wrong in omitting the full *isnād* in view of the fact that he extracted these *Aḥādīth* from other well-known authoritative collections of *Ḥadīth* wherein their full *isnād* could be found.

Al-Baghāwī's contemporaries regarded his compilation as a valuable contribution and acknowledged its importance in fulfilling the need of the time. But, the later scholars had certain reservations about his compilation due to its certain shortcomings, one of which was omission of the *isnād*.

In due course there appeared a number of commentaries on *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*. These commentaries primarily focussed on the *isnād* of the *Aḥadīth* which had been included in the abovementioned compilation. Likewise, al-Baghāwī's classifications of the *Aḥadīth* have also been dealt with in these commentaries.

Some two hundred years later, al-Baghāwī's compilation was revised and enlarged by Walī al-Dīn Muhammad al-Tabrīzī (d. 749/1348). This edited version came to be known as *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.

T.P. Hughes describes *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* as follows:

" A well-known book of Sunni traditions much used by Sunni Muslims in India...........".[1]

AIM OF THIS STUDY

Two reasons may be put forth in order to substantiate the academic value of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. Firstly, notable scholars found it necessary to translate it from Arabic into Persian, Urdu and English. These translations have undoubtedly contributed in widening its readership among the non-Arabic

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1. Hughes, T.P., *Dictionary of Islam*, Lahore, Premier Book House, n.d., p. 353.

speaking people who, due to the language barrier, had previously been unable to gain access to it. Secondly, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* was incorporated into the the syllabus of the various Islamic Religious Educational Institutions (*Dār al-'Ulūm*) in India from as early as the fourteenth century C.E.[1].

Today, even in South Africa, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* forms an integral part of the syllabus of all the local *Dār al 'Ulūm* within the country. But, inspite of its wide readership and acceptance as a compulsory text book on *Hadīth* and *al-Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) in India and Pakistan and in all such institutions which follow the Indo-Pak Islamic Sciences curriculum, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* has not received the same degree of importance and attention at the Islamic institutions of higher learning in the Arab world.

As yet, no study has been undertaken in order to investigate the reasons for the popularity of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* and to explain its academic value and indespensability as an elementary and introductory source work on *Hadīth* and Islamic Jurisprudence. Thus, the objectives of this study are threefold as enumerated hereunder:

1. To analyse its special features and characteristics.

2. To investigate the reasons for its popularity.

3. To evaluate its academic standing and value as a source work on *Hadīth* and Islamic Jurisprudence.

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1. Desai, Ziyaud-Din, A., *Centres of Islamic Learning in India*, Simla, India, Government of India Press, 1978, p. 12.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ḤADĪTH

1.1. Definition

Ḥadīth is a verbal noun derived from the Arabic root verb *ḥadatha* which means to occur, to relate, to speak, and to report.[1] Thus, the word Ḥadīth literally means "communication, story, conversation.[2] The word *Ḥadīth* in its literal sense appears both in the *Qur'ānic* texts and *Ḥadīth* literature. For example, in the *Qur'ān* we come across this citation:

"Has the Ḥadīth (story) of Mūsā reached you."[3]

In the *Ḥadīth* literature it is reported that the Prophet Muḥammad (*s.a.w.s.*) said:

"The best Ḥadīth (communication) is the Book of Allāh."[4]

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1. Lane, E.W., *Arabic-English Lexicon*, New York, Frederick Unwar Publishing Co., 1956, Book 1, part 2, p. 527.

2. Azami, M.M., *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, Indianapolis, American Trust Publications 1977, p. 1.

3. *Qur'ān*, 20:9.

4. Al-Naysabūrī, Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Karachi, Nūr Muḥammad Aṣaḥḥ al-Maṭābi', 1956, vol. 1, p. 284.

It may be appropriate to point out that the term *Hadīth* also has the connotation of 'new ' being used as an antonym of 'old' (*qadīm*). The technical meaning of the term *Hadīth* has been defined by the *fuqahā'* (Muslim jurists) as "the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (*s.a.w.s.*)", while the *muhaddithūn* (scholars of *Hadīth*) define it as "the words, practices, tacit approval of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) in private or public or description of his sifāt (features) meaning his physical appearance is part of the *Hadīth* literature."[1]

1.2. *Hadīth* and *Sunnah*

Closely connected with the term of *Hadīth* is the term *Sunnah*. *Sunnah* (pl. *Sunan*) is a verbal noun derived from the Arabic root verb *sanna* which means to shape, form, introduce, prescribe or establish.[2]. In the Islamic literature the technical meaning of the term *Sunnah* is the mode of life of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).[3]

The two terms *Hadīth* and *Sunnah* are translated as Traditions of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*). They are often interchangeably used but there is a subtle difference between the two terms. In short, *Sunnah* represents what was practised by the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*), while *hadīth* is the record of what the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) said and practised. Thus, a *Hadīth* may not contain any *Sunnah* as in the following example:

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1. *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, op. cit., p. 3.
2. *Arabic-English Lexicon*, op. cit., Book 1, part 4, p. 1436.
3. *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, op. cit., p. 4.

"The best of you is the one who studies the Qur'ān and teaches it".[1]

Or, on the other hand, it may contain one or more *Sunnah* as, for example, in the *Aḥādīth* (sing. *Ḥadīth*) dealing with matters pertaining to the mode of *'ibādah* (worship) like the *Sunnah* of the *ṣalāh* (obligatory prayers), the rites of *ḥajj* (pilgrimage), the etiquette of *ṣiyām* (fasting) etc. To Muslim jurists *Sunnah* is "what has been transmitted on the authority of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) which includes his saying, practice, and approval or disapproval." The *muḥaddithūn* (scholars of *Ḥadīth*) define this term as "that which has been reported on the authority of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) and includes in it his saying, practice, and approval or disapproval, and, *inter alia*, description of his physical appearance, moral character and way of life, before and after prophethood was conferred upon him.[2]

1.3 The Three Types of *Sunnah*

a. *Al-Qawl* i.e. verbal teaching of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*). For example, *Ḥaḍrat* Abū Hurayrah (*r.a.*) reported that the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) said " The best house, amid the Muslim community, is one in which an orphan is treated well, and the worst house is that in which an orphan is ill-treated."[3]

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1. Al-Tirmidhī, Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Kutub Khāna Rashidiyyah, n.d., vol. 2, p. 114.

2. Al-Sabā'ī, M., *Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, Damascus, Al-Maktab al Islāmī, 1398/1978, p. 47.

3. Ibn Mājah, 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Yazīd, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Karachi, Qadīmī Kutub Khāna, n.d., p. 262.

b. *Al-Fi'l* i.e. practical teaching done by the Prophet through practical demonstration like the method of performing the *wuḍū* (ablution), *ṣalāh* (obligatory prayers), the mode of *ṣiyām* (fasting) and the performance of *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) etc.[1]

c. *Al-Taqrīr* i.e. tacit approval which may be explained as an act done in the presence or in the absence of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) and he either approved or disapproved it. For example the *Ḥadīth* of Jābir (*r.a.*), " We used to practise '*azl* (coitus interruptus) during the Prophet's (*s.a.w.s.*) lifetime and he was informed about this and he did not forbid us."[2] Likewise, it comprises that which the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) instructed and acted upon and the *Ṣaḥābah* (*r.a.*) upheld it. For example, the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) forbade his Companions (*r.a.*) from wearing silk and gold rings.[3]

1.4 Preservation of *Ḥadīth*

1.4.1 During the Lifetime of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).

The Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) encouraged his Companions (*r.a.*) to acquire and teach his *Ḥadīth/Sunnah* to others.[4] This resulted in their taking a keen interest in

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1. *Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*,op. cit., p. 47.

2. Al-Shawkāni, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī bin Muḥammad, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, Cairo, Maktabah Dār al-Turāth, n.d., part 5, pp. 195.

3. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 193 and 195.

4. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 90.

the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and thus they memorized everything that they heard from him and saw him do.

The course of study which the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) prescribed for the Ashāb al-Suffāh (Companions of the Platform) included, *inter alia*, the study of the Qur'ān, his Sunnah and the art of writing.[1] The Prophet when appointing officials gave preference to those who were learned in the Qur'ān as well as the Hadīth.[2]

The Companions (r.a.) did not only commit many of the Ahādīth to memory, but, some of them went a step further and recorded them in writing them on stone-tablets, skin, bones and on some form of paper as well.[3]. Each of these written documents came to be known as a Sahīfah.

The Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) written documents in the form of letters inviting the chieftains and Kings to Islam; the treaties and agreements he concluded with the different Arabian tribes, Jews and Christians in Arabia; and the letters addressed to the Muslim governors detailing the rules for zakāh and other legal matters, all fall under the category of the teaching of his Sunnah through the

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1. Siddiqi, Muhammad Zubayr, *Hadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, and Special Features*, Cambridge, The Islamic Text Society, 1993, p. 5.
2. *Sahīh Muslim*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 272.
3. Azami, M. M., *Studies in Early Hadīth Literature*, Indianapolis, American Trust Publication, 1978, p. 200.

written medium.[1] Some of the Companions (r.a.) had written down the

Ahādīth. The scribes of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) for example, Abū Rāfiʿī, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn Al-ʿĀṣ and Zayd ibn Thābit were entrusted with the writing down of the *Ahādīth*, treatises of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s*),laws, and letters etc. After the demise of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) (11/632) the importance of *Ḥadīth* increased even more.

1.4.2. After The Demise of The Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*)

From the very beginning Muslims were interested in what the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) said and did. After the demise of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) his *Ḥadīth* began to be disseminated along with the spread of Islam beyond the confines of Arabia. Newcomers to the fold of Islam were anxious to hear and learn about him and his teachings. The *Ṣaḥābah* (*r.a.*) were given an eager hearing as they spoke about the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*). In this way a great number of *Ahādīth* came to be disseminated.[2]

At this juncture it should be noted that the *Ahadīth* were constantly being memorised and repeatedly reported by the Companions (*r.a.*). In this domain the *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffah* (*r.a.*) played a vital role. The most famous amongst them was Abū Hurayrah (*r.a.*) (d. 59/679) who chose to remain with the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) in order to learn everything that the Prophet did or said and is noted

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1. For a detailed account of the letters written by the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) see Qureshi, Sultan Ahmed, *Letters of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.)*, Karachi, International Islamic Publishers, 1983, pp. 123
2. *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, and Special Features*, op. cit., p. 29.

to have transmitted the largest number of *Ahadīth*.[1] He, however, selected 138

Ḥadīth dealing with *al-Akhlāq* (Ethics and Morality) from the vast number of *Aḥādīth* he had memorised and dictated them to his disciple Hammām ibn Munabbih and entitled this collection *al-Ṣaḥīfah al- Ṣaḥīḥah* (The Correct Tract). This *Ṣaḥīfah* popularly known as the *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām ibn Munnabih has been edited and published by Dr Muḥammad Hamidullah of Paris in 1953.[2]

It should be pointed out here that the writing down of the *Aḥadīth* was not encouraged in the beginning lest the Companions (*r.a.*) confuse the *Ḥadīth* with the *Qur'ānic* text.[3] However, after some time when the fear of confusion disappeared, the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) permitted the *Ḥadīth* to be written. Consequently, the Companions (*r.a.*) wrote them down, even during the lifetime of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*). For example, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr (*r.a.*) complained to the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) that he had a problem in memorising what he heard from him, so the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) told him that he should seek the assistance of his right hand i.e. suggesting he should write them down.[4] He called his collection *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Ṣādiqah* (The Truthful Tract).[5]

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1. *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, op. cit., p. 36.

2. See Hamidullah, M., *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām ibn Munabbih*, Hyderabad, Gemini Printers, 10th Edition, 1979.

3. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 414.

4. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, op.cit. vol. 2 p. 91.

5. *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, and Special Features*, op. cit., p. 10.

7

1.4.3 After the Companions (*r.a.*)

In the year 101/719 the Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (61-101 /680-719), fearing the loss of *Ahādīth*, appointed learned scholars like *Imām* Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) to compile *Hadīth* literature. Al-Zuhrī was a renown scholar and an authority on *Hadīth*.[1] It is stated by Ibn Sa'd that al-Zuhrī had collected a considerable number of *Ahādīth* with the result "that after his death several riding beasts were needed to transport his manuscripts."[2]

'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz also wrote letters to scholars of *Hadīth* all over the then Islamic world and appealed to them to embark upon the task of compiling the *Ahādīth* that were then available in the form of books. Thus, through his initiative, the *Ahādīth* that were scattered throughout the Muslim domain came to be systematically collected and preserved.

However, the first comprehensive and systematic compilation of *Hadīth* was undertaken by *Imām* Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795). His compilation is entitled *Al-Muwattā'* (The Trodden Path), and contains *Ahādīth* dealing with different legal topics. Thereafter other compilations of *Hadīth* came into existence either in the form of *Musnad* or *Musannaf* collections.

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1. Walī al-Dīn, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al Khatīb, *Mishkāt al-Masābīh*, in the section entitled "Ikmāl fī Asmā' al-Rijāl", Karachi, Nūr Muhammad Asahh al-Matābi', n.d., p. 595.
2. *Hadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, and Special Features*, op. cit., p. 7.

1.5 Types of Compilations

There are two types of compilation of Hadith. The *Musnad* collection, is that in which *Ahādīth* are arranged alphabetically under the names of the *Ṣaḥābah* (*r.a.*) on whose authority these were reported. Among the earliest available in print are the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal [d.164-241 /780-855] and the *Musnad* of Abū Da'ūd al-Ṭayālisī (d. 203/818).

As for the *Muṣannaf* collections, the *Ahādīth* are recorded under various headings dealing with juridical subjects. Famous collections belonging to this category are *Al-Ṣiḥaḥ al-Sittah* (The Six Authentic Books of *Hadīth*), namely the compilations of *Imāms* Abu 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/874), Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī (d. 302/914), Abū Dā'ūd al-Sijistānī (d. 200/835), Abu 'Īsā Muḥammad ibn 'Īsa al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), and Abu 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Yazīd ibn Mājah al-Qazwīnī (d. 273/886).

1.6 Fabrication of *Hadīth*

The conflict between Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (*r.a.*) and Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah (*r.a.*) in regard to the question of *Khilāfah*, finally led to wars which in turn resulted into formation of various groupings and factions supporting one or the other. Each faction began to back up its claim or its political and theological standpoint by inventing a *Hadīth* in its favour or in opposition as the case may be.

It may be appropriate to discuss, at this juncture, some of the avenues through which the fabrication of *Hadīth* came about:

9

A. Political Differences

The Shī'ah strongly felt that the Caliphate was the right of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (Family of the Prophet) and thus held that *hadrat* 'Alī (*r.a.*) was the legitimate successor to the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*). They therefore fabricated *Hadīth* i.e. they attributed to the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) many sayings in which mention was made that *Hadrat* 'Alī (*r.a.*) should succeed him.[1] Others who supported the claim of *Hadrat* Mu'āwiyah (*r.a.*) to the Caliphate were equally guilty of such fabrications. The same is true with other later political groupings such as the Khawārij, the Ummayyads and the Abbasids.

B. Theological Differences

During the latter part of the Ummayyad *Khilāfat* and throughout the 'Abbasid period a number of theological issues arose in relation to *Īmān* (Faith) and *Sifāt* (Attributes of *Allāh*). This resulted in the creation of various theological sects such as the Qadariyah, Jabariyah, Mu'tazilah, etc. Factions belonging to these different groupings made deliberate changes to the texts or *isnād* (chain of narrators) of certain *Hadīth*, and fabricated other *Hadīth* to lend support to their views.[2]

C. *Al-Qussās* (storytellers)

It was a common practice among the Arabs to be entertained by storytellers during their time of leisure. These *Qussās* related amusing annecdotes, stories,

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1. *Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, op. cit., p. 75.

2. *Hadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, and Special Features*, op. cit., p. 32.

tales of bravery during battles to the common people. Thus, their main object was to please the audience who handsomely rewarded them. They invented many amusing anecdotes and tales of bravery during the course of narration and thus invented unwittingly *Ahādīth* to back up their narration.[1]

D. *Al-Wā'izūn* (The Preachers)

The *Wā'izūn* were alarmed at the spiritual decay of the people. In order to rectify this, they fabricated *Hadīth* in which mention was made of increase of *thawāb* (blessings) for minor actions and severe punishments for minor sins. This was done with the good intention of encouraging people to do good and abstain from evil.

The Companions (*r.a.*) became alarmed at the rate of fabrication of *Hadīth* and laid down stringent rules for the reporting of *Hadīth*, laying down the foundation for the development of the Science of Criticism of *Hadīth*.[2]

Thus, a concerted effort was made during the early period of the defusion of *Hadīth*, to curb the fabrication of *Hadīth*.

By the second century *Hijrī* the Science of Criticism of *Hadīth* was fully developed. Every *Hadīth* consists of two sections: the *isnād* (chain of narrators) and the *matn* (text of the *Hadīth*). Specific rules were laid down by

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1. *Hadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, and Special Features*, op. cit., p. 34.

2. *ibid*, p. 36.

11

the *muḥaddithūn* (scholars of *Hadīth)* in order to examine the reliability of the *ruwāt* (narrators of the *Aḥādīth*) and this led to the compilation of their biographical data. Special investigation was also carried out in order to establish whether they were influenced by any particular religious view. Furthermore, a method was devised in order to scrutinize the *matn* (text) of the *Hadīth*. The *muḥaddithūn* also devised a system by which the authenticity of the *Aḥadīth* could be assertained and laid down specific criteria for their acceptance.[1]

1.6.1 *'Ilm Asmā' al-Rijāl*

'Ilm Asmā' al-Rijāl (The Biographies of the Reporters). This science deals with the personal details of the reporters of the *Aḥādīth*. The *isnad* (chain of authorities) of each *Hadīth* are closely examined in order to establish their integrity and reliability as reporters of the sayings of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).

Among others, the following principles were laid down:[2]

1. Each *Hadīth* has to be traced back to the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) through a trustworthy chain of narrators. Thus their biographies were carefully examined.
2. The character of each reporter was studied carefully in order to assertain his truthfulness and veracity.
3. If the reporter was noted to have a weak memory or was known to have spoken a lie his report was not excepted.

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1. *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, op. cit., pp. 58-67.
2. Hanafi, J.A., *A Survey of Muslim Institutions and Culture*, Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1969, p. 16.

4. Every reporter had to furnish a complete chain of narrators that were all traced back to the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).

5. The reporter was to be a reputable educationist as well as a *muhaddith*. This was to ensure that he understood the correct implication of the *Hadīth*.

Thus, biographical works in which minute details of each narrator were recorded came into existence. An important work in this field is that of Ibn Hatim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938) entitled *Kitāb al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dīl*.[1]

1.6.2 *'Ilm al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dīl*

'Ilm al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dīl (The Science of Criticism) was evolved so as to examine the veracity of the *matn* (text) of the *Hadīth*. Several principles were laid down by the *muhaddīthūn* in this regard. Some of these principles are enumerated hereunder[2]:

1. The report must be established. This means that it has to be ascertained whether it was said or done by the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).

2. Any *Hadīth* which went contrary to the explicit text of the *Qur'ān* or *Sunnah* was rejected.

3. Any *Hadīth* that contradicted the established *al-Sunnah al-Mutawātirah* (successive practice of the Prophet) was rejected.

4. In the event that a particular *Hadīth* was against historical facts was not accepted.

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1. Robson, James, *Mishkāt al-Masābīh- English Translation with Explanatory Notes*, Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1963, vol. 1, p. vi.

2. *A Survey of Muslim Institutions and Culture*, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

1.6.3. Classification of *Ḥadīth*[1]

Scholars of *Ḥadīth* have classified the *Aḥādīth* into two broad categories which are termed as *Mutawātir* and *Aḥad*. *Mutawātir Ḥadīth* is one which has been reported by a large number of narrators and therefore it is inconceivable that all of them could have lied.

As for the *Aḥad Ḥadīth*, the number of narrators are lesser than that of those reporting the *Mutawātir Ḥadīth*. The *Aḥad Ḥadīth* is further divided into the following categories:

1. *Al-Mashhūr* (well-known). This type of *Ḥadīth* has been transmitted by two or more reporters at every stage.

2. *Al-'Azīz* (strong). A *Ḥadīth* is said to be *'azīz* if it happens to have been transmitted by at least two reporters in every generation.

3. *Al-Gharīb* (Strange). A *gharīb Ḥadīth* is one in whose *isnād* there exists only a single narrator after the *Ṣaḥābī*.

The *muḥaddithūn* further classified the *Ḥadīth* into two groups i.e. *maqbūl* (accepted) and *mardūd* (rejected). The *Maqbūl Ḥadīth* is further divided into the following two groups:

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1. See al-Suyūṭī, 'Abd al- Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr Jalāl al-Dīn, *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, Madīnah, Saudi Arabia, Maktab al-'Ilmiyyah, 2nd Edition, 1972, pp. 62-208.

14

1. *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Sound or Authentic)

A *Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth* is one whose reporters in its *isnād* are all considered to be authentic, strong in memory and are all above any kind of criticism. The *Aḥādīth* which belong to this category are included in the compilations of *Imāms* al-Bukhari and Muslim.

2. *Al-Ḥasan* (Good)

A *Ḥadīth* is said to be *ḥasan* if it has been reported by such reporters whose truthfulness and trustworthiness do not match that of those who reported the *Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth*. Most of the *Aḥādīth* which have been included in the compilation of *Imām* al-Tirmidhī are regarded to be of this category.

The *Mardūd Ḥadīth* is that type of *Ḥadīth* which does not meet the criteria of *Ṣaḥīḥ* and *Ḥasan Ḥadīth*. *Mardūd Ḥadīth* is termed as *da'īf* (i.e. weak). *Da'īf Ḥadīth* is classified into the following divisions:

1. *Al-Marfū'* is that type of *Ḥadīth* whose *isnād* is traced directly back to the Prophet (*s.a.w.s*) but there is a broken link in between.
2. *Al-Mawqūf* is such that its *isnād* stops at the *Ṣaḥabī* only and does not go back to the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).
3. *Al-Maqtū'* is a *Ḥadīth* which goes back to the *tābi'ī* (successor to the *Ṣaḥābī*) only.
4. *Al-Mu'allaq* is such that one of the reporters in the beginning of its *isnād* is *majhūl* (unknown).
5. *Al-Mursal* is a *Ḥadīth* in whose *isnād* one of the reporters is unknown at the end.

15

CHAPTER TWO

HADĪTH AS THE SECOND PRIMARY SOURCE OF ISLAMIC LAW

2.1 The *Sharī'ah* (Islamic Law)

The term *Sharī'ah* is derived from the Arabic root verb *shara'a* which means to become apparent, manifest or plain. Literally, the term *Sharī'ah* means 'the way to a watering place' or a source of water.[1] Technically, it stands for the commandments of *Allāh* (*SWT*) which deal with *al-halāl* (the permissible) and *al-harām* (the prohibited). These injunctions were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (*s.a.w.s.*). The *Qur'ān*, in several verses[2], exhorts Muslims to uphold the law of *Allāh* (*SWT*) in their daily lives. This is so because within the Islamic system, the Sovereign is Almighty *Allāh* (*SWT*) Himself.

The *Qur'ān* and *Hadīth/Sunnah* are the primary sources of the *Sharī'ah*. The former being the verbatim word of *Allāh* (*SWT*) and the other being its elucidation in the form of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).

2.1.1. The *Qur'ān*

The *Qur'ān* is the Book of *Allāh* which contains the instructions and guidance

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1. Doi, Abdur Rahman I., *Sharī'ah - The Islamic Law*, London, Ta-ha Publishers, 1984, p. 2.
2. *Qur'ān*, e.g. in the following verses 4:105, 5:44-45, 5:48-49.

revealed by *Allāh* for the benefit of mankind. The *aḥkām* (injunctions) of the *Qur'ān* constitute the code of conduct for Muslims from birth to death.

The *Qur'ān* was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad (*s.a.w.s*) over a period of 23 years. Most of the verses which embody rules of law came about to settle questions that actually arose for decision. Some other verses were revealed in order to censure the evil practices that prevailed in the society like infanticide, gambling, usury, unlimited polygamy, etc. These rules of law are found in certain chapters of the *Qur'ān* e.g. *al-Baqarah, Āl 'Imrān, al-Nisā', al-Mā'idah, Banī Isrā'īl, al-Nūr, and al-Ṭalāq.* Some of these rules are in detail while others are not. The *Qur'ān* states:

> *"And We have sent down unto you also the Message that you may explain clearly to man what is sent for them, and that they may give thought".*[1]

From this verse one gathers that the Prophet (*s.a.w.s*) is the only reliable medium through which the Will of *Allāh* (*SWT*) was made known to mankind. Thus, one of his duties was to interpret the *Qur'ānic* injunctions.

2.1.2 The *Ḥadīth/Sunnah*

The *Qur'ānic* injunctions, as mentioned above, are further explained and translated into practice by the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) in the form of his *Sunnah.* Thus, the *Sunnah* constitutes the second most important source of the *Sharī'ah,* second in authority only after the *Qur'ān.* That Muslims should

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1. *Qur'ān,* 16:44

17

accept the *Ḥadīth/Sunnah* as a source of Islamic Law is advocated by the *Qur'ān* itself:

"*Whatever the messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you from, abstain from that.*"[1]

"*Obey Allah and obey the Prophet and render not your actions in vain.*"[2]

"*Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allāh.*"[3]

Likewise, the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) also emphasized the authoritative nature of his *Sunnah*. During the course of *Khuṭbah al Wadā'ah* (Farewell Sermon) the Prophet (*s.a.w.s*) is reported to have said:

"*I leave behind two things, if you hold fast unto them you shall never go astray: the Book of Allāh and my Sunnah.*"[4]

He also exhorted his Companions (*r.a.*) to convey to others what they have heard from him saying:

"*Ḥaddithū 'annī*" (relate my saying to others).[5]

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1. *Qur'ān*, 59:7.
2. *Qur'ān*, 8:20.
3. *Qur'ān*, 4:80.
4. Mālik, Anas bin, *Al-Muwaṭṭa'*, Beirut, Dār Iḥyā' al 'Ulūm, 1988, p. 690.
5. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 414.

Futhermore, he implored them to uphold his way of life saying:

" *'Alaykum bi sunnatī*" (follow my example)[1].

The *Qur'ān* without the *Ḥadīth* or *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) remains unintelligible in certain instances and that is why the *Qur'ān* has, in several verses, commanded Muslims to follow the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) in all his deeds and sayings. Therefore, if one believes in the *Qur'ān*, there is no other alternative but to uphold the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*)

The *Qur'ān* makes it clear that it is not proper on the part of any Muslim to ignore or oppose the explanations given by the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) to the commandments of *Allāh* as depicted in the following verse:

"*And as for him, who opposes the Messenger after guidance has been made clear, follows a path other than that of a believer.*"[2]

From the time of the Companions (*r.a.*) to this day, there has always been consensus amongst Muslims that the *Qur'ānic* revelation and the precepts of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) constitute the primary sources of Islamic Law.[3]

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1. Al-Sijistānī, Abū Sulaymān ibn al-As'ab, *Sunan Abī Dawūd*, Karachi, H.M. Sa'id Company, n.d., vol. 2, p. 279.

2. *Qur'ān*, 4:115.

3. Abū Zahrah, Muḥammad, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, Cairo, Dār al-Fikr al-Arabī, n.d., p. 90.

Generally the *Qur'ān* lays down broad principles of Law and *Sharī'ah* obligations which cannot be fulfilled without resorting to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*). For instance, the *Qur'ān* orders Muslims to 'perform *Ṣalāh*' but does not provide details of how it should be performed and what is to be read in it. The details are found in the *Sunnah*. Again, the *Qur'ān* allows one to bequeath a share from one's estate to any person and does not stipulate the maximum limit for such a bequest.[1] The Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) is the one who fixed its maximum limit at one third of one's estate only.[2]

In other words then, the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) interpreted the verses of the *Qur'ān* and explained their meanings and implications to the *Ṣaḥābah* [*r.a.*] for practical application. In the process he [the Prophet] also made provisions for those aspects of the Law which were not specifically provided for in the *Qur'ān*. The Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) interpreted the Qur'ānic injunctions by his own words and deeds which was transmitted by the Companions (*r.a.*) from generation to generation. Even the most common every day *Sharī'ah* obligations such as *ṣalah* (prayer), *sawm* (Fasting), *ḥajj* (annual Pilgrimage to Makkah) and *zakāh* (compulsory charity) cannot be carried out if *Ḥadīth* is not accepted.

It can therefore safely be said that the *Ḥadīth* supplements the *Qur'ān* as a source of the Islamic laws. The importance of the *Ḥadīth* in this domain can be realised fully when after the death of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) every case that came for decision had to be referred to the *Qur'ān* or the *Ḥadīth*. There are numerous cases on record in which judgement was given solely on the basis

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1. *Qur'ān*, 2:180.
2. *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 133.

of the *Hadīth*. For instance, *hadrat* Fātimah (*r.a.*) (d. 11/632) the Prophet's (*s.a.w.s.*) daughter claimed that she was entitled to an inheritance from the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*). *Hadrat* Abū Bakr (*r.a.*) (d. 13/634) ruled against her claim on the basis of the following *Hadīth*:

> *"Our property cannot be inherited, and whatever we leave behind is to be spent in charity."*[1]

Many other instances of this nature came about for decisions and were mostly resolved on the strength of the *Hadīth* of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).

There is agreement amongst most Muslim scholars that the contents of the *Hadīth* are from *Allāh* (*SWT*).[2] Hence they have described it as being the result of some form of inspiration and that is why *Hadīth* is termed as *al-wahy al-khafī* (hidden revelation). The contents of the *Hadīth* are expressed through the Prophet's own words or actions, while in the case of the *Qur'ān*, the angel Jibrā'īl (Gabriel) (*'alayhi al-salām*) conveyed the exact wordings and contents of the divine revelation to the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).

Though the *Hadīth* has complemented the teachings of the *Qur'ān* in many respects, they are in essence distinct from each other. Muslim scholars have dealt extensively with the differences that exist between the *Qur'ān* and the *Hadīth* and some of these differences are enumerated hereunder:[3]

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1. Al-Bukhāri, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, Karachi, Nūr Muhammad Asah al-Matābi', 1961, vol. 2, p. 995.

2. *Shari'ah: The Islamic Law*, op. cit., p. 45.

3. Von Denffer, Ahmad, *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Leicester, The Islamic Foundation, 1983, pp. 18-20.

1. *Hadīth* is not necessarily the exact words spoken by the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*), while the *Qur'ān* is the actual words of *Allāh (SWT)*.

2. The *Hadīth* is not protected by *Allāh (SWT)* from corruption while the *Qur'ān* is.

3. The *Hadīth* from or about the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) is the word or action of a human being and not the speech of *Allāh (SWT)* as is the case of the *Qur'an*.

4. Every word of the *Qur'ān* is transmitted by *tawātur* (i.e. many people throughout the generations) while the same cannot be said of each and every *Hadīth* .

2.2 *Al-Hadīth al-Nabawī* (the Prophet's *Hadīth*) and *al-Hadīth al-Qudsī* (the Sacred *Hadīth*)

The *Muhaddithūn* have further differentiated between two distinct types of *Hadīth* which are termed as *Al-Hadīth al-Nabawī* and *al-Hadīth al-Qudsī*. The former being restricted to the sayings of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*), while the latter case the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) quotes *Allāh (SWT)* in the direct speech. *Al-Quds* means holy or sacred. The sayings that are termed as *al-Qudsī* are such that while the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) was relating them to his Companions (*r.a.*), he mentioned that *Allāh*, in effect, had communicated them to him. However, these communications do not form part of the *Qur'ān*.

Such reports are included within the category of *Al-Hadīth al-Qudsī*. An example of this type of *Hadīth* is one which had been reported by *hadrat* Abū Hurayrah (*r.a.*) in which it is mentioned that the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) said that *Allāh* said:

"If My servant likes to meet Me, I will love to meet him"[1].

In what has been discussed above, it is evident that the Prophet's (*s.a.w.s.*) explanations in the form of *Hadīth* and *Sunnah* serve as a source of guidance for every Muslim in every age. This is so because *Allāh* the Almighty (*SWT*) describes the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) as the expounder of the *Qur'ān*[2]. *Allāh* (*SWT*) also emphasizes the fact that every Muslim must obey the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*)[3].

The importance of *Hadīth* as a source of Islamic Law is recognised by the Muslim community. It is, as mentioned earlier, understood to be an exposition of the *Qur'ān*. Without the *Hadīth* the science of Islamic Jurisprudence (*al-Fiqh*) could not have been evolved and the details of obligations and dos and don'ts would not have been known.

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1. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 342.
2. *Qur'ān*, 16:44.
3. *Qur'ān*, 59:7.

CHAPTER THREE

MAṢĀBĪḤ AL-SUNNAH

By the end of the third century *Hijrī* a large number of *Hadīth* compilations made their appearance. However, the momentum to compile other works on *Hadīth* never ceased. Each compilation was unique and served a particular purpose. Al-Baghawī's (d. 516/1122) *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* was a welcome addition to the vast literature on *Hadīth*.

This collection is known by the title of *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*. Before discussing the contents and distinguishing features of the *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*, it would be appropriate to give a brief account of the life of its author.

3.1 Al- Baghawī

Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Masʿūd ibn Muḥammad al-Farrāʿ al-Baghawī (commonly known as al-Farrāʿ) was born in 435/1043 in Herat, ʿIrāq. He died at the age of 81 in 516/1122 in Baghshur, and was buried in the graveyard of Qāḍī al-Ḥusayn in Herat, ʿIrāq.[1]

He was a Shāfiʿī scholar who hailed from a village called Bagh or Baghshūr, near Herat, ʿIrāq. He took the *nisbah* (title) *al-Farraʿ* from his father who was a furrier (*farrāʿ*). He had good training in *al-Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and in *Hadīth*. He was a favourite pupil of Qāḍī al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-

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1. Al-Qārī, Mullā ʿAlī, *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, Multan, Maktabah Imdādiyah, n.d., vol. 1, p. 10.

Marw al-Rūdhī (d. 462 /1069), he also studied under other prominent scholars of his time such as Abū al-Ḥasan Da'ūdī (d. 465 A.H.), 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad Ya'qūb ibn Aḥmad Sayrifī[1], etc.

3.1.1. His Literary Works

Among the literary works of al-Baghawī are *Sharḥ al-Sunnah* (the explanation of the *Sunnah*) and *Al-Mu'jam*. Walī al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh al-Tabrizī (d. 749 A.H.) in his *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* makes a mention of these two works. *Sharḥ al-Sunnah* is a collection of the *Aḥādīth* of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) copies of which exist in manuscripts only. To this day, this manuscript remains unpublished. As far as *Al-Mu'jam* is concerned it has not survived but reference to it is made by ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) in his *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*.[2] Although he wrote on many subjects, the work for which he is most known is his *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*.

3.2 *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*

This work was first printed in Bulāq in 1294/1877 and thereafter it was printed in two volumes in Cairo, Egypt in 1318/1900, with *Imām* Mālik's *al-Muwaṭṭā'* in its margin. This edition was again reprinted in Cairo in 1354/1935.

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1. 'Abd al-'Azīz, Shāh, *Bustān al-Muḥaddithīn*, Karachi, Sa'īd Company, 1970, p. 136.
2. Al-Asqalānī, ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Beirut, Dār Iḥyā' al-'Ulūm, n.d., vol.2 p. 138.

Al-Baghawi omitted to mention the *isnād* (chain of authorities) of the *Aḥādith* which are found in his *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* but retained the name of the *Ṣaḥābah* through whom each of the *Ḥadīth* could be traced. He selected the *Aḥādith* which he included in his work from a large number of collections of *Ḥadīth*. These *Aḥādith* cover a variety of topics and are arranged accordingly under specific books (*kutub*) on the principle of the *muṣannaf* works.

In the introduction of *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*, al-Baghawi outlines the aims and objectives for his compiling this work. He was particularly interested in compiling a work that would include such *Aḥādith* that could serve as a guide for Muslims in those matters of which the *Qur'ān* is silent upon.[1]

The reason for his omitting to mention the chain of narrators of the *Aḥādith* may be attributed to the trust he had in the *muḥaddithūn* (scholars of *Ḥadīth*) from whose works he extrapolated these selected *Aḥādith*. The other possible explanation for omitting *isnād* could be the saving of space and avoiding repetitive reading of the *isnād*.[2]

Every book (*kitāb*) in this compilation is divided into a number of different chapters (*abwāb*). Every chapter consists of two sections (*faṣl*). The first section contains *Ṣaḥīḥ Aḥādith* (i.e. the authentic ones) which have been taken from the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* (i.e. the compilations of Imāms al-Bukhārī and Muslim).

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1. Chishti, 'Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-Bidā'at al-Mizjāt*, Multan, Maktabah Imdādiyah, n.d., p. 57.

2. *ibid*, p. 60.

The second section (*faṣl*) contains the *Aḥadīth* which are classified as *hasan* (i.e. good). These *Aḥadīth* have been taken from the compilations of al-Tirmidhi, Abū Dā'ūd and others.[1]

In preparing this work, al-Baghawī did not indicate the source of each *Hadīth*, but one ought to note that in the first section the *Aḥadīth* in every chapter have been taken either from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* or *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* or from both. As far as the *Aḥadīth* which are to be found in the second section, al-Baghawī had taken them from a number of different compilations and does not make any mention of their sources. This shortcoming in the second section makes it cumbersome and difficult to trace the source of a *Hadīth* therein. However, after careful investigations one may finally come to know that the *Aḥadīth* in the second section have been taken from the works of Abū Dā'ūd (d. 200/835), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), al-Nasā'ī (d. 302/914), ibn Mājah (d. 273/886) and al-Dārimī (d. 255). Thus, these five works are the sources of the *Aḥadīth* in the second section of *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*. It is perplexing that al-Baghawī, in the introduction of this compilation, restricted himself to mentioning that the *Aḥadīth* in the second section are from the works of Abū Dā'ūd, al-Tirmidhī and others, without citing the other three works.[2]

The *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* contains 4 434 *Aḥadīth* of which 2 434 were taken from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Of the 2 434 *Aḥadīth*, 325 are from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* alone, 875 from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* alone, and the remainder, i.e. the 1 234 *Aḥadīth*, are to be found in both these sources.[3].

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1. *Al-Bidā'at al-Mizjāt*, op. cit., p. 60.
2. *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 32.
3. *Bustān al-Muhaddithīn*, op. cit., p. 348.

Another observation one can make is that al-Baghawī mentions at the end of his introduction that he would indicate which *Hadīth* in the second section is *gharīb* (strange) or *da'īf* (weak) and specifically states that he would avoid classifying any of the *Hadīth* therein as *munkar* (rejected) and *mawdū'* (fabricated). But, he went a step further and gave a more elaborate classification of the *Ahādīth* and actually pointed which were *mursal, munqatī* and *hasan* and *munkar*.[1]

3.4 Translations and Commentaries of *Masābīh al-Sunnah*

Masābīh al-Sunnah was held in high esteem by the learned contemporaries of al-Baghawī and thus, within a short span of time there appeared a number of commentaries on *Masābīh al-Sunnah*.

The first brief commentary that appeared was that of 'Abd al-Qādir ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Suhrāwardī (d. 563/1163). Thereafter another two very important commentaries made their appearance. One of them being that of Shihāb al-Dīn Fadl Allāh al-Turabishtī (d. 686) and entitled as *Al-Mayassar*. It was written in the year 666 A.H.. The other was that of Nasir al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar al-Baydāwi (d. 675/1276) which was known as *Tuhfat al-Abrār*.[2]

It is unfortunate that nothing much can be said about these commentaries in view of the fact that they are not available. This means that what we know of them is restricted to what we read about them in the works of al-Qārī Mullā

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1. *Bustān al-Muhaddithīn*, op. cit., page 348.
2. *Al-Bidā'at al-Mizjāt*, op. cit., p. 59.

28

'Alī[1] and Muḥammad Idrīs Khandihlwī[2]. From the work of 'Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm Chishtī we learn that the seventh and eighth centuries *Hijri* saw the compilation of many other commentaries on *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*, which unfortunately are not available, but none of them acquired the eminence of *Al-Mayassar* and *Tuḥfat al-Abrār*.

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1. *Mirqāt al Mafātīḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 70.
2. Khandihlwī, Muḥammad Idrīs, *al-Taʿlīq al Ṣabīḥ*, Lahore, al-Maktabah al-'Uthmāniyyah, n.d., vol. 1, pp. 7 and 10.

CHAPTER FOUR

MISHKĀT AL-MAṢĀBĪḤ

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* was an important contribution to the *Ḥadīth* literature and its value was acknowledged by prominent scholars of *Ḥadīth* of the time when it made its appearance. However, the later scholars felt that this work should be revised and modified in order to increase its utility and to make it accessible to the common man who does not possess a sound knowledge of the science of *Ḥadīth*.

One such scholar who held this view was 'Allāmah Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥhammad al-Ṭibī who lived in the eight century *Hijrī*. He therefore advised one of his students, Walī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Tabrizī (d. 749/1348) to write a commentary on *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*, and to ameliorate all its shortcomings. Al-Tabrizī responded to the call of his teacher and his efforts bore fruit and the improved version of *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* came to be known as *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.

Al-Tabrizī was a renown *muḥaddith* (scholar of *Ḥadīth*) of his time. He was well-versed in the intricacies of the Arabic language and rhetorics. It is unfortunate, however, that not much is known about his life.[1] Al-Tabrizī is to be commended for successfully improving upon *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*.

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1. *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, vol. 1, op.cit., p. 64.

4.1 Improvements upon *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*

1. Al-Tabrizī added 1 511 *Hadīth* to the original number of *Hadīth* in *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*, thus raising the total from 4 434 to 5945.[1] He does not give any particular reason as to why he chose to increase the number of *Ahadīth*. He only mentions that he was motivated to do so for an important reason, but fails to explain.[2] A plausible explanation may be that he felt that these additions would further his interpretation and were pertinent to the topics discussed in the *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.

2. Al-Baghawī was somewhat hesitant in passing his own judgment on the quality of the *Ahadīth* which he included in his work. At times, however, he would declare certain *Ahadīth* to be *ṣahīḥ* (sound) although such *Ahadīth* were not found in the compilations of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Likewise, he remained absolutely silent and gave no explanation as to why he had classified them as such. Al-Tabrizī, on the other hand, corrected the discrepancy by re-classifying these *Ahadīth* and gave reasons for the same.[3]

3. It is interesting to note that al-Tabrizī devoted more attention to giving his views on the quality of the *Ahadīth* which have been taken from the compilation of al-Tirmidhī.[4] He did not explain as to why this was done.

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1. *Al-Taʻlīq al Sabīḥ ʻalā Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* , op. cit., vol. 1, p. 8.

2. *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, op. cit., p. 11.

3. *Al-Bidāʻah al Mizjāt*, op. cit., p. 61.

4. *Al-Taʻlīq al Sabīḥ ʻalā Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 8

It may be inferred that he chose to do that primarily because al-Tirmidhī had commented more, in comparison to the other compilers, on the quality of the Ahādīth that are to be found in his compilation.

4. Al-Baghawī had divided his work into two sections. The first included only those Ahadīth taken from al-Bukhārī and Muslim and the second from other sources. Al- Tabrizī has added a third section (al-Faṣl al-Thālith) to most of the chapters in Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah. In these sections he recorded additional Ahādīth from the works of al-Bukhārī, Muslim and other sources which he deemed relevant to the topics covered in the respective chapters.[1] However, the sequence of the Maṣābīḥ chapters remains unchanged.

5. Some Ahādīth which appear in the second section of Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah have been moved to the third section of Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ. Likewise, certain Ahādīth which had appeared in the first section of Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah have been moved to the second section of Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ The reason that is cited for this change from the first section to the second is related to the untraceability of these particular Ahādīth in their original sources.[2]

6. Al-Tabrizī has identified at the end of every Hadīth the source or sources from where the particular Hadīth was taken.[3] Thus, by doing so, he managed to overcome al-Baghawī's shortcoming of not mentioning the isnād (chain of authorities of the Hadīth).

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Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, op. cit., p. 11.

2. ibid, p. 11

3. ibid, p. 11.

Thus, al-Tabrizī succeeded admirably well in accomplishing the task assisgned to him by his teacher. The additions and technical improvements which he incorporated in his revised version were indeed significant and made his *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* an academically popular work.

4.2 *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*

Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ is divided into twenty-nine books (*kutub*) and each book is divided into several chapters (*abwāb*). Thereafter each chapter is further divided into three sections (*faṣl*). It has in all a total number of three hundred and twenty-seven chapters.

The first book is entitled *Kitāb al-Imān* (The Book of Faith). This Book of Faith is divided into five chapters dealing with sins (*dhunūb*), signs of a hypocrite (*'alāmāt al- munāfiq*), Satan (*al-shayṭān*), the belief in predestination (*al-qadr*), the proof of punishment in the grave (*ithbāt al-'adhāb fī al-qabr*), and steadfastness to the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*.

Next come the books dealing with *ṭahārah* (cleanliness), *ṣalāh* (the five daily prayers), *zakāh* (compulsory charity), *ṣawm* (Fasting during the holy month of *Ramaḍān*) and *ḥajj* (annual Pilgrimage). These are then followed by other books which deal with business transactions, trusteeship and with the conditions of employment and other related legal matters in general.

The books dealing with marriage, divorce, and family maintenance come thereafter and are followed by the remaining books which deal with a variety of subjects, such as food, drinks, clothing, behaviour, *jihād* etc.

Each book has been given a particular title which indicates the nature of its contents. The chapters also have titles which indicate the aspects of the subjects being covered in the books. However, there are only a few chapters which do not have titles.[1]

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1. For example see *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, op. cit., pp. 66, 370 and 546.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMMENTARIES AND TRANSLATIONS OF
MISHKĀT AL-MAṢĀBĪḤ

Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, within a short period of time, gained the acceptance of the scholars and this was a contributing factor for its popularity. The extent of its popularity and value can be estimated by the large number of commentaries and translations that have appeared in due course in various languages. Important commentaries and translations of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* are discussed in this chapter.

5.1 Arabic Commentaries

1. *Al-Kāshif 'an Ḥaqā'iq al-Sunan*, written by Sharf al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad al-Ṭībī (d. 743/1342), was the very first commentary on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.[1] Al-Ṭībī was well-versed in *Tafsīr* (Commentary on the *Qur'ān*), Arabic grammar and linguistics. He was equally recognised as an authority on the science of influencing juridical principles from the *Ḥadīth*.[2] Interestingly, he was the teacher of al-Tabrizī, the compiler of the *Mishkāt*. This was indeed a matter of unique honour for the student, al-Tabrizī, that the teacher wrote a commentary on the student's work. Al-Ṭībī may have undertaken to write this commentary in view of the fact that the *Mishkāt* is a complete compilation of *Aḥādīth*, covering practically all aspects of the teachings of Islam. In his

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1. *Al-Bidā'at al-Mizjāt*, op. cit., p. 61.
2. *ibid*, pp. 83-85.

commentary, al-Ṭībī explained the difficult words, elucidated upon the grammatical structure of the *Ḥadīth* and provided details of the rules of rhetorics as applicable to the *Ḥadīth*.

Furthermore, he interpreted the *Aḥādīth* of the *Mishkāt* in detail, and also explained the salient juridical deductions based on these *Aḥādīth*. He relied, in his explanation, as he himself points out, on the work of the renown Shāfiʿī scholar ʿAllāmah Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) entitled *al-Minhāj ʿalā Sharḥ Muslim* which is a commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.[1]

Al-Kashif ʿan Ḥaqāʿiq al-Sunan is not available in print but it seems that Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī (d. 1014/1605) had access to the manuscript since he made references to it in his famous *Mirqāt al Mafātiḥ*.[2] Copies of the handwritten manuscripts of this commentary are available in Pīr Jhandū Muḥibb Allāh Shāh Library in Sind, Pakistan and in the University of the Punjab Library, Lahore, Pakistan. ʿAllāmah Yūsuf Binnūrī (d. 1977), the then Rector of *Madrasah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Islāmiyyah*, Newtown, Karachi, Pakistan, had in his possession a leather-bound copy of the manuscript on which were the signatures of some great Afghan scholars.[3] Muslim scholars used to sign on the manuscripts of other sholars as a token of *tabarruk* and historicity (for obtaining blessings).

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1. *Al-Bidāʿat al-Mizjat*, op. cit., p. 61.
2. *Mirqāt al Mafātiḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 53.
3. *Al-Bidāʿat al-Mizjat*, op. cit., p. 63.
4. *ibid*, p. 64.

2. *Minhāj al-Mishkāt* was written by 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Abharī (d. 843/1439). Nothing much is known about al-Abharī's life. His commnetary on the Mishkāt is brief.[4] In it, al-Abharī explained the unfamiliar words used in the *Aḥādīth* that are to be found in the *Mishkāt*.

3. *Hāshiyat al-Mishkāt* was written by 'Allāmah 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413). Al-Jurjānī was called al-Sayyid al-Sharīf and was born in Tājū, near Astarābadh, present-day Iran, in 740/1339. He studied in Herat, present-day Iran, and Egypt and taught in Shirāz where he finally passed away.[1] His commentary was also a brief one. A copy of this commentary in manuscript form has survived and is being available in the University of the Punjab Library, Lahore, Pakistan.[2]

4. *Mirqat al-Mafātīḥ* by 'Alī ibn Sulṭān Muḥammad al-Qārī (d. 1014/1605) is the most comprehensive and excellent Arabic commentary on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. He came to be popularly known as Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī and belonged to the Ḥanafī School. He was born in Herat, Iran, where he received his basic Islamic education. Thereafter, he travelled to *Makkah al Mukarramah*, Saudi Arabia, and studied under the celebrated scholar Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Hajar Haythamī Makkī. Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī eventually decided to remain in *Makkah al Mukarramah* where he taught, died and was laid to rest.[3] It ought to be noted here that his commentary was the first one to have been written by a

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1. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1965, vol. II, pp. 602-603.

2. *Al-Bidā'at al-Mizjat*, op. cit., p. 63.

3. Bijnūrī, Mawlānā Aḥmad Riḍā, *Anwār al-Bārī*, Deoband, India, Maktabah Nāshir al-'Ulūm, vol. 2, n.d., p. 176.

37

Ḥanafī scholar. In this commentary, the author touches upon the authenticity of the *Aḥādīth* based upon the opinions of the early *Ḥadīth* scholars. He also points out that since al-Tabrīzī was a Shāfiʿī scholar he had restricted himself to include only those *Aḥādīth* which were important and relevant to legal deductions and teachings according to the the Shāfiʿī School.[1]

In this commentary, al-Qārī refutes the Shāfiʿī juridical opinions and puts forth the Ḥanafī opinions.[2] In certain instances he questions whether the *Aḥādīth* were of weak (*daʿīf*) ranking or alternatively he gives his reasons as to why a particular *Ḥadīth* cannot be accepted to be a source for a specific Shāfiʿī ruling.[3] Thus, he added in his commentary such *Aḥādīth* from which Ḥanafī legal deductions are made.

Mirqat al-Mafātīḥ was published in Cairo for the first time in five volumes in 1309/1891 with the text of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* in the margin.[4] A beautiful edition of the same has recently been published in eleven volumes in Multan, Pakistan, but unfortunately the year of its publication has not been mentioned.[5]

5. *Al-Taʿlīq al-Ṣabīḥ ʿalā Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* of Mawlānā Muḥammad Idrīs Kāndihlwī (1394/1974). Mawlānā Kāndihlwī was born in 1312/1894 in Kāndihla, India, which is a village near Delhi. At the age of 11 he memorized the *Qurʾān*. He studied Islamic Sciences at the renown Islamic institution,

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1. *Al-Bidāʿat al-Mizjat*, op. cit., p. 75.
2. *ibid*, op. cit., p. 80.
3. *Mirqāt al Mafātiḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 343.
4. Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1., p. xv.
5. Its Publisher is Maktabah Imdādiyah, Multan, n.d.

Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm, in Sahāranpūr, India. He specialised in *Hadīth* under the renown scholar 'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī. Mawlānā Kāndihlwī taught at the Dār al-'Ulūm, Deoband, and finally migrated to Pakistan in 1949. He passed away in that city.[1] His work happens to be the most recent commentary on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. This commentary is in effect an abridged version of *Mirqat al-Mafātīḥ*.[2] Mawlānā Kāndihlwī did not manage to complete his commentary. Thus, his equally well-known son, Mawlānā Muḥammad Mālik completed the work and published it in five volumes in Lahore, Pakistan.

6. *Lamahāt al-Tanqīḥ* was written by Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaq Sayf al-Dīn al-Dihlawī (d. 1052/1642) and is a short Arabic commentary on al-Tabrīzī's *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.[3] 'Abd al-Ḥaq al-Dihlawī was born in India and completed his studies of the Islamic Sciences in Delhi. Thereafter, he travelled to *Makkah al Mukarramah*, Saudi Arabia, and specialised in *Hadīth* under Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī and other notable scholars. He was a prolific writer and wrote on a wide variety of subjects. He passed away in 1052/1642 at the age of 94 and is buried in Delhi. A manuscript of his *Lamahāt al-Tanqīḥ* is found in al-Āṣafiyah Government Library, Hyderabad Deccan, India.[4]

7. *Zujājat al-Maṣābīḥ*[5]. Its author Abū al-Ḥasanāt al-Sayyid 'Abd Allāh ibn Mawlānā al-Sayyid Muzaffar Ḥusayn al-Hydarābādī al-Ḥanafī (d. 1384/1964)

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1. *Al-Ta'līq al-Ṣabīḥ 'alā Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 2-3.

2. Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1., p. xv.

3. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, op. cit., 1960, vol. I, pp. 60-61.

4. *Anwār al-Bārī*, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

5. *Zujājah al-Maṣābīḥ* has been published by Tāj Press, Hyderabad Deccan, India, n.d. in five volumes.

wrote *Zujājat al-Maṣābīh* on the pattern of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*. He attained his religious education in Hyderabad Deccan, India, under prominent scholars. He was a prolific writer and wrote on a variety of subjects. He passed away in Hyderabad, India, at the age of 92.

Abū al-Ḥasanāt undertook writing his commentary on the *Mishkāt* entitled *Zujājah al-Maṣābīh* while visiting Turkey and Afghanistan. Since the majority of the Muslim population in these two countries follow the Ḥanafī School of Islamic Jurisprudence, his commentary is based upon the Ḥanafī juridical opinions. Some salient features of his commentary are as follows: firstly, he has included at the beginning of every chapter relevant verses of the *Qur'ān* pertaining to the topics discussed in the chapters; secondly, since Al-Tabrizī, the author of the *Mishkāt*, had included only such *Aḥādīth* which have a Shāfi'ī bias, he, on the other hand, replaced these *Aḥādīth* with others that are in conformity with the Ḥanafī rulings; thirdly, unlike the *Mishkāt* he grouped all the *Aḥādīth* which deal with juridical matters under relevant headings. This commentary has been translated into Urdu by a group of scholars and entitled as *Nūr al-Maṣābīh*.

5.2 *Farsī* Translation and Commentary

Ashi'at al-Lama'at of Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaq Sayf al-Dīn al-Dihlawī represents the first attempt at translating *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh* into *Farsī* (the Persian language). It also incorporates a full commentary on the same. It was published for the first time in 1277/1860 in Lucknow, India and another edition of the same was later published in 1390/1970 in Lahore, Pakistan.[1]

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1. *Mazāhir al-Ḥaq*, op. cit., p. 26.

5.3 *Urdu* Translation and Commentary

Mazāhir al-Ḥaq of Muḥammad Quṭb al-Dīn Khan Dihlawi (d. 1289/1872) is in five volumes and is considered to be the most comprehensive commentary on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* written in the *Urdu* language. The author was born in 1219/1804 in Delhi, India, and began his studies under the learned scholar Shāh Muḥhammad Isḥāq of Delhi. He then travelled to Saudi Arabia, where he studied under prominent scholars in *Makkah al Mukarramah* and *al-Madīnah al- Munawwarah*. He passed away in *Makkah al Mukarramah*.[1] In his commentary on the *Mishkāt* he quotes extensively from the other commentators. Though it is an excellent translation and commentary, it does not appeal to the laymen because of the fact that the style and language are too high-flown. The translation contains Arabic and Persian words[2] and constructions which make the language highly Arabicised and Persianised, making it difficult to follow.

2. *Tarjamat al-Mishkāt* is purely an Urdu translation of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. It is the work of Mawlānā Karāmat 'Alī Jawnpūrī (d. 1290/1873). Karāmat 'Alī was born in Jawnpūr, India, but the year of his birth is uncertain. He studied Islamic Theology and other Islamic Sciences under Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz Muḥaddith al-Dihlawī (d. 1239/1824). He was a disciple of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd of Breyli (d. 1246/1831), India. He was a trained *qārī* (i.e. reciter of

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1. *Mazāhir al-Ḥaq*, op. cit., pp. 24 and 40.

2. For example see *Mazāhir al-Ḥaq*, op. cit., the beginning of its introduciton, p. 26.

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the *Qur'ān*) and an expert calligraphist. He is buried in Rangpūr, India. All his literary works have been written in the Urdu langauage.[1]

5.4 English Translations and Commentaries

It is appropriate to mention here that most of the relevant informations on the English translations and commentaries on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh* have been taken from Dr. James Robson's *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh - English Translation with Explanatory Notes*. Dr. Robson was an Irish clergyman and was Professor of Arabic at the University of Manchester, England.

1. The first English translation of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh* was done by A N Matthews in two volumes. His translation was printed in Calcutta, India, in 1809. Some of the shortcomings of this translation are as follows: Firstly, a substantial number of *Aḥādīth* have been left out and therefore not translated. No reason has been given as to why this was done. Secondly, there are wrong translations of the Arabic texts. Thirdly, at certain places the commentaries on the *Aḥādīth* are given in the midst of their translations, thus causing much confusion between the translation of the text and the commentary.[2]

2. There were some scholars, for example A.A.K. Muhammad, who attempted to translate into English only selected portions of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*. His work entitled *The Sayings of Hazrat Muhammad* was published in Calcutta,

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1. Ali, A Yusuf, "Karāmat 'Alī" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by E. van Donzel et al, op. cit., 1978, vol. IV, pp. 625-626.
2. Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1, p. xv.

India in 1918.[1] Selections of texts is quite arbitrary and no explanation is given for his selection of the passages.

3. Another English translation of selections from *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* is that of W. Goldsack entitled *Selections from Muhammadan Traditions*. It was published in Madras, India in 1923.[2] It has not been possible to establish as to why he chose to translate certain selections from the *Mishkāt*.

4. The celebrated translation and commentary of Moulana Fazlul Karim entitled *Al-Ḥadīs* was published for the first time in Calcutta, India in 1939 and includes the Arabic text as well. While the author calls it a translation of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, it is evident that he has rearranged the order of the *Aḥādīth* and added some *Aḥādīth* on his own intiative and omitted some from the original text. It is, in effect, a new work based on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.[3]

5. In view of the previous shortcomings that existed in the abovementioned English translations, Professor James Robson felt that there was a need "to *produce a translation in natural English*".[4] *He undertook the translate the Mishkāt*. His translation runs into five volumes and is entitled *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ - English Translation with Explanatory Notes*. It was published in Lahore, Pakistan in 1963. Its language is lucid and the modern system of transliteration has been employed. In his commentary on the *Aḥādīth* that are

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1. Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1, p. xvi.
2. *ibid*, vol. 1, p. xv.
3. *ibid*, vol. 1, p. xvi.
4. *ibid*, vol. 1, p. xv.

to be found in the *Mishkāt* he has incorporated brief explanations of certain *Aḥādīth* based on the explanations found in *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ* and *al-Taʿlīq al-Ṣabīḥ ʿalā Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.[1]

Professor Robson himself points out that, in his work, he did not discuss the questions of authenticity of the *Aḥādīth*, nor did he elaborate upon the salient meanings of the *Aḥādīth*. Furthermore, he himself admits that the "notes (in his translation) mainly deal with explantions of some Arabic words, place names, incidents to which reference is made, and the references to the *sūrah*s and verses of the *Qurʾān* which are quoted."[2]

6. ʿAbdul Hameed Siddiqui translated and annotated the *Mishkāt* and named his work *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. In 1976 Islamic Publications Ltd, Lahore, Pakistan, published it in two volumes. In its introduction, ʿAbdul Hameed Siddiqui states that he encountered certain difficulties in translating the *Mishkāt* into English but nevertheless has "endeavoured to convey somehow or the other the meanings of the words of *aḥādīth* to the English-knowing readers."[3] The value of translation lies in the fact that the Arabic text of the *Aḥādīth* have been retained. While he does explain, in some instances, the meanings of certain *Aḥādīth*, a need still exists for a more comprehensive English translation and commentary on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.

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1. Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1, p. xv.

2. *ibid*, vol. 1, p. xix.

3. Siddiqui, ʿAbdul Hameed, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, Lahore, Pakistan, Islamic Publications Ltd., 1976, p. xii.

4. *Maẓāhir al-Ḥaq*, op. cit., p. 26.

5.5 Other Commentaries

The author of *Maẓāhir al-Ḥaq*, Muḥammad Quṭb al-Dīn Khan Dihlawi[4] cites numerous other commentaries on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. The writer of this thesis has not been able to have access to any one of them but their copies, either in old print or manuscript forms, should be available in India and Pakistan. Thus, only their titles and the names of their authors are listed in what follows:

1. *Sharḥ al-Mishkāt* of Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī Muḥammad 'Ilm al-Dīn Bukhārī (d. 841/1438).

2. *Hāshiyah al-Mishkāt* of Shaykh Muḥammad Sa'īd ibn Mujaddid Alf al - Thānī (d.1070/1658).

3. *Hidāyat al-Ruwāt ilā Takhrīj al-Maṣābīḥ wa al-Mishkāt* of Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1450).

4. *Mir'āt al-Mafātīḥ* of Mawlānā 'Ubayd Allāh Rahmānī Mubārakpūrī.

5. *Aziqat al Najāt Sharḥ al-Mishkat* of Shaykh 'Abd al-Nabī 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad Shatarī.

6. *Zīnat al-Nuqāt fī Sharḥ al-Mishkat* of Muḥammad Abū al-Majdī Maḥbūb 'Ālam Aḥmad 'Abādī.

CHAPTER SIX

EVALUATION OF *MISHKĀT AL-MAṢĀBIḤ* AS A SOURCE BOOK OF *ḤADĪTH* AND ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

From the very beginning Muslims concerned themselves with the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*. These two sources of Islam, in due course, gave rise to other branches of Islamic learnings such as Law and Jurisprudence, Theology, Grammar, History, etc.

Initially, *Ḥadīth* was linked to the *Sīrah* and *Tafsīr* literature (i.e. literature which dealt with the life of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) and intepretations of the *Qur'ānic* text). It was only in the second century *Hijrī* that the *Muḥaddithūn* (scholars of *Ḥadīth*) finally segregated *Ḥadīth* from *tafsīr* literature and thus an independent science of *Ḥadīth* came into being. This move was necessary for the development and preservation of *Ḥadīth*.

6.1 Evolution of Islamic Educational Institutions

Tafsīr, Ḥadīth and other Islamic Sciences form the core of the curriculum in educational institutions throughout the Muslim world and it may therefore be appropriate to give an account of the evolution of the system of education in the Muslim world. The *Masjid* (Mosque) that existed in towns and villages, was a convenient place to use it as an educational institution also. Then gradually *maktabs* (elementary religious schools), separate from the *Masjid*, came into existence. Thereafter, centres for higher education were established. For example, Madrasah al-Nūrīyah in Damascus (Syria) Al-Azhar University

in Cairo (Egypt), and the Niẓāmīyah in Baghdād ('Irāq) came into existence. The curriculum of these institutions covered the religious and social sciences and Arabic language and literature. The *Qur'ān* and *Hadīth*, as mentioned earlier, formed an integral part of the curriculum. Here, it must be noted that all branches of *Hadīth* such as the *Uṣūl* (Principles), *Naqd al-Hadīth* (Science of Criticism of *Hadīth*), the Science of Reconciling apparently opposing *Hadīth* texts became fully fledged sciences and were all incorporated into the curriculum.

6.2 Selected Works on *Hadīth*

The process of collection of *Hadīth*, within a short period of time, gained momentum and this gave rise to the appearance of a large number of *Hadīth* compilations within the Muslim world. This phenomenon was a blessing for it served as an inspiration for later scholars to compile condensed works of selected and important *Ahadīth* for the benefit of those who did not possess sufficient skill and had no time to consult the bulky and voluminous collections of *Hadīth* literature. These selected works on *Hadīth* were compiled either in the form of *Musnad* or *Muṣannaf* compilations. Each of these works reflected its compiler's affiliation to a particular school of Islamic Jurisprudence.

It was during the eight century *Hijrī*, when 'Allāmah al-Ṭībī was in the midst of writing his celebrated commentary on the *Qur'ān* entitled *Al-Kashshāf* that he felt the need of compiling a *Hadīth* textbook, free from any *Fiqhī* school bias.[1]

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1. *Al-Bidā'at al Mizjāt*, op. cit., p. 25.

47

6.3 Compilation of *Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ*

Masābīḥ al-Sunnah[1] was at that time the only concise *Ḥadīth* book. Its compiler took great care to provide such materials that were indispensable for regulating the practical lives of Muslims in accordance to the dictates of Islam.[2] Thus, al-Ṭībī entrusted his student al-Tabrizī with the task of improving upon this work so that it could serve as an introductory book on *Ḥadīth* and *Fiqh*. This improved version of *Masābīḥ al-Sunnah* was entitled *Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ* and was completed on the eve of *'Īd al-Fiṭr* (the Festival following the termination of the *Ramaḍān* Fast) in 737/1336. On the following day, the student presented it to his teacher, who wasted no time and wrote a commentary on it entitled *al-Kāshif*.[3] Al-Ṭībī was pleased with the efforts of his student and this may have prompted him to write a commentary on *Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ*.

6.3.1 Views of Some Muslim Scholars on *Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ*

Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ undoubtedly covers a wide variety of topics which are of vital importance to a student of Islam or a lay Muslim. 'Allāmah Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī al-Makkī (d. 973/1565) in his *Fatḥ al-Ilāh* admitted that the *Mishkāt* was the best arranged compilation during his time.[4]. Mawlānā Muḥammad Idrīs Kāndihlwī pointed out in the introduction of his commentary on the *Mishkāt*

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1. *Al-Bidā'at al-Mizjāt*, op. cit., p. 62.
2. *ibid*, p. 60.
3. *ibid*, p. 25.
4. *ibid*, p. 64

48

entitled *al-Ta'līq al-Ṣabīḥ 'alā Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* that none would be able to be in a position to find among the collections of *Ḥadīth* a book that was more complete than the *Mishkāt*.[1] Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaq al-Dihlawī in his *al-Lamaḥāt al-Tanqīḥ* described *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* as a book that was free from errors, containing such *Aḥādīth* relevant to the knowledge and practice of Islam, and was of the opinion that any improvement on the *Mishkāt* was unimaginable in view of the fact that its competent author had exerted considerable intellectual acumen in the process of compiling it.[2] The renown scholar, Shāh Walī Allāh (d.1174/1762), advised potential Muslim scholars to acquaint themselves with the Arabic language so that they could be in a position to study the *Mishkāt*[3].

6.3.2 The *Mishkāt* as a Standard Textbook

The *Mishkāt*, since its compilation, became a standard textbook for studying *Ḥadīth* and also as an introductory source book of Islamic Jurisprudence. Its compiler, Al-Tabrizī, paved the way for this by taking it upon himself to teach it privately in Herat, Iran, and later he taught it at the Niẓāmīyah in Baghdād, Irāq.[4] Thereafter, the *Mishkāt* was also introduced in the curriculum of other religious institutions in Egypt, Syria, and in Makkah al-Mukarramah in 983/1575.[5]

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1. *Al-Tā'līq al-Ṣabīḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 7.
2. *Al-Bidā'at al-Mizjāt*, op. cit., p. 61.
3. *Centres of Islamic Learning*, op. cit., p. 17.
4. Al-Sabā'ī, M., *Some Glittering Aspects of Islamic Civilization*, Eng. Trans. by Sharif Ahmad Khan, Delhi, Hilal Printers, 1983, p. 170.
5. *Mirqāt al-Mafātiḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 2.

Islamic education was at its zenith and perhaps past its meridian when Islam came to India as a permanent political force in the last decade of the 12th century C.E. It brought in its wake its own system of education and in the succeeding years, religious educational institutions came into existence. These institutions have more or less continued to function on the same pattern up to the present times.

Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ was taught at Madrasah of Fīrūz Shāh at Haus Khās in New Delhi (14th century C.E.), at the Institute in Bidar (15th century C.E.) which was named after Maḥmūd Gāwān (d. 887/1482) and also at the Madrasah Purānā Awliyā' in New Delhi (16th century C.E.).[1]

In the first part of the 18th century, some reforms were carried out in the religious curriculum by Shāh Walī Allāh and Mullā Niẓāmuddīn of Sihalī (d. 1160/1748). The syllabus that was designed by them came to be known as *Al-Dars al-Niẓāmī*, named after Mullā Niẓāmuddīn. It must be pointed out that the *Mishkāt* was the only book of *Ḥadīth* that was included in the syllabus.[2]

Thus, to this day, *Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ* remains part of the syllabus of hundreds of Islamic religious institutions in the Indo-Pak subcontinent, such as Dār al-'Ulūm, Deoband, Nadwat al-'Ulamā', Lucknow, Jāmi'ah Mansabiyah, in Meerut, Maẓāhir al-'Ulūm, Shahāranpur, Madrasah Amīnīyah, Delhi, Jāmi'ah al-'Arabīyah al-Islamiyah, Karachi, Dār al-'Ulūm, Karachi, etc. This is so because the Mishkāt is a concise work dealing with the basic

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1. *Centres of Islamic Learning*, op. cit., p. 12.
2. *ibid*, p. 12.

teachings of Islam, without delving into unnecessary and irrelevant details, hence its popularity.

Interestingly, the *Mishkāt* was also introduced in the higher Islamic educational institutions in South Africa. For example, Dar al-'Ulūm, Newcastle, Natal was established in 1973 and the *Mishkāt* was introduced in its curriculum for the first time in 1981 and since then onwards it has been and continues to be taught as a *Hadīth* textbook and also as an introductory source book of *al-Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence).

6.3.3 Some Juridical Inferences

The importance of the *Mishkāt* lies in the fact that its compiler has included in it selections of *Ahādīth* from the larger collections of *Hadīth*. Interestingly, these *Ahādīth* were those that formed the basis of juridical inferences. This feature undoubtedly enhanced the value of the *Mishkāt*. Hence, both scholars and laymen alike found it to be a useful work. In what follows a few examples are given of some of the *Ahādīth* which have been included in the *Mishkāt* and have juridical significance:

6.3.3.1 The Performance of *Wudū* (Ablution)

In the chapter entitled *Kitāb al-Tahārah* (The Book of Purification) the following *Hadīth* appears in connection with the performance of *wudū* (ablution):

> *"The key to Paradise is Salāh and the key to Salāh is wudū (ablution)"*.[1]

Muslim jurists inferred from this *Hadīth* that it is compulsory to perform *wuḍū* (ablution) before engaging in *Salāh* (the five times' daily prayer)[1] and this complements the *Qur'ānic* injunction (5:6) which makes it obligatory upon Muslims to perform the *wuḍū* before praying.

6.3.3.2 Invoking the Name of *Allāh* Before Performing *Wuḍū*

In the chapter entitled *Sunnah al-Wuḍū*, the following *Hadīth* is recorded:

> *"Wuḍū is incomplete without Bismillāh (invoking the Name of Allāh)"*.[3]

Since Al-Tabrizī included this *Hadīth* in the chapter entitled *Sunnah al-Wuḍū* then it would be in conformity with the practice of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s*) to utter *Bismillāh* before performing the *wuḍū*.[4]

6.3.3.3 Recitation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* During the *Salāh*

In the chapter dealing with the recitation of the *Qur'ān* in the *Salāh* the folliwng *Hadīth* is recorded:

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1. Al-Tabrizī, Walī al-Dīn, *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, Karachi, Aṣaḥḥ al-Maṭābi', 1368/1948, p. 39.

2. *Mirqāt al-Mafātiḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 329.

3. *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, op. cit., p. 46.

4. *Mazāhir al-Ḥaq*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 393.

"Salāh is not valid except with the recitation of Sūrat al-Fātihah, (the Opening chapter)."[1]

The inference made from this *Hadīth* is that it is compulsory to recite *Sūrat al-Fātihah* in every *raka'ah* of *Salāh*. There is agreement amongst the jurists on this. However, the inference of the jurists based on the text of this *Hadīth* differ. The differences of opinion pertain to the nature of its recitation.[2]

6.3.3.4 The Validity of A Sale

In the chapter dealing with business transactions, the following *Hadīth* is recorded:

"Bargain not in that which is not in your possession".[3]

Muslim jurists are in agreement that, on the basis of this *Hadīth*, one may not sell that which is not in one's possession.[4]

6.4 Some Literary Works Based on the *Ahādīth* of the *Mishkāt*

Interestingly, there are a number of literary works that have been based on the *Ahādīth* of the *Mishkāt*. According to Mawlānā Muhammad Qutb al-Dīn Khān

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1. *Mishkāt al-Masābīh,* op. cit., p. 78.
2. For details in this regard see *Al-Ta'līq al-Sabīh,* op. cit., vol. 1., p. 362.
3. *Mishkāt al-Masābīh,* op. cit., p. 247.
4. *Mirqāt al-Mafātih,* op. cit., vol. 6, p. 75.

Dihlawī, the renown Shāh Walī Allāh of Dehli based his famous *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bālighah* on the *Mishkāt*.[1] Mawlānā Manzūr Nu'mānī concedes that the *Aḥādīth* which he translated in his book *The Meaning and Message of the Traditions* were taken from the *Mishkāt*.[2] *Zād al-Ṭālibīn* is being taught in all Indo-Pak and South African Dār al-'Ulūms as an Arabic vocabulary book. It was written by 'Āshiq Ilāhī al-Barnī, a former teacher[3] at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband, India. In its introduction, the author states that the *Aḥādīth* which have been included in his book are from the *Mishkāt*.[4] Likewise, extensive references to the *Aḥadīth* of the *Mishkāt* have been made in *Tuḥfat al-Khawātīn*[5] of Mawlānā 'Āshiq Ilāhī Balandshahrī, former head *Muftī*[6], Dār al-Iftā', Dār al-'Ulūm, Korangi, Karachi, also in *Khawātīn Ke liye Shar'ī Aḥkām*[7] of the late Dr. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hayy, a homeopathic doctor, Karachi, Pakistan, and in *al-Jihād* of Mawlānā Ḥabīb Allāh Mukhtār[8], present Rector, Madrasah al-'Arabiyyah Islāmiyyah, Newtown, Karachi, Pakistan.

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1. *Maẓāhir al-Ḥaq*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 17.

2. Nu'mānī, Manzūr, *The Meaning and Message of the Traditions*, Lucknow, Lucknow Publishing House, 1980, p. 17.

3. He is now retired.

4. Al-Barnī, 'Āshiq Ilāhī, *Zād al-Ṭālibīn*, Deoband, Maktab al-Thanwī, p. 3.

5. Balandshahrī, 'Āshiq Ilāhī, *Tuḥfat al-Khawātīn* , Karachi, Maktabah Dār al-'Ulūm, n.d., pp. 152, 153 and 191.

6. He is now residing in al-Madīnat al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.

7. 'Abd al-Hayy, *Khawātīn Ke liye Shar'ī Aḥkām*, Karachi, Dār al-Ishā'āt, 1988, pp. 3, 9 and 14.

8. Mukhtār, Ḥabīb Allāh, *al-Jihād*, Karachi, Dār al-Tasnīf, 1990, p. 13.

CONCLUSION

The divine guidance that came to the Prophet Muḥammad (*s.a.w.s.*) was in the form of the *Qur'ān* which, in essence is the *verbatim* word of *Allāh* (*SWT*). Since the *Qur'ān*, in many instances does not provide the details for the divine injunctions, the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) supplements the *Qur'ān* in that it serves to elaborate upon the *Qur'ānic* teachings. This is so in view of the fact that since the Prophet Muḥammad (*s.a.w.s.*) was the one who received the revelation directly, he was the one who could interpret the meanings of the *Qur'ān*. The words and deeds of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) came to be recognised as the second source of Islam and, as discussed earlier, the *Qur'ān* itself exhorted Muslims to obey and follow the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*).

The teachings of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*) in the form of his *Ḥadīth* (sayings) and *Sunnah* (deeds) were well recorded and preserved and transmitted by the *Ṣaḥābah* (*r.a.*) orally. Though the *Aḥādīth* were recorded in writing during the lifetime of the Prophet (*s.a.w.s.*), it was only in the second century *Hijrī* that the first systematic compilation of *Ḥadīth* was accomplished by Imām Mālik bin Anas (d. 193/808). Thereafter other compilations appeared including what is termed as *al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sittah* (The Six Authentic Books of *Ḥadīth*). However, later on, these compilations were found to be too bulky and not easily accessible to students and lay Muslims. There arose a need therefore for concise compilations of *Ḥadīth* that would cover all aspects of the teachings of Islam. One such distinguished compilation was *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* which was later revised by al-Tabrizī and came to be known as *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.

This study was undertaken in order to ascertain the importance of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* as a standard textbook for *Ḥadīth* and Islamic Jurisprudence. It was

pointed out that from the time that the *Mishkāt* was compiled, it attracted the attention of Muslim scholars and attained popular acceptance. The book was popular among laymen and scholars alike in view of the fact that it dispensed them from recoursing to the larger compilations of Ḥadīth. Many commentaries were written on it and it was subsequently translated into *Farsi, Urdu* and English. Moreover, it was also established that from as early as the 14 century C.E. the *Mishkāt* was introduced in the curriculum of the *Dār al-'Ulūm*s in India. Furthermore, the *Mishkāt,* up to the present time, is being used as an introductory work on *Ḥadīth* and students learn how to draw juridical inferences from the *Aḥādīth* of the *Mishkāt.*

In the final analysis, therefore, judging from the views expressed by Muslims scholars on the *Mishkāt*, the commentaries that have been written on it, and the fact that the *Mishkāt* is still being taught in religious institutions in various parts of the world, including South Africa, one has to concede that the *Mishkāt* is undoubtedly a valuable work of *Ḥadīth* and Islamic Jurisprudence. Had it not been so, it would not have sustained consistantly the popular academic recognition at all levels.

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