

ḤADĪTH SCHOLARSHIP IN THE 18TH CENTURY OF HARAMAYN: THE CONTRIBUTION OF ABDULLAH IBN SALIM AL-BASRI (D. 1722)

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Islamic Studies at the
Faculty of Islamic Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Abdul Kamil

01212310001

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Abdul Kamil

01212310001

abdul.kamil@uiii.ac.id

MA in Islamic Studies

Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia

The 18th century of Islamic history is often claimed as an age of intellectual decline, including in the field of ḥadīth studies. In this period, ḥadīth was commonly positioned by scholars as a foundation of moral guidance and a tool in responding to religious problems. However, as an academic discipline, ḥadīth was perceived to have undergone little to no significant development. This perception has been challenged by recent studies that explore the intellectual networks of 18th-century scholars and highlight the vibrant ḥadīth scholarship in regions such as Yemen and India. Nevertheless, research on the central role of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī in preserving and advancing the discipline of ḥadīth in the Haramayn remains limited. Al-Baṣrī was a key figure within the intellectual network of the Haramayn during this period. This thesis specifically examines al-Baṣrī’s contributions to the development of ḥadīth studies in the Haramayn in the 18th century. It explores the broader intellectual dynamics of ḥadīth scholarship during that period. It adopts an intellectual history approach combined with textual analysis. The research methodology encompasses a comprehensive literature review of historical sources and a detailed examination of al-Baṣrī’s works. The findings reveal that al-Baṣrī played a significant role in both preserving and advancing the tradition of ḥadīth scholarship. He not only inherited and transmitted the classical ḥadīth tradition but also actively engaged in teaching, the transmission of *isnād*, the authorship of ḥadīth works, particularly a commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, and the critical verification of manuscripts to ensure textual integrity. This study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of ḥadīth studies in the 18th century. By challenging the assumption of intellectual decline, it demonstrates that the period was marked by dynamic developments, including the continuity of transmission practices, deeper engagement with textual understanding, and the emergence of diverse genres of ḥadīth scholarship, as exemplified by al-Baṣrī’s intellectual legacy.

Keywords: *Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri, ḥadīth scholarship, Haramayn*

الملخص

غالبًا ما يُزعم أن القرن الثامن عشر من التاريخ الإسلامي هو عصر التراجع الفكري، بما في ذلك في مجال دراسات الحديث. في هذه الفترة، كان العلماء يعتبرون الحديث أساسًا للتوجيه الأخلاقي وأداة في الاستجابة للمشكلات الدينية. ومع ذلك، كنتخصص أكاديمي، كان يُنظر إلى الحديث على أنه لم يشهد سوى القليل من التطور المهم. وقد تم تحدي هذا التصور من خلال الدراسات الحديثة التي تستكشف الشبكات الفكرية لعلماء القرن الثامن عشر وتسلط الضوء على علم الحديث النابض بالحياة في مناطق مثل اليمن والهند. ومع ذلك، لا يزال البحث في الدور المركزي لعبد الله بن سالم البصري في الحفاظ على علم الحديث والنهوض به في الحرمين محدودًا. كان البصري شخصية رئيسية في الشبكة الفكرية للحرمين خلال هذه الفترة. تتناول هذه الرسالة تحديدًا مساهمات البصري في تطوير دراسات الحديث في الحرمين الشريفين خلال القرن الثامن عشر. وتستكشف الديناميكيات الفكرية الأوسع لدراسة الحديث خلال تلك الفترة. وتعتمد على منهج التاريخ الفكري مع تحليل النصوص. وتشمل منهجية البحث مراجعة شاملة للمصادر التاريخية ودراسة مفصلة لأعمال البصري. وتكشف النتائج أن البصري لعب دورًا هامًا في الحفاظ على تراث علم الحديث والنهوض به. فهو لم يكتفِ بنقل وورث تراث الحديث الكلاسيكي فحسب، بل شارك أيضًا بنشاط في التدريس ونقل الإسناد وتأليف كتب الحديث، ولا سيما شرح صحيح البخاري، والتحقق النقدي من المخطوطات لضمان سلامة نصوصها. تُسهم هذه الدراسة في فهمٍ أعمق لدراسات الحديث في القرن الثامن عشر. وبتحديها فرضية التراجع الفكري، تُبيّن أن تلك الفترة اتسمت بتطوراتٍ ديناميكية، شملت استمرارية ممارسات النقل، وتعمّق فهم النصوص، وظهور أنواعٍ متنوعة من علوم الحديث، كما يتجلى في الإرث الفكري للبصري.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عبد الله بن سالم البصري، علم الحديث، الحرمين

TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

It refers to the translation guide of the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)

Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman
ا	a	س	s	ل	l
ب	b	ش	sh	م	m
ت	t	ص	ṣ	ن	n
ث	th	ض	ḍ	و	w
ج	j	ط	ṭ	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ء	'
خ	kh	ع	'	ي	y
د	d	غ	gh		
ذ	dh	ف	f		
ر	r	ق	q		
ز	z	ك	k		

Short Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
اَ	A	نَسَخَ	<i>nasakha</i>
اِ	I	حَسِبَ	<i>ḥasiba</i>
اُ	U	كُتِبَ	<i>kutubu</i>

Long Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
آ/أ	Ā	أَجَازَنِي	<i>ajāzanī</i>
ي	ī	حَدِيث	<i>ḥadīth</i>
و	Ū	قَامُوا	<i>qāmū</i>

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for being a great role model. Although we rarely communicate or have deep conversations, that is our language of love, mutual prayer from a distance, bound by affection and deep familial care.

Finally, I must humbly admit that this thesis is far from perfect. I sincerely welcome any suggestions and constructive criticism from readers, in the hope of strengthening the arguments presented in this work.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Discussions about the 18th century in the Islamic world always revolve around two dimensions. The first frames the Islamic world in this period as an age of decline. In contrast, the second criticizes this assumption by highlighting the progress of the Islamic world in the 18th century across various sectors, including the intellectual one. The assumption of Islamic decline during this period asserts that significant changes in the social order of the Muslim community were largely influenced by Western imperialism in the Islamic world.¹ In other words, this claim often characterizes the 18th century as an “age of ignorance” for Islam, citing perceived declines in economic, political, and intellectual life during that period.² The notion of economic and political decline in the Islamic world has been largely refuted through studies of Ottoman history in the 18th century.³ Meanwhile, criticism of the view of intellectual decline has also been carried out by several scholars and historians, including Fazlur Rahman, who proposed the concept of Neo-Sufism.⁴ Various studies describe Neo-Sufism as a movement that rejects popular Sufi practices, the philosophical mysticism of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 630 AH/1240 CA), the strict

¹ Albert Habib Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*, 1st ed (Cambridge University Press, 1983), iv.

² John O. Voll, “From Saints and Renewers to Mahdis and Proto-Nationalists,” in *The Wiley Blackwell History of Islam*, 1st ed., ed. Armando Salvatore et al. (Wiley, 2018), 501–2, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118527719.ch24>; Recep Şentürk mentioned some Orientalists and scholars who shared similar views regarding the narrative of Islamic intellectual decline in the 17th and 18th centuries. For example, Halil İnalcık, a Turkish historian often associated with the Orientalist perspective, viewed the 17th century Ottoman Empire as a period of intellectual decline due to “fanaticism,” especially after the death of Sultan Süleyman (1566). This view reflects the dominant narrative among Western and modern Muslim historians. Similarly, Ernst Renan, a French Orientalist, asserted that Islam hindered the advancement of science after the 12th century, a view that long influenced Western perceptions of Islamic intellectual stagnation until the 17th/18th centuries. Pierre Duhem, a French science historian, even added a racial bias in assessing that the Islamic world experienced a decline after the Middle Ages, including the 17th/18th centuries. Recep Şentürk, “The Decline of the Decline Paradigm: Revisiting the Periodisation of Islamic History,” in *Niedergangsthesen Auf Dem Prüfstand / Narratives of Decline Revisited* (Peter Lang AG, 2020), 232, 237, <http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?scp=85111960246&partnerID=8YFLogxK>.

³ For a critique of the narrative of economic and political decline in the eighteenth-century Islamic world, see: Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540 - 1834*, 1. publ, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997); Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2001), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511612800>; André Raymond, “The Ottoman Conquest and the Development of the Great Arab Town” in *Arab Cities in the Ottoman Period* (Routledge, 2002).

⁴ Fazlur Raḥmān, *Islam* (Univ of Chicago Press, 1968), 205.

hierarchy between *murshid* (the teacher of a particular *ṭarīqah*) and his student, and *taqlīd* (blind imitation of religious authority). Other characteristics include an orientation toward mass social organizations, mysticism based on the Prophet (*Ṭarīqa Muḥammadiyya*), legitimacy through spiritual lineage, political and military involvement, an emphasis on ḥadīth, and the reassertion of independent juridical reasoning (*ijtihād*). According to Dallal, one of the main criticisms of this concept is that Ibn ‘Arabī’s influence remains strong in both elite and popular Sufism. Some Studies also show that the anthropocentric orientation of *Ṭarīqa Muḥammadiyya* actually originated with Ibn ‘Arabī in the 13th century, and that this school generally reinforces, rather than undermines, the spiritual and imaginative dimensions of Sufism.⁵

Besides Fazlur Rahman, there is another scholar who criticized the narrative of Islamic decline in the 18th century, such as John Voll. His research on the network of scholars in the Haramayn region rejected the notion that the 18th century was a period of stagnation or intellectual decline in Islam. Instead, he asserts that this period was marked by intense and sustained intellectual dynamism, particularly in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. He points out that the emergence of a large community of ḥadīth scholars and Sufi figures during this period reflects the vitality of the Islamic intellectual tradition. The intellectual activity that made the Two Holy Mosques a center of Islamic revival was the result of the convergence of various traditions of ḥadīth studies and Sufi schools of thought from across the Islamic world, including India, North Africa, and Egypt. The integration of these two scholarly traditions produced a synthesis that enabled scholars to transcend the rigid boundaries of sectarian *taqlīd*. In this respect, Voll underlines that the 18th century should be understood as a crucial phase in the revitalization of transregional Islamic scholarly networks, not as a period of decline, as is often assumed in classical Orientalist narratives.⁶ In line with Voll’s view, Levtzion, as quoted by Dajani, emphasized that the intellectual activity that made Haramayn the center of Islamic revival was the result of the convergence of various traditions of ḥadīth studies and Sufi schools from India, North Africa, and Egypt. This synthesis between ḥadīth and Sufism freed the scholars from being shackled by rigid imitation.⁷

⁵ Ahmad Dallal, *Islam without Europe: Traditions of Reform in Eighteenth-Century Islamic Thought*, Islamic Civilization and Muslim Networks (The University of North Carolina press, 2018), 14; R. S. O’Fahey and Bernd Radtke, *Neo-Sufism Reconsidered*, *Der Islam*, 70, no. 1 (1993): 52–87, <https://doi.org/10.1515/islam.1993.70.1.52>.

⁶ John O. Voll, “1. *Ḥadīth* Scholars and Tariqahs: An Ulama Group in the 18th Century Haramayn and Their Impact in the Islamic World,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 15, no. 3–4 (January 1, 1980): 263–74, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156852180X00392>.

⁷ Samer Dajani, *Sufis and Sharī‘a: The Forgotten School of Mercy* (Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 302.

Meanwhile, Khaled El-Rouayheb confirms that the intellectual dynamics that developed in the 17th century did not stop as a phenomenon limited to that period, but continued and laid the foundation for scientific progress in the 18th century. In the historical framework he presents, the period spanning from the ascension of Sultan Murad IV (d. 1032 AH / 1623 CE) to the outbreak of the Russo-Ottoman War (1768–1774) reflects the continuity of an active and productive scientific tradition. El-Rouayheb critically rejects the narrative of decline often attributed to the 17th century, encouraging readers to assess critically the development of Islamic thought based on its internal dynamics rather than measuring it through the lens of Western European historiography. Thus, he suggests that the eighteenth century not be viewed as a new starting point, but rather as a natural continuation of the intellectual revitalization that had been underway since the 17th century.⁸

In line with Khaled El-Rouayheb, Ahmad Dallal offers a fundamentally different understanding of 18th-century Islam, not as a period of decline, but as a period of extraordinary intellectual creativity that developed independently of European influence.⁹ In his study of the tradition of Islamic intellectual reform in the 18th century, Ahmad Dallal demonstrates that the 18th century marked an important revival in the study of ḥadīth, not as a stagnant continuation of old traditions, but as a critical methodological and intellectual reformulation of previous scholarly authority. Moreover, Dallal draws attention to the fact that this revival was not monolithic but was shaped by distinct regional traditions, such as those of Yemen and India, each developing its revisionist approach to classical ḥadīth theory.¹⁰ Dallal highlights the extraordinary contributions made by Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī (1176 AH / 1762 CE) in India and Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Amīr al-Ṣan‘ānī (1182 AH / 1769 CE) in Yemen. Both figures were involved in efforts to revise the established science of ḥadīth, which had been in place for several centuries. They both criticized the established knowledge of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* as the most authoritative books after the Quran. Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī emphasized that *Muwaṭṭa’* of Mālīk Ibn Anas (d. 150) was the most authoritative book after the Quran. He explicitly showed that, in matters of Islamic law, no other book is more authoritative than *Muwaṭṭa’* of Mālīk Ibn Anas.¹¹ Meanwhile, al-San’ani emphasized that authentic ḥadīths are not only

⁸ Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 347–61.

⁹ Dallal, *Islam without Europe*, 4.

¹⁰ Dallal, *Islam without Europe*, 220.

¹¹ Dallal, 249; Shāh Walī Allāh repeatedly emphasized the superiority of Mālīk’s *al-Muwaṭṭa’* in several of his works, see: Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī, *Al-Musawwā Sharḥ al-Muwaṭṭa’* (Bairūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1983), 17; Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī, *Hujja Allah Al-Balighah*, 2nd ed. (Bairūt:

found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and Muslim. With this, he urged Muslims not to rely solely on these two canonical books in seeking authentic ḥadīths for guidance in daily life. In other words, although *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* specifically compile the sound of ḥadīths, these ḥadīths can also be found in other collections of ḥadīth that compile weak (*ḍaʿīf*), good/reliable (*ḥasan*), and sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) ḥadīths, such as the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal.¹²

Several studies on the development of Islamic thought in the 18th century suggest that ḥadīth played a central role in various religious debates, such as the *anti-taqlīd* movement, criticism of Sufi practice (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), and others. In other words, ḥadīth was often used by scholars as the primary epistemological foundation in the discourse of scholars during this period, both as an authoritative source to reinforce arguments and as a tool for critiquing established scholarly constructs. It is not surprising that some ḥadīth scholars emerged who enriched Islamic scholarship, both in the Haramayn and in other Islamic regions, such as ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī (d. 1134 AH / 1722 CE), Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī (d. 1162 AH / 1749 CE), and Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī (d. 1176 AH / 1762 CE).¹³ Interestingly, most of them were also affiliated with certain Sufi orders. In the polemic surrounding *waḥdat al-wujūd*, both those who supported and those who criticized it often came from a Sufi background. Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī, for example, although known as a fierce critic of Ibn ʿArabī's philosophical Sufism, was himself a practitioner of the *Naqshabandiyya* order.¹⁴ Meanwhile, defenders of Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine, who also played a major role in the study of ḥadīth,¹⁵ showed that the relationship between Sufism and the science of ḥadīth was complex and intertwined.

Fundamentally, nevertheless, the relationship between these two disciplines, *tasawwuf* and ḥadīth, is not a recent development in the history of Islamic thought. Some ḥadīth scholars attacked the theory of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in the discourse surrounding the

Dar Ibnu Katsir, 2012), 249; Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī, *Ittiḥāf Al-Nabīh Fīmā Yaḥtāj Ilayh al-Muḥaddith Wa-l-Faqīh, Wa-Huwa al-Qism al-Thānī Min Kitāb al-Intibāh Min Salās al-Awliyyāʾ Allāh Wa-Asānīd Wārithī Rasūl Allāh*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAtāʾ Allāh Ḥanīf al-Fūjjiyānī, trans. Muḥammad ʿAzīr Shams, 1st ed. (al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, 2002).

¹² Dallal, *Islam without Europe*, 224; Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Ṣanʿānī, *Tawḍīḥ Al-Aḥkām Li-Maʿānī Tanqīḥ al-Anzār*, ed. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ṣalāḥ ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUwainah, 1st ed. (Bairūt: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1997); Ahmad Dallal, "Rethinking Authority: Trends in Eighteenth-Century Ḥadīth Studies" (Brill, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004364042_011.

¹³ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah & Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII; Akar Pembaharuan Islam*, 3rd ed. (Kencana, 2018), 186.

¹⁴ John O. Voll, "Muḥammad Hayyā Al-Sindī and Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab: An Analysis of an Intellectual Group in Eighteenth-Century Madīna," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 38, no. 1 (1975): 38.

¹⁵ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Di Indonesia: Survei Historis, Geografis, Dan Sosiologis* (Penerbit Mizan, 1992), 59.

concept, claiming that it was not directly derived from the Prophet Muhammad. Interestingly, certain Sufi groups sought to trace this teaching back to the generation of the *salaf* (the early Muslim generations), attributing it to figures such as Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 AH / 728 CE), who was believed to have received spiritual transmission from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. However, several prominent ḥadīth scholars such as Ibn Salah (d. 643 AH / 1245 CE), Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852 AH / 1449 CE), and al-Shawkānī (d. 897 AH / 1402 CE) rejected this claim because, according to them, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī never met ‘Alī Ibn Abu Talib. On the contrary, al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH / 1505 CE) defended the claim of Sufis by stating that Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was raised in the house of Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet, which allowed him to meet the Prophet.¹⁶ In addition, al-Suyūṭī is known as one of the scholars who had a different view from the majority of ḥadīth scholars regarding the verification of the authenticity of narrations through the method of *al-kashf*. Like Ibn ‘Arabī¹⁷ and some other Sufi figures, al-Suyūṭī believed that *al-kashf* could be used as one of the criteria for validating ḥadīth. Thus, according to him, a Sufi who has reached a certain spiritual level can meet the Prophet in a dream and receive narrations directly from him spiritually.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Samer Dajani suggests that some Sufis have contributed to the writing of ḥadīth commentary. One of them is al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 298 AH / 910 CE), who wrote *Nawādir al-Uṣūl*, containing around 300 ḥadīth on the theme of Sufism. Dajani also highlights Ibn ‘Arabī’s expertise in the study of ḥadīth, noting his abridgments of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, and *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*. One of his notable works is *al-Miṣbāḥ fī al-jam‘ bayn al-Ṣiḥāḥ* and the book *Aḥādīth Qudsiyyah*, which contains 101 ḥadīths.¹⁹

Thus, it can be said that the contribution of the Ṣūfī community to the development of ḥadīth studies is not a new phenomenon. The assumption that Sufi doctrine has no strong basis in the Qur'an and ḥadīth is an inaccurate assessment. Many scholars who practice Sufi principles are also recognized as ḥadīth experts, as evidenced by their significant works in this field, some of which are still available in the 21st century. Nevertheless, the dichotomy between Sufism and ḥadīth remains a polemic that continues to shape the intellectual dynamics of scholars from generation to generation, including in the 18th century, known

¹⁶ Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Ḥadīth; Muhammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2009), 191.

¹⁷ Mohammad Anas Sarmini, “Qabul Al-Hadis Wa Raddihi ‘Inda Ibnu ‘Arabi; al-Tashih Bi al-Kasyf Wa Manzilatihī Min Nazariyyah al-Isnād,” in *Kitab Muktamar Ibnu ‘Arabi al-Dauli al-Bahs ‘An al-Haqiqah Wa Ibn ‘Arabi*, 1st ed. (turkey: İnönü University İlahiyat Faculty, 2018), 325–57.

¹⁸ Rodina Billah and Muhid, “ORISINALITAS HADIS ULAMA SUFI MELALUI METODE KASYF PERSPEKTIF IMAM AL-SUYUTI,” *IMTIYAZ: Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman* 8, no. 2 (2024): 298–319, 2, <https://doi.org/10.46773/imtiyaz.v8i2.1330>.

¹⁹ Dajani, *Sufis and Sharī‘a*, 115; Samer Dajani, “Sufi Contribution to *Ḥadīth* Commentary,” in *Ḥadīth Commentary; Continuity and Change*, ed. Joel Blecher and Stefanie Brinkmann (Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 118; al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, *Nawadir Al-Usul*, 4th ed. (Dar al-Jil, 1992).

as the era of Islamic intellectual revival. This period did not emerge suddenly, but was a continuation of the intellectual dynamics of the 17th century, as emphasized by Khaled El-Rouayheb, who showed that the continuity of classical thought continued through a network of scholars across generations. This is represented by the students of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1102 AH / 1690 CE),²⁰ such as ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, who played an important role in the transmission of ḥadīth while also being affiliated with the Ṣūfī order. Al-Qushāshī (d. 1072 AH / 1661 CE),²¹ al-Kūrānī’s teacher interpreted Sufism through the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* of Ibn ‘Arabī, while al-Kūrānī, despite studying the thought of Ibn Taymiyya and accepting some of his criticisms, maintained his epistemological affiliation with the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. This shows that the traditions of Sufism and ḥadīth scholarship do not negate each other, but rather intertwine within the structure of pre-modern Islamic scholarship.

Although ḥadīth occupied an important position in the religious dynamics of Muslims in the 18th century, modern studies of 18th-century Islamic history often take a revisionist approach, placing Sufism and ḥadīth in a narrow position, namely solely as social and moral instruments. In this context, ḥadīth is primarily understood as a source providing standards for individual and collective behaviour, while the intellectual and theoretical aspects of ḥadīth and Sufi works are often overlooked. Ahmad Dallal critiques this tendency by emphasizing that the focus on social functions has shifted attention away from the scientific dimension, which was actually at the core of Islamic intellectual dynamics during that period. However, for 18th-century scholars, ḥadīth was not merely a moral guide but also a medium for reconstructing the structure of scientific authority and responding to epistemological challenges in a constantly changing social and doctrinal context.²² On this basis, Dallal then conducted a critical study of Islamic intellectual reform in the 18th century involving the regions of India and Yemen, as briefly discussed earlier.

On the one hand, this thesis builds upon Ahmad Dallal’s study of the development of ḥadīth studies in the 18th century, particularly by focusing on the Ḥaramayn regions, Mecca, and Medina. These have received relatively little attention in Dalla’s research. On the other hand, rather than tracing the methodological reforms of ḥadīth studies as Dallal

²⁰ For further analysis of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī’s contributions to Sufism and *ḥadīth* scholarship, see: Zacky Khairul Umam, “Becoming a Sunni Scholar: Ibrahim Kurani (d. 1690), His Role in Seventeenth-Century Medina and the Transregional Context of His Writings” (Dissertation, Freie Universitat Berlin, 2021).

²¹ For an in-depth study of al-Qushāshī’s intellectual legacy, see: Zacky Khairul Umam, *Seventeenth-Century Islamic Teaching in Medina: The Life, Circle, and Forum of Ahmad al-Qushashi* (King Faisal Center for research and Islamic Studies, 2016), <https://www.kfcris.com/pdf/0f391f75f59211ca6010918ce7a0dd275875ce43c0233.pdf>.

²² Dallal, *Islam without Europe*, 7.

did in Yemen and India, this research takes a different approach by focusing on the individual contributions of an important figure in maintaining the preservation of ḥadīth transmission and teaching the ḥadīth texts in Ḥaramayn, namely ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī. Some historical accounts show that al-Baṣrī is referred to as one of the central figures holding the highest authority in *isnād* in his time. In line with the intellectual characteristics of 18th-century Muslims, al-Baṣrī was also known as a practitioner of Sufism and had affiliations with various Sufi orders. He received an *ijāza* (certificate of authorization) in the *Naqshabandiyya* order from Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Sa‘īd Bāqushayr (d. 1072 AH / 1661 CE), as well as *ijāzas* for several *ḥizb* (litany or section of prayer), such as the *ḥizb* of Imam al-Shādhilī from Muḥammad ‘Alā al-Dīn al-Bābilī (d. 1077 AH/1666 CE) and the *ḥizb* of Imam al-Nawawī from ‘Alī Ibn al-Jamal al-Anshari (d. 1072 AH / 1661 CE). He also received the *khirqah ṣūfiyyah* (The robe of Sufis) from Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān al-Maghribī al-Rūdānī (1094 AH / 1683 CE).²³ Nevertheless, al-Baṣrī did not engage in polemics surrounding philosophical Sufism and *waḥdat al-wujūd*, but rather focused his attention on teaching, transmission, and critical study of ḥadīth manuscripts.²⁴

The pivotal role of hadith scholars such as ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, a Sufist who paid great attention to the study of ḥadīth, seems to have been overlooked in contemporary academic discussions on the development of ḥadīth science. This is likely caused by several factors, such as al-Baṣrī's relatively low productivity in writing ḥadīth works and his preference for emphasizing the preservation and transmission of established scholarly traditions from earlier periods. Nevertheless, he is different from some other 18th-century *muḥaddithīn* known for their prolific works and methodological innovations that revised the discipline of ḥadīth; al-Baṣrī is better known as a guardian of the established scholarly heritage. Thus, this approach demonstrates al-Baṣrī's significant contribution to strengthening the continuity of the ḥadīth tradition within the cosmopolitan network of scholars in the Ḥaramayn. The main characteristics of al-Basri as a hadith scholar are his ability to maintain a deep respect for Islamic intellectual tradition while still opening space

²³ Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*, 1st ed. (Dar al-Tauhid Li al-Nashr, 2006), 156–59.

²⁴ John Voll, “‘Abdallah Ibn Salim Al-Basri and 18th Century Ḥadīth Scholarship,” *Welt Des Islams* 42 (December 1, 2002): 356–72, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700600260435029>. There is currently no evidence indicating that ‘Abdallāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī actively participated in the scholarly debates among Ḥaramayn scholars from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. Although he is recognized as a Sufi, no clear sources suggest that his affiliation with Sufism influenced his methodological approach to ḥadīth, as was commonly the case with other Sufi scholars who were also *muḥaddithūn*, particularly in their acceptance of concepts such as *kashf* or *ilhām* in ḥadīth criticism. On the contrary, al-Baṣrī consistently emphasized the importance of *isnād* and adhered to the principles of traditional ḥadīth scholarship, maintaining a proportionate and systematic understanding of the ḥadīth corpus.

for engagement with the foundational texts. Such dynamic traditionalism presents a model that allows for intellectual continuity while also providing an adaptive response to changing times.²⁵

1.2. Research Objectives

This study reveals the central role of Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri, a pivotal figure in ḥadīth scholarship, in preserving the transmission and teaching of ḥadīth Prophet in the 18th century of Haramayn. It will position al-Basri as a hadith scholar who nevertheless had a major influence on the continuity and development of ḥadīth dynamics in Haramayn and the Islamic world in general. Indeed, al-Basri was not the only scholar with a short chain of transmission, and many other scholars also taught ḥadīth during that period. Nevertheless, this study does not seek to portray al-Basri as the sole significant figure, to explore his specific contributions, which have received little attention in studies of Islamic intellectual history. By examining how he stood out in an environment full of ḥadīth scholars, we can better understand the complex dynamics of knowledge transmission and scholarly authority in the 18th century. Therefore, this study is part of an effort to uncover the development of ḥadīth scholarship during this period, particularly in the Haramayn, while challenging the claims of most studies that ḥadīth was only useful as a social and moral parameter of religion, and thus there was no significant development in the field of ḥadīth scholarship itself.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct an in-depth study of the dynamics of ḥadīth studies in the 18th century, by tracing the network of cosmopolitan scholars who shaped and influenced the scientific landscape in the Ḥaramayn region during that period. This research will also examine the important role of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī in this context, both through his contributions to the transmission and teaching of ḥadīth and through the intellectual legacy he left behind in the form of relevant literary works for subsequent generations of scholars. By situating al-Baṣrī within a broader transregional network, this study seeks to discuss how ḥadīth was not only studied as a normative tradition but also as a means to maintain and renew the authority of Islamic scholarship. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the intellectual role of ḥadīth in the context of pre-modern Islamic history.

²⁵ Basheer M. Nafi, “A Teacher of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb: Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī and the Revival of A ḥāb al-Ḥadīth’s Methodology,” *Islamic Law and Society* 13, no. 2 (2006): 35–39.

1.3. Research Questions

This research will focus on answering the following questions:

1. How did the intellectual dynamics of the scholars and the development of ḥadīth studies in the Haramayn region in the 18th century shape ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī as one of the important figures in the tradition of ḥadīth scholarship at that time?
2. To what extent did ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī contribute to the development of ḥadīth studies in the 18th century of Haramayn?

1.4. Literature Review

In the historiography of 18th-century Islamic scholarship, most academic attention tends to focus on reformist figures who openly advocated methodological renewal in the study of ḥadīth. This generally seeks to emphasize the intellectual contributions of figures who formulated critiques of traditional schools of thought and explicitly proposed new understandings of religious teachings based on textual evidence. For example, Basheer M. Nafi, through his research on the intellectual Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī (d. 1750), the teacher of the founder of the Wahhabi Movement, Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1792).²⁶ Nafi describes Muhammad Hayat al-Sindi as a key figure in revitalizing the Ahl al-Ḥadīth approach by calling for ijtihad and rejecting sectarian fanaticism. Al-Sindi is considered a transitional figure from sectarian loyalty to scripturalism based on the Qur’an and hadith. One of the important works emphasized by Nafi is *Tuhfat al-Anām fī al-‘Amal bi-Ḥadīth al-Nabī*, which illustrates al-Sindi’s commitment to the authority of hadith through his emphasis on the validity of *isnād* (chain of transmission) and *matn* (the content of hadith).²⁷ Thus, al-Sindi is not only regarded as the teacher of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, but also as a key figure in the reconfiguration of hadith epistemology in the 18th century. However, Nafi also emphasizes that although al-Sindi was Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s teacher, both of them had different attitudes toward Sufism. Al-Sindi, on the one hand, criticized *wahdat al-wujud*, yet remained a practitioner of the Sufi order. Meanwhile, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb rejected Sufism in its entirety.²⁸

According to Ahmad Dallal, although Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb studied under Muhammad Hayyāt al-Sindi’s guidance, this does not mean that they shared the same religious views across the board, even though there were some similarities in other aspects. In his analysis of the thoughts of four reformist figures between the mid-18th century and

²⁶ Nafi, “A Teacher of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,” 208–41.

²⁷ Nafi, “A Teacher of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,” 216.

²⁸ Nafi, “A Teacher of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,” 219–25.

the mid-19th century, namely Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1787), Shah Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī (d. 1762), 'Uthmān Ibn Fūdī (d. 1233 AH / 1817 CE), and Muhammad 'Alī al-Sanūsī (d. 1275 AH / 1859 CE), Dallal unveiled significant differences in the Islamic reform movement despite their nearly identical scholarly lineage. Shah Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī and Muhammad 'Alī al-Sanūsī emphasized a more conciliatory approach in responding to issues facing the Muslim community, including the issue of *wahdat al-wujūd* and the anti-sectarian movement. At the same time, 'Uthmān Ibn Fūdī and Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb were more inclined to adopt a radical approach, influenced by the conflict-ridden background of their region. This shows the diversity of intellectual dynamics in the Islamic reform movement during that period.²⁹

In another article, Aḥmad Dallāl, instead of accepting the intellectual stagnation of Islam in the 18th century, rejected the narrative of intellectual stagnation during that period by emphasizing that this period witnessed intense scientific activity, including significant reformulations in the study of ḥadīth. Through an examination of the works of Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 1183 AH / 1769 CE) and Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Shawkānī (d. 1250 AH / 1834 CE), Dallāl demonstrates that renewal was not limited to moral aspects, but also epistemological and methodological ones. In this respect, Al-Ṣan'ānī rejected the claim of *ijmā'* (the consensus of scholars) regarding the validity of the works of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and asserted that authority must be examined based on critical *ijtihād*, not collective acceptance. He also debunked the idealization of the *ṣaḥāba* as infallible transmitters, stating that their understanding was not the sole argument for subsequent generations.³⁰ Shawkānī continued this approach by distinguishing between textual authority, interpretive authority, and individual testimonial authority. Shawkānī distinguished three forms of authority in the study of ḥadīth: first, textual authority (*matn ḥadīth*) as a normative source; second, the interpretive authority of the *fuqahā'* and madāhib (the schools of thought); third, the authority of individual transmitters' testimony. In addition, He challenged the idea of absolute authority, emphasizing instead the importance of critical evaluation and *ijtihād* in assessing its validity.³¹ This reform shows that 18th-century thinkers did not simply continue established traditions, but renegotiated the foundations of scientific authority in Islam through a rigorous, rational, and historical framework.

²⁹ Ahmad S. Dallal, "The Origins and Early Development of Islamic Reform," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, 1st ed., ed. Robert W. Hefner (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 341–59, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521844437.005>.

³⁰ Dallal, *Rethinking Authority*, 222–27.

³¹ Dallal, *Rethinking Authority*, 230.

Several of the aforementioned studies have tended to highlight reformist figures who explicitly advocated methodological reforms. However, attention to traditional figures who work behind the scenes to maintain the continuity of scholarly authority remains relatively limited. In this context, John O. Voll makes an important contribution. Through an analysis of scholarly networks, Voll highlights al-Baṣrī's role as a silent transmitter with considerable influence within the Ḥaramayn scholarly structure. Voll asserts that: "al-Basri was at the beginning of this process of developing ḥadīth studies, but he played a possible linking role."³² Although al-Baṣrī is not widely recognized as a *mujaddid* or a reformer who introduced novel frameworks, he played a strategic role in safeguarding the integrity of ḥadīth transmission and the authority of *isnād*, which formed the foundation of premodern ḥadīth scholarship. In addition, this article presents convincing arguments regarding the network of scholars and the continuity of hadith studies, although it does not explore the theoretical content of al-Baṣrī's hadith studies in depth. In this context, al-Baṣrī emphasizes *'ulūw al-isnād* (the high chain of transmission) as a crucial dimension in the authority of a hadith scholar. Furthermore, Voll shows that al-Basri stands at the forefront of a broader shift toward more textual and philological approaches to ḥadīth studies, later developed by Murtadā al-Zabīdī (d. 1204 AH / 1790 CE), a prominent hadith scholar in the late eighteenth century. While the limited availability of al-Baṣrī's written works constrains theoretical analysis, Voll successfully demonstrates how scholarly authority could be established not only through authorship but also through teaching, transmission, and *isnād*.

In another study, John Voll offers a nuanced analysis of the relational dynamics between two major scholarly groups, hadith scholars and Sufis. He portrays eighteenth-century Mecca and Medina as vibrant centers of Islamic learning. Within the scholarly cosmopolitan networks in the Ḥaramayn, intensive transregional exchanges of knowledge took place. According to him, the distinct scholarly backgrounds of ḥadīth scholars from various regions of the Islamic world mutually influenced one another. For instance, *'ulamā'* from North Africa began studying *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, a text previously uncommon in their region, while scholars in the Ḥaramayn were introduced to al-*Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik ibn Anas through engagement with African scholars, despite its limited popularity in Mecca at the time. Furthermore, Voll highlights Ṣūfī movements that sought to align *taṣawwuf* practices with the principles of Islamic orthodoxy, reflecting broader efforts to harmonize spirituality with mainstream Islamic thought in the eighteenth century.³³

³² Voll, "Abdallah Ibn Salim Al-Basri and 18th Century *Ḥadīth* Scholarship," 366.

³³ Voll, "1. *Ḥadīth* Scholars and Tariqahs," 264–74.

Based on the literature review, it is concluded that scholarly works on the development of ḥadīth studies in the eighteenth century have generally focused on prominent figures and strategic regions within the Islamic world that exhibited tendencies toward reform and renewal. Nevertheless, they did not pay sufficient attention to the pivotal role of ‘Abdallāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī in sustaining and preserving the tradition of ḥadīth transmission during this period. This is particularly notable given that scholars such as al-Sindī, Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī, and Muḥammad al-Ṣan‘ānī maintained intellectual ties, directly or indirectly, with al-Baṣrī. This can be said, the contributions of al-Baṣrī appear underrepresented in contemporary literature on eighteenth-century ḥadīth studies, despite his significant role in the Ḥaramayn, a central figure for the dissemination and preservation of Islamic knowledge, in maintaining the continuity of Islamic scholarly tradition and influencing broader transregional intellectual networks.³⁴

Meanwhile, John Voll's research on the intellectual network of scholars in the 18th century provides valuable insights into the coexistence of two major disciplines, hadith and Sufism, at the same time. He successfully revealed how the intellectual network of scholars played a major role in the process of transferring and exchanging scientific traditions in the Islamic world, with Haramayn as the main locus of interaction between scholars. In addition, he also revealed the contributions of several important figures in this dynamic, one of whom was Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri. However, Voll's approach was criticized by Ahmad Dallal. According to him, studying intellectual history is not sufficient by relying solely on intellectual networks and the relationship between teachers and students. This is because, in his view, two students who study under the same teacher will not arrive at the same understanding. In other words, each student develops their independent understanding of what their teacher conveys based on their different contexts. In this regard, Dallal proposes a critical approach by conducting in-depth studies of scholars' works to uncover their contributions to specific fields of knowledge.³⁵ However, although John Voll has made efforts to uncover al-Baṣrī's role in the field of ḥadīth, his analysis remains focused on al-Basri's single work, *al-Imdā' fī Ma'rifat 'Ulūw al-Isnād*. The limited access to al-Baṣrī's broader corpus has rendered Voll's study incomplete in capturing the full scope of his contributions. On this basis, the present thesis seeks to address this scholarly lacuna by offering a more comprehensive analysis of al-Baṣrī's thought,

³⁴ Stefan Reichmuth, "Aspects of Prophetic Piety in the Early Modern Period," *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 178 (2017): 135, <https://doi.org/10.4000/assr.29454>.

³⁵ Dallal, *Islam without Europe*, 209.

combining an investigation of his intellectual networks with a critical study of his surviving works.

Ahmad Dallāl's perspective suggests that the study of intellectual figures should not only focus on tracing their scholarly networks and intellectual affiliations, but also include an in-depth study of their intellectual works. This model will provide a proper understanding of the thoughts of the scholars. In this context, there seems to be a gap in the study of ‘Abdallāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī's contribution to the preservation of hadith studies in the Haramayn in the 18th century. Although John Voll has attempted to highlight al-Baṣrī's role in the field of ḥadīth, his analysis is still limited to one work, namely al-Imdād fī Ma‘rifat ‘Ulūw al-*Isnād*. Therefore, this thesis aims to reveal the dynamics of the development of ḥadīth studies in the 18th century by highlighting al-Baṣrī's contributions to the field. This study not only examines al-Baṣrī's involvement in the scholarly network in the Haramayn, but also comprehensively examines his contribution to maintaining the continuity of ḥadīth transmission, particularly through maintaining the continuity of the *isnād* (chain of transmission) which is a key characteristic of the Islamic scholarly tradition, as well as his role in the teaching and development of the discipline of ḥadīth during his time. Thus, this study attempts to combine the approaches of Ahmad Dallāl and John Voll through a network analysis of scholarship and an in-depth study of al-Baṣrī's intellectual activities and legacy.

By tracing the scholarly network of the 18th-century Haramayn and examining the intellectual legacy of Abdullah ibn Salim al-Basri in depth, this study argues that hadith scholarship during this era was characterized by vitality and continued growth. On the one hand, scholars during this period, including al-Baṣrī, continued to maintain connections with past scholarly authorities, including by preserving the continuity of the chain of ḥadīth transmission (*isnād*) and teaching classical works of ḥadīth science. On the other hand, al-Baṣrī also demonstrated initiative in developing the tradition of ḥadīth scholarship by composing new works in the discipline. This thesis not only refutes the claim that ḥadīth studies in the 18th century were merely used as moral standards or a means of justifying certain doctrines and teachings, such as in the polemic of anti-madhhab or against Sufi practices that were considered excessive, but also rejects the assumption that the peak of ḥadīth scholarship occurred in the 15th century and stagnated in the following periods.

1.5. Research Significance

This study is a part to fill the scholarly gap in addressing the scholarly lacuna concerning the dynamics of ḥadīth scholarship in the Haramayn during the eighteenth

century, a period often overlooked or reduced in both classical and modern Islamic historiography. This study highlights the crucial role of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, a scholar who has received little attention but held a central position in the hadith transmission network of the 18th century. Thus, this research attempts to correct the common view that often depicts the 18th century as a period of intellectual decline. Through al-Baṣrī, we can see how the *isnād* tradition and scholarly authority were maintained and renewed in the cosmopolitan intellectual atmosphere of the Ḥaramayn region. This research also contributes to understanding how religious authority in Islam was formed, not solely from the originality of ideas, but also from the continuity of traditions and scholarly connections across regions.³⁶ Within this framework, this study confirms that hadith studies during this period were still very much alive and developing, not merely a collection of normative and moral teachings.

Furthermore, the study aims to offer a critical contribution to contemporary debates surrounding the often-invoked dichotomy between those who identify as hadith scholars and those affiliated with *taṣawwuf*. Through an examination of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī’s role, this research highlights that the engagement of Sufi scholars in the development of ḥadīth studies was not an anomaly, but rather an integral part of the Islamic scholarly tradition. In doing so, the study challenges modern dichotomies that separate the spiritual (*taṣawwuf*) and the textual-normative (ḥadīth) dimensions, and underscores the epistemological synthesis that characterized premodern Islamic intellectual history.

1.6. Research Method

This study adopts a historical-qualitative methodology focused on intellectual history, supplemented by an analysis of scholarly networks and critical textual analysis of al-Baṣrī’s works. In other words, this thesis does not exclusively concentrate on the dimension of scholarly networks; rather, it balances this with an in-depth textual examination. Such an approach enables the identification of the distinctive contributions of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, which are largely absent among most ḥadīth scholars of his time, such as his efforts in copying and critically examining ḥadīth compilations,

³⁶ Mohammed Rustom offers a critical perspective on the dominance of Western rationalism, underscoring the significance of authoritative transmission through scholarly lineages (*isnād*), and provides a reflective framework relevant to this study. For Rustom, intellectual legitimacy in Islam is not derived from modern conceptions of originality, but from continuity with past authorities through the guidance of the ‘ulamā’ within the interconnected networks of the Islamic intellectual tradition. See: Mohammed Rustom and Soroosh Shahriari, “*Neo-Orientalism and the Study of Islamic Philosophy: An Interview with Professor Mohammed Rustom*,” *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 3, no. 1 (2018): 114, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jims.3.1.11>.

composing the commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, and compiling works in the form of the *khatm* genre as a sign of the closing of the reading of a particular ḥadīth book in its entirety

The primary sources for this research are the works of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī himself, including *al-Imdād fī ma‘rifat ‘uluww al-isnād*, *Khatm Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Khatm Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Khatm Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Khatm Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Khatm al-Muwatta’*, *Hāshiyat Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, and *Ḍiyā’ al-sarī fī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Secondary sources include biographical and intellectual accounts that present the scholarly dynamics of the eighteenth century. In addition, this study involves recent academic studies on the development of ḥadīth studies during this period that offered valuable insights into the broader intellectual context surrounding Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī’s scholarly activity and the position he occupied within it.

1.7. Thesis Structure and Outline

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter outlines the research background, problem statement, research objectives, significance of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, and the overall structure of the thesis. The second chapter explores the historical and intellectual context of the Ḥaramayn in the eighteenth century. It addresses the political and social conditions of the Ḥaramayn during this period, the scholarly traditions and networks of the *ulamā*, as well as the development of ḥadīth studies in the region. The third chapter examines the biography and intellectual legacy of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī. It presents the background of al-Baṣrī’s life, traces his scholarly journey, including his teachers and students, and delineates his intellectual contributions to the ḥadīth tradition. The fourth chapter provides an in-depth analysis of al-Baṣrī’s contributions, which have received little scholarly attention. This includes his role in maintaining the transmission and teaching of ḥadīth to scholars from across the region who came to Mecca. In addition, it explains al-Baṣrī’s dedication to the meticulous copying and critical engagement with major ḥadīth collections, particularly his work on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Additionally, it examines his efforts to sustain the tradition of composing commentaries on canonical ḥadīth works, especially the commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. The final chapter, Chapter Five, presents the conclusion of this thesis as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL AND INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT OF THE HARAMAYN IN THE 18TH CENTURY

This chapter seeks to explore and elucidate the historical and intellectual landscape of the 18th-century Ḥaramayn, referring to the two holiest cities in Islam: Mecca and Medina. These cities occupy a central role in the religious consciousness and devotional life of Muslims worldwide. Makkah is widely regarded as the birthplace of Islam, where the Prophet Muḥammad first proclaimed his divine message. The city is also home to the *Ka'ba*, the sacred sanctuary that serves as the *qiblah* (direction of prayer) for Muslims around the world. Medina, on the other hand, holds significant importance as the second pivotal site in the Prophet's mission. It was here that foundational aspects of Islamic governance and communal life were articulated. Furthermore, it is the final resting place of the Prophet, making the city a locus of spiritual reverence. For Muslims, performing pilgrimage to these sacred cities holds deep spiritual and emotional importance, reflecting a profound connection to faith and tradition.³⁷

Nevertheless, this investigation will be temporally contextualized within the lifetime of 'Abdallāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, who lived between 1049–1134 AH / 1639–1722 CE. This period spans two critical phases in Islamic history: the latter half of the 17th century and the early decades of the 18th century. The analysis will thus focus on how the religious, intellectual, and spiritual roles of the Ḥaramayn evolved during this transitional era. The timeframe under examination is particularly significant, as it marks a period of renewed scholarly activity and dynamic transmission of religious knowledge in the Ḥaramayn. Special attention will be given to how al-Baṣrī's intellectual milieu reflected broader currents of Islamic thought, including Sufi devotionism and ḥadīth transmission, within the sacred urban environments of Mecca and Medina.³⁸

2.1. The Political and Social Context of Haramayn in the 18th Century

The power to govern and administer this holy city was not entirely controlled by the Ottoman government directly, but was instead entrusted to local rulers known as *sharīfs*. They were a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad who held religious and political

³⁷ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah & Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII; Akar Pembaharuan Islam*, 53.

³⁸ For further explanation about the birth and early career of al-Basri as an important scholar in Haramayn will be discussed in the next chapter. The mention here is only to provide a brief overview of the life of Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri's period.

legitimacy to govern affairs in the Haramayn, including security and religious administration. The descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, namely the Hashemite *sharīf* dynasty, ruled the Hijaz region continuously from the 4th/10th century until early 14th/20th century. The Hasanid *sharīfs* ruled Mecca, while the Husainid *sharīfs* ruled Medina. During this period, conflicts between these groups were common, until around the 10th/15th century when the Hasanid *sharīfs* of Mecca succeeded in gaining control of both cities.³⁹ Despite frequent internal conflicts among the *sharīfs*, their role was at least important in maintaining a balance between the broader Ottoman authority and local demands and religious interests, thereby creating a kind of semi-autonomous government in the holy region. This allowed the Haramayn to remain a stable religious and social center, despite the complex political dynamics at the imperial level.

During the first four decades of the 11th century AH or 17th century CE, the Haramayn region experienced two major phenomena that significantly worsened the political and security situation. This internal phenomenon manifested in the intense competition and conflict over the position of *sharīf* among the leaders of the Banu Abu Numay, resulting in instability within the local power structure. Meanwhile, the external phenomenon was reflected in the chaos caused by the military campaigns of the Ottoman Empire, which moved toward Yemen and passed through the Hijaz region, causing disturbances and tensions that further complicated the security situation. The weakening of the Ottoman Sultanate's authority and the prevalence of corruption in various government institutions exacerbated both phenomena, resulting in a decline in central control over the Hijaz region.⁴⁰ In this context, according to Ḍumayrīyah, political developments showed the dominance of Mecca over Medina, where the power of the Sharif of Medina significantly diminished under Ottoman rule, leaving only symbolic authority. Ironically, the political marginalization of Medina had a positive effect on the intellectual development of the city. Medina, which was relatively free from the bloody conflicts that frequently occurred in Makkah, became a more stable and conducive environment for students, scholars, and pilgrims who sought to deepen their knowledge and settle near the holy sites. The open attitude and warm support of Medina's residents toward visitors and *mujāwirūn* strengthened the city's role as a center for religious studies, enabling Medina to stand out

³⁹ Nāṣir Muḥammad Yaḥyá Ḍumayrīyah, *Intellectual Life in the Hijāz before Wahhabism: Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī's (d. 1101/1690) Theology of Sufism*, *Islamicate Intellectual History* 9 (Brill, 2022), 43.

⁴⁰ 'Uwāyḍah ibn Mutayrik al-Juhanī, "al-Sulṭah al-'Uthmānīyah fī al-Ḥijāz fī Awsāt al-Qarn al-11 al-Hijrī / al-17 al-Mīlādī kamā Tu'akkisuh 'Ahd Sharīf Makkah Zayd ibn Muḥsin (1041–1077 H / 1631–1666 M)," *Jordan Journal for History and Archaeology* 2, no. 2 (2008): 135.

intellectually compared to Makkah during that period. This situation reflects how political dynamics not only impact power but also shape the intellectual landscape in the Hijaz.⁴¹

Although it appears that the turbulent political situation had a positive impact on intellectual development in Medina, this does not mean that there was no intellectual activity in Mecca. In this context, Mecca remained an important center for the exchange of knowledge during the *Hajj* season. This fact is hard to deny because of Mecca's central role in the *Hajj* pilgrimage. Additionally, not all scholars were comfortable with Medina's open and cosmopolitan culture and social life. This is reflected in historical facts showing that during the era of al-Basri, many scholars from various Islamic regions came to Mecca to perform the *Hajj* and stayed there for some time. For example, one of al-Basri's teachers, as narrated by *al-'Ayyasi* (d. 1090 AH / 1679 CE), Isa Al-Tha'ālibī al-Maghribī (d. 1080 AH / 1670 CE), stated that the people of Medina underwent a significant process of cosmopolitanization, marked by the dominance of foreign cultural practices and a tendency toward luxurious and excessive lifestyles. This situation caused the people of Medina to exhibit foreign characteristics in their clothing and daily lives. In contrast, the people of Mecca maintained a strong attachment to their Arab-Badawī cultural roots, which were sustained through intensive interaction with Bedouin tribes and life in the desert, including the *Shārif*, who spent most of their time in the desert despite having residences in Mecca. This dominance of Arab-Bedouin culture made the people of Mecca culturally more homogeneous and reduced the presence of foreign settlers compared to Medina. Additionally, Mecca was under the control of local rulers and their families, while the influence of the Ottoman Empire was more direct in Medina, leading foreign settlers to prefer settling in Medina. This narrative highlights how social and political structures shaped the characteristics of the two holy cities.⁴²

This shows that political instability did not necessarily affect intellectual life in Mecca as a whole. This is also evident from the role of Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri in the political context of Mecca during that period. Al-Basri continued to occupy a very prominent social and religious position in society. His position was not only recognized by the general public but also served as an important reference for the sharifs, officials, and other elite figures. Al-Basri's house was not merely a place of residence, but also a center for the consolidation of ideas and a gathering place for advisors and community leaders who had significant influence in decision-making. This is exemplified by his active role in

⁴¹ Ḍumayrīyah, *Intellectual Life in the Hijāz before Wahhabism*, 45–47.

⁴² 'Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad al-'Ayyāshī, *Al-Riḥlah al-'Ayyāshiyyah*, ed. Sa'īd al-Fāḍilī and Sulaymān al-Qurashī (Dār al-Suwaydī lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2006), 1:457.

uniting and directing troops during political dynamics, as well as the recognition of the leaders who entrusted his house as a shelter for important guests from various circles.⁴³ This position indicates that al-Baṣrī was not only respected for his depth of knowledge and piety but also for his steadfastness, which had a positive influence in addressing various social and political challenges in Mecca. Thus, al-Baṣrī's presence remained a focal point and primary reference in Meccan society, despite the complex and tense political situation at the time.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, amid ongoing political conflict, the Haramayn region consistently received aid and support from neighboring countries such as Egypt, Yemen, and Syria. The Ottoman government increased its special funding allocation for the Hijaz, with various projects related to the organization of the *Hajj* receiving support from the sultan, princes, wealthy individuals, scholars, and court women. Most of this funding was allocated to support educational institutions involved in the training of students and scholars. These institutions included various facilities such as *madrāsas*, libraries, *ribāṭ*, and public kitchens.⁴⁵ The Ottoman government viewed its construction projects as an opportunity to garner support from influential families in Haramayn, from the Sheikh of Mecca downwards. Much time and energy were spent on this matter, and the disapproval of a single scholar was considered so serious that extensive negotiations were conducted solely for this reason. This was especially true for the reconstruction of the Ka'ba, but the reorganization of the city's physical structure and services could only succeed if the important figures in the Holy City could be persuaded to cooperate.⁴⁶ In addition to the Ottomans, other Islamic governments, such as the Mughals, also paid great attention to assisting in the welfare of scholars, teachers, and schools in the Haramayn.⁴⁷

From the concise overview of the social and political life in Haramayn during this period, it is evident that Medina held a relatively advantageous position in terms of

⁴³ In the year 1116 AH, in the context of a discussion about Amir Sa'īd bin Zayd, it was mentioned that the sharīf was preparing to depart with them, rallying the troops, securing the entrances, and gathering a number of people at the house of their uncle, Abū Saud al-Sanjārī, as well as at the house of Shaykh al-Baṣrī. Furthermore, in the year 1120 H, when some guests of Amir 'Abd al-Karīm arrived in Makkah, the Sharif designated the homes of Mawlānā 'Abdullāh al-Baṣrī and Mawlānā Muḥammad Shaykhān as the accommodations prepared for them. See: Alī ibn Tāj al-Dīn al-Sinjārī, *Manā'ih al-Karam Fī Akhbār Makkah Wa-al-Bayt Wa-Wulāt al-Ḥaram*, ed. Jamīl 'Abdullāh Muḥammad al-Miṣrī, 1st ed., vol. 5 (Mecca: Umm al-Qurā University, 1998), 300, 465.

⁴⁴ Al-'Arabī al-Dā'iz al-Firyāṭī, *Min a'lām al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām 'Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 1st ed. (Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyyah, 2005), 28–29.

⁴⁵ Dumayrīyah, *Intellectual Life in the Hijāz before Wahhabism*, 35.

⁴⁶ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans, 1517-1683* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994), 125.

⁴⁷ For further discussion on the support and waqf provided by the Mughals to Mecca, see: Naimur Rahman Farooqi, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations (A Study of Political & Diplomatic Relations between Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire, 1556-1748)* (Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delhi, 2009), 107–43.

intellectual life, owing largely to its more cosmopolitan social environment compared to the culturally homogeneous setting of Mecca. Nevertheless, within the context of al-Baṣrī, political conflicts and social dynamics did not significantly affect his central role as a respected religious authority in Mecca. Not only al-Basri but also several of his teachers tended to prefer residing in Mecca, partly due to their incompatibility with Medina's openness towards newcomers and its cosmopolitan milieu. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Ḥaramayn benefited materially from support extended by various Islamic states during this era. This aid facilitated the establishment of educational institutions and helped meet the needs of the pilgrims, as well as the resident scholars and students engaged in the pursuit of knowledge. Although in practice, these funds were not always fully delivered due to corruption among governmental officials,⁴⁸ some of them, nonetheless, contributed to the economic sustenance of the ulama. This enabled them to maintain their focus on cultivating a stable and thriving intellectual environment in Ḥaramayn. Thus, despite political and social challenges, Ḥaramayn remained a vital center for religious scholarship and learning during this period.

2.2. The Scholarly Traditions and Networks of the Ulamā in the Haramayn

Since the beginning of Islam, Haramayn has played a role not only as a spiritual center for pilgrims performing the *Hajj* and visiting the Prophet's tomb in Medina, but also as a center of intellectual activity. Many visitors, both temporary and permanent residents known as *mujāwirūn*, were drawn to the region's dynamic religious and intellectual milieu. The annual *Hajj* pilgrimage served as a crucial gathering point for scholars and Sufis from various Islamic worlds, facilitating the widespread exchange of knowledge, manuscripts, and academic credentials across the Islamic world. These activities transformed the Haramayn into a major route for the dissemination of religious and intellectual traditions, strengthening the scientific and social networks among diverse Muslim communities. Thus, the Haramayn functioned as the primary driving force in the mobility of knowledge and the development of Islamic scholarly traditions on a broad scale.⁴⁹

In the seventeenth century, hundreds of students and scholars from various regions of the Islamic world formed a dynamic intellectual community that discussed various important issues in the history of Islamic scholarship. Annual meetings of pilgrims played a central role in consolidating this community of scholars and facilitating the dissemination

⁴⁸ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah & Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII; Akar Pembaharuan Islam*, 69.

⁴⁹ Naser Dumairieh, *Sufis and Their Lodges in the Ottoman Hijāz* (Brill, 2023), 1, <https://brill.com/display/title/63423>.

and circulation of knowledge, which served as the intellectual lifeblood of the Islamic world. Pilgrims, students, and scholars brought their unique scholarly traditions to these religious centers, then returned to share their experiences and knowledge with their home communities. This process indicates the vital role of intellectual interaction and scientific mobility in preserving and developing Islamic scholarly traditions on a transnational scale.⁵⁰

In the 17th century, the *madrasa* system had long been established and developed. Evliyā Çelebî noted in his journey to Haramayn in 1081 AH / 1671 CE that there were at least forty large *madrasas* in Mecca at that time. Among them were the *Madrasa of Bāb al-Salām*, the *Madrasa of Sulaymāniyya*, the *Madrasa of Khashīkiyya*, the *Madrasa of Farjiyya*, the *Madrasa of Bāb Ziyād*, and others. In addition to mosques and *madrasas*, *ribāt* and *zāwiya* also played an important role in the education system. According to Çelebî's calculations, there were at least seventy-eight *Takiyya*, which were special residences or facilities provided for Sufis, often in the form of *khānqāh*, *ribāt*, or *zāwiya*, functioning as centers for spiritual activities, education, and community service. At that time, the largest institution was the *Mawlawiyya* order. Another notable aspect of Çelebî's records is the role of educational institutions, whether *madrasa* or comparable establishments such as *khānqāh*, *ribāt*, or *zāwiya*, which became significant destinations for pilgrims. These sites provided lodging for pilgrims, many of whom took the opportunity to study with the teachers and spiritual guides who oversaw the educational institutions.⁵¹

Meanwhile, formal educational institutions in Medina were considered to be more advanced during this period. According to the records of Evliyā Çelebî, there were approximately 118 *madrasas* spread throughout the walled city and its outskirts, covering various levels of education from elementary school to the teaching of ḥadīth. This number is quite large compared to Medina's relatively small population of around 14,000 people. The educational structure in Medina was also quite complex, with variations in the number of teachers and students, as well as the presence of support staff, such as a *mu'īd* (person who repeats the teacher's reading clearly), servants, and guards. These educational activities indicate that Medina was a rapidly developing intellectual center, with various institutions that not only focused on formal education but also supported broader intellectual activities in the holy city.⁵² Therefore, it must be acknowledged that the rapid development of educational institutions in Medina cannot be separated from its political

⁵⁰ Dumayrīyah, *Intellectual Life in the Hijāz before Wahhabism*, 2.

⁵¹ Evliyā Çelebî, *Al-Rihla al-Hijāziyya*, trans. Aḥmad al-Mursī al-Şafşāfī (Dār al-Āfāq al-‘Arabiyya, 1999), 265.

⁵² Dumayrīyah, *Intellectual Life in the Hijāz before Wahhabism*, 53–54.

and social context. In addition, the presence of the Prophet's tomb in Medina further reinforced the city's status as a crucial area of Islamic learning. Many scholars, including influential figures such as Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, a renowned ḥadīth scholar known for his *Isnād 'Alī*, chose to settle and make regular visits to Medina. They came to strengthen their spiritual connection with the Prophet and enhance their expertise in the ḥadīth scholarship.⁵³ The presence of scholars like al-Kūrānī further solidified Medina's position as a vital center for religious studies within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

According to Azra, *madrasas* that existed in Ḥaramayn during this period were generally dedicated to providing basic and intermediate teaching in various Islamic disciplines. In the form of formal institutions, *madrasas* lost their role in producing students who were able to pursue higher levels of Islamic studies. In this context, Azra emphasizes that the role of *zāwiya* and non-formal Islamic educational institutions, such as *ḥalaqah* (learning circle) held around the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*, became very important. Usually, seekers of knowledge who wanted to study more complex and in-depth Islamic sciences would visit these *ḥalaqah*. Here, they are trained in advanced Islamic disciplines so that the knowledge they acquire can influence their intellectual careers after returning to their hometowns.⁵⁴ This is reinforced by Franke's research findings that in the 18th century, there were almost no *madrasas* still operating effectively as educational institutions in Mecca. The limited role of formal *madrasas* as educational institutions in the early modern period was partly because, at least in part, the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* also served an educational function. As one of the holiest places in the world, scholars generally prefer to hold lectures in the courtyard or arcade of the mosque to obtain blessings, rather than sitting in *madrasas*. This shows that although the number of formal *madrasas* was limited in Mecca, the centrality of Mecca and the Ka'ba as a sacred building became an important pillar that attracted scholars from various Islamic regions to settle and study there. In addition, massive intellectual development in Mecca took place more in non-formal institutions such as *zāwiya* and *halaqa* held by local scholars.⁵⁵ Therefore, mosques and non-formal educational institutions cannot be separated from the continuity of knowledge transfer activities.⁵⁶

⁵³ Umam, "Becoming a Sunni Scholar: Ibrahim Kurani (d. 1690), His Role in Seventeenth-Century Medina and the Transregional Context of His Writings," 121.

⁵⁴ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah & Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII; Akar Pembaharuan Islam*, 76–77.

⁵⁵ Franke, "Educational and Non-Educational Madrasas in Early Modern Mecca. A Survey Based on Local Literary Sources," *Zeitschrift Der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 170, no. 1 (2020): 77, <https://doi.org/10.13173/zeitdeutmorggese.170.1.0077>.

⁵⁶ George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 9.

In addition, Muslims from all over the world travel to Haramayn, not only to perform the *Hajj* or visit the Prophet's tomb and various sites of Islamic significance, but some of them also tend to visit and meet with scholars residing in the two holy cities. The practice of visiting scholars during the *Hajj* pilgrimage is not a new phenomenon in the 18th century; rather, it has been taking place in previous centuries, as documented in the travel accounts of al-'Abdary (13th century).⁵⁷ In this context, the home of Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri became one of the places frequently visited by scholars.⁵⁸ Ahmad al-Khalifa recounted his meeting with Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri in Mecca in *al-Rihlat al-Nasiriyya*. He first met al-Basri at the Masjid al-Haram alongside Ahmad al-Nakhli (d. 1129 AH/ 1717 CE). At that time, al-Basri was very pleased to welcome al-Khalifa, providing him with accommodation during his stay in Mecca. Al-Basri then invited al-Khalifa to his home. There, al-Khalifa saw al-Basri's library, which was filled with books and manuscripts. Additionally, al-Basri found three volumes of *Musnad* Ahmad ibn Hanbal there. On that occasion, al-Basri informed al-Khalifa that he had written the original manuscript of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in the al-Yunini version with his beautiful handwriting, and he had just begun writing the commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, having reached the discussion of the chapter of al-*Hajj*. Al-Basri himself was known among the seekers of knowledge in Mecca as a scholar of high reputation in the Two Holy Mosques in the study of ḥadīth and other Islamic sciences. Al-Basri permitted al-Khalifa to transmit all his knowledge, both what he had read and what he had heard from his teachers. On this occasion, al-Khalifa also asked al-Basri about the explanation of Ibn Abbas' statement regarding the ḥadīth on the excellence of the Sacred Mosque.⁵⁹

On the contrary, several prominent teachers and scholars from various regions in the Islamic world, such as Egypt, performed the *Hajj* to Mecca and chose to stay there temporarily to continue their scholarly activities. One example is Muhammad Ibn 'Ala al-Dīn al-Bābilī, who made several pilgrimages to Mecca and stayed there for a certain period to teach and narrate ḥadīth to local students and scholars. Among his students were several important figures in the study of ḥadīth in Mecca, such as 'Abdullāh Ibn Sālīm al-Baṣrī, Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad al-Nakhli, Ḥasan Ibn 'Alī al-'Ujaimī, Ibrāhīm Ibn Ḥasan al-Kūrānī, Muhammad ibn 'Abd Rasūl al-Barzanjī, and Abū al-Ḥasan Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥādī

⁵⁷ Maria Wilhelmina Buitelaar and Richard Louis Anton van Leeuwen, *Narrating the Pilgrimage to Mecca: Historical and Contemporary Accounts*, Leiden Studies in Islam and Society, volume 16 (Brill, 2023), 55–56.

⁵⁸ Abdullah al-Ghazi, *Ifadat Al-Anam Bi Akhbari Baladi Allah al-Haram*, 1st ed., ed. Abdul Malik Abdullah Ibnu Dahish (Maktabat al-Asadi, 2009), 6:379.

⁵⁹ Abu al-Abbas al-Dar'i, *Al-Rihlah al-Nasiriyya*, 1st ed. (Dar al-Suwaydi, 2011), 367.

al-Sindī, who later became central figures in the development of ḥadīth studies.⁶⁰ Under the guidance of al-Bābilī, 'Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī received several important *ijāzas* in ḥadīth studies and other Islamic disciplines. He obtained at least seventy-seven types of *ijāza*, including authorization to narrate specific ḥadīth books, *musalsal ḥadīth*, and several other classical scholarly works, affirming al-Bābilī's role in the transfer of knowledge and scholarly legitimacy in Mecca.⁶¹

The scientific context and learning process at Ḥaramayn, which is cosmopolitan, has indirectly succeeded in breaking down the boundaries of sectarian disputes in the Islamic world. The presence of teachers and students from various sects marks a significant level of intellectual interaction and openness. In this case, a teacher who follows the Shafī'i sect does not mean that he only learns from those of the same sect. A concrete example is 'Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, who, despite being a follower of the Shafī'i school, also sought knowledge from scholars of the Maliki school and other Sunni schools. One of the important teachers in al-Baṣrī's intellectual life was 'Īsā al-Ṭa'labī, an influential Mālikī scholar. Interestingly, al-Baṣrī not only studied the works of Mālikī scholars from al-Tha'ālibī but also delved into the Shafī'i school of thought, which was not his original school. This indicates that the scholarly tradition in Ḥaramayn was highly inclusive and cosmopolitan, enabling scholars to recognize and appreciate scholarly traditions beyond the school of thought they adhered. Thus, Ḥaramayn served as a space for inter-school dialogue and intellectual exchange, enriching the dynamics of Islamic scholarship.⁶²

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that Haramayn plays a very important role as both an intellectual and spiritual center in the Islamic world. Medina and Makkah are not only the primary destinations for the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage and religious visits but also serve as gathering places for scholars, students, and intellectuals from across the Islamic world. The scientific community formed there exhibits a cosmopolitan and inclusive nature, breaking down sectarian boundaries and facilitating inter-sectarian knowledge exchange. This phenomenon is reflected in the practices of scholars such as 'Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, who studied and taught in an environment that involved diverse scholarly traditions, including those of the Shafī'i and Maliki schools of thought. The role of formal *madrasas* was indeed limited, especially in Mecca, where non-formal institutions such as *zāwiya*, *ḥalaqa*, and *ribāṭ* were more dominant in intellectual life. Meanwhile, Medina showed significant development in educational institutions with a

⁶⁰ Voll, "1. *Ḥadīth* Scholars and Tariqahs," 265–66.

⁶¹ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*.

⁶² al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*, 105–6.

large number of *madrasas* supporting teaching from elementary to ḥadīth levels. Educational activities in Ḥaramayn were supported by the mobility of students and scholars from various regions, who not only visited holy sites but also settled there to study and teach. The presence of the Prophet's tomb in Medina served as a spiritual and intellectual magnet, attracting influential scholars such as Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī to settle and contribute to the scholarly tradition. Overall, the social and political interactions in Ḥaramayn created a dynamic and pluralistic educational ecosystem that played a crucial role in maintaining the continuity and development of Islamic scholarly traditions at the local, regional, and transnational levels. This scholarly tradition affirmed Ḥaramayn's position as a vital and inclusive center for Islamic studies during that period.

2.3. The Development of Ḥadīth Studies of Haramayn in the 18th Century

In pre-modern Islamic tradition, scholars played a central role in preserving the intellectual heritage contained in the texts of the Qur'an and ḥadīth, as well as in maintaining the interpretive methodology that accompanied these two sources. Scientific authority in this context is not only based on the substance of the content, but also on the transmission mechanisms that ensure the integrity of knowledge. Therefore, a complete rejection or denial of the textual authority that has been inherited, including its methods of understanding, contradicts the fundamental principles of academic legitimacy within the Islamic scholarly tradition.⁶³ Renewal in Islamic discourse, particularly from the 16th to the 18th centuries, focused more on preserving tradition than on discovering new insights into Islamic scholarship itself. As Graham notes regarding Islamic society, greater value was placed on continuity with traditional norms that were considered to have very ancient historical roots. In summary, this indicates that intellectual transformation during this period was more concerned with refining methods of transmission and preservation of tradition than with substantial changes in the content of Islamic teachings. Scholars sought to ensure continuity with past authorities, thereby maintaining the legitimacy of scholarship within the Islamic educational and intellectual system.⁶⁴

After reaching its peak in the 14th and 15th centuries, the development of ḥadīth scholarship has not been comprehensively studied. However, since the end of the 17th

⁶³ Walead Mosaad, "Islam Before Modernity: Aḥmad alDardīr and the Preservation of Traditional Knowledge," in *Islam Before Modernity* (Gorgias Press, 2022), 17, <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.31826/9781463243814/html>.

⁶⁴ Mosaad, "Islam Before Modernity," 19–20; William A. Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 3 (1993): 499, <https://doi.org/10.2307/206100>.

century, there has been renewed interest in the prophetic tradition, particularly in the aspects of *isnād* and textual studies of canonical works. This interest continued to grow throughout the 18th century and spread to various Muslim regions that had previously been less involved in the tradition of ḥadīth studies. During this period, the Hijaz region emerged as an important center of ḥadīth scholarship with a wide influence, including in the Maghreb and India.⁶⁵ Several modern studies reveal interesting facts about this dynamic. John Voll, for example, shows that in the 18th century, Ḥaramayn became a major intellectual center, especially in the field of ḥadīth. He notes differences in the focus of ḥadīth studies across various Islamic regions: in North Africa, *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ* by Mālik was the primary reference; in the Eastern Mediterranean, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* dominated; while in India, the study of ḥadīth was initially less popular due to the dominance of the Hanafī school of thought. In this context, the network of scholars in the Haramayn played an important role in integrating this ḥadīth literature. *Al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, which was previously little known in the Ḥaramayn, began to be actively taught alongside *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.⁶⁶

Given the central position of the Haramayn in the development of ḥadīth studies in the 18th century, it is important to examine the teaching models applied in the region during that period. Additionally, crucial aspects such as the tradition of transmission through *ijāza* and the pursuit of *isnād ʿālī* need to be explained as part of the scholarly dynamics of the scholars who came to the Haramayn.

2.3.1. The Method of Ḥadīth Learning in Haramayn in the 18th Century

Sadiq Ahmad Khan (d. 1307 AH/1889 CE) identified three models of ḥadīth learning commonly applied among the scholars of Ḥaramayn in the 18th century. The first is the *sard* method (uninterrupted recitation or reading without pause), where the teacher or a *qārī* (a student assigned to read aloud) recites the ḥadīth text without providing explanations regarding linguistic aspects, meanings, or the names of the transmitters. The second is the *ṭarīq al-ḥallī wa al-baḥṭh* method (explanation and elaboration), in which the teacher pauses after reading one ḥadīth to explain difficult phrases, explain the names of

⁶⁵ Reichmuth, “Aspects of Prophetic Piety in the Early Modern Period,” 135; Dumairieh affirms the central role of the Hijāz as a meeting point for scholars in ḥadīth studies and the exchange of *ijāza* in the 17th century. The ḥajj season facilitated intensive interaction between intellectual traditions through the transmission of isnād among pilgrims. This supports the views of Shāh Walī Allāh and Western scholars that the revival of ḥadīth studies in the 17th century was rooted in the Hijāz and developed alongside the growth of Sufism. See: Naser Dumairieh, “Revising the Assumption That Ḥadīth Studies Flourished in the 11th/17th-Century Hijāz: Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī’s (d. 1101/1690) Contribution,” June 29, 2021, 24–25, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700585-12341597>.

⁶⁶ Voll, “1. Ḥadīth Scholars and Tariqahs,” 265–66.

little-known transmitters, and relate them to the main theme of the ḥadīth. These explanations are simple but help students gain a basic understanding. Third is the *ṭarīq al-im‘ān* (in-depth approach) method, which involves a detailed analysis of each sentence in the ḥadīth text, linking it to various disciplines, and accompanying it with stories, anecdotes, and quotations from other works. This method is more comprehensive than the previous two models. Sadiq Ahmad Khan quotes the views of scholars such as Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī, Aḥmad al-Qaṭṭān, Ḥasan al-‘Ujaymī, and Abū Ṭāhir al-Kurdī, that the *sard* method is intended for established students, while the second method is for beginners and intermediate students, and the third method is more reflective and spiritual, not to transmit ḥadīth.⁶⁷

The general picture described by Sidiq Ahmad Khan shows that the model *sard* and the method of explanation and analysis (*al-ḥallī wa al-baḥthī*) dominated the pattern of ḥadīth teaching in Haramayn in the 12th/18th century. The practice of reading ḥadīth quickly without accompanying explanations of meaning and understanding was not a new phenomenon of the 18th century; rather, it had been in place for several centuries prior, specifically after ḥadīth were codified by scholars during the 9th to 10th centuries. For transmission purposes, the method of *sard* was more commonly used. It does not always mean reading extremely quickly, but rather at a sufficiently fast pace to ensure efficient transmission of the text. However, since the 11th century, the practice of *sard* began to accelerate extremely. In this regard, Davidson provides several examples of the phenomenon of quickly reading ḥadīth by scholars since the 11th century. He notes the remarkable achievements of figures such as Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463 AH / 1071 CE), who completed the reading of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in just three sessions (*majlis*), as well as Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852 AH / 1449 CE) and al-Qaṣṭalānī (d. 923 AH / 1517 CE), who were also known for their speed in reading completely major ḥadīth works. This narrative underscores that the practice of *sard* was not a phenomenon that emerged in the 18th century, but rather a long-standing element of the Islamic scholarly tradition, particularly in the context of transmission.⁶⁸

As noted by Khan, the primary motivation for reading ḥadīth rapidly is to obtain a certificate (*ijāza*) for its transmission. This practice is widely observed among scholars, as it is oriented not toward understanding the content of the ḥadīth itself, but rather toward securing authorization for its transmission. In this context, the 17th and 18th centuries

⁶⁷ Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, *Al-Hitta Fi Dzīkr al-Sihah al-Sitta* (Dar al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyah, 1985), 131–32.

⁶⁸ Garrett Davidson, “Carrying on the Tradition: A Social and Intellectual History of *Ḥadīth* Transmission across a Thousand Years” (Brill, 2020), 75–77, <https://brill.com/display/title/39428>.

witnessed an enthusiasm for the production of certificates in the Haramayn. Given the limited time available to scholars visiting Mecca and their obligation to return to their hometowns, many during this period sought more time-efficient alternatives for the transmission of ḥadīth. One approach used was the method of *sard*, which, although concise, still required a considerable amount of time. Therefore, the preferred method was the direct granting of *ijāza*, whether for the transmission of a single ḥadīth or an entire collection of ḥadīth. Sometimes the process of *samā* (the teacher reads the ḥadīth to the students), or *qirā'ah 'alā al-shaykh* (students read the ḥadīth in front of the teacher), was retained, which involved reading the beginning or several ḥadīths from a book in the presence of the teacher, with the remainder being granted permission without further reading. This method was considered more efficient than quickly reading the entire contents of the book. For example, 'Īsā al-Tha'ālibī, the teacher of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, read some ḥadīths (*qirā'ah 'alā al-shaykh*) in front of his teacher, Muḥammad ibn 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Bābilī, during his visit to Mecca. He read the first eight ḥadīths from *Musnad* Abū Bakr, the beginning of *Musnad* Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and then al-Bābilī granted *ijāza* for the rest. This model appears to have been predominantly practiced in the transmission of other ḥadīth books, as reflected in the *thabat* of al-Bābilī compiled by 'Īsā al-Tha'ālibī himself.⁶⁹

Regarding the *thabat* genre compiled by Isa Al-Tha'ālibī, Davidson chronologically describes how the genre developed over time. Initially, the *thabat* genre (which developed in the Eastern Islamic region, such as Egypt and Syria) and the *fihris* genre (which was typical of the Western Islamic region, such as Andalusia and Maghrib) had fundamental differences in function and content. *Thabat* focused on documenting oral transmission (*samā'āt*), serving as a personal archive detailing learning sessions, including dates, locations, texts used, and witnesses, as reflected in the work of Diyā' al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 622 AH / 1245 CE). Meanwhile, *fihris* emphasizes non-oral transmission through *ijāza* (written authorization) and systematic cataloging of books, such as *fihris* of Ibn 'Atiyya (d. 541 AH / 1147 CE), which documents books along with their chains of transmission via *ijāza* without physical interaction with the teacher. However, after the 16th century, these differences began to converge. A significant decline in oral transmission (due to socio-intellectual changes) forced *Thabat* to adopt *ijāza* as the primary method of validation. Meanwhile, *fihris*, which had been based on *ijāza* from the outset, became the structural model universally adopted. As a result, the two terms merged in terms of meaning

⁶⁹ 'Īsa bin Muhammad al-Tha'ālibī, *Muntakhab Al-Asānīd Fī Wasl al-Muṣannaḥāt Wa al-Ajzā' Wa al-Masānīd.*, 1st ed., ed. Muḥammad bin Nāṣir al-'Ajmī (Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmīyah, 2004), 59.

and function: *thabat* and *fihris* both mean “the catalog of chain of transmission,” combining oral (*samāʿ*) and non-oral (*ijāza*) evidence, and expanding to encompass multidisciplinary fields such as ḥadīth, fiqh, tasawuf, and other Islamic disciplines.⁷⁰

The convergence of function and structure between *thabat* and *fihris* formed the basis for a significant revival in the compilation of similar works in the 18th century. Isa Al-Thaʿālibī’s work, as mentioned earlier, became the main catalyst, inspiring his students to adopt a similar model in the codification of ḥadīth. One notable example is the work of al-Basri, *al-Imdād Fi Maʿrifati ʿUluwwi al-Isnād*. This book not only compiles ḥadīth chains and Islamic scholarly works transmitted through the al-Babili and Isa Al-Thaʿālibī traditions but also integrates chains from the networks of al-Basri’s other teachers. This structural pattern was replicated in parallel by al-Basri’s colleague, Ahmad al-Nakhli, in his work *Bughyat al-Ṭālibīn li-Bayān al-Ashyākh al-Muḥaqqiqīn*.⁷¹ This developing genre of *thabat* played a crucial role in maintaining the continuity of scholarly chains of transmission. The ḥadīth scholars of that era actively utilized *thabat* works as instruments of transmission, by authorizing their students to use these *thabat* collections. The importance of *thabat* in the mechanism of knowledge transmission will be further elaborated through an analysis of the ḥadīth transmission practices applied by al-Basri, as described in Chapter IV.

The teaching model of ḥadīth through rapid reading (*sard*) and the granting of certificates appeared to dominate the tradition of ḥadīth learning in Haramayn in the 18th century. However, this dominance did not eliminate the existence of the second learning model, namely the *al-ḥallī wa al-baḥthī* method (explanation and analytical discussion). This method could still be found in ḥadīth teaching practices during that period, albeit in limited numbers. One example is ʿIsā al-Thaʿālibī, the teacher of ʿAbd Allāh al-Baṣrī. Al-Baṣrī studied under his guidance for a considerable period of time, approximately fifteen years, reflecting the intense scholarly relationship between the teacher and student. This interaction will be discussed further in the study of al-Baṣrī’s scholarly network in the next chapter. Like his teacher, al-Baṣrī did not rely solely on the methods of rapid reading and *ijāza* in teaching ḥadīth, but also actively guided his students to understand the meaning, context, and legal implications of the ḥadīth being studied.⁷² This approach demonstrates

⁷⁰ Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 254–75.

⁷¹ Ahmad al-Nakhli, *Bughyat Al-Ṭālibīn Li-Bayān al-Ashyākh al-Muḥaqqiqīn* (Majlis Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif al-Nizāmiyyah, 1910).

⁷² Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī, *Insān Al-ʿAyn Fī Mashāyikh al-Ḥaramayn* (Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Kattāniyya, 2021), 98.

his involvement in applying the *al-ḥallī wa al-baḥṭhī* method, which will be explained in more detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Thus, it can be concluded that the model of teaching ḥadīth through the method of rapid reading (*sard*) and the granting of *ijāza riwāya* did indeed dominate the ḥadīth learning system in Haramayn in the 18th century. This dominance is not unrelated to the reality that the majority of scholars who chose to stay temporarily in Mecca after performing the *Ḥajj* generally already had a solid academic background. Their primary goal was no longer to deeply understand the content of ḥadīth, but rather to obtain a chain of transmission (*isnād*) for a specific collection of ḥadīth, or even more specifically, to obtain an *isnād ‘ālī*, a short chain of transmission close to the source. Therefore, in this context, it is important to further examine how the concept of *ijāza* was understood and practiced within the ḥadīth tradition, as well as how the pursuit of *isnād ‘ālī* became an integral part of the cosmopolitan scholarly ethos of the scholars in the Two Holy Mosques during the 18th century.

2.3.2. The Production of *Ijāza* and Search for *Isnād ‘ālī* in the 18th Century

Ijāza is a formal authorization issued by a teacher to his student, allowing the transmission of a single ḥadīth, a specific ḥadīth book, or a collection of works, without the process of direct listening (*samā’*) or reading in front of the sheikh (*‘ard*). It can take the form of an explicit statement such as, “I grant you *ijāza*” or “I permit you to narrate from me *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.” This legitimization allows the recipient (*mujaz*) to include the name of the *ijāza* issuer (his teacher) in their *isnād* (chain of transmission), even though there was no direct learning interaction on the material being granted. The *ijāza* serves as a written channel of transmission that expands access to the text and preserves the continuity of the *isnād*, although it has sparked debate among scholars regarding its authenticity when compared to primary methods of reception, such as *samā’* (hearing the ḥadīth directly from the teacher).⁷³

Davidson describes in detail how the development of *ijāza* in the ḥadīth tradition transformed from its inception to its maturity as a method of ḥadīth transmission. In the early phase 9th/15th, *ijāza* emerged as a solution to non-oral transmission due to geographical constraints and the proliferation of ḥadīth literature. However, it was rejected by the majority of scholars, as it was considered to disrupt the chain of transmission (*irsāl*), and was only employed to a limited extent for non-ḥadīth texts. In the 4th century AH/10th century CE, practical pressures led to gradual acceptance: the debate shifted to the

⁷³ Nūr al-Dīn ‘Iṭr, *Manhaj Al-Naqd Fī ‘ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 3rd ed. (Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 215.

terminology of mentioning the chain of transmission with partial legitimacy in ḥadīth transmission. A key transformation occurred in the 5th century AH/11th century CE through al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī: *ijāza mutlaqah* (*ijāza* without specification of the transmitted text) and *ijāza* for children or infants were introduced for the efficiency of mass transmission and the pursuit of *Isnād ‘ālī*, though opposed by a conservative minority. The mature phase (6th-8th/12th-14th century) established *ijāza* as a social-spiritual instrument, including *ijāza al-‘āmmah* (for all Muslims during the lifetime of the grantor, to preserve *isnād* as the “unique characteristic of the Muslim community” and the hierarchy of knowledge, while also serving as a medium for getting blessings).⁷⁴

Although it initially faced opposition and was considered a threat to oral transmission when it first appeared, *ijāza* was gradually accepted as a mechanism for transmitting ḥadīth by scholars in the 5th/11th century. Rather than viewing *ijāza* as a threat to oral transmission, they instead regarded it as a means or medium for preserving the culture of ḥadīth transmission. *Ijāza* was established as the primary tool to uphold the doctrine that the transmission of ḥadīth is a unique characteristic or defining feature of the Muslim community, distinguishing them from other religious communities. Abu Thahir al-Silafī (d. 576 AH / 1180 CE) was the first scholar to present this argument. According to him, the *ijāza* served as an important means of maintaining the continuity of the chain of transmission, which he considered to be the main pillar of Sharia. He deemed it impossible for all Islamic legal works to continue to be transmitted orally, given the abundance of ḥadīth literature and Islamic knowledge. Without a chain of transmission (*Isnād*), a work is deemed invalid. Thus, *ijāza* serves as an instrument to preserve the transmission of knowledge, thereby safeguarding the integrity of Islam itself from corruption and extinction. Since the chain of transmission is the pillar and foundation of sacred law, every means and tool must be employed to protect it (such as *ijāza*).⁷⁵

The 18th century was an important period in the history of *ijāza* granting, which took place on a massive scale, especially in the Ḥaramayn.⁷⁶ This occasion was also utilized as a platform for the transmission of knowledge, where pilgrims had the opportunity to obtain *ijāza* from the scholars residing in the holy city, as well as from other scholars who were also performing the *Hajj*. The works of scholars during this period extensively documented the practice of granting *ijāza* as part of efforts to preserve the chain of transmission (*isnād*), a hallmark of Islamic scholarly tradition. The case of al-Baṣrī, for

⁷⁴ Davidson, “Carrying on the Tradition,” 113–51

⁷⁵ Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 127.

⁷⁶ Muntasir Zaman, “Periodization of *Ḥadīth*,” Qalam Research, accessed June 28, 2025, <https://www.qalamresearch.com/research-papers/periodization-of-ḥadīth>.

example, shows that he did not travel far to obtain a particular ḥadīth narration.⁷⁷ Instead, most of the *isnād* or *ijāza* he possessed were obtained when his teachers came to Mecca to perform the *Hajj*. Additionally, he also received *ijāza* from some scholars residing in the holy city over a relatively long period of time. As a consequence of this practice, many works by ḥadīth scholars in the 18th century consist of collections of *isnād*, particularly the *Isnād 'ālī* they obtained during their lifetimes, as mentioned earlier.

Isnād 'ālī is one of the important factors in the massive practice of ḥadīth transmission through the mechanism of *ijāza*. This term refers to a chain of ḥadīth transmission that has fewer transmitters or was transmitted earlier than other *Isnāds*.⁷⁸ In the tradition of ḥadīth criticism, Ibn Ṣalāḥ (d. 643 AH / 1245 CE) stated that the elevation of the *isnād* can reduce the potential for transmission errors, as each transmitter in the *isnād* has the potential to make mistakes, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Thus, the fewer the number of transmitters, the smaller the possibility of error; conversely, the longer the *isnād*, the greater the potential points of error.⁷⁹ However, Jonathan Dickinson's analysis of transmission practices during the pre-canonization era of ḥadīth (before the 3rd century AH / 9th century CE) shows that *isnād 'ālī* had not yet played a significant role in determining the authority or validity of ḥadīth. The main focus of the scholars at that time was on the validity of the *matn* through criticism of the credibility of the transmitters (*al-jarḥ wa-l-ta'dīl*), not on the length or shortness of the *isnād*. *Isnād 'ālī* was often suspected of being an indication of forgery, especially by individuals who claimed to have lived very long lives. Authoritative figures such as 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181 AH / 797 CE) explicitly emphasized that the superiority of an *Isnād* lies in the reliability of its transmitters, not in generational proximity or the brevity of the transmission chain (*qurb al-isnād*).⁸⁰

Upon completion of the ḥadīths being codified and the scholars having selected several ḥadīths and compiled them into a complete book, such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, the centrality of *Isnād 'Ali* became increasingly important in the ḥadīth tradition. The search for *Isnād 'Ali* became a noble endeavor undertaken by ḥadīth students and scholars. For example, Uthman ibn Fudī traveled to Mecca to obtain *Isnād 'ālī*, where

⁷⁷ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*.

⁷⁸ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Ṣan'ānī, *Tawḍīḥ Al-Afkār Li-Ma'ānī Tanqīḥ al-Anzār*, 1st ed., ed. Ṣalāḥ ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Uwīḍah (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1997), 2:227.

⁷⁹ Ibn Ṣalah, *Muqaddimah Ibn Ṣalah*, 1st ed. (Dar al-Kutub al-'ilmiyah, 2002), 256.

⁸⁰ Eerik Dickinson, "Ibn Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī and the Isnād," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122, no. 3 (2002): 481–94, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3087517>.

he studied under al-Basri.⁸¹ This was based on the belief that *isnād* not only serves as a means to ensure the reliability and historical accuracy of a ḥadīth, but also as a medium connecting an individual to the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, having an *isnād* directly connected to the Prophet is a great honor for a scholar. As a result, most scholars strive to obtain *isnād 'ālī*, as this model of *isnād* reduces the intermediaries between a scholar and the Prophet, making their connection more significant. Meanwhile, in the Sufi tradition, *isnād* also functions as a chain of transmission that not only connects the blessings of the Prophet but also conveys ethical instructions and esoteric knowledge. Thus, the function of *isnād* is not only focused on proving the reliability and authenticity of a ḥadīth but also serves as a link to the blessings of the Prophet.⁸²

This important position in the tradition of the ulama continued into the following period. For example, in the 17th-century tradition of ḥadīth scholarship, the ulama sought to collect *isnād 'ālī*, the central figure of this period being Ibrahim Kurani, the teacher of al-Basri.⁸³ Additionally, Stefan Reichmuth, in his study of the intellectual life of Murthada Zabidi, an 18th-century scholar, revealed that in the context of pre-modern Islamic intellectual development, *isnād* was no longer merely positioned as an instrument for verifying the authenticity of texts, but also acquired spiritual meaning as a means of obtaining blessings and symbolic closeness to the Prophet. This transformation of meaning shows the dual function of *isnād*, both scientifically and devotionally. To obtain the shortest chain of transmission to the Prophet, it has become common practice among scholars to grant general *ijāza* even to young children, including those still in the womb.⁸⁴ In this context, 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī (d. 1304 AH / 1886 CE), a 19th-century ḥadīth scholar, offers a significant observation regarding the procedure of granting *ijāza* to young children. He argues that the practice is recommended (*mustaḥabb*) as a means of preserving the continuity of *isnād*, which constitutes a distinctive feature of the Islamic scholarly tradition. This recommendation, however, is contingent upon both the grantor and the recipient being scholars (*ulamā*), particularly in cases where *samā'* (direct hearing from the teacher) is not

⁸¹ John O. Voll, "UTHMĀN B. MUHAMMAD FŪDĪ'S *ISNĀD* TO AL-BUKHĀRĪ AS PRESENTED IN TAZYĪN AL-WARĀQĀT," *Sudanica Africa* 13 (2002): 113–14.

⁸² Brown, *Ḥadīth: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 273.

⁸³ Dumairieh, *Revising the Assumption That Ḥadīth Studies Flourished in the 11th/17th-Century Hijāz*.

⁸⁴ Stefan Reichmuth, "Murtadā Az-Zabīdī (D. 1791) in Biographical and Autobiographical Accounts. Glimpses of Islamic Scholarship in the 18th Century," *Die Welt Des Islams* 39, no. 1 (1999): 71–72.

feasible. If the recipient is not a scholar, then although it remains permissible to issue such an *ijāza*, it is no longer considered recommended.⁸⁵

Thus, at least two primary factors help explain the dominance of ḥadīth transmission through the *ijāza* mechanism in the tradition of ḥadīth studies in the Ḥaramayn during the 18th century. The first factor pertains to the continuity of transmission practices in the post-codification era. Following the compilation of ḥadīth into written collections and the exponential growth of ḥadīth literature, coupled with the geographic expansion of the Islamic world, scholars increasingly faced logistical challenges in traveling long distances to hear even a few ḥadīths directly from a specific teacher. Within the context of the Ḥaramayn, the limited time available during the *Ḥajj* further constrained the possibility of utilizing the *samāʿ* method. As a result, the practice of granting *ijāza* emerged as a practical and effective solution for maintaining the transmission of ḥadīth while preserving the continuity of the *isnād*. The second, equally significant, factor concerns the spiritual dimension embedded in the concept of *isnād ʿālī*. In the post-codification period, the *isnād* was no longer merely a means of verifying the authenticity of transmissions; it also acquired symbolic value as a representation of spiritual proximity to the Prophet Muḥammad. An *Isnād ʿālī* was perceived as a more direct link to the Prophet and functioned as a symbol of both intellectual and spiritual distinction within the Islamic scholarly tradition. Consequently, beyond fulfilling their religious obligation of *ḥajj*, many scholars traveled to Mecca primarily to obtain an *ijāza* from scholars renowned for possessing an *isnād ʿālī*.

2.4. Conclusion

The 18th century witnessed the Ḥaramayn (Mecca and Medina) functioning as cosmopolitan intellectual and spiritual centers of the Islamic world, shaped by their distinctive socio-political contexts and the global mobility generated by the *ḥajj*. Politically, the semi-autonomous Sharifian government operating under the Ottoman umbrella created a unique dynamic: while Medina, stable and increasingly cosmopolitan, emerged as a major hub of learning through the rapid development of *madrassa* (totaling 118 institutions), Mecca, despite its cultural homogeneity and political volatility, retained its central role in Islamic scholarship. This was due in large part to the influence of prominent figures such as ʿAbdallāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, who served not only as a religious authority but also as a political advisor and a key facilitator of transregional intellectual

⁸⁵ al-Lakhnawī, *Ẓafar Al-Amānī Bi-Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī Fī Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth*, 518.

networks from within his residence. The scholarly infrastructure of the Ḥaramayn was primarily informal, revolving around *zāwiya*, *ḥalaqa* surrounding the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*, and Sufi *ribāt*, all of which were sustained through financial patronage from both Ottoman and Mughal sources. This cosmopolitan milieu enabled extensive transregional knowledge exchange through the activities of *mujāwirūn* (resident seekers of knowledge) and pilgrims, often transcending sectarian affiliations. Scholars commonly studied under teachers from various *madhhabs* and orientations, reflecting the pluralistic spirit of the region.

In the field of ḥadīth studies, the period was marked by scholars' intense pursuit of *isnād 'ālī* (a high chain of transmission). Consequently, the method of *sard* (rapid recitation) and the transmission of ḥadīth via the *ijāza* mechanism became widespread within the scholarly networks of the Ḥaramayn. However, this did not imply the absence of in-depth ḥadīth instruction. Certain scholars, such as 'Abdallāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, continued to play a significant role in delivering rigorous, sustained instruction to their students. It is also important to note that the granting of *ijāza* for *riwāya* and the adoption of the al-sard model were generally reserved for scholars who were already well-established or for those who had limited time to remain in the Holy Cities. Their primary motivation for seeking an *ijāza* or studying through al-sard was often driven by the desire to obtain an *isnad 'ālī*. Thus, the transmission of ḥadīth via *ijāza* and the use of al-sard represented adaptive forms of scholarly exchange, suited to the conditions and practical needs of knowledge seekers in that period.

CHAPTER 3

THE INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY OF ‘ABDULLAH IBN SALIM AL-BASRI

This chapter will examine the intellectual development of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Salīm al-Baṣrī as a Sufi figure who made a significant contribution to the preservation and development of the study of ḥadīth in the 18th-century Ḥaramayn. The discussion will address several key aspects of al-Baṣrī's intellectual life, including his birthplace, the environment in which he was raised, and his personal and formal relationships with his teachers in the pursuit of knowledge. Moreover, his relationship with his students will be a central focus, given his substantial influence in disseminating knowledge. Al-Baṣrī's intellectual contributions to the field of ḥadīth, which encompass discussions on the transmission (*riwāya*) and understanding or interpretation (*dirāya*) of ḥadīth, represent one of his most important contributions to Islamic scholarship, particularly in the context of ḥadīth studies in the Ḥaramayn during his time. Thus, this discussion will not only address his contributions to the field of ḥadīth but also shed light on the scholarly network surrounding his life and the scientific efforts he undertook throughout his lifetime.

From an early age, Abdullah ibn Salim al-Basri was nurtured in a family that placed high importance on intellectual pursuits, and the educational support provided by his family played a decisive role in shaping the trajectory of his intellectual development. During his formative years, he engaged with a diverse range of knowledge pertinent to the intellectual climate of his time, and his early education laid a robust foundation for the cultivation of critical thinking, which was further enriched by his life experiences. Education and the pursuit of knowledge were integral to his growth, as he studied under renowned scholars and experts across various disciplines, developing methodologies that enabled him to engage in rigorous analysis of social, religious, and political phenomena. His experiences, both within the familial sphere and through broader social interactions, played a pivotal role in shaping his cognitive framework and worldview. The intellectual formation of al-Baṣrī was influenced by a confluence of factors, including religious teachings, engagement with prominent intellectual figures, and his own lived experiences. He is particularly noted for his significant contributions to Islamic thought, offering profound insights into the understanding of life and religious values. His ideas and intellectual legacy have had a substantial and enduring impact on society, solidifying his standing as a respected and influential figure within the intellectual traditions of his time.

3.1. Life Background and Intellectual Settings

First and foremost, it is important to note that although ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī was a significant figure in the tradition of ḥadīth scholarship in the Ḥaramayn, detailed biographical information about him remains scarce. In his work *al-Imdād fī Ma’rifat ‘Ulūw al-Isnād*, he introduces himself with his full name: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim ibn Muḥammad ibn Sālim ibn ‘Īsā al-Baṣrī, al-Makkī. The attribution (*Nisbah*) “*al-Baṣrī*” refers to Basra, where he was raised and intellectually formed, while “*al-Makkī*” designates his birthplace, Mecca. He also identifies his adherence to the Shāfi‘ī school of fiqh and the Ash‘arī creed, both of which are explicitly stated in the introduction to *al-Imdād*.⁸⁶ Interestingly, although he was born and spent the majority of his life in Mecca, he is more widely recognized by the *nisbah* “*al-Baṣrī*”, reflecting his familial and developmental roots in Basra. This usage aligns with a broader convention among later scholars (*‘ulamā’ muta’akkhkirīn*), as noted by al-‘Irāqī (d. 806 AH / 1403 CE), who explains that scholarly attribution was often based on a person’s familial or regional origin rather than their place of birth or residence. As a result, most 18th-century biographical sources refer to him as ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī.⁸⁷

Based on information found in *al-Imdād*, it is known that he was born in Mecca, although there are differing opinions among historians regarding the exact year of his birth. Some sources suggest that al-Baṣrī was born in 1050 AH / 1637 CE, while others propose 1048 AH / 1634 CE. However, the most widely accepted opinion holds that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī was born in 1049 AH / 1634 CE. This view is supported by biographical records written by his contemporaries and students, such as al-Shibrāwī, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Shammā’, and ‘Abīd al-Sindī. This view is reinforced by al-Firyāṭī, a contemporary scholar specializing in the intellectual legacy of al-Baṣrī. He affirms the 1049 AH / 1634 CE birth date and reinforces his argument by calculating al-Baṣrī’s age to be 84 years at the time of his death in 1134 AH / 1722 CE. This age estimation aligns consistently with the more widely accepted biographical accounts, thereby strengthening the credibility of the 1049 AH / 1634 CE birth year.⁸⁸

The family of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī originated from Basrah, Iraq. According to al-Firyāṭī, available historical information about the background of al-Baṣrī’s family, particularly concerning the social status of his father, is limited. It remains uncertain

⁸⁶ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma’rifat ‘Uluwi al-Isnād*, 51.

⁸⁷ Abū al-Faḍl al-‘Irāqī, *Al-Tabsirah Wa al-Tadhkirah Fī ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 2nd ed., ed. al-‘Arabī al-Dā’iz al-Firyāṭī (Maktabat Dār al-Manhāj, 2007), 185.

⁸⁸ al-Firyāṭī, *Min a’lām al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām ‘Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 42–43.

whether his father was a prominent scholar or a merchant engaged in trade within the Ḥaramayn region during that period. Nonetheless, al-Firyāṭī emphasizes that al-Baṣrī's father held a notable social position in Mecca. Citing *al-Ḥāfiẓ* Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Gharbī al-Ribāṭī hī, al-Firyāṭī explains that while al-Baṣrī's father was not an intellectual or a distinguished scholar, he demonstrated a profound appreciation for scholarship and scholars. He was known for his generosity toward seekers of knowledge, offering his home as a resting place for pilgrims and students who had come to the Holy Cities. His residence also housed a collection of books and manuscripts authored by earlier scholars, which were accessible to guests for study. Al-Firyāṭī concludes that although there is no evidence to suggest that al-Baṣrī's father was a renowned scholar, his contributions to the intellectual milieu of his time were significant. The financial resources he possessed, likely generated from trade or landholdings, played a vital role in supporting the intellectual formation of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī. Thus, the family's socio-economic foundation appears to have been instrumental in facilitating al-Baṣrī's scholarly development.⁸⁹

Al-Firyāṭī's account of the family background of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī offers valuable insights; however, it remains limited regarding the source of his father's wealth and the specific nature of the economic stability that supported al-Baṣrī's scholarly pursuits. The lack of detailed biographical information on al-Baṣrī has prompted further inquiry into the broader literature on the intellectual life of 18th-century scholars, particularly those connected to al-Baṣrī either directly through teacher-student relationships or indirectly through scholarly transmission networks. In this context, the study by Stefan Reichmuth is particularly illuminating. His research on the life and intellectual journey of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, a leading 18th-century ḥadīth scholar and prominent Sufī, provides important insights. Although al-Zabīdī was not a direct student of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, his ḥadīth scholarship was significantly shaped by al-Baṣrī's grandson, 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Aqīl al-Makkī (1102–1174 AH / 1690–1760 CE). Notably, Reichmuth himself was surprised by the lack of detailed biographical records on influential figures like al-Baṣrī, particularly regarding his family background and personal life. According to Reichmuth, al-Baṣrī was an important ḥadīth scholar of the 17th and 18th centuries.⁹⁰

Reichmuth draws attention to important literature that helps contextualize the socio-economic background of the al-Baṣrī family, particularly through the work *Mukhassaṣāt Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn fī Miṣr: Ibhān al-'Aṣr al-'Uthmānī fī al-Fatraḥ min 923–1220 AH*

⁸⁹ al-Firyāṭī., *Min a'lām al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām 'Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 43–45.

⁹⁰ Stefan Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91): Life, Networks and Writings* (Gibb memorial trust, 2009), 30.

/1517–1805 CE by Muḥammad ‘Alī Fahīm Bayūmī. This study explores the broader social and economic context of the Ḥaramayn from the 16th to the early 19th century, with a particular focus on the *mukhassaṣāt* (state allocations or charitable endowments) designated for the maintenance of the Two Holy Cities. Bayūmī explains that during this period, the Ḥaramayn were not solely inhabited by their indigenous populations but became home to large communities of Muslim immigrants from various parts of the Islamic world. These individuals were known as *mujāwirūn*, denoting those who reside near the holy sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina. The *mujāwarah* (residency) was not confined to a fixed duration but was instead contingent upon the individual's intentions, scholarly goals, or personal circumstances. The *mujāwirūn* originated from diverse regions such as Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, al-Andalus, Syria, Yemen, and beyond. A significant proportion of them came from ascetic and Sufi backgrounds, which explains the proliferation of *ribāt* (Sufi lodges and guesthouses for pilgrims) and *tākiyyāt* (Sufi convents) founded by Egyptians in the Ḥijāz during the Ottoman period. Bayūmī further notes that Ottoman archival records document the customs and practices of prominent families such as the Sālim al-Baṣrī and al-Bakrī lineages. These documents reveal that such families received substantial financial allocations (*mukhassaṣāt*) that were subsequently passed down to their descendants. This economic structure sheds light on the stability and prominence enjoyed by figures like ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, allowing for a sustained commitment to scholarship in the Ḥaramayn.⁹¹

The al-Baṣrī family was entrusted with several religious duties (*wazā’if*) that were considered both strategic and of high religious and social value. In addition to these responsibilities, his family received substantial financial support from Egyptian waqf foundations affiliated with the Two Holy Sanctuaries, namely *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* in Mecca and *al-Masjid al-Nabawī* in Medina. These endowments (*waqf*) were regularly distributed each year through the pilgrim caravans traveling from Egypt to Mecca. Bayūmī offers a detailed account of the salaries received by the family of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī during their tenure in religious service in Mecca. Al-Baṣrī’s father, Sālim, reportedly received a salary of 6,300 *bārah*,⁹² although the specific position he held remains unclear.

⁹¹ Muḥammad ‘Alī Fahīm, *Mukhassaṣāt Al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn Fī Miṣr ‘Ibhān al-‘Aṣr al-‘Uthmānī Fī al-Fatraḥ Min 923-1220 H/1517-1805 M*, 1st ed. (Dār al-Qāhirah lil-Kitāb, 2001), 370–71.

⁹² Al-Sāḥilī noted that the Ottomans used the term *bārah* to refer to a silver currency that had been in circulation in Egypt since the 16th century and continued to be used until the early 19th century. See: Zuhear Ghanaïem and Othman Al-Taal, “Ottoman Coins in the Jerusalem District in the Tenth Century AH / 16th Century AD 921-1111 AH/ 1516-1700 AD,” *Journal of the Faculties of Arts* 16, no. 2 (2019): 559–82, <https://doi.org/10.51405/16.2.6>.

This amount likely represented compensation for his services in hosting pilgrims and scholars arriving in Mecca. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī himself received a salary of 5,580 *bārah*, most probably in recognition of his role as a ḥadīth teacher at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*. Furthermore, the al-Basri’s family received even larger salaries in Medina than in Mecca, namely 7,200 *bārah*. This record reflects the economic stability of the al-Baṣrī family, which was bolstered by financial allocations from various holy sites, underscoring their prominent role within the religious community of the time.⁹³ Moreover, this affirms the existence of robust social and institutional networks maintained by the family, along with a central role in facilitating relations between major religious centers in the Arabian Peninsula and Muslim communities elsewhere. This privileged position also granted ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī easy access to sources of religious knowledge and a broad scholarly network, both of which significantly supported his intellectual output and scholarly productivity.

In conclusion, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī was a significant figure in the tradition of ḥadīth scholarship in the Ḥaramayn, although biographical information about him remains limited and marked by uncertainty. Despite being born in Mecca, al-Baṣrī is more commonly known by the attribution of “al-Baṣrī,” which refers to Basrah, the familial place of origin. The al-Baṣrī family enjoyed a stable social standing, supported by considerable financial resources derived both from Egyptian donations and from waqf endowments affiliated with the Ḥaramayn. His father likely received a salary in return for providing accommodations to pilgrims and scholars, while al-Baṣrī himself earned a salary for his role as a ḥadīth teacher at *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*. His family also received even larger allowances in Medina, underscoring their economic stability. Their active involvement in managing connections between the major religious centers of the Arabian Peninsula and wider Muslim communities further solidified their status in the intellectual and religious landscape of the period. This strong social and institutional network, along with direct access to scholarly resources, contributed to the scholarly productivity of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī and his enduring contributions to the ḥadīth tradition in the eighteenth century.

3.2. Scholarly Formation: Teachers and Networks

This section aims to examine how ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī emerged as a prominent ḥadīth scholar in the eighteenth century, particularly within the intellectual

⁹³ *Mukhassaṣāt Al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn Fī Miṣr ‘Ibhān al-‘Aṣr al-‘Uthmānī Fī al-Fatraḥ Min 923-1220 H/1517-1805 M*, 374.

network of the Ḥaramayn. The discussion is divided into two key phases: the first phase, which explores al-Baṣrī's formative education, and the second phase, which traces his integration into the cosmopolitan scholarly network of the Ḥaramayn. This latter phase is well-documented in his monumental work *al-Imdād fī Ma'rifat 'Ulūw al-Isnād*, which includes a detailed list of scholars from whom he received knowledge. In contrast, the first phase of his education is more difficult to reconstruct, as al-Baṣrī does not provide specific details about the locations or instructors involved in his early intellectual formation. While he does mention the names of several teachers in his works, there is no clear indication of who initially instructed him in the foundational Islamic sciences such as Arabic grammar, fiqh, and related subjects. Notably, al-Baṣrī does not include his father's name among his teachers. Consequently, a critical analysis comparing the dates of death of the teachers listed in *al-Imdād* with al-Baṣrī's birth year may provide insight into the key figures who played formative roles in shaping his scholarly trajectory.

3.2.1. First Phase: The Early Education of Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri and the Formation of the Foundations of Islamic Knowledge

Historians have recorded that 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī was born in Mecca and spent his childhood in Basrah, the city of his family's origin. However, no historical sources provide explicit details about his early life or the beginnings of his intellectual journey. It remains unclear whether al-Baṣrī began his studies in Mecca, his birthplace, or in Basrah, where he was raised. This lack of information makes it difficult to determine when he was taken to Basrah by his parents after his birth or when he ultimately returned to Mecca. Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that al-Baṣrī's family maintained strong ties to Mecca, as shown in historical records that highlight the family's prominent position in the city. This connection is further supported by the unstable political and social conditions in Basrah during the time of his birth, around 1047 AH /1638 CE, when conflicts erupted between the Turks, Persians, and Arabs over control of the city.⁹⁴ These deteriorating conditions likely contributed to the family's frequent movements between Basrah and Mecca before eventually settling in Mecca, possibly after receiving financial

⁹⁴ Al-Firyathi cites the statement of Al-Bustani in his work *Daairatul Ma'arif*, a scholar from Lebanon (d. 1883), who states, "The rulers continuously alternated in controlling Basrah until it was eventually seized by the Ottoman Empire in 1638 CE during the reign of Sultan Murad IV, making it the capital of a large province with a population of around 15,000. This date marks the birth of Al-Basri, or one year prior." Al-Bustani also mentions, "Then, in 1685 CE, Basrah was controlled by the Arabs and handed over to the Persians, but their rule was short-lived. It was subsequently regained by the Ottomans and was finally conquered again by the Persians in 1773 CE, see: al-Firyāṭī., *Min a'lām al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām 'Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 49–50.

support from Egypt. This relocation underscores both the family's strong connection to Mecca and the broader historical context that shaped their decision to reside there.

Since there is no available information regarding al-Baṣrī's education during his childhood in Baṣrah, this study will instead focus on his educational background in Mecca. As previously discussed, the account of al-Baṣrī's education in Mecca centers on his formative years under several notable teachers, particularly during his teenage years. In *al-Imdād fī Ma'rifa 'Uluw al-Isnād*, al-Baṣrī notes that he studied under a prominent scholar of Arabic language and literature at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*, Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Asadī al-Shāfi'ī al-Makkī, who passed away in 1066 AH / 1655 CE, when al-Baṣrī was 18 years old. Although al-Baṣrī does not specify the exact subjects he studied with al-Asadī, biographical sources describe al-Asadī as an expert in Arabic grammar and poetry.⁹⁵ Apart from al-Asadī, al-Baṣrī also studied with al-Qāḍī Tāj al-Dīn, who died in the same year, 1066 AH / 1655 CE. Al-Qāḍī Tāj al-Dīn was a respected preacher (*khaṭīb*) and teacher at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*, renowned for his rhetoric and literary talents, as well as his deep knowledge in the fields of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and the science of *kalām* (Islamic theology).⁹⁶ Another teacher of al-Baṣrī was Shaykh Qāḍī 'Ishām al-Dīn ibn 'Alī Zādah, who passed away in 1069 AH / 1658 CE, when al-Baṣrī was 20 years old. In *al-Imdād*, al-Baṣrī recounts his consistent attendance at the scholarly sessions of these three teachers in Mecca. He also indicates that the disciplines he studied under their guidance included both the *'ulūm naqliyyah* (transmitted religious sciences) and the *'ulūm 'aqliyyah* (rational sciences).⁹⁷

The information presented above indicates that 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī's early teachers, Sheikh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Asadī and al-Qāḍī Tāj al-Dīn, both passed away in 1066 AH. Based on this, it can be estimated that al-Baṣrī was approximately 17 years old at the time of their deaths. Al-Baṣrī himself mentions that he studied under both scholars for an extended period at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* and that he received *ijāza* from them. The granting of an *ijāza* represents the culmination of the educational process for a student (*ṭālib al-'ilm*) within the Islamic scholarly tradition. This suggests that al-Baṣrī completed his formal studies with these two scholars by the age of 17. Consequently, it is reasonable to infer that he began his studies in religious sciences several years prior,

⁹⁵ Muhammad Amin al-Muhibbi, *Khuḷāṣat al-Āthār Fī 'A'yān al-Qarn al-Ḥādī 'Ashar*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 2010), 325.

⁹⁶ al-Muhibbi, *Khuḷāṣat Al-Āthār Fī 'A'yān al-Qarn al-Ḥādī 'Ashar*, 1:457–58.

⁹⁷ Al-Basri said, "I attended their lessons for an extended period, read to them, and acquired knowledge from them in both the revealed sciences and intellectual disciplines. All of them granted me permission to transmit and narrate everything they had taught and conveyed," see: al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*, 153–54.

perhaps one, two, or even more years earlier, especially considering the breadth of subjects he pursued under their guidance, which encompassed both *‘ulūm naqliyyah* (transmitted religious sciences) and *‘ulūm ‘aqliyyah* (rational sciences).

Although the above explanation indicates that al-Baṣrī had begun his study of religious sciences before the age of seventeen, this does not necessarily imply that he started his formal education during early childhood, such as before the age of ten. It is more likely that during his early years, he remained in Baṣrah with his family. There is no concrete information regarding the exact time of al-Baṣrī’s return to Mecca. However, it can be reasonably speculated that he returned sometime after the age of ten. This assumption is supported by the fact that al-Baṣrī does not mention one of the major ḥadīth scholars of the period, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ‘Allān al-Ṣiddīqī, as one of his teachers. Ibn ‘Allān passed away in 1057 AH, at which time al-Baṣrī would have been approximately eight years old. Biographical sources indicate that Ibn ‘Allān was one of the foremost ḥadīth scholars of his era. His prominent position as a teacher of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* at the *Ka‘ba* parallels the role later held by al-Baṣrī himself.⁹⁸ Ibn ‘Allān’s teaching circles at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* attracted numerous scholars and students of knowledge, such as Aḥmad al-Nakhlī and Ḥasan al-‘Ujaymī, both of whom held the highest levels of *isnād* authority in the Ḥaramayn and were contemporaries of al-Baṣrī in their study of ḥadīth under leading scholars. Notably, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī maintained a close friendship with Ḥasan al-‘Ujaymī.⁹⁹ These observations suggest that al-Baṣrī’s serious pursuit of religious knowledge in Mecca did not begin in early childhood but rather during his early adolescence.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that despite the limited information available regarding ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī’s early education, both in Baṣrah and Mecca, several key aspects provide valuable insight into his intellectual development. While historical sources do not confirm that he began his studies at a very young age, the evidence suggests that al-Baṣrī embarked on his scholarly journey in earnest during his teenage years in Mecca, studying under some of the most prominent scholars of the time. The education he received at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*, covering both the transmitted (*naqliyyah*) and rational (*‘aqliyyah*) sciences, laid a strong foundation for the depth of knowledge and scholarly expertise that would later define his career. Moreover, although concrete evidence regarding his childhood in Baṣrah is lacking, the broader historical

⁹⁸ For a complete biography of Ibn ‘Allan, see: al-Muhibbi, *Khuḷāṣat Al-Āthār Fī ‘A ‘yān al-Qarn al-Ḥādī ‘Ashar*, 1:184–89.

⁹⁹ Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-‘Ujaymī, *Khabāyā Al-Zawāyā*, ed. Naser Dumairieh (n.d.); Dumairieh, *Sufis and Their Lodges in the Ottoman Hījāz*, 368.

context of his family's relocation points to significant shifts that likely influenced crucial decisions in his life. In sum, while the available biographical information remains fragmentary, the early phase of al-Baṣrī's education underscores the decisive role of environmental factors and formative teachers in shaping his intellectual trajectory, factors that would later support his major contributions to the Islamic scholarly tradition.

3.2.2. Second Phase: Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri's Connection with the Haramayn Intellectual Network

This phase marked a critical period in the intellectual formation of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī as a leading ḥadīth scholar in the Ḥaramayn during the 18th century. Notably, there are no sufficient historical records detailing al-Baṣrī's educational journey across various regions. In this respect, al-Baṣrī stands apart from the prevailing tradition among ḥadīth scholars of his time, as well as earlier generations, who typically undertook extensive travel (*riḥlah*) in pursuit of knowledge.¹⁰⁰ This distinctiveness, however, underscores the centrality of the Ḥaramayn, particularly Mecca, as a preeminent center of Islamic learning during al-Baṣrī's lifetime. Al-Baṣrī did not need to embark on long intellectual journeys to become a scholar. Instead, by maintaining a consistent presence (*mulāzamāh*) at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* and studying diligently under resident and visiting scholars, he rose to prominence as one of the most influential figures in the field of ḥadīth. This phenomenon was undoubtedly facilitated by Mecca's status as a sacred city and the annual destination of pilgrims from across the Muslim world. Thus, al-Baṣrī's expertise in ḥadīth was shaped not through travel outside of Haramayn but rather within Mecca's cosmopolitan intellectual milieu, an environment in which diverse traditions and scholarly cultures converged at the Two Holy Mosques. To understand the foundations of al-Baṣrī's scholarly authority, it is essential to examine the influence of his teachers, under whom he studied. In this regard, his seminal work *al-Imdād fī Ma'rifat 'Ulūw al-Isnād* is an indispensable source. This text not only documents the *isnād* of al-Baṣrī in ḥadīth but also traces his intellectual affiliations in other Islamic sciences. Remarkably, the work also includes spiritual (Ṣūfī) transmission lines that he received from several prominent scholars of his time. Furthermore, *al-Imdād* is dedicated to compiling al-Baṣrī's superior chains of

¹⁰⁰ For example, Ibrahim al-Kurani, one of al-Basri's teachers, undertook journeys to various regions, such as Damascus, and ultimately chose to settle in Medina to study *Ḥadīth*. See: Dumairieh, "Revising the Assumption That *Ḥadīth* Studies Flourished in the 11th/17th-Century *Ḥiğāz*". For further discussion on how scholars of *Ḥadīth* embarked on their intellectual journeys to seek and study *Ḥadīth*, see: Aḥmad bin 'Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Al-Riḥlah Fī Ṭalab al-Ḥadīth* (Bairūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1975).

transmission (*isnād* 'ālī), which represent an important dimension of ḥadīth scholarship and signal his esteemed position within the tradition.

In *al-Imdād*, al-Baṣrī compiled a list of his teachers in Mecca, including both local scholars and those who had come from other regions. The first name he mentions is Shaykh Muḥammad 'Alā' al-Dīn Shams al-Dīn al-Bābilī (d. 1077 AH/1666 CE), an Egyptian ḥadīth scholar recognized as one of the foremost authorities in the field during the 11th century AH. His stature among both contemporaries and later scholars was significant. One notable testimony comes from Murtadā al-Zabīdī (d. 1212 AH/1791 CE), a leading ḥadīth scholar of the 18th century, who noted that “the scholars of the time unanimously conferred upon him the title of *al-Ḥāfiẓ*.” This recognition is preserved in the handwritten annotations of various renowned scholars, including Shaykh Abū Mahdī 'Isā al-Tha'labī, al-Muḥaddith Muḥammad ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ithfīhī, Abū Muḥliḥ Khalīl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Luqānī, al-Shihāb al-'Ajāmī, and his son Abū al-'Izz, each of whom was an esteemed figure in the Egyptian ḥadīth tradition.¹⁰¹ The title *al-Ḥāfiẓ* holds great significance in Islamic scholarly history and is conferred only upon those who have demonstrated exceptional expertise in the sciences of ḥadīth, particularly in memorization and transmission. That al-Bābilī was accorded this honor reflects his eminent status in the field. For al-Baṣrī, the opportunity to study under such a distinguished scholar constituted a significant mark of scholarly distinction.¹⁰² Moreover, the *isnād* he received from al-Bābilī was higher ('ālī) than those he obtained from other teachers. Accordingly, al-Baṣrī placed Shaykh al-Bābilī's name at the beginning of *al-Imdād*, emphasizing the central purpose of the work, namely, to document his teachers and highlight the *isnād* 'ālī he acquired through them.¹⁰³

Al-Sharqāwī (d. 1227 AH / 1812 CE) included al-Bābilī in the *ṭabaqah* of Shāfi'ī scholars and described him as a figure endowed with exceptional abilities in the memorization and transmission of ḥadīth. How al-Bābilī conveyed ḥadīth in his scholarly gatherings was likened to the recitation of the Qur'an, an indication not only of the strength of his memory but also of his dedication and meticulousness in preserving the integrity of ḥadīth transmission. Al-Sharqāwī emphasized that al-Bābilī demonstrated accurate attention to detail in every act of transmission, articulating the words of the ḥadīth with precision and clarity, while also offering clear and insightful interpretations. This pedagogical approach rendered the process of ḥadīth transmission both textual and

¹⁰¹ Abdul Hay al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 2nd ed., ed. Ihasan Abbas (Dar al-Garb al-Islami, 1982), 1:210.

¹⁰² al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:71–79.

¹⁰³ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*, 54.

interpretive, enabling students to grasp not only the wording of the ḥadīth but also its deeper meanings and contextual significance.¹⁰⁴ Although al-Sharqāwī was not a direct student of al-Bābilī and thus did not personally observe his teaching methods, his account was corroborated by reports from al-Bābilī's students in Mecca, such as al-Shīlī (d. 1093 AH / 1682 CE). Al-Shīlī noted that al-Bābilī's teaching sessions were attended by such a large number of scholars and residents of Mecca that they were difficult to enumerate. According to al-Shīlī, this popularity stemmed not only from the elevated status of al-Bābilī's *isnād* but also from his mastery in conveying religious sciences, making him a principal authority in the study of ḥadīth during his time.¹⁰⁵

Al-Bābilī arrived in Mecca to perform the *Hajj* pilgrimage in 1070 AH or 1659 CE and remained there for some time, following the common practice among scholars of that period. At that time, al-Baṣrī was approximately 21 years old. During his stay in Mecca, al-Bābilī dedicated himself to teaching religious sciences, transmitting ḥadīth, and granting *ijāza* for various ḥadīth collections. Through his encounters with al-Bābilī, al-Baṣrī received an exceptional number of scholarly *ijāzas*. In *al-Imdād*, it is recorded that al-Baṣrī received at least seventy-seven types of *ijāza* from al-Bābilī, encompassing ḥadīth compilations, musalsal narrations, works of fiqh, Arabic grammar, and other fields of Islamic scholarship. Al-Baṣrī placed al-Bābilī at the top of his *isnād* hierarchy due to the elevated status (*isnād 'ālī*) of the transmission chain he received from him. For instance, in the *isnād* of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* transmitted via al-Bābilī, there are twelve transmitters between al-Baṣrī and Imām al-Bukhārī. Interestingly, al-Baṣrī did not assess the superiority of a transmission chain solely based on the number of transmitters, but also on the scholarly capability of the transmitters found in *isnād*. Although the *isnād* he received through Shaykh Muḥammad al-Maktabī included only eleven transmitters, al-Baṣrī still considered al-Bābilī's chain superior due to its connection to renowned scholars who hold the title *al-Ḥāfiẓ*, leading ultimately to al-Qāḍī Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī.¹⁰⁶

Although al-Bābilī is the first teacher mentioned in *al-Imdād*, this does not necessarily indicate that he was the most influential figure in shaping al-Baṣrī's intellectual formation as a ḥadīth scholar. It is known that al-Bābilī first arrived in Mecca for the *Hajj* pilgrimage in 1070 AH or 1659 CE and, as noted by Azra, performed the pilgrimage multiple times, eventually becoming an important figure in the scholarly networks of

¹⁰⁴ Abdullāh bin Hījāzī al-Sharqāwī, *Al-Tuhfah al-Bahīyah Fī Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyah*, 1st ed. (Kashededa Publishing, 2015), 439.

¹⁰⁵ Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Shillī, *Aqd al-Jawāhir Wa al-Durar Fī Akhbār al-Qarn al-Hādī 'Ashar* (Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal li-l-Buḥūth wa-l-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah, 2014), 2:260–62.

¹⁰⁶ al-Baṣrī, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*, 97.

Mecca.¹⁰⁷ However, it is essential to highlight that before al-Bābilī arrived in Mecca, al-Baṣrī had already received a substantial education under one of al-Bābilī's students, namely 'Īsā al-Maghribī al-Tha'ālibī (d. 1080 AH / 1669 CE). Al-Baṣrī's period of study with al-Tha'ālibī was notably extensive. According to al-Kattānī (d. 1382 AH / 1962 CE), al-Tha'ālibī originated from the region of Al-Jazā'ir (Algeria), where he spent his early years studying under local scholars. He later continued his academic journey to other centers of Islamic learning, including Tunis and Egypt. In Egypt, he studied under prominent ḥadīth scholars who were also teachers of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, such as Qāḍī Aḥmad al-Shihāb al-Khafājī, Sulṭān al-Mazzāhī, and Nūr 'Alī al-Shibrāmalīsī.¹⁰⁸ By 1066 AH / 1655 CE, he had chosen Mecca as his final destination in the pursuit of knowledge and resided there until his death. Al-Tha'ālibī was known for his scholarly interest in Mālikī fiqh and ḥadīth.¹⁰⁹

Despite his extensive travels to various regions in pursuit of ḥadīth and other Islamic sciences, al-Tha'ālibī remained unsatisfied with the knowledge he had acquired. His intellectual curiosity and commitment to scholarly excellence drove him to further his studies by learning directly from scholars who came to Mecca. One notable example was his attendance at a *majlis al-samā'* (ḥadīth recitation assembly) organized by al-Bābilī. On this occasion, al-Tha'ālibī invited his students, including 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī and Aḥmad al-Nakhilī, to participate in the session. In this context, al-Tha'ālibī served as the *qāri'* (reciter) of the ḥadīth texts in front of al-Bābilī, while other scholars and attendees listened attentively. Within the tradition of ḥadīth transmission, the role of *qāri'* was typically assigned to the most competent or accomplished scholar or student, underscoring al-Tha'ālibī's esteemed position. Recognizing the significance and prestige of al-Bābilī's *isnād*, al-Tha'ālibī compiled the chains of transmission he received from him into a dedicated work titled *Muntakhab al-Asānīd fī Waṣl al-Muṣannaḥāt wa al-Ajzā' wa al-Masānīd*.¹¹⁰ He then presented this compilation to al-Bābilī for review. Remarkably, al-Bābilī gave his approval, affirming that the material written by al-Tha'ālibī was *ṣaḥīḥ*

¹⁰⁷ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah & Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII; Akar Pembaharuan Islam*, 104.

¹⁰⁸ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah & Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII; Akar Pembaharuan Islam*, 106.

¹⁰⁹ Abdul Hay al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, ed. Ihasan Abbas (Dar al-Garb al-Islami, 1982), 2:808.

¹¹⁰ The work of Tsa'alibi was subsequently published alongside the work of Murthada Zabidi, al-Murabbi al-Kabuli fī man rawā 'an al-Shams al-Bābilī, which was critically edited by Muḥammad bin Nāṣir al-'Ajmī. See: al-Tha'alibi, *Muntakhab Al-Asānīd Fī Waṣl al-Muṣannaḥāt Wa al-Ajzā' Wa al-Masānīd*.

(correct). This direct endorsement not only validated the accuracy of the work but also reinforced al-Tha‘ālibī’s scholarly authority in the field of ḥadīth studies.¹¹¹

Based on the year of his arrival until he died in Mecca, al-Tha‘ālibī resided in the city for fifteen years, a period during which al-Baṣrī consistently attended his scholarly gatherings (*mulāzamāh*). As al-Baṣrī himself affirmed, “He taught during his stay in Mecca, where he resided for many years. I continuously attended his lessons until he passed away and was buried in *al-Ma‘lā* (the cemetery in Mecca). He granted me *ijāza*, may Allah benefit him, for all his transmissions, records, and works, providing a comprehensive and inclusive authorization (*ijāza*).”¹¹² This statement indicates al-Tha‘ālibī’s profound role in shaping al-Baṣrī’s scholarly formation as a ḥadīth scholar, with consistent *ṣuḥbah* (close mentorship) and *mulāzamāh* (regular scholarly attendance) as crucial components. In the Islamic educational tradition, *ṣuḥbah* signifies a long-term, intimate intellectual relationship between teacher and student, an aspect that, as al-Maqdisī emphasized, is foundational in shaping a student’s epistemological orientation.¹¹³ The tangible influence of this relationship is evident in al-Baṣrī’s frequent reference to al-Tha‘ālibī’s work, especially *Muntakhab al-Asānīd fī Waṣl al-Muṣannafāt wa al-Ajzā’ wa al-Masānīd*, which he regarded as an authoritative source for ḥadīth transmission and compilation, even before composing *al-Imdād fī Ma‘rifat ‘Ulūw al-Isnād*.¹¹⁴ Apart from ḥadīth learning, al-Baṣrī also received spiritual guidance (*talqīn al-dhikr*) from ‘Īsā al-Tha‘ālibī in Mecca. Although al-Baṣrī does not explicitly identify a specific *ṭarīqah*, his chain of spiritual transmission suggests affiliation with Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561 AH/1166 CE), the founder of the *Qādiriyyah* order.¹¹⁵ This fifteen-year academic and spiritual association confirms the central role of al-Tha‘ālibī in al-Baṣrī’s intellectual constellation.¹¹⁶ At an epistemological level, this also illustrates that while institutional frameworks such as *madrasas* contributed significantly to the development of Islamic civilization, the

¹¹¹ al-‘Ujaymī, *Khabāyā Al-Zawāyā*, 313.

¹¹² al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma‘rifat ‘Uluwi al-Isnād*, 104.

¹¹³ Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, 128.

¹¹⁴ al-Basrī granted an *ijāza* to Shihāb al-Manīnī (d. 1172 AH) and his brother ‘Abd al-Rahmān in 1122 AH. In the *ijāza*, al-Basrī transmitted the contents of *Muntakhab al-Asānīd fī Waṣl al-Muṣannafāt wa al-Ajzā’ wa al-Masānīd*, a compilation originally authored by his teacher ‘Īsā al-Maghribī. The transmission of several ḥadīth works listed in this compilation was received from Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Bābilī during his visit to Makkah in 1070 AH. See: Abū Firyānī, *Min a‘lām al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām ‘Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 230–32.

¹¹⁵ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma‘rifat ‘Uluwi al-Isnād*, 167–68.

¹¹⁶ Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (790/1388) mentioned one of the characteristics that can legitimize a scholar in his expertise in religious science, namely that a true scientist should come from among those who have been guided by scholars in that field of science, by taking knowledge directly from them and always being in close proximity to them. See: Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt*, 1st ed., ed. Abū ‘Ubayda Āl Salmān (Dār Ibn ‘Afān, 1997), 1:145.

authenticity and transmission of scholarly authority remained deeply rooted in the legitimacy established through direct teacher-student relationships via *ṣuḥbah* and *ijāza*.¹¹⁷

Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Rūdānī (d. 1094 AH / 1683 CE) was another significant teacher in al-Baṣrī's intellectual development. Al-Baṣrī stated that he studied all branches of knowledge under him, both rational sciences (al-‘aqliyyah) and transmitted religious sciences (*al-naqliyyah*), covering foundational (*uṣūl*) and derivative (*furūʿ*) disciplines, with a particular emphasis on ḥadīth studies and the epistemological authority of its transmission.¹¹⁸ The relationship between al-Baṣrī and al-Rūdānī was exceptionally close, no less intense than his bond with ‘Īsā al-Tha‘ālibī. This intimacy is reflected in al-Baṣrī's extensive use of al-Rūdānī's thabat entitled *Ṣilat al-Khalaf bi-Mawṣūl al-Salaḥ*, which he frequently cited as a primary reference when explaining his *isnād* in the context of granting *ijāza* to his students. In addition to ḥadīth transmission, al-Baṣrī also received several *isnāds* in the field of tawasuf from al-Rūdānī. One example is the wearing of the *khirqah* (the robe of the Sufi) by Sulaiman al-Rudani to al-Basri, whose spiritual chain of transmission traces back through Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī, al-Ghazālī, and Ali ibn Abi Thalib, ultimately to the Prophet Muhammad.¹¹⁹ Al-Baṣrī, in turn, transmitted this *khirqah* to his students and subsequent generations. In this regard, al-Suhrawardī (d. 632 AH / 1234 CE), the 13th-century Persian Sufi, explained that the transmission of the *khirqah* represents a spiritual bond between the shaykh and his disciple, and signifies the disciple's submission (*taḥkīm*) to the shaykh's authority in guiding spiritual and moral affairs. This practice, al-Suhrawardī affirms, is permissible under Islamic law, particularly when it pertains to worldly and ethical conduct.¹²⁰

In *al-Imdād*, al-Baṣrī composed a dedicated chapter discussing his teachers and their chains of transmission (*isnād*) in the discipline of taṣawwuf (Sufism) and the *ṭarīqah* tradition. The first teacher he mentioned was Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Miknāsī (d. 1085 AH / 1674 CE), from whom al-Baṣrī received an *ijāza* for all his scholarly records, including *Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt*.¹²¹ His colleague in Mecca, Aḥmad al-Nakhli, recorded in detail various Sufi texts they studied together under al-Miknāsī, such as al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, Ibn ‘Arabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, and various prayers (*wird*) compiled

¹¹⁷ Jonathan Porter Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education*, Princeton Studies on the Near East (Princeton university press, 1992), 23.

¹¹⁸ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Maʾrifat ‘Uluwi al-Isnād*, 146.

¹¹⁹ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Maʾrifat ‘Uluwi al-Isnād*, 159–60.

¹²⁰ Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi, *‘Awārif al-Maʾārif*, 1st ed., ed. Bilal Muhammad Hatim al-Saqqā (Dar al-Taḥqāq, 2022), 1:330.

¹²¹ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Maʾrifat ‘Uluwi al-Isnād*, 154.

by Aḥmad Zarrūq.¹²² Moreover, al-Baṣrī's *isnād* in both taṣawwuf and Ash'arī theology (*'aqīdah al-Ash'ariyyah*) was largely obtained from the renowned scholar Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī. Al-Baṣrī noted that he studied directly under al-Kūrānī, through both *samā'* (listening) and *qirā'ah 'ala al-shaykh* (reading in front of the teacher). From al-Kūrānī, al-Baṣrī received *ijāza* across various disciplines, including ḥadīth with *isnād 'ālī*, seminal works in tasawwuf, and foundational texts in Islamic theology, particularly those of al-Ghazālī.¹²³ Additionally, al-Baṣrī mentioned his affiliation with several Sufi orders through different teachers. He received the *Qādiriyyah* not only from 'Īsā al-Tha'ālibī but also from Sa'd Allāh al-Hindī (d. 1138 AH / 1725 CE). Furthermore, he was affiliated with the *Naqshbandiyyah ṭarīqah* through the guidance of 'Abd Allāh Bāqushayr. These various spiritual lineages enriched his Sufi orientation and further cemented his role as a transmitter of both scholarly and mystical traditions.¹²⁴

Apart from the teachers previously mentioned, al-Baṣrī had numerous other teachers who played important roles in his intellectual formation, including some listed in *al-Imdād* and others not explicitly mentioned therein. Among them was Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Bishīshī al-Miṣrī (d. 1096 AH), whose scholarly gatherings (*majālis 'ilmiyyah*) were regularly attended by al-Baṣrī during al-Miṣrī's residence in Mecca. The subjects he studied under al-Miṣrī included ḥadīth, fiqh, and *'ulūm al-ālah* (the sciences of grammatical Arabic). Another example is Shaykh 'Alī ibn Jamāl, under whom al-Baṣrī studied regularly until the shaykh passed away in 1072 AH / 1661 CE. From him, al-Baṣrī studied not only ḥadīth but also the sciences of arithmetic (*'ilm al-ḥisāb*), algebra (*al-jabr*), and algebraic equations (*al-muqābalah*). In the domain of Shāfi'ī fiqh, the most influential figure for al-Baṣrī was 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Zamzamī. He also studied fiqh under Manṣūr al-Ṭukhī, whose gatherings he attended regularly while in Mecca. Notably, al-Baṣrī is also recorded to have studied with a female scholar, Zayn al-Sharaf bint 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ṭabarīyyah (d. 1083 AH / 1672 CE), reflecting the presence of learned women in the scholarly circles of the Ḥaramayn. Another significant teacher was Muḥammad al-Maktabī al-Dimashqī, who is mentioned second in *al-Imdād* due to the elevated status of his *isnād 'ālī*. In total, *al-Imdād* lists 24 teachers from whom al-Baṣrī received transmission, though this list does not represent the full range of his teachers. This is because *al-Imdād* is specifically focused on

¹²² al-Nakhlī, *Bughiyat Al-Ṭālibīn Li-Bayān al-Ashyākh al-Muḥaqqiqīn*, 5–6.

¹²³ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*, 122–45; For further study on the ḥadīth scholarship of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, See : Umam, "Becoming a Sunni Scholar: Ibrahim Kurani (d. 1690), His Role in Seventeenth-Century Medina and the Transregional Context of His Writings."

¹²⁴ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*, 156–57.

compiling the names of those scholars from whom al-Baṣrī received *isnād* ‘ālī, by the work’s primary objective.

	Teacher	Discipline & Key Texts Studied
1	Muḥammad ‘Alā al-Dīn al-Bābī (d. 1077 AH/1666 CE)	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i> , <i>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim</i> , <i>Sunan Abī Dāwūd</i> , <i>Sunan al-Tirmidhī</i> , <i>Sunan al-Nasā’ī</i> , <i>Sunan Ibn Mājah</i> , <i>al-Muwatta’</i> of Mālik (transmitted by Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā), <i>al-Muwatta’</i> (transmitted through Abī Mush‘ab), <i>ḥadīth musalsal</i> (such as <i>musalsal bi al-awwaliyya</i> , or known as <i>ḥadīth of raḥma</i> , <i>ḥadīth musalsal bi al-sūrat al-Ṣaff</i>), <i>Musnad al-Dārimī</i> , <i>Sunan al-Dāraquṭnī</i> , <i>Musnad Abī Ḥanīfa</i> , <i>Musnad al-Shāfi’ī</i> , <i>Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal</i> , <i>Musnad al-Ṭayālīsī</i> , <i>al-Mu’jam al-ṣaghīr of al-Ṭabarānī</i> , <i>Nawādir al-uṣūl</i> of al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhī, <i>Sunan al-Bayhaqī</i> , <i>Dalā’il al-nubuwwa</i> of al-Bayhaqī, <i>Sharḥ ma ‘ānī al-āthār</i> of al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ṭaḥāwī, <i>al-Arba’in al-Nawawiyya</i> , <i>al-Maṣābīḥ</i> of al-Baghawī, <i>‘Umdat al-aḥkām al-ṣuḡhrā</i> of al-Maqdisī, <i>al-Jāmi’ al-kabīr</i> of al-Suyūṭī, <i>Sīra</i> of Ibn Ishāq, <i>al-Rawḍ al-unuf</i> of Abū al-Qāsim al-Suhaylī, <i>Sīra</i> of Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, <i>al-Shifā’</i> of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, <i>Sharḥ al-Nukhba</i> of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, <i>al-Shāṭibiyya</i> of Ibn al-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī, <i>Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl</i> of al-Baghawī, <i>al-Kashshāf</i> of al-Zamakhsharī, <i>al-Wasīṭ</i> of al-Wāḥidī, <i>Tafsīr</i> of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, <i>Tafsīr</i> of al-Bayḍāwī, <i>Tafsīr</i> of Ibn Ḥayyān, <i>Tafsīr</i> al-Jalālayn, <i>al-Durr al-manthūr</i> of al-Suyūṭī, <i>Qūt al-qulūb</i> of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, <i>al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya</i> , <i>Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn</i> of al-Ghazālī, <i>‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif</i> of Abū Ḥafṣ al-Suhrawardī, <i>al-Ḥikam</i> of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Sakandarī, <i>al-Tadhkira</i> of al-Qurṭubī, <i>al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya</i> of Ibn ‘Arabī, <i>al-Mawāqif</i> of al-‘Aḍud al-Ījī, <i>Sharḥ al-maqāṣid</i> of al-Taftāzānī, <i>Sharḥ al-mawāqif</i> of al-Jurjānī, <i>al-Musayyara</i> of Ibn Humām, <i>Sharḥ al-jawhara</i> of al-Laqqānī, <i>Jam’ al-jawāmi’</i> of al-Subkī, <i>al-Taḥrīr</i> of Ibn Humām, <i>Minḥāj al-ṭālibīn</i> of al-Nawawī, <i>al-Bahja</i> of Ibn al-Wardī, <i>Sharḥ al-Burda</i> of Ibn Marzūq, <i>Mukhtaṣar al-Qudūrī</i> , <i>al-Hidāya</i> of al-Marghīnī, <i>al-Kanz</i> of al-Nasafī, <i>Majma’ al-baḥrayn</i> of Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn al-Sā‘ātī, <i>Fath al-qadīr</i> of Ibn Humām, <i>al-Mudawwana</i> of Saḥnūn, <i>al-Muqni’</i> of Ibn

		Qudāma, the works of Sībawayh, <i>Milḥat al-iʿrāb</i> of al-Qāsim al-Ḥarīrī, the works of Ibn Mālik al-Andalusī, the works of Ibn Hishām, <i>al-Ājurrūmiyya</i> of Ibn Ājurrūm, <i>Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ</i> of al-Qazwīnī, <i>Sharḥ al-Muṭawwal</i> of al-Taftāzānī, <i>al-Ṣiḥāḥ</i> of al-Jawharī, <i>al-Qāmūs</i> of al-Fīrūzābādī, <i>Qaṣīdat al-Faraj</i> of Ibn al-Nahwī, and <i>al-Burda</i> of al-Būṣīrī, <i>ḥizb al-Bahr</i> (litany or section of prayer) of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, <i>ḥizb</i> of al-Nawawī.
2	Muḥammad al-Maktabī al-Dimashqī (d. 1096 AH / 1684 CE)	<i>Ḥadīth musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya</i> , <i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i> , <i>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim</i> , <i>Sunan Abī Dāwūd</i> , <i>Sunan al-Tirmidhī</i> , <i>Sunan al-Nasāʾī</i> , <i>Sunan Ibn Mājah</i>
3	Yahyā al-Shāwī (d.1096 AH / 1684 CE)	<i>Ḥadīth musalsal bi-l-awwaliyya</i> , <i>ijāza muṭlaqa</i> (without specific text). Al-Basri said, “He granted me authorization (<i>ijāza</i>) for all that he is permitted to transmit, both from his own teachers and from all his intellectual and transmitted narrations, including ḥadīth and other disciplines, as well as all of his authored works.”
4	ʿĪsā al-Maghribī al-Thaʿālibī (d. 1080 AH / 1669 CE)	<i>al-Muwaṭṭaʾ</i> of Mālik b. Anas, <i>al-Fiqh of al-Shāfiʿī</i> , <i>al-Fiqh of Mālik b. Anas</i> , <i>Ijāza for Sūrat al-Fātiḥa</i> , <i>ḥizb al-Bahr</i> (litany or section of prayer) of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī. al-Basri Said, “I attended his lessons during his scholarly residency in Mecca, where he resided for many years. I remained steadfast in attending his lessons until he passed away and was buried in <i>al-Maʿlāh</i> . He granted me a comprehensive, unrestricted <i>ijāza</i> (license to transmit) for this knowledge and all his narrated traditions (<i>marwiyyāt</i>) and aural transmissions (<i>masmūʿāt</i>)”
5	ʿAbd al-Malik Ibn Muḥammad al-Tājmūʿatī (d. 1118 AH / 1706 CE)	<i>Ijāza muṭlaqa</i> (without specific text)
6	ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Saʿīd Bāqushayr (d. 1072 AH / 1661 CE)	Al-Basri said, “He granted me a particular and general <i>ijāza</i> (license to transmit) for all of his narrated traditions (<i>marwiyyāt</i>) and aural transmissions (<i>masmūʿāt</i>).” Al-Basri was affiliated with <i>Naqshbandiyyah ṭarīqah</i> under the guidance of ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿīd Bāqushayr.

7	‘Alī al-Shibrāmālīsī al-Miṣrī (d.	<i>al-Fiqh of al-Shāfi‘ī</i> , and <i>Ijāza muṭlaqa</i> (without specific text)
8	Manṣūr Ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṭukhī (d.1090 AC / 1679 CE)	<i>al-Fiqh of al-Shāfi‘ī</i> , <i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i> , <i>al-Arba‘īn al-Nawawiyya</i> , <i>Minhāj al-‘Ābidīn</i> of al-Ghazālī, <i>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim</i> , <i>Kutub al-Sitta</i> , <i>al-Fiqh</i> of the Ḥanafī school
9	Aḥmad Ibn ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Bishbīshī (d. 1096 AH / 1685 CE)	Hadith, Fiqh, the science of grammatical Arabic, <i>Ijāza muṭlaqa</i> and general <i>Ijāza</i>
10	‘Alī Ibn al-Jamal al-Anshari (d. 1072 AH / 1661 CE)	Hadith, the science of arithmetic, algebra, and <i>al-muqābala</i> (restoration and balancing), <i>ḥizb</i> (litany or section of prayer) of al-Nawawī
11	Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad al-Bannā, known as Ibn ‘Abd al-Ghanī (d. 1117 AH / 1705 CE)	The general and unspecified <i>ijāza</i> , <i>Ḥadīth musalsal bi al-awwaliyya</i>
12	Aḥmad Ibn Sulaymān al-Shunīlī, known as Abū Thāqa	Hadith and the general and unspecified <i>ijāza</i>
13	‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ibn Muhammad al-Zamzamī (d. d. 1072 AH / 1661 CE)	The general and unspecified <i>ijāza</i>
14	Zayn al-‘Ābidīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ṭabarī (d. 1084 AC / 1673 CE)	The general and unspecified <i>ijāza</i>
15	‘Alī Ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ṭabarī (d. 1075 AC / 1664 CE)	The general and unspecified <i>ijāza</i>
16	Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Sharnbulālī	The general and unspecified <i>ijāza</i>
17	Ibrahim Kurani (d. 1690)	<i>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī</i> , <i>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim</i> , <i>Sunan al-Tirmidhī</i> , <i>Sunan Abī Dāwūd</i> , <i>Sunan al-Nasā’ī</i> , <i>Sunan Ibn</i>

		<i>Mājah</i>, <i>al-Muwaṭṭaʿ</i> of Mālik b. Anas, the <i>Musnad</i> of al-Shāfiʿī, the <i>Musnad</i> of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, the <i>Musnad</i> of al-Dāramī, the <i>Musnad</i> of Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, the <i>Muʿjam</i> of al-Ṭabarānī, <i>Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān</i>, <i>Sunan al-Dāraqūṭnī</i>, <i>al-Mustadrak ʿalā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn</i> of al-Ḥākim, the <i>Musnad</i> of Abū Ḥanīfa, the works of al-Baghawī, <i>Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ</i> by Muḥammad al-Tibrīzī, <i>Mashāriq al-Anwār</i> by al-Ṣaghānī, the works of al-Bayḍāwī, the works of al-Taftāzānī, the works of Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa, <i>al-Hidāya</i>, <i>al-Nihāya</i> by Ḥusayn al-Sughnāqī, <i>al-Ghāya sharḥ al-Hidāya</i> by al-Sarūjī, <i>al-Nihāya ʿalā al-Hidāya</i> by ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Qurashī, <i>Takhrīj al-Hidāya</i> by al-Zaylaʿī, the works of al-Ḥuṣrī, the works of Fakhr al-Dīn Qāḍikhān, the works of al-Nasafī, the works of Abū al-Baqāʿ, the works of Ibn al-Sāʿātī, the works of al-Bazdawī, the works of al-Qudūrī, the works of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, the works of Akmal al-Dīn al-Rūmī, the works of al-Māturīdī, the works of al-Jurjānī, the works of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī, the works of Mullā Muḥammad Amīn Jāmī, the works of Mullā ʿIṣām, the works of al-Rāzī, Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ by al-Tanūkhī, the works of al-Naysābūrī, the works of al-Ghazālī, <i>ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif</i> by al-Suhrawardī, and the works of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī.
18	Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān al-Maghribī al-Rūdānī (1094 AH / 1683 CE)	The rational (<i>al-ʿaqliyyah</i>) and transmitted/religious sciences (<i>al-naqliyyah</i>), covering foundational (<i>uṣūl</i>) and derivative (<i>furūʿ</i>) disciplines, <i>khirqah ṣūfiyyah</i> (The robe of Sufis)
19	ʿAlī al-Waṭṭi (d. 1079 AC / 1668 CE)	Al-Basri did not mention any specific field or text that he studied with this teacher.
20	Qāḍī ʿIṣām al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī Zādah (d. 1069 AH / 1652 CE)	Al-Basri did not mention any specific field or text that he studied with this teacher.
21	al-Qāḍī Tāj al-Dīn (d. 1066 AH / 1655 CE)	Al-Basri did not mention any specific field or text that he studied with this teacher.
22	Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-	the <i>ʿulūm naqliyyah</i> (transmitted religious sciences) and the <i>ʿulūm ʿaqliyyah</i> (rational sciences)

	Asadī al-Shāfi‘ī al-Makkī (d. 1066 AH / 1655 CE)	
23	‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥasanī al-Miknāsī (d. 1085 AC / 1674 CE)	<i>Dalā’il al-Khayrāt</i> , the general and unspecified <i>ijaza</i> .
24	Sa‘d Allāh al-Hindī (d. 1138 AH / 1725 CE)	<i>Qādiriyyah ṭarīqah</i> (order)

*The table of al-Basri’s teachers.*¹²⁵

From the above description, it can be concluded that ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī was an integral part of the 18th-century scholarly network, whose intellectual formation was profoundly shaped by the vibrant scholarly environment of Ḥaramayn. Mecca and Medina, two sacred cities that served as the primary destinations for the annual Muslim pilgrimage, both for temporary visitors and permanent residents devoted to teaching, played a significant role in facilitating al-Baṣrī’s intellectual development. His residence in Mecca enabled him to access a wide array of scholarly resources and to build connections with numerous prominent scholars from across the Islamic world, without the need to undertake a *riḥlah ‘ilmiyyah* (scholarly journey) to other centers of learning such as Egypt, Damascus, or elsewhere. Although he is ultimately renowned as a *muḥaddith*, al-Baṣrī’s scholarly pursuits were by no means confined to ḥadīth and its related disciplines. As evidenced in his work *al-Imdād*, he engaged in the study of a broad spectrum of subjects under the guidance of contemporary scholars. These included rational sciences such as arithmetic and algebra (*al-jabr*), as well as transmitted sciences like tafsīr, fiqh, and ḥadīth. Furthermore, al-Baṣrī’s involvement in Sufi orders illustrates the close integration of ḥadīth and taṣawwuf, highlighting that these two traditions were not perceived as dichotomous, but rather as complementary within the intellectual and spiritual framework of Islam in that period.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma’rifat ‘Uluwī al-Isnād*, 54–156.

¹²⁶ Jeremy Farrell challenges the prevailing “split–reconciliation” model, which posits a sharp division between the ḥadīth scholar community and the Sufi tradition during the 3rd/9th to 4th/10th centuries AH. Through a network analysis approach, he identifies figures such as Ibn Masrūq, Ibn al-A‘rābī, and al-Khuldī as prominent examples of scholars who were active in both domains. Farrell’s findings demonstrate that collaboration between the two scholarly traditions was not only present from an early period but also developed organically. These “traditionist Sufis” played a consistent and stabilizing role within the ḥadīth transmission networks, thereby reinforcing the intellectual integration of Sufi and ḥadīth scholarship. See: Jeremy Farrell, “Early ‘Traditionist Sufis’: A Network Analysis,” in *Modern Ḥadīth Studies: Continuing Debates and New Approaches*,

3.3. The Intellectual Production and Teaching Activities of ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī in Ḥaramayn

After reviewing the family background and teachers who formed the foundation of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī’s scholarship, this section will trace the development of his intellectual career as a prominent teacher and *muḥaddith* in Ḥaramayn during the 18th century. Al-Baṣrī’s active participation in the interdisciplinary intellectual networks of the ‘ulamā’, focused primarily on the science of ḥadīth, secured his place as a distinguished figure within the Islamic scholarly tradition of his time. His reputation was built not only through his intensive teaching activities in Mecca and Medina, but also through his *riwāya* (ḥadīth transmission), which was passed on to generations of students from various regions of the Islamic world. This section will examine in detail al-Baṣrī’s role as a teacher of ḥadīth in the Ḥaramayn, while also highlighting his monumental writings that demonstrate the breadth of his scholarly contributions.

Al-Baṣrī was known as a distinguished ḥadīth scholar in the Ḥaramayn during the 18th century. Several biographical sources highlight his active role as a teacher in Mecca throughout his lifetime. ‘Abd Allāh al-Mirdād (d. 1343 AH / 1924 CE) records that al-Baṣrī regularly taught and recited the *Kutub al-Sittah* and several other ḥadīth collections at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* in Mecca. Additionally, he recited the *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal at the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina, specifically near the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad, in a series of 56 sessions that took place in 1131 AH / 1719 CE.¹²⁷ Al-Baṣrī’s authority as a ḥadīth teacher was acknowledged by scholars of his generation as well as by those of later periods, both through direct transmission and scholarly testimonies. A notable example is the recognition given by Aḥmad al-Nakhlī, a prominent *muḥaddith* and colleague of al-Baṣrī at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*. In 1123 AH / 1711 CE, when Aḥmad al-Sharabātī, a scholar from Aleppo, approached al-Nakhlī to receive *ijāza*, al-Nakhlī not only granted it but also strongly advised him to study with al-Baṣrī. He stated, “Go to him (al-Baṣrī), because he is among the most meticulous scholars (*min kibār al-muṭqinīn*) and is the seal of the most trustworthy of hadith scholars (*khātim al-muḥaddithīn*).”¹²⁸ This remark reflects not only al-Nakhlī’s profound respect for al-Baṣrī but also an explicit recognition of al-Baṣrī’s

ed. Belal Abu-Alabbas, Christopher Melchert, and Michael Dann (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 70–82.

¹²⁷ Abu al-Khair, *Al-Mukhtasar Min Kitāb Nashr al-Nur Wa al-Zahr Fi Tarajum Afādil Makkah*, 2nd ed., ed. al-‘Amudi and Ahmad Ali (Alam al-Ma’rifah, 1986), 290–91; Dihlawī, *Insān Al-‘Ayn Fī Mashāyikh al-Ḥaramayn*, 98–99.

¹²⁸ al-Firyātī, *Min a’lām al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām ‘Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 207.

exceptional scholarly stature, even by his peers. Although they had studied under many of the same teachers, al-Nakhli acknowledged a distinctive quality in al-Baṣrī, prompting him to direct his students to benefit from al-Baṣrī's mastery firsthand.

In addition to recognition from his contemporaries, al-Baṣrī's authority as a teacher of ḥadīth was also acknowledged by the Ottoman authorities and the governor of Mecca during his lifetime. Notably, al-Baṣrī was entrusted twice with the prestigious role of leading the recitation (*qāri'*) of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* inside the *Ka'ba*. The first occasion occurred in 1109 AH/1697 CE during the renovation of the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*, specifically during the reconstruction of the *Ka'ba*'s roof under the supervision of Ahmad Beik, the Governor of Jeddah, and the Sheikhs of the Grand Mosque. The second took place in 1119 AH/1708 CE by order of the Ottoman Sultan, Aḥmad III, and coincided with the renovation of the *Ka'ba*'s doors.¹²⁹ Sayyid Ghulām al-Balkarāmī (d. 1120 AH / 1785 CE), in his work *Subḥat al-Marjān*, notes that al-Baṣrī was only the second individual in history to receive this dignity. The first was Muḥammad ibn 'Allān (d. 1057 AH / 1647 CE), who was granted this role in 1039 AH during a critical moment in Meccan history. That year, Mecca experienced torrential rain and flash floods that devastated the city, severely damaging the *Ka'ba* and resulting in numerous of approximately 500 fatalities. Amid the reconstruction efforts, the caliph ordered Ibn 'Allān to lead the recitation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* inside the *Ka'ba*, a practice that had no precedent and initially sparked controversy. Some scholars viewed it as an act of *bid'ah* (unwarranted innovation) and as a violation of the sanctity of the *Ka'ba*.¹³⁰ In response, Ibn 'Allān composed a dedicated treatise titled *al-Qawl al-Ḥaqq wa-al-Naql al-Ṣarīḥ bi-Jawāz an Yudarrasa bi-Jawf al-Ka'ba al-Ḥadīth al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, in which he presented strong legal and theological arguments legitimizing the teaching of the sound of ḥadīth works within the sacred interior of the *Ka'ba*.¹³¹

In this context, due to limited access to the work, I must acknowledge the constraints in identifying the specific arguments presented by Ibn 'Allān in his treatise, which legitimized the recitation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* inside the *Ka'ba*, a practice later continued during the time of al-Baṣrī. However, the title of Ibn 'Allān's work implicitly suggests the exceptional status of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* as the most authoritative ḥadīth collection after the Qur'ān, a status that has gained *ijmā'* (scholarly consensus) among

¹²⁹ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥadrāwī, *Nuzhat Al-Fikr Fīmā Maḍā Min al-Hawādith Wa-al-'ibar Fī Tarājim Rijāl al-Qarn al-Thānī 'ashar Wa-al-Thālith 'ashar*, 1st ed., ed. Muḥammad al-Miṣrī (Wizārat al-Thaqāfah, 1996), 2:60.

¹³⁰ Sayyid Ghulām al-Balkarāmī, *Subḥat Al-Marjān Fī Āthār Hindustān*, 1st ed., ed. Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Ṭurayḥī (Dār al-Rāfidīn, 2015), 180–81.

¹³¹ Muḥammad Amin al-Muhibbi, *Khuḷāṣat Al-Āthār Fī 'A'yān al-Qarn al-Ḥādī 'Ashar* (Dār Ṣādir, 2010), 4:186.

Sunni scholars. Thus, the act of reciting *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which consists entirely of *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) *ḥadīth*, is likely equated, at least in spiritual terms, with the recitation of the *Qurʾān*, as it contains no fabricated reports. Furthermore, the tradition of reciting *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in various religious rituals has contributed to the canonization of the text itself. Jonathan Brown highlights numerous historical instances where scholars and communities collectively recited *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in both religious and socio-political contexts to seek divine blessings and protection from disasters. For example, in 790 AH / 1388 CE, the judge of the Shāfiʿī school ordered a recitation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* at the al-Azhar Mosque as a spiritual response to the plague afflicting Cairo. Similarly, the Saʿdī Dynasty conducted a public recitation of the text in 998 AH / 1589 CE during the launching of a military campaign.¹³² These examples suggest that the recitations led by Ibn ʿAllān and later by al-Baṣrī were not merely ritualistic but were intended as supplications for the successful completion of the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* renovations.¹³³ However, Brown also notes the political dimension underlying al-Baṣrī’s recitation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, viewing it as part of Sultan Aḥmad III’s broader effort to consolidate political legitimacy through religious symbolism.¹³⁴ While this interpretation highlights the intersection between politics and religion, it is important to recognize that Sultan Aḥmad III was known for his genuine devotion to *ḥadīth* scholarship. His engagement with *ḥadīth* extended beyond symbolic appointments; he also initiated innovative developments in Islamic calligraphy by incorporating *ḥadīth* texts into artistic expressions, which had traditionally focused on *Qurʾānic* verses.¹³⁵ Therefore, the appointment of al-Baṣrī as the reciter of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* during that period cannot be merely reduced to the instrumentalization of religious narratives for the consolidation of political power. Rather, it was a reflection of al-Baṣrī’s scholarly influence and recognized authority as a leading *muḥaddith* of his time, comparable to the trust placed in Ibn ʿAllān several decades earlier.

The appointment of al-Baṣrī as a reciter of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the most authoritative text after the *Qurʾān*, carries profound implications regarding his expertise in *ḥadīth*

¹³² Jonathan A. C. Brown, *The Canonization of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon*, *Islamic History and Civilization* 69 (Brill, 2007), 341–44.

¹³³ Among the unique merits of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*—as some have claimed—is that whoever opens it, or opens to a portion of its content before the tomb of a saint, then reads the first *ḥadīth* their eyes fall upon while supplicating to God through the intercession of the chain of transmitters up to the Prophet ﷺ and presents their need, they will—if God wills—have their request fulfilled. See: Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar al-Kattānī, *Salwat Al-Anfās Wa-Muḥādathat al-Akyās Bi-Man Uqbira Min al-ʿUlamāʾ Wa-al-Ṣulḥāʾ Bi-Fās*, 1st ed. (Dār al-Thaqāfah, 2004), 1:67.

¹³⁴ Brown, 344.

¹³⁵ Phillippe BORABORA Keskiner, “SULTAN AHMED III’S *ḤADĪTH*-TUGHRA: UNITING THE WORD OF THE PROPHET AND THE IMPERIAL MONOGRAM,” *İstanbul Araştırmaları Yıllığı*, no. 2 (2013).

sciences. Although his seminal work, *al-Imdād fī Ma'rifat 'Ulūw al-Isnād*, is primarily dedicated to the transmission of ḥadīth chains rather than in-depth commentary, the trust placed in him by Sultan Aḥmad III demonstrates his comprehensive mastery of ḥadīth. This is further supported by biographical sources that affirm al-Baṣrī's proficiency in both *riwāya* (transmission) and *dirāya* (understanding and analysis) of ḥadīth.¹³⁶ Moreover, the traditional scholar Yūsuf Ṭalāl DeLorenzo explains that within the classical Islamic educational system, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* is studied only after a student has acquired foundational knowledge in disciplines such as Arabic grammar, rhetoric, logic, Islamic legal theory, and ḥadīth methodology.¹³⁷ In other words, without passing through these stages, a student would be unable to grasp the comprehensive and complex nature of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. DeLorenzo's observation underscores that a teacher of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* must possess an even higher level of scholarly competence. Therefore, if a student must undergo such rigorous preparation to study *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, then undoubtedly, a teacher entrusted with teaching it must hold an advanced and exceptional level of expertise.

Al-Baṣrī's intellectual pursuits appear to have been deeply dedicated to the teaching of ḥadīth and the continuation of its transmission tradition, both through the mechanisms of *ijāza* (authorization) and *samā'* (oral transmission via reading sessions). In his teaching, al-Baṣrī did not merely focus on the transmission of ḥadīth; he also engaged in critical examination of ḥadīth texts. He devoted considerable time to comparing various manuscripts of the Kutub al-Sittah in circulation to determine the most accurate textual variants. For instance, he is reported to have spent approximately twenty years conducting a critical and comparative study of the text of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Al-Baṣrī's contribution in this domain will be further examined in the following chapter. Due to the demanding nature of these activities, al-Baṣrī did not produce a large body of written works. His intellectual output was also constrained by the time he devoted to transmitting ḥadīth, as many scholars and students came to him, either to obtain *ijāza* and *isnād 'ālī*, or to study with him through the method of *mulāzamāh* over extended periods. Furthermore, it is important to note that al-Baṣrī was not only a ḥadīth scholar but was also recognized as a devoted Sufi who consistently dedicated substantial time to cultivating closeness to God. Abū Salīm al-Shamā' described al-Baṣrī's daily routine, noting that he regularly recited one-third of the Qur'ān each day until the age of eighty, just a few years before his passing. Moreover, it is

¹³⁶ Abu al-Khair, *Al-Mukhtasar Min Kitāb Nashr al-Nur Wa al-Zahr Fi Tarajum Afādil Makkah*, 290–91.

¹³⁷ Muḥammad Ibn-Ismā'īl al-Buḥārī and Yusuf Talal De Lorenzo, *Imam Bukhari's Book of Muslim Morals and Manners*, 2. print (Al-Saadawi, 1999), i–iii.

said that he never allowed any moment to pass without filling it with teaching, recitation, prayer, or scholarly discussion.¹³⁸

However, despite his numerous activities, al-Baṣrī still left behind several significant intellectual contributions to the ḥadīth tradition. The following are some of his works that were accessible during this research.

3.3.1. *al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifati 'Uluwwi al-Isnād* (Aids in Understanding the Elevation of the Chain of Transmission)

Al-Baṣrī's work belongs to the *thabat* or *fihris* genre within the ḥadīth literary tradition. This category traces its origins to the pre-canonical period of ḥadīth compilation, when transmission was primarily oral. This genre evolved from the model of *mu'jam* works, which emerged between the 3rd and 4th centuries AH or 9th and 10th CE. *Mu'jam* texts served to demonstrate a *muḥaddith*'s scholarly authority by compiling ḥadīths either thematically or according to the names of teachers, with particular emphasis on the quality of the *isnād*, especially those categorized as *isnād 'ālī*. One notable example is *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥābah* by Abū al-Qāsim al-Baghawī (d. 317 AH / 929–930 CE), which records a single ḥadīth from each companion (*Ṣaḥābī*), accompanied by its respective *isnād*. By the 6th to 8th centuries AH or 12th to 14th CE, the *fihris* genre had emerged, differing from its predecessors in that it no longer documented individual ḥadīths but instead listed the collective *isnāds* of ḥadīth books received through *ijāzā*. This form was particularly developed in the western Islamic lands, such as the Maghrib, as a response to the gradual weakening of oral transmission practices following the increasing codification of texts. Meanwhile, in the eastern Islamic world, the *thabat* genre took shape, initially serving as archival records of *samā'āt*. An example is *Thabat* by Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 643 AH / 1245 CE), which documents the oral transmission of several ḥadīth texts from 598 to 610 AH, including locations and the names of the *qārī'* (reciters). Between the 9th and 11th centuries AH (15th–17th CE), the *thabat* genre expanded its function into a type of *ijāzā* catalog for ḥadīth works. By the 11th century AH and beyond, the terms *thabat* and *fihris* became interchangeable in ḥadīth discourse.¹³⁹ Jonathan Brown observes that during the 12th century AH or 18th CE, the practice of writing *mu'jam* evolved with the emergence of *thabat* as a distinct literary form. Unlike the *mu'jam*, which focused more on *isnāds* of individual ḥadīths, the *thabat* served as a means to document the *isnāds* of entire texts

¹³⁸ al-'Arabī al-Dā'iz al-Faryāṭī, *Min A'lām Al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-l-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 1st ed. (Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyyah., 2005), 292.

¹³⁹ For a more detailed discussion on the development of the *thabāt* and *fihris* genres in ḥadīth literature, see Davidson's diachronic analysis of these textual forms. See: Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 254–64.

received by scholars, thereby asserting their intellectual lineage and scholarly authority.¹⁴⁰ Brown further notes that *thabat* eventually encompassed not only *isnāds* of ḥadīths and the collection of ḥadīth but also those of other Islamic sciences, such as fiqh, Arabic grammar, tafsīr, taṣawwuf, and ṭarīqah affiliations. Al-Baṣrī's *al-Imdād* aligns with this evolution, as it compiles not only *isnāds* of ḥadīths and canonical collections, but also chains of transmission related to fiqh, Arabic linguistics, the science of Islamic theology, Sufism, ṭarīqah affiliations, and liturgical recitations (*aḥzāb* and *awrād*).¹⁴¹

Al-Baṣrī's work *al-Imdād fī Ma'rifat 'Ulūww al-Isnād* represents his effort to preserve and advance the tradition of *isnād*, which stands as one of the defining features of Islamic scholarship. In the introduction to this work, al-Baṣrī cites several authoritative statements from earlier scholars to underscore the centrality of *isnād* within the discipline of ḥadīth. He asserts, "It is well known that *isnād* is an integral part of religion, as it serves as the link to the master of all creatures, *Sayyid al-Awwalīn wa al-Ākhirīn* (the Prophet Muhammad)." Furthermore, he references scholarly opinions likening *isnād* to a sword for a *muḥaddith* and to a ladder by which one ascends to elevated ranks. In al-Baṣrī's perspective, *isnād 'ālī* (elevated chains of transmission) is not only a marker of credibility in the transmission of ḥadīth but also carries profound spiritual significance. He writes, "teachers (mashāyikh) of people are his fathers in religion and the link between him and the Lord of the Worlds." The inclusion of a quote from al-Ṭūsī, "The closeness of *isnād* is a form of closeness to Allah", further illustrates that al-Baṣrī's engagement with *isnād* was not solely motivated by scholarly verification but was deeply rooted in the spiritual values of the Ṣūfī tradition.¹⁴² This synthesis of scholarly rigor and spiritual depth affirms al-Baṣrī's identity as a *muḥaddith-ṣūfī* of the 18th century, who embodied a commitment to both ḥadīth study and inner devotion.¹⁴³

As previously discussed about al-Baṣrī's network of teachers, *al-Imdād* documents the names of at least twenty-four teachers who possessed *isnād 'ālī* (elevated chains of transmission). However, this does not imply that al-Baṣrī's teachers were limited to those listed in the work. This is because *al-Imdād* was specifically compiled to record teachers who held elevated *isnād*, rather than to provide a comprehensive account of his entire scholarly network. In the introduction to the work, al-Baṣrī explicitly states that his purpose in compiling *al-Imdād* was to preserve the legacy of teachers who held authority in *riwāya* through *isnād 'ālī*, whom he had encountered during his lifetime. He writes: "Their *asānīd*

¹⁴⁰ Brown, *Hadīth; Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World*, 50.

¹⁴¹ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*.

¹⁴² al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma'rifa 'Uluwi al-Isnād*, 51–52.

¹⁴³ Voll, "'Abdallah Ibn Salim Al-Basri and 18th Century Ḥadīth Scholarship," 367–68.

(sing. *isnād*) are dispersed, not collected, and there is a concern that, over time, they may be lost. Therefore, I intend to gather those scattered chains, place their guidance in its proper context, and mention some of my teachers (*ba‘du mashāyikhī*) who possess transmission authority, through which the perfection of knowledge (*kamāl al-dirāya*) can be attained.”¹⁴⁴ This statement underscores that *al-Imdād* was part of al-Baṣrī’s broader effort to preserve the continuity of scholarly transmission. The *isnād* tradition, as reflected in this work, is not only methodologically essential to the science of ḥadīth but also symbolically reinforces the legitimacy and integrity of Islamic scholarly tradition.

3.3.2. The Works of al-Khatm

Throughout the history of Islamic thought, the science of ḥadīth has evolved into one of the most intellectually rich disciplines, generating an extensive and diverse body of literature.¹⁴⁵ Although the major phases of ḥadīth codification occurred during the 4th and 5th centuries AH, this did not preclude the emergence of new works and genres, including *sharḥ* genre (commentaries), *‘ilm al-rijāl* (the study of transmitters’ credibility), and other specialized subfields. One important concern among scholars following the canonization of ḥadīth was the teaching and transmission of canonical collections such as the *Kutub al-Sittah* and other major compilations. In certain contexts, upon the completion of teaching a ḥadīth collection, scholars would compose a work known as a “*khatm*”, which served as a conclusion to the process of teaching and transmission. These texts typically include discussions of the methodology employed in the composition of the work studied, biographical accounts of the author, and commentary on complex textual and terminological issues encountered during the reading. Despite their significance, many works of *khatm* do not contain explicit definitions of the genre. It was ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn Muḥammad al-Jīlānī who is credited as one of the earliest scholars to formally define this genre, based on his analysis of *al-Intihād fī Khatm al-Shifā’* by al-Sakhāwī (d. 902 AH / 1496 CE). In the introduction to his study, al-Jīlānī explains that the books of *khatm* (*kutub al-khatm*) are texts written by a teacher (*shaykh*) to mark the completion of the reading and instruction of a specific work, whether in ḥadīth, *sīrah*, *fiqh*, or other Islamic sciences. Such works typically highlight the virtues and scholarly contributions of the original author, and they elaborate on the distinctive features and methodologies employed in the composition of the text. Authors of *khatm* literature often include an *isnād* linking them to the studied work and provide a commentary on the final ḥadīth of the text, both in terms of its

¹⁴⁴ al-Basri, *Al-Imdād Fī Ma’rifat ‘Uluwī al-Isnād*, 52.

¹⁴⁵ Garrett Davidson, “Chapter 15 The Ḥadīth Section,” in *The Library of Aḥmad Pasha Al-Jazzār*, 1st ed. (Brill, 2024), 151, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004720527_017.

transmission and its content. These books of *khatm* are invaluable sources for understanding the methodological approaches used in the production of classical Islamic scholarship, as they frequently represent a synthesized and reflective appraisal of the intellectual strategies adopted by earlier authors.¹⁴⁶

In this context, the *khatm* works compiled by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī may be seen as a continuation of a tradition initiated by al-Sakhāwī in the 9th century AH. Although several scholars after al-Sakhāwī contributed to the development of this genre, such as Muḥammad ibn ‘Allān, a prominent ḥadīth scholar of the Ḥaramayn in the 11th century AH/17th century CE, Ṣādiq Aḥmad Khān noted that among the most well-known authors of *khatm* literature after al-Sakhāwī was indeed ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī. This recognition originates from the remarkable volume and scope of *khatm* works al-Baṣrī authored, which include those dedicated to several major ḥadīth collections such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, and the *Muwatta‘* of Mālik. Following al-Baṣrī, the *khatm* genre was further developed and adopted by subsequent scholars. For instance, Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad Tājd al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Muḥsin ibn Sālim al-Qal‘ī (d. 1149 AH / 1736 CE) composed “*Muntakhab al-Darārī*”, a *khatm* work dedicated to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.¹⁴⁷ In a similar vein, Davidson affirms that the *khatm* genre maintained its popularity in ḥadīth scholarship throughout later periods. According to him, scholars consistently produced a substantial number of works in this format, estimated in the hundreds, well into the 20th century.¹⁴⁸

Muḥammad ibn ‘Azzūz, in his study of the *kursī* (assembly) for the recitation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* at the University of al-Qarawiyyīn in Fez, Morocco, classifies the models of *khatm* assemblies held by scholars into two primary forms. The first, *khatm al-qirā‘ah*, refers to the completion of the public reading and transmission (*samā‘*) of the ḥadīth text, particularly *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which is typically performed as a devotional act during sacred months, such as Ramaḍān. The second, *khatm al-iqrā‘*, is more formal and academic. It is characterized by the comprehensive reading, transmission, and in-depth study (*tamḥīṣ and dirāya*) of the text by an ‘ālim (teacher or scholar) with his students. This practice often concludes with the attendance of scholars and teachers, and the compilation of a dedicated work that preserves important insights derived from the text.¹⁴⁹ This classification is crucial in demonstrating that the sessions for reading ḥadīth texts serve not

¹⁴⁶ Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Intihād Fī Khatm al-Shifā‘*, 1st ed., ed. Abd al-Laṭīf b. Muḥammad al-Jilānī (Dār al-Bashā‘ir al-Islāmīyah, 2001), 10.

¹⁴⁷ al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Intihād Fī Khatm al-Shifā‘*, 17.

¹⁴⁸ Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 89.

¹⁴⁹ Muḥammad ibn ‘Azzūz, *Kursī Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Imām al-Bukhārī Bi-Jāmi‘ al-Qarawiyyīn Bi-Madīnat Fās*, 1st ed. (Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2010), 177–78.

only devotional and spiritual purposes through the continuity of transmission, but also embody an intense intellectual tradition. In particular, the emergence of *khatm* works authored by scholars leading these assemblies illustrates how the reading of ḥadīth often involves deep analysis, critical examination of textual meanings, and engagement with methodological complexities in ḥadīth scholarship. Thus, the tradition of ḥadīth recitation encompasses both the spiritual reverence for the texts and the rigorous scholarly activity to understand and interpret their contents.

In his commentary on the final ḥadīth of Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Baṣrī offers an exposition that goes beyond a mere literal or textual reading. The ḥadīth states: “People should stop boasting about their ancestors who have passed away. They are simply the fuel of Hellfire. If they do not desist, they will be more insignificant in the sight of Allah than a beetle that rolls dung with its nose. Verily, Allah has removed from you the arrogance of the Jāhiliyyah and its pride in lineage. One is either a righteous believer or a miserable sinner. All people are the children of Ādam, and Ādam was created from dust.” Al-Baṣrī not only elucidates the *gharīb* (unfamiliar) expressions found in the ḥadīth, but also expands its interpretive scope. He argues that the prohibition against boasting about ancestry, though directed at the disbelievers' forefathers, is universal and applies equally to Muslims and non-Muslims. To substantiate this broader contextual interpretation, al-Baṣrī cites several supporting traditions.¹⁵⁰ First, he provides other ḥadīths that underscore the absence of privilege for any race, tribe, or group in the sight of God, affirming that the only determinant of a person's religious worth is determined solely by individual piety.¹⁵¹ Second, he provides other ḥadīths that illustrate how lineage (*nasab*) alone is insufficient to elevate a person's status.¹⁵² Moreover, he provides the ḥadīth that reinforce the prohibition of pride in ancestry, emphasizing that a person's worth in the sight of God is based entirely on their deeds rather than their lineage. This comprehensive interpretive

¹⁵⁰ ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, *Khatm Jāmi‘ Al-Imām al-Tirmidhī*, 1st ed., ed. al-Faryāṭī, al-‘Arabī al-Dā‘iz (Dār al-Bashā‘ir al-Islāmiyyah., 2002), 49–55.

¹⁵¹ al-Baṣrī, 49; Narrated by Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ delivered a sermon to us in the middle of the Days of Tashrīq during the Farewell Sermon (Khutbat al-Wadā‘), and he said: "O people, indeed your Lord is One, and your father (Ādam) is one. Know that there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab; nor of a red-skinned person over a black-skinned person, nor of a black-skinned person over a red-skinned person, except by piety (taqwā). Verily, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Have I conveyed the message?" They said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah." He then said, "Let those who are present convey it to those who are absent." See: Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab al-Īmān*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Alī ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥamīd, 1st ed., vol. 7 (Riyād: Maktabat al-Rushd li-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2003), 132.

¹⁵² al-Baṣrī, *Khatm Jāmi‘ Al-Imām al-Tirmidhī*, 50; "Whoever is held back by his deeds will not be pushed forward by his lineage." See: Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. Muḥammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, vol. 4 (Cairo: Maṭba‘at ‘Īsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Shurakā’uhu, 1955), 2074.

method reflects al-Baṣrī's depth in ḥadīth scholarship, where his analysis extends beyond *ẓāhir al-naṣṣ* (surface-level textual meaning) to encompass a synthesized understanding that connects various relevant narrations (*al-jam' bayna al-adillah*), revealing a multidimensional grasp of prophetic traditions.

Al-Baṣrī's interpretation or commentary on the final ḥadīth recited during *khatm* sessions is generally found across most of his *khatm* works. However, an interesting departure appears in *Khatm al-Muwaṭṭa'*, where al-Baṣrī does not provide a detailed explanation of the last ḥadīth recited. Instead, the primary focus of the work shifts to a comprehensive discussion of the status and significance of the book *al-Muwaṭṭa'* itself. Al-Baṣrī underscores the considerable attention given to this work by scholars, including some of Mālik ibn Anas's teachers, who narrated *al-Muwaṭṭa'* from him. Citing Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Baṣrī notes that several of Mālik's teachers, such as Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd al-Anṣārī, Yatīm 'Urwah, and Ziyād ibn Sa'd, transmitted *al-Muwaṭṭa'* from him. Furthermore, some prominent senior scholars from Mālik's era, including Abū Ḥanīfah, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and al-Awzā'ī, who died before Mālik, are also recorded as having narrated from him. This remarkable fact illustrates Mālik's elevated status in the field of ḥadīth.¹⁵³ Additionally, al-Baṣrī includes a valuable discussion on the transmission of *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, focusing on the most prominent and widely accepted lines of transmission in the ḥadīth tradition. He outlines the various transmission routes through Mālik's students, giving particular emphasis to the chain of narration through Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā al-Andalusī. According to al-Baṣrī, Yaḥyā met Mālik during his pilgrimage to Mecca, which coincided with the year of Mālik's death in 179 A.H / 795 CE. This account reflects al-Baṣrī's scholarly interest not only in the content of the ḥadīth but also in the integrity and prestige of its transmission lines.¹⁵⁴

One of the key aspects addressed in the *khatm* genre is the articulation of the status of the ḥadīth works being recited within the broader corpus of ḥadīth literature, particularly the rationale for the inclusion of certain texts within the category of *al-Kutub al-Sittah*, the six canonical collections recognized by the majority of Sunni scholars. In this regard, al-

¹⁵³ Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri, *Khatm Al-Muwaṭṭa' Riwāyat Yaḥyā Ibn Yaḥyā*, 1st ed., ed. Yūnus 'Azīz al-Maknāsī (Dār al-Baṣā'ir al-Islāmiyyah, 2008), 60–63.

¹⁵⁴ Mālik ibn Anas once referred to Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā al-Andalusī as 'Āqil al-Andalus ("The Intelligent One of al-Andalus"). The reason for this title, as reported, is that while Mālik was seated with a group of his students, someone announced, "A great elephant has arrived." All the students went out to see it, except Yaḥyā. Mālik asked him, "Why did you not go out to see it? After all, there are no elephants in al-Andalus." Yaḥyā replied, "I did not come from my land to look at elephants, but to learn from your guidance and knowledge." Mālik was impressed by his response and thus called him "the Intelligent One of al-Andalus." Yaḥyā later returned to his homeland. See: al-Basri, *Khatm Al-Muwaṭṭa' Riwāyat Yaḥyā Ibn Yaḥyā*, 86–88.

Baṣrī offers a specific analysis of the position of *Sunan Ibn Mājah* in comparison to Mālik ibn Anas's *al-Muwattaʿ*.¹⁵⁵ He cites the opinion of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, a prominent ḥadīth scholar of the 9th / 15th Century, who argued that scholars preferred *Sunan Ibn Mājah* as part of *al-Kutub al-Sittah* due to the significantly larger number of ḥadīth *marfūʿ*,¹⁵⁶ contained in it was much greater than that in *al-Muwattaʿ*. Ibn Ḥajar also responded to criticism of the quality of the *isnād* of ḥadīths exclusively narrated (*infirād*) by Ibn Mājah,¹⁵⁷ which, according to some scholars, were considered weak (*ḍaʿīf*). He explained that this weakness generally lies in the transmitters (*rijāl*), not in the entire *matn* of the ḥadīth. In fact, among the isolated ḥadīths, several ḥadīths are considered *ṣaḥīḥ*. Al-Baṣrī, then, emphasized that *Sunan Ibn Mājah* had been widely accepted by Muslims, and the weak ḥadīths in it were generally strengthened by *mutabaʿāt* and *shawāhid*.¹⁵⁷ For this reason, *fuqahāʾ* (Islamic jurists) continue to use the ḥadīth contained in *Sunan Ibn Mājah* as a legal basis and maintain it as an authoritative source in the Islamic scientific tradition.¹⁵⁸

In the book *Khatm Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, al-Baṣrī reviews in depth the position of the ḥadīth contained in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. The scholars disagree in assessing the authority of the ḥadīth contained in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Al-Ghazālī mentioned that it is easy for fiqh students to study ḥadīth spread across many books in their entirety, but it is sufficient for them to have a main source that has been collected and carefully examined, which contains all the *ḥadīth al-aḥkām* (legal ḥadīth), such as *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Al-Nawawī (d. 676 AH / 1277 CE) rejected this opinion. According to him, the majority of the ḥadīth contained in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* are not related to legal ḥadīth. He added that many legal ḥadīth

¹⁵⁵ Al-marfūʿ refers to any ḥadīth specifically attributed to the Prophet, whether it be in the form of words, actions, or tacit approvals (*taqrīr*). See: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb Al-Rāwī Fī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawawī*, ed. Abū Qutaybah Naṣar Muḥammad al-Fāriyābī (Dār Ṭayyibah, n.d.), 1:202.

¹⁵⁶ This refers to a ḥadīth that is transmitted solely by a single transmitter, whether in all levels of the chain of transmission (*isnād*) or in some of them—even if only at one level. See: Mahmud Thahhan, *Taysir Mushtalah Al-Hadis*, 10th ed. (Maktabah al-Maʿarif, 2004), 38.

¹⁵⁷ In the science of ḥadīth, *iʿtibār* is a critical effort to examine the various transmission paths (*thuruq*) of a ḥadīth that at first glance appears to be narrated singly (*fard*) by a transmitter. The purpose of *iʿtibār* is to reveal whether other transmitters also narrated the ḥadīth. If in the process of *iʿtibār*, another supporting ḥadīth is found, then the supporting ḥadīth is called *Mutabaʿah* (or *Tabiʿ*) if it narrates the same or similar text from the same Companion of the Prophet. Meanwhile, if the supporting ḥadīth narrates the same or similar text but comes from a different Companion of the Prophet, then it is called a *Shahid*. *Mutabaʿah* and *Shahid* play an important role in strengthening the position of a ḥadīth that initially appeared *fard*, showing that it has a strengthening path so that its degree can increase from *gharīb* (foreign) to *mutabaʿah* or *shahid*. For more discussion on this issue, See: al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb Al-Rāwī Fī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawawī*, 1:281–85.

¹⁵⁸ ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, *Khatm Sunan Ibn Mājah*, ed. Badr ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAmāsh (Markaz Taḥqīq ʿUlūm al-Islāmī, n.d.), 484–86.

mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* are not found in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*.¹⁵⁹ In this context, al-Baṣrī presents an interesting fact from al-Nawawī's statement that refutes his view. Namely, al-Baṣrī quotes a direct statement from al-Nawawī in his commentary on *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, which says, "It is fitting for anyone who studies fiqh, as well as others, to pay serious attention to *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* and comprehend it thoroughly. This is because the majority of *ḥadīth al-aḥkām* (legal ḥadīth) that are used as evidence are contained in it. In addition, this book is easily accessible, its ḥadīth are summarized systematically, its author has extraordinary skills, and shows high attention in compiling and filtering them scientifically."¹⁶⁰ In this context, al-Baṣrī offers a comprehensive perspective on the authority of the aḥkām ḥadīth contained in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, while also indirectly introducing his commentary on the collection, an understudied work that has received little scholarly attention in contemporary scholarship. This is because, in contemporary scholarship, the most widely known ḥadīth commentary compiled by al-Nawawī is *al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

Furthermore, al-Baṣrī also highlighted differences of opinion among scholars regarding the status of ḥadīths that were not commented on by Abū Dāwūd, known as *sukūt Abī Dāwūd* 'anhu (his silence concerning a ḥadīth). A stronger opinion among ḥadīth scholars and fuqahā' say that this type of ḥadīth cannot be used as absolute evidence, because it is very likely that it has a weak status (*ḍa'īf*). In response to this, al-Baṣrī offers interpretations of Abū Dāwūd's silence. According to him, Abū Dāwūd did not comment on the ḥadīth in which there was a problematic transmitter because he already knew the weaknesses of the *isnād*, so there was no need to provide an explicit explanation. Alternatively, it is possible that Abū Dāwūd was aware of corroborating evidence (*jābir*) from another ḥadīth that remains unknown to the reader. If not, then it is possible that the ḥadīth was indeed *ḍa'īf*, but its weakness was not severe (*ḍa'īf ḡhayr shadīd*). In this regard, Abū Dāwūd once stated: "*Wa mā fīhi waḥmun shadīdun faqad bayyantuhu*" (Every ḥadīth with serious weakness, I have explained it). Alternatively, another possibility is that Abū Dāwūd did not find any other ḥadīth in the chapter that was stronger. In this case, Abū Dāwūd may have followed the opinion of his teacher, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, that a *ḍa'īf ḥadīth* is still preferred over the opinions of scholars (*ra'y*) if there are no other ḥadīth on the topic. This position was also confirmed by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, who stated that every ḥadīth that

¹⁵⁹ Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri, *Khatam Sunan Abi Daud*, 1st ed. (Dar Diwa' as-Salaf, 2004), 74; Muḥyī al-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Rauḍat Al-Ṭālibīn Wa 'Umdat al-Muftīn*, 1st ed., ed. Zuhayr al-Shāwīsh (al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1991), 11:95.

¹⁶⁰ al-Basri, *Khatam Sunan Abi Daud*, 75; Muḥyī al-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Al-Ījāz Fī Sharḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī*, 1st ed., ed. Abū 'Ubaydah Mashhūr ibn Ḥasan Āl Salmān. (al-Dār al-Athariyyah, 2007), 56.

was kept silent about by Abū Dāwūd was considered ṣaḥīḥ according to him, especially if no stronger ḥadīth was mentioned in the chapter for comparison.¹⁶¹

In addition to deeply examining the interpretive aspects of ḥadīth, the methodology of compiling ḥadīth works, and the quality of the narrations contained in ḥadīth books, al-Baṣrī also consistently included the *isnād* he possessed for the books he studied (*khatama*) in each of his *khatm* works. This practice is evident in all of al-Baṣrī's completed *khatm* works. For example, in *Khatm Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-Baṣrī mentions his *isnād* directly connected to the compiler, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī. In this context, al-Baṣrī specifies one of his shortest chains (*isnād 'ālī*), transmitted through Muḥammad ibn 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Bābilī, from whom al-Baṣrī received *ijāza* (certification) twice. First occasion, when al-Bābilī visited Mecca initially, Shaykh 'Alī al-Ayyūbī recited three ḥadīths from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in al-Bābilī's presence. Al-Baṣrī attended this session (*samā'*). Afterwards, al-Bābilī granted an *ijāza* for the entire book. Second Occasion, when al-Bābilī returned to Mecca in 1070 AH or 1659 CE, he held a reading session of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. The commencement of the book was read by al-Baṣrī's teacher, 'Isā al-Tha'ālibī. Al-Baṣrī attended and listened (*istimā'*) until al-Bābilī granted *ijāza* to all attendees for the entire book. Al-Baṣrī considered this transmission path particularly significant due to its brevity (*isnād 'ālī*) and the stature of its transmitters, all being renowned *ḥuffāz* (sing: *ḥāfiẓ*) and leading authorities in ḥadīth scholarship, such as Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and al-Qāḍī Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī.¹⁶²

Thus, al-Baṣrī not only perpetuated the tradition of compiling *khatm* works for various canonical texts but significantly expanded their scope. His works transcended mere documentation of author biographies and transmission chains (*isnād*), encompassing critical analyses of compilation methodology, scholarly debates on ḥadīth authority (such as the status of *sukūt Abī Dāwūd* or the comparative standing of Sunan Ibn Mājah versus al-Muwatta'), and comprehensive interpretations of specific ḥadīths, particularly the final ḥadīth of each book, using the *jam' bayna al-adillah* (reconciliation/integration of evidences) approach. Through his meticulous documentation of *isnād 'ālī* and synthesis of earlier scholarly thought, al-Baṣrī's *khatm* works constitute a vital source for understanding the evolution of ḥadīth criticism, the tradition of scholarly transmission (*riwāya*), and the assessment of classical ḥadīth literature's authority. Simultaneously, these works reflect the dialectic between the spiritual-devotional dimension (*khatm al-qirā'ah* - completion

¹⁶¹ al-Basri, *Khatam Sunan Abi Daud*, 79–81.

¹⁶² 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī, *Khatm Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, 1st ed., ed. Fu'ād ibn al-Ḥusayn Būlfān al-Sūsī (Dār al-Tawḥīd li-al-Nashr, 2015), 49–52.

through recitation) and the academic-intellectual dimension (*khatm al-iqrā'* - completion through critical study) within post-codification ḥadīth scholarship.

3.3.3. *Al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyyah* (the first ḥadīth of ḥadīth texts)

In the history of ḥadīth codification, works focusing on *awā'il al-ḥadīth* (the opening or the first ḥadīth of major collections) emerged as a scholarly response to the need for a systematic and accessible introduction to the first ḥadīth in a given ḥadīth compilation, particularly for pedagogical purposes. Al-Kattānī explains that there were several factors that influenced the emergence of this genre. During the later period of ḥadīth transmission, there was a noticeable decline in students' enthusiasm for intensive study, while access to ḥadīth compilation became increasingly limited. This was due to the physical difficulty of transporting numerous texts and the long distances required for scholarly travel to the places where major ḥadīth scholars resided. In response, students adopted a more practical approach by compiling the beginnings (*awā'il*) of various ḥadīth books into small booklets (*kurāsāt*) to be read in front of their teachers. Following this, they would receive a *samā'* (hearing) *isnād* for the parts that were read aloud, and an *ijāza* for the remainder of the work. The first scholar known to have written in this genre was *al-Ḥāfiẓ* Ibn al-Dībā' (d. 944 AH / 1537 CE).¹⁶³ In his introduction to a study on *al-Awā'il al-Sunbuliyyah*, 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah (d. 1997 CE) emphasized the important, yet often overlooked, function of this genre. One of its main purposes is to serve as an introductory tool for novice students of ḥadīth. By exposing them to the opening sections of major ḥadīth works, these texts encourage interest and intellectual curiosity, thereby encouraging further study. Familiarity with the opening narrations of key collections allows students to gradually recognize and differentiate between the structures and themes of major ḥadīth texts, providing an accessible gateway into the more complex study of the ḥadīth corpus.¹⁶⁴

Al-Baṣrī composed this work without assigning it a specific title, unlike his other writings. At the beginning of the manuscript, he merely described it as *al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyyah*, referring to it as a treatise (*risālah*) containing Prophetic ḥadīths that are sufficiently narrated (*takfī*) to represent the transmission of the entire parent text through reception from the *mashāyikh* (*al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyyah, wa hiya risālah fī al-aḥādīth al-nabawiyyah al-sharīfah allatī takfī bitalaqqihā 'an riwāyati uṣūlihā 'an al-ashyākh*). In later biographical sources, this work came to be known simply as *al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyyah*.

¹⁶³ al-Kattānī, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:94–95.

¹⁶⁴ Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd al-Sunbulī, *Al-Awā'il al-Sunbuliyyah Wa-Dhayluhu*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghuddah (Bairūt: Maktab al-Maṭbū'āt al-Islāmiyyah, 2015), 25.

However, the descriptive statement found in the opening of the manuscript reveals the book's functional role: to continue the transmission of ḥadīth through the mechanism of reading the initial portions of selected canonical works and then granting authorization (*ijāza*) for the remainder of the text. For instance, al-Jabartī recounts that al-Qālinī, one of al-Baṣrī's students, heard the *Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyyah* directly from him while performing the *Ḥajj*.¹⁶⁵ This suggests that al-Baṣrī composed the work not merely as an introduction to the early portions of ḥadīth collections for novice students, but also to facilitate the process of ḥadīth transmission for scholars who visited him during the pilgrimage season. Given the limited timeframe of these scholarly visits and the logistical constraints of time, this treatise served as an efficient method for scholars to receive a valid chain of transmission by reading a portion of the ḥadīth compilation, followed by the granting of a comprehensive *ijāza*. This purpose is further supported by the narration appended by al-Baṣrī at the end of the treatise, addressed to two of his students, Aḥmad Jawharī al-Khālīdī and Aḥmad al-Malāwī. In short, al-Baṣrī appears to have compiled this work as a practical instrument to accelerate and legitimize the transmission of ḥadīth during his scholarly encounters in Mecca, particularly during the *Ḥajj* season.

Nevertheless, the use of *awā'il al-ḥadīthiyyah* as a means of transmitting ḥadīth offers distinct advantages compared to the mechanism of *ijāza 'āmmah*, a general form of authorization that does not specify the particular text or book being transmitted, and which became a common practice among scholars after the codification period of ḥadīth. One of the primary drawbacks of *ijāza 'āmmah* is that it has the potential for misattribution of ḥadīths to specific collections, a concern that had previously been explained by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. While Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī is known to have employed *ijāza 'āmmah* in his scholarly practice, he also made a concerted effort to avoid such unverified forms of transmission whenever possible.¹⁶⁶ In this context, the use of this work provides a significant corrective, as it allows the recipients of transmission to identify the content for which they received authorization, particularly regarding the attribution of ḥadīth to a specific collection. Moreover, works in this genre typically mention both the title of the ḥadīth book and the name of its author, thereby enhancing clarity and accuracy in the transmission process. Consequently, the use of *awā'il al-ḥadīthiyyah* minimizes the risk of errors in textual attribution and bolsters the validity of *isnād* within the Islamic scholarly tradition.

¹⁶⁵ Abd al-Rahman al-Jabartī, *'Ajaib al-Athar Fi al-Tarajim Wa al-Akhbar*, ed. 'Abd al-'Aziz Jamaluddin (Maktabat Madbuli, 1997), 1:325.

¹⁶⁶ For more discussion on this issue, see: Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 133–46.

Al-Baṣrī's work compiles the first twenty-nine ḥadīths from various ḥadīth collections, including not only the well-known canonical texts such as *al-Kutub al-Sittah*, but also relatively unpopular works such as *al-Mustakhraj* of Abū 'Awānah, *Sunan Abī Muslim al-Kashshī*, *Sunan Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr*, *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥamīd al-Kissī, and others. As previously discussed, a defining feature of the *al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyyah* genre is its focus on collecting the first ḥadīth of various ḥadīth books. Interestingly, however, in the case of 'Abd al-Razzāq's *al-Muṣannaf*, al-Baṣrī does not cite the first ḥadīth as he does with other texts, but instead presents part of the concluding ḥadīth of the work. Al-Baṣrī himself notes that the ḥadīth he includes is taken from the end of *al-Muṣannaf*, but he does not explicitly explain his reason for omitting the initial ḥadīth, as he typically includes elsewhere. According to Miṣ'al ibn Ḥamīd al-Luhaybī, in his study of the work, this abnormality may be due to al-Baṣrī's inability to locate the first ḥadīth of *al-Muṣannaf*.¹⁶⁷ However, al-Luhaybī does not cite any direct statement from al-Baṣrī confirming this explanation. Nonetheless, this assumption remains plausible, given that one of the main motivations behind the compilation of the *al-Awā'il* genre was the limited accessibility to complete manuscripts in the post-codification era of ḥadīth. Furthermore, 'Abd al-Razzāq's *al-Muṣannaf* is among the earliest ḥadīth compilations, and it was copied far less frequently than more canonical texts like *al-Kutub al-Sittah*. The dominance of these canonical collections likely restricted access to the full text of *al-Muṣannaf* in al-Baṣrī's time, thereby preventing him from including its opening ḥadīth.

Al-Baṣrī's efforts in compiling works in the *awā'il* genre played a pivotal role in broadening the scholarly focus beyond the canonical ḥadīth collections. Through this endeavor, he effectively introduced unpopular ḥadīth books to his students, expanding their engagement with the wider corpus of ḥadīth literature. Reichmuth, in his study of the intellectual legacy of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, a student of one of al-Baṣrī's students, acknowledges that al-Baṣrī's attention to non-canonical ḥadīth works significantly influenced al-Zabīdī, particularly in his extensive commentary on al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. This influence highlights the lasting impact of al-Baṣrī's contributions to the development of ḥadīth studies across generations. In this regard, al-Baṣrī can be seen as having sought to expand the boundaries of ḥadīth scholarship, not by restricting it to the canonical collections, but by also incorporating works that were relatively rare or less circulated in the ḥadīth tradition of his time.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Miṣ'al ibn Ḥamīd al-Luhaybī, "Kutub Al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyyah: Dirāsah Ta'ṣīliyyah, al-Awā'il al-Baṣriyyah Namūdḥajan," *Arrasikhun Journal* 7, no. 3 (2021): 80.

¹⁶⁸ Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 31.

3.3.4. *Hasyiyah Taqrib al-Tahzib* (the supercommentary of *Taqrib al-Tahzib* of Ibnu Hajar)

This work was published alongside a *taḥqīq* study by the contemporary ḥadīth scholar Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah, who compiled two *ḥāshiyahs* on Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*: one by al-Baṣrī himself and the other by his student, Muḥammad ‘Amīn ibn Ḥasan al-Mirghīnī. In the introduction, ‘Awwāmah emphasizes that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī’s *ḥāshiyah* made a significant contribution to refining the orthography of transmitter names and provided supplemental information on the status of the transmitters discussed by Ibn Ḥajar. This achievement is closely tied to al-Baṣrī’s position as a ḥadīth instructor at the al-Ḥarām Mosque, where he regularly conducted repeated readings of several key ḥadīth texts. Moreover, the *ḥāshiyah* reflects al-Baṣrī’s scholarly dedication to the critical examination of ḥadīth manuscripts, which he pursued through comparative analysis of multiple manuscript versions. This meticulous engagement enabled him to accurately identify the names of transmitters appearing in these texts and to compile a *ḥāshiyah* that not only included valuable insights but also proposed corrections to transmitter entries in Ibn Ḥajar’s work.¹⁶⁹

Furthermore, Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah highlights two key aspects of al-Baṣrī’s *ḥāshiyah*: first, its precision in documenting the identities of transmitters, including their proper names, kunyah, lineage, and honorific titles; and second, its incorporation of supplementary information drawn from the authoritative works of earlier scholars. In compiling this commentary, al-Baṣrī consulted a wide range of primary and secondary sources within the ḥadīth tradition. He referenced major works of *riwāya*, such as manuscripts of *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, and other canonical ḥadīth collections. Additionally, he made extensive use of *‘ilm al-rijāl* literature that explores the biographies and reliability of transmitters, including Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, al-Mizzī’s *Tuhfat al-Ashrāf*, and al-Dhahabī’s *al-Kāshif*. In the more specialized genre of transmitter name analysis, he relied on works such as al-Dāraqūṭnī’s *al-Mu’talif wa al-Mukhtalif*, Ibn Mākūlā’s *al-Ikmāl*, and Ibn Nuṭṭah’s *Takmilat al-Ikmāl*. He also drew on genealogical sources, including al-Sam‘ānī’s *al-Ansāb*, *al-Lubāb* of Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Lubb* by al-Suyūṭī, among other essential references. Thus, this *ḥāshiyah* demonstrates a highly

¹⁶⁹ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Taqrīb Al-Tahdhīb, Wa-Ma’ahu Ḥāshiyatā ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī Wa-Muḥammad Amīn Marghīnī*, 1st ed., ed. Muḥammad ‘Awwāmah (Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1991), 5.

critical and comprehensive methodology, reflecting al-Baṣrī's extensive engagement with the vast corpus of ḥadīth scholarship across multiple genres.¹⁷⁰

As an example, in the discussion concerning a transmitter named 'Īsā ibn Mughīrah al-Tamīmī, Ibn Ḥajar records his full name and designation as 'Īsā ibn Mughīrah al-Tamīmī al-Ḥarrānī, pronouncing the *hā* with a fathah and the *rā* clearly, stating he hailed from Kūfah and bore the kunyah Abū Shihāb. However, al-Baṣrī provides a divergent account, asserting that the correct *nisba* (attribution) concluding the transmitter's name is "*al-Ḥaramī*", not "*al-Ḥarrānī*". In this matter, Muḥammad 'Awwāmah concurs with al-Baṣrī's position, based on his examination of the transmitter's biography within pre-Ibn Ḥajar works, particularly *al-Ikmāl fī raf' al-irtiyāb 'an al-mu'talif wa al-mukhtalif fī al-asmā' wa al-kunā wa al-ansāb* by Ibn Mākūlā (d. 475 H/1082 CE).¹⁷¹ This aligns with 'Awwāmah's observation in his introduction that al-Baṣrī intensively consulted classical *'ilm rijāl* literature when composing his *ḥāshiyah* on *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*. Furthermore, al-Baṣrī also preferred to evaluate 'Īsā ibn Mughīrah as *thiqah* (trustworthy), citing the assessment of Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354 H/965 CE), contrasting with Ibn Ḥajar's categorization of him as *maqbul* (acceptable).¹⁷² Although Ibn Ḥibbān is recognized as a critic often lenient in his evaluations, frequently assigning *thiqah* status to transmitters criticized by other ḥadīth scholars, al-Baṣrī's adherence to Ibn Ḥibbān's view in this case appears more accurate. This position is corroborated by the evaluations of other prominent ḥadīth critics, such as Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn and Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, who likewise deemed 'Īsā ibn Mughīrah a *thiqah* transmitter.¹⁷³

Thus, through his *ḥāshiyah* on *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, al-Baṣrī made a substantial contribution to the critical study of earlier works in the field of ḥadīth sciences. His

¹⁷⁰ al-'Asqalānī, *Taqrīb Al-Tahdhīb, Wa-Ma'ahu Ḥāshiyatā 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī Wa-Muḥammad Amīn Marghīnī*, 6–7.

¹⁷¹ al-'Asqalānī, *Taqrīb Al-Tahdhīb, Wa-Ma'ahu Ḥāshiyatā 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī Wa-Muḥammad Amīn Marghīnī*, 512.

¹⁷² A transmitter categorized as *maqbul* in the terminology of Ibn Ḥajar occupies the sixth rank among transmitters deemed credible. This refers to a transmitter whose transmission activity is relatively limited in quantity when compared to major ḥadīth transmitters, and against whom there are no strong criticisms from leading ḥadīth critics that would render his narrations outrightly rejected. Thus, according to Ibn Ḥajar, such a transmitter is deemed *maqbul* (acceptable) provided that his narration is corroborated by another independent chain of transmission (*mutabī*). In other words, if no corroborating transmission is found, the ḥadīth reported by such a transmitter is considered weak (*ḍa'īf*), and may be classified specifically as *layyin al-ḥadīth* (soft or feeble in transmission strength). See: al-'Asqalānī, *Taqrīb Al-Tahdhīb, Wa-Ma'ahu Ḥāshiyatā 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī Wa-Muḥammad Amīn Marghīnī*, 43.

¹⁷³ For more discussion on 'Īsā ibn Mughīrah, see: Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Su'ālāt Abī Dāwūd Li-l-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal Fī Jarḥ al-Ruwāt Wa-Ta'dīlhim*, 1st ed., ed. Ziyād Muḥammad Maṣṣūr (Maktabat al-'Ulūm wa-al-Ḥikam, 1993), 307; ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Al-Jarḥ Wa al-Ta'dīl*, 1st ed., ed. Ḥaydar Ābād al-Dakkan (Maṭba'at Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyyah, 1952), 6:286.

dedication to teaching ḥadīth and conducting independent research, particularly through the comparison of various manuscript copies of classical ḥadīth works such as Ibn Ḥajar's *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, enabled al-Baṣrī not only to correct errors in the names and titles of ḥadīth transmitters but also to offer critical evaluations of earlier scholars' judgments concerning transmitter credibility. Accurately identifying the transmitters and assessing their reliability is essential for the critical analysis of *isnād* in ḥadīth studies. Through this work, al-Baṣrī reaffirmed his position as a prominent ḥadīth scholar in the Ḥaramayn who went beyond the transmission and teaching of ḥadīth texts, demonstrating a deep commitment to the scholarly and methodological rigor required in the advanced study of ḥadīth.

3.3.5. *Dhiya' al-Sari Fii Masalik Abwab al-Bukhari* (the radiance of the nocturnal traveler on the pathways of the chapters of al-bukhārī)

This work represents one of al-Baṣrī's most significant contributions during his career as a ḥadīth teacher in the Ḥaramayn and falls within the genre of *sharḥ* (commentary) on the ḥadīths of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. Unfortunately, the work remained incomplete, as al-Baṣrī passed away before he could finish writing it, ending his commentary at the discussion of *Kitāb al-Itq* (the Chapter of the Emancipation of Slaves). Nevertheless, the work received high praise from various scholars. Ibn 'Aqīlah, one of al-Baṣrī's students and the teacher of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, stated that al-Baṣrī composed his *sharḥ* on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* by synthesizing the main ideas of earlier foundational commentaries such as Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's *Fath al-Bārī*, al-Kirmānī's *Sharḥ*, and several other major works. Indeed, al-Baṣrī's commentary was known to be broader in scope than even al-Qaṣṭallānī's *Irshād al-Sārī*.¹⁷⁴ Similar admiration came from Sayyid Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, who quoted Shaykh Āzād in his *Tasliyyat al-Fu'ād*: "By God, it is very difficult to find a *sharḥ* that compares with this work of al-Baṣrī among all the existing commentaries. However, the limited time and constraining circumstances of the period ultimately prevented the completion of this monumental work."¹⁷⁵

Al-Baṣrī's work in this genre appears to have received limited attention in John Voll's study of his intellectual contributions. This is likely due to the restricted availability of manuscripts or printed editions at the time, as the work was only published in Lebanon in 2011. As noted by several scholars, the breadth and depth of al-Baṣrī's scholarly engagement are evident in this *sharḥ*, which spans eighteen volumes despite covering only

¹⁷⁴ al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:197.

¹⁷⁵ Khān, *Al-Hitta Fi Dzīkr al-Sihah al-Sitta*, 198.

approximately one-third of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. This fact highlights al-Baṣrī's remarkable mastery of ḥadīth sciences, particularly his deep engagement with *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which played a central role in shaping his intellectual legacy. A more detailed analysis of the distinctive features and methodological contributions of al-Baṣrī's *sharḥ* on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter.

3.4. Beyond the Haramayn: The Transregional Scholarly Network of Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri

The central role of al-Baṣrī in the teaching and transmission of ḥadīth had a significant impact on the continuity of ḥadīth scholarship in the subsequent centuries. As a recognized authority and transmitter possessing *isnād 'ālī*, al-Baṣrī held a prominent position in Mecca, where he dedicated his life to ḥadīth instruction and became a pivotal figure sought after by students from various parts of the Islamic world. Abdullah al-Mirdad Abu al-Khayr (d. 1343 AH / 1924 CE) noted that the number of al-Baṣrī's students was remarkably large. This is largely attributable to his prominent position as an authoritative figure in the teaching of ḥadīth in the Ḥaramayn. Consequently, it is unsurprising that scholars have observed that his students came from various regions of the Islamic world, including the Ḥaramayn, the Levant (*al-Shām*), Yemen, and the eastern Islamic regions (*al-Mashriq*), in numbers too great to be precisely counted.¹⁷⁶ In other words, his scholarly network extended beyond the confines of Mecca and Medina, reaching far across the Arabian Peninsula. Furthermore, the *isnād* of ḥadīths transmitted through al-Baṣrī became one of the significant transmission lines in later centuries, including in Southeast Asia. The following section provides a brief examination of how al-Baṣrī's *isnād* network spread through his students across various Islamic regions.

3.4.1. Haramayn (Mecca and Medina)

These two holy cities, Mecca and Medina, served as the principal centers for the dissemination of al-Baṣrī's *isnād*. Widely recognized as a leading ḥadīth scholar, al-Baṣrī attracted a significant number of local scholars who sought to study under him and obtain *isnād* for various ḥadīth collections. A considerable number of scholars who studied with al-Baṣrī either originated from or were long-term residents of these cities. Many of these students would go on to become influential ḥadīth scholars in subsequent generations. Among the most prominent of al-Baṣrī's students was Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī (d. 1163

¹⁷⁶ Abu al-Khair, *Al-Mukhtasar Min Kitab Nashr al-Nur Wa al-Zahr Fi Tarajum Afadil Makkah*, 290.

AH / 1750 CE). Although he originally came from the city of Sindi (Pakistan), al-Sindī pursued his in-depth study of ḥadīth during his residence in Medina, and he was known later as a hadith scholar who was active in teaching and transmitting the hadith of Haramayn. While there, he studied with several prominent scholars, including Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī (d. 1139 AH / 1727 CE), ‘Abdallāh ibn Salīm al-Baṣrī, and al-‘Ujaymī (d. 1113 AH / 1702 CE). Al-Sindī represents a notable example of a scholar from outside the Haramayn who devoted the rest of his life to teaching religious sciences, particularly ḥadīth, until he died.¹⁷⁷

In addition to Muḥammad Ḥayāt al-Sindī, another prominent student of al-Baṣrī was Abū Ṭāhir al-Kūrānī (d. 1188 AC / 1774 CA), the son of the renowned Sufī and ḥadīth scholar of Medina, Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī. Although the majority of Abū Ṭāhir’s ḥadīth *isnāds* were transmitted through the path of his father, he was also notably drawn to the *isnād* of hadith from al-Baṣrī. Consequently, several of Abū Ṭāhir al-Kūrānī’s *isnāds* can be traced through al-Baṣrī’s transmission line. In this regard, John Voll highlights Abū Ṭāhir’s engagement with al-Baṣrī’s work *al-Imdād fī Ma’rifat ‘Uluww al-Isnād*. In the *ijāza* he granted to his students, Abū Ṭāhir included a catalogue of his teachers’ *isnāds*, among which al-Baṣrī’s *al-Imdād* was listed. Notably, Abū Ṭāhir al-Kūrānī was also a key teacher of the eminent Indian ḥadīth scholar Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī, who paid considerable attention to the disciplines of ḥadīth, law, and Sufism.¹⁷⁸ Shāh Walī Allāh’s contribution in this regard is elaborated in detail in his seminal work *al-Hujjah al-Bālighah*.¹⁷⁹ This intellectual trajectory highlights al-Baṣrī’s pivotal role in shaping ḥadīth scholarship in the Haramayn and his enduring influence on the broader, transregional scholarly networks in subsequent periods.

Abū Bakr ibn Aḥmad ibn Zāhirah al-Ḥanbalī al-Makkī (d. 1139 AH / 1727 CE) was one of al-Baṣrī’s distinguished students who attained a prominent position in Mecca. He was entrusted with the responsibility of teaching religious sciences and appointed as the *mufī* of the Ḥanbalī school or serving as a legal authority within the framework of the Ḥanbalī madhhab. In this context, al-Baṣrī is recorded as a key teacher who conferred scholarly legitimacy and transmission authority upon Abū Bakr al-Ḥanbalī.¹⁸⁰ In addition, Sayyid Amīn al-Marghīnī al-Makkī (d. 1161 AH / 1749 CE) was one of al-Baṣrī’s most consistent and long-term students. Throughout his years of study with al-Baṣrī, he dedicated himself to documenting and elaborating on al-Baṣrī’s explanations concerning

¹⁷⁷ Nafi, “A Teacher of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,” 214–16.

¹⁷⁸ Voll, “‘Abdallah Ibn Salim Al-Basri and 18th Century Hadith Scholarship,” 362–66.

¹⁷⁹ Dihlawī, *Hujja Allah Al-Balighah*.

¹⁸⁰ Abu al-Khair, *Al-Mukhtasar Min Kitab Nashr al-Nur Wa al-Zahr Fi Tarajum Afadil Makkah*, 67.

ḥadīth transmitters. He was also known for his diligence in copying al-Baṣrī's works, significantly contributing to their wider dissemination.¹⁸¹

The intellectual legacy of al-Baṣrī was not only preserved by scholars but also directly inherited by his descendants and relatives. His son, Sālīm ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālīm al-Baṣrī (d. 1160 AH / 1747 CE), played a crucial role in safeguarding and continuing his father's scholarly tradition as a ḥadīth scholar. Sālīm al-Baṣrī continued the transmission of ḥadīth and the teaching of ḥadīth texts to his students, while also actively reproducing his father's works in significant quantities, contributing to their widespread dissemination.¹⁸² In this context, it is worth noting that the *isnād* of ḥadīth through the lineage of Sālīm al-Baṣrī has become one of the prominent chains of transmission in Indonesia. For instance, K.H. Hāshim Ash'arī (d. 1947 CE), the founder of the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, possessed an *isnād* of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī received from his teacher, Shaykh Maḥfūz al-Tarmasī (d. 1338 AH / 1920 CE), which traces back through Sālīm al-Baṣrī to 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālīm al-Baṣrī.¹⁸³

In addition to Sālīm al-Baṣrī, another close relative who inherited his intellectual legacy was his maternal grandson, 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Aqīl al-Makkī (d. 1174 AH / 1760 CE).¹⁸⁴ His central role as a prominent ḥadīth scholar in the 18th century is evident from the direct testimony of his student, Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1205 AH / 1791 CE), who stated that he received the *ijāza* of many ḥadīth works from 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Aqīl, who had himself received them directly from his grandfather, 'Abdallāh ibn Sālīm al-Baṣrī. In his study of al-Zabīdī's intellectual network, Stefan Reichmuth identifies 'Umar Ibn 'Aqīl as one of al-Zabīdī's principal teachers in the field of ḥadīth. Furthermore, several of al-Zabīdī's other teachers were also direct students of al-Baṣrī, including Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aslam al-Makkī (d. 1165 AH / 1752 CE), Sayyid Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥasanī (d. 1167 AH / 1754 CE), and Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Ḥasanī (d. 1173 AH / 1760 CE). This network of transmission illustrates al-Baṣrī's pivotal role in ensuring the continuity of ḥadīth scholarship beyond his own time, particularly through the significant intellectual contributions of his students, such as Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ al-Firyānī, *Min a'lām al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām 'Abdullāh Ibn Sālīm al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 111–12.

¹⁸² Abu al-Khair, *Al-Mukhtasar Min Kitāb Nashr al-Nur Wa al-Zahr Fi Tarajum Afādil Makkah*, 203.

¹⁸³ Musfiroh Musfiroh, "Peran Hadratus Syaikh Kh. Hasyim Asyari Dalam Pengembangan Hadis Di Indonesia," *Holistic Al-Hadis* 5, no. 1 (2019): 8, <https://doi.org/10.32678/holistic.v5i1.3229>.

¹⁸⁴ al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 2:792–95.

¹⁸⁵ Reichmuth, *The World of Murtada Al-Zabidi (1732-91)*, 30–32.

3.4.2. The Levant Region (Syria, Aleppo, and Damascus)

As is well known, the spread of al-Baṣrī's students was not limited to the Ḥaramayn region alone, given that the Ḥaramayn served as a major destination for the pursuit of *isnād* and Islamic religious sciences during that period. Consequently, al-Baṣrī also had disciples from regions beyond the Ḥaramayn, including the Levant (*Shām*), encompassing areas such as Syria, Aleppo, and Damascus. One of his most prominent students from Syria was Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad al-‘Ajlūnī (d. 1162 AH / 1749 CE), who became one of the most prolific writers in the field of ḥadīth studies among al-Baṣrī's pupils. His notable works include *Sharḥ al-ḥadīth al-musalsal bi-l-Dimashqiyyīn*, *Kashf al-khafā' wa-l-iltibās 'ammā ishtahara min al-aḥādīth 'alā alsinat al-nās* (Unveiling the Hidden and the Ambiguous in Well-Known Hadiths Circulated Among the People), and *al-Fayḍ al-jārī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, and others.¹⁸⁶

Meanwhile, one of al-Baṣrī's prominent students from the Aleppo region was Ṭahā ibn Muḥannā al-Shāfi'ī al-Jabrīnī al-Ḥalabī (d. 1178 AH / 1764 CE). He was a scholar who demonstrated a balanced mastery of both rational and transmitted sciences (*al-'ulūm al-'aqliyyah wa al-naqliyyah*). According to Muḥammad Khalīl al-Ḥusaynī (d. 1206 AH / 1791 CA), a scholar in the 18th century, Ṭahā ibn Muḥannā paid significant attention to ḥadīth studies, having studied directly with the commentator of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī. This scholarly engagement inspired Ṭahā ibn Muḥannā to compose his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, following in the footsteps of his teacher. Even though this work only includes up to *Bāb al-Maghāzī* (the Chapter of Wars), his efforts remain a significant contribution, reflecting his crucial contribution to enriching the literary tradition of hadith commentary.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, al-Basri's students from this region were not limited to Ṭahā ibn Muḥannā and al-‘Ajlūnī. In another word, they included prominent figures such as Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Manīnī al-Dimashqī (d. 1172 AH / 1758 CE), Sayyid Sa‘dī ibn Sayyid ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dimashqī (d. 1132 AH / 1720 CE), Ṣāliḥ ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sulaymān al-Dimashqī (d. 1171 AH / 1757 CE), Abdul Karim Ibn Ahmad al-Sharābātī al-Halabī (d. 1178 AH / 1764 CA), and others.

3.4.3. Egypt

In Egypt, several students of al-Basri played a significant role in continuing the tradition of hadith scholarship. One of them was Ahmad Ibn Mustafā al-Iskandari al-

¹⁸⁶ al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:97–98.

¹⁸⁷ Muḥammad Khalīl al-Ḥusaynī, *Silk Al-Durar Fī A'yān al-Qarn al-Thānī 'Ashar*, 3rd ed. (Dar al-Basair, 1988), 2:219.

Sabbagh (d. 1162 AH / 1748 CE). Al-Kattani mentioned that he was the foremost authority in Hadith transmission or isnad in Egypt (*khātim al-musnidīn bi-Miṣr*).¹⁸⁸ Sara Nims, in her research on the *ijāza* received by al-Sabbagh from al-Basri, reveals that al-Basri was a very important teacher for al-Shabbagh. She calculates that most of the isnad in al-Shabbagh's isnad catalog were received from al-Basri, amounting to approximately 60 percent of all the isnad he possessed.¹⁸⁹ This highlights the central influence of al-Basri in al-Shabbagh's academic career as a leading hadith scholar in Egypt.

In addition to al-Shabbāgh, another student of al-Baṣrī who also played an important role in the development of ḥadīth scholarship in this region was Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-Jawharī al-Azharī (d. 1181 AH / 1767 CE). Aḥmad al-Jawharī's relationship with al-Baṣrī was very intense; historical records show that he studied under al-Baṣrī in Ḥaramayn at least twice, in 1124 AH / 1712 CE and 1130 AH / 1718 CE. Furthermore, in al-Baṣrī's work *al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyyah*, al-Baṣrī granted a special license for the book to him and his colleague, Aḥmad al-Malāwī (d. 1181 AH / 1767 CE).¹⁹⁰ Meanwhile, al-Jabartī (d. 1237 AH / 1821 CE) mentions that Aḥmad al-Jawharī held an important position in the scholarly tradition at al-Azhar, both as a teacher and as a muftī for sixty years.¹⁹¹ Although it must be acknowledged that his interactions with many other teachers also shaped this important position, al-Baṣrī's centrality in ḥadīth scholarship was one of the key aspects that contributed to his status as a notable scholar in Egypt, given that he underwent two phases of learning with al-Baṣrī throughout his life.

3.4.4. Yemen

Muḥammad Ibn Ismā'īl al-Shan'ānī (d. 1182 AH / 1768 CA) was one of the students of al-Baṣrī from Yemen. He traveled to Mecca to perform the *ḥajj* and remained there for a period of time, during which he studied under al-Baṣrī. Upon returning from Mecca, many students sought him out due to the elevated *isnād* he had acquired through his studies with al-Baṣrī.¹⁹² In addition, al-Shan'ānī was an important figure in reforming and critically reviewing the established tradition of hadith scholarship in Yemen. Although he was not the first to introduce the tradition of hadith in this region, his role is still

¹⁸⁸ al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:135.

¹⁸⁹ Sara Nims, "Sainthood and the Law: The Influence of Mysticism in Eighteenth Century Pedagogy of the 'Fuqahā'," *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 14 (2014): 198, <https://doi.org/10.5617/jais.4644>.

¹⁹⁰ Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri, *Al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyya*, 1st ed., ed. Aḥmad 'Alī Barīsim al-Zubaydī (Dār al-Faṭḥ li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashr, 2021), 115.

¹⁹¹ al-Jabarti, *'Ajaib al-Athar Fi al-Tarajim Wa al-Akhbar*, 1:364–65.

¹⁹² al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:513.

considered significant in reviewing the deeply rooted discourse of hadith scholarship. One of his contributions was to critically evaluate the assumption that the sound hadiths were limited to those compiled in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. In other words, al-Shanʿānī sought to reconstruct the perspective on the authority of hadith books, proposing that the sound hadiths are not only found in these two main books, but can also be found outside of them, such as in *Muwattaʿ* by Mālik, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, and other works.¹⁹³

In this case, although there was no explicit correlation found between al-Shanʿānī and al-Baṣrī regarding this issue, al-Shanʿānī's enthusiasm in expanding the scope of the sound of hadith discoveries was in line with al-Baṣrī's efforts through the compilation of the book *al-Awāʿil al-Ḥadīthiyyah*, which aims to introduce a broader corpus of hadiths beyond *al-kutub al-sittah*.

3.4.5. Anatolia and Central Asia (Turkey, Turkmenistan)

Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Baṣrī played a significant role in the dissemination of ḥadīth studies in the region of Turkey, with several of his students originating from this area, including Ibn Ḥimmat al-Dimashqī (d. 1174 AH / 1761 CE), a prominent scholar who taught in Istanbul during the eighteenth century. Ibn Ḥimmat resided for over a decade in Üsküdar, Istanbul, and delivered instruction at the Aḥmadiyya Mosque and the *Wālidā Sulṭān Dār al-Ḥadīth*, earning him the title *Muḥaddith* and *Musnid* of Istanbul. Al-Baṣrī was instrumental in shaping Ibn Ḥimmat's scholarly authority in ḥadīth, having transmitted to him approximately forty ḥadīth collections and portions of six *tafsīr* books. These transmissions were documented in an *ijāza* granted by al-Baṣrī, specifying the titles of the texts and the methods of transmission, whether *samāʿ* (listening) or *qirāʾah* (reading hadith in front of the teacher). Ibn Ḥimmat is also credited with introducing the *ijāza*-based method of ḥadīth instruction in Turkey, which previously emphasized *mulāzamah*, or long-term apprenticeship with a teacher.¹⁹⁴

In addition to Ibn Ḥimmat, several other disciples of al-Baṣrī also hailed from this region. Among them were Sulaimān ibn Aḥmad al-Qusṭanṭīnī (d. 1134 AH / 1722 CE), Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Turkumānī al-Dakdakī (d. 1132 AH / 1720 CE), Shihab al-Din Ahmad Ibn ʿAli al-Manini al-Dimashqī (1172/1758), ʿAbdallāh ibn Muḥammad al-Suktānī al-Tūnisī (d. 1169 AH / 1759 CE), and others.¹⁹⁵ Their presence underscores the wide

¹⁹³ Dallal, *Islam without Europe*, 224–25.

¹⁹⁴ Kadir Ayaz, “İstanbul’da Müsnid Bir Muhaddis; İbn Himmât ed-Dimaşkî (1175/1761),” *Marife Dini Araştırmalar Dergisi* 21, no. 1 (2021): 397, 1, <https://doi.org/10.33420/marife.900364>.

¹⁹⁵ al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Muʿjam al-Maʿajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 2:750.

geographic appeal of al-Baṣrī's teaching authority, drawing students not only from the central Islamic lands but also from North Africa and beyond.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter explains al-Basri's background and intellectual development. Al-Basri came from a fortunate and socially prominent family in Mecca. This situation influenced al-Basri's development into the important figure he became as an adult. Furthermore, Mecca's centrality was another factor underlying al-Basri's intellectual development. In this regard, al-Basri connected with scholars from various centers of Islamic scholarship, such as Egypt, Morocco, and other Islamic regions. His teacher includes various important scholars in that period, such as Muhammad 'Ala al-Din al-Babili, Isa Tha'alibi, Ibrahim Kurani, and other scholars, as summarized in *al-Imdād*. While al-Baṣrī is better known for his contributions to ḥadīth scholarship, he was also an active participant in Sufi traditions. *al-Imdād* details al-Basri's various scholarly paths within Sufism and the various tariqahs he adhered to. In addition, al-Basri not only played an active role in transmitting ḥadīth through *ijāza*, but he also actively taught ḥadīth at the Masjid al-Ḥarām. Al-Basri's expertise in ḥadīth earned him the honor of leading the reading of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* during the renovation of the Ka'ba by the Ottoman Sultan at that time.

Meanwhile, despite his busy schedule teaching and transmitting ḥadīth texts, this did not prevent al-Basri from composing works in the discipline of ḥadīth scholarship. Although al-Basri's work is limited, it has had a significant influence on the treasury of ḥadīth scholarship in the 18th century and beyond. In addition, al-Basri's scholarly authority in the field of hadith was recognized by his students. This is evident in the network of al-Basri's students, who came not only from local scholars, the Haramayn, but also from other Islamic regions, such as Anatolia, Central Asia, Yemen, Egypt, the Levant regions, and others. The students described in this chapter are limited to only a few of al-Basri's important students in several Islamic regions. In other words, there were many other al-Basri students spread across several regions, as al-Faryāṭī notes that al-Basri's students reached hundreds of important scholars throughout the world.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, al-Basri's students played a major role in continuing the tradition of teaching and transmitting hadith books, both in their own regions and in peripheral Islamic regions, such as Indonesia.

¹⁹⁶ Al-‘Arabī al-Dā’iz al-Firyāṭī., *Min a’lām al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām ‘Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 1st ed. 103–48.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ABDULLAH IBN SALIM AL-BASRI IN PRESERVING ḤADĪTH TRADITION IN THE 18th CENTURY OF HARAMAYN

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the role of Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri in preserving and maintaining the tradition of hadith scholarship in the Haramayn in the 18th century. Even though the majority of scholars in that century were generally well versed in hadith scholarship, al-Basri occupied a unique and distinct position in the intellectual landscape. Unlike some of his contemporaries, such as al-Shanʿānī in Yemen and al-Dihlawi in India, who sought to deconstruct or redefine the methodological framework of hadith studies or interpret hadith within the framework of Sufism, ideology, or specific sectarian affiliations, al-Basri adopted a more conservative approach. He demonstrated a strong commitment to the continuity of the classical hadith tradition and consistently focused on strengthening the substantive aspects of hadith studies themselves. Thus, the discussion in this chapter occupies a central position in this thesis, as it will clearly illustrate al-Basri's efforts and dedication to preserving the integrity of the ḥadīth discipline in the Two Holy Mosques, whose influence later spread to various regions of the Islamic world.

Al-Basri's consistency in maintaining this classical ḥadīth tradition was recognized by later generations of ḥadīth scholars. One of them was al-Kaṭṭānī, who, in the introduction to *Fihris al-Fahāris*, emphasized the importance of the title *al-Ḥāfiẓ*, the highest predicate in the discipline of ḥadīth, which he considered continues to hold relevance throughout history. He rejected the view that limits this title to scholars such as al-Suyūṭī and al-Sakhāwī, stating that the gift of knowledge from Allah is not bound by space and time. In this regard, al-Kaṭṭānī set strict standards for an *al-Ḥāfiẓ*, such as a deep mastery of ḥadīth science, breadth of *isnād*, and sharpness in assessing narrations. Interestingly, among the three leading ḥadīth scholars in Haramayn at that time, Ḥasan al-ʿUjaymī, Aḥmad al-Nakhīlī, and al-Basri, only al-Basri was explicitly highlighted by al-Kaṭṭānī. This indicates that al-Basri's dedication and competence in the field of ḥadīth were considered outstanding, even placing him ahead of many of his contemporaries. Thus, al-Basri's position as an authoritative guardian of the ḥadīth tradition was not only recognized locally in the Haramayn but also legitimized by prominent scholars across generations.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ According to al-Kaṭṭānī, the minimal requirements for a ḥāfiẓ in the contemporary era include: being widely recognized for active and proficient engagement in ḥadīth sciences; having studied under reliable and reputable teachers; affirming the authenticity and precision of isnāds through rigorous verification and scrutiny; possessing direct auditory transmission of major ḥadīth

4.1. Dualism of *Riwāya-Dirāya* al-Basri: Ḥadīth Transmission and Methodological Implications in Haramayn in the 18th Century

The previous chapter outlined the general model of ḥadīth transmission that developed in the 18th century, which included three main approaches: first, the method of rapid reading or *ṭarīq al-sard*, which emphasized the concise delivery of the *matn* of the ḥadīth without detailed explanation; second, the method of reading accompanied by explanations of complex or problematic aspects, known as *ṭarīq al-ḥall wa al-baḥṭh*; and third, the elaborative approach or *ṭarīq al-im'ān*, which links ḥadīth with other disciplines to broaden understanding. Among these three approaches, the *ṭarīq al-sard* method appears to have been the most dominant in the transmission of ḥadīth in the 18th century, especially among scholars whose primary goal was to obtain permission to hear or transmit ḥadīth quickly without delving into its content and explanation. In addition to the rapid recitation of ḥadīth, the granting of *ijāza* to scholars became an important mechanism in the transmission process, as explained in Chapter Two. In this context, al-Basri, according to Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi, combined two models of ḥadīth transmission in his career: the rapid recitation model (*sard*) and the transmission model accompanied by explanations and understanding of the ḥadīth being recited, adjusted to the context of those to whom he transmitted the ḥadīth.¹⁹⁸ Additionally, al-Basri was also involved in ḥadīth transmission based on *ijāza*, as will be discussed in the following section.

At this point, I must admit the limitations of the data on how al-Basri taught ḥadīth through the mechanism of rapid reading (*sard*). Instead, what has been widely found so far is al-Basri's ḥadīth transmission model through the *ijāza* mechanism, as well as ḥadīth teaching using the second method, namely ḥadīth recitation accompanied by an explanation of the meaning of the ḥadīth itself (*ṭarīq al-ḥall wa-l-baḥṭh*). Nevertheless, the first model, the *Sard* method, at least shares the same motive as the *ijāza* model, which is to expedite the ḥadīth transmission process without taking too much time, as al-Basri's transmission

collections such as al-Kutub al-Sitta (the Six Canonical Books) and al-Masānid al-Arba'ah (the Four Musnads) from authoritative scholars; demonstrating a thorough understanding of ḥadīth terminology; studying key works like Ibn Ṣalāḥ's texts along with their commentaries and Sharḥ al-'Ulfiyyah; being capable of producing recognized scholarly works in ḥadīth or at least possessing strong literary skills; having broad knowledge and the ability to select the best opinions in matters of disagreement while expanding one's transmission repertoire; acquiring knowledge both locally and through travel to obtain strong isnāds; understanding the classifications of scholars across various ranks and being familiar with their biographies; maintaining access to and collection of authentic isnāds, musnads, classical texts, and scholarly tools with the capacity to preserve and recall them; and continuously developing oneself into old age with dedication and perseverance in learning and transmitting ḥadīth. See al-Kaṭṭānī, *Fihris al-Fahāris*, introduction. al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:71–79.

¹⁹⁸ Dihlawī, *Insān Al-'Ayn Fī Mashāyikh al-Ḥaramayn*, 98.

partners in this context were scholars who did not require further explanation of the meaning and intent of the ḥadīth itself. This differs from the model of ḥadīth transmission, which is accompanied by the interpretation of the ḥadīth's meaning and an explanation of the transmitters' conditions within the *isnād* of the ḥadīth. In this context, al-Basri transmits the ḥadīth to his students, who are still at the beginner stage in the discipline of ḥadīth science.

Davidson, in his study of the history of ḥadīth transmission, attempts to distinguish between two models of *ijāza* that apply in the process of ḥadīth transmission, namely *ijāza* for *riwāya* and *ijāza* for *tadris* (*dirāya*). According to him, *ijāza* for *riwāya* is an authorization that allows the recipient to transmit a ḥadīth or specific text without having to listen to all or part of the material directly from an authoritative source. Meanwhile, *ijāza* for *tadris* or teaching (*dirāya*) is a qualification certification granted in certain contexts as official permission for the recipient to teach. The latter *ijāza* is obtained through direct learning with a teacher, which includes a deep understanding and explanation of the meaning of the ḥadīth, making *ijāza al-dirāya* much more difficult to obtain than *ijāzat al-riwāya*.¹⁹⁹ Thus, the teaching and transmission methods of ḥadīth applied by al-Basri can be categorized into two categories: the *sard* method or rapid reading, whose output is an *ijāza* for *riwāya*, while the *ṭarīq al-ḥall wa-l-baḥṭh* method has an output for both transmitting and teaching ḥadīth, as the recipient of the *ijāza* in this context is considered to already understand the meaning contained within the ḥadīth itself.

4.1.1 Transmission of Ḥadīth Through the Mechanism of *Ijāza* for *Riwāya*

The *ijāza riwāya*, which is the granting of authority to someone to narrate or convey ḥadīths and their collections, was a common practice in the tradition of ḥadīth transmission in the Ḥaramayn region in the 18th century. In this context, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī actively employed this model, which generally did not require the full recitation of ḥadīth or ḥadīth collections in the presence of the student. Al-Baṣrī's application of this method was adapted to the conditions and needs of the recipients of the *ijāza*, most of whom were established scholars who did not have enough time to stay long in Mecca. One example is Aḥmad ibn Nāṣir al-Dar‘ī (d. 1129 AH / 1717 CE), also known as Aḥmad Khalīfa. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1122 AH / 1710 CE, and he mentioned his meetings with several prominent scholars, including al-Baṣrī. In his testimony, it is mentioned that the seekers of knowledge in Mecca generally recognized al-Baṣrī's superiority over the scholars of the Ḥaramayn in the field of ḥadīth and various other

¹⁹⁹ Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 110.

branches of knowledge.²⁰⁰ On that occasion, Ahmad Khalifa requested permission to narrate *al-Kutub al-Sittah* and *al-Muwattaʿa* of Malik from al-Basri. In the content of the *ijāza*, al-Baṣrī himself acknowledged Ahmad Khalīfa's scholarly authority through the statement: “I have requested from the humble servant of Allah, our leader and master, the ‘*allāmah*, the perfect example, the great faqīh, our teacher, Sheikh Sayyidi...”²⁰¹ This practice confirms that al-Baṣrī used the *ijāza riwāya* as the primary method for transmitting the collection of ḥadīths to scholars who already possessed scholarly authority.

Several *ijāza* documents indicate that al-Baṣrī consistently utilized his work in the *thabat* genre, *al-Imdād fī Maʿrifat ʿUlūw al-Isnād*, in the process of granting *ijāza*. He granted authorization for the transmission of knowledge (*ijāza*) to his students to narrate all the ḥadīth and collections contained in the *al-Imdād*. This pattern is exemplified in the *ijāza* issued by al-Baṣrī to Sayyid Aḥmad Ghānim ‘Alī Afandī (d. 1130 AH / 1718 CE), in which he explicitly states the granting of *ijāza* for the entire contents of his *thabat*.²⁰² In addition to Afandī, Abū al-‘Abbās al-Dakālī al-Fāsī (d. 1160 AH / 1747 CE) also received an *ijāza* directly from al-Baṣrī specifically for the book *al-Imdād* (which is al-Baṣrī's *thabat*). Al-Kattānī mentions that he has a copy of *al-Imdād* that al-Dakālī strictly transcribed in front of the Kaʿba. This copy was then read (‘*arḍ*’) in front of al-Baṣrī, with an official *ijāza* included in the colophon that authenticated the transmission of the text.²⁰³

Furthermore, several of al-Baṣrī's *ijāza* documents reveal his practice of using his teachers' *thabat* before compiling his similar works, as described earlier. It appears that al-Baṣrī made use of his teachers' *thabats* in the process of ḥadīth transmission before he had compiled his own. This pattern is seen in the *ijāza* given to Khaṭīb Muṣṭafā Afandī al-Istānbūlī (d. 1164 AH / 1751 CE), in which al-Baṣrī granted authorization for transmission (*ijāza*) of *Muntakhab al-Asānīd fī Waṣl al-Muṣannaḥāt wa al-Ajzāʾ wa al-Masānīd*, a *thabat* work by his teacher, Shaykh ʿIsā al-Thaʿālibī. As stated in Chapter Three, this compilation brings together the *isnād* ḥadīth and collection of books that al-Baṣrī received together with al-Thaʿālibī from Muḥammad ‘Alāʾ al-Dīn al-Bābilī. In addition, al-Baṣrī also made use of another *thabat* belonging to his teacher, namely *Ṣilat al-Khalaf bi Mawṣūl al-Salaf* by Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Rūdānī, as mentioned in the *ijāza* for Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad

²⁰⁰ al-Darʿi, *Al-Rihlah al-Nasiriyya*, 367.

²⁰¹ Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh ʿInān et al., *Fahāris Al-Khizāna al-Ḥasaniyya*, 1st ed. (al-Maṭbaʿa al-Mamlakiyya, n.d.), 1:1158–59; al-Faryāṭī, *Min Aʿlām Al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-l-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 223–24.

²⁰² al-Faryāṭī, *Min Aʿlām Al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-l-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 221.

²⁰³ al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Muʿjam al-Maʿajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:193.

ibn Ḥasan al-Jawharī (d. 1181 H / 1767 CE).²⁰⁴ Furthermore, al-Kattani also mentioned that he had a copy of Sheikh Hasan Ibn Muhammad al-Barzanji's *Shilatul Khalaf* by Muhammad Ibn Sulaiman al-Rudani, which al-Barzanji obtained permission to narrate from al-Basri.²⁰⁵

Al-Basri not only used the model of ḥadīth transmission through *ijāza* without reading the ḥadīth book, but sometimes he also issued *ijāza* after reading several ḥadīths from a particular ḥadīth collection. For example, a well-known scholar from Syria, ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sharābaṭī (d. 1178 AH / 1764 CE), once asked for *ijāza* for several ḥadīth books from al-Basri, such as the *Kutubussittah*, the *Muwatta’* of Malik, and other collections. This happened in 1123 AH or 1711 CE, while ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sharābaṭī was performing Hajj in Mecca. In this case, al-Basri granted the *ijāza* after reading multiple ḥadīths from one of the collections. Al-Basri said in his *ijāza*, “The recipient of the *ijāza* has recited to me (*qara’a ‘alayya al-mūjaz al-mushār ilayhi*) the first three ḥadīths from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.” This *ijāza* probably took place before al-Basri compiled one of his most important works, *al-Awā’il al-Ḥadīthiyyah*. At the end of this book, it seems al-Basri gave *ijāza* to his two students, Ahmad Jawhari al-Khalidi and Ahmad Malawi. It appears that he compiled this book at their request, as explained earlier. Besides these two students, Al-Jabarti mentions that Sheikh Abdullah Ibn Muhammad al-Syibraawi (d. 1171 AH / 1757 CE) heard the *musalsal bi al-awwaliyya* and *al-Awā’il al-Ḥadīthiyyah* from Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri.

The granting of *ijāza* by al-Basri to several scholars, as illustrated by some of his certificates, shows that al-Basri granted them *ijāza riwāya* in order to preserve the tradition of continuity of the *isnad* of ḥadīth in the Islamic world. The majority of those who received certificates from al-Basri were prominent scholars whose authority as scholars in various disciplines had already been recognized. Despite holding important positions within society and possessing profound religious knowledge, for scholars of that era, *isnād* remained a crucial scholarly tool in reinforcing their identity.²⁰⁶ Therefore, the pursuit of *Isnād* ‘Ālī, such as requesting *ijāza* from al-Basri, was a common phenomenon among scholars. At first glance, it appears that al-Basri was granted this *ijāza riwāya* with relative ease. However, al-Basri was not a scholar who granted *ijāza riwāya* carelessly. This is because the majority of those who received *ijāza riwāya* from al-Basri were scholars who already

²⁰⁴ al-Faryāṭī, *Min A’lām Al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-l-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 248.

²⁰⁵ al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu’jam al-Ma’ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:427.

²⁰⁶ Voll, “From Saints and Renewers to Mahdis and Proto-Nationalists,” 505.

had a deep understanding of ḥadīth. This can be identified from several *ijāzas* granted by al-Basri to scholars, where al-Basri himself acknowledged that they were great scholars and role models for the Muslim community at that time. Additionally, some of al-Basri's *ijāzas* explicitly state that the recipients of these *ijāzas* were already experts and masters of what was being authorized. For example, in the *ijāza* to Ahmad Ibn Ali al-Manini (d. 1172 AH / 1758 CE) and Abdurrahman, al-Manini's brother, al-Basri clearly states, "And I have permitted the two people mentioned (al-Manini and his brother) to narrate from me everything contained in the two indexes (*Shila al-Khalaf* and *Muntakhab al-Asanid*) mentioned, and everything that I am permitted to narrate and that can be narrated from me, because both of them are indeed qualified (*ahl*) to receive it."²⁰⁷ This indicates that al-Basri was very aware of the status of the recipients of the *ijāza*.

4.1.2 The Transmission of Ḥadīth through *Ijāza* for *Dirāya*

One of the key weaknesses in the transmission of ḥadīth through the mechanism of *ijāzat al-riwāya* is that the ḥadīth text being transmitted is neither read nor understood. This is due to the main orientation of this practice, which focuses on obtaining *isnād*, especially *isnād 'ālī*, which is regarded by ḥadīth scholars as a key source of academic validation. For example, Al-Ayyasi (d. 1090 AH / 1679 CE) was once reprimanded by his teacher, Badr al-Din al-Hindi, when Al-Ayyasi arrived in Medina after returning from Mecca. According to Badr al-Din al-Hindi, in Mecca, the ḥadīth learning system was dominated by ḥadīth transmission based on *riwāya* in the form of *ijāza*. In this case, Badr al-Din al-Hindi, a scholar from the Indian subcontinent and teacher of Ibrahim Kurani, criticized the pattern of ḥadīth teaching in Mecca, which only emphasized the *riwāya* aspect rather than the *dirāya* aspect. He said that if Indian students attended al-Ayyāshī's teaching sessions, they would most likely be surprised and even criticize the methods used. This was due to the tendency to read ḥadīth without any effort to understand its meaning or discuss its details. For Badr al-Dīn, such an approach was considered to provide no substantial scientific benefit, as the teaching of ḥadīth should not be limited to reading, but should also include exploring the meaning and extracting the benefits from the content of the ḥadīth.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ al-Faryāṭī, *Min A'lām Al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-l-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 231.

²⁰⁸ 'Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad al-Ayyāshī, *Al-Riḥlah al-Ayyāshiyyah*, ed. Sa'īd al-Fāḍilī and Sulaymān al-Qurashī, vol. 1 (UEA: Dār al-Suwaydī lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2006), 630–33; In addition to al-Ayyāshī, al-Ḥamawī also conveyed Badr al-Dīn al-Hindī's critical perspective on the pattern of ḥadīth transmission based solely on *riwāyah*. According to him, Badr al-Dīn al-Hindī regarded the reading of ḥadīth that relied exclusively on *isnād* (*lā yastahsin qirā'at al-ḥadīth riwāyatan*) as lacking substantial scholarly value. He considered the mere act of listening to a ḥadīth—without engaging in the study of its meanings, concepts, and legal implications—as a practice of limited benefit. Al-Hindī emphasized the importance of critical engagement with both

Dumairieh highlights the development of ḥadīth studies in the 17th century by rejecting the notion that this period was a time of revival of ḥadīth scholarship in the Haramayn. He criticized the position of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī as a central figure in ḥadīth studies in Medina and, through an analysis of his works compared to those of 15th-century scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, concludes that the 17th century reflects the role of Hijaz as a center for global exchange of *isnād* through the activity of *Ḥajj*, rather than as a center of innovation in *matn* or ḥadīth criticism. Al-Kūrānī's focus on *isnād* is exemplified as a response to previous scholarly traditions and as a form of Sufi-theological connection with past authorities.²⁰⁹ On the one hand, Dumairieh's findings are acceptable, given that the dominance of *ijāza* practices and *isnād*-based transmission was indeed a common phenomenon in ḥadīth studies in the Haramayn in the 17th and 18th centuries. However, this does not mean that a deep approach to ḥadīth teaching was absent from the region. In Mecca, for example, although scholars tended to prioritize the aspect of transmission through *ijāza* and made *isnād* an important instrument, the mechanism of ḥadīth transmission based on *dirāya* continued to exist. In other words, the *ijāza* model for transmission continued to prevail among scholars. However, beginner and intermediate-level students remained engaged in ḥadīth learning processes that emphasized understanding the meaning of ḥadīth, as well as analyzing *isnād* through classical *sharḥ* texts (the text of hadith commentary) or the *sharḥ* works of their teachers.

Although ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālīm al-Baṣrī is widely known as a figure who actively transmitted ḥadīth through the mechanism of *ijāza* for *riwāya*, on a number of occasions, he also developed a transmission approach that emphasized deepening the meaning of ḥadīth (*dirāya*) and critical studies of the conditions of transmitters found in *isnād*. Thus, al-Baṣrī did not merely act as a collector and inheritor of *isnād*, but also as an educator who prioritized understanding in the teaching of ḥadīth. This is reflected, for example, in the intellectual journey of Abū Bakr ibn Zāhirah al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1195 AH / 1780 CE). ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mirdād mentions that Ibn Zāhirah studied under some scholars in Haramayn, such as Ḥasan al-‘Ujaymī, ‘Abd Allāh Ṭarafah, and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sālīm al-Baṣrī. These teachers not only permitted him to narrate ḥadīth but also authorized him to teach, enabling Ibn Zāhirah to become a teacher at the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*. He was later appointed as the

the general and specific aspects of a ḥadīth, as well as the extraction of legal rulings, as essential components of the scholarly process in ḥadīth studies. See: Muṣṭafā ibn Faṭḥ Allāh, *Fawā'id Al-Irtihāl Wa-Natā'ij al-Safar Fī Akhbār al-Qarn al-Ḥādī 'ashar*, 1st ed., vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Nawādir, 2011), 233.

²⁰⁹ Dumairieh, *Revising the Assumption That Ḥadīth Studies Flourished in the 11th/17th-Century Hijāz*.

mufti (jurisconsult) of the Hanbali school of thought in the *Masjid al-Ḥarām*.²¹⁰ This fact demonstrates that the transmission of ḥadīth in the *Masjid al-Ḥarām* in the 18th century was not limited to the aspect of narration, but also included the dimension of understanding, where students obtained *ijāza al-tadrīs* (teaching/*dirāya*) after demonstrating a deep understanding of the material taught. In this context, al-Baṣrī's active role in shaping Ibn Ḍāhirah's scholarly capacity underscores his contribution not only in preserving the chain of transmission but also in developing scholarly authority through substantive teaching.

Another example that illustrates how al-Basri was also active in the transmission of ḥadīth based on *ijāza* for *dirāya* is the *ijāza* he gave to Ibn Himmat al-Dimashqī (d. 1175 AH / 1761 CE). Ibn Himmat, known as the “Ḥadīth Scholar of Istanbul” and “*Musnid*,” was an expert in ḥadīth with a chain of transmission who taught at the Ahmediyye Mosque and the *Dār al-Ḥadīth Valide-i Atik in Üsküdar*. He was appointed as the official *muḥaddis* at the Ayasofya Library by Sultan Maḥmūd I, and also taught at Galata Sarayı and the court. His most famous work is *Tuḥfat al-Rāwī fī Takhrij Aḥādīth al-Bayḍāwī*.²¹¹ Ibn Himmat came to Mecca in 1132 AH to settle and study with the scholars there. Ibn Himmat's stay in Mecca was quite long, lasting about a year. Upon arriving in Mecca, he visited al-Basri at his home and asked al-Basri to narrate to him the ḥadīth of *musalsal bil awwaliyah*. After the first meeting, al-Basri revealed that Ibn Himmat regularly visited his home to study with him every day, in the morning and evening. Additionally, al-Basri explicitly stated in his *ijāza* that he applied the process of transmission and interpretation of knowledge to Ibn Himmat. This indicates that the transfer of knowledge between al-Basri and Ibn Himmat was highly intensive and profound.²¹²

During his year-long stay, Ibn Himmat successfully studied various works of ḥadīth and other Islamic disciplines under the direct guidance of al-Baṣrī. In the *ijāza* he received, it is recorded that al-Baṣrī taught Ibn Himmat around 40 books of ḥadīth and 6 books of tafsir. Some of these were transmitted through the method of *riwāya*, which involves reading part of the book and then certifying the remainder. This was done, for example, through the reading of the book *al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyyah*, a work compiled by al-Baṣrī himself. For other books, al-Baṣrī provided direct explanations of the ḥadīths that were read, referring to literature such as *sharḥ* and *ḥāshiyah*. In teaching *al-Muwatta'* by Mālik, for example, he used *Ḥāshiyat* of al-Suyūṭī and *Sharḥ* of al-Zurqānī as explanatory references. When teaching *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-Baṣrī refers to his commentary, *Ḍiyyā' al-*

²¹⁰ Abu al-Khair, *Al-Mukhtasar Min Kitāb Nashr al-Nur Wa al-Zahr Fi Tarajum Afādil Makkah*, 67.

²¹¹ Ayaz, “İstanbul’da Müsnid Bir Muhaddis; İbn Himmât ed-Dımaşkî (1175/1761).”

²¹² Ḥāmid b. Yūsuf al-Jalūṭī, “Jāmi’ Riwayāt Al-Fahāris Wa-Lāmi’ Ijāzāt Ahl al-Fahāris” (naskh script, Medina, King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Library, n.d.), 164–65

Sārī fī Masālik Abwāb al-Bukhārī, and compares it with the *sharh* works of earlier scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī and al-Qaṣṣālānī. In teaching al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, he uses the *takhrīj ḥadīth* written by al-‘Irāqī. Meanwhile, in explaining the status of the transmitters, al-Basrī refers to ‘ilm rijāl literature such as *al-Taqrīb* by Ibn Ḥajar, *Lubbu al-Ansāb* by al-Suyūṭī, *al-Atrāf* by al-Mizzī, and *Usūd al-Ghābah* by Ibn al-Athīr.²¹³ The *ijāza* granted to Ibn Himmat reveals al-Basri’s diligence and expertise in ḥadīth and ḥadīth science. He did not merely act as a collector of *Isnād* of ḥadīth but also understood and taught the substantive content of what was transmitted to his students.

4.1.3 Criticism of Haramayn’s Dominant Narrative: The Dual Transmission of al-Basri and the Neutrality of *Ijāza Riwāya*

The transmission of ḥadīth through the mechanism of *ijāza riwāya* was the dominant practice among 18th-century scholars in Haramayn. As stated in chapter two, one of the main motives in this transmission process was to obtain *isnād ‘ālī*, which held a special position among ḥadīth scholars. In this context, Dickinson highlights the practice of collecting *isnāds* in the discipline of ḥadīth, which has long ceased to perform its original function, namely to verify the *matn* (text or content) of a ḥadīth by ensuring the authenticity of each individual or connectedness of the *isnād*.²¹⁴ Regarding the *ijāza* granted by al-Basri, Sara Nims, in her study of the *ijāza* of Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā al-Iskandarī al-Ṣabbāgh (d. 1162 AH / 1748 CE), one of al-Basri’s students, reveals a significant transformation in the epistemology of ḥadīth studies, where *isnād* no longer functions primarily as an instrument of historical verification. The authenticity of the *matn* had been established, so that the recording of *isnād* shifted to a ritual-textual practice of a devotional nature. Its essential value lay in the process of *qurba* (physical and spiritual closeness) with an authoritative teacher through authorized transmission (*barkah* / blessing), rather than in its informative content. As stated in the *ijāza* of Ṣabbāgh, *isnād* is understood as a means of *taqarrub ilā Allāh* (drawing closer to Allah), forming a spiritual network that spans generations back to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Thus, *isnād* becomes a manifestation of the continuity of the intellectual community and transcendent piety, surpassing its original technical function.²¹⁵

On the one hand, the above paradigm may be acceptable in that the function of *isnād* has transformed from a means of verifying the authenticity of ḥadīth to a devotional

²¹³ Hāmid b. Yūsuf al-Jalūṭī, “*Jāmi’ Riwayāt Al-Fahāris Wa-Lāmi’ Ijāzāt Ahl al-Fahāris*” (naskh script, Medina, King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Library, n.d.), 166–68

²¹⁴ Eerik Dickinson, “*Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī and the Isnād*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122, no. 3 (2002).

²¹⁵ Nims, “Sainthood and the Law,” 193.

practice that connects a scholar with the Prophet Muhammad, and ultimately reflects spiritual closeness to the Creator. However, it is inaccurate to simplify this by concluding that the process of ḥadīth transmission post-codification is purely symbolic and does not involve the reading and deep understanding of the ḥadīth texts that are transmitted. Although the devotional dimension and the search for *isnād 'ālī* dominate part of the ḥadīth transmission tradition, this does not negate the existence of *ijāza* for al-*dirāya*, which emphasizes the aspects of understanding and learning. Therefore, understanding 'Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī in the context of ḥadīth studies in the Ḥaramayn in the 18th century solely as a figure holding an *isnād 'ālī* would simplify and overlook his contribution in teaching ḥadīth in depth to students of knowledge. One of the weaknesses of this approach is the tendency to evaluate al-Baṣrī based solely on one *ijāza* document, then draw partial conclusions about his scholarly authority. However, in other certificates, such as the one issued to Ibn Himmat, it is clear that al-Baṣrī not only granted authorization for narration but also stated that his student had attained the qualifications to teach, following a learning process that included explaining the meaning of ḥadīth and analyzing the status of transmitters.

Beyond the evidence offered by *ijāza*, al-Baṣrī's role in teaching ḥadīth through the *dirāya* approach can also be traced through several *khatm* works that have been described previously in chapter three. The essence of writing a *khatm* book in the ḥadīth tradition is that the work is compiled to commemorate the final session of the ḥadīth teaching process. This book usually includes an explanation of the *matn* of ḥadīth that was read, a *sharḥ* (explanation) of the last ḥadīth that was read, as well as other related information, including details about the author of the work.²¹⁶ In addition, al-Baṣrī's position as one of the holders of *isnād 'ālī* in Mecca was not the only reason why the *ṭullāb* (seekers of knowledge) came to study with him. They were also motivated by al-Baṣrī's reputation as a *muḥaddith* who taught ḥadīth through an analytical approach based on commentary and other disciplines of ḥadīth science, particularly those related to the evaluation of al-rāwī through references to the works of earlier scholars in the field of *'ilm rijāl al-ḥadīth*. In this context, the case of the meeting between al-Baṣrī and 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1134 AH / 1722 CE) explicitly demonstrates the depth of al-Baṣrī's knowledge in the field of *dirāya*. During the scientific discussion, al-Nābulusī obtained important information about the collection of major works in the field of ḥadīth and *'ulūm al-ḥadīth* owned by al-Baṣrī, such as the works

²¹⁶ Badr b. Muḥammad b. Muḥsin al-'Amāsh, *Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī Wa-Juhūduhu Fī al-Ḥadīth Wa-'ulūmihi*, 1st ed. (Maktabat al-Rushd, 2000), 1:239.

of al-Mizzī and Ibn Ḥajar, which consist of several volumes.²¹⁷ This confirms that al-Baṣrī not only played a role in the transmission of ḥadīth for *riwāya* but also actively maintained the *dirāya* approach, thus deserving the title of *al-Ḥāfiẓ* of the 18th century, as affirmed by al-Kattānī.

Nevertheless, al-Baṣrī's involvement in the transmission of ḥadīth through the mechanism of *ijāza al-riwāya* is a fact that cannot be ignored. However, it should be emphasized that the recipients of these *ijāza* were generally 'ulamā' who already possessed a high level of scholarly maturity. Therefore, the process of transmitting ḥadīth to them was not done through a *dirāya* approach that included explanations of the meaning, context, and legal implications of the *matn* ḥadīth. Their main motive in meeting al-Baṣrī was not to gain a deep understanding of the content of the ḥadīth, but to obtain *isnād 'ālī* and access the collection of ḥadīth owned by al-Baṣrī. In this context, the distinction between *ijāza al-riwāya* and *ijāza al-dirāya* as explained by Davidson is important for understanding the complexity of the socio-intellectual relations of the 'ulamā' in Mecca in the 17th and 18th centuries. This distinction shows that *ijāza al-riwāya* only marks the continuity of *isnād* transmission, while *ijāza al-dirāya* indicates recognition of the student's understanding and scientific capabilities. Therefore, it is not accurate to assume that an *ijāza* obtained from a teacher always impacts the student's understanding or ideology.²¹⁸ Given that most scholars who came to the Ḥaramayn were already established in their scholarship and did not stay for long periods, the practice of *ijāza al-riwāya* became an efficient mechanism and did not necessarily indicate the transfer of specific ideologies or thoughts.

4.2. The Preservation of Ḥadīth Text in the 18th Century: Al-Basri's Correction (*Tahqīq*) Role and Its Influence on Ḥadīth Canonical Consolidation

This section will attempt to reveal Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri's contribution to critical studies of ḥadīth texts. This project was undertaken to preserve the authenticity and originality of ḥadīth collections circulating throughout the Islamic world. In other words, al-Basri's critical study was not an attempt to doubt or question the quality of ḥadīth, but rather an effort to ensure that the authenticity of ḥadīth texts circulating in Muslim communities could be verified as consistent with what their authors had written centuries ago. Just as is common in the contemporary era, the emergence of multiple editions of the same book with minor changes, omissions, or additions is a common phenomenon in the

²¹⁷ 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Al-Ḥaqīqah Wa-al-Majāz Fī al-Riḥlah Ilā Bilād al-Shām Wa-Miṣr Wa-al-Hijāz*, 1st ed., ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Majīd Harīdī (al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-'Āmmah li-al-Kitāb, 1986), 464.

²¹⁸ Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 110.

modern era. This was also the case in the early Islamic period. Given that before the modern era, printing technology for mass-producing books had not yet been invented or widely used, students studying under a particular teacher would bring copies of the texts being taught, while making corrections to the texts based on the teacher's explanations. Some of them also made additions or omissions to what they deemed inconsistent with what they had received from their teachers. These manuscript copies were then transmitted to subsequent generations. Thus, it is not surprising that several centuries later, copies of certain books exhibit differences from one another.²¹⁹

In the world of classical Islamic intellectualism, the copying and dissemination of knowledge were heavily dependent on the role of manuscript copyists. Two main terms describe this function, namely, *nāsikh* and *warrāq*. *Nāsikh* comes from the Arabic verb *nasakha*, which means to copy, referring to individuals who were directly involved in the activity of copying manuscript texts. In addition, in the world of classical Islamic scholarship, the figure of the *muṣaḥḥiḥ* or corrector played an important role in ensuring the accuracy of the manuscript's content. A *muṣaḥḥiḥ* typically had expertise in the fields of grammar (*nahw*), morphology (*ṣarf*), and lexicography. They had to be careful in making corrections, only changing the text if they were certain of the error. This correction is not only technical but also requires a deep understanding of the scientific content of the text. Additionally, the role of the *muqābil* (verifier or collator) is to compare various manuscript copies to ensure the accuracy of the text, a process known as *mu'āraḍah* or *muqābalah*.²²⁰ Abdullah Ibn Salīm al-Baṣrī, a prominent figure in the field of ḥadīth during that period, held all three roles, as a *nāsikh*, *muṣaḥḥiḥ*, and *muqābil*, in the process of copying, correcting, and comparing manuscripts, demonstrating the depth of his involvement in preserving the authenticity and validity of ḥadīth texts.

It must be acknowledged that the exploration of al-Basri's contribution to the critical study of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* did not involve primary sources, such as the original manuscripts of al-Basri's reviews, due to limitations in data and time. Nevertheless, the secondary sources I have encountered at least provide a general overview of how al-Basri's efforts significantly influenced the authenticity of the collection of ḥadīth texts up to the contemporary era. The use of these secondary sources includes the acceptance and recognition of scholars after al-Basri in this intellectual endeavor. In addition, it also utilizes current literature that reveals the critical edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* published by the *Sultaniyyah* edition. The use of secondary sources, such as the acceptance of scholars

²¹⁹ Muhammad Musthafa Azami, *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature*, n.d., 79–80.

²²⁰ Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*, 221–22.

of al-Basri's contribution in this aspect, is a reasonable thing to do when we do not have direct access to it. This is similar to what Zacky Khairul Umam did when describing the important figure of ḥadīth scholar and Sufi in Medina, Ahmad Qusyasyi. He supported his claim regarding Ahmad Qusyasyi's expertise in the field of ḥadīth by analyzing the work of his student, Ibrahim Kurani. Umam states that “while we have no sufficient evidence from Qushashi's writings, Kurani in his curriculum vitae al-Amam transmitted high *isnād*s from this Medinan teacher. This implies that Qushashi's superiority was widely acclaimed by his peers in Medina and beyond. Wider recognition from other scholars corroborated Kurani's position.”²²¹

4.2.1. Non-Oral Transmission and Scribal Errors: Dual Mechanisms of Ḥadīth Textual Variance

Since its inception, ḥadīth transmission has prioritized oral transmission over written transmission, such as verbatim copying of ḥadīth from a teacher's notes. Although in practice, copying ḥadīth in certain notes is still practiced, in the culture of ḥadīth scholars, transmitting ḥadīth to the next generation orally remains the preferred practice. The majority of ḥadīth scholars consider transmitting ḥadīth in written form or through notes without undergoing the oral transmission process to be a threat that could easily lead to errors and misunderstandings.²²² Therefore, scholars continue to prioritize sessions where ḥadīth are heard directly from the teacher (*samāʿ*) or recited in the presence of the teacher (*qiraʿa ʿala Sheikh*) as an important mechanism in the transmission of ḥadīth. This is intended to minimize errors and misunderstandings in the transmission process.

In the middle of the fourth century AH, along with the emergence of the ḥadīth scholars' movement to collect ḥadīths in specific collections, such as sorting authentic ḥadīths into one collection, oral transmission remained the main pillar. However, at this stage, the process of ḥadīth transmission was carried out by listening to specific ḥadīth texts from teachers, while students copied what they heard from their teachers in the form of written collections. In this context, the majority of ḥadīth scholars required that only the written copies of ḥadīth texts heard from the teacher could be transmitted to subsequent generations. For example, if a transmitter hears and writes *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* from his teacher, then to continue the transmission of ḥadīth to the next generation, he is required to only transmit the manuscript or copy he received from his previous teacher. In other words, he is not permitted to transmit another copy of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. This restriction is rooted

²²¹ Umam, “*Becoming a Sunni Scholar: Ibrahim Kurani (d. 1690), His Role in Seventeenth-Century Medina and the Transregional Context of His Writings*,” 131.

²²² Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 47.

in the manuscript culture of medieval Islam. The process of copying and transmission often resulted in significant differences in the manuscripts of a particular ḥadīth collection. Therefore, transmitting ḥadīths not based on the manuscript copy heard with the teacher was considered an incorrect practice and was condemned by ḥadīth scholars of this period. For example, Al-Rawwās (d. 503 AH / 1109 CE) was once accused of transmitting *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* from a manuscript different from the one used in the *samāʿ* (the transmission process) he attended, an act considered highly reprehensible in the view of ḥadīth scholars.²²³

The points outlined above substantiate that, even in the early stages of ḥadīth codification, the strict transmission of ḥadīth remained an important mechanism that continued to command the attention of ḥadīth scholars. However, over time, this transmission process began to undergo relaxation and change. Transmitters were no longer required to transmit ḥadīth to the next generation based on the manuscript copies they received when they received the ḥadīth text from their teachers. This occurred because the stability of ḥadīth texts had developed through the canonization process, such as the emergence of the *Kutubussittah*, which were accepted as collections of ḥadīths that could be practiced and used as a legal basis, since most of the ḥadīths contained in these texts had undergone a verification process. As a result, differences in ḥadīth manuscripts were no longer considered a serious threat to scholars, and the transmission of ḥadīth based on copies rather than the original text was no longer a requirement.²²⁴ For example, Ibn Salah stated that in the process of ḥadīth transmission, a transmitter was not required to verify the text of the ḥadīth directly during the transmission process (*samāʿ*). In fact, according to him, the verification process of ḥadīth texts may be carried out by others as long as they are trustworthy.²²⁵ This is different from what was practiced by previous scholars, who required a verification process and compared the transmitter's copy with their teacher's directly, i.e., during the transmission process. For example, Karimah Marwaziyya (d. 463 AH / 1070 CE), one of the female ḥadīth scholars who paid great attention to the transmission of ḥadīth, especially *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. She did not grant *ijāza riwāya* to her students unless they compared their copies of the text with the copies she possessed.²²⁶

According to Azami, a significant phenomenon in the transmission of ḥadīths after codification was the practice of students bringing personal copies of ḥadīth texts to the

²²³ Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 48–49.

²²⁴ Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 62.

²²⁵ Ibn Salah, *Muqaddimah Ibn Salah*, 198.

²²⁶ Jumʿah Fathī ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm, *Riwayāt Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ Wa Nusakhuhu: Dirāsah Naẓariyyah Taḥqīqiyah*, 1st ed. (Dār al-Falāḥ li-l-Baḥṡ al-ʿIlmī wa Taḥqīq al-Turāth, 2014), 451.

transmission assemblies. During the transmission process, a student would usually compare and adjust the contents of his copy with what he heard directly from the teacher. Azami emphasizes that in this context of adjustment, students have the freedom to add additional notes based on information obtained during the assembly. These additional notes may include explanations related to the *isnād* or *matn* of the ḥadīth itself, and even include the teacher's personal opinions conveyed orally. This permission for adding notes is what potentially causes differences in content between one student's copy and another's. Consequently, these variations between copies directly impact the emergence of ḥadīth text variants when the student transmits them to the next generation.²²⁷

Several centuries later, ḥadīth scholars began to apply *ijāza* as a mechanism for continuing the tradition of ḥadīth transmission. It no longer involved the oral transmission of ḥadīth, but utilized *ijāza* as a medium for continuing the tradition of *isnād*. Of course, this method did not involve the oral and complete transmission of ḥadīth texts. Although the oral transmission of ḥadīth texts remained in certain contexts, in many cases the use of *ijāza* became more dominant. Davidson explains that initially, the use of *ijāza* was criticized by ḥadīth scholars. However, over time, ḥadīth scholars began to accept this model and apply it to preserve the tradition of ḥadīth transmission and the continuity of *isnād*, which is an important aspect of the tradition of ḥadīth science. Even at an extreme level, recipients of *ijāza* were not restricted by specific conditions. Most ḥadīth scholars granted the widest possible leniency to recipients of *ijāza*. Therefore, it became a common phenomenon that recipients of *ijāza* were children or even individuals who did not understand Arabic. The purpose of *ijāza* was to ensure the continuity of ḥadīth transmission and *isnād*.²²⁸ The acceptance of *ijāza* as a mechanism for the transmission of ḥadīth continues centuries later and involves important figures in ḥadīth, such as Khatib al-Baghdadi, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, al-Qasthalani, and other great ḥadīth scholars.

From the above description, it is clear that the oral transmission of ḥadīth, and even more so non-oral transmission such as *ijāza*, had a significant impact on the emergence of variations in ḥadīth texts. The practice of transmission through critical reading of a text and direct comparison with the teacher's copy was a relatively rare method. In the post-codification period of ḥadīth, the *ijāza*-based transmission model became the more dominant form. Over time, the form of *ijāza* also changed. What is known as *ijāza muṭlaqa* emerged, which is an *ijāza* granted to a student without specifying the text or book being

²²⁷ Muḥammad Muṣṭafā A'zamī, *Studies in Early Hadīth Literature: With a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts*, 2nd edition (American Trust Publications, 1978), 204.

²²⁸ Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 137.

transmitted. In theory, this type of *ijāza* still requires the recipient to verify the text by referring directly to the teacher's original copy. However, in practice, this requirement is rarely fully implemented. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, for example, directly notes how negligence in this verification practice has led many transmitters to mistakenly attribute the text of a ḥadīth to its source.²²⁹ This phenomenon continued and even dominated the pattern of ḥadīth text transmission until the time of ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī, as discussed in the previous section. This condition was inseparable from the shift in ideological motives in the practice of ḥadīth transmission. While the emphasis was previously on the accuracy of the transmitted ḥadīth, in the subsequent period, attention was more focused on preserving the continuity of the chain of transmission as a symbol of scholarly authority. Thus, the diversity in the copies of ḥadīth texts is an inevitable consequence of the transmission model based on *ijāza*, which is more lenient in terms of manuscript verification.

4.2.2. Al-Basri’s Correction Project as the Continuity of al-Yūnīnī and al-Qaṣṭallānī’s Legacy

Although the practice of *ijāza* and transmission without textual verification appears to have been dominant among scholars for centuries after the codification of ḥadīth, this does not mean that it excluded the role of some scholars who exerted considerable effort to verify the accuracy of ḥadīth texts. For example, Sharaf al-Din Ali al-Yunini (d. 701 AH / 1301 CE) played a crucial role in the critical study of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. He compared various manuscripts of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* that were circulating at the time. In this regard, he utilized five copies of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* whose chains of transmission originated from al-Bukhari’s primary students, namely al-Firabri (d. 320 AH / 932 CE), the manuscripts of Abū al-Waqt, Abū Dharr al-Harawī (d. 433 AH / 1041 CE), al-Āṣilī (d. 392 AH / 1001 CE), Ibn ‘Asākir (d. 571 AH / 1175 CE), and Abū Sa’d al-Sam‘ānī (d. 562 AH / 1162 CE). In this case, al-Yunini made one manuscript, namely the manuscript of Abu al-Waqt, the main (*asl*) copy, then gave symbols to the text variants found, such as the symbol *ha’* (ح) for the manuscript of al-Harawī, the symbol *ṣād* (ص) for the manuscript of al-Asili, the symbol *sīn* (س) for the manuscript of Ibn Asakir, and the symbol *zā’* (ظ) for the manuscript of al-Sam'ani, due to the accuracy and reliability of memorization (*li-ḥifẓihi wa-itqānihi*). Additionally, in this major project, al-Yunini involved ḥadīth scholars and Arabic linguists, such as Ibn Malik al-Andalusi (d. 672 AH / 1273 CE), who was tasked with correcting the Arabic language errors found in the copies of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.²³⁰ Al-Yunini's efforts were part of a dedication to maintain the credibility and accuracy of the ḥadīth text and prevent

²²⁹ Davidson, *Carrying on the Tradition*, 133.

²³⁰ al-Ḥalīm, *Riwayāt Al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ Wa Nusakhuhu: Dirāsah Naẓariyyah Taṭbīqiyyah*, 678–85.

it from various forms of alteration. The results of al-Yunini's critical study of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* became the primary reference for subsequent scholars and are recognized as the most authoritative version of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* manuscript.²³¹

This manuscript by al-Yunini was then widely studied and copied by subsequent generations. This led to the creation of copies (*furu'*) of the original al-Yunini manuscript. Among the popular copies of al-Yunini are the copy by Shihab al-Din al-Nuwairi (d. 733 AH / 1332 CE), the copy by Shams al-Din al-Ghazuli (d. 777 AH / 1357 CE), and the copy by Muhammad Ibn Ilyas Ibn Usman.²³² Meanwhile, the original manuscript of al-Yunini was not found until the era of al-Qastalani (d. 922 AH / 1516 CE). Al-Qastalani initially used a copy of the original al-Yunini's manuscript in writing his commentary on the ḥadīth, known as *Irshād al-Sārī li-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. It should be noted that the copies of the original al-Yunini's manuscript also have some differences. In this case, al-Asqalani attempted to compare the various copies of the original al-Yunini manuscript. The primary reference for al-Asqalani was the copy of al-Ghazūlī, due to its reputation and accuracy. In addition to using the copy of al-Yunini's manuscript, al-Asqalani managed to obtain the last part of al-Yunini's original manuscript after he had finished writing his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in 913 AH / 1507 CE. He then corrected the ḥadīths he had written in his commentary based on the original manuscript of al-Yunini that he had just found. This process was completed in the month of Muharram in the year 917 AH (1511 CE).²³³ Thus, al-Asqalani spent approximately four years verifying and correcting the ḥadīth text.

After being used by al-Asqalani as a guide in writing his commentary on the ḥadīth, the original manuscript was lost and never found again. This likely happened because there was no official institution that produced the manuscript officially. Before it was discovered by al-Asqalani, the manuscript had already been lost and never found, and what was found were only copies of the original manuscript. Meanwhile, the copies of the original Yunini manuscript also differ from one another, such as the copies owned by al-Nuwairi and al-Ghazūlī. Even though both of them lived within a relatively close timeframe to al-Yunini, variations in the text of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* became inevitable. The loss of al-Yunini's original manuscript continued until the era of al-Basri, when the original manuscript was finally rediscovered by Muhammad Ibn Sulaiman al-Rudani, the teacher of al-Basri, in the Maghreb region in 1094 AH / 1683 CE. The original manuscript then

²³¹ Ahmed El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 2020), 222–23.

²³² Muhammad Abu al-Huda al-Ya'qubi, *Al-Madkhal Ila Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1st ed. (London: Dar Tawqī'at, 2019), 125–26.

²³³ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qaṣṭallānī, *Irshād Al-Sārī Li-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1st ed. (Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2021), 1:329–30.

passed into the hands of Muhammad Akram Ibn Muhammad al-Hindi in Mecca. Al-Basri then borrowed the original manuscript from him to conduct a critical study of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.²³⁴

In al-Basri's biography, scholars documented information related to al-Basri's contributions in correcting or verifying (*taṣḥīḥ*) various ḥadīth books, and the most famous is his critical study of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Al-Syamma', for example, revealed that al-Basri was known as a ḥadīth expert who was fully dedicated to verifying the *Kutubussittah* and other ḥadīth collections. He said, "And al-Basri's most notable achievement was his role in verifying *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which involved the original manuscript of al-Yunini and other copies of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. He wrote down the results of his verification himself, and this activity lasted for twenty years."²³⁵ Abdurrahman Ibn Sulaiman al-Ahdal (d. 1250 AH / 1834 CE) emphasized al-Basri's contribution in this regard, stating that al-Basri's critical study of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* resulted in the most accurate copy of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, making it an important reference for ḥadīth scholars from around the world. Additionally, al-Ahdal explicitly explains that, in addition to verifying the *Kutubussittah*, al-Basri also compiled copies of the *Musnad* of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, which were previously scattered and disorganized. In this case, al-Basri verified various copies and then compiled them into a single text, making it the accurate standard.²³⁶ The ḥadīth manuscripts that had undergone the verification process were read and taught by al-Basri to his students. For example, the *Musnad* of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal. In this case, al-Basri read the manuscript near the Prophet Muhammad's grave in Medina in 1131 AH / 1719 CE. The manuscript was successfully taught to his students over fifty-six sessions.²³⁷

In conducting a critical study of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-Basri appears to follow the verification pattern used by al-Yunini. In this regard, al-Basri has one important work related to the verification of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, namely *Ishārāt Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. This work is still in manuscript form and has not yet been published. Through my research in the Digital Library of the Middle East (DLME) collection,²³⁸ there are at least six components

²³⁴ Yusuf al-Kattani, *Madrasat Al-Imam al-Bukhari Fi al-Magrib* (Dar al-Lisan al-'Arabi, n.d.), 1:111–12.

²³⁵ al-Firyātī, *Min a'lām al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām 'Abdullāh Ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 293.

²³⁶ 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Sulaymān al-Ahdal, *Al-Nafsu al-Yamānī Wa al-Rūḥ al-Rūḥānī Fī Ijāzat al-Quḍāt Banī al-Sukānī*, 1st ed., ed. 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Ḥabsī (Dār al-Samī'ī li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 2012), 97–98.

²³⁷ Abu al-Khair, *Al-Mukhtasar Min Kitāb Nashr al-Nur Wa al-Zahr Fi Tarajum Afādil Makkah*, 291.

²³⁸ Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri, "Isyarat Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī," مكتبة الشرق الأوسط الرقمية - DLME, accessed July 11, 2025, <https://dlmenetwork.org/ar/library/catalog/321c5c77-d79e-4656-9b13-31904793467d>.

written by al-Basri in this work. The first is the introduction to al-Yunini's original manuscript, which includes a discussion of the transmission of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and the methods he applied in verifying the text of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. The second is a copy of al-Qastalani's introduction in his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which also explains the transmission of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and the verification process he conducted when compiling his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Meanwhile, the next four discussions focus on one language regarding the commentary on ḥadīth and al-Basri's chain of transmission for *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Thus, in addition to using the copies of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* that were circulating at the time, al-Basri appears to have relied primarily on al-Yunini's original manuscript and al-Qastalani's commentary as his main references for verifying the text of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

Al-Basri's critical study of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* later became known as one of the popular copies of al-Yunini. This encouraged scholars to obtain this valuable copy. For example, Ahmad al-Khalifa, a ḥadīth scholar and teacher at Zāwiyah al-Nasiriah in Morocco, was one of those interested in al-Basri's manuscript. During his visit to Mecca, Ahmad al-Khalifa saw the al-Basri Library, which was filled with books and manuscripts. In addition, he also found three volumes of *Musnad* Ahmad Ibn Hanbal that had been verified by al-Basri. On that occasion, al-Basri informed al-Khalifa that he had written the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* manuscript based on the original al-Yunini manuscript.²³⁹ After the meeting, Ahmad al-Khalifa purchased al-Basri's manuscript, consisting of 10 volumes, for 70 *mithqāl* of gold (a classical unit of weight, approximately 4.25 grams). He then brought the manuscript to Morocco and assigned his assistants to copy it as many times as possible to become the main manuscript for teaching *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* at Zāwiya al-Nasiriah under his guidance.²⁴⁰ Thus, al-Basri's manuscript became the main reference for teaching ḥadīth in Morocco and spread through the transmission of students who studied there. The circulation of al-Basri's manuscript of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* not only spread to the Moroccan region but also to the Indian subcontinent.²⁴¹

Thus, al-Basri's critical study of the ḥadīth collections, especially *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, became the standard text of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, which was recognized by various scholars. This copy became the reference for *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* for all Muslims around the world. During his observations in Medina, al-Kaṭṭānī testified about a manuscript of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* written by Abdullah ibn Salim al-Baṣrī. The manuscript is in the possession of a

²³⁹ al-Dar'i, *Al-Rihlah al-Nasiriyya*, 367.

²⁴⁰ Matthew Conaway Schumann, "A Path of Reverent Love: The Nasiriyya Brotherhood Across Muslim Africa" (Dissertation, Princeton University, 2020), 179–80.

²⁴¹ Khān, *Al-Hitta Fi Dzīkr al-Sihah al-Sitta*, 197.

prominent ḥadīth scholar, al-Ḥakīm al-Musnid Sheikh Ṭāhir Sunbul. Al-Kaṭṭānī assessed this manuscript as a highly mature work in terms of authenticity, textual comparison accuracy, copying precision, and clarity of handwriting. According to the owner of the manuscript, it was once brought to the palace to be used as a reference in the process of correcting the official edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* there. Subsequently, the Ottoman sultan, Abd al-Ḥamīd II, distributed copies of this manuscript to various mosques and regions as part of an effort to improve and strengthen the ḥadīth texts in circulation.²⁴²

Regarding this critical edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-Munīnī revealed that the most accurate version is the critical edition based on the original manuscript attributed to al-Yūnīnī, held in the Ottoman Treasury's Palace Library. This edition was supplemented with additional folios from other Yūnīnī-related manuscripts, including the copy of al-Ghazūlī, edited by al-Dhahabī and al-Mizzī, as well as the copy of al-Baṣrī. The publication process involved an in-depth and meticulous examination carried out by a group of sixteen scholars from al-Azhar. They included an important note in the preface of the edition, stating that this newly produced version should serve as the reference point for the textual authenticity and reliability of *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ by al-Bukhārī*.²⁴³ The group was led by Shaykh Ḥasūnah, the Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar at the time, and operated under the direct patronage of the Ottoman Sultan, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II.²⁴⁴ However, over time, extensive scholarly research has questioned the actual use of the original Yūnīnī manuscript in the publication of this critical edition. Arafat Aydın, for instance, demonstrated through his detailed investigation of the imperial edition that the manuscript sent from Istanbul to Cairo for the printing was not the original Yūnīnī manuscript. His study concluded that there is no clear indication that the original al-Yunini manuscript was consulted during the verification process. Instead, the standard used appears to have been the manuscript of al-Baṣrī, large portions of which were reproduced verbatim in the edition.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, Ṣalāḥ Fathī Ḥalāl, through his research on the imperial edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, affirmed that the Azhar scholars at the time did not rely on the original Yūnīnī manuscript. Rather, they depended on copies derived from the Yūnīnī tradition, particularly those of al-

²⁴² al-Kattani, *Fihris Al-Faharis Wa al-Asbat Wa Mu'jam al-Ma'ajim Wa al-Mashyakhat Wa al-Musalsalat*, 1:199.

²⁴³ Muhammad al-Manuni, "Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Fi al-Dirasat al-Magribiyyah," *Majallah Da'wat al-Haq*, n.d., 534–35.

²⁴⁴ al-Kattani, *Madrasat Al-Imam al-Bukhari Fi al-Magrib*, 1:117.

²⁴⁵ Arafat Aydın and Ali Albayrak, "Ṣaḥīḥ-i Buhārī Nūshalarına Dair Yeni Bulgular: Bulak Baskısı, Yūnīnī Yazmaları ve Abdullah b. Sālim el-Baṣrī Nūshası," *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 35 (June 2017): 34–36, 35, <https://doi.org/10.26570/isad.329959>.

Baṣrī and al-Qaṣṭallānī, as cited in their respective *sharḥ* works.²⁴⁶ This suggests that al-Baṣrī's manuscript played a significant role in shaping the Sultanate edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, primarily due to its textual precision and accuracy.

Al-Baṣrī's concern for the integrity of ḥadīth texts had a significant influence on subsequent generations of ḥadīth scholars. Muntasir Zaman's review of printed editions of ḥadīth literature in India highlights al-Baṣrī's substantial role in shaping the methodological framework for the verification of ḥadīth texts, which later influenced the development of ḥadīth scholarship in the Indian subcontinent. Zaman argues that al-Baṣrī's foundational approach to manuscript verification laid the groundwork for the practices adopted by 19th-century Indian scholars. This intellectual legacy was transmitted to Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī (d. 1762), who was notably impressed by al-Baṣrī's rigorous efforts in textual verification during his scholarly sojourn in the Ḥaramayn. The mission of ḥadīth verification was then carried forward by the next generation, most notably by Aḥmad 'Alī Sahāranpūrī (d. 1880), who is recognized as one of the earliest scholars to initiate the publication of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* printed edition in India. In this regard, Zaman underscores al-Baṣrī's indirect yet enduring impact on the preservation and transmission of ḥadīth literature across generations.²⁴⁷ Further support for this intellectual lineage is provided by Taqī al-Dīn al-Nadwī, who notes in his introduction that Shaykh Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī, in his commentary on *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (*Badhl al-Majhūd fī Ḥall Sunan Abī Dāwūd*), relied primarily on the manuscript of Muḥammad Ishāq al-Dihlawī for textual verification. Notably, this manuscript was itself an important 19th-century copy of *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, which had been collated with the manuscript of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī.²⁴⁸ This illustrates that al-Baṣrī's copy contributed, albeit indirectly, to the modern era of ḥadīth commentary and verification, particularly in the scholarly efforts of figures such as Sahāranpūrī

Besides the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* manuscript, another work by al-Baṣrī that drew scholarly attention during the printing of ḥadīth books was his manuscript of *Musnad* Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. As previously noted, al-Baṣrī was also actively involved in the verification of this canonical work. In this context, Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūt, a leading

²⁴⁶ Salah Fathi Halal, "Taḥrīr Al-Aṣl al-Mu'tamad Fī al-Ṭab'a al-Sulṭāniyya Min Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī," *Institute of Arabic Manuscripts*, no. 3 (2018): 52.

²⁴⁷ Muntasir Zaman, "Editing and Printing Ḥadīth Literature in Nineteenth-Century India: Aḥmad 'Alī Sahāranpūrī and the Maṭba'-'i Aḥmadī Press," November 20, 2024, 9–10, <https://doi.org/10.1163/24519197-bja10058>.

²⁴⁸ Khalīl Aḥmad al-Sahāranfūrī, *Badhl Al-Majhūd Fī Ḥall Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 1st ed., ed. Taqī al-Dīn al-Nadwī (Markaz al-Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan al-Nadwī li-l-Buḥūth wa-l-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah, 2006), 1:11.

contemporary expert in *tahqīq*, used al-Baṣrī's manuscript as a primary reference in the critical edition of the *Musnad*, which was later published in a printed edition. In his introduction to the Sunan of Abū Dāwūd, al-Arnā'ūṭ notes: "This manuscript is a very valuable and meticulously prepared copy. It has been collated with many other manuscripts, most of them ancient, including one belonging to *al-Ḥāfiẓ* Ibn 'Asākir. The margins of the text are adorned with important notes that include corrections of scribal errors, documentation of variant readings across manuscripts, corrections of mistakes in the names of transmitters, identification of previously unknown transmitters, and explanations of unfamiliar or difficult terms. This manuscript was read in the presence of several prominent figures from among the people of Medina, as well as leading scholars who had traveled from Mecca to Medina with Shaykh 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī." In addition to the *Musnad* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, another manuscript by al-Baṣrī that has been used in the modern publication of ḥadīth literature is his copy of Sunan al-Nasā'ī.²⁴⁹

This section demonstrates that 'Abd Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī made a significant contribution to the preservation of ḥadīth texts. His efforts can be seen as a response to the widespread reliance on *ijāza*-based transmission, which generally did not involve the complete oral recitation of ḥadīth before a teacher. In this regard, al-Baṣrī did not reject the *ijāza* model outright; rather, he continued to engage in it on various occasions, particularly in scholarly circles, as previously discussed. However, to minimize textual errors and variations, al-Baṣrī undertook systematic efforts to verify and collate ḥadīth texts, thereby ensuring their integrity and accuracy. Although numerous ḥadīth scholars were active in the Ḥaramayn during the 18th century, many of whom possessed rich chains of transmission (*isnād 'ālī*), in the domain of textual verification, al-Baṣrī stands out as perhaps the only scholar of the period who committed himself to the meticulous examination of ḥadīth manuscripts. In this way, al-Baṣrī distinguished himself from his contemporaries, many of whom were satisfied with the *ijāzā* they had received, without engaging in the critical verification of ḥadīth texts.²⁵⁰

4.3. The Contribution of Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri in Ḥadīth Commentary

In Chapter Three of this thesis, it was revealed that al-Baṣrī produced various ḥadīth works while actively teaching his students in the Ḥaramayn. One such work is *Ḍiyā' al-sarī fī masālik abwāb al-Bukhārī*. Al-Baṣrī's involvement in ḥadīth commentary is also

²⁴⁹ Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan Al-Nasā'ī al-Mujtabā*, 1st ed., ed. Muḥammad Riḍwān 'Arqasūsī et al. (Dār al-Risālah al-'Ālamiyyah, 2018), 1:83.

²⁵⁰ Dihlawī, *Insān Al-'Ayn Fī Mashāyikh al-Ḥaramayn*, 14.

exemplified in his *khatm* books. This section will examine al-Baṣrī's unique contributions and approaches in explaining the ḥadīth contained in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*

According to Muhammad Qasim Zaman, one of the hallmarks of pre-modern Islamic scholarly culture was the use of commentary as a primary means of conveying discourse. Zaman argues that legal works of that period were considered "open texts," requiring continuous interpretation and elaboration. The process of "constructing internal discourse" within these texts necessitated ongoing engagement to clarify their meanings. He explains that commentaries, along with fatwas, were the two principal mechanisms for developing and adapting Islamic law to meet the demands of changing times. Commentaries provided scholars with the opportunity to preserve the identity and authority of their respective legal schools while also allowing for adjustments within those traditions.²⁵¹ Thus, commentary functioned not only as an explanatory tool but also as a means of legal development, enabling the tradition to remain relevant amidst evolving social, cultural, and political dynamics. Beyond legal discourse, commentaries also played a vital role as mediums for elucidating and interpreting Islam's primary sources, namely the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth, which form the foundation for the understanding and application of Islamic teachings. However, scholars who approach earlier societies from a post-Enlightenment perspective often regard the commentarial tradition as indicative of intellectual stagnation and sterile scholasticism. This criticism arises from a framework that values originality and innovation as the primary indicators of intellectual progress, thereby casting the commentarial tradition as repetitive and lacking in creativity.

Regarding Islamic societies, modern scholars have increasingly recognized that scholarly production in the post-classical period (roughly the 6th to 13th/12th to 19th centuries) largely took place through the complex genre of commentary. This genre, encompassing disciplines such as poetry, grammar, philosophy, and exegesis, dominated both public and private learning, in formal as well as informal curricula. Initially, commentaries were dismissed as merely outdated interpretations of earlier works, a view largely shaped by Orientalist scholarship, which perceived them as a central component of the *madrasa* curriculum, serving only to preserve existing authority structures. As a result, the genre was long neglected and regarded as offering little that was new or innovative. These negative assessments were even employed to reinforce colonial narratives that portrayed the Islamic intellectual tradition as stagnant and regressive during the pre-modern period. However, in recent years, particularly with growing scholarly attention to post-

²⁵¹ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton University Press, 2002), 38, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rh2s>.

classical Islamic intellectual history and the deeper engagement with extant commentarial evidence, this perception has begun to shift. Scholars are now increasingly recognizing that the commentarial tradition was, in fact, highly dynamic, offering a fertile ground for a more nuanced and enriched reappraisal of Islamic intellectual history.²⁵²

In line with this, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī exemplified a dynamic and ongoing model of the ḥadīth commentary process, in which his commentaries on *Fath al-Bārī sharh Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* underwent multiple revisions and additions throughout his lifetime. This process was not merely the production of a single, final work, but rather a form of “serial performance” in which each revision opened new interpretive spaces and addressed evolving issues in the understanding of ḥadīth. These revisions were often carried out within the context of the cyclical and ritualistic recitation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, such as its public reading in front of the sultan during Ramaḍān, requiring the commentary to remain relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the community. Ibn Ḥajar also viewed this task as a spiritual mandate that would transcend his lifetime, with the awareness that future scholars would continue to study, reinterpret, and expand upon the understanding of ḥadīth.²⁵³ In this context, al-Baṣrī in the 18th century, adopted a similar model in his efforts to compile a commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, although he never completed it. He inherited the intellectual and spiritual legacy of Ibn Ḥajar, who regarded ḥadīth discourse not as a closed and final project, but as a continuously evolving process, one that served as a bridge across generations of scholars and practitioners. Thus, al-Baṣrī’s contributions enriched the tradition of ḥadīth scholarship in the 18th-century Ḥaramayn, affirming that the study of ḥadīth was a lived practice deeply integrated with the social, religious, and intellectual contexts of his time.

As previously noted in his biography, al-Baṣrī was known as a prominent ḥadīth teacher in the Ḥaramayn during the 18th century. He actively taught ḥadīth to scholars who came from various regions of the Islamic world. Al-Baṣrī’s intellectual formation was shaped through his engagement with the scholarly networks of the Ḥaramayn. Although the majority of al-Baṣrī’s teachers were Sufi figures, his approach to writing *sharḥ* (commentaries) on ḥadīth remained firmly grounded in the principles of ḥadīth science and rigorous Islamic scholarship. In other words, al-Baṣrī’s method of ḥadīth interpretation did not reflect Sufi-leaning arguments aimed at defending controversial Sufi doctrines of the time, such as the concept of *wahdat al-wujūd* and other similar ideas. Interestingly, al-

²⁵² Asad Q. Ahmed and Margaret Larkin, “[Introduction]: The Hashiya and Islamic Intellectual History,” *Oriens* 41, no. 3/4 (2013): 213–15.

²⁵³ Joel Blecher, *Said the Prophet of God: Ḥadīth Commentary across a Millennium* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018), 77–79.

Baṣrī's consistent adherence to mainstream Islamic scholarship appears to have been influenced by his teacher, Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī. While al-Kūrānī is well known as a defender of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, in the context of ḥadīth interpretation, he urged his students to rely solely on established Islamic knowledge. According to al-Kūrānī, interpreting ḥadīth through Sufī frameworks, without grounding such interpretations in the Qur'ān and corroborating ḥadīth, would lead only to delusion or spiritual annihilation (*fanā*). This admonition is explicitly stated in his work *al-Umam li iḳāz al-himam*.²⁵⁴

Al-Baṣrī did not explicitly outline the methodology he employed in writing his commentary. This is due to the absence of an introduction authored by al-Baṣrī himself; instead, the introduction found in the work was written by his student, Khayr al-Dīn Ilyās ibn Tāj al-Dīn al-Ḥanaḫī (d. 1127 AH / 1715 CE).²⁵⁵ In this introduction, Khayr al-Dīn Ilyās provides background information on the motivation behind the writing of the work. He notes that, although numerous commentaries on the *Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī* already existed, many of them suffered from significant shortcomings. Some were overly lengthy and detailed, while others were too brief and lacking in explanation. As a response to this, Khayr al-Dīn Ilyās emphasized that his teacher, al-Baṣrī, aimed to produce a commentary that struck a balance between these two extremes, neither too prolix nor overly concise. The content includes explanations of the meanings of the ḥadīth and elaborations on grammatical constructions that may be difficult to understand. Moreover, al-Baṣrī's commentary is written in accessible and fluid language.²⁵⁶ This suggests that al-Baṣrī, though implicitly, sought to offer an interpretation of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* that would be comprehensible to a wide audience.

One of the unique features of *Sharḥ* al-Baṣrī is its inclusion of highly detailed biographical information. In this work, al-Baṣrī provides thorough biographical accounts of the ḥadīth transmitters, including the assessments of ḥadīth critics regarding their reliability. Al-Baṣrī avoids repetition; he does not repeat a transmitter's biography if it has already been discussed in a previous section. For example, in the *isnād* of a ḥadīth concerning the obligation to love the Prophet Muḥammad (*ḥubb al-Rasūl*), al-Baṣrī offers a detailed biography of one of the transmitters, Ibn 'Ulayyah. He provides his full name, Abū Bishr al-Asadī Ismā'īl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḳsim, and cites evaluations from ḥadīth critics that demonstrate the transmitter's credibility. In contrast, Anas ibn Mālīk, the

²⁵⁴ Ibrahim al-Kurani, *Al-Umam Li Iqazh al-Himam* (n.d.), 115.

²⁵⁵ al-Faryāṭī, *Min A 'lām Al-Muḥaddithīn Bi-l-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn: Al-Imām 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sālīm al-Baṣrī al-Makkī*, 114.

²⁵⁶ Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri, *Ḍiyā' Al-Sārī Fī Masālik Abwāb al-Bukhārī*, 1st ed., ed. Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṭālib (Dār al-Nawādir, 2011), 4:5–6.

Companion who also transmits the ḥadīth, is not discussed again in detail, as al-Baṣrī had already addressed his biography in an earlier section.²⁵⁷ Such a level of biographical detail is not found in Ibn Ḥajar's *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.²⁵⁸ Likewise, in al-Qaṣṭallānī's *Irshād al-sārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, similar information is absent; al-Qaṣṭallānī generally limits himself to brief, general remarks about the transmitters without citing the views of ḥadīth scholars concerning them.²⁵⁹ Therefore, *Sharḥ al-Baṣrī* stands out for its distinctive approach and offers a unique contribution when compared to earlier works of ḥadīth commentary.

Furthermore, another notable aspect of al-Baṣrī's *Sharḥ* is his meticulous attention to the manuscripts and transmission of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. This distinguishes *Sharḥ al-Baṣrī* from earlier commentaries, including that of al-Qaṣṭallānī. Al-Baṣrī not only provides detailed explanations of the wording of the ḥadīth as found in authoritative manuscripts, such as that of al-Yūnīni, but also, in several instances, critiques the interpretations of earlier scholars regarding specific word forms. For example, in the ḥadīth passage beginning with "*Anna Rasūlallāh...*", al-Baṣrī notes that the hamzah in *anna* bears a *fathah*. He criticizes al-Kirmānī (d. 805 AH / 1384 CE), who claimed that the vowel should be a kasrah. According to al-Baṣrī, this view is incorrect, as multiple manuscripts of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, including the authoritative copy by al-Yūnī, consistently indicate the vowel (*harkah*) as *fathah*.²⁶⁰ Al-Baṣrī's critique is not limited to al-Kirmānī; he also engages critically with other commentators, such as Ibn Ḥajar, al-Qaṣṭallānī, and several other ḥadīth scholars. This emphasis on textual precision and manuscript verification underscores the uniqueness of al-Baṣrī's contribution, as he demonstrates a high level of rigor in preserving the integrity of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. His deep familiarity with various manuscript variants is a result of his lifelong scholarly commitment to the authentication and study of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and other ḥadīth works. Consequently, al-Baṣrī succeeds in producing a *sharḥ* that is not only comprehensive in addressing textual variants but also distinguished by its critical methodology and scholarly depth.

Another strength of al-Baṣrī's *Sharḥ* lies in his effort to compile and engage with the views and explanations of earlier scholars who had written commentaries on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, such as Ibn Ḥajar, al-Qaṣṭallānī, al-Kirmānī, and others. However, this does not mean that al-Baṣrī merely repeated their opinions. On the contrary, he frequently offered

²⁵⁷ al-Basri, *Ḍiyā' Al-Sārī Fī Masālik Abwāb al-Bukhārī*, 4:204–5.

²⁵⁸ al-'Asqalānī, *Fath Al-Bārī Bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, 1970), 1:58.

²⁵⁹ al-Qaṣṭallānī, *Irshād Al-Sārī Li-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1:503.

²⁶⁰ al-Basri, *Ḍiyā' Al-Sārī Fī Masālik Abwāb al-Bukhārī*, 4:301.

critical responses and corrections to their views. Al-Baṣrī's critiques were not limited to technical aspects of ḥadīth editing, as previously discussed, but also extended to more substantive issues. For example, in his discussion of the ḥadīth concerning a person who mistakenly prays in the wrong direction of the Qibla, al-Baṣrī comments on Ibn Ḥajar's treatment of the issue. Ibn Ḥajar mentioned two primary scholarly opinions: first, that the prayer does not need to be repeated; and second, that it must be repeated. Ibn Ḥajar attributed the first opinion to a ḥadīth narrated by al-Tirmidhī through 'Āmir ibn Rabī'ah, and stated that al-Tirmidhī had graded the ḥadīth as *ḥasan*, even though the majority of scholars considered it *ḍa'īf*. In this instance, al-Baṣrī criticized what he saw as an error in Ibn Ḥajar's citation of al-Tirmidhī's judgment. According to al-Baṣrī, al-Tirmidhī never graded the ḥadīth as *ḥasan*. Rather, he emphasized that the ḥadīth had only one transmission route, through Ash'ath al-Sammān, who was a weak (*ḍa'īf*) transmitter. This critical engagement reflects al-Baṣrī's depth of scholarship and his commitment to rigorous analysis, both in terms of textual integrity and legal reasoning within the ḥadīth tradition.²⁶¹

In this case, it appears that Ibn Ḥajar made a significant error, which al-Baṣrī sought to correct. Al-Tirmidhī explicitly stated that the ḥadīth in question had only a single chain of transmission, and that one of its transmitters was classified as *ḍa'īf* (weak). According to the principles of ḥadīth science, a *ḍa'īf* ḥadīth can only be elevated to the rank of *ḥasan* li-ghayrih if it is supported by multiple similar chains of transmission that mutually reinforce one another.²⁶² In this case, however, al-Tirmidhī explicitly noted that the ḥadīth was transmitted solely through Ash'ath al-Sammān, who is considered a weak transmitter. Therefore, the ḥadīth remains *ḍa'īf* and cannot be elevated to the level of *ḥasan*. This example illustrates al-Baṣrī's deep understanding of ḥadīth criticism methodology and his broad mastery of the classical ḥadīth corpus. Moreover, his critique of Ibn Ḥajar challenges the assumption that the tradition of *sharḥ* or *ḥāshiya* (supercommentary) in Islamic scholarship is rigid or devoid of innovation. On the contrary, in this context, the *sharḥ* tradition serves as a dynamic platform for revisiting and critically evaluating the views of earlier scholars, rather than merely transmitting their authority uncritically.

²⁶¹ al-Basri, *Ḍiyā' Al-Sārī Fī Masālik Abwāb al-Bukhārī*, 4:69–70.

²⁶² Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Nuzhat Al-Nazar Fī Tawḍīḥ Nukhbat al-Fikar Fī Muṣṭalah Ahl al-Athar*, 1st ed., ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ḍayf Allāh al-Ruḥaylī, (2021), 140–41.

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter examines in depth al-Basri's contributions to the dynamics of ḥadīth studies in the 18th-century Haramayn. Al-Basri emerged as an ideal ḥadīth scholar who mastered all aspects of ḥadīth scholarship, both in the transmission of ḥadīth (*riwāya*) and in the level of understanding (*diraya*). An analysis of al-Basri's *ijāza* reveals how al-Basri adopted an adaptive approach in transmitting and teaching ḥadīth. In certain contexts, al-Basri tended to be more lenient in granting *ijāza riwāya* to the recipients (ulama), considering the importance of the continuity of *Isnād*, which is a key characteristic of the Muslim community and the distinctive culture within the tradition of ḥadīth discipline. On the other hand, al-Basri prioritized in-depth teaching of ḥadīth to his students who were still at the beginner or intermediate stage, a model that emphasized the importance of interpreting the transmitted ḥadīth texts. Furthermore, the analysis of al-Basri's *ijāza* also reveals the phenomenon of ḥadīth transmission among the 18th-century Haramayn scholar network. This is because intellectual connections through *ijāza* did not necessarily guarantee a shared ideology and religious understanding. This is because the *ijāza* granted to scholars in practice was only for transmitting texts (*ijāza riwāya*), not for teaching (*ijāza diraya*), which requires an understanding of ḥadīth.

This chapter also reveals al-Basri's role in maintaining the integrity of ḥadīth texts. In this regard, al-Basri dedicated twenty years to critically studying ḥadīth manuscripts, particularly the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. The results of al-Basri's critical study of these ḥadīth texts became an important reference and the most authoritative ḥadīth manuscripts in the Islamic world. Al-Basri's dedication to comparing and verifying ḥadīth texts demonstrates the keen attention of 18th-century scholars to the integrity of ḥadīth manuscripts. Finally, this chapter presents al-Basri's contribution to the compilation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* commentary. Although he was unable to complete this work due to his death, his commentary on the ḥadīth in this work holds many unique qualities compared to previous commentaries on ḥadīth. Al-Basri not only presents language that is easy to understand but also provides important information, both regarding the explanation of the meaning of the ḥadīth and the biographies of its transmitters. Furthermore, al-Basri's extensive knowledge of various *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* manuscripts makes this work exceptional. In many cases, al-Basri explains the differences in the text of the ḥadīth based on authoritative *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* manuscripts, such as the original manuscript of al-Yunini.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The 18th century Haramayn was an important period that connected the network of scholars across the Islamic world. The centrality of Haramayn as a holy city made it not only a place to perform the *Hajj*, but also a locus for meetings and exchanges of scholarly discourse among scholars. Therefore, most scholars, while performing the *Hajj* and visiting Islamic sites in Haramayn, would stay there for a certain period, either to teach ḥadīth or to study and seek *isnād* ḥadīth. Ḥadīth education is not only conducted at the *Masjid al-Haram* but also in informal institutions, such as the homes of scholars. Meanwhile, ḥadīth teachers employ adaptive teaching methods, including the *al-Sard* method (rapid recitation of ḥadīth), granting *ijāza* without reciting the ḥadīth, and the method of explanation and analysis (*al-Ḥall wa-al-Baḥth*).

Abdullah Ibn Salim al-Basri (d. 1722) was one of the most important ḥadīth scholars of the 18th century in the Holy Cities. He benefited from the scholarly networks of the Holy Cities during that period, which made it easier for him to study under scholars from various regions without having to travel long distances. This environment shaped al-Basri into an influential ḥadīth scholar of his time, not only possessing an *isnād 'ālī* but also attaining comprehensive proficiency in ḥadīth sciences. Al-Basri did not participate in the Islamic debates of his time, such as the *anti-madhhab* movement and debates over Sufi practices, choosing instead to pursue a solitary path to delve into the intellectual legacy of ḥadīth scholarship. Nevertheless, al-Basri was also known as a follower of the Shafi'i school of thought and was affiliated with several Sufi orders, such as the *Naqshbandiyyah*, *Shadhiliyyah*, and others.

Al-Basri is a representative figure who demonstrates the dynamics of ḥadīth scholarship in the 18th century. On the one hand, al-Basri focused on teaching ḥadīth texts and ḥadīth scholarship compiled by ḥadīth scholars of the past. He also sought to preserve the continuity of the *Isnād* (chain of transmission), a hallmark of the Islamic community, through his works, *al-Imdād* and *al-Awā'il al-Ḥadīthiyya*. These two genres illustrate how ḥadīth transmission unfolded in the Haramayn during the 18th century, with a focus on ḥadīth transmission and the search for an *isnād 'ālī* becoming a crucial aspect in the development of ḥadīth scholarship in the Haramayn. Meanwhile, al-Basri was also actively engaged in teaching ḥadīth comprehensively to his students through the detailed reading and explanation of each ḥadīth. His scholarly activities in this field are exemplified in his work, which is a genre of *khatm* on the ḥadīth collections

In addition, one of al-Basri's major contributions to the science of ḥadīth was his intellectual effort in verifying ḥadīth texts. This was al-Basri's attempt to overcome the weaknesses of non-oral transmission of ḥadīth (such as using *ijāza*) after the ḥadīth had been codified, which led to the circulation of manuscripts of ḥadīth texts that varied and differed from one another. Al-Basri's dedication to this activity spanned two decades. The results of his critical studies of these ḥadīth manuscripts, particularly *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*, became the most authoritative ḥadīth manuscripts in the field of ḥadīth studies in the Islamic world. Al-Basri's copies then spread throughout the Islamic world and became the primary reference for the critical edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* published under the patronage of Sultan Abd al-Hamid II in the 19th century.

Through an analysis of the 18th-century Haramayn scholars' network and the intellectual works of al-Basri, this study reveals that ḥadīth studies in the 18th century did not stagnate; rather, this period was a continuation of the development of ḥadīth studies in the previous period. Ḥadīth scholars in the 18th century sought to balance their attention between connecting with the ḥadīth scholarly tradition of the past and engaging with the realities of ḥadīth scholarship in their own time. This is explicitly exemplified in how al-Basri taught the intellectual legacy of previous scholars to his students and maintained the continuity of the ḥadīth transmission chain by emphasizing the importance of *isnād 'ālī*. On the other hand, instead of following the ḥadīth tradition of classical scholars and assuming that ḥadīth scholarship had reached maturity, as in the 15th century, al-Basri in this case sought to re-examine the opinions of past ḥadīth scholars. Al-Basri's work, *Ḍiyā' al-Sārī fī Masālik Abwāb al-Bukhārī*, demonstrates his efforts to compile the explanations of previous scholars regarding the ḥadīth found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, while also critiquing their opinions and interpretations in various cases.

Thus, this study shows that, rather than claiming a period of stagnation, ḥadīth studies in the 18th century were a continuation of ḥadīth studies in the previous period. This shows that the 18th century was a period in which ḥadīth scholarship underwent dynamic development, connected to the scholarly traditions of the past while adapting to the realities of the period.

5.1 Future Research

Further research will enable us to explore in depth the intellectual history of other scholars who lived in the 18th century. Considering that the majority of scholars in the 18th century were known as ḥadīth scholars. A study of the thoughts of Hasan al-'Ujaimi and Ahmad al-Nakhli, 18th-century ḥadīth scholars and colleagues of al-Basri, will enrich our perspective on the development of ḥadīth studies in the 18th century in the Holy Cities.

Additionally, further research could also examine al-Basri's work, Syarh *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, using a social and political science perspective. The focus of the study is how al-Basri's position as a ḥadīth teacher, who received full support from the Ottoman rulers at that time, influenced al-Basri in explaining the ḥadīth contained in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. This research is in line with Joel Blecher's research, which highlights how patronage of power influenced Ibn Hajar's *Sharh Fath al-Bari*.²⁶³

²⁶³ Joel Blecher, “Ḥadīth Commentary in the Presence of Students, Patrons, and Rivals: Ibn Ḥajar and Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in Mamluk Cairo,” *Oriens* 41, nos. 3–4 (2013): 261–87.

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