

# THE CREED OF SUFYAN IBN 'UYAYNAH

Day 2 Lecture Companion: Transmission, Genres, & Companions

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## I. Etiquettes of Learning & Hadith Abbreviations

The second lecture commenced with an analysis of the jurisprudence of social and academic etiquette as practiced by the Salaf. To establish the proper behavior of both teacher and student, the speaker expounded upon a narration in Sahih al-Bukhari wherein a Bedouin cut off the Prophet's speech to ask, "*When is the Hour?*" instead of waiting. The Prophet completed his speech in its entirety, and only after concluding his address did he turn to ask, "*Where is the questioner who asked regarding the Hour?*" and answered him.

### Pedagogical Principles Derived:

- **Respecting Prior Audiences:** It is not necessary for a scholar or teacher to immediately halt their discourse to answer an interjection. The right to full attention belongs to those first being addressed, and delaying the answer to a later interrupter is not considered 'hiding knowledge' (*kitman al-'ilm*) but rather a preservation of justice and order.
- **Student Lenience and Cultivation:** The Prophet did not revile or harshly rebuke the Bedouin for his improper interruption. Rather, he was gentle, demonstrating that a teacher must remain lenient and patient when encountering academic ignorance or lack of social decorum in students.
- **The Propriety of Questions:** The Salaf remarked that "*asking questions in a proper manner is half of knowledge.*" A student must learn when, how, and what to ask, ensuring that questions are beneficial and well-timed.

### The Prophet's Methodology of Teaching:

Long before modern academics developed educational frameworks, the Prophet implemented multi-sensory teaching methods over 1,450 years ago. These included the use of structured **Question & Answer** sessions to spark curiosity, the delivery of **vivid parables and analogies** (like the date palm), the **repetition of critical points three times** for memorization, and the employment of **non-verbal cues** or **drawing diagrams upon the earth** to make intangible concepts tangible and lasting in the minds of his companions.

## Transmission Symbols and Writing Abbreviations

In the early centuries of Islam, scholars faced severe material constraints. Paper was a highly precious and scarce commodity, ink had to be painstakingly crafted, and pens were manually carved. To save precious physical space, ink, and time during the rapid-fire dictation of Hadith in assemblies (*majalis al-impla*), the early traditionists (*muhaddithun*) formulated a standardized system of shorthand notation and textual symbols:

| Symbol                      | Full Terminology                             | Technical Methodology Represented                                                                                                                          | Reading Requirement                                           |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sana / na</b> (سنا / نا) | Haddathana (هَدَّثَنَا)                      | Indicates Al-Sama' (Hearing): The sheikh dictated/spoke the Hadith aloud, and the student heard it directly from the sheikh's mouth.                       | Must be read aloud as 'Haddathana' (never as 'Sana' or 'na'). |
| <b>ana</b> (أَنَا)          | Anbana / Akhbarana (أَنْبَنَا / أَخْبَرَنَا) | Indicates Al-'Ardh / Al-Qira'ah (Reading upon): The student read the Hadith aloud to the sheikh, who remained silent to approve or correct.                | Must be read aloud in its full form 'Anbana' or 'Akhbarana'.  |
| <b>H</b> (هـ)               | Tahwil (تَهْوِيل)                            | Represents the 'shifting' or branching of chains. Used to move from one path of transmission to another without repeating the entire text or shared nodes. | Read silently to indicate chain branching.                    |

## II. The Structural Genres of Hadith Literature

The speaker provided an academic taxonomy of how Hadith compilations were structured historically. Each genre was developed with a distinct structural philosophy, serving specific pedagogical, memory-based, or jurisprudential needs:

### 1. Al-Masanid (The Musnad Works)

- **Structural Scheme:** A compilation where the Hadiths are arranged solely under the name of the transmitting companion (*Sahabi*), regardless of the theological or legal topic. Thus, all Hadiths of Abu Bakr are placed in one chapter, followed by those of Umar, and so on. The content fluctuates randomly (e.g., a Hadith on fasting followed immediately by one on legal judgments or the last day).
- **Primary Purpose:** These works were authored in the late 1st and 2nd centuries to aid in *memorization*. Because the chains of a single companion are often identical or highly repetitive, compiling them side-by-side made retaining the vast corpus far more manageable.
- **Key Examples:** The *Musnad* of Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi (d. 204 AH), recognized as the earliest compiled Musnad; the massive *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH), published in 52 volumes containing roughly 40,000 Hadiths; and the historically tragic loss of the *Musnad of Baqi ibn Makhlad* (d. 276 AH) of Al-Andalus (Islamic Spain), which was praised by early scholars as the most structurally detailed and vast Musnad ever written.

### 2. Al-Jawami' (The Comprehensive Works)

- **Structural Scheme:** Compilations that contain Hadiths covering *all eight branches of Islamic knowledge*: 1. Creed ('*Aqidah/Iman*), 2. Legal Rulings (*Ahkam*), 3. Asceticism/Spiritual heart softeners (*Riqaq*), 4. Etiquettes of conduct (*Adab*), 5. Quranic Exegesis (*Tafsir*), 6. Prophetic Biography and Campaigns (*Siyar/Maghazi*), 7. Signs of the Hour (*Ashrat al-Sa'ah*), and 8. Tribulations (*Fitan*).
- **Key Examples:** *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, and *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* (commonly called *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* but technically a *Jami'*).

### 3. Al-Sunan (The Legal Compilations)

- **Structural Scheme:** Compilations structured strictly around the chapters of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh* or *Ahkam*: purification, prayer, charity, fasting, business transactions, marriage, etc.). Unlike the *Jawami'*, they omit chapters on exegesis, creation, or biographical virtues, sufficing only with what governs legal commands and prohibitions.
- **Key Examples:** *Sunan Abi Dawud*, *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, and the monumental *Sunan al-Kubra* of Imam al-Bayhaqi (d. 458 AH).

### 4. Al-Sihah (The Rigorous Authentic Collections)

- **Structural Scheme:** Works where the author explicitly stipulated a condition to exclude weak narrations, collecting only what has been rigorously authenticated. Aside from Bukhari and Muslim, this includes *Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah* and *Sahih Ibn Hibban*, although their strictness did not match the pinnacle achieved by the two Sheikhs.

#### Academic Dispute on the 'Sixth Book' of the Six Canons:

While the entire Muslim Ummah unanimously accepts the first five books of Hadith (Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, and al-Nasa'i) as the foundation of the Sunnah, early scholars differed into three positions regarding which volume completes the 'Six Books':

1. **Al-Muwatta' of Imam Malik:** Favored by many early scholars due to its unmatched jurisprudential and narrational rigor.
2. **Sunan al-Darimi:** Selected by some because its narrators contain very few weak links.
3. **Sunan Ibn Majah:** Initially excluded due to a higher proportion of severely weak Hadiths, it was officially integrated as the sixth canon by the great cataloguer **Al-Hafidh Abu al-Fadl al-Maqdisi** (Ibn Tahir). This integration was cemented permanently by **Imam al-Mizzi** in his monumental indexing works, *Tuhfat al-Ashraf* and *Tahdhib al-Kamal*, which became the standard reference of all subsequent Hadith sciences.

### III. Chapter on Raising the Voice with Knowledge

Imam al-Bukhari established a chapter in his *Book of Knowledge* entitled: "*The one who raises his voice with knowledge.*" The speaker explained the contextual background of the Hadith narrated therein. During a journey returning from Makkah to Medina, the Prophet had stayed slightly behind the main body of travelers. As the time for the 'Asr prayer was rapidly coming to an end, the companions ahead began making their ablutions (*wudoo*) in extreme haste. In their hurriedness, they began lightly wiping over their feet rather than washing them completely, leaving their heels dry. Upon catching up and witnessing this, the Prophet yelled out with the highest volume of his voice twice or thrice: "**Save your heels from the hellfire!**" (*Waylun lil-a'qabi min an-nar!*).

#### Theological and Juridical Rulings Derived:

- **Permissibility of Raising the Voice:** A scholar or teacher is fully permitted to raise their voice when teaching, sternly correcting an error, or refuting a wrong. This does not oppose the recommended traits of scholastic gravity (*wakar*), tranquility (*sakina*), and modesty, as the Prophet raised his voice to its absolute peak here. Similarly, when delivering the Friday sermon (*khutbah*), the Prophet's eyes would redden, and his voice would rise as if he were a military commander warning his army of an imminent enemy attack.
- **Stern Refutation of the Shia Rafidah:** Al-Bukhari deliberately used this Hadith as a textual proof to refute the Rafidah Shia who assert that the feet should merely be wiped (*mash*) during wudoo. By repeating the Hadith under the chapter of *Washing the Feet* in his Book of Ablutions, al-Bukhari proved that washing is an absolute obligation, and that failing to wash the heels completely is a major sin threatened with the Fire.
- **The Methodology of Repetition:** The Prophet repeated his warning three times, demonstrating the educational benefit of repeating critical, core tenets to ensure they are properly understood, retained, and never forgotten.

#### The Historical Role of the Mustamli and Musm'i:

In the classical eras, long before the invention of electronic microphones and audio amplification, the assemblies of the great Muhaddithun were attended by staggering numbers of students, sometimes reaching tens of thousands (such as the gatherings of Imam Ahmad). To ensure the sheikh's dictations reached every row, the scholars employed **Mustamliyun** or **Musm'iyyun** (voicers/transmitters). These were trusted students of high memorization and vocal power, positioned at regular intervals of several rows. The sheikh would speak a line (e.g., '*Haddathana...*'), the first Mustamli would hear and bellow it to the next, who would relay it to the next, seamlessly propagating the transmission across vast open-air plazas without distortion or delay.

### Differentiating Hidden and Ambiguous Narrators

During this section, the speaker elucidated the critical Hadith terminology concerning narrators whose identities are ambiguous or hidden in the chains (*isnad*) or text (*matn*):

- **Al-Mubham (The Unnamed/Obscured):** A narrator who is completely unnamed, represented in the chain or text by a generic pronoun or phrase (such as '*on the authority of a man*', '*a woman came*', or '*a certain Bedouin*'). Scholars authored exhaustive works to identify these individuals by cross-referencing and

compiling all variant chains of the Hadith to uncover the specific name hidden behind the obscurity.

- **Al-Mo'mal (The Ambiguous Names):** A narrator who is named, but with a name shared by multiple individuals of the same generation, making it difficult to immediately distinguish them (e.g., if a chain reads '*on the authority of Sufyan*' or '*on the authority of Hammad*'). Traditionists distinguish them by examining the sheikhs and students on either side of the node. For example, if 'Sufyan' is narrated from by Imam al-Bukhari, it is typically Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah (d. 198 AH); if the sheikh on the other side is from Kufa and passed away much earlier, it may be Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161 AH). Similarly, Hammad ibn Salamah is distinguished from Hammad ibn Zayd by their respective circles of students and geographical regions.

- **Al-Majhul (The Unknown):** A narrator whose name and lineage are fully specified, but whose reliability and standing in the science of narrator-evaluation (*al-Jarh wa'l-Ta'dil*) are unknown. It is divided into two sub-types: *Majhul al-'Ayn* (only a single student has narrated from him, and no authority has authenticated him) and *Majhul al-Hal / Al-Mastur* (two or more students have narrated from him, but his internal reliability remains unverified).

## IV. Point 2 of the Creed: Precedence of Abu Bakr and Umar

Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah stated in his creed: *"The Sunnah consists of ten points... the second is giving precedence to Abu Bakr and Umar over the remaining companions."*

The speaker explained that the consensus (*ijma'*) of the Salaf is absolute and binding upon the superiority (*tafdil*) of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, followed by Umar ibn al-Khattab, as the greatest of this Ummah after its Prophet. This ranking is derived from explicit scriptural proofs and the statements of the companions themselves:

- **The Sermon of Ali ibn Abi Talib:** This superiority is famously established by Ali ibn Abi Talib himself. From over 80 independent lines of transmission, it is verified that Ali climbed the pulpit (*minbar*) of Kufa during his caliphate and proclaimed: *"No one is brought to me who gives me precedence over Abu Bakr and Umar except that I will administer to him the lashing of a slanderer and fabricator (80 lashes)."* Ali's own son, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, asked him: *"Who is the best of people after the Prophet?"* Ali replied, *"Abu Bakr."* He asked, *"Then who?"* Ali replied, *"Umar."* When Muhammad asked if Ali was next, Ali modestly replied, *"I am but a normal man from among the Muslims."*
- **The Shura of Six:** When Umar was on his deathbed, he established a committee of six noble companions to select the next Caliph (Usman, Ali, Talha, Zubayr, Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas, and Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf). These were chosen from the ten who were explicitly granted glad tidings of Jannah in a single Hadith. After Talha, Zubayr, and Sa'ad excused themselves, Abdur-Rahman ibn Awf spent three days consulting the Muhajirun, Ansar, and the general public, finding absolute, unanimous consensus to appoint Usman, followed by Ali. Hence, their sequence in leadership represents the consensus of the entire companion generation.

### The Historical Progression of Tafdil (Superiority of Usman vs. Ali):

While the precedence of Abu Bakr and Umar was a matter of immediate and universal consensus, the early generation experienced a temporary geographical difference of opinion regarding the third position:

- **The School of Kufa:** Some early scholars of Kufa (such as Sufyan al-Thawri initially, though he later changed his view) gave precedence in virtue (*Tafdil*) to Ali over Usman.
- **The School of Medina:** Some scholars of Medina (including Imam Malik in one of his two narrated positions) remained silent, refusing to rank one over the other in virtue.
- **The Final Settled Creed:** Despite this early fluctuation, the scholars of the Sunnah ultimately unified upon a permanent, final creed: **Usman is superior to Ali in virtue, just as he preceded him in the Caliphate.** Anyone who opposes the historical sequence of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (Abu Bakr, then Umar, then Usman, then Ali) in their Caliphate is declared an innovator. As Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and other imams declared, such a person accuses the Muhajirun and Ansar of either ignorance or oppression, and is *'more ignorant of the correct path than the donkey of his own family.'*

## V. Point 3 of the Creed: Belief in the Basin (Al-Hawdh) - Part 1

The third point of Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah's creed is: "*Believing in the Basin (al-Hawdh) on the Day of Judgment.*" The speaker initiated the theological explanation of this monumental event of the unseen (*Ghayb*), which is a non-negotiable article of Islamic faith.

### Theological Foundations and Evidentiary Rigor:

- **An Obligation of the Unseen:** Belief in the Basin is a fundamental part of the description of the Day of Judgment. Since it belongs to the realm of *Ghayb*, it cannot be deduced by speculative human intellect or philosophy. It must be accepted unconditionally based on textual revelation (*Nass*).
- **Mutawatir Transmission:** The Hadiths establishing the physical existence of the Basin have reached the absolute highest level of textual authenticity—being *Mutawatir*. They have been transmitted by over 50, and according to some Hadith cataloguers, more than 80 distinct companions, including the foremost leaders, jurists, and narrators of the Sahabah. This provides absolute, definitive, and certain knowledge (*Ilm al-Yaqin*) of its reality, making its denial an act of heresy.
- **Quranic Allusion:** While the word 'Hawdh' is not explicitly spelled out in the Quran, it is structurally represented by the opening of Surah al-Kauthar: "*Verily, We have granted you Al-Kauthar.*" The Prophet explained that Al-Kauthar is a magnificent river in Paradise, which feeds the prophetic Basin on the plain of resurrection through two descending streams.

### The Intellectual Misguidance of the Mu'tazilah:

The deviant theological sects, primarily the **Mu'tazilah** (rationalists), rejected the physical existence of the Basin in its entirety. Despite the overwhelming volume of Mutawatir Hadiths, they prioritized their speculative intellects (*'Aql*) over divine transmission (*Naql*). They arrogantly argued that a physical pool was 'illogical,' questioning how a pool could exist on the plain of resurrection before the crossing of the Bridge (*Sirat*) when Hellfire lies between the people and Paradise. In doing so, they attempted to reduce the majestic, physical realities of the hereafter into metaphorical concepts of justice, demonstrating the dangerous path of theological rhetoric (*Kalam*) that the Salaf so severely warned against.

## References and Technical Sources

This study companion is compiled directly from the live translation and commentary of the classical creed of Imam Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah (107–198 AH) as preserved by **Imam al-Lalaka'i** (d. 418 AH) in his monumental compendium, *Sharh Usul I'tiqad Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah*. The structural details of Hadith sciences and the five conditions of authenticity are grounded in classical manuals including *Tuhfat al-Ashraf* of Imam al-Mizzi and the textual commentaries of Sahih al-Bukhari. Delivered during the Summer Knowledge Program at Darul Hadith Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.