

The Revival Movement in Hadith Studies: An Analytical Study of Selected Topics in Hadith Terminology

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Abstract :

This research paper aims to highlight the aspects of revival and renewal in the sciences of Hadith, its terminology, and methodologies, and to demonstrate the areas of scholarly *ijtihād* addressed by later and contemporary Hadith scholars through their critical readings and academic revisions of what became established in terminology after Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. The paper is limited to presenting revivalist models from the later period—namely Ibn Ḥajar and al-Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī—and from contemporary scholarship, Dr. Ḥamza al-Malībārī. This paper seeks to answer the following questions: Has the field of Hadith terminology after Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ undergone renewal attempts? What form did these attempts take? And what were their areas? Among its most important findings is that the revivalist approach in Hadith sciences is an authentic one, practiced by leading scholars across successive periods through numerous additions and critiques that addressed various aspects—such as reformulating certain terminological concepts, reorganizing Hadith sciences thematically, and similar contributions. Adopting the analytical approach

Key Words: Revival, Renewal, Term, Hadith, Criticism, Method.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The science of Hadith terminology has gone through different stages required by the nature of the emergence and formation of sciences. It began with the stage of emergence, then development, arriving at the stage of stability and stagnation, where those engaged in the study of terminology were dominated by repetition and regurgitation of what was established, especially after the era of Ibn al-Salah, the author of *Al-Muqaddimah* (Introduction to the Science of Hadith). Although the characteristic of stagnation and imitation was predominant in what we presented, this did not prevent the existence of serious attempts to break this stagnation and work to renew what was obliterated and revive what was lost from the features of the science of terminology. We will present some of them in this research paper, which I entitled (*The Revival Movement in Hadith Studies: An Analytical Study of Selected Topics in Hadith Terminology*).

PROBLEM STATEMENT: In this paper, we seek to answer the following questions:

Has the study of Hadith terminology since Ibn al-Salah been subject to any revisionist and renewal attempts?

What were the areas and manifestations of this methodological revival?

What is their scientific value?

OBJECTIVES: In this research paper, we aim to highlight the aspects of revival and renewal in the sciences of hadith, its terminology, rules, and methods, and to reveal the areas of *ijtihad* that were affected by the efforts of later and contemporary hadith scholars, through their critical readings and scholarly reviews of the established terminology after Imam Ibn al-Salah.

The study also aims to overcome the methodological and objective obstacles that prevent a correct understanding of scientific issues related to the sciences of the Prophetic Sunnah.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY: Renewing the sciences is a necessity imposed by the requirements of reality and the current historical stage. The necessity of renewal intensifies in proportion to the growing challenges confronting the field. Moreover, we live in an era in which the Sunnah faces the harshest criticism and most virulent suspicions. It is incumbent upon those engaged in this science to devote themselves to evaluating and assessing their heritage, without compromising its established principles.

It is also not hidden from the observer that the subject is directly related to the making of critical judgments in narrators and narrations and its formulation that leads to the acceptance and rejection of narratives, and this is a serious matter that adds great importance to this research topic.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY: This research is limited to presenting a number of revivalist models within the field of *Hadith terminology* ('Ilm al-Muṣṭalah), including epistemological models such as the concept of "al-Ṣaḥīḥ" (the authentic

ḥadīth) as defined by Ibn Ḥajar, and the concept of “al-‘Adālah” (integrity) as discussed by al-Amīr al-Ṣan‘ānī among the later scholars, and another methodological one, which was manifested in the reordering of the topics of Hadith sciences as presented by Al-Hāfiz Ibn Hajar and by Dr. Hamza Al-Malibari among contemporary scholars.

RESEARCH PLAN: In this paper, we seek to focus on three main axes: the first axis is about the methodological flaw and the necessity of renewal in the study of Hadith sciences, and the second: we held it to analyze examples of the efforts and contributions of some scholars in scholarly revisions of hadith sciences, and as for the latter axis, we presented examples of the efforts of some imams and researchers in methodological revisions (Al-Istidrākāt) to the sciences of hadith.

METHODOLOGY: In this study, we relied on the analytical approach necessitated by the nature of this research.

THE CONCEPT OF THE REVIVAL MOVEMENT IN THE HADITH STUDIES: We mean by it those critical efforts of hadith scholars - over successive eras - that engaged with various topics within the science and terminology of Hadith, through improving the methodological structure of the hadith studies from the technical standpoint, and through correcting certain assertions and concepts that contradict what the early leading scholars of this field established scientifically, such correction breathes new life into this discipline and restores its vitality, enabling it to perform its critical function concerning narrations and narrators. It also facilitates a proper understanding for the researcher and comprehension of the methodological approaches of the early critical scholars, while providing answers to many methodological and scientific problems that arise within it.

2. SECTION ONE: Methodological Flaw and the Necessity of Renewal in the Study of Hadith

Discussing the revivalist and renewal approach to the sciences of hadith and its terminology must be preceded by discussing the reality of this science through its well-known compilations, which are of utmost importance in understanding the terminology and rules of this science, and in refining its issues and foundations. By “compilations,” we refer to all the books on the sciences of hadith and its terminology, such as Al-Kifaya by Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Ma‘rifat ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth by Al-Hakim, the Introduction by Ibn Al-Salah, Nukhbat Al-Fikr by Ibn Hajar, and others that are well-known among their scholars.

We continue to emphasize that the call for exercising a measure of methodological critique regarding certain established notions in some writings on the sciences of hadith should not be understood as a call to reject the works of our distinguished scholars, nor as an attempt to undermine their efforts or belittle their intellects. Rather, it is an invitation to address the gaps that may exist within those blessed and valuable contributions and to elevate them methodologically so that they respond to the demands and challenges of the present age. This call in no way compromises the fundamental principles and established constants of this discipline; rather, it encourages an engagement with this rich scholarly heritage in a manner that

serves the higher objective of preserving the religion—without undue sanctification and without unjust devaluation.

The context in which we are present does not suffice to mention the merits of what has been written in the field of hadith studies and its rules, its importance and preciousness, and the necessity of preserving it and starting from it, because it is the context of a discussion about a revivalist and renewal method to fill the shortcomings and defects and complete the deficiency that appears clearly evident in many methodological and scientific aspects, and what we seek to discuss here is to clarify the most important aspects of the deficiency, which are manifested in the following points: (Al-Malibari, 2004, p. 122)

- Many terminology books rely on logical definitions that are still insufficient to Cover the meanings encompassed by the terminology and preserving its critical dimensions, without noting that the early Hadith scholars sometimes used them in their broadest sense, which has caused major scientific problems.
- The conflation of different methodologies, and not pointing out that some terms were created in the post- narrative era, or that their meanings are newly introduced. And if we treat all terms as if they were agreed upon by the early scholars and the moderns, this would lead to confusion in approaches and distortion of concepts, as has occurred with terms such as *'Illah*, *Munkar*, *Shādh*, and *Ziyādat al-Thiqah* (the addition made by a reliable narrator), and the like.
- Combining what should remain distinct, and distinguishing between what is essentially similar, restricting what is meant to be broad, and generalizing what is intended to be specific.
- The absence of a coherent thematic arrangement of topics and terminologies within hadith sciences has resulted in the fragmentation of subjects and made it difficult for the student to comprehend and understand them correctly.
- The cessation of renewal efforts in accordance with the scientific imperatives required by the changing context has contributed to the deviation of the scientific rules related to authentication (*Taṣḥīḥ*) and discrediting (*Taḍ'īf*) from their proper course, and to the distortion of their concepts.

Among the forms of methodological flaws added by Dr. Abu Bakr Kafi are the following (Kafi, 2019, p. 3):

- Neglecting to provide a definition of the term in many cases¹, or defining it very briefly sometimes, neglecting some of the essential constraints and conditions necessary for attaining a correct understanding of the term².

¹ See, for example: *Ma'rifat Ziyādāt al-Thiqāt wa Ḥukmihā* (Knowing the Additions of Trustworthy Narrators and Their Rulings) in *Tadrīb al-Rāwī*, (1/132); *Ma'rifat al-Afrād*, (1/133); and *Ma'rifat al-Mudraj* and *Ma'rifat al-Maqlūb* in *ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth* by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, pp. 84, 91.

² See, for example: I Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's summary of al-Tirmidhī's discussion on the meaning of *ḥasan*, as well as al-Nawawī's summary of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's view. There is a noticeable divergence and a neglect of some important conditions related to al-Tirmidhī's concept of *ḥasan*. See: al-Muqaddimah, pp. 26 ff; and al-Taqrīb wa al-Taysīr, (1/180).

- Repetition and reiteration of what was mentioned by predecessors without any scrutiny, criticism, or significant addition, and limiting oneself to secondary issues such as linguistic, grammatical, logical, and other discussions - which have no effect on clarifying and defining the term in most cases.
- The absence of illustrative examples in these books sometimes, and their scarcity at other times, and their lack of variety and diversity, as well as the frequent repetition of the same examples in most of them, and this example may be ambiguous, wrong, criticized, or possibly doubtful, and this leads to the inherent ambiguity of the term itself, and its lack of clarity, and the lack of knowledge of its relationship with other related concepts. For example, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ defines the term “Ṣaḥīḥ” (authentic) in detail without citing a single example; the same approach is found in the works of al-Nawawī and al-Suyūfī. The same holds true for other terms such as “Ḥasan” (fair) and “Ḍa‘īf” (weak) (Lubābah, 2002, pp. 367-368).
- Interpreting the statements of the early Hadith scholars in light of the conventions established by later scholars, along with contradicting the terminology of the predecessors, discarding their usages, and accusing them of negligence, error, or oversight. (An example of this is Ibn Ḥajar’s discussion of the terms *Shādh* and *Munkar*)³
- The lack of linkage between the theoretical aspect and the practical application in works on Hadith terminology, and this is a phenomenon that we should be aware of and be wary of so that we do not fall into a conflict between what is theorized in the books of Hadith terminology and what we find applied in works of the early critical scholars, as we often face problems due to the formulation of terminology detached from the practical reality observed among the early critical scholars. For example, the term “ṣaḥīḥ” (authentic) has been defined in the books of Hadith terminology as a narration whose chain of transmission is continuous, transmitted by narrators of complete integrity and precision, from the beginning of the chain to its end, and free from (*shudhūdh*) and (*‘illah qādiḥah*) (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1981, p. 10). However, when examining the works of the early critical scholars - foremost among them the two Ṣaḥīḥs (of al-Bukhārī and Muslim) - we find many ḥadīths in which some of these conditions are not fully met, particularly with regard to complete precision (*kamāl al-dabt*). How, then, can the practical application be reconciled with the theoretical framework?
- The intrusion of opinions and terminologies from non-specialists - such as theologians, jurists, and *uṣūl* scholars - who were not well-versed in the methodologies of the hadith critics, thus intruding upon the domain of hadith

³ See: *Nuzhat al-Nazar*, p. 73, where Ibn Ḥajar says, after explaining the difference between *al-munkar* and *al-shādh*: “Those who equate between them have been heedless,” although many of the early scholars—and some of the later ones—did not distinguish between the two. He also said, regarding the distinction between *al-mursal al-khaṭfī* and *tadlīs*: “The correct view is to differentiate between them,” although some of the early ḥadīth scholars did not make such a distinction.

scholars in their own discipline, and even to disagree with them on many of its fundamental issues.

- Separating synonymous terms that share the same meaning, exaggerating the division, assuming the differences between terms that differ in wording, and differentiating between them in form by scattering them without order as previously indicated, and in content by forcing oneself to find differences between them, even if they are not effective.

These are the most important observations that most works on the sciences and terminology of hadith share, with some differences in some aspects.

3. SECTION TWO: Examples of the efforts of some imams in scholarly revisions in the field of Hadith sciences

3.1 The redefinition of the term “*Sahih*” according to Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar

According to the consensus of later scholars, such as Ibn al-Salah and others, the term *ṣaḥīḥ* denotes a hadith with a continuous chain of transmission, narrated by trustworthy (*‘adl*) and perfectly precise transmitters (*tām al-ḍabṭ*) throughout, and free from any (*shudhūdh*) or (*‘illah qāḍiḥah*) (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1981, p. 10).

Although this definition is widely cited in the literature on hadith terminology, it entails certain scholarly difficulties, as noted by al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar, the most notable of these problems is that a literal application of the conditions stated in this definition would invalidate many of the critics’ judgments regarding the authenticity of narrations — foremost among them those of the authors of the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, al-Bukhārī and Muslim. This raises the question: which of the two should be derived from and referred back to - the later technical definition, or the practical judgments of the early hadith critics? It is beyond dispute that the terminology was derived from the critics’ practical applications, not the other way around. If that is the case, then many of the narrations found in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* cannot fully satisfy certain conditions- such as complete precision and other requirements - that were later incorporated into the technical definition of ‘authentic’ (*ṣaḥīḥ*) hadith.

When al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar realized that accepting this definition of the ‘authentic’ (*ṣaḥīḥ*) hadith would lead to numerous problems and open an endless door to questioning the canonical collections of Sunnah that have been unanimously accepted by Muslims, he proposed a revision to the definition of the authentic hadith. He said: "First, the apparent meaning of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s statement is that a condition of authenticity is that the transmitter must be a *ḥāfiẓ* (one possessing complete mastery and precision), and we have already discussed the problem with this earlier. Second, a *ḥadīth* described as ‘authentic’ (*ṣaḥīḥ*) which falls short of the full level of authenticity, yet meets the criteria of *ḥasan* (good) when supported by another chain of transmission, is not included in Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s original definition of the authentic hadith. Hence, either the definition of ‘authentic’ must be expanded to include such cases, or such reports cannot be termed authentic. The correct view, from a rational standpoint, is that they should indeed be considered authentic, and the definition of the authentic hadith ought to be modified accordingly - namely, that: *It is the ḥadīth whose isnād (chain of transmission) is continuous through transmitters who are upright (‘adl) and possess complete or partial precision (ḍabṭ), provided that the*

report is corroborated by another of similar strength up to the end of the chain, and that it is free from (*shudhūdh*) and (*ʿilal*). He added: I say this because, after examining many of the narrations in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, I found that they could not be judged authentic except on this basis" (Ibn.Ḥajar, 1994, pp. 1/416-417).

Although this represents one of the clearest examples of renewal in the most central of hadith-related technical terms - namely, the term *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) - insofar as the concept was reformulated in a way that accords with the practical methods of the early hadith critics, particularly as reflected in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, and although this proposed definition successfully addresses many of the objections raised by sectarian polemicists in the past and by modernist thinkers today who question the authenticity of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* and other authoritative hadith collections, the revised formulation, like that of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ before it, still implies a necessary correlation between the authenticity of a hadith and the reliability of its transmitter.

And it does not sufficiently account for the critical dimensions that underlie the methodology of the hadith critics in their authentication (*taṣḥīḥ*) and weakening (*taʿlīl*). Their approach rests on an integrated examination of both the chain of transmission (*isnād*) and the text (*matn*), considering the contextual and corroborating indicators surrounding each report, and awareness of the narrator's general and specific transmission patterns. They also take into account narrators' concordance (*muwāfaqa*) and divergence (*mukhālaḥa*), as well as noting cases of solitary transmission (*tafarrud*). Consequently, they may judge a report transmitted by a weak narrator to be authentic due to supporting evidence, or conversely, they may deem a report from a trustworthy transmitter weak. Authenticity, therefore, is not an inherent quality of everything narrated by reliable transmitters; rather, each hadith is subject to its own particular critical assessment.

In conclusion, the flaw in the well-known definition of the authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) hadith lies in its failure to take into account the practical methodology of the early hadith critics when formulating hadith terminology.

3.2 : Al-Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī's Critique of the Concept of *al-ʿAdālah al-dīniyyah* (Religious Integrity)

Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī defined *ʿadālah* (uprightness) as "a firmly established disposition in the soul that inclines one to truthfulness in speech, both in states of contentment and anger. It is recognized through the avoidance of major sins, the absence of persistence in minor ones, and adherence to moral decorum (*murūʿah*)" (ʿAṭṭār, p. 2/175). Ibn Ḥajar summarized this definition by stating that *ʿadālah* is "a moral faculty that compels one to observe piety (*taqwā*) and social propriety (*murūʿah*)" (Ibn.Ḥajar, *Nuzhat al-naẓar fī tawḍīḥ nukhbat al-fīkar fī muṣṭalaḥ ahl al-athar*, 2000, p. 58).

The foregoing definition of *ʿadālah* (uprightness) is the most widely cited in the works on hadith terminology. However, this concept - as established by the later scholars - fails to address several critical objections. If by "moral faculty" (*malakah*) one means a firmly rooted disposition in the soul from which virtuous actions proceed effortlessly (al-Ṣanʿānī, 2006, p. 33), then *ʿadālah* in this sense would hardly apply to anyone except one protected from error (*maʿṣūm*). The biographical entries

of trustworthy transmitters clearly indicate otherwise (al-Ṣanʿānī, *Tawḍīḥ al-afkār li-maʿānī tanqīḥ al-anzār*, 1997, p. 2/284). Moreover, the notion of such a “faculty” is itself elusive and difficult to define or measure with precision.

Al-Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī perceived this problem and stated: “Their interpretation of *ʿadālah* (uprightness) as a *malakah* (moral faculty) neither corresponds to its linguistic meaning nor is there a single textual indication from the Sharīʿah supporting it. Defining it as such imposes undue strictness, attainable only by the infallible or by a few exceptionally pious individuals ... It is evident that the presence of this faculty in every ḥadīth transmitter is virtually impossible; whoever examines the biographical entries (*tarājim al-ruwāt*) will realize this with certainty. The accurate view is that an upright person is one who strives for moderation and rectitude, and whose good deeds outweigh his faults.” (al-Ṣanʿānī, *Tawḍīḥ al-afkār li-maʿānī tanqīḥ al-anzār*, 1997, p. 2/284).

This view is supported by the statements of several eminent scholars such as al-Shāfiʿī, Ibn Ḥibbān, and al-Dhahabī, among others, as reflected in their following expressions:

Al-Shāfiʿī stated: “*I do not know of anyone to whom God granted obedience without mixing it with disobedience, except Yahyā ibn Zakarīyā (John the Baptist), peace be upon him. Nor do I know of anyone who disobeyed God without mixing it with obedience. Thus, when obedience predominates, the person is deemed reliable (muʿaddal), and when disobedience predominates, he is deemed discredited (mujarrah).*” (Al-Khaṭīb, p. 79).

Ibn Ḥibbān stated: “*Uprightness (ʿadālah) in a person means that most of his states are characterized by obedience to God. If we were to deem upright only those from whom no sin whatsoever had been observed, this would lead us to conclude that there is no upright person in existence—for no human being is free from the influence of Satan. Rather, an upright (ʿadl) individual is one whose outward conduct is generally in obedience to God, whereas one whose predominant state is disobedience is not upright.*” (Ibn Ḥibbān, 2012, p. 1/140).

Al-Dhahabī stated: “*It is not a condition for reliability (thiqa) that a transmitter be infallible or free from error and sin.*” (al-Dhahabī, 1963, p. 3/141).

Accordingly, what Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ reported from the early scholars - that they required of an upright (ʿadl) narrator freedom from the causes of immorality (*fisq*) and from breaches of propriety (*khawārim al-murūʿah*) - is an unqualified statement that must be restricted in light of the practical applications of the early ḥadīth critics. Uprightness (ʿadālah) should be confined to what directly affects the validity of narration, namely, the narrator’s truthfulness (*ṣidq*) and precision in narration (*ḍabt*), while other considerations are to be set aside.

This is precisely what al-Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī sought to emphasize when he stated: “*The correct view is that there is consensus among scholars that the essential conditions for narrators are truthfulness and accuracy in transmission. As for their religious conduct, it suffices that righteousness predominates over sinfulness—this is a matter of agreement. Some, however, have added further conditions, such as freedom from religious innovation (bidʿah) and observance*

of social decorum (*murū'ah*), and they have defined uprightness in a manner attainable only by the infallible. In my treatise *Thamarāt al-Nazar fī 'Ilm al-Athar*, I have presented the evidence for what I affirm here—that the two essential conditions are truthfulness and accuracy, and that this is the agreed position. Those who introduced additional conditions were unable to fulfill them in practice, for the reports of narrators with tendencies toward certain religious innovations—such as *Qadar*, *Irjā'*, *Nusb*, or *Rafd*—were nonetheless accepted, provided the narrator was truthful. I have elaborated on this in the aforementioned work, demonstrating that it represents the correct position. Thus, when one says that a transmitter is *'adl*, it means he is truthful and that his virtue predominates over his faults. ... I am not aware that anyone has preceded me in articulating this view.” (al-Ṣan'ānī, *Tawḍīḥ al-afkār li-ma'ānī tanqīḥ al-anzār*, 1997, p. 1/313).

4. SECTION THREE: Examples of the Methodological Revisions Made by Some Scholars in the Science of Hadith

4.1 The Reorganization of the Topics of Hadith Sciences in the Works of Ibn Ḥajar

The deficiency—or rather, the absence—of systematic organization in the topics of ḥadīth sciences and their terminology are evident to anyone who examines the works of the specialists in the field, starting with al-Rāmahurmuzī's *al-Muḥaddith al-Fāṣil*, which did not encompass all the foundational principles and issues of the discipline (Ibn Ḥajar, *Nuzhat al-nazar fī tawḍīḥ nukhbat al-fīkar fī muṣṭalaḥ ahl al-athar*, 2000, p. 38). Following him came al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405 AH) with his *Ma'rifat 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, one of the earliest comprehensive works on ḥadīth sciences. Yet al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar criticized it, saying: “But al-Ḥākim did not refine or organize it” (Ibn Ḥajar, *Nuzhat al-nazar fī tawḍīḥ nukhbat al-fīkar fī muṣṭalaḥ ahl al-athar*, 2000, p. 39). Afterward came al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *al-Kifāyah* (d. 463 AH), whose arrangement likewise fails to achieve the desired clarity and, in many instances, is difficult to follow or understand. From Ibn Ḥajar's description of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's work, it may be inferred that al-Khaṭīb's compilation was fragmented in its issues, scattered in its purpose, and incomplete in its coverage (Ibn Ḥajar, *Nuzhat al-nazar fī tawḍīḥ nukhbat al-fīkar fī muṣṭalaḥ ahl al-athar*, 2000, p. 40). In the seventh century, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643 AH) produced his well-known work *al-Muqaddimah*, which later scholars adopted as their principal reference, seldom departing from its content or method. However, as al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar and others have noted, *the Muqaddimah* did not exhibit any significant improvement in organizational structure. Ibn Ḥajar stated: “Its arrangement was not set out in the most suitable order—such that the topics related solely to the text (*matn*) would be presented separately, as well as those related exclusively to the chain of transmission (*isnād*), those common to both, those specific to the manner of transmission and audition (*taḥammul wa adā'*), and those pertaining solely to the qualities of narrators” (Al-Suyūṭī, 1996, p. 1/19)⁴.

⁴ see also: Ibn Ḥajar's *al-Nukat*, (1/232).

Ibn Hajar offered an apology on Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's behalf, saying: "The response to this is that he (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ) compiled the dispersed discussions of this discipline from extensive works into concise volume, and he deemed the acquisition and transmission of the science to its students more important than devoting attention to refining its arrangement." (Ibn Hajar, *al-Nukat 'alā kitāb Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 1994, p. 1/232). Such was al-Ḥāfiẓ's gracious explanation—an expression of goodwill and scholarly courtesy toward a man of great merit and learning—yet it can hardly be considered a strong justification. In any case, those who came after Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ did not dare to depart from the framework and method of arrangement he had established in presenting the topics of ḥadīth studies. Al-Suyūṭī said: "A number of scholars followed him (i.e., Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ) in this arrangement, among them the author (al-Nawawī), as well as Ibn Kathīr, al-ʿIrāqī, al-Bolqīnī, and others such as Ibn Jamāʿah, al-Tabrīzī, al-Ṭiyibī, and al-Zarkashī" (Al-Suyūṭī, 1996, p. 1/19). Even if Ibn Hajar's justification for Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's unsystematic arrangement were to be granted, no valid excuse or legitimate reason can be offered for those who, after him, merely replicated his method — such as the scholars named by al-Suyūṭī and others.

Ibn Hajar was fully aware of this structural deficiency in *al-Muqaddimah*. In response, he presented his own innovative attempt to reorganize the disciplines and terminology of ḥadīth in his work *Nukhbat al-Fikar*. In this treatise, he structured the subject matter into coherent units, taking into account similarities and differences, correspondences and distinctions. This reorganization represents a new formal arrangement of the issues of ḥadīth terminology— an approach that emphasizes form rather than content. He begins with what pertains to the *isnād* (chain of transmission), then what pertains to the *matn* (text of the report), followed by what involves both. He then divides the reports into *accepted* and *rejected*, and details the categories that fall under each. This innovative order is what he himself described as: "an arrangement I have devised and a method I have adopted, along with the addition of rare and valuable scholarly insights." (Ibn Hajar, *Nuzhat al-naẓar fī tawḍīḥ nukhbat al-fikar fī muṣṭalaḥ ahl al-athar*, 2000, p. 40).

This noteworthy contribution by Ibn Hajar, although grounded in the methodological framework of the *mutakallimūn* (theologians) in their classification of *akhbār* (reports) and criteria for *ih̥tijāj* (validation), nonetheless warrants particular recognition. It constitutes a substantive advancement in the renewal of the pedagogical methodology of Ḥadīth studies in his time and beyond. The work is distinguished by the precision of its language, the richness of its content, and the rigor of its analytical insights. Moreover, its systematic mode of presentation—structured upon a refined and coherent categorization of the various divisions of al-khabar, whether *maqbul* (accepted) or *mardūd* (rejected)—offers a distinctive formulation and a unique conceptual framework for *ʿIlm al-Muṣṭalaḥ* (the science of ḥadīth terminology), unparalleled in other works of the discipline (Nūral-Dīn. ʿIṭr, p. 5).

The scholarly value of this contribution is diminished only by the persistent thematic fragmentation within the disciplines of *ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*, which hinders a comprehensive understanding of the scientific dimensions of its technical

terminology. It is precisely this methodological gap that Dr. Ḥamza al-Malibārī endeavored to remedy, as will be elaborated in the following section.

4.2 Thematic Structuring of the Disciplines of ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth in the Work of Dr. Ḥamza al-Malibārī

Shaykh Ḥamza al-Malibārī stands out among contemporary scholars for his reformist approach to Hadith sciences and its methodologies. The titles of his works bear witness to this orientation, including *Nazarāt Jadīdah fī ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* (New Perspectives on Ḥadīth Sciences)⁵ and *al-Aṣālah wa al-Tajdīd fī ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* (Authenticity and Renewal in Ḥadīth Studies)⁶. The Shaykh articulates the epistemological and methodological crisis that calls for renewal in the field of Hadith sciences as follows:

“Renewal, as understood by later scholars, has been confined to the formal arrangement of technical terms according to rigid logical classifications, without aligning them with the pedagogical and methodological developments of our time ... The persistent thematic fragmentation found in the works of *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* continues to constitute a major impediment for contemporary researchers in fully grasping the discipline. This has led to their estrangement from the critical methodologies of the early ḥadīth scholars, as well as to profound confusion in conceptual precision and a tendency to conflate distinct methodological frameworks (Al-Malibari, 2004, p. 102).

Dr. Ḥamza al-Malibārī identifies three principal domains of renewal within the field of Hadith sciences: the first is the restoration of matters to their original foundations; the second, the re-examination and renewal of technical terms and theoretical principles; and the third, the reform of pedagogical methods in teaching Ḥadīth sciences (Al-Malibari, 2004, p. 99). He considers one of the major problems in the study of ḥadīth sciences to be the absence of a coherent thematic organization of its issues. This has resulted in the dispersion of topics associated with its technical terms, leaving their interrelations obscure. This point, he emphasizes, is of utmost importance, for a proper understanding of ḥadīth sciences and their principles depends fundamentally on clarifying these connections" (Al-Malibari, 2004, p. 123).

The reform proposed by Shaykh al-Malibārī in this regard lies in organizing the topics and technical terms of ḥadīth sciences according to coherent thematic units. He contends that any discipline becomes susceptible to significant conceptual difficulties when its principles and terminologies are treated in a fragmented and dispersed manner, such that the interconnections among related concepts remain obscure and the points of distinction between differing ones fail to be properly discerned. This thematic reorganization, he argues, enables a more comprehensive and integrated understanding of ḥadīth sciences, thereby enhancing both its

⁵ 2nd ed., 2003, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, Beirut.

⁶ An article published in *al-Iḥyā’* Journal, no. 5, 2002.

pedagogical effectiveness and methodological clarity (Al-Malibari, 2004, pp. 124-125)⁷

4.3 Al-Malibari's proposed thematic structure of Hadith sciences:

Under the title "The Sciences of Hadith and Their Thematic Classification", Dr. Hamza al-Malibari explained that the various branches of Hadith sciences can be categorized under four principal thematic units, as follows (Al-Malibari, 'Ulūm al-ḥadīth fī daw' taṭbīqāt al-muḥaddithīn al-nuqqād, pp. 1/16-18):

1. The Science of Hadith Transmission (*'Ilm al-Riwāyah*)
2. The Principles of Authentication and Weakening of Hadith (*Qawā'id al-Taṣḥīḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*)
3. The Science of Evaluation of Narrators (*'Ilm al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*)
4. The Jurisprudential Understanding of Hadith (*Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*)

Unit One: The Science of Ḥadīth Transmission (*'Ilm al-Riwāyah*). This unit includes the following topics: the modes of receiving ḥadīth (ṭuruq al-taḥammul), the writing and documentation of ḥadīth, the verification and preservation of written texts, the transmission (narration) of ḥadīth and its conditions, the proper etiquette of the *muḥaddith* (teacher or transmitter), the etiquette of the student of ḥadīth, and the study of the elevation and decline of *isnād* chains ('ulūw wa-nuzūl al-isnād).

Unit Two: The Principles of Authentication and Weakening of Ḥadīth. This unit comprises the following categories of ḥadīth, which constitute the foundation for assessing and classifying reports: the *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic), the *ḥasan* (fair), the *ḍa'īf* (weak), the *mudallas* (report involving concealed transmission), the *mursal* (interrupted), the *munqaṭi'* (broken chain), the *mu'allaq* (suspended), the *mu'dal* (gap of two or more narrators), the *ziyādat al-thiqah* (addition by a reliable transmitter), the *'illah* (hidden defect), the *shādh* (anomalous), the *munkar* (rejected), the *maqlūb* (reversed), the *mudraj* (interpolated), the *muṣaḥḥaf* (altered by misreading), the *muḍṭarib* (inconsistent), and the *mawḍū'* (fabricated).

Unit Three: The Science of al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl (Criticism and Accreditation of Narrators). This unit encompasses the following topics: the transmitters of ḥadīth and their generational classifications, the Companions (*al-Ṣaḥābah*), the Followers (*al-Tābi'ūn*), and the Followers of the Followers (*Atbā' al-Tābi'īn*); the conditions for the acceptance of narration—namely: *'adālah* (moral integrity) and *ḍabt* (precision of transmission); the factors that impair either *'adālah* or *ḍabt*; religious innovation (*bid'ah*) and its effect on *'adālah*; anonymity (*jahālah*) and its impact on the rejection of ḥadīth; falsehood (*kadhib*) and its effect on integrity; the terminology and expressions used in jarḥ (discrediting) and ta'dīl (accrediting); the cases of conflict between jarḥ and ta'dīl and their underlying causes; as well as the major scholars of this discipline and its primary sources

⁷ See also: *al-Tajdīd al-manhajī fī 'ilm al-muṣṭalah bayna al-tanzīr wa-al-mumārasah* (Methodological Renewal in the Science of Ḥadīth Terminology: Between Theory and Practice), p. 10.

Unit Four: The Comprehension of Ḥadīth (*Fiqh al-Ḥadīth*). This unit encompasses the following areas: the knowledge of abrogating and abrogated ḥadīths (*al-nāsikh wa al-mansūkh*), problematic and unambiguous ḥadīths (*mushkil al-ḥadīth wa muḥkamuh*), unfamiliar or rare expressions in ḥadīth (*gharīb al-ḥadīth*), and the understanding of the context and reasons for the Prophet's statements (*asbāb wurūd al-ḥadīth*).

This proposed method for teaching the sciences of Hadith does not call for neglecting the definitions found in the books of terminology. Rather, it seeks to make them easier for students to understand by arranging them thematically, then presenting each one alongside the practical applications of the Hadith critics, and explaining them through familiar real-life examples ... This approach will help today's students grasp the sciences of Hadith more effectively, understand the true meanings of its terms, and gain insight into the methodology of the Hadith critics in authentication and weakening, as well as in *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*, in all its aspects — both major and subtle (Al-Malibari, 'Ulūm al-ḥadīth fī ḍaw' taṭbīqāt al-muḥaddithīn al-nuqqād, pp. 1/9-10).

Some researchers (al-Zahrānī, 2004, p. 151) have objected to this new approach, arguing that the issues of overlap, shared concepts, and unity of subject were not unknown to the early masters of the discipline, but that they were rather concerned with elaborating and clarifying the contents of the science. However, this objection is unfounded. Dr. al-Malibari did not deny this; what he did was in fact a completion of what Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ and those who came after him—such as Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Ḥajar—had done. Each of them had his own perspective and *ijtihād* (scholarly effort) in making the topics of this discipline more accessible. Moreover, this arranging according to thematic unity is an innovative contribution—which is the main point— even though it may not be free from debate in some of its details

5. CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of this research paper on the revivalist movement in Hadith studies, and after presenting several relevant examples, we present the main conclusions drawn from the study:

- The revivalist approach in Hadith sciences is an authentic methodology that has been practiced by leading scholars throughout successive periods, through various forms of critical engagement such as scholarly corrections, critical revisions, and other revivalist forms
- The call for criticism and renewal should not be understood as a negation of the classical Hadith heritage, but as an effort to complete its intellectual structure and advance the discipline's methodologies.
- There is a pressing need to exercise revivalist criticism of the Hadith sciences corpus in order to achieve scientific rectification and methodological enhancement.
- Among the most evident manifestations of renewal within what we identify as the revivalist methodology in Hadith studies is the reformulation of the most central concept in Hadith terminology, namely the notion of *al-ṣaḥīḥ* (the authentic Hadith), by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar. Equally significant is the substantial amendment proposed by

al-Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī concerning the definition and criteria of *ʿadālah* (integrity of transmitters).

- Among the most significant technical and structural revisions is the work of Ibn Ḥajar, who reorganized and reclassified the topics of Hadith sciences and terminology in his book *Nukhbat al-Fikar*. He introduced a new systematic framework for the issues of Hadith terminology—beginning with matters related to the *isnād* (chain of transmission), followed by those concerning the *matn* (text), then addressing issues that combine both. He also proposed a comprehensive classification of reports into accepted (*maqbul*) and rejected (*mardūd*) categories, along with their respective subdivisions.

- Ibn Ḥajar's reorganization of the topics of Hadith terminology is characterized more by a structural and formal dimension than by a thematic one.

- Dr. al-Malibari's proposal for the thematic reorganization of the issues of Hadith sciences represents an added scholarly value, as it eliminates the obstacle of thematic fragmentation within Hadith terminology—an obstacle that has long hindered a comprehensive understanding of the scientific dimensions of its concepts.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended to conduct inductive studies aimed at tracing the efforts of scholars in their critical contributions that have enriched the field of Hadith studies across its various domains, with the purpose of evaluating and benefiting from these scholarly endeavors.

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