

10

COLLECTIONS OF FORTY ḤADĪTHS

Al-Arbaʿīn

Taking Delight from Forty Distinguished
Hadiths Received Through Audition

الإمتاع بالأربعين المتباينة السماع

ḤĀFIẒ AḤMAD IBN ʿALĪ IBN
AL-ḤAJAR AL-ʿASQALĀNĪ



TURATH PUBLISHING

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful. All praises are for Allah the Lord of the universe, the most Merciful most Kind. Master of the day of judgement. Most Merciful most Kind. You alone we worship and you alone we ask for help. Guide us along the straight path. The path of those who have earned your favour. And not the path of those who have earned your anger and went astray. Ameen. And praise and salutations on our liege-lord the Prophet ﷺ and his noble and pure family and the stalwart scholars of this ummah.

THE FORTY HADITH GENRE

The virtue for memorising forty ḥadīths can be traced back to the Prophet ﷺ.¹ Although scholars of ḥadīth have criti-

cally analysed the ḥadīth and discussed its defects, it functioned as an impetus for them to create the forty ḥadīth genre. It maybe the scholars’ sincerity to carefully practice the Prophet’s ﷺ sunna on the one hand and their sceptical caution to attribute any dubious material to him on the other that they did not strictly include forty ḥadīths in their collections. For example imam an-Nawawī includes forty-two ḥadīths in his collection and imām Ibn Ḥajar include’s forty-five ḥadīths in this collection. Nevertheless, the major motivation for collecting forty ḥadīths has been devotional with a few exceptions. For example to gain some financial benefits from Sultan Ahmad III, the Ottoman scholar Osman Zāde Ṭā’ib wrote a forty ḥadīth collection on the virtues of good health and presented it to the Sultan when he recovered from an illness.

Scholars have collected forty ḥadīths on a whole range of topics. These included from one theme only to a number of themes. An-Nawawī identifies a few of these themes such as: fundamentals of religion (*uṣūl ad-dīn*), Islamic law, jihad, exhortation and intimidation (*targhīb wa tarhīb*) and etiquettes (*ādāb*). Some of the collections translated and published by Turath Publishing include: Loving the Prophet’s ﷺ family (al-Kattānī), virtues of the Prophet’s wives (Ibn ‘Asākir), excellence of the Qur’ān (‘Alī al-Qārī) and legal judgements (as-Suyūṭī). Other topics include as-Sulamī’s (d. 422/1031)

forty ḥadīth on sufi morals, Abū Nu‘aym al-Isfihānī’s (d. 430/1039) *Kitāb al-arba‘īn ‘alā madhāhib al-muhaqqiqīn min aṣ-ṣūfiyya*, and Muḥīyyuddīn ibn al-‘Arabī’s forty ḥadīth *al-Aḥādīth al-Qudsiyya*.

In addition to compiling topical collections, the scholars also compiled forty ḥadīth collections with regards to special features in the *isnād*. For example, Abū Sa‘d Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad al-Mālinī (d. 412/1021) compiled a forty ḥadīth collection where all the shuykh in the *isnād* were sufis called *Kitāb al-Arba‘īn fī shuyūkh aṣ-ṣūfiyya*. Similarly ‘Abdullāh al-Furāwī (d. 530/1136) started of the trend of narrating ḥadīths from forty different shuyukh. This feature was later developed by Abū al-Futūḥ aṭ-Ṭā‘ī (d. 555/1160) who collected forty ḥadīths from forty shuyūkh going through forty Companions. Finally Ibn ‘Asākir’s teacher Abū Ṭāhir as-Silafī further developed it in his *Kitāb al-Arba‘īn al-Mustaghni bi Ta‘yīn mā fīhi ‘an al-Mu‘īn* by narrating from forty shuyūkh from forty different towns. Imam Ibn Ḥajar’s *al-Imtā‘ fī al-Arba‘īn al-Mutabayyināt as-Simā‘* follows the above pattern, since he narrates from 40 Companions through 40 shuyukh in a myriad of places such as Makkah, in front of the Ka‘bah, between the rawḍā and minbar, Cairo, Damscus, Bayt al-Maqdis and many more.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

From where he sat in the house of al-Kharrūbi near mount Ṣafā the scenery was awe-inspiring. He could see people flocking towards the black stone situated in the eastern corner of the Kaʿba. He was listening to his first ḥadīth lectures delivered on the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* by Shaykh ʿAfīf ad-Dīn. Just moments before, the twelve year old Ibn Ḥajar had led the people in *tarāwīḥ* prayer. This first lesson sowed the seed of love for ḥadīth in the young Ibn Ḥajar’s heart to the extent that he reached the heights of excellence. As-Suyūṭī calls him the adh-Dhahābī of his time. He says, ‘He is the imam of the hadith scholars of his time, the ḥāfīz of Egypt, its greatest ḥadīth scholar, nay, the greatest ḥadīth scholar ever to have lived.’ He drank from the well of Zamzam and prayed to Allah to make him like adh-Dhahabī. Allah accepted his prayer and he surpassed adh-Dhāhabī in knowledge.²

Imam Abū al-Faḍl, Shihāb ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Kinānī al-ʿAsqalānī was born on 22 Shaʿbān 773 hijri (18 February 1372) in the old quarters of Cairo. He is famously known as Ibn Ḥajar which was either the name of one of his forefathers Aḥmad or the latter’s father’s name. He came from a pious and scholarly family. His father Shaykh Nūr ad-Dīn ʿAlī (d. 777) was a mufti and his father’s paternal uncle Fakhr ad-Dīn ʿAlī was

a shafi'ī faqīh and the head mufti of Alexandria. Ibn Ḥajar's mother died when he was very young and his father died when he was four. He was looked after by one of his guardian al-Kharrūbī who looked after him and educated him and had an everlasting effect on him. He started maktab when he was five and memorised the Qur'ān in a very short time. He memorised the entire surah Maryam in a day. He also memorised Ibn Ḥājib's small treatise on fiqh.

After al-Kharrūbī's death, he was looked after by Ibn al-Qattān who introduced him to the scholar Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī. Some of his famous teachers include al-Bulqīnī, Ibn al-Mulaqqin, al-'Irāqī, Nur al-Dīn al-Haythamī, 'Izz ibn al-Jamā'a and the famous lexicographer Majduddīn al-Fayrūzabadi (ḥadith 35). Some of his famous students include as-Sakhāwī, Qāsīm ibn al-Qutlubughā, Kamāl ibn al-Humām and Zayn Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī. Imām as-Suyūṭī says that he used to frequent the gathering of Ibn Ḥajar as a child with his father. He may have also heard some ḥadīths from him although he does not remember. Ibn Ḥajar died in 852 while as-Suyūṭī was born in 849. In addition to his scholarly activities, imam Ibn Ḥajar also took the public office of the chief qadi of Cairo. Despite having an aversion to engage in politics, he took the office of qadi no less than seven times.

Imam Ibn Ḥajar wrote over 300 hundred books, some

as small as the current book and others going into volumes covering topics as wide a range as hadith to Arabic grammar and poetry. Indeed he was a poet by temperament. The most famous of his books is *Fatḥ al-Bārī* the commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Ash-Shawkānī says about it, ‘*Hijra* is no longer required after *Fatḥ*.’ Ash-Shawkānī uses the same words of a Prophetic ḥadīth to praise the *Fatḥ al-Bārī*. By it the Prophet ﷺ meant that it was no longer necessary to emigrate (*hijra*) after the conquest (*fatḥ*) of Makkah. Ash-Shawkānī intended by these words that it was no longer necessary to travel for knowledge since ḥafīẓ Ibn Ḥajar has already done the hard work for us in *Fatḥ al-Bārī*. Upon studying the various commentaries of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* prevalent in his time, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 809) says that the Muslims still have a debt that they must pay to imam al-Bukhārī for writing the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Imam as-Sakhāwī, Ibn Ḥajar’s student says that if Ibn Khaldūn had the opportunity to study the *Fatḥ al-Bārī* he would have conceded that this debt has been paid.

In addition to the *al-Imtāʿ*, Ibn Ḥajar also has a number of other forty ḥadīth collections such as:

1. *Al-Arbaʿūn al-ʿAshāriyat al-Isnād ilā aṣ-Ṣaḥāba*
2. *Al-Arbaʿūn fī Radʿ al-Mujrim ʿan Sabb al-Muslim*
3. *Al-Arbaʿūn al-Mumtāza bi ʿAwālī Shuyūkh al-Ijāza*
4. *Al-Arbaʿūn al-Muntaqā min ʿAwālī Muslim ʿalā al-Bukhārī*

5. *Al-Arbaʿūn min Masmūʿ Ibn ʿAbd ad-Dāʿim min at-Targhīb li at-Taymī*
6. *Ḍiyāʾ al-Anām bi ʿAwālī Shaykh al-Islām al-Bulqīnī*
7. *Al-ʿAwālī at-Tāliya li Miʿab al-ʿĀliya*
8. *Mukhtaṣar al-Imtāʿ bi al-Arbaʿīn al-Mutabāyina bi Shart as-Simāʿ*

Imam Ibn Ḥajar’s fame wasn’t unchallenged and unrivalled. Many scholars interrupted his work as a qadi. His arch-nemesis was his fellow colleague at the al-Muʿayyid school, the famous hanafi scholar and commentator of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukḥarī* Imam Badr ad-Dīn al-ʿAynī (d. 855). Academic rivalry between them was perhaps due to a number of factors: firstly both of them held the office of chief qadi; Ibn Ḥajar of the shāfiʿis and al-Aynī of the hanafis. Secondly both of them wrote a commentary of the same book and finally both of them used their commentary to give leverage to their *madh-dhab*. Since al-ʿAynī wrote his commentary called *ʿUmdat al-Qārī* after Ibn Ḥajar, he had the benefit of studying and criticising the latter’s work. Ibn Ḥajar wrote two rebuttals afterword called *Intiqād at-Taʿrīd* and *al-Istaṣṣār ʿalā at-Ṭāʿīn al-Mukhtār*. In there, Ibn Ḥajar accuses al-ʿAynī of plagiarising his material. ʿAbdurRaḥmān al-Baṣīrī (d. 1935), a Libyan scholar made a study of their differences in his book *Mubtakirāt al-Laʿālī wa ad-Durar fī al-Muḥākama bayn al-ʿAynī*

wa Ibn Ḥajar. Al-Baṣīrī identified 343 points of contentions between them. Those who have analysed both the commentaries have said that al-ʿAynī's grasp of lexicography, grammar and language is much better than Ibn Ḥajar. Their rivalry can be summed up in the following light incident.

One day Ibn Ḥajar saw the minaret of the al-Muʿayyid school, where both he and al-ʿAynī were lecturers, damaged. Ibn Ḥajar took this opportunity to have a go at al-ʿAynī and wrote the following couplets:

لجامع مولانا المؤيد رونق . . . منارته بالحسن تزهو وبالزين
تقول وقد مالت على البرج امهلوا . . . فليس على جسمي أضر من العين

Splendour belongs to the mosque of our master al-Muʿayyid

Its minaret shines with beauty and adornment

Inclining away from the middle course, it says, 'Wait,

Nothing is more injurious to my body than the evil eye

(*al-ʿayn*)!'

(The word *al-ʿayn* (evil eye) is a pun on the name al-ʿAynī)

Upon hearing this al-ʿAynī retorted with couplets of his own:

منارة كعروس الحسن اذ جليت . . . وهدمها بقضاء الله والقدر
قالوا أصيبت بعين قلت ذا غلط . . . ما أوجب الهدم إلا خسة الحجر

A minaret when it is polished it looks like the bride of beauty

Its destruction is according to the decree and will of Allah.

They say that it has suffered from the evil eye, I say, wrong,
Nothing but the bad quality of the stone (*al-ḥajar*) caused
its destruction!’

(The word *al-ḥajar* (stone) is a pun on the name Ibn Ḥajar)

Imam Ibn Ḥajar died of a terminal illness which lasted for two months. He died on Friday night on 28 Dhī al-Ḥijja 852 hijri (2 February 1448) and was buried in al-Qarrāfa, Cairo, now famously known as the City of the Dead (*madīnat al-mawtā*). The caliph of the time led his funeral prayer. Imam as-Suyūṭī mentions that ash-Shihāb al-Manṣūrī told him that he was present at Ibn Ḥajar’s funeral. It started raining and Ibn Ḥajar’s body began to get wet. Capturing the moment, Al-Manṣūrī recited the following couplet;

قد بكت السحب على ... قاضي القضاة بالمطر
وانهدم الركن الذي ... كان مشيدا من حجر

The clouds have shed tears of rain on the chief qadi

Thus the solid pillar of stone got ruined

ABOUT THE BOOK

The *Imtāʿ* is a fine, yet simple example of imām Ibn Ḥajar’s finesse in ḥadīth. Imam Ibn Ḥajar did not make the topics of the ḥadīth his main focus but the *isnād*. This is why when

one reads the *Imtā‘*, one will not get a feel for the logical arrangements of the topics. They are haphazard and range from fiqh to history. The brilliance of imam Ibn Ḥajar lies in his arrangement of the *isnād*. Firstly the collection is a composition of 45 ḥadīths the author heard directly from his teachers. This is the first important value of this book which is also expressed in its title. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars of ḥadīth regarding the best mode of receiving ḥadīth from one’s teacher. Some are of the opinion that it is to present (‘*ard*’) one’s materials to the shaykh by reading it to him (*qirā’at ‘alā ash-shaykh*). This is expressed by some scholars using the phrase ‘*qar‘atu ‘alā*’ or more commonly ‘*akhbaranā*’. Imām Mālik was of the opinion that if the student is confident with his material and competent to relay it back to the teacher without making major mistakes then it is better to present it to the teacher. However, the majority of the scholars are of the opinion that listening (*simā‘a*) to the teacher recite the ḥadīth is the superior mode of reception. This is expressed using the phrases ‘*sam‘itu*’ or more famously by some as ‘*ḥaddathanā*’. However the early scholars such as Abū Ḥanīfa, aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī and al-Bukhārī did not make any semantical distinctions between the terms *ḥaddathanā* and *akhbaranā*. Ibn Ḥajar seems to be following the opinion that audition (*simā‘a*) is superior to presentation (‘*ard*’) hence the title of the book. Nevertheless, there is more

than one example in the collection where Ibn Ḥajar reads to his shaykh (*qirā'atī 'alayh*, ḥadīth 5, 9, 17, 21, 29) or some other students read while Ibn Ḥajar is listening in the gathering (*qirā'atan 'alayh wa an asma'*, ḥadīth 15). However this is an exception and not the rule.

It was the practice of our teacher shaykh Hashim Patel (may Allah give him health and long life), professor of Ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Bury, UK to recite the text of the *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* while all the students listened to him. His argument was that it is a more accurate and blessed practice for the teacher to recite the text than the student to recite to him. This was opposite to the practice of our other shuyūkh of ḥadīth who made the students recite the text to them. Obviously one can appreciate the pedagogical value in their approach. May Allah bless all our shuyukh and give them good health.

Coming back to the *Imtā'*, imam Ibn Ḥajar heard each ḥadīth from a different teacher. In this sense the collection can be called a *mu'jam* of Ibn Ḥajar's shuyukh. *Mu'jam* is a type of ḥadīth collection where an author arranges his materials according to the names of his teachers. Famous in this genre are the three *mu'jams* of aṭ-Ṭabarānī. Ibn Ḥajar's erudition can really be appreciated when we realise that each of the ḥadīths narrated in the collection, in addition to being received from 45 different shuyukh, is also narrated from

45 different Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. The chapter headings are named after the Companions ﷺ. In this sense it can be called a *musnad* of the *ṣaḥāba*. The *musnad* is a genre of ḥadīth collection where the material is organised according to the names of the Companions ﷺ. The most famous *musnad* is the *Musnad* of imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

The *al-Imtā‘* starts with a special ḥadīth narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Āṣ which is known as *al-musalsal bi al-awwaliyya*. The *musalsal* is a special type of *isnad* where a particular feature is repeated throughout the entire *isnad*. This particular *isnād* is known as *awwaliyya* because it is the first ḥadīth that the Companion ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Āṣ ﷺ heard from the Prophet ﷺ, and it is the first ḥadīth that his student heard from him and the first ḥadīth that his student’s student heard from his student and so forth in all subsequent generations. It is still the practice of ḥadīth teachers today to initiate ḥadīth lectures with it. This was also the practice of our shuyukh. Ḥadīth number 35 is another extraordinary example of the *musalsal*. This particular ḥadīth is known as *al-musalsal bi al-Muḥammadiyya*, meaning every single narrator in the *isnād* is called Muḥammad. It is a blessed *isnād* and should be read with uttermost reverence.

After the first ḥadīth, the next 10 ḥadīths are narrated from the 10 Companions who were promised paradise (*al-‘ashara al-mubashshara*), starting with the four Caliphs.

The Companions are: (1) Abū Bakr, (2) ʿUmar, (3) ʿUthmān, (4) ʿAlī, (5) Ṭalhā ibn ʿUbaydullāh, (6) az-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām, (7) Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, (8) Saʿīd ibn Zayd, (9) ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf, and (10) Abū ʿUbayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ رضي الله عنه. The following 28 ḥadīths are alphabetically arranged according to Companions. Each letter of the alphabet represents a Companion. Some of these are very famous Companions such as Jabir ibn ʿAbdillāh (ḥadīth 16) while others are nearly unknown for example Ḥazim ibn al-Ḥarmala (ḥadīth 17). Hadīths 40 and 41 are narrated by ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar and ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās respectively. This alongside, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-Āṣ (ḥadīth 1) and ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd (ḥadīth 29), completes the inclusion of the four ʿAbdullāhs (*ʿabādila al-arbaʿa*) in the *Imtāʿ*.

The final ḥadīth (45) has a lengthy discussion on the status of the ḥadīth regarding the virtues of 40 ḥadīths. Ibn Ḥajar narrates this ḥadīth from a female teacher of his by the name of Maryam bint Aḥmad as-Saʿdiyya. Another female teacher of his Sāra bint Taqīuddīn as-Subkī features in the discussion. The book closes with some poems related to the virtues of studying for knowledge, a prayer to Allah and the status of ḥadīth scholars.

This long introduction to the logical arrangement of the collection will help readers to appreciate the effort that imam Ibn Ḥajar put into such a small opuscle. However,

with such fancy and elaborate materials comes a trade off. In order to maintain the unique nature of this collection, Ibn Ḥajar had to rely on *isnāds* that ranges the entire gamut of ḥadīth classification from sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) to fabricated (*maʾwḍūʿ*). This does not mean that the actual ḥadīth is fabricated. It just means that the particular *isnād* that he used in this book is not sound. For example the *isnād* of ḥadīth 39 on ascribing false ḥadīths to the Prophet ﷺ is weak despite the fact that the ḥadīth is the only undisputed rigorously sound (*mutawātir*) ḥadīth at our disposal. This is purposely done to maintain the distinguishing characteristic of the opuscle. Imam Ibn Ḥajar is aware of this and this is why he supplements every ḥadīth with a long discussion on its *isnād* paths and variant wordings.

Finally shaykh ʿAbdul ʿAzīz the muḥaddith of Delhi writes in *Bustān al-Muḥaddithīn* that every ḥadīth of the *Imtāʿ* is supplemented with a poetical couplet encapsulating the essence of the ḥadīth. This is missing from our manuscript of *Imtāʿ*. Maybe the shaykh had another manuscript at his disposal. Here is the translation of the section of *Imtāʿ* from the *Bustān* for the readers benefit. The *Bustān* has been translated and published by Turath Publishing as *The Garden of the Hadith Scholars*.

He related them from forty shaykhs from forty Companions, and from among them the ten who were

promised the Garden, and after each hadith he mentioned some appropriate lines of poetry. For instance, after the second hadith, which is: “After the statement of sincerity (the *shahādah*), people have not been given anything like health,” he says:

There are two things whose like an intelligent man
has not been given in our vanishing abode:
Someone who has Allah make easy for him
the testimony of sincerity, and health.

He says after the third hadith, “Actions are according to intentions”:

Actions are according to intentions in every matter in which it
is possible obligatorily.
They spoke well. Do good, and if you cannot, then intention is enough.

He said after the fourth hadith, “There is no Muslim man who attends a prescribed prayer and performs purification and its bowing well and with humility. . .”:

Do purification well and be humble in obedience,
coming to rest in all *rakā'ahs*.

Al-Arba‘īn

It is expiation for what you did before
of minor wrong actions. *Good actions. . .*

He says after the fifth hadith, “He forbade to drink standing”:

When you want to drink, sit down and you will settle
like the stones of the people of the Hijaz.
They have soundly transmitted drinking standing,
but it was to make clear that it is permissible.

He says after the sixth hadith, which is the hadith of Ḍimām ibn Tha‘labah:

Persevere in the sound *sunnahs* and you will obtain a reward
and Allah will be pleased with you and you will profit.
If you confine yourselves to the obligatory prayers, then let it be
without abstaining from supererogatory prayers; you will
have success.

He says after the seventh hadith, which is the hadith of the good news of the ten promised the Garden:

The guide gave good news of the Gardens of ‘Aden to all
of a group of Companions each of whose excellence

is well-known. Sa'īd, Zubayr, Sa'd, Ṭalḥah, 'Āmir,
Abū Bakr, 'Uthmān, Ibn 'Awf, 'Alī, 'Umar.³

EDITORIAL WORK

I have made some major structural changes to the original arrangement of the text. This is to make the book accessible for people at all levels of knowledge. *Isnāds* of all ḥadīths have been truncated and taken to the appendix. This is so that the original text does not look cluttered. Only the names of Ibn Ḥajar's shaykh and the Companions have been kept in the actual text. I have used three dots [. . .] in the text to show the ellipsis. Similarly, Ibn Ḥajar's discussions on the ḥadīths (which mainly relate to technical ḥadīth points) have been relegated to the appendix with its translation. Readers wishing to study the *isnāds* or Ibn Ḥajar's discussions on the ḥadīths will find them in full in the appendix. I have done this for all ḥadīths except three: ḥadīth 1 known as *al-musalsal bi al-awwaliyya*, ḥadīth 35 known as *al-musalsal bi al-Muḥammadiyya* and ḥadīth 45 which is the final ḥadīth of the collection where Ibn Ḥajar discusses extensively the status of the 'forty ḥadīth' ḥadīth.

Further to the above, I have also added a small commentary after each ḥadīth where I thought it was necessary. I have also provided small biographical information for

Al-Arba'īn

all of the Companions in the book. The biographies have been taken from Ibn Ḥajār's book *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz aṣ-ṣaḥāba*. Finally I pray to Allah that he makes this book a means for our guidance and success in the hereafter.

Dear Lord, Hallowed be they name, lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot our sins, and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; help us against those who stand against Faith. Peace and salutations be showered on your Prophet ﷺ and his pure family and the pious savants of this ummah. *Ameen*.

MANSUR ALI

September 2013

Caerdydd, Cymru