



A CRITICAL STUDY ON THE MA'ĀLIM AS-SUNNA AN-NABAWIYYA BY ṢĀLIḤ ASY-SYĀMĪ

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Abstract

Asy-Syāmī intended the Ma'ālim as-Sunna an-Nabawiyya to be the fifteenth in the list of the hitherto fourteen hadith books of Muslim. It is made up more concise for the people to access it more easily – of course without deteriorating the fourteen acclaimed primary sources. Reading the book more closely, this article argues that the method asy-Syāmī uses in producing the book triggers hadith scholars to question its worthiness to join the list. I further try to do critique by employing the so-called conventional hadith science recognized widely in Muslim scholarship. I find some aspects in which asy-Syāmī is quite inconsistent in treating the hadith. He take out some parts of hadith text, miscount the total number of the hadith, and do some wrong in classifying and assessing the quality of the hadith. These all make the book unworthy to join the list of primary hadith books for Muslim. However, the book helps Muslim, especially lay Muslim, to understand closer the prophetic hadith.

Keywords: *Ma'ālim as-Sunna an-Nabawiyya, Method, Critical, asy-Syāmī, Primary Text Books.*

Abstrak

Al-Syamiy membuat karya Ma'alim al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah ditujukan pada kaum Muslim agar mereka memiliki kitab hadis ke 15 dari 14 kitab hadis induk yang sudah ada dengan kemudahan mengaksesnya, lebih ringkas tanpa mengalpakkan hadis-hadis yang ada dalam kitab-kitab induk tadi. Tulisan ini ini menunjukkan bahwa penetapan metodologi yang dibuat al-Syamiy dalam kitabnya, menyisakan sejumlah pertanyaan tentang keabsahan karyanya untuk dimasukkan sebagai kitab induk hadis ke 15. Dengan mengkritisi metodologi al-Syamiy melalui metode dan teori ilmu hadis yang telah dikenal oleh muhaddis, ditemukan ketidak konsistenan al-Syamiy dalam menerapkan metodologi yang dibuatnya sendiri yaitu pengurangan, penghitungan hadis, klasifikasi dan penilaian kualitas hadis dalam kitab Ma'alim al-Sunnah sehingga kitab ini belum dapat dikategorikan sebagai kitab hadis induk, meski cakupan global kitab tersebut dapat membantu bagi Muslim pemula yang ingin mengetahui hadis Nabi suci saw.

Kata Kunci: *Ma'alim al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah, Metodologi, Kritis, al-Syamiy, Kitab Induk.*

A. Introduction

There are thousands or billions hadith attributed to the prophet in varying different version. The huge number makes no surprise for the definition of hadith (al-Sakhawiy, 1426 H, vol. I, p. 14) is everything related to the prophet, with regard to Islamic law and beyond (Abu Zahw, 1968, p. 9-10). The discipline of hadith studies however is an area in which Muslim scholars compile hadith in circulation to later make certain assessment. The first level, the compilation, generates a genre of hadith books with a set of alternative names like *al-Jāmi'* and *al-Zawā'id*. These names hint at certain categorization and goal the author is pursuing.

Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad al-Shāmī, a 21st-century scholar, has spent nearly 20 years to continue the tradition. Al-Shāmī makes an abridged version of fourteen hadith books he chose out of hundreds. He declares it an abridged yet all-covering version that will occupy the fifteenth in the list of the standard book of hadith. Together with all members of the list, the *Ma'ālim al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya* constitute the guidance to which Muslims will refer to.

This article tries to make an assessment of the work of al-Shāmī from several aspects, particularly the method and the structure of the book. It succeeds in abridging hundred-thousands of hadith to the total of 3921. The method of abridgement, the quality assessment and the citation of hadith critics, as well as the structure of the book are some aspects worth to a critical study leading to a question whether it is worthy to be the fifteenth in the list of standard hadith books. The latter status is such an important one that Muslims all over the world refer to in making any decision regarding their religious life. It is a group of high-qualified books containing only valid hadith attributed from the prophet.

The critical study this article works on makes use of traditional hadith sciences, including the categorization of the *matn* as *marfū'*, *mauqūf*, and *maqṭū'*, in addition to the assessment of the *sanad*, i.e. the chain of transmission which

includes *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, and *ḍa'īf*. It also addresses the term and classification al-Shāmī uses in his book and see whether or not he follows the tradition of hadith scholars.

The hadith theory I use here is a synthesis of the concept developed by al-Zahabī (d. 748), Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852), al-Sakhawī (d. 902), al-Laknawī (d. 1304), and many other (al-Dzahabiy, n.d., vol. I, al-Dzahabiy, 1984; al-Asqalaniy, 1990; al-Sakhawiy, 1426 H, vol. I; al-Laknawiy, n.d., al-Laknawiy, 1984; al-Raziy, 1952, vol. I).

This article also adopts the sociological theory of the public. Agus Comte (d. 1853) pointed out that science is regarded positive only when it is centered on the concrete symptoms with no obstacle or so (Soekanto, 2013, p. 30). The science is a public consumption particularly in today's context in which the internet constitutes such an important medium to spread the knowledge. The theory of the public has been emphasizing the dispersed nature of the society, whose communication is conducted indirectly and is always mediated by gossip, news, radio, television, and such. Through these media, the public has a much wider and bigger influence. A public action is triggered by individuals with social awareness or personal interest (Soekanto, 2013, p. 126, 129). This kind of awareness is what Immanuel Kant (d. 1804) has termed the civil society, characterized as critical and oriented to the universal moral interest of humanity – the very aspect that makes it global, not limited to specific figures (Sutopo, vol. V, no. 1, 2014, p. 18).

In this article I define the public as a segment of Muslims having the privilege to access the *Ma'ālim al-Sunna* through the internet with which al-Shāmī spread his ideas and idea of producing a standard book, an act that might bring a social awareness and personal interest or ideas. This article initially gives a brief introduction of the *Ma'ālim al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya*. Following the section is the passages in which I analyze some aspects of the book and the final section concluding the paper.

The *Ma'ālim al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya* is printed in three volumes. It contains prophetic hadith. The introduction tells us a story that this book is a continuation of the *al-Jāmi'* that combine the two *ṣaḥīḥ* (of Bukhārī and Muslim). It takes him twenty years and he intends the book to be the fifteenth in the list of standard hadith books of Muslim (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 5).

The book contains the total number of 3921 hadith with double abridgement process from 113914 with his own method. The nearly four thousands hadith are divided into ten *maqṣad*, a term referring to the main theme of the book. Each *maqṣad* has several *kitāb*. Each *kitāb* has several *fuṣūl*. Each *fuṣūl* has several *bāb*. I will get back to this later on with longer description.

C. The Method and Structure of the Book

This section will elaborate the way al-Shāmī gains the 'truth', the way he abridges the hadith, breaks the topics into several parts, classifies and makes assessment to the hadith. Generally speaking, methodology is an explanation of method (*Arti Kata Metodologi - Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Online*, n.d.) al-Shāmī uses in writing the book. The structure here means the division of topics, the use of abbreviation, and the way of presenting hadith.

On the basis of the introduction of the book, this section will explain these two aspects, and more precisely the goal and the source of the book, the topic division, the way of abridging, classifying, and assessing the hadith.

1. The Goal of the Book

In the introduction, al-Shāmī points out that the intention of writing the book is to fulfill the need of Muslim in providing textual basis of all their activities, be it religious or worldly-oriented activities. Al-Shāmī initially explains two things before going any deeper. *First*, he explains the goal of

the rules and explanation. This part is intended to the knowledge-seeker as he mentions. *Second*, the hadith contained by the *Ma'ālim al-Sunna* (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 6).

In the second rule, al-Shāmī recounts the statement he made about his intention in writing the book, but in different wording. He says again that the book is intended to be circulating among Muslims so that they have an easy-to-read reference for their activities. In addition to that, he says that the book contains hadith through which the reader would get the global concept of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad with regard to specific aspects classical and modern scholars had codified in their respective books of hadith compilation (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p.13).

In doing so, al-Shāmī compile hadith from many books, sorting out the *ṣaḥīḥ* ones, and arrange them according to the source, and gives a numbering, the total number, *fāida* (benefit), and commentary to hadith in question (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 13-14, 16-19). Al-Shāmī thus thrives to re-arrange anew methodology with a number of unique steps in pursuing the goal of the book.

2. The Source

Al-Shāmī take the hadith from the following books: *Muwaṭṭa' Mālik*, *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abī Daud*, *Sunan al-Turmuḏī*, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* by al-Baihaqī (d. 458 AH), *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaima*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, *al-Mustadrak al-Ḥākim*, and *al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtāra* by Muḥammad b. 'Abd Wāḥid al-Maqdisī (d. 643 AH). He states more specifically that he takes an aid from *al-Jāmi' bain al-Ṣaḥīḥain*, *Zawā'id al-Sunan* to the *ṣaḥīḥ* or *Zawā'id Muwaṭṭa'*, *Zawā'id Musnad*, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, *Zawā'id Ibn Khuzaima*, *Ibn Ḥibbān* and *al-Mustadrak* from the *kutub al-tis'a* (the nine canonical books of

hadith) and *Zawā'id al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtāra 'alā al-Kutub al-Tis'a* (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 7-8).

Al-Shāmī goes on with explaining the position of the fourteen standard books of hadith as the main reference for the scholars, be it the *mutaqaddimīn*, *muta'akhkhirīn*, and *muāṣirīn* like Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), Ibn Ṣalāḥ (d. 643 AH), al-Nawawī (d. 676 AH), Abū Ja'far al-Kattānī (d. 1345 AH), and Aḥmad Shākīr (d. 1377/1958) (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 10-11).

3. Topic Division and Abridging Method

The topic division is dependent on the abridgement method. In the first rule, al-Shāmī states the main goal of employing the rule, i.e. to wipe out the recurred hadith. It would make him mentioning only one hadith under one specific theme. He gives an example with the hadith on *niyya* (intention). The hadith is mentioned seven times in al-Bukhārī and also mentioned in other hadith compilation, but al-Shāmī only mentions this once in a specific chapter. Had this hadith is transmitted on the authority of 'Umar (d. 23 AH), al-Shāmī argues, it would not be counted recurring because the name of the companion on which the authority is based is different, a basic rule known among hadith scholar about hadith recurrence. On this basis, of the total number of 114194 hadith from fourteen books, only 28430 remain (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 8-9).

He has the second role, in which he considers two things; *first*, specific Islamic law contained in one chapter; *second*, the meaning of the hadith (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 14).

The abovementioned two rules, al-Shāmī says, would eliminate a huge number of hadith, especially those that have related or close meaning. He explains further about the second rule, saying that it is different from the first. The hadith eliminated by the second rule is not the recurring ones

eliminated by the first. The first rule follows the traditional idea of hadith scholar, leaving only 28430 out of 114194, while the second one considers the recurrence in terms of action and practices. Al-Shāmī gives an example of the hadith on *al-ḥarb khid'a* (war is deceit), transmitted by Abū Huraira (d. 58/59 AH) and a number of other companions like Jābir (d. 78 AH), Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68 AH), Ka'b b. Mālik (d. 72 AH), and 'Āisha (d. 56/57 AH). Being transmitted by a number of companions, these tradition would not be counted as recurring for the different sources. Each companion makes his/her own count. In this part the second rule plays its role. In his book, al-Shāmī only mentions the tradition once, for they share the same content (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 15).

Other hadith with close redaction and content are only mentioned once. This helps the reader well in searching hadith and makes the book even thinner. This very rule eliminates a huge number of hadith, leaving only 3921 hadith on the table (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 16), the exact number *Ma'ālim* contains.

4. Hadith Classification

Al-Shāmī classify the hadith here according to the sources they come from. The structure of the *Ma'ālim* starts with the hadith originating from al-Bukhārī and Muslim in the beginning of every chapter, followed by those originating from the *sunan*, *musnad*, and the rest of references. The traditions from Bukhārī and Muslim have a special code mentioned before the tradition comes. Traditions from other sources also have their own code, mentioned after the hadith. Every code comes along with a brief mention of the quality of the hadith and its number in their reference of origin (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 17).

The *Ma'ālim* only contains the total of 3921 hadith by this composition; 55% originating from al-Bukhārī and Muslim (2131 hadith),

3691 (94%) originating from the nine canonical books including al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and the rest (230 hadith) originate from the other five books, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaima*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, *Mustadrak al-Ḥākim*, and *al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtāra*. There is a special part of the book in which one could find a review (*ta'liqāt*) of the author (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 19).

Ma'ālim al-Sunna one has ten *maqṣads*, each of which has several *kitāb*, each of which has several *fuṣūl*, each of which has several *bāb*. Volume one has three *maqṣads* on 'aqīda, science and its source, and worship (the first half); volume two continues the rest of the *maqṣad* three and goes on with the fourth and the first half of the fifth on family law and the basic need (*al-darūriyya*); volume three begins with the rest of the fifth *maqṣad* and goes on with the sixth on trade, the seventh on leadership and law, the eighth on *al-raqāiq* (on being compassionate), *akhlāq* and *adab* (both referring to ethics), the ninth on history and memory, *sīra* and *manāqib*, and the tenth about *al-fitan* (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 20–21, 25–363; vol. II, pp. 5–459; vol. III, pp. 5–477).

5. Quality Assessment

The *Ma'ālim al-Sunna* only has the *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan* hadith—the first and second highest level of hadith. It only has some weak (*ḍa'īf*) hadith but with special address in one of three ways; *first*, to explain the meaning of the *ṣaḥīḥ* ones; *second*, the popular, circulating in the society—al-Shāmī will explain the weakness of this hadith; *third*, a particular chapter, that of *faḍāil al-a'māl*, only has *ḍa'īf* hadith in it—in addressing them al-Shāmī follows Imām Aḥmad's method. However, the book only has thirty-three hadith, ten *ḥasan* hadith (although some scholars regard them *ḍa'īf*), and he will not mention hadith with the high level of weakness (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 16–17).

In doing the assessment, al-Shāmī follows the method developed by Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī (d. 1420/1999), Shu‘aib al-Arnaūṭ (d. 1438/2016), ‘Abd Qādir al-Arnaūṭ (1425/2004), Ustāz Ḥusein Sulaim (?), Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-A‘zamī (1439/2017), al-Baihaqī (458/1066), al-Ḍahabī (d. 748/1348), and Abd Malik b. Dahish (d. 1434/2013) (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 21–22).

D. Analysis of the *Ma‘ālim al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya*

This part presents a further analysis about the aspects of *Ma‘ālim al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya* by al-Shāmī addressed before in the same order, so that it is easier for the reader to look up to.

In doing so, I will also presents some points mentioned by another critic of al-Shāmī, that is ‘Alwī b. ‘Abd al-Qādir Assagaf (“Alwi Assagaf,” 2020), the advisor of a public website <https://www.dorar.net/>. He seems to be the only one to critique al-Shāmī in a specific writing.

In 4 Jumādil Ūlā 1441/1 January 2020, through a treatise *Kalimat al-Inṣāf li Kitāb Ma‘ālim al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya* Alwi expresses four points of objection to al-Shāmī: *first*, hadith assessment with such a standard term as *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, and *ḍa‘īf*; *second*, providing no elaboration in adopting the quality assessment; *third*, containing the *athar* of *tābi‘īn* and even *tābi‘ al-tābi‘īn* and counting them (thus regards them *hadith*); *fourth*, recounting some hadith and gives them different number (A. bin A. Q. Assagaf, n.d.).

In this part, I mention Alwī’s critique on al-Shāmī and in some relevant points also my own arguments. His critique focuses on two: *one*, the assessment and *second*, the counting method.

1. The name of the book

The *Ma'ālim al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya* has a unique name, not found in any book written by classical or modern scholar. Similar to it is the name of several books, but with the plural form, *al-Sunan*.

Al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388 AH) has a *Ma'ālim al-Sunan* as a commentary of the *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*. Al-Baihaqī also has a book with the exact same name as al-Khaṭṭābī's (Hajiy Khalifah, 1994, vol. II, pp. 46, 590; Kahhalah, n.d., vol. II, p. 61; al-Kattaniy, 1995, p. 42). However it is no equal to his masterpiece *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*. The word *sunan* is the plural form of *sunna*, the very word al-Shāmī adopts as the title.

The plural form *sunan* indicates a kind of encouragement for al-Khaṭṭābī and al-Baihaqī to write their respective books. The word implies that the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad is preserved in the varying form of *sunna*/hadith. This fluid form of the tradition, as the discipline of hadith studies has witnessed, often triggers a conflict particularly in the hadith assessment. This happens mostly in the different transmission. It is this very implication that al-Shāmī seems to avoid by taking the single form, *sunna*, as the title. This latter word designates a style of uniformed guide of the Prophet regarding a specific topic. This accords his idea of not recurring the hadith.

2. The content

While claiming that the book contains the prophetic hadith, it turns out that it also contains *athar*, a practical term in hadith studies that refers to tradition attributed no to the Prophet nor the companions, but to the successor, the third generation of Muslims. To this very aspect Alwi gives an objection. He lists nine *athar*, one of which is the hadith number 347, that turns to be the statement of al-Sha'bī (d. 103/104 AH) (A. bin A. Q. Assagaf, n.d.). I also find another one in the hadith number 381 on the authority of

al-Dārimī. It turns out to be the statement of al-Auza'ī (d. 157 AH) (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol I, pp. 182–183).

...عن الأوزاعي قال : قال إبليس لأوليائه : من أى شىء تأتون بنى آدم؟ فقالوا : من كل شىء. قال :

فهل تأتونهم من قبل الاستغفار؟ فقالوا : هيهات ذاك شىء قرن بالتوحيد. قال : لأبئن فيهم شيئا لا

يستغفرون الله منه. قال : فبث فيهم الأهواء (al-Darimiy, 2005, vol I, p. 68 hadis no. 311)

Quite frankly, there are a number of statements in al-Shāmī's work that actually comes from the companions, the *tābi'īn* (the successor) or even the *tābi' al-tābi'īn*.

The fact that he allows the *athar* to be part of this book contradicts his own statement. He must not include the statements of any other figures than the Prophet, unless he follows the idea that the term hadith covers the *marfū'*, *mauqā'if*, and *maqṭū'* – respectively meaning traditions attributed to the hadith attributed to the Prophet, the companions, and the successor. Still, he has no reason to also include the statement of the successor of the successor (*tābi' al-tābi'īn*), unless he follows the idea of Ibn Ḥajar to use *maqṭū'* to name the hadith from the period after the successor (al-Asqalaniy, 1990, p. 54).

It is quite confusing, particularly when we see two aspects of this book; *first*, it was intended to be the fifteenth of the standard books, but it has the *mauqā'if* even *maqṭū'* hadith – with no clarification about the use of such term. This will leave the students in confuse; *second*, the use of the word *maqṭū'* to name the traditions originating from the successor of the successor is quite unpopular.

3. The goal

This shows the level of complexity of the discipline of hadith study particularly for the junior scholar or the lay Muslims, while the two groups is the targeted audience of the *Ma'ālim al-Sunna*. As mentioned above, al-

Shāmī intends the book to be the reference for every Muslims for their daily life holistically. This complexity would just leave them in confuse or rather lead them to misunderstand the hadith. The book thus needs an additional part, a glossary, in which it explains the key term it is about to use throughout the book.

However, the work of al-Shāmī is exceptional for it is a good attempt of compiling hadith and producing a kind of practical guidance on the basis of the reliable references – although al-Maqdisī (d. 643 AH) is not that popular.

4. The source

Al-Shāmī uses fourteen references in writing this book. The five additional books to the *kutub al-tis'a* may raise some critique. This is definitely the '*ijtihād*' of al-Shāmī, and the fourteen books have widely been recognized by Muslim – excepting the work of al-Maqdisī (d. 643 AH) that is not that popular.

Al-Shāmī mentions the fourteen books many times but with different order. In some cases he follows the historical chronological order by mentioning the works of Imām Mālik (d. 179 AH) and Imām Aḥmad (d. 241 AH) before al-Bukhārī and Muslim. However, in other cases he mentions the *kutub al-sitta* with the traditional order, in which al-Bukhārī and Muslim are mentioned first. It represents their level in the mind of the hadith scholar. He thus uses two ways of mentioning the books; in an order on par with the level of each book or in a chronological historical way.

The fourteenth book al-Shāmī uses as reference is *al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtārah* by al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī. It has no tradition mentioned by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Generally speaking, the hadith may originate from a book belonging to the genre of *musnad*. The book does however belong to

the category of *al-mustakhraj* (al-Kattaniy, 1995, pp. 26–27; al-Thahhan, 1991, pp. 100–101) of the *musnad*.

5. The topic division and abridgement method

Before dividing the topic, al-Shāmī conducts double-abridgement to the hadith. The first round eliminate the hadith attributed to the same companion that recur several times, leaving only 28430 hadith. In this round al-Shāmī takes the stance of traditional hadith scholar, arguing that two hadith with a shared meaning must be counted as two as long as they are attributed to different companions. It differs from the stance of another hadith scholar like al-A'zamī who stands on the other edge of the spectrum. He counts every single chain of transmission as one separate hadith. Even if the hadith have the exact same text, if it goes back to one specific companion through thirteen chains, al-A'zamī would count it thirteen transmissions. It applies to the hadith of *mass al-khuffain* (rubbing the leather socks) attributed to the companion Mugīra b. Shu'ba (d. 50 AH) from Ibn Mahdī (d. 198 AH) through thirteen chains. In this case al-A'zamī would count them thirteen (al-A'zhamiy, 1980, p. 614; al-Raziy, 1952, vol. I, p. 261).

The hadith scholars have disagreed in counting hadith from as early as the discipline of hadith came to its establishment. Bearing this in mind, we need to look at the method al-Shāmī uses in his book and see whether he applies the rule he sets throughout the book. I have presented a brief review of the method in the previous section. It is the second one I am about to present here. Reading more closely, there are some hadith which share the same meaning but are mentioned more than once. Hadith number four, about *niyya*, is mentioned two times although it goes to the same companion, 'Umar (d. 23 AH), from al-Bukhārī (al-Bukhariy, 1995, vol I, pp. 3–4, hadis no 1; vol. IV, p. 235 hadis no. 6953). The first tradition is quite long, while the second one he mentions is only a short version with a bit

different wording (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 31). Other hadith about how to perform the prayer has the same story, but with a reversed plot. It is mentioned two times, with the short version by al-Bukhārī comes first, followed by the longer one by al-Turmuḏī (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 452–453) – both attributed to the same companion Abū Ḥumaid; al-Munzir b. Sa’ad al-Sa’īdī (d. around 60 AH) (al-Bukhariy, 1995, vol. I, pp. 183–184, hadis no. 828; al-Turmuziy, 2003, vol. I, pp. 327–328, hadis no. 304).

Although al-Shāmī does not give a separate number for the second version in each case (for it was regarded a part from the first one, namely the hadith of the chapter), but to mention two hadith with a shared meaning contradicts al-Shāmī’s own rule. He mentions in the introduction that he would not mention two hadith with a related or close meaning twice. It makes more confusion for he does not give any *ta’līq* to the hadith. Normally even the two hadith shared meaning, but they would make different law and interpretation if they have different wording.

The second round of hadith elimination only leaves 3921 hadith in his book. He thinks that one only need to mention one hadith to explain one specific law or teaching. Paying attention to the application of the second rule, we would also have the same impression as the two cases above – and this is also a point Alwi made about al-Shāmī. Alwi presents six recurring hadith with a shared meaning but different companions to which they are attributed. These six hadith also have their own number. Alwi mentions two hadith, number 294 and 295 (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 157).

من يرد الله به خيرا يفقهه في الدين

This hadith is reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Mu’āwiyā (d. 60 AH) and by Ibn Mājah on the authority of Abū Huraira (d. 58/59 AH).

I also find another case, this one about *khawārij* and their characters, number 3913 (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. III, p. 482). The hadith is reported by Muslim on the authority of Jābir (d. 78 AH).

...يقراءون القرآن لا يجاوز حناجرهم يمرقون منه كما يمرق السهم من الرمية...

And number 3914 by Muslim on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (d. 74 AH)

...يقراءون القرآن لا يجاوز تراقيهم يمرقون من الإسلام كما يمرق السهم من الرمية...

Another case is hadith number 969 (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 388) on the authority of Busra bt. Ṣafwān (died in the rulings of Mu'āwiya)

And number 969 on the authority of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (d. 51/52)

Although the two hadith have quite different wording (one mentions *ẓakar* while the other mentions *farj*, both referring to man's and woman's genitalia respectively), they share the same meaning in that they explain things that could invalidate the ablution, that is touching one's genitalia by hand. This violates his second rule with regard to hadith abridgement. He also does not explain why this case is an exception.

This also leaves us thinking about the way al-Shāmī divides the topics and the standard upon which he does so. He previously mentions two considerations, that the hadith share the same law/teaching and the meaning of the chapter (*faṣl*). It turns out that this needs a further explanation for al-Shāmī also has other consideration as to the related and close meaning and wording.

The topics in the *Ma'ālim al-Sunna* are divided in the same way as in the fourteen books. Al-Shāmī uses the word *maqṣad* which is quite new compared to the fourteen books he refers to. It gives an impression that al-

Shāmī starts every chapter with a big theme that he is about to break down as the chapter goes.

In specifying the topics, al-Shāmī follows the method of *al-Jāmi'* rather than that of the *sunan* which follows the logic of *fiqh*, the discipline of Islamic law, or of the *musnad*, that follows the name of the companion (al-Kattaniy, 1995, p. 33,40, 54; al-Thahhan, 1991, p. 40,97, 115). This implies that the book covers all aspects Muslims need in their everyday life; although al-Shāmī states that the topics will be about the religious and worldly issue, not the hereafter.

6. The classification

Al-Shāmī has the special code for each reference; *qāf* for al-Bukhārī and Muslim altogether. He always mentions al-Bukhārī and Muslim first in every chapter with the code mentioned before the tradition. This gives no benefit to the reader. He does not need to mention the code before the hadith. He can also mention the code for each before the hadith and mention the number right after the hadith ends. If they share the same tradition, he can mention *qāf* as it signs the two altogether and the number after the hadith. The method he applies now seems to emphasize the number of the hadith.

The *Ma'ālim* only contains the total of 3921 hadith by this composition; 55% originating from al-Bukhārī and Muslim (2131 hadith), 3691 (94%) originating from the nine canonical books including al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and the rest (230 hadith/5%) originate from the other five books, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaima*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān*, *Mustadrak al-Ḥākim*, and *al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtāra*. This leaves a question about how many hadith originate from the *kutub al-tis'a* outside al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and how many originate from the other five books.

According to a brief explanation of al-Shāmī, the hadith originating from seven canonical books other than al-Bukhārī and Muslim has 40% of the composition (1560 hadith), and 5% (230 hadith) of the total of 3921 hadith originate from the five books outside of the *kutub al-tis'a*. It makes up the composition of; 55% (2131) from al-Bukhārī and Muslim, 40% (1560) from the seven other canonical books, and 5% (23) from the five books outside the *kutub al-tis'a*.

Ma'ālim al-Sunna one has ten *maqşads*, each of which has several *kitāb*, each of which has several *fuşūl*, each of which has several *bāb*. Closely reading the book, I find that some *kitāb* has no *faşl*. The *maqşad* two on science and its alleged source is a good example. It has four *kitāb*. The first one has forty-four *bāb* with no *faşl*. The third one has seventy-four *bāb* with no *faşl*. The hadith about al-Fātiḥa and the subsequent Quranic chapters are mentioned in the same order as the Quran (*tartīb muşḥafī*). Yet this only applies up to the chapter Maryam. The Ṭāhā to al-Nās no longer follows the traditional order – and not every chapter of the Quran is mentioned here. The fourth *kitāb* has twenty-three *bāb* with no *faşl* (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 157–193, 241–340, 343–357). The second *kitāb* of this *maqşad* is the only one that has the *faşl*. It has four *faşl* more precisely, with eleven, twenty-five, fourteen, and seven *bāb* in each *faşl* respectively (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, pp. 197–237).

The topic division into *maqşad*, *kitāb*, *faşl*, and *bāb* is anew to the discipline of hadith studies. Al-Shāmī does so in order to make it easier for people to access. Still this method will open the way of misunderstanding for the lay Muslim. The absence of the *faşl* in some cases complicates the case, leaving the reader with a question of the difference between the *faşl* and the *bāb*. It is also noteworthy that al-Shāmī does not specify every *kitāb* and further *bāb* by mentioning a word or two (*kitāb al-īmān* or *bāb umūr al-*

īmān), the traditional way of hadith scholar to gives a hint to the reader on what the chapter is about to discuss (al-Bukhariy, 1995, vol. I, pp. 9-10).

7. The assessment

This section is divided into two subsection; the assessment and its source.

a. The assessment standard

Al-Shāmī does not involve the weak hadith (*ḍaʿīf*) with an exception of some cases in which he wants to pursue one of the three reasons mentioned above. His work only involves ten *ḥasan* hadith and thirty-three *ḍaʿīf* hadith. The rest of the book is the *ṣaḥīḥ*. Bearing in mind that the hadith originating from the two *ṣaḥīḥs* by al-Bukhārī and Muslim compose the total of 55%, the *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith involved in this book is around 70-75%.

The rest 30-25% of the hadith involved in this work needs to be assessed on the basis of the traditional method of hadith assessment established by the classical hadith scholar. This very point is one of the objection Alwī points out in his treatise. He touches upon the concept of the *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith, for he finds three hadith which are *ṣaḥīḥ* in the eyes of al-Shāmī but turn out to be weak (A. bin A. Q. Assagaf, n.d.). A hadith number 480 is one example. Classical scholars like Ibn 'Adī (d. 365 AH), Ibn Taimiyya (d. 728 AH), al-Zailāī (d. 762 AH), and even the contemporary al-Albānī, the one al-Shāmī refers to, deem this hadith weak (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 214).

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ حِلْيَةً، وَحِلْيَةُ الْقُرْآنِ الصَّوْتُ الْحَسَنُ

(al-Maqdisiy, 2000, vol. VII, p. 88 hadis no. 2496)

In this regards, Alwi slightly misses the point, for the four hadith critics Alwi mentions above deems the hadith weak on the basis of an *isnād* different from that of al-Shāmī. Their critique

addresses the transmitter ‘Abdullāh b. Mahraz/Muḥarrar (d. 160-170 AH). His chain of transmission goes on with Qatāda (d. 117 AH) from Anas (d. 93 AH) (al-Albaniy, 2001, vol. IX, p. 309; al-Jurjaniy, 1998, vol. IV, p. 133; al-Zaila’iy, 2003, vol. II, p. 217; Ibn Taimiyyah, 1403 H/1983 M, pp. 289-290).

The *isnād* of al-Shāmī originates from the *al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtāra* on the authority of Muḥammad b. Ḥumaid (d. 361 AH) from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Khāliq (d. 309) from Sulaimān b. Tauba al-Nahrawānī (d. 262 AH) from Mūsā al-Khuttālī (the contemporary of Yaḥyā b. Ma’in d. 233 AH) from Muḥammad b. Fuḍail (d. 195 AH) from his father; Fuḍail b. Gazwān (d. after 140 AH) from Qatāda from Anas.

The figures mentioned by al-Shāmī in an *isnād* he takes from *al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtāra* are all reliable but Muḥammad b. Ḥumaid. The latter is regarded weak by some critics, but al-Shāmī follows the assessment of ‘Abd Mālīk b. Dahish who regards Muḥammad, and thus the hadith, *ḥasan* (al-Maqdisiy, 2000, vol. VII, p. 88). This adoption of *ḥasan* hadith is not breaking his own rule.

However, al-Shāmī’s assessment of the quality of the hadith is quite controversial for in several cases he takes regards the normally weak hadith *ṣaḥīḥ*. The hadith number 299 is a good example. It talks about the knowledgeable person and the prayer of all the residents of the heaven and the earth even the fish in the ocean for him/her.

...عن أبي الدرداء قال سمعت رسول الله -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يقول إنه ليستغفر للعالم من

في السموات ومن في الأرض حتى الحيتان في البحر

(al-Qizwiniy, 2004, vol. I, p. 91 hadis no 239)

Al-Shāmī regards this hadith *ṣaḥīḥ* (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 158) while the great Ibn Ḥajar considered two transmitters of the *isnād* weak; ‘Uthmān b. ‘Aṭā’ al-Khurasānī (d. 155 AH) and Hafash b. ‘Umar al-Bazzāz (d. 191-198 AH) (al-Asqalaniy, 1995, vol. I, pp. 132, 394). It is quite clear here that al-Shāmī conducts a great mistake in regarding the weak hadith *ṣaḥīḥ*.

I also find the badly weak hadith in the book, hadith number 359. Al-Shāmī also regards this hadith very weak (*ḍa‘īf jiddan*) and clarifies that he mentions this hadith to elaborate its weakness (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 177). However, this contradicts his own assessment for not involving the very weak hadith.

In other parts of the book we can also find an inaccurate assessment of al-Shāmī. Alwī mentions four examples in his treatise (A. bin A. Q. Assagaf, n.d.). The first one is the hadith number 337 (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 170).

...أن عبد الله بن مسعود قال ما أنت بمحدث قوما حديثا لا تبلغه عقولهم إلا كان لبعضهم فتنة

(al-Qusyairiy, 1993, vol. I, p. 8)

The main critique of Alwī is on the mention of the source of this hadith; *muqaddima* (introduction) of the (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *Muslim*, without mentioning the quality of the hadith. This will lead the reader to think that the hadith is *ṣaḥīḥ*, for it is mentioned in the (introduction) of the *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. However, it is not a secret that the hadith mentioned in the introduction of the *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* might be *ḥasan* or *ḍa‘īf*. Alwī even points out that the hadith is *ḍa‘īf munkar* (A. bin A. Q. Assagaf, n.d.).

Alwī’s critique however is not that accurate, especially when we take two things into consideration; *first*, the weakness of the hadith is not in its *isnād*, but it being attributed to the companion Ibn Mas’ūd (d. 32 AH), not the prophet. The figures in the *isnād*, namely Abū Ṭāhir,

Aḥmad b. ‘Amr (d. 250 AH) and Ḥarmala b. Yaḥyā (d. 243 AH), Ibn Wahb (d. 197 AH), Yūnus b. Yazīd al-Ailī (d. 159 AH), Ibn Shihāb (d. 124/5 AH), and ‘Ubaidillāh b. Abdullah bin ‘Utba (d. 94 AH) are all good (al-Asqalaniy, 1995, vol. I, pp. 19, 110, 377; vol. II, pp. 552, 688). The *second* consideration is that the statement of Ibn Mas‘ūd is not in the introduction of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The one Muslim mentioned in the introduction of his work is a tradition attributed to the prophet (thus *marfū‘*) on the authority of Abū Huraira.

We can also find another inaccuracy in the hadith number 877 (al-Syamiy, 2015, vol. I, p. 365). It is by al-Dārimī and al-Turmuḏī (al-Darimiy, 2005, vol. I, p. 122 hadis no. 669; al-Turmuḏiy, 2003, vol. I, p. 92 hadis no 14) on the authority of Anas:

عن أنس قال كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا أراد الحاجة لم يرفع ثوبه حتى يدنو من الأرض

This hadith is *ṣaḥīḥ* according to al-Shāmī, but the hadith itself clearly shows that it is *mursal*, for Sulaimān b. Mihrān al-A‘mash (d. 148) never learnt to Anas or even a single companion of the prophet. The *isnād* mentioned by al-Dārimī and al-Turmuḏī is the same, from ‘Abd Salām b. Ḥarb (d. 187 AH) from al-A‘mash from Anas. Al-Turmuḏī even declares the hadith *mursal* for some strong reasons. On what basis al-Shāmī makes such assessment, while he only mentions al-Dārimī and al-Turmuḏī as the source in this regard?

It would be better however if al-Shāmī follows the assessment al-Turmuḏī himself makes in his work. It is all the more when we take into account that al-Turmuḏī is characterized *mutasāhil*, a term that means a person who accepts a hadith even if it is weak, not the *mu’tadil* (moderate) or *mutashaddid* (strict) (al-Dzahabiy, 1984, pp. 158–159; al-Laknawiy, n.d., pp. 272–275, 283–286). If the scholar of this group

deems a hadith weak, then it must be weak. It seems to me that al-Shāmī does not yet touch this aspect of hadith critique.

b. The source for the assessment

As mentioned above, in assessing the hadith al-Shāmī follows the method developed by the classical scholar like Nāṣiruddīn al-Albānī, Shu'aib al-Arnaūṭ, 'Abd Qādir al-Arnaūṭ, Ustāz Ḥusein Sulaim, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-A'zamī, al-Baihaqī, al-Ḍahabī, and Abd Malik b. Dahish. In this regard, Alwī argues that al-Shāmī follows the assessment by the scholars who have no expertise in hadith. He even does not mention the statement of *mutaqaddimīn* and *mutaakhhirīn* (A. bin A. Q. Assagaf, n.d.).

Alwī's critique misses the point again, for two reasons;

1) Referring to the hadith critic

We may raise a question as to the scholars with no expertise in hadith Alwī refers to. It is quite clear that al-Baihaqī and al-Ḍahabī are of the greatest hadith critics. The figures mentioned above, particularly the modern ones, have at least produced works on hadith, although controversial ones. I rather see Alwī as the Albānī-fanatic in a much higher level than al-Shāmī. This is quite interesting for al-Albānī is known as a controversial scholar. It is for this reason many hadith scholars study the works of al-Albānī like the one by Ḥasan b. 'Alī Assagaf *Tanāquḍāt al-Albānī al-Wāḍiḥāt* (H. bin A. Assagaf, 1992) and Muḥammad 'Abd Qādir Aḥmad Jalmad (Jalmad, n.d.).

Alwī often cites al-Albānī in critiquing al-Shāmī. He comments no part of al-Albānī's assessment. Alwī also refers to Ibn Taimiyya in critiquing the hadith on which al-Baihaqī puts no comment and discusses al-Ḍahabī's assessment to the *Mustadrak*

by al-Ḥākim. The former case is quite different with the opinion of the ordinary ulama like al-Turkī (al-Baihaqiy, 2011, vol. I, pp. 63–69). The latter shows quite clearly the stance of Alwī for other ulama rather suggest students of hadith to learn al-Ḍahabī's commentary on the *Mustadrak* with special notes (al-Laknawiy, 1984, pp. 161–162). We might ask why Alwī makes no single comment to al-Albānī but rather makes strong objection to not only al-Shāmī, but also al-Ḍahabī and al-Baihaqī, the two of which surpasses al-Albānī in hadith studies.

2) The term *mutaqaddimīn* and *mutaakhhirīn*

Alwī's critique to al-Shāmī on the ignorance of the assessment by *mutaqaddimīn* can be justified for several reasons, but the no-use of the statement of the *mutaakhhirīn* is quite confusing, for al-Shāmī clearly refers to al-Ḍahabī. It is just a common knowledge among hadith scholars that the scholars living after the third century of Hijri belong to the group of *mutaakhhirīn* (al-Dzahabiy, n.d., vol. I, p. 4). Al-Baihaqī and al-Ḍahabī thus belong to this group, for the two passed away after the third century AH. The question again is on what basis Alwī makes his argument.

Some of Alwī's critique are on point, but some other miss the point. However, Alwī appreciates the work of al-Shāmī and regards it good and unique (A. bin A. Q. Assagaf, n.d.), for it compiles a great number of hadith, the all-covering ones.

E. Conclusion

This research concludes that the *Ma'ālim al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya* by al-Shāmī does not meet the requirements to be in the list of the standard books of hadith.

The method and the structure of the book has some inconsistencies, particularly in the recurrence of some hadith, the involvement of weak hadith, and even some traditions outside the scope of the prophetic hadith, and the quality assessment – the latter turns out to be controversial. It also makes confusion by dividing the topics into the *maqṣad*, *kitāb*, *faṣl*, and *bāb*.

The work of al-Shāmī however contains the all-covering hadith, generally speaking, considering the topics it touches upon and thus helps the lay Muslims understand the keep in touch with the prophetic hadith.

A further research may take a closer reading to the *isnād* aspect of the book. Unlike the traditional standard books of hadith compilation, it mentions only short versions of the *isnād* in this book. The structure of the book might also be an interesting thing to look at, for it is a bit different from that of the traditional standard books.

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