

شَرْحُ الرَّبْعِينَ النَّوَوِيِّ

COMMENTARY
ON
THE FORTY ḤADĪTH
OF
IMĀM AL-NAWAWĪ

*Timeless Prophetic Gems of
Guidance and Wisdom*

Dr. Jamāl Aḥmed Bādī

Edited by
Dr. Masood Aḥmed Ranginwala

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Published by:
Dakwah Corner Bookstore (M) Sdn. Bhd.
Section 14,
Ampang Point Shopping Centre,
Ampang, Selangor D.E.
MALAYSIA
Tel: +603-4266 9892

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No. 5, Jalan Dato Abdul Aziz, Section 14,
46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan,
MALAYSIA
T: +603-7956 4664

2nd Published:
2024

Title:
Commentary On
The Forty Hadith
of Imam Al-Nawawi

Author:
Dr. Jamāl Ahmed Bādī

ISBN:
978-967-5699-92-4

Edited by:
Dr. Masood
Ahmed Ranginwala

Cover Design:
Norashikin Yussof

Typesetting:
Penerbit Begawan

Printed by:
Firdaus Press Sdn. Bhd.

**For suggestions and
comments:**
dakwahcornerpublications
@gmail.com

National Library of Malaysia *Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*
1. Nawawi, 1233-1277. 2. Hadith. 3. Hadith--Criticism, interpretation, etc.
I. Masood Ahmed Ranginwala, Dr. II. Title. 297.125

Showroom Outlets:

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NIGERIA

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WUSE 2 Abuja.
Tel: +234 805 603 7779

Distributors:

Darussalam Australia
Australia
Tel: +61 2 9740 7188

Salaam Media International
Singapore
Tel: +65 6396 4121

Darussalam Publishers
USA
Tel: +1 860 224 2400

Darussalam Bookshop
Philippines
Tel: +639 5 6617 6293

Darussalam Books
(London Central Mosque) UK
Tel: +44 2077231234

Book Land Bookshop LLC
United Arab Emirates
Tel: +971 6 746 8299

Ilannoor, Bangladesh
Tel: +88014 0707 0266

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PREFACE



This book, which serves as a commentary to the *Forty Ahādīth* of al-Imām al-Nawawī was essentially a series of evening lessons I conducted at the International Islāmic University Malaysia's Mosque for over one and a half years, commencing from April 2001. It was thereafter edited and published on the internet.⁴

Due to the great demand from readers from different parts of the world, the web version of this commentary has been improved, proofread, and edited to be published into a book, the one which you now have in your hand today.

The commentary is a humble effort made to benefit the layman as well as intellectuals from different disciplines with little background in Islāmic studies. In addition, this commentary also offers discussions on related important contemporary issues.

I have followed a systematic approach in commenting on, and explaining the *ahādīth*. Every *ḥadīth* is given a title which conveys its main message. The methodology is as follows:

- i. First, the *ḥadīth* is cited in Arabic followed by its translation in the English Language.

⁴ The original web address was changed, and is currently <http://fortyhadith.iium.edu.my/>

- ii. Second, a brief introduction is given regarding the *ḥadīth*.
- iii. Third, lessons and wisdoms are extracted from the *ḥadīth* including the following:
 - Relevant *Qur'ānic* āyāt and *aḥādīth* are highlighted and used to elaborate on the respective Nawawī's *ḥadīth*.
 - Definitions of concepts are highlighted and explained.
 - Application of *ḥadīth* to contemporary issues.
 - An attempt is made to relate the respective *ḥadīth* to real life and to draw some practical implications that will enable the Muslim to better understand and practice it today.
- iv. Finally, a conclusion is given, summarizing the salient points, concepts, and lessons to be learned from the *ḥadīth*.

This commentary incorporates various classical interpretations from Muslim scholars. When there are differing viewpoints, those are also presented, and an attempt is made to reconcile between them. If I have my own opinion, then that is also presented as well in the light of contemporary internal and external challenges.

I have tried my best to use simple and direct English throughout the book. Philosophical issues and discussions have been avoided in order to achieve the objective of the commentary. Whenever a particular *ḥadīth* has a correlation with another *ḥadīth* (or *aḥādīth*), it is mentioned in order to link the *aḥādīth* to each other. Altogether, this will greatly benefit the reader in understanding the significance of every *aḥādīth* of this great collection.

I hope and pray to Allāh that this book will be of a benefit to English speaking Muslims wherever it reaches. *Āmīn*

Jamāl Aḥmed Bashier Bādī (جمال أحمد بشير بادي)

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

October 2016

INTRODUCTION



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى الْمَبْعُوثِ رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ
 نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ

The collection of *Forty Ahādīth* by al-Imām al-Nawawī has been recognized, accepted, and appreciated by Muslim scholars for the last seven centuries. Its significance lay in the fact that these selected forty *ahādīth* comprise the main essential and fundamental concepts of *Islām*. And these are the unique *ahādīth* which reflect the minimum level of knowledge required for every Muslim. Various principles are contained within these *ahādīth*, such as belief, Muslim ethics, and *fiqh*. From this, it is very important that these *ahādīth* be understood properly and thoroughly based on scholarly interpretations.

Al-Imām al-Nawawī stated the following: "These are forty *hadīth*... each *hadīth* from them is a great foundation of the foundation of the religion. Scholars have described regarding each *hadīth* that *Islām* revolves around them, or they considered as half of *Islām*, or a one-third of it and the like.... Most are from the authentic books of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. And I shall mention them with omission

of the chains of narrations in order to make its memorization easy and encompass overall benefit by Allāh's grace. Then, I follow it with a chapter of precision and inherent wordings. It is important for everyone hoping for reward in the Hereafter to know all these *aḥādīth* for all-inclusive importance; and it (the collection) contains the warning on all acts of worship, so that it is apparent to those who ponder over it. And unto Allāh, the Almighty I rely and to Him, I direct my mandate and my request, and all Glory and Blessing belong to Him alone, and with Him success is ascertained and protection is guaranteed."

This text provides a simple and practical commentary on these *aḥādīth* of al-Imām al-Nawawī's collection. It further discusses relative contemporary issues that they shed light upon. Explanations from classical scholars are also mentioned. Wherever relevant, a respective *ḥadīth* is connected with real life situations and practical implications to current times. It is hoped that this commentary will lead the Muslim to better understand and practice the *aḥādīth* in his or her life.

AL-IMĀM AL-NAWAWĪ'S INTRODUCTION TO THE ARBA'ĪN AN-NAWAWĪYAH



الْمُقَدِّمَةُ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، قَيُّومِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِينَ، مُدَبِّرِ الْخَلَائِقِ
أَجْمَعِينَ، بَاعِثِ الرُّسُلِ صَلَوَاتُهُ وَسَلَامُهُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَى الْمُكَلَّفِينَ؛
لِهَدَايَتِهِمْ وَبَيَانِ شَرَائِعِ الدِّينِ، بِالذَّلَائِلِ الْقَطِيعَةِ وَوَاضِحَاتِ الْبَرَاهِينِ،
أَحْمَدُهُ عَلَى جَمِيعِ نِعَمِهِ، وَأَسْأَلُهُ الْمَزِيدَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَكَرَمِهِ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ، الْكَرِيمُ الْغَفَّارُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ،
وَحَبِيبَهُ وَخَلِيلَهُ، أَفْضَلَ الْمَخْلُوقِينَ، الْمَكْرَمُ بِالْقُرْآنِ الْعَزِيزِ الْمُعْجِزَةِ
الْمُسْتَمِرَّةِ عَلَى تَعَاقِبِ السِّنِينَ، وَبِالسَّنَنِ الْمُسْتَنِيرَةِ لِلْمُسْتَرْشِدِينَ، سَيِّدَنَا
مُحَمَّدَ الْمَخْصُوصِ بِجَوَامِعِ الْكَلِمِ وَسَمَاحَةِ الدِّينِ، صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ وَسَلَامُهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَعَلَى سَائِرِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ، وَآلِ كُلِّ وَسَائِرِ الصَّالِحِينَ،

أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَقَدْ رَوَيْنَا عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ، وَعَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ،
وَمُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ، وَأَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ، وَابْنِ عُمَرَ، وَابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، وَأَنْسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، وَأَبِي

AL-IMĀM AL-NAWAWĪ'S INTRODUCTION TO THE ARBA'ĪN AN-NAWAWĪYAH



Praise is to Allāh ﷻ, the Lord of the Worlds, the Only Provider and Sustainer of the heavens and earth. The Mastermind of all creatures, the Sender of the Messengers to all the adolescents in order to guide them, and offer elucidation on the canons of the religion (*Islām*), with clear cut evidence and explicit peremptory proof. Praise unto Him for all His grace and I ask Him for more of His bounty and generosity. And I bear witness that there is no god but no partners, the Only One God, The Supreme Mighty, the Glorious the Forgiving, and I bear witness that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is His slave, His messenger, His beloved, and His intimate friend, the best of all creatures, who was honored with the Glorious *al-Qur'ān* the everlasting miracle which will remain forever, and for many years to come, it will continue to be an illuminating guidance for those that seek it. Our master Muḥammad ﷺ was endowed with an idiosyncrasy reflected in his proprioceptive concise speech and religious tolerance, may Allāh's blessings be upon him and all other Prophets and Messengers, and all of their families, and the remaining of the righteous. Then, it has been narrated from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, and Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, and Abū Dardā', and Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās and Anas ibn Mālik, Abū Hurayrah and Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﷺ, and many other chains of narrations with many marvelous varieties of narrations

AL-IMĀM AL-NAWAWĪ'S INTRODUCTION

that, indeed the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said that: "Whoever safeguard or document forty *ḥadīth* for my *ummah* on the issues of their religious matters, he shall be resurrected on the Day of Judgment in the congregation of scholars and the knowledgeable." In another narration: "Allāh ﷻ shall resurrect him as a jurist (*faqīh*), knowledgeable." In the narration of Abū Dardā': "I shall be his intercessor and a witness on the Day of Resurrection." Further, in the narration of Ibn Mas'ūd "He would be told that: 'Enter any of the doors of Paradise that you wish.'" In the narration of Ibn 'Umar: "He shall be included among the scholars and shall be resurrected in the group of martyrs." And nonetheless, the experts in the field of *ḥadīth* agreed that the *ḥadīth* is weak although it has many chains.

The scholars ﷺ have compiled countless works or treatise on this subject (*Forty Ḥadīth*). Hence, the first person I knew that authored book on this was 'Abd Allāh ibn Mubārak, then Muḥammad ibn Aslam al-Ṭūsī (knowledgeable about religious canon), then Ḥasan ibn Sufyān al-Nasā'ī, and Abū Bakr al-Jurrī, and Abū Bakr ibn 'Ibrāhīm al-Aṣfahānī, and Dāraqutnī, al-Ḥākīm, and Abū Na'im, Abū 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, and Abū Sa'īd al-Mālīnī, and Abū Uthmān, al-Ṣābūnī, and 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, and Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, and many others among the predecessors and successors. Indeed, Allāh ﷻ the Almighty has made it possible for me to compile forty *ḥadīth* by imitating the footsteps of the sagacious, versatile, and eminent experts of *ḥadīth* in *Islām*.

Verily, scholars have agreed that it is permissible to use the weak on motivational actions or virtues, in spite of this, this is not my reliance on this *ḥadīth*, but on saying of the Prophet ﷺ in the authentic narration which goes thus: "For the present who witnesses his speech should convey to the absentee." And also the Prophet's saying that: "May Allāh ﷻ bless a person that listens to my words, and imbibes it and conveys it exactly the

way he heard it." Then, there are
forty ḥadīth on the fundamentals of *Islām*, some of them in the
branches, some in *jihād*, some in asceticism, some in arts and
literature, and some of them in speeches, all these are good
purposes and may Almighty Allāh ﷻ reward good intention.

I see a (new) collection of forty ḥadīth as the most important of all
these. These are forty ḥadīth containing all these aspects, and each
ḥadīth from them is a great base of religious rules or tenets. Scholars
have described (regarding each ḥadīth) that *Islām* revolves around
them, or they considered as half of *Islām*, or a one-third of it, and
the like. Then, I will ensure these forty ḥadīth as being authentic.
Most are from the authentic books of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. And
I shall mention them with omission of the chains of narrations
in order to make its memorization easy and encompass overall
benefit by Allāh's grace. Then, I follow it with a chapter of precision
and inherent wordings. It is important for everyone hoping for
reward in the Hereafter to know all these *aḥādīth* for all-inclusive
importance; and it (the collection) contains the warning on all acts
of worship, so that it is apparent to those who ponder over it. And
unto Allāh ﷻ, the Almighty I rely and to Him, I direct my mandate
and my request, and all Glory and Blessing belong to Him alone,
and with Him success is ascertained and protection is guaranteed.

Al-Nawawī

Ḥadīth 1: Actions are by Intentions

عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَبِي حَفْصِ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رضي الله عنه قَالَ:

سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ:

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَهَجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ، وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكِحُهَا فَهَجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ ﴾

رَوَاهُ إِمَامَا الْمُحَدِّثِينَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
بْنِ الْمُغِيرَةَ بْنِ بَرْدِزْبَةَ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَأَبُو الْحُسَيْنِ مُسْلِمُ بْنُ الْحَجَّاجِ بْنِ
مُسْلِمِ الْقُشَيْرِيِّ النَّيْسَابُورِيِّ رضي الله عنه فِي صَحِيحَيْهِمَا اللَّذَيْنِ هُمَا أَصْحُ
الْكِتَابِ الْمُصَنَّفَةِ.