A Brief Biography Of
SHAYKH AL-ḤADĪTH
FAZLUR RAHMAN AZMI

MUFTĪ ATIQUR RAHMAN AZMI

MADRASAH DA’WATUL HAQ

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In the name of Allāh,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
All praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds,
And peace and blessings be upon
His Messenger Muḥammad,
Mercy to the Worlds.
A Brief Biography of
SHAYKH AL-HADĪTH
FAZLUR RAHMAN AZMI

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Translated by
Muhammad Abdul Khaliq Yusuf

MDH
MADRASAH
DAWATUL HAQ
Azaadville, South Africa
To three great hadith scholars

Shaykh Habib al-Rahmān Azmi

Shaykh Hafiz al-Rahmān Azmi

Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi

The info about the SA distributor is redundant here since we already have them above as publishers. I can put it back if you want, but it is really cramped here.
A slight catch in the breath. It is also used to indicate where the hamza has been dropped from the beginning of a word.

\( ^a, \, \check{a}, \, ʾ, \, ā \) (Pronounced from the throat.)

\( \text{gh} \) (Pronounced like a throaty French \( r \) with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

\( \text{f} \) q (A guttural q sound with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

\( \text{a, ā} \) b

\( \text{t} \) th (Should be pronounced as the th in thin or thirst.)

\( \text{b} \) (Tensely breathed b sound.)

\( \text{kh} \) (Pronounced like the ch in Scottish loch with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

\( \text{j} \) gh (Should be pronounced as the th in this or that.)

\( \text{d} \) d

\( \text{dh} \) (Should be pronounced as the th in this or that.)

\( \text{r} \)

\( \text{z} \)

\( \text{s} \)

\( \text{sh} \)

\( \text{s} \) (A heavy s pronounced far back in the mouth with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

\( \text{ḏ} \) (A heavy d/db pronounced far back in the mouth with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

\( \text{ṯ} \) (A heavy t pronounced far back in the mouth with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

\( \text{ẓ} \) (A heavy db pronounced far back in the mouth with the mouth hollowed to produce a full sound.)

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In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise be to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger Muḥammad, Mercy to the Worlds r.

This offering, a translation of Mukhtaṣar sawāniḥ Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi by Muftī Atiqur Rahman Azmi, was originally published in Urdu in July 2002 by Zamzam Publishers, Pakistan. With the kind permission of the author, I consider myself fortunate to bring this invaluable work into the English language.

Keeping faithful to the original, I have attempted to translate as accurately as possible, however the style and format of the book have been modified to conform to the standards of Western readership. Therefore, a more standardised transliteration of Arabic terms has been adopted except where proper nouns are involved, in which case the common spelling is used, e.g. Azmi instead of al-ʿAẓamī, Darul Uloom instead of Dār al-ʿulūm, etc. Furthermore, chapter titles and subsections have been more clearly defined and other relevant headings added where deemed necessary. A transliteration key has also been added together with a glossary and index.

Where possible I have attempted to use English terminology. However, where the English does not fully convey the intended meaning of the Arabic or Urdu word or phrase I have placed the original in brackets after first offering a translation. For the sake of brevity,
Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi

throughout this book Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him) has been referred to as ‘Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’, and Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Rahmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) as ‘Muhaddith Kabīr’. The footnotes are from Muftī Atiqur Rahman Azmi, son of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect them) unless stated otherwise.

May Allāh Most High accept this work and bless all who have assisted in its preparation. I would specifically like to thank my teacher, Muftī Atiqur Rahman Azmi for giving me the opportunity to translate this work; Mawlānā Taha Karaan for his invaluable corrections; Muftī Abdur-Rahman Mangera, Muftī Abdullah Patel and Mawlānā Ismail Ibrahīm for their editing work; Mawlānā Ziyad Husain, Mawlānā Abdullaḥ Dabhelia and Sidi Yahya Batha and for their advice and assistance in the preparation of this book. My final thanks are for my parents, wife and family for their continued support and without whom this task would not have reached its fruition.

I have attempted to render this invaluable work into English as accurately as possible. If there are any errors, they are from me alone. I would welcome any corrections or feedback on maky1@ymail.com.

We ask Allāh that He accept this effort and grant us a true appreciation of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi. May the All-Mighty prolong his life, bless him in his knowledge, health, wealth and family and allow us all to benefit from him fully. Āmin.

Muhammad Abdul Khaliq Yusuf
Ramaḍān 23, 1429 | September 23, 2008

Author’s Note

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allāh and He is sufficient, and peace be upon those servants whom He has chosen.

Some scholars have stated: ‘Upon mention of the pious, mercy descends.’ Imām Abū Ḥanīfa (may Allāh have mercy on him) has said: ‘Stories of the scholars and mention of their qualities are more beloved to me than a great deal of fiqh as they involve the manner and character of people (Muhāsibī, Risālat al-mustarshidīn pg. 12–13).

All praise is due to Allāh that this concise book is presented before the readers outlining my respected father’s biography. Many individuals have helped in the preparation of this book and I thank them all from the bottom of my heart. May Allāh Most High reward them all in abundance and in accordance with His lofty status. May He make this humble effort a means of salvation and reward in the Hereafter and may He grant it acceptance in all quarters, for all people.

O Allāh, send salutations on the best of Your creation, Muḥammad ﷺ and all his family and Companions ﷺ. All praise is due to Allāh.

Atiqur Rahman Azmi
Azaadville, South Africa
Rajab 12, 1422 | September 30, 2001
Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. I am delighted to hear of your intention to compile a biography of your respected father (may Allāh protect him). I pray to Allāh Most High from the bottom of my heart that He make all stages of the process easy, right through to completion. Āmin.

Studying the biographies of the pious is most beneficial for the reader. One can rectify oneself through reading them as the famous saying goes: ‘Upon mention of the pious, mercy descends.’ I am sure that your respected father’s biography will, if Allāh wills, be of great use to students in particular and to the general public too.

Biographies generally come to light after the death of a pious individual, and this has been the case with our pious predecessors. Examples include the Physician of the Umma [Ashraf ‘Alī] Thānawi, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muhammad Zakariyya Kândhlâwi, Shaykh ‘Alī Nadwî and Shaykh Daryâbâdî (may Allāh have mercy on them). Published biographies of pious people during their lifetime include those of Muftī Rashīd Aḥmad Ludhyānwi (may Allāh have mercy on him) and Muftī Taqi Usmani (may Allāh protect him).

A writer acquaintance of mine wrote long eulogies for Shaykh Saʿīd Aḥmad Khān and Shaykh ‘Alī Nadwî (may Allāh have mercy on them) in which he listed their achievements and exploits. When it was made
available in booklet form to the general public, many commented that they wished it had been written during the lives of these individuals so people could have benefited from them directly. Therefore, if this biography of your respected father (may Allāh protect him) can be published in his lifetime, it would give an invaluable opportunity to those wishing to benefit from him to do so.

In conclusion, I wish you full success in this noble work and I request special ḍuʿāʾs from you. And peace be with you,

[Shaykh] Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī
Dewsbury, UK

Foreword 2
Muftī Muhammad Saeed Motara
Lecturer of Ḥadīth and Senior Muftī
Madrasah Arabia Islamia, Azaadville, South Africa

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

The beauty of the skies lies in the stars
The beauty of the earth lies in the pious

When Muftī Atiqur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him), the respected son of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him) requested me to write my impressions of his father’s personality, I took it as my good fortune and decided to muster up the courage to write a few words with regard to his greatness, respect, services rendered and love. I sincerely hope that it will be a means of reward in the Hereafter.

My teacher, the compassionate Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi’s celebrated personality is not in need of introduction. Whilst on the one hand, Shaykh’s passion for knowledge and absorption in it not only reminds one of the pious predecessors and is an invaluable asset, on the other hand, when it comes to practise and where piety is concerned, he is the Umma’s priceless gem. Furthermore, where he showers pearls in the classroom and in the public arena, he also flies
the flag of Ilyās’ (may Allāh have mercy on him) in the field of da’wa and tablīgh, where he is a champion of the prophetic mission.

I first had the great fortune of meeting Shaykh al-Ḥadīth whilst a student at Jāmi’a Islāmiyya Tālim al-Dīn, Dabhel, India. I can picture the moment now, as Shaykh al-Ḥadīth first stepped foot into the confines of the madrasa; the students were waiting restlessly for this teacher and he was a cause of great pride. The students were well acquainted with his illustrious personality well before he arrived and the desire and fervour surrounding his arrival caused the heart to beat faster. Then, suddenly, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth arrived and the madrasa’s fortune was immediately brightened and there was no end to our happiness. The opportunity to sit before such a loving teacher who was the outstanding student of the ḥadīth master (muḥaddith) of the time, Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) was a great blessing. The establishment had further grounds to be delighted—Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s saintly father, Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh protect him) had, just a few years earlier, illuminated the name of the very same seminary as a teacher.

Our first impressions of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth as students was that of a young, small-bodied individual, but it was in the classroom where his splendour was exhibited and we soon realised his calibre as a mountain of knowledge. On a personal level, I have benefited greatly from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth for which all praise is due to Allāh. I have had the opportunity to sit before such a loving teacher who was the outstanding student of the ḥadīth master (muḥaddith) of the time, Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) was a great blessing. The establishment had further grounds to be delighted—Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s saintly father, Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh protect him) had, just a few years earlier, illuminated the name of the very same seminary as a teacher.

Our first impressions of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth as students was that of a young, small-bodied individual, but it was in the classroom where his splendour was exhibited and we soon realised his calibre as a mountain of knowledge. On a personal level, I have benefited greatly from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth for which all praise is due to Allāh. I have had the good fortune of studying numerous books under him: Sirājī, Sharḥ al-nukhbha, Sunan al-Nasā’ī, the second volume of Hidāya and Misbāḥ al-masāḥih. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s lessons were always delivered in simple, straightforward language, and in a manner that made complex ideas and intricate themes easy to grasp.

From the time of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s residence in Dabhel he has had a deep connection and affiliation with the work of da’wa and tablīgh.

If I recall correctly, it was in 1977 or 1978, after the Godhra Ijtimā’; that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth became deeply involved in the work of da’wa and tablīgh and he would work tirelessly in Dabhel and the surrounding villages. Despite his scholarly commitments Shaykh al-Ḥadīth spread the message of Allāh and His Messenger through his travels in the different corners and walkways of the region. The inhabitants of Dabhel and the adjacent villages of the district of Valsad have had a good relationship with him and until today feel the pain of separation and mourn his absence.

Amongst Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s qualities, one particular praiseworthy trait is that in his services to the Religion (Dīn) he would never hesitate. I remember once, whilst studying in India, that people from the village of Sāyan in the Surat district asked me to request one of my teachers to speak at Friday prayers. I approached Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and he immediately accepted their invitation and enlightened the hearts of the locals with some of his precious advices.

Similarly, when the consultation (shūrā) committee of Madrasah Arabia Islamia, Darul Uloom Azaadville, South Africa convened and decided to extend the syllabus to include the [the dawrat al-ḥadīth as the sixth and ] final year, the members of the board were unanimous in deciding to appoint Shaykh al-Ḥadīth as most senior lecturer in ḥadith. His personality is so comprehensive that he would be able to see to the responsibilities of teaching ḥadith and simultaneously accomplish the demands of fulfilling the tablīghi goals and nature of the madrasa. At the request of the board, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth immediately responded in the affirmative. When I came to know of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s acceptance there was no limit to my happiness, and the feeling was replicated by the Muslims of Africa; such a mountain of knowledge and practice has decided to set foot in a land of disbelief, scattering his pearls amongst its inhabitants! For me, it is undoubtedly an unexpected blessing; having

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1 In reference to Shaykh Muḥammad Ilyās (may Allāh have mercy on him), the founder of the Jamā’at Tablīgh movement (translator).

2 An ijtīmā’ in this context is a gathering in which Muslims involved in the da’wa and tablīgh effort convene and listen to talks, culminating in the mission or khurūj. This particular gathering occurred in the town of Godhra, Gujarat, India (translator).
been in the shade of a loving teacher in India, now in my homeland I could attain it too. It was a means of contentment and fortune. All praise is due to Allāh for this.

All praise is due to Allāh, whatever acceptance has been granted to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in India has also been granted to him here in South Africa. May Allāh Most High keep Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s benevolent shade on us always, and together with the residents of Africa may all parts of the world and all creatures benefit from his knowledge and fiyūḍ (outpouring) in abundance. Āmin.

[Muftī] Muhammad Saeed Motara
Azaadvile, South Africa

I n the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

I hope that you are well. Your respected father’s biography is currently being prepared for which I am delighted. I consider myself fortunate enough to participate. Unfortunately, due to numerous commitments I was unable to reply earlier.

Your respected father is my teacher and I began studying under him at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya Dabhel in 1984. In 1985 I studied Safīnāt al-bulaghāʾ and Qutbī in the fourth year [of the course] and the second volume of Hidāya in the fifth year. The effect of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s unique style was such that I memorised more or less every poem. When the lesson of al-asbāḥ al-arba’a came in Qutbī (a notoriously difficult section in which the order of the words plays a hugely important role) a student requested Shaykh al-Ḥadīth to deliver the lesson in Arabic. He obliged and taught the entire lesson in fluent Arabic.

I was excited to study ḥadīth under Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and when I was in my fifth year whenever the opportunity arose I would attend his lessons on Misbāḥ al-maṣābih, delivered to the sixth year class. When
He left, it was the fifth, sixth and final year students of Jāmiʿa Dabhel who felt the sadness of his departure most.

In 1997 I was given the final ten portions of the second volume of [Sabīḥ al-]Bukhārī to teach in Madrasah Taleemuddeen, Isipingo Beach. In 1998, I was reading Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s Hadiyyat al-darārī during the last ten days of Ramaḍān. When I finished the book and was resting after Fajr I dreamt of Imām Bukhārī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He was clothed in green but his features and form was that of your respected father (may Allāh protect him). I also saw Ḥāji Bhāi Padia (may Allāh have mercy on him) in the dream and he was reading something, though I can’t recall exactly what he was reciting. Good dreams are from Allāh and I relay it in good faith. Had I not dreamt this, it would not have made the least bit of difference in my opinion of him.

May Allāh Most High give us the true appreciation of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s ocean of knowledge and may He grant us maximum benefit from him. Āmīn.

[The Shaykh’s] student
EHRAHIM DESAI
(may Allāh forgive him and his parents)
Servant of Madrasah In’aamiyyah, Camperdown, Durban
Rabī’ al-Awwal 9, 1422 | June 2, 2001

I was a third year student of Arabic at Jāmiʿa Islamiyya Dabhel and it was the first year your respected father took up the teaching post there. Small-bodied, wearing a shērwānī... the scene is in front of me now as we stood observing him walking to the principal’s office from our classroom above. The students, as usual, began chatting away and some commented that he didn’t seem like the senior type, with the splendour and entourage to match. On the contrary, there was even a student from South Africa who was noticeably bigger. We even said to him that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth looks younger than you do. But after that, well, what can I say? We had the good fortune of studying under him in his very first year during which he taught us a few of the third year books. Oh what fun we had! An ocean of knowledge and a style of oratory that my words cannot express. What more needs to be said? As my class and I progressed through the course, each year we had the great fortune of studying with him. His humility and soft-heartedness was such that I still recall the way he cried during the Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ lesson whilst speaking on the Hellfire.

I also studied Sunan al-Nasā’ī with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. As ever, he was punctual, giving due right to every book he taught. There was no favouritism; all students were seen as equal, regardless of their background. He would not fall prey to flattery, nor subscribe to it, and he

3 Ḥāji Bhāi Padia (may Allāh have mercy on him) was the head (amīr) of the Ṭablīgh Jamāʿat effort in South Africa. He passed away on Jumādā Thāniya 7, 1419/September 28, 1998 (translator).
would not stand in awe of anyone and would not shy from speaking the truth. Despite his innumerable academic commitments, he would travel to the villages for da’wa and tabligh. He would often travel especially to my village of Kafletā to give talks. One of my beloved teachers there who taught in the maktab (children’s madrasa) and who was also my relative was Shaykh Ibrāhīm Rājā, a student of Shaykh Badre ʿĀlam Mīrathī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He would often invite your respected father. In actual fact, Shaykh Ibrāhīm Rājā’s son attained an isnād (chain of transmission) in tajwīd (laws of Qur’ānic recitation) from your grandfather, due to which he had great affection for your father.

Whenever your father would grace our village he would speak to the public in a very simple tongue, expounding to them knowledge of the religion (dīn). This is in fact the nature of da’wa; when one has an opportunity one should speak of the religion. Recently, when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth came to America he said to me: ‘Molwī Yūsuf! The people’s ears are also a trust. When people come to the mosque you should fulfil that trust by conveying a few words to them regarding the religion. If these people didn’t come at all, then whom would you address?’

Whenever I wrote a letter to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth he would always reply with invaluable advices. I enclose photocopies of our correspondence. I urge you to publish them, they would be of immense benefit to the Umma.

In 1986 when I was going out in tabligh for one year, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth accompanied me personally to the bus stop in Dabhel and made lots of du’ā for me. Such a great Shaykh al-Ḥadīth showing such humility and consideration to a lowly student like me is a rare occurrence nowadays. Whenever he comes to Lodi I request him to rest in comfort at home, to which he always replies that he prefers sleeping on the floor with the tablighī jamāʿat. With such humility, it is little wonder that Allāh has granted him such honour. Allāh has sent him to many countries around the world to spread the word of His Religion.
Introduction
Shaykh Marghûb Aḥmad Lājpūrī

It is from amongst the great blessings of Allāh that such a worthless and sinful person like myself could be bestowed with such great teachers. The academic abilities, talent, piety, purity, and sincerity of whom, was one to write on them, would most definitely fill a voluminous book.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth (may Allāh protect him) is also from amongst those esteemed teachers who possess expertise, proficiency, breadth and depth of knowledge in all fields. This, coupled with his God-given, unique style of explanation, which even the weakest of students can appreciate, are qualities which only the students of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth can attest to.

The writer has had the opportunity to study over ten books under Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. During his numerous trips to the UK, I managed to stay in his company and on two or three occasions was fortunate enough to be with him for long periods of time. All praise is due to Allāh, my love and admiration for him increased at each instance. It must be said that this is not the case with everyone; there may be some with whom one may have confidence initially, but when meeting them in person and spending time with them, this confidence soon dwindles, sometimes ending altogether.

Allāh has not only adorned Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s outward form
with knowledge, but He has also illuminated his inward spirit with knowledge. I have witnessed with my own eyes Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s humility and modesty, his regularity and punctuality in his practices and adhkār (remembrances), and the tears shed out of concern for the welfare of humanity.

I was once in London when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was preparing to leave for ḫumra. Those present requested him to make duʿāʾ before leaving and he obliged. He made such a duʿāʾ that to this day I remember it clearly.4 It was so moving that at times he was unable to utter the words; everybody present was in tears. The characteristics of the duʿāʾs of the pious were found in Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s duʿāʾ.

One can gauge his humility from the experience I had when I wrote to him requesting an introduction to a commentary I had written on the book Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ. He kindly agreed and also wrote a note saying that I should leave his name just as he had written it, insisting I do not add any titles such as ‘Mawlānā’ (our leader) before it. He also asked me to correct any mistakes I found in it.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has always shown his kindness and assistance. In particular, his guidance with regard to the commentary on Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ will always be appreciated and remembered. I decided to commence work on this book and with the guidance of Allāh some progress was made. However, due to my meagre knowledge I was restless and felt the need for one of my teachers to edit it. I decided to approach Shaykh al-Ḥadīth for this task as I could think of no one else but him. The reason was simple; numerous individuals hadn’t encountered the book or read it, let alone taught it. He had done so, and for many years at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, despite all his commitments spent time correcting this commentary. I pray to Allāh that He rewards him fully in this world and the Hereafter. He also undertook this task at a time when his interest had changed; had it been during his time at Dabhel or had he still been teaching the book, the task would undoubtedly be much easier. However, his occupation is now with ḥadīth and tafsīr (Qurʾānic exegesis). He alluded to this in one of his correspondences to me: ‘I am delighted at commencing this work. From it, if Allāh wills, my ability will develop. However much I can help, I will do so, and it will also be beneficial for me as my interests have now changed.’

A point worthy of mention here is that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s acceptance as a master-teacher is attested by one and all. When students are handed their timetable they are anxious to know how many books they can look forward to studying under him. In reality, students never tire in his lessons and no matter which subject he teaches, his lessons are always captivating. His punctuality meant that there was never a frantic rush to complete the amount required in the syllabus at the end of the year. During his lessons of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī he would offer such delightful translations of the various poems and exercises, and his explanation would be so enthralling, that it would bring a smile to the students’ faces. It was only when the bell would ring that we would realise that an hour had passed, so absorbed we were.

I have strayed from the topic! I was discussing how the commentary of Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ came about. I would work on a few pages of text and send it to be checked by Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. He would correct where necessary and would always offer beneficial advice. In this way he checked and corrected the entire commentary. Had it not been for his edit, the book would not have been worthy of publishing. After the corrections I requested him to write an introduction, and suggested the name ‘Khazīnat al-ṭalabāʾ, sharḥ Urdu Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī’ for consideration, or any other alternative he felt appropriate. He replied and suggested ‘Tuḥfat al-ṭalabāʾ, sharḥ Urdu Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī’, ‘Dalīl al-ṭalabāʾ’ or ‘Dalāl al-ṭalabāʾ’. Thus Tuḥfat al-ṭalabāʾ was decided.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, despite all his commitments spent time correcting this commentary. I pray to Allāh that He rewards him fully in this world and the Hereafter. He also undertook this task at a time when his interest had changed; had it been during his time at Dabhel or had he still been teaching the book, the task would undoubtedly be much easier. However, his occupation is now with ḥadīth and tafsīr (Qurʾānic exegesis). He alluded to this in one of his correspondences to me: ‘I am delighted at commencing this work. From it, if Allāh wills, my ability will develop. However much I can help, I will do so, and it will also be beneficial for me as my interests have now changed.”

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4 I have also witnessed this. Once, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was teaching Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and he described ḥajj in a most unique way that tears began to flow from his eyes. WHO IS SAYING THIS????????
I first noticed Shaykh al-Hadith’s relationship with the effort of *da’wa and tāblīgh* of Shaykh Muḥammad Ilyās (may Allāh have mercy on him) whilst at Dabhel. After moving to South Africa it only increased. Shaykh al-Hadith currently plays an indispensable role and is an important pillar for the effort there. His talks are often based on this effort [*da’wa and tāblīgh*], which he explains from the Qurʾān and hadīth. Creating the enthusiasm for the religion in the Ummah has become the purpose of his life.

One of Shaykh al-Hadith’s noteworthy qualities, certainly worth imitating, is his passion for research. Whether discussing *masāʾil* (religious rulings) of the religion or general daily affairs through his writings or speeches, he always backs them with sound research. He also personally advised me to always reference my work, as non-referenced work carries little weight. This quality can be seen in his publications where he quotes the page numbers of various books of *fiqh* and hadīth and the publishers too. Resultantly, Shaykh al-Hadith has thoroughly investigated many of those practices and ideas that have become widespread in the Ummah despite being based on a weak or fabricated basis and he has clearly established their true status. Examples include:

1. Fasting on the fifteenth of Shaʾbān is commonly cited as *sunna*. Shaykh al-Hadith has established, through the opinions of the classical and contemporary hadith scholars that this fast is neither *sunna* nor *mustāḥab*. The reference for it can only be found in a very weak narration of *Sunan Ibn Māja*. Shaykh al-Hadith has collected the opinions of the hadith scholars on this and published a booklet treatise on it.

2. Similarly, he also mentioned in one gathering that he searched through the books of hadīth for the famous *duʿāʾ* before eating: *bismillāh wa ʿalā barakatillāh* (In the name of Allāh and upon the blessing of Allāh), but could not find it worded as such. Once I mentioned to him in his travels here that the *duʿāʾ* is mentioned in Ḥīṣn al-ḥaṣin with [Al-Mustadrak of] Ḥākim as the reference, to which he replied, ‘This *duʿāʾ*, in those exact words [*i.e. bismillāh wa ʿalā barakatillāh*] is not found in Ḥākim in any of the various editions’.

He once mentioned in a gathering that there should be [published] compilations in Urdu of fabricated hadīths. He also emphasised the need for articles to be published with good research on the various oft-quoted yet unfounded hadīths.

Due to Shaykh al-Hadith’s capacity as a leading authority on hadīth, I requested him to devote some attention to completing Shaykh [Yūsuf] Binnōri’s commentary on *Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Maʿārif al-Sunan* as well as Shaykh Yūsuf Kāndhlawī’s *Amānī ʿl-ḥabār*. It is not unlikely that Allāh Most High employ Shaykh al-Hadith to complete this blessed work. I am sure that he will intend to commence this work, if Allāh wills, as without doubt it would be of great benefit to all. His response to my request was: ‘Completing *Maʿārif al-Sunan* and *Amānī ʿl-ḥabār* is currently beyond my control,’ followed by the Persian maxim: ‘Only I know what I really am. Nevertheless make *duʿāʾ*, if Allāh decides to employ me for this work then I am ready.’

The chain of transmission (*isnād*) in hadīth that Shaykh al-Hadith was granted from his various teachers is mentioned in detail in his book *Hadiyyat al-awāli li ṭālib Jānī al-Tirmidhī* (pg. 119) and in his other publication *Hadiyyat al-darārī li ṭālib Ṣāḥīḥ al-Imām al-Bukhārī* (pg. 201). He also received permission from his teacher, the great hadīth scholar, Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Rāhmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) to transmit the *Risālat al-awāʾil* (of the great hadīth scholar and jurist Shaykh Muḥammad Saʿīd b. Sunbul al-Makki (may Allāh have mercy on him)); 7 I also read this entire collection in a gathering with

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5 He has only objected to the fact that it be classified as *sunna* since one can fast on the day with the intention of voluntary (*nafl*) worship. He has written ‘Fasting is a good act and therefore one should fast. The question is simply whether one should have the intention of *sunna* or *nafl*. I have written that one can fast on this day with the intention of a *nafl* act.’ (*Shab-e barāṭ kī haqīqat* (The reality of the fifteenth of Shaʾbān) pg. 21 and 31).

6 What Shaykh al-Hadith was highlighting was that the actual *duʿāʾ* in Ḥākim appears as *bismillāh wa barakatillāh* without the word ʿ*alā* (upon) (translator).

7 A compilation of the opening narrations of forty Hadith collections (translator).
Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and he granted me authorization (ijāza) to transmit it as mentioned below:

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. I say, whilst first praising Allāh and asking Him to send peace and blessings on His Messenger, that our distinguished brother, Marghūb Aḥmad was present when this collection (risāla) was being read and I have granted him permission in the same manner that was granted to me by my Shaykh Muḥammad [Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān] Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him).

Fazlur Rahman Azmi, UK, Ramadān 28, 1419/January 16, 1999

I mention these few lines here so that those readers who are enthusiastic about attaining authorisation (ijāza) of ḥadīth transmissions from him can attain this great blessing from him during his lifetime.

Whenever and wherever I have spent time with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, it quickly dawned upon me that he is very conscious of following the sunna. He researches the various sunnas, practices accordingly and then relays this knowledge to others. In his speeches and writings he has highlighted several sunnas that have been completely abandoned or are practised rarely and, to a great extent, he has managed to revive them once again. For example, the proper repose to be observed in jalsa8 and in qawma9 that is abandoned by many people, despite their observance not just being sunna, but wājib (compulsory) according to the jurists. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has written a thoroughly researched booklet on this matter and often alludes to its importance in his talks. Through this, many people have corrected this common mistake and have begun to observe the proper repose in these postures. Furthermore, he has publicised the du‘ā’ for qa’ima and jalsa that have been narrated in the ḥadīth, which help one in correcting these postures. The du‘ā’ for qa’ima is as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْتَ الْحَمْدُ مَلَّا السَّمَوَاتِ وَمِلَّا الْأَرْضِ وَ مِلَّا مَا شَئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ

O Allāh! Our Lord, to You be the praise that would fill the heavens and the earth and that which pleases You besides (them) (Muslim 1:190).

And in one narration:

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْمُدْمِلِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَمِلَّا الْأَرْضِ وَ مِلَّا مَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَ مِلَّا مَا شَئْتَ مِنْ بَعْدُ

Our Lord! To You be the praise that would fill the heavens and the earth and that which is between them, and that which pleases You besides (them) (Tirmidhī 1:16, 2:185).

The du‘ā’ for jalsa is as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَفْغِرْنِىْ وَ اْرْحَْنِىْ وَ عَافِنِىْ وَ اْهْدِنِىْ وَ اِرْزُقْنِىْ

‘O Allāh! Forgive me and have mercy on me, grant me wellbeing and guide me, and sustain me’ (Abū Dāwūd 1:123).

I humbly urge readers to study Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s two booklets entitled: Namāz kī pābandī awr uskī ḥifāẓat (Punctuality in prayer and safeguarding it) and Qawma wa jalsa mē īmān kā wujūb awr in dōnī mē adhkār kā thubūt (The obligation of composure in qa’ima and jalsa and the proof of the supplications in them both). I request the imāms and scholars in particular to study these publications so that they, together with their congregations, can correct their prayers.

The sunna of joining one’s heels in sjada has unfortunately also been overlooked by many. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth says, ‘It is also sunna to join the two heels together in sjada as related in Ṣaḥīh Ibn Khuzayma (1:328) and Tā’ al-Sunan (3:32). The correct method is to ensure that
the two feet are brought together and the heels and ankles touch. The two feet should be kept upright and the toes should be facing the qibla\(^{10}\) (Namāz ki pābandi awr us ki ḥifāzat pg. 20).

Shaykh al-Hadith has highlighted this in various talks and writings and this has, all praise be to Allāh, made a profound impact on the practice of many.

May Allāh Most High grant him a long life and bestow him with good health and strength.

[Shaykh] Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī

\(^{10}\) The joining of the heels in ṣajda has also been classified as sunna by ʿAllāma Ibn ʿĀbidīn al-Shāmī, ʿAllāma Anwar Shāh Kashmirī, and Muftī Māḥmūd Ḥasan Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on them) and others.
Can we put these two sections together and call it Birth, Name, and Family. This will help us get rid of the large white gap in between the two sections. Not really good for the opening page.

**Name and Birth**

His lineage is as follows: Fazlur Rahman, son of Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān, son of Muḥammad Saʾīd, son of Dāwūd son of Nūr Muḥammad. He was born in Shawwal 1365 (September 1946), in Maunath Bhanjan (more commonly known as Mau) in UP, India.¹¹

**Family**

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s respected father, Shaykh Muftī Qārī Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi (b. 1345/1926) is from amongst the famous scholars of Mau and is known as ‘Qārī Ṣāḥib.’ He is also one of the students of the illustrious scholar, Muḥaddith Kabīr (Great Ḥadīth Scholar) Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him). He studied

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¹¹ Maunath Bhanjan (Mau) was originally a small town in Azamgarh but in 1988 became an independent district. There is an abundance of madrasas and scholars there, with seven or eight Darul Uloom and approximately one hundred and seventy five mosques. Muḥaddith Kabīr, Shaykh Muhammad Manẓūr Nuʿmānī, Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Azmi (former Head Muftī at Darul Uloom Deoband) (may Allāh have mercy on them), and Muftī Zafr al-Dīn (the compiler of Fatāwā Darul Uloom Deoband) (may Allāh protect him) have all studied there. The work of daʿwa and tablīgh has also reached a high level. All praise is due to Allāh.

¹² Muḥaddith Kabīr Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in Mau in 1319/1901 and his father’s name is Shaykh Muhammad Sābir. His father was a disciple (murīd) of the Physician of the Umma Thānawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and passed away in 1365/1946. Muḥaddith Kabīr was educated mostly in his local area by Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghaffār Maur (may Allāh have mercy on him) (d. 1341/1923) who was the

When Muḥaddith Kābīr established Madrasa Mirqāt al-‘Ulūm in Mau, Shaykh Ḥafīz al-Raḥmān Azmi also moved there with him. There, together with the responsibility of teaching in the *Ifā* program, Shaykh Ḥafīz al-Raḥmān also taught Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ, Ẓāhib al-Bukhārī and Ẓāhib Muslim. All praise due to Allāh, he is still teaching as Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and Muftī in Mirqāt al-‘Ulūm. The former head Muftī of Darul Uloom Deoband, Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Azmi used to say that two individuals remained completed devoted to Muḥaddith Kābīr (may Allāh have mercy on him). The first was Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jabbār Azmi, and the other was Shaykh Ḥafīz al-Raḥmān Azmi.

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*student of Shaykh Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and by Shaykh Karim Bakhsh Sanhbalī (may Allāh have mercy on him) (d. 1367/1949) who was a student of Shaykh al-Hind (may Allāh have mercy on him). He also studied for a while at Maṭbā‘ al-‘Ulūm, Varanasi (Banārās) and Darul Uloom Deoband where his teachers included the illustrious personalities of ‘Allāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī, ‘Allāma Shabbīr Ahmad ‘Uthmānī and Muftī ‘Azīz al-Raḥmān ‘Uthmānī (may Allāh have mercy on them). Thereafter, he rendered great service in many madrasas, in particular, Miḥfāż al-‘Ulūm and Mirqāt al-‘Ulūm (both Mau). He passed away on Ramaḍān 10, 1412/March 15, 1992 (see *Ḥayāt Abū l-Maʾāthīr* and Tarjumān al-Sunna).*

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13 Specialized training in answering legal questions (translator).

14 Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jabbār (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in approximately 1323/1905 in Mau. He was educated at Darul Uloom Mau and Maṭbā‘ al-‘Ulūm, Varanasi (Banārās) and was a student of Muḥaddith Kābīr (may Allāh have mercy on him). After graduating he became a teacher at Miḥfāż al-‘Ulūm, Mau, then Maṭbā‘ al-‘Ulūm, Varanasi, and thereafter Mirqāt al-‘Ulūm, Mau, where he was appointed the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. He retained this post until he passed away. Whilst Shaykh al-Ḥadīth at Maṭbā‘ al-‘Ulūm he wrote a book rectifying the mistakes found in the marginalia of the commonly available edition of Ẓāhib al-Bukhārī entitled *Taṣawwīh li maḥfī bawāshī al-Bukhārī min al-taḥḥāfīt*, which has now been published. He also translated *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa ‘l-Maʾāthīr* into Urdu, which he called *Ībār-e akhbat (preference for the Hereafter)*. He passed away in Mau

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Shaykh Ḥafīz al-Raḥmān Azmi was a disciple (murid) of Shaykh al-Islām Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madañī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He benefited greatly from him and his Shaykh had great love for him too and would like listening to his recitation of the Qur’ān.

Some of Shaykh Ḥafīz al-Raḥmān Azmi’s works include: (1) *Ihya‘ al-Sunan—Namaz parīn kā masnūn ṭariqa* (Reviving the sunnas—The sunna method of performing prayer). (2) *Ba waqt qiyāmat muqtaḍī kab khārē hō?* (When should a muqtaḍī stand upon hearing the call to commence?) (3) *Firā al-Sunna* (Elevating the Sunna), which answers objections raised by those who do not follow a school of Islamic law (ghayr muqallidīn) regarding *tawāwīb* (4) *Taqlīd awr ghayr muqallidīn* (Taqlīd and those who do not do taqlīd) (5) *Firā ghayr muqallidīn* (The Ghayr Muqallid Sect). The last two works have been published together.

Shaykh Ḥafīz al-Raḥmān Azmi also supervised the Urdu translation of Ibn al-Mubārak’s *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa ‘l-Maʾāthīr* undertaken by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jabbār Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) who named it *Ībār-e akhbat (Preference for the Hereafter).*

Shaykh Ḥafīz al-Raḥmān Azmi has also travelled a few times to South Africa and on one occasion made the completion of Ẓāhib al-Bukhārī there. In his native Mau he is widely accepted in both public and scholarly quarters and he often visits peoples’ home and workplaces holding religious discussions. Discussions regarding the prayer (ṣalāt) are also accompanied by practical demonstrations, and on the appropriate occasions religious rulings (masā’il) of Ḥaj and fasting are also explained. Another madrasa also runs under his patronage and his effort in this regard is astonishing considering his old age. May Allāh accept his efforts. Āmin.

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* on Rajab 17, 1414 (December 31, 1993) to the sound of the adhān of Friday prayers (see Al-Maʾāthīr Rajab 1414 and Ḥayāt Abū l-Maʾāthīr).
Initial Education

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi’s entire education was undertaken in Mau. He studied basic Arabic and Urdu under the stewardship of his father. Upon completion, to facilitate the educational needs of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and two other students a new maktab (children’s madrasa) called Tālim al-Dīn was established. The three, as a blessing, read the Qurʾān to a famous personality of that time, Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi. Nevertheless, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s first teacher was his father, Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān Azmi, with whom he completed the initial recitation (nāẓira) and subsequently the memorization of the Qurʾān (ḥifẓ). In this same maktab another teacher, namely Munshī Muḥammad Siddīq taught him the first three levels of elementary Urdu. After that, he completed levels four and five in two years at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau.

Persian and Arabic Education

In the next two years, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth learned Persian and thereafter exerted himself in the Arabic aspect of the course, to the extent that he came top of the class in his final year (dawrat al-ḥadīth) which he completed in 1386/1966. He also committed some books to memory, such as the text (matn) of Sharḥ al-Tāḥdīb, called Tāḥdīb al-Manṭiq.

15 Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him): His father’s name is Ḥāfiẓ Muhammad Siddīq. Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi was born in 1327/1909 and completed his elementary education at Darul Uloom Mau. At the age of 18 he studied tajwīd according to the riwāya of Ḥafiz and thereafter studied the seven modes of recitation (qirāʾāt sabʿa) with Qārī Riyāsat Ali for two years. He then went on to become the Shaykh of Tajwīd at Darul Uloom Mau. His mere presence was a means of goodness and blessing for the madrasa. He had a powerful and attractive voice. He passed away in Rabi’ Thānī, 1390/June, 1970 at the age of 63 [Islamic years] (Tadhikira qāri’īn-e Hind).

16 He later married the eldest daughter of Munshiji. Munshiji was a teacher at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau.

Munshi and Ālim Examinations

In the final two years of his studies, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth took the ālim examination. He made preparations from the fifth year for his final year exams which he wrote in 1386/1966 in Allahabad. He attained a first-class certification from the Allahabad Examination Board. Similarly, in six or seven months he prepared for the Munshi Examination,” which he wrote in 1388/1968 and in which he gained a first-class certification.

Tajwīd and Ḥadr

During his Arabic studies he would also learn the laws of reciting the Qurʾān (tajwīd) and practically demonstrate its application through recitation (ḥadr). He completed this recitation with Qārī ‘Abd al-Mannān and through this he attained expertise in it. At that time many of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s class fellows had quickly completed their recitation, however his teacher would listen to his recitation conscientiously, small portions at a time, because his intonation was good. On a few occasions, his teacher praised him, and it was in the fourth year of Arabic class that he completed his recitation.

17 This refers to the art of writing and calligraphy (translator).

18 Qārī ‘Abd al-Mannān (may Allāh have mercy on him): He was a resident of Phatān Tola, Mau. He was one of the senior teachers of tajwīd and qirā’a at Madrasa Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm. He was bedridden for a number of years and on Jumādā Ūlā 18, 1414/November 4, 1993, at around noon, he passed away. The late Qārī was an excellent teacher of tajwīd and would recite the Qurʾān beautifully. He would often touch listeners with his recitation and maintained the gaiety in his voice during his old age. His students are numerous (see Al-Ma’āthir and Ḥayāt Abū l-Ma’āthir).
fter graduating from his Arabic studies Shaykh al-Ḥadīth exerted himself in different fields. This included advanced recitation classes involving the sab’a (seven) and ‘āshara (ten) modes of Qur’ānic recitation (qira’āt). He completed this by Qārī Muṣṭafā Azmi, who was Shaykh al-Tajwīd at Darul Uloom Mau and the student of Qārī Riyyāsat ʿAlī Bahrābīdī (may Allāh have mercy on them). Shaykh al-Ḥadīth then studied the book Tāsīr with Qārī Riyyāsat ʿAlī and once this was complete he moved on to Shāthbiyya where he would often be asked to translate and read for the class. Where the need arose, Qārī Riyyāsat ʿAlī would interject, otherwise Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would prepare and decipher the text before coming to class. He completed the book in one and a half months.

During the completion of the seven modes of Qur’ānic recitation (qira’āt sab’a) which was overseen by Qārī Riyyāsat ʿAlī, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was reading when the teacher corrected a mistake. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth hesitated, suggesting that he had not in fact erred. When other books were consulted, it became apparent that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was in fact correct and his teacher was mistaken. His teachers were greatly impressed and news of this incident soon spread, to the extent that the madrasa in which Qārī Muṣṭafā (may Allāh have mercy on him) was working (Darul Uloom Mau), offered Shaykh al-Ḥadīth the post of teaching qira’āt, however his family refused on account of his ill health at that time. ‘This is the grace of Allāh which He bestows upon whom He wishes’ (Qurʾān 5:54).

Completion in Other Fields

In the same year Shaykh al-Ḥadīth studied Tafsīr al-Baydawī with Shaykh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Nuʿmānī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and a portion of Tafsīr al-Nasāfī (Madārik al-tanzīl).

At that time, with the encouragement of Muḥaddith Kābir (may Allāh have mercy on him) a faculty of takhassus (specialization) in Ḥadīth was established at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlām, Mau. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth enrolled with one other individual who soon had to leave due an illness. Interestingly, no other student joined this department thereafter, suggesting that this department had been established especially for Shaykh al-Ḥadīth by divine decree. He studied there for two and a half years, during which he was given the responsibility of teaching a few elementary Arabic and Persian books. In his spare time Shaykh al-Ḥadīth completed the study of the voluminous Radd al-muhātār ʿalā l-Durr al-mukhtar, (more commonly known in the Indian Subcontinent as Shāmi) as well as a few other books. Under the supervision of Muḥaddith Kābir (may Allāh have mercy on him) Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also practised the art of fatwā writing. Muḥaddith Kābir would give him questions and he would search for answers. He was also instructed to write two books: (1) Sirat al-Imām Abū Yūsuf (may Allāh have mercy on him) (yet unpublished) and (2) A response to a ghayr muqallid work entitled Anbār majmūʿa, written as a critique of Muḥaddith Kābir’s two books entitled Aʿlam marfūʿa and Azhār marbūʿa.

19 Qārī Riyyāsat ʿAlī (may Allāh have mercy on him): His father’s name is ʿAbd al-Ra’ūf. He was born in 1317/1899 and memorized the Qurʾān on Dhū l-Hijja 14, 1391/January 31, 1972 (see Ḥayāt Abū ʿl-Maʿāthīr, Tadbikra qārīʿin-e Hind (abridged) and Tadbikra Qārī Riyyāsat ʿAlī).
**Authorisation (Ijāza) for Transmitting Ḥadīth**

In 1393/1973 Shaykh al-Ḥadīth read Risālat al-auwā’īl with Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) and attained authorization from him. Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) had authorization from his teacher Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghaflār ‘Īraqī Mauwi,20 who had authorization from Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaq Ilāhābādī 21 (may Allāh have mercy on them). The details of this chain (isnād) can be found in Risālat al-auwā’īl and brief biographies of these personalities in Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s work Muqaddima-e Bukhārī (Urdu).

A copy of this chain of transmission can be found below:

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20 Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghaflār son of Shaykh Turāb ‘Āli ‘Īraqī Mauwi al-Hanafi (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born on 12 Safar 2, 1283/June 15, 1866 in Aurangabad, Mau. His teachers include Shaykh Jāmal al-Dīn Mauī, Shaykh Fayd Allāh Mauī, Shaykh Ḥakīm ‘Abd Allāh Mujaddidī (the student of Shāh ‘Abd al-Ghanī), Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥad (the student of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaq Ilāhābādī 22), and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaq (may Allāh have mercy on them). He studied the Siḥāb Sitta (the six authentic books of Ḥadīth) under Shaykh Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He passed away in 1341/1923 in Mau (Ḥayāt Abū l-Ma’āthir).

21 Shaykh al-Dalā’il ‘Abd al-Ḥaq Ilāhābādī Muhājir Makkī (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in Allahabad. He studied under Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Dihlawī and Shāh ‘Abd al-Ghanī (may Allāh have mercy on them). He passed away on Shawwāl 19, 1333/August 30, 1915 in Makka and is buried near the grave of Shaykh Raḥmat Allāh Kīrānwī in the Jannat al-Maʿāthir cemetery (see Ḥayāt Abū l-Ma’āthir and Nuzhat al-khawāṭir).

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Whilst Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was at Dabhel, Qārī Ṭayyib (may Allāh have mercy on him) visited one day and taught a class on Shāh Wālī Allāh’s (may Allāh have mercy on him) Musalsalāt bi ‘l-awwaliyya, in which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was also present. Therefore, he also received authorization for it. Qārī Ṭayyib (may Allāh have mercy on him) had studied this under Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and been authorised by him.

These special authorizations (ijāzas) are aside from the Madrasa’s general authorization provided to graduates, in which all current books are included.

**Teachers (Asātidha)**

The teachers under whom Shaykh al-Ḥadīth studied in his home town include:

1. Muḥaddith Kabīr Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him), with whom he studied parts of Šaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and a few other books not included in the general syllabus. He also read Risālat al-auwā’īl 22 and attained an isnād in it. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also benefited from him greatly at a personal level. If Allāh so wills, a few incidents will be mentioned later in this regard.

2. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Latīf Nu’mān Azmi23 (may Allāh have mercy on him),

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22 Authored by Muḥammad Sa’d Sunbul Mājallā’ī Shāfi,22 (may Allāh have mercy on him). He lived in Makka and used to teach in Masjid al-Ḥarām. He passed away in 1175/1762 (Ḥayāt Abū l-Ma’āthir).

23 Shaykh ‘Abd al-Latīf was born in Mau in 1315/1897 and his father’s name is Ḥabīb ‘Abd al-Ḥaẓīm. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Latīf spent most of his life with Muḥaddith Kabīr and like him he was educated in Mau and Deoband. He graduated from Darul Uloom Mau in 1341/1923. His teachers include Shaykh Karīm Bakhsh, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Amrōhī and ‘Allāma Ibrāhīm Balyāwī (may Allāh have mercy on them). He also taught at Darul Uloom Mau and Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau where he was the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and Principal. He was the debater of his era and an expert in most
with whom he studied most of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, a portion of Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Nasāʾī and Tafsīr al-Baydawī.

3. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Bārī Qāsmī (may Allāh have mercy on him), former Muftī of Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm Maywān, under whom he studied the Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ and Ḥadiyya.

4. Shaykh Irshād al-Ḥaq (may Allāh protect him).

5. Qārī Aḥmad Allāh Qāsmī (may Allāh have mercy on him).

6. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jabbār Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) with whom he studied Diwān al-Mutanabbī, Ḥamāsa, Mukhtaṣar al-Maʿānī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ.

7. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Ḥusaynī Maʿī24 (may Allāh have mercy on him) with whom he studied most of Sunan al-Tirmidhī. That year he went for Ḥajj, so Shaykh ʿAbd al-Latīf taught in his place for a while.

8. Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Azmi.25


11. Shaykh Shafiʿ Aḥmad.

12. Shaykh Ḥafiz al-Raḥmān (Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s father).


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24 Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (may Allāh have mercy on him) was educated at Darul Uloom Mau. He was a student of Muḥaddith Kabīr and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Latīf (may Allāh have mercy on them) and was a teacher at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm Mau. He was an accepted individual among the masses with many qualities and exemplary character. He passed away on Dhū ’l-Qaʿda 1402/September 14, 1982. He had taken the pledge (bayʿa) with Shaykh al-Īlām Ḥusayn Aḥmad Mādani (may Allāh have mercy on him) due to which he would call himself a ‘Ḥusaynī’ (see Ḥayāt Abū ʿl-Maʿāthir and Ḥadiyya al-aḥwāḏī).

25 Shaykh Shams al-Dīn (may Allāh have mercy on him) graduated from Darul Uloom Mau in 1341/1923. He was a class-fellow of Muḥaddith Kabīr in some subjects. After graduating he rendered great services to Madrasa Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm. He was a chronic asthmatic and passed away in Jumādā Ulā 1392/June 1972 (Ḥayāt Abū ʿl-Maʿāthir).
Chapter 2

C

TEACHING & OTHER SERVICES
**Teaching**

After specialising in Ḥadīth Shaykh al-Ḥadīth taught for a while at Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm, Mau. Then, on the advice of Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) he went to Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm, Varanasi (Banārās) where he taught for approximately four years. At first he taught Kāfiya Ibn al-Ḥājib, Sharḥ al-Jāmī and Diwān al-Mutanabbī. Not only was he very talented but he also enjoyed a good relationship with Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) and was his special student, sent personally by him with his duʿāʾs to this madrasa. The students were enthused by his style of teaching and were so thrilled that on the very first day they went to the principal and sung his praises. The principal was naturally delighted and appointed him to also teach Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ the following year. He also had the opportunity to deliver a lesson on Sunan al-Nasāʾī. Now his acceptance became apparent to the students.

The following year he was given Sunan al-Tirmidhī to teach and was also made responsible for issuing fatwās. He would write the fatwā and the head muftī, Muftī ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Makkī (may Allāh have mercy on him) would approve it and sign on it. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth worked in the fatwā department for a few years. Since his family were still in Mau he

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26 Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm: This is a famous seat of learning in Varanasi (Banārās). Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghaffār (may Allāh have mercy on him) taught there. It was during his time that Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) studied under him and he [Muḥaddith Kabīr] later went on to teach there in two separate stints.
Varanasi and Mawdūdism

Besides his lecturing commitments Shaykh al-Ḥadith built a strong rapport with the general public through his effort in the field of daʿwa and tablīgh. He once mentioned that whilst living in Varanasi he was given some books on Mawdūdism by friends. He read them thoroughly but eventually became weary with their philosophy and did not devote further time to the subject.

In this regard Shaykh al-Ḥadith remarks:

The full name of the madrasa in Varanasi is Jāmiʿa Yātīm Khāna Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm. When I first arrived there, there was a strong inclination towards Mawdūdism. A number of teachers were on the board or trustees of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Varanasi. The students’ library was full of Jamaat-e-Islami books and they were influenced by them. There would often be Jamaat-e-Islami talks in the city. I was most unfamiliar with this group as I did not know of any in Mau.

Coincidentally, the Principal of the madrasa, Shaykh Ishāq Banārsī (may Allāh have mercy on him) shared our viewpoint and was a great admirer of Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him). He would show great compassion toward me as I had been sent by Muḥaddith Kabīr personally. I had a relationship with the work of daʿwa and tablīgh from before and I would visit the Tablighi Markaz in Varanasi. I had also built up a relationship with the brothers involved in the work. I also attended some Jamaat-e-Islami programs, but noticed a major deficiency in spirituality in their work. Despite the fact that they were well organized and their talks were good, “These were words spoken by the tongue, not the heart,” therefore it had no effect on the heart, and only benefitted the ears. On the contrary the tablīghi talks had a profound effect on the heart as they were concerned with self-rectification and rectification of the Umma. They scholars had written refuting Mawdūdism and I came across a number of articles in the magazine al-Furqān. These books included:

1. Qalandar har che gawid dida gawid (Whatever the men of Allāh see, they see with insight), an article by Shaykh Ṭāqī al-Raḥmān Sanbhāli (may Allāh have mercy on him) the son of Shaykh Muḥammad Manzūr Nuʿmān; (2) Mawdudi Şāhīb ki ḥikmat-e ‘ibnī par tabējīra (A review of Mawdūdī Şāhīb’s rationale) by Mawlānā Madānī (may Allāh have mercy on him); (3) Mawdudi Şāhīb ki Khilāfāt wa mulākiyyāt kā jawāb (An answer to Mawdūdī Şāhīb’s Khilāfāt wa mulākiyyāt) by Mawlānā Muḥammad Miyā, the then head of Jamāt-e-Islami in Varanasi. The students’ library was full of Mawdūdī literature, especially that relating to daʿwa and tablīgh and jihād. I read them and liked them. Then I began wondering why our scholars disagreed with the Jamaat-e-Islami philosophy. Therefore, I began to investigate the books our
evoked remembrance of the grave and the Hereafter and this was a clear distinction that immediately became apparent.

After that, with the advice of the Tablīghī Markaz I began leading groups of students in *tablīgh* jamāʿat. Most of the time we would leave on a Friday to one of the mosques in town where other tablīghī brothers would join us. *Gasht* and talks would take place as well as *tashkīl*. We would not have the opportunity to stay overnight and would return to the madrasa by the evening. Through this, the minds of many of the students began to slowly change. This pattern continued and soon some capable brothers had established themselves in the effort [of *daʿwa* and *tablīgh*].

A senior teacher at the madrasa, who was also a senior member of the Jamaat-e-Islami was dismissed. He filed a legal case as a result, due to which the madrasa was closed for three weeks. Later, he distanced himself from the Jamaat-e-Islami and expressed regret for his past involvement. He was reemployed by the madrasa but not very long after that he passed away. May Allāh have mercy upon him. Āmīn.

Other teachers who were members of the Jamaat-e-Islami left for their own reasons. I also left for Dabhel, Gujarat. Then, my respected teacher, Shaykh ʿAbd-al Jabbār Mauī Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) accepted a teaching post there ʿMasdar al-Ḥaqīq] and became the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. Shaykh Niʿmat Allāh Azmi (may Allāh protect him) who is currently a senior lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband, also initially taught at this madrasa [Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm]. The Jamaat-e Islami philosophy was finally dispelled once and for all.

Whilst residing in Varanasi, I wrote some articles refuting Mawdūdism which were published in Deoband’s monthly Tajallī magazine. I was also the sole imām of the mosque in the madrasa. Due to my talks in the nearby locality and surrounding areas and because of the *tablīgh* jamāʿat work and gatherings (jalsas) in the local mosques, the locals were familiar with me and we had a good relationship. Madrasa Maẓhar al-ʿUlūm is located in the northern area of the region, near the railway station. The southern region of the city, Madanpūra is well known because of its Muslim inhabitants. There is also a Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya there, and our good friend, Shaykh Abū ʿl-Qāsim Banārāsi (may Allāh protect him) lives there. I sometimes have the opportunity to visit the area. Shaykh Ḥusayn Banārāsi (may Allāh have mercy on him) also lived there and we were good friends.

Varanasi is famous for its large Hindu population though there is still a significant Muslim community, especially on the outskirts of the city. There are many mosques with people from the Ḥanafi, Ghayr Muqallid and Barēlwī schools of thought. Debates are common, with many talks and gatherings held for this sole purpose. Staying in such an environment means that one is exposed to many different ideologies, due to which one gets the opportunity to study and research. My research of the Jamaat-e-Islami movement was for this very reason—the environment forced me to undertake it.

There are also Shiʿa in Varanasi and some Barēlwīs are inclined towards Shiism, so articles and books on this topic surface from time to time. During that time, I also had the opportunity to study many books refuting Shiism, and countless books on the incident of Karbala. These included: *Tuḥfa-e Karbala* by Shaykh Sirāj al-Ḥaq Machlishahrī; *al-ʿAwnāṣim min al-qawāṣim* by Ibn al-ʿArabī; *Khilāfat-e Muʿāwiya* wa Yāzīd and *Taḥqīq-e mazīd*, both by Maḥmūd ʿAbbāsī; and ʿRaʾis al-Ḥusayn* by Ibn Ṭaʿīmiya (may Allāh have mercy on him). Others included books by Qārī Muḥammad ʿAbī ’l-Kalām Āzād. I eventually reached the conclusion that I should not devote any more time to this. ‘That was a nation that had passed away. They shall reap the fruits of what they did, and you of what you do. And you will not be asked of what they used to do’ (Qurʾān 2:141).

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27 *Gasht* refers to meeting fellow Muslims. *Tashkīl* is encouraging others to join the cause (translator).
Dabhel
On the advice of Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him), Shaykh al-Ḥadīth moved to Jāmīʿa Islāmiyya Dabhel in Dhū Ṭaʿlīl 1394 (January 1975), where he remained for approximately twelve years. For the first three years he lived alone in one of the rooms of the madrasa. Later, his entire family arrived and he moved into a residence outside the madrasa, near the Jāmīʿ Mosque. He worked determinedly in the public domain and the locals continue to remember him fondly to this day. Whether he was delivering speeches, offering advice, helping and assisting in community affairs, writing taʾwīd or performing ḍam;29 in all respects he worked tirelessly and was accepted by one and all.

Teaching the Sabʿa and Ḥashara Qirāʿas
Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also taught the seven qirāʿas (sabʿa) and the ten qirāʿas (ḥashara) in his spare time. The circumstance behind this is noteworthy. The head qārī of Jāmīʿa Dabhel, Qārī ʿAbd Allāh Bhāgalpūrī (may Allāh protect him) went to Deoband in 1403 AH and so the students of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. Hence, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was appointed this task and he taught wholeheartedly, devoting a great deal of time and energy to it.

It was said that once in a single night he conducted the practice (ijrāʾ) of nine to ten portions (ajzāʾ) of the Qurʾān. In 1405 AH he taught the Durra, ʿAqīla and Ṭayyib texts in qirāʿa and in 1406 AH he supervised the recitation of the additional three completing qirāʿas (iblātha mutammima). Successful students were granted authorisation (īsnād) from the seminary as well as a personal authorisation from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. To this day students in India and England (Dewsbury Markaz) still study the seven and ten qirāʿas through his chain of transmission.

Responsibility of the Assembly (Anjuman)
In order for facilitate the practice of public speaking for students, Jāmīʿa Dabhel organised weekly assemblies. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was appointed as the supervisor, a duty which he performed admirably throughout. Students would hold an annual conference (jalsa) on a relevant theme and the task of overseeing and organising this was also given to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth.

Once a Qurʾānic recitation competition was held and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth together with Qārī Anis Fāyḍābādī (may Allāh have mercy on him), the former head qārī at Madrasa Falāḥ al-Dārayn, Tarkeshwar were appointed as judges. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would also be called on a regular basis to examine students at Jāmīʿa Dabhel and other madrasas too. All praise is due to Allāh that in the field of ṭajwīd and qirāʿa Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has rendered great service.

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28 Surat is a famous city in India. There are two villages located off the main road leading from it to Mumbai, namely Dabhel and Simlak. Dabhel is located 26 km from Surat and 14 km from Navsari. Jāmīʿa Islāmiyya was originally established as a maktab in the mosque of Simlak, but over time as the need to increase capacity grew, land was purchased in the village of Dabhel and the seminary was transferred there. Shaykh Ahmad Ḥasan Bham Simlaki (may Allāh have mercy on him) laid the foundations in 1326/1908. Numerous luminaries have taught and worked at this prestigious establishment including Allāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī and Allāma Shabbīb Ahmad Uṭhmānī (may Allāh have mercy on them) (see Tarikh-e Jāmīʿa by Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fāzlu Ṭabība Azmi (may Allāh protect him)).

29 Taʾwīd are amulets that contain Qurʾānic verses etc., and ḍam refers to blowing over a person or into water after reciting some Qurʾānic verses or supplications (translator).
Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi

Compiling Tārīkh-e Jāmi’a (A History of Jāmi’a Dabhel)

Shaykh al-Hadith compiled a history of Jāmi’a Dabhel. When the board of Jāmi’a Dabhel decided such a task should be undertaken, their choice fell on Shaykh al-Hadith and this task was assigned to him. Despite his other academic commitments, Shaykh al-Hadith put a great deal of time and effort into this challenging task. His meticulous research included sifting through madrasa reports and historical records and this was coupled with the collection and collation of oral accounts of relevant elderly individuals in the community. After gathering a plethora of information, Shaykh al-Hadith prepared a concise history of Jāmi’a Dabhel. When the board of Jāmi’a Dabhel decided such a task should be undertaken, they would come and read the book. The book was first published in Deoband in 1406 AH and was republished some time later in Pakistan.

Azaadville

Whilst at Dabhel, students from all corners of the world derived great benefit from Shaykh al-Hadith. His unique style of teaching was so inspiring that perhaps no student could fail to be amazed or be left profoundly moved by his lessons (further details will be discussed later, if Allāh wills). Nevertheless, the acceptance that Allāh had bestowed him with in the hearts of the people was manifest in the numerous invitations he received from England and South Africa. After much deliberation he accepted the invitation of the people of South Africa and in Shawwāl 1406/June 1986 he left for South Africa. This was a very sad occasion for the people of Dabhel. After arriving in South Africa, Shaykh al-Hadith lived alone for two years. At that time, the final year of the course (dawrat al-hadith) had not yet been started so Shaykh al-Hadith taught the Misbāḥ al-maṣābīḥ, Hidāya, Hayāt al-Ṣabāḥa, Uṣūl al-Shābī and other books. After two years his entire family joined him and in the very same year (1408 AH) classes for the final year were initiated. He has since then been teaching the whole of Ṣabīḥ al-Bukhārī and Sunan al-Tirmidhī for many years.

Shaykh al-Hadith also has the responsibility of teaching a number of other books which vary from time to time. These include Tafsīr al-Baydawī, Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid and Ṭahāwī’s Sharḥ al-Maʿānī. Initially, due to the large number of books Shaykh al-Hadith had been assigned, the sacrifice he had to make was huge and he worked very hard to teach them all as they deserved to be taught. This cannot be more obvious than from the responsibility he assumed during the first year of dawrat al-hadith. In that year Shaykh al-Hadith taught Ṣabīḥ al-Bukhārī, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Hidāya, Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid and Tafsīr al-Baydawī. Later, he was assigned Ibn Nujaym’s al-ʾIṣbah wa ʾl-ʾnaṣāʿir, Shābī’s ʿAqīla ʿatrab al-qaṣāʾid, Ibn Hajar’s Bulūgh al-marām, Shirāzī’s al-Luma (in Shāfiʿi jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh)), Imām Lukhnawī’s al-Raf wa ʾl-takmil, Muqaddima Ibn al-Šalāb, and Ẓafar Ahmad ʿUthmānī’s Qawāʾid fi ʾl-ulūm al-hadith. He also taught Risalat al-awā’il and the Musalsalat every year. Sometimes, whilst travelling, the local scholars would come and read Risalat al-awā’il and obtain his authorisation.

Unique Features of His Teaching

Shaykh al-Hadith’s lessons are always well researched and interesting. His talent is such that no matter the subject or book with which he is entrusted, he is able to teach it. His lessons on Tafsīr al-Baydawī in particular have led the likes of Muftī Rashīd Ahmad Faridi to say: ‘We as students used to refer to Shaykh al-Hadith as “Shaykh al-kull fi ʾl-kull” (“the shaykh of all in all”).’ He goes on to say, ‘Shaykh al-Hadith’s style of teaching was so unique that when he would teach the Shābībiyya, for example, he would teach in such a way that we would inadvertently end up memorizing many of the poems in it. During one particular lesson of Shābībiyya, he highlighted in a single poem the application of laws from several different disciplines including Arabic grammar (nahu), morphology (ṣarf) and rhetoric (balāgha).’

30 Those who have studied this text by him will testify to his mastery of it and often comment that the rights of such a book can only be fulfilled by him.
Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi

Shaykh Marghūb Ahmad Lājpūrī (may Allāh protect him) writes: ‘I have been and continue to be astounded of his depth of knowledge and unquestionable God-gifted talent and expertise in every field’ (Muqaddima sharḥ Safinat al-bulaghā). When Shaykh Fārūq Makkī (may Allāh protect him) visited South Africa in 1422/2001 he took time out of his busy schedule to attend Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s lesson, after which he commented: ‘Such a well-researched and fascinating lecture is of the type that Shaykh Binnōrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) used to deliver. To find a lesson of such quality nowadays is most rare. His mere presence is a great bounty for the people of South Africa. If he was not here then perhaps the religious environment would not be as it is. May Allāh grant the people of South Africa an appreciation for him. Āmīn.’ He then encouraged his assistants to see to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s needs and emphasised the need to spread his knowledge. Many other scholars have highlighted their admiration for him, but the aforementioned comment suffices.

When teaching, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s practise has always been to leave unnecessary discussions aside and deal with the important issues in detail. He always decodes the text regardless of the book. In any given lesson he does not restrict himself to the appointed text and if any important topic arises or he wishes to present additional research he cites references or sometimes reads directly from other sources. In the issue of raising of the hands in prayer (rafʿ al-yadayn), for example, he reads references from an extended number of books.

His teaching practise (especially in regard to the major books) includes recording dates [often in the margin] to ascertain the pace he needs to maintain [by comparing it to previous years] in order to complete the amount required by the curriculum comfortably. In this way, lessons at the end of the year are delivered in the same manner as those at the beginning, without compromising quality or content. If any lesson is missed due to travels or otherwise he devotes his spare time to the students in order to catch up. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is very particular with time and is always punctual. It is exceptionally rare that he arrives late or leaves later than scheduled. Even his teaching outside of normal hours is governed by a strict schedule; for example, from Muharram he has two weekly lessons in the evening. From Jumādā Thānīya he teaches for one hour (usually after ‘Ishāʾ) except on Thursdays and Fridays.

Besides teaching, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also displays concern for the spiritual wellbeing and nurturing of the students. He places great emphasis on prayer, Fajr in particular. He always asks his students whether or not they have performed Fajr with congregation and if they missed any rakʿas (units of prayer). He sometimes says to his students, ‘Whoever finds it difficult to wake up for Fajr should sleep in the mosque as his eyes will open when people arrive for prayer.’ In short, his talks often revolve around the importance of daʿwa and ᵃˡreplaceAll. He also speaks on the importance of education and the responsibilities of the scholars (ʿulamāʾ), quoting passages and extracts from various books. These include Tuḥfat al-mutaʾallimīn, Fadāʾil al-ṣadaqāt and Jāmiʿ bayān al-ʿilm wa faḍluluḥu, from which he discusses important and beneficial points. At the beginning of the year when he dictates important notes to the students, he also includes the following poem of Ibn Durayd:31

Welcome to those whom I love
And hold dear for the sake of Allāh, the Bountiful One
Welcome to a righteous and pious people
Shining faces and the beauty of every gathering
O seekers of knowledge of the Prophet Muḥammad

31 These advices, together with oft-quoted poems have been compiled into book-form, entitled Ganjīna ashʿār-e maʿrifat.
Others cannot be equalled with you.

Other Religious Services

In most of the fields of the religion Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has had, and continues to have an important role to play. In particular, his contributions in the field of hadith and his efforts in the work of da’wa and tablīgh are plain for all to see. On Fridays (his day off), he often travels with students in [tablīgh] jamāʿat in the path of Allāh. Sometimes, whilst travelling in jamāʿat, he teaches Sahih al-Bukhārī and sets time aside for the teaching of other books such as Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā’s (may Allāh have mercy on him) Tablīghi jamāʿat par i’tirādat kē jawābat [which answers objections raised against the tablīghi jamāʿat effort] and the sayings of the Physician of the Umma Thānawī and ‘Allāma Binnūrī (may Allāh have mercy on them).

For the effort of da’wa and tablīgh Allāh has taken Shaykh al-Ḥadīth to many parts of the world. Examples include, the two Holy Sanctuaries (Haramayn Sharifayn), either for ḥajj or ‘umra during which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would be punctual with discourses, meeting fellow Muslims and performing gashī. During the ḥajj of 1422/2001, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth together with Ḥāfiẓ Patel of England and others would go the various camps, often delivering speeches twice or thrice a day. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would also be particular about performing gashī in Minā too.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has also visited Bangladesh, Canada, Egypt, France, India, Jordan, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Pakistan, Palestine, Reunion, Syria, Turkey, UK, USA, West Indies (Barbados, Trinidad and Grenada), Zambia and Zimbabwe. In all these countries numerous talks were held. Together with all these trips abroad, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has continued to strive on the domestic front, often travelling to the various regions of South Africa. There have also been numerous invitations from other places but due to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s various commitments he has been unable to oblige. An example of his itinerary for one three-day trip to the Natal Province, South Africa in April 2001 is presented below:

**Thursday:**
- Return from madrasa at 4pm
- Perform ‘Asr and immediately leaves for the airport
- Reach Durban in time for ‘Ishā’
- Talk after ‘Ishā’ at Junction Tablīghi Markaz in Durban

**Friday:**
- Talk after Fajr at Masjid al-Nūr, Stanger
- Talk before Friday prayers at Jāmi’ Masjid, Stanger
- Talk for women (3–4pm)
- Talk after Maghrib, Tongaat
- Talk after ‘Ishā’, Verulam

**Saturday:**
- Talk after Fajr at Spencer Road Mosque, Durban
- Consultations (mashwara) at 10am at Junction Road Tablīghi Markaz
- Talk after Zuhr at Madrasah In’aamiyyah, Camperdown
- Talk for women (2.30–3.30pm), Overport
- Talk after Maghrib at Greyland Road Mosque and meeting with some scholars (‘ulamā’)
- Talk after ‘Ishā’ at Jāmi’ Mosque, Effingham in which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth sang some poems
- After dinner there was another private gathering in which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also said some poetry.

**Sunday:**
- Talk after Fajr at Mallinson Road Mosque
- Consultations (mashwara) at 10am at Junction Road Tablīghi Markaz accompanied with a short talk
- Short talk at the madrasa of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥim Khān
- Talk after Zuhr in Pietermaritzburg
Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi

Teaching and Other Services

- Talk for women (2.30–3.30pm), Pietermaritzburg
- Talk after ‘Asr in a prayer room (jamā‘at khāna)
- Talk after ‘Ishā’ in Isipingo Hill Mosque after which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth returned to Johannesburg by air
- Arrive home about 11 pm and the next morning back to his teaching routine

This is the summary of one trip in which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth delivered almost twenty talks. Similarly, in one trip to India in 2007 which lasted almost two weeks, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth gave more than sixty talks. Such busy schedules are the norm for him. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is also currently patron of numerous madrasas and institutes in India, UK and Africa.

One of the gifts Allāh has bestowed upon Shaykh al-Ḥadīth includes his ability to draw from his wide-ranging knowledge at a moment’s notice. Examples of this have been included below:

In his book ‘Ilm al-qirā‘t aur qurrā‘-e sab‘a Qārī Abū ʾl-Ḥasan Azmi (may Allāh protect him) states that Imām Ibn Kathīr’s students (may Allāh have mercy on him) include Imām Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh have mercy on him). Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has footnoted this as: ‘This is incorrect as Imām Shāfi‘ī (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in 150 AH and Imām Ibn Kathīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) passed away in 120 AH. This mistake is also found in Jāmi‘ al-qirā‘at.’

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth delved into the issue of the importance of repose (iṭmi‘nān) and proper composure in the standing posture after rukū‘ (qawma) and in the sitting posture between the two sajdahs (jalsa) in ṣalāt, and also highlighted some du‘ā‘s to help achieve the repose and proper composure in them. Many scholars raised objections to this and suggested that the du‘ā‘ was for voluntary (nafl) prayers only. However, after the issue was raised before other highly regarded scholars it soon became apparent that those scholars agreed with him. The authority and thoroughness of his research can be gauged from this.

A teacher from Jāmi‘ Islāmiyya, Dabhel, wrote a critique of Safīnat al-bulaghā in which he listed the flaws of the book, concluding that it was inappropriate and that Durūs al-balāgha should be taught instead. The author also had reviews written by some senior scholars and after publication sent a copy to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth to ascertain his opinion. After deep consideration Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was unable to agree with the teacher’s research and made his point clear in a letter, a few extracts of which are mentioned here.

All praise is due to Allāh, I am well. Your letter with the accompanying booklet was received. I read your critique of Safīnat al-bulaghā as well as the comments of the distinguished scholars and I also gave it to others to read. I am pleased that you have prepared this critical edition (taṣḥīḥ) and the marginalia (ta‘līq) of Durūs al-balāgha, together with the Urdu commentary. May Allāh bring the work to fruition, and may the scholars and students of prophetic knowledge benefit from it. May it be a means of continuous charity for you.

Unfortunately, I cannot agree with your critique of Safīnat al-bulaghā and despite much thought and a second reading, I am unable to align myself to your position. As for those scholars who reviewed your book, they have done so on the basis of your work and not directly through personal experience. Therefore, they are not fully exposed to the pros and cons of the Safīnat al-bulaghā itself.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth went on to answer every objection in detail and finally concluded:

It seems as though you have gone to great lengths to discourage people [from Safīnat al-bulaghā] and have managed to influence those who have never studied the book, let alone teach it. Allāh is most aware of what is in the hearts of His servants and their intentions. My purpose of writing this
is to defend the older teachers of the Jāmiʿa and other seminaries. I do not claim that this book [Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ] is the best or most beneficial or that it is completely free from flaws. However, it is undoubtedly a useful book with challenging exercises that require effort to solve—and effort reaps benefit. If one were to choose on the basis of ease alone then Durūs al-balāgha may be more appropriate. I do not deny this fact; However, I do reserve my judgement regarding your suggestion that it would be more beneficial [in every way than Safīnat al-bulaghāʾ]. And Allāh knows best.

Your conclusions appear somewhat harsh and seem to suggest that the older teachers were in some way ignorant. Although I am very far from you but since you wrote to me I have made my opinion clear. This I have done while keeping with the maxim, “the one who is consulted has been placed in a position of trust” (al-mustashār muṭaman) in front of me. If you agree with me, it would not be of any [personal] benefit to me, and if you disagree, then it will not cause me any harm. And peace be with you.

Fazlur Rahman
Azaadville, South Africa

In the village of Dabhel a scholar’s (ʿālim) mother passed away. The scholar invited his teachers for a meal and extended his invitation to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth too. Coincidently, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was away at the time so he was unable to attend or meet with him in person. The scholar then invited Shaykh al-Ḥadīth on the second and third day but Shaykh al-Ḥadīth did not oblige, whereas other scholars did. On the third day the scholar brought some food to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s house. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth invited him inside and sat him down. He then opened various books and pointed out to him the ruling stating that feeding people at the home of the deceased is not [from] the Sharīʿa. He then explained that it was for this reason that he had not accepted the invitation.

One day when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was teaching the Hidāya at Jāmiʿa Dabhel a mischievous student decided to test him. The student came to class after copying out a long objection from one of the commentaries and posed the question in class. He began to read from his papers and got stuck in the middle. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth immediately realised that something was amiss and said: ‘Come on! What’s wrong? Has your objection come to an end?’ When the student did not reply, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth himself completed the objection and explained the answer in detail. The student was shocked and those present were amazed at Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s breadth of knowledge.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is of the opinion that invitation for food from the bride’s side of the family is not a sunna. Therefore, when his daughters’ nikāḥ (marriage ceremonies) took place he did not invite anybody nor did he pay much attention to informing everyone. For one of his daughters, his father Shaykh Ḥafīẓ al-Raḥmān (may Allāh protect him) performed the nikāḥ after Maghrib in the Azaadville Mosque. After prayer, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth turned to the audience and said: ‘See, my nose is where it was [i.e., I have not been put to shame] even though I did not invite anyone for a wedding reception.’ He then informed everyone, ‘I am off to shab guzārī33 now’ and proceeded from there. Allāh has protected Shaykh al-Ḥadīth from such mundane and irreligious customs and rituals. On that very day, his father (may Allāh protect him) had an invitation elsewhere and so he went too after the nikāḥ was over. Such simplicity was maintained in all his children’s weddings.

In Dabhel’s central mosque the imām once made a mistake in his recitation during the prayer. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth corrected him. After the prayer another scholar objected and asked him why he had corrected the imām as [in his opinion] there had not been any need to

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32 This was also the opinion of Muḥaddith Kabīr, Muftī Kifāyat Allāh (may Allāh have mercy on them) and many others as according to them there is no evidence for this custom from Ḥadīth or fiqh (see Kifāyat al-muftī 5:156 and al-Maʾāthir Rajab 1416).

33 This refers to spending a night at a tablīghi markaz, usually Friday night, which is the night that follows the day of Thursday. A talk about the importance of daʿwā and related subjects is delivered with the view to increase the concern of people for the Umma (translator).
do so. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth suggested that the matter should be put to the madrassa’s fatwā department to be resolved. After researching the matter, they found that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had been correct.

An individual from England mentioned that somebody in one of the mosques once mentioned a hadith that others had not heard of before. Some of the listeners felt the desire to find a reference for this hadith but were not able to get an answer after consulting many scholars. Coincidently, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was visiting a nearby mosque at the time and when the people asked, he was able to immediately inform them that it was in such and such a volume of al-Tarhīb wa ʾīl-tarhib.

When Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was staying in Dabhel he would be requested to lead the ʿĪd prayers. Even after moving to South Africa, if he happened to travel to Gujarat in the Ramadān holidays, he would be requested to perform the ʿĪd prayers and give a talk. A year before his entire family moved to South Africa, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s eldest daughter had an operation scheduled in a hospital in Surat and so he stayed with her. Two or three days before ʿĪd al-Fiṭr members of the Dabhel community came to him and insisted he lead the ʿĪd prayer for them. Hence, on ʿĪd morning Shaykh al-Ḥadīth travelled in a rickshaw to Dabhel, and gave the talk and led the prayer.

During Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s stay in England one Ramadān, he went with some [tablighi] brothers to meet some of the local Muslim after Maghrib. They went to meet a man who wasn’t in a very good spiritual state and this visit was deemed very important. They therefore decided to go at a time when he would be least busy, so there would be more chance for him to pay attention to what they had to say. They arrived as he was closing his shop. As soon as he saw them he inquired as to which mosque they had come from. On reply he said: ‘I have already donated ten pounds for it.’ They replied that they had come for the sole purpose of speaking about the religion (din) with him and not to collect money for charity. They also introduced Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and mentioned that he was a great shaykh and a scholar of hadith who has come from abroad. The person was a bit taken aback. He invited them in and sat them down with great respect. All praise is due to Allāh that after they had spoken to him in detail, he became very much impressed. He has since changed and now has great enthusiasm for Islam.

It was also in England that someone mentioned to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth that there were some [Muslim] youths who were confused about [their] religion. They always made objections, thereby confusing others too. The people suggested to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth that he should meet them. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth first suggested that the local scholars be taken to meet them, but they replied that none of the scholars were prepared to do so. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth then agreed to meet with them.

In 1998, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth travelled to Maputo, Mozambique where he conducted many programs. He also gathered the local scholars and read from the works of the senior scholars, reminding them of the importance and benefits of da’wa and tablīgh. He made particular reference to the Physician of the Umma Thānawi’s counsels (may Allāh have mercy on him) from his book Da’wat wa tablīgh kē ʾusāl wa ahkām and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī’s (may Allāh have mercy on him) book Tablīgh jamāʿat par iʿtīdāt kē jawābāt. The imām of the famous Bāb al-Salām Mosque there had some objections with regards to the Tabligh Jamāʿat. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth answered his objections so well that the imām became convinced of the work and went to Pakistan (where he was originally from) and spent four months in tablīgh. Some have even reported that he spent a year in tablīgh.

Another scholar also had some objections about the permissibility of eating prawns. He discussed the issue with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth who satisfied him that they were permissible.

One of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s students narrates the following:

In the fifth year of my studies I was honoured to be taught Jalālayn by Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. It was his habit that during the lesson he would regularly ask us questions on Arabic grammar, morphology and other related sciences. If the other students were unable to answer he would ask me and, all praise is due to Allāh, I was able to answer most of the time. Once, we were
studying the final verse of Sūra Hāmīm Sajda in which Allāh says: ‘Nor is your Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His Servants’ (Wa mā Rabbuka bi ḥalāmīn li l-ʿabīdī) [Qur’ān 41:46]. The commentary of the word ḥalām as suggested by the author of the book is dhī ḥalāmin. As was his habit, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth asked why the author had said this. Since no one answered, he asked me, but I replied that I did not know either. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth then said: ‘Can’t you remember the lesson in ʿIlm al-ṣīga regarding fāʾil dhī kadhā?’ With great shame, I replied that I could not recall it. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth instructed me to check it and then let him know. All praise is due to Allāh that since then I have remembered this point well.

Some Well-Known Students of the Shaykh

1. Muftī Ebrahim Desai, Durban, South Africa, Muftī of Natal and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of Camperdown Madrasah
2. Shaykh Ibrahim Patel, Skeerpoort, South Africa
3. Shaykh Ahmad Buzrug, Principal of Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel, India
4. Shaykh Ahmad Sulayman Katani, Durban, South Africa
5. Shaykh Ahmad Derwesh, Azaadville, South Africa
6. Shaykh Ahmad Sabir, Azaadville, South Africa
7. Shaykh Ismail Abdul-Khaliq, Malegaon, India
8. Shaykh Ismail Pandor, Simlak, India
9. Shaykh Ismail Wali, Reunion
10. Shaykh Ashraf Dockrat, Laudium, South Africa
11. Qārī Ismail Essack, Azaadville, South Africa
12. Shaykh Ismail Wali, Reunion
13. Shaykh İmam İsmayl, Dewsbury, England
14. Shaykh İmam İsmayl, Menas, South Africa
15. Shaykh Khalid, son of Shaykh Bayzayd Pandor, Lenasia, South Africa
16. Shaykh Dawud Qasim, Roshnee, South Africa
17. Shaykh Rashid Ahmad Faridi, Тарāj, Gujarat, India
18. Shaykh Riyad Hashim, Laudium, South Africa
20. Shaykh Sulayman Choksi, lecturer of ḥadīth, Darul Uloom Zakariyya, South Africa
21. Qārī Said Nurag, Reunion
22. Muftī Shamsuddin Nur, Karachi, Pakistan
23. Muftī Abbas Bismillah, Muftī of Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel, India
24. Muftī Abdul-Qayyum Kāthyāwāri, Assistant-Muftī, Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel, India
25. Muftī Abdur-Rashid Memi, England
27. Shaykh Abdullah Derwesh, Roshni, Tarbiyat al-Banār, Azaadville, South Africa
28. Muftī Abdus-Samad Desai, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
29. Shaykh Abdullah (Ṣūfi Abdullah) Pandor, South Africa
30. Shaykh Abdur-Rahim Khan, Durban, South Africa
31. Shaykh Abdullah Hafejee, Durban, South Africa
32. Shaykh Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūri, Dewsbury, England
33. Shaykh Muhammad Ilyas Patel, Isipingo Beach, Durban, South Africa
34. Muftī Muhammad Saeed Motara, Muftī of Azaadville, South Africa
35. Shaykh Muhammad Sabir Ifrīqi, South Africa
36. Shaykh Muhammad Gardi, White River, South Africa
37. Muftī Muhammad Yaqub Mīnti, Klerksdorp, South Africa
38. Shaykh Musa Adamjee, Durban, South Africa
39. Shaykh Musa Mīm, South Africa
40. Shaykh Muhammad Yusuf Bhula, California, USA
41. Shaykh Yusuf Darwan, lecturer of ḥadīth, Dewsbury, England
42. A Few Senior Disciples (Khulafāʾ)
43. Shaykh Idris Saloo, Derby, England
44. Shaykh İmam İsmayl, Howick, South Africa
45. Shaykh İsmayl İsmayl, Portlock, South Africa
46. Shaykh İmam İsmayl, Maputo, Mozambique
47. Shaykh Aminud-Dawlah, Dhaka, Bangladesh
48. Shaykh Bilal Ghangat, Reunion
Chapter 3

SHAYKH AL-ḤADĪTH
& HIS CONTEMPORARIES
The acceptance that Allāh has granted Shaykh al-Ḥadith in scholarly circles as well as in the public domain is not in need of elaboration. Suffice to say that his immediate family, the people most familiar with him, always speak highly of him. Furthermore, whenever Shaykh al-Ḥadith visits India, invitations come flooding in to him. Some incidents and impressions of a few scholars have been listed below.34

*Muhaddith Kabir Shaykh Habib al-Rahman Azmi*  
*(may Allāh have mercy on him)*

Perhaps Shaykh al-Ḥadith benefited most from Muhaddith Kabir and his works (may Allāh have mercy on him). His education was under his direct supervision as Shaykh al-Ḥadith’s father, Shaykh Ḥafiz al-Rahmān had a very good relationship with him due to which, Muhaddith Kabir’s attention would always be with him. Even after Shaykh al-Ḥadith graduated, he would consult with his illustrious teacher before undertaking any important task, as has been mentioned before.

34 Some are no longer contemporaries of Shaykh al-Ḥadith as they have passed away but have still been included in the list as they once were (translator).
Whilst Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was teaching at Jāmiʿa Dabhel, the Faculty for Specialisation in Hadith Studies (takḥasṣus fi ’l-ḥadīth) was inaugurated and Muḥaddith Kabīr’s name was nominated for its patronage. Due to their special relationship, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was appointed for the delicate task of approaching him to undertake this role. Correspondence ensued between the two. The syllabus was decided but eventually due to insufficient number of students the faculty did not open.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth mentioned:

Once I was sitting in Muḥaddith Kabīr’s room. Despite the fact that it was a very modest and unfinished dwelling, it was in this very room that his great scholarly endeavours were undertaken. He said to me: ‘One day Shaykh Sulaymān Nadwī (may Allāh have mercy on him) was sitting with me in this room and I suggested to him that he go to the Physician of the Umma (Ḥakīm al-Umma) Thānawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and learn from him, to which he replied: “He is very strict, perhaps I will not be able to endure it.” I then said, “Why don’t you go first and observe? What harm is there in taking a look?” So he went. On his return I met him and asked him about it. He said that he was not strict, rather a man of principle. When he requested to take the pledge (bayā’a) on his hands, the Physician of the Umma Thānawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) first laid the condition that he should retract his opinion of a certain aspect of miʿrāj (nightly ascension) that was mentioned in his book Sinārat al-Nabī  }. He should also openly announce this decision and repent. Shaykh Sulaymān Nadwī (may Allāh have mercy on him) complied35 after which he took the pledge and also received discipleship (khilāfa).”

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35 This announcement was published in the monthly Maʿārif Azamgarh magazine, but his book has not yet been updated.
always manage to solve it. Once Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was reading Anwar Shāh Kashmirī’s *Nayl al-farqadayn*, when he came across a portion of text that he did not understand. He first approached a junior teacher and asked for an explanation, but he was unable to offer one. He then approached a more senior teacher and he too was unable to explain the text. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth then went to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Nu’mānī (may Allāh have mercy on him) who, after just a brief glance, immediately explained it in a very confident manner.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth mentions:

We used to study *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* under Shaykh Nu’mānī (may Allāh have mercy on him). He never kept a book with him. We would bring one for him and indicate where the lesson was from and he would begin to explain the lesson in his informal style. I don’t know if he came prepared or not. Shaykh Manẓūr Nu’mānī and Muftī Ṭafīr al-Dīn are two of his many students. He was a skilful and experienced debater and an energetic, brave man. His expertise extended to all fields and his talents were undeniable.

Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi

He was the former Shaykh al-Ḥadīth at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel.36 Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had a good relationship with him because as a child, he would sometimes spend the night at Shaykh Ayyūb’s house, which happened to be adjacent to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s maternal grandfather’s house. When Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would visit his mother’s family with her in his childhood, he would stay with Shaykh Ayyūb because his maternal grandfather and grandmother had already passed away long before. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s respected mother was like a daughter to Shaykh Ayyūb’s family. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth maintained a very good relationship with his teacher especially whilst at Dabhel. At the time when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was compiling the history of Jāmiʿa Dabhel, Shaykh Ayyūb (may Allāh have mercy on him) also included a brief autobiography.

Numerous people have heard the Jurist of the Umma (Faqīh al-Umma) Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him) often saying that Shaykh Ayyūb (may Allāh have mercy on him) would address Shaykh al-Ḥadīth as ‘Fazl.’ Once, when there was a meeting regarding who should be assigned certain books to teach at the Jāmiʿa, Shaykh Ayyūb (may Allāh have mercy on him) commented, ‘Give it to Fazl, give it to Fazl.’

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muhammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had a good relationship with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muhammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī37 and had taken the pledge (*bayʿa*) with him. Whenever he visited Saharanpur he benefited from the company of his Shaykh (may Allāh have mercy on him). After graduation, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth saved some money and travelled. He visited the Nizamuddin Markaz in Delhi and also travelled to Deoband, Saharanpur, Nānōta and Gangōh. It was during this journey that he took the pledge with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muhammad Zakariyyā (may Allāh have mercy on him). He received a booklet which contained introductory spiritual practices (*maʿmūlāt*) and it was recommended

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36 Shaykh Ayyūb Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) was born in Shawwāl 1319/January 1902 in Mau. He studied in Mau, Balyā and Deoband. His teachers include Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghaffār Mauī, ‘Allāma Ibrāhīm Balyawī, Shaykh Iʿzāz Allī, ‘Allāma Anwar Shāh Kashmirī, ‘Allāma Shabbīr Ahmad ‘Urbmānī and Muftī ‘Azīz al-Rahmān (may Allāh have mercy on them). He also completed the samāʿ (listening) of *Tirmidhī* from Shaykh al-Hind (may Allāh have mercy on him). He passed away on Shawwāl 6, 1404/July 6, 1984. *(Tārīkh Jāmiʿa Dabhel).*

37 Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muhammad Zakariyyā Kāndhlawī’s personality (may Allāh have mercy on him) needs no introduction. He passed away on Rajab 1402/May, 1982 in Madīna Munawwara.
he also maintain a reformatory relationship (ishābi ta'alluq) with the Jurist of the Umma Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him). He then learnt the audible form of dhikr (bi ‘l-jabr) from some of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muhammad Zakariyyā’s senior disciples (khulāfā‘). He once mentioned during a lesson that ‘I saw Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muḥammād Zakariyyā with my own eyes meditating (performing murāqa) by a grave.’ Shaykh al-Ḥadīth also regularly studies Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muhammad Zakariyyā’s works (may Allāh have mercy on him) including Lāmi ‘al-dīrārī, al-Abwāb wa-l-tarājim, Badbh al-majhūd, Jamā’ at-e tablīgh par i’tirādāt kē jawābāt, and Ap bi’tī.

The Jurist of the ‘Umma Muftī Maḥmūd Hasan Gangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

It was on the order of Shaykh Muḥammād Zakariyyā (may Allāh have mercy on him) that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had a reformatory relationship (ishābi ta’alluq) with Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him). Whenever Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) would visit Dabhel or Azaadville, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth would sit in his gatherings and benefit from him. He would also attend his gatherings of dhikr. Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) was once in Randfontein. Häjī Bhai Padia (may Allāh have mercy on him) was there too. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth arrived, greeted him with salām and inquired after his health. He then informed Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) that Muhaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) was very ill. Muftī Maḥmūd made du‘ā’, after which Häjī Bhai Padia (may Allāh have mercy on him) inquired from him whether he had seen Muhaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) whilst a student or after graduation. Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) replied: ‘After graduation, as I never had the opportunity whilst a student.’

In one gathering (where there was some discussion about Madrasa Falāḥ al-Dārayn, Tarkeshwar, India), Muftī Maḥmūd posed the question as to whether it was ‘Tarkesar’ or ‘Tarkeshwar?’ He then went on to explain that both pronunciations were correct. In another gathering a discussion was taking place on al-Tawwībāt li mā fi ḥāshiyat al-Bubārī min al-taṣḥīfāt, which was the work of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jabbār Azmi Mauī (may Allāh have mercy on him) former Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of Mīrqāṭ al-‘Ulūm, Mau. It was suggested that this particular work was actually that of another individual, namely, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jabbār Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) former Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of Madrasa Shāhī Murādābād and former Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of Jāmī‘a Islāmiyya Dabhel.38 Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) clarified the issue by saying that it was not the work of the latter, but that of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jabbār of Mīrqāṭ al-‘Ulūm, who was his teacher. The reason for the confusion was obvious as both personalities shared the same name.

About a year or so before Muftī Maḥmūd passed away, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was travelling in India during which he visited the spiritual retreat (khānqā) in Deoband. When he went to meet Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) and greeted him with salām, Muftī Maḥmūd stood up, and despite his weakness embraced him. He also enquired of his health and immediately made arrangements for food. Some of those present were greatly surprised at the level of honour and respect that Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) had displayed for his guest. They came to the conclusion that this must be a great scholar who had come to visit from abroad.

Muftī Maḥmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) instructed Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in a letter to initiate internal remembrance (dhikr qalbī) in such a manner that ‘with every heartbeat the expression “Allāh, Allāh” should emerge.’ In short, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth had a close relationship

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38 Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jabbār was born in Mau in 1325/1907. His teachers include Shaykh ‘Abd al-Latīf Nu’maynī Mau, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Latīf Sahārānpūrī and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Muhammad Zakariyyā Kāndhawālī (may Allāh have mercy on them) from whom he received discipleship (khulāfā‘). He twice held the role of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth at Jāmī‘a Dabhel. From 1379/1960 he was Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in Murādābād until his death on Sha‘bān 30, 1409/April 7, 1989 (Tārīkh-e Shāhī and Tārīkh-e Dabhel).
with Mufti Mahmud (may Allah have mercy on him) and feelings of love and affection were mutual. During his spiritual retreats (khanaqah), Shaykh al-Hadith often reads from the poetry and writings of Mufti Mahmud (may Allah have mercy on him), together with the works of Shah Hakim Akhtar (may Allah protect him).

**Shah Muhammad Waṣi Allah Ilahabādī (may Allah have mercy on him)**

Whilst Shaykh al-Hadith was a student at Jama‘a Miftah al-Ulūm, Mau, Shaykh Muhammad Waṣi Allah (may Allah have mercy on him) would occasionally visit. Lessons would stop and all would gather in the Shahi Katra Mosque of the Jama‘a where he would give a talk.

Shaykh al-Hadith recalls: ‘When I was a student in the fourth year, my respected father and I went to meet him personally and we requested his du‘ā’s.’ He went on to mention the unique atmosphere of his gatherings, ‘Shah Waṣi Allah’s gatherings were unique. Muhaddith Kabir would sit at his side and in front of him Qari Riyasat Ali and Mufti Nizām al-Dīn Azmi, who were two of his most senior disciples (may Allah have mercy on them). When he experienced a state of spiritual ecstasy (jazb) the gathering would be struck motionless with awe. Furthermore, I used to carefully read the magazine published from Shah Waṣi Allah’s spiritual retreat (khanaqah), entitled Ma‘rifat-e haq. It contained amazing articles which were truly inspirational.’

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39 Shah Waṣi Allah was born in Fatehpur. He graduated from Darul Uloom Deoband and then took the pledge with Shaykh Ashraf ‘Ali Thanaawi (may Allah have mercy upon him) and was also given discipleship (khilafah). He later resided in Mumbai, and it was from there that he embarked on a journey to the Two Sacred Sanctuaries (Haramayn Sharīfayn) but passed away en-route. His body was handed over to the sea (Hayat Abū ‘l-Ma‘āthir).

40 Shaykh Muhammad Ahmad was born in 1323/1905 in Phulpur, in the Partābagharh district in UP. He was a disciple of Shah Badr ‘Ali of Rai Bereilly and also a disciple of Shah Fadl al-Rahmān Ganjurādabādī (may Allah have mercy on them). He passed away in Rabi‘ Thānī 1412/October 1991 (Hayat Abī ‘l-Ma‘āthir and al-Rashād, Ṣafar 1421).

41 Shaykh Muhammad ‘Umar Pālanpūrī was born in Rabi‘ Thānī 1348/September 1929 in Mumbai. He was educated at Mazāhir al-Ulūm and Deoband from where he
ʿUmar would show great respect for Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and would make him sit in front of him when delivering a talk, saying to him, ‘If I say anything which you object to, please inform me.’

Once Shaykh al-Ḥadīth heard him mention in a talk at Nizamuddin Markaz that a man in Heaven will have two million five hundred thousand heavenly maidens (ḥūrs). Shaykh al-Ḥadīth requested him for a reference to this. Shaykh Muḥammad ʿUmar (may Allāh have mercy on him) cited Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥāba and immediately instructed his sons to search for the relevant text, but they were unable to find it at the time. When they later discovered it, they forwarded the reference to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth.

On another occasion Shaykh Muḥammad ʿUmar Pālanpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) came to Azaadville and was delivering a talk. When he discovered Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was present in the gathering he immediately stood up, greeted him and made him sit close to him and commented, ‘Upon hearing your name I don’t know where my mind went!’

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rashīd Ḥusaynī Mauī (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was very close to Shaykh Ḥusaynī (may Allāh have mercy on him). This was primarily because Shaykh al-Ḥadīth studied Sunan al-Tirmidhī under him. His method of teaching this work involved a copy of Tuḥfat al-ḥawādīḥ. All the points he observed in his preparatory studies would be noted down in this copy and he would teach the lesson from it. Interestingly, when Shaykh al-Ḥadīth requested this very precious copy from his teacher, he gave it to him. Keeping in mind that many others had asked for this but had not been honoured, this act alone demonstrates the deep love he had for Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. Despite all the effort and time spent in annotating the book, he was happy to gift it to his prized student. This precious copy still remains in Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s safe hands. Furthermore, Shaykh Ḥusaynī (may Allāh have mercy on him) also wrote biographies of Imām Muslim and Imām Tirmidhī (may Allāh have mercy on them). Shaykh al-Ḥadīth copied these valuable works and they are also with him today.

Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd Nuʿmānī, Karachi (may Allāh have mercy on him)

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was most impressed with the writings of Shaykh Muhammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd Nuʿmānī. There was some correspondence between the two and a long-distance relationship ensued. When Shaykh al-Ḥadīth later visited Pakistan, the two met and engaged in lengthy discussions, after which Shaykh Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Rashīd gifted some of his publications to him. When Shaykh al-Ḥadīth wrote Muqaddima-e Bukhārī and Muqaddima-e Tirmidhī, he sent them to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rashīd to be edited. The shaykh read the works thoroughly, made corrections in a few places and added some footnotes and sent it back. This was all included in the published editions.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rashīd was so impressed with Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s works that he wrote to him, requesting him to embark upon the task of completing Maʿārif al-Sunan and Amanī l-ḥāʾūr. Further details of this request will be discussed later, Allāh willing. Unfortunately, due to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s numerous commitments he has been unable to fulfil this task to date. ‘Perhaps Allāh will bring about thereafter a new situation’ (Qurʾān 65:1).

graduated in 1375/1956. He passed away on Muḥarram 14, 1418/May 21, 1997 (Ṣawāniḥ Maulānā Muḥammad ʿUmar).
Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn Maʿrūfī
(may Allāh protect him)

Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (may Allāh protect him) is a teacher of ḥadīth and is responsible for the ḥadīth specialization course at Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm, Saharanpur, India. Whilst a student Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was examined on numerous occasions by Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, who had remarked several times: ‘From all the students of Muḥaddith Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) that I have tested, I only ever anticipated Molwī Fazlur Rahman as his able deputy’ (meaning, he would do justice to his knowledge through his services to it). Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (may Allāh protect him) mentioned this in front of his other students.

Shaykh Zuhayr ibn Nāṣir al-Nāṣir
(may Allāh protect him)

Shaykh Zuhayr resides in Madīna Munawwara. He is a Ḥanafī and is inclined to taṣawwuf. Some of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s students went to Madīna Munawwara to further their studies in ḥadīth with him and other scholars there. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was introduced to Shaykh Zuhayr through his students and when he learnt that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was visiting Madīna Munawwara during hajj, he quickly made arrangements to meet him. Upon meeting, they were both delighted and talked for a while. Some of Shaykh Zuhayr’s students read the Risālat al-ʿawā’il and received authorisation in ḥadīth from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth. When this was done then Shaykh Zuhayr himself request authorisation. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth responded to Shaykh Zuhayr by suggesting that an exchange of ijāzas would be more appropriate.42 This is an indication of his humility and the respect he had for the shaykh.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth & His Contemporaries

An Amazing Dream

The meeting between Shaykh Zuhayr and Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was by a pillar in Masjid Zuhayr behind the ṣuffa (raised platform) between Maghrib and ‘Ishā’. At that time, Shaykh Zuhayr’s son was asleep at home [in Madīna Munawwara] and he had a dream in which he saw the Prophet ﷺ saying to him: ‘You are asleep and my gathering is taking place in my mosque!’ He awoke quickly, made wuḍū’, rushed to the mosque directly to the pillar he had seen in his dream. When he arrived, he noticed it was there that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was granting authorizations in ḥadīth to those present. He informed his father of the dream who, in turn, conveyed the glad tidings to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth who immediately began to cry. Shaykh Zuhayr was so delighted and impressed at meeting Shaykh al-Ḥadīth that he later invited him home for a meal and requested him to teach Nawawi’s al-Arbaʿīn. Shaykh Zuhayr obtained written authorization for himself, his son-in-law and his daughter, and later praised Shaykh al-Ḥadīth in the following words, ‘The like of this shaykh is rare, most rare.’ He went on and mentioned to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s students who were present, ‘Hold firmly to him…firstly, because of his faith (iḥān), then because of his love of the Prophet ﷺ, then because of his knowledge.’

Shaykh Zuhayr has written many books, including a marginalia (taʿlīqāt) on Musnad Ahmad. He gifted copies of these to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and on the opening page of his al-Qawl al-mufīd fī ‘l-dhabb ‘an Jāmiʿ al-masānīd he wrote:

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. All praise is due Allāh, Lord of the worlds, and salutations upon our master Muḥammad ﷺ, and all his Family and Companions ﷺ. This is a gift presented to Our liege lord Mawlānā Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi, the great scholar of ḥadīth. May Allāh protect him with goodness and well-being. In request of his duʿā’s and guidance.

42 This is known as tadbīj according the terminology of the Ḥadīth scholars (translator).
Other Shaykhs

There are many other scholars with whom Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has enjoyed a good relationship: Shaykh As’ad Allāh, rector (nāẓim) of Mazāhir al-ʿUlūm, Saharanpur, whose company he sat in; Muftī ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Lājpūrī senior mufti of Gujarat, India, who gifted him some volumes of his famous ṵāfāwā Ṭabīnīyya; Shaykh Muhammad ʿAlī Ajmērī; Ḥājī Bhāi Padia, amīr of the tablīgh jamāʿat in South Africa (may Allāh have mercy on them); Shaykh Niʿmat Allāh Maʿrūfī, senior lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband; Muftī Muḥammad Saʿīd Pālanpūrī, senior lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband; Ḥāfīz Patel, amīr of tablīgh jamāʿat in the UK (may Allāh protect them).
Correspondence from some contemporary scholars is reproduced below, from which Shaykh al-Ḥadīth lofty status can be ascertained.

_Shāh Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar_
_(may Allāh protect him)_

Shāh Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar (may Allāh protect him) is the spiritual guide of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and displays great affection for him as can be seen from the following correspondence.

_Letter 1_

My respected, beloved _Mawlānā_ Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him)

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. Your lovely letter has been received, heart and mind are delighted.

Blessed it is when a loved one meets his beloved

Such was the feeling between Laylā and Majnūn

It is hoped from your sincerity that you will soon be honoured with a great nearness to Allāh. I make wholehearted _du‘ā_’ everyday that Allāh
Praise From Other Scholars

Most High bestow on this lowly one and all you beloved ones that level of faith (īmān) and closeness of the true and faithful friends of Allāh (awliyāʾ sīdīqīn), after which the status of prophethood begins. The door of prophethood is closed, but the doors to the upper echelons of the awliyāʾ sīdīqīn are open. It was after this realisation that the Physician of the Umma and Reviver of the Faith Thānawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) took an oath and then recited this couplet:

The cloud of mercy still scatters precious pearls
For the wine and winery of divine love still stand

Your correspondence is a substitute for sitting in the company of the spiritual guide (murshid). Therefore, every month, writing a letter of this type is to ascend the stages of the Path (sulūk).

Keep walking the path you tread
for you are moving in the right direction

Mawlānā Husayn Bhayyat phoned with glad tidings of you; he said that your talks are such that it is as though I am giving them. May Allāh increase you in abundance and bless you. My soul has multiplied a hundred fold upon hearing this delightful news. How wonderful it is that the Knower of Allāh Mawlānā Rūmī has said:

The more you remain before me, the greater is my fortune
My soul multiplies a hundred fold when I meet you

Meeting the beloved of the religion (dīn) is a strong means of religious progress, and upon meeting you my soul really has multiplied a hundred fold.

The time for your gathering is an appropriate one. May Allāh Most High spread and complete the outpouring (fayḍ) of your spiritual retreat (khīnā) and your efforts in the field of spiritual reformation. If Allāh wills, my trip to Reunion is anticipated to be after fifteenth August.

Our first spiritual guide, Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Phūlpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) used to say that for the completion of the path to Allāh, love for one’s spiritual guide is the key to all stages; ‘O Allāh, verily I ask you for your love, and the love of those who love you, and love of that deed which will give me your love.’ Therefore, loving those in love with Allāh is a strong means and connection toward attaining the love of Allāh and [the performance of] good deeds.

With peace and honour,

Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar
(may Allāh Most High forgive him)

Letter 2

My respected, beloved Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him).

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

Mawlānā! Your beloved letter has delighted the heart and caused the soul to experience a state of ecstasy. Congratulations are due for your loving zeal.

I have tested the far-sighted mind
Thereafter, I had driven myself insane

Those loving poems which you have asked of me at the multazam are indicative of your association (nisba) and the heartache (dard-e dil) which has been conferred upon you. I now have strong hope, Allāh willing, that the fragrance of the love of Allāh will spread throughout the world from you. May Allāh Most High bestow upon you the honour of His acceptance.

May Allāh spread and complete the outpouring (fayḍ) of your spiritual retreat (khīnā) and your efforts in the field of spiritual reformation. If Allāh wills, my trip to Reunion is anticipated to be after fifteenth August.

Our first spiritual guide, Shāh ʿAbd al-Ghanī Phūlpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) used to say that for the completion of the path to Allāh, love for one’s spiritual guide is the key to all stages; ‘O Allāh, verily I ask you for your love, and the love of those who love you, and love of that deed which will give me your love.’ Therefore, loving those in love with Allāh is a strong means and connection toward attaining the love of Allāh and [the performance of] good deeds.

With peace and honour,

Ḥakīm Muḥammad Akhtar
(may Allāh Most High forgive him)
Praise From Other Scholars

Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi

Letter 3
My respected, beloved Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him)

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

I have received your letter and accompanying publications. I am sending this reply through Dr. Muḥammad 'Umar. I was delighted to receive your letter, and your books are a cause for great joy. May Allāh Most High through His mercy grant you acceptance and make it a means of continuous charity, Āmīn. May He also bestow upon me and all my beloved ones and their associates external and internal progress and fulfil every good intention. I request you to make ḏu'āʾ for blessings in my health and age so that I live until one hundred and twenty! I also request you and all my beloved ones to pray for my health and wellbeing so that I may deliver services to the religion in the best way, and pray that it is accepted from me in a like manner.

With peace and honour,

Muḥammad Akhtar
(may Allāh Most High forgive him)

Letter 4
In the name of Allāh, Most High.

My respected, beloved, Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi, muḥaddith of Darul Uloom Azaadville.

May Allāh increase your knowledge and inspire you toward further good works. Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

Your letter was received and from the details of your journey, your external and internal progress has delighted the heart. May Allāh increase you in abundance and bless you. I make ḏu'āʾ for further such progress. Your mention of my commentary of the verse ‘jāhadū fīnā’ [Qurān 26:29] from Tafsīr Rūḥ al-maʿānī was most pleasing. This connection through knowledge is a sign of love for one’s spiritual guide. Our spiritual guide, Shāh ‘Abd al-Ghanī Phūlpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) has mentioned, ‘Love for one’s shaykh is the key to all stages of the spiritual path.’ I pray to Allāh that He grant you progress in attaining closeness to Him and the manifestations (tajalliyāt) of the Divine proximity, and may it be always amply, continuous, abundant and evident. Āmīn. May He also take us all to the highest stages of the awliyāʾ ‘iddiqīn, which is attainable only through His grace, without us meriting it.

Your journeys to Bayt al-Muqaddas and visiting the graves of the Prophets, great Companions ﷺ and noble awliyāʾ (may Allāh have mercy on them) have caused my heart great pleasure and delight. May Allāh accept all our journeys and your journeys and all our efforts and all your efforts with His grace. Your ḏu’āʾ for me that I live until one hundred and twenty in good health and wellbeing, with the guidance for good deeds has pleased the heart, and your hearty love is cause for great joy. May Allāh Most High reward you in the best of manners and accept your ḏuʿāʾs.

With peace and honour,
Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi

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In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Respected Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi,

May Allāh inspire you and I to that which He loves and is pleased with. Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. All praise is due to Allāh that your letter dated Muḥarram 21, 1412 [August 2, 1991] has been gladly received together with your introductions to Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Sunan al-Tirmidhī, which coincidently, arrived whilst the quarterly examinations were taking place. I therefore reviewed both works personally. You have referenced them well and although my reading was in haste, I highlighted places I felt were in need of correction. I looked at the introduction to Sunan al-Tirmidhī in one sitting and the introduction to Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in two.

The Ḥanafī scholars should also focus on their [Ḥanafī] works. To focus all one’s abilities on books of [juridical] dispute seems inappropriate. Shaykh Abū ʾl-Wafā’ has made great efforts in this regard. There are countless Ḥanafī works in Istanbul. You should travel there if you have the financial means. While only four volumes of Imām Ẓahāwī’s Musḥkal al-ʾāthār have been published, the complete set is to be found there. Efforts should be made to edit (taṣḥīḥ) the manuscripts and bring the remaining volumes into print. I recommend you complete Shaykh Yusuf Dīlahwī’s Amānī l-ʾaḥbār, or undertake the referencing (taḥbīr) of Musnad Khawārizmī or any other appropriate work. You are still young; I don’t know whether an academic institute can be established there or not. If you get the opportunity on your return journey please visit Karachi and, Allāh willing, we shall talk about this in more detail.

The questions which you attached in your letter dated Dhū l-Ḥijja 11 have been answered below:

1. Concerning the section of Maʿārif al-Sunan (6:292), Bāb mā jāʾā fīʾl-ṭīb ʿinda al-ḥalāl gahl al-zyāna, your observation regarding Shaykh Binnōrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) is correct. He has erred and the mistake is not that of Shaykh Mubārakpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him). I have also checked Muwatta’ Imām Muhammad for this.

2. When the purpose of istinjāʿ is purification, the obligation (wujūb) of it is then obvious. This obligation is only in the case where the impurity has exceeded its place of exit (makhraj), whereas in normal circumstances it is an emphasized (muʿakkada) sunna whether with water or stones. I was unable to fully comprehend your question and what exactly you meant.

3. Your observation is correct; Nukat was compiled before Sharb al-Nukhba.

An extract of a letter from the famous ʿālim of Mau and author of numerous books Shaykh Saʿīd al-Ḥaq Qāsmī (may Allāh protect him) to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth states:

I have sent you three books and the fourth, Tadbīkā ʿUlāmaʾ-ā Mau is currently being prepared and you have also been included in it. I have attached some questions and hope you will reply in full. Your respected father and his accomplishments have also been listed in detail.

He writes in another letter:

Dear Respected Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him)
Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. I hope you are well. A few days ago I received your letter via some friends, and reading it left no end to my happiness. I thank you profusely for the kind words of affection. Having read your letter, the thought immediately came to mind that I should request you to write a review for my forthcoming book. I would be most grateful if you oblige. A few others have also forwarded their reviews, but yours is most necessary, without which the book would be incomplete. I hope that upon receipt of this letter, you will put pen to paper and take the trouble of forwarding it to me at your earliest convenience.

And peace be with you,

Saʿīd al-Haq Qāsmī
(may Allāh Most High forgive him)
Madani Dār al-Qurʿān

Shaykh Marghūb Ṭāḥā Madānī Lājpūrī
(may Allāh protect him)

Letter 1
To Respected Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him)
From Marghūb Ṭāḥā Madānī Lājpūrī, Dewsbury

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.

I hope you are well. All praise is due to Allāh, I am well. The purpose of my writing is to bring to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s attention that with the grace and mercy of Allāh I had the opportunity of performing ḥajj this year. Whilst in Madīna Munawwara the thought crossed my mind on numerous occasions that I should request you to complete Shaykh Yūsuf Binnōrī’s work (may Allāh have mercy on him) Maʿārif al-Sunan and Shaykh Muḥammad Yūsuf Kāndhlawī’s work (may Allāh have mercy on him), Amānī ʿl-ḥabār, to be entitled ‘Taḵmila Maʿārif al-Sunan’ and ‘Taḵmila Amānī ʿl-ḥabār’ respectively. Initially, I requested Muftī Taqī Usmani (may Allāh protect him) to complete Maʿārif al-Sunan. However, the death of Shaykh Subḥān Mahmūd (may Allāh have mercy on him) has made this task difficult as Muftī Taqī has since then been given the task of teaching the whole of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, instead of just Sunan al-Tirmidhī. This coupled with his demanding travelling schedule means that it is very difficult for him to fulfil this task.

It was hoped from Shaykh Ḥabīb Allāh Mukhtar Shahīd (may Allāh have mercy on him) of Binnōrī Town that he would complete Maʿārif al-Sunan. Unfortunately, it was not meant to be. Currently, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth probably has the responsibility of teaching both Sunan al-Tirmidhī and [Sharḥ al-Maʿānī of] Ṭāḥāwī, but it is not far fetched that Allāh accept you for this great service to the blessed field of ḥadīth and allow the works of these two pious individuals to be completed on your hands. It is greatly hoped that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth will consider this proposal. I say without exaggeration that perhaps there is none more suited to complete this challenge than yourself. In an age where lack of enthusiasm and effort is the norm, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has been bestowed with a great zeal for ḥadīth. The efforts through which your introductions to the various books of ḥadīth have been ordered strongly suggest that the depth and breadth of your knowledge, coupled with your passion for this field, leave you most suited to this task.

And peace be with you.

In request of your duʿāʾs,

Marghūb Ṭāḥā Madānī Lājpūrī
Dewsbury

Letter 2 (An Extract)

I am currently occupied in ordering grandfather’s fatāwā43 (may Allāh have mercy on him). Two volumes are complete and i’m currently working on

43 This is a reference to the famous Fatāwā Raḥīmiyya by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahīm
Praise From Other Scholars

Shaykh Fazlur Rahman Azmi

the third. Volume two comprises of kitāb al-ṭabarā and kitāb al-ṣalāt, in which I have included four of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s (Urdu) treatises: (1) Qawma awr jalsa mē iṭmi’nān kā wujūb awr un dōnō mē adhkār kā thubūt (The obligation of composure in qawma and jalsa and the proof of the supplications in them both), (2) Imāma, Tōpi, Kurtā (Turban, Topee, Kurta), (3) Šahīb awr munāśib tar masāfat-e qāṣr (The correct and appropriate distance that necessitates shortening of prayer), (4) Ḥadīn ki namāz shahrē kē bāhir maydān mē parhnā sunnat hē? (Is it sunna to perform the two ‘Īd prayers outside of the town?).

I hope that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth agrees to their inclusion. I searched for Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s treatise on Shab-e barāʾat, but could not find it. If he would be kind enough to forward it, then I would like to include it in the appropriate volume.

Muftī Aḥmad Dewlā
(may Allāh protect him)

In his foreword on page four of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s publication, Namāz kī pābandī awr uskī ḥifāẓat (Punctuality in prayer and safeguarding it), Muftī Aḥmad Dewlā44 writes:

The author of this book, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him) is the son of my teacher. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was a teacher of ḥadīth at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel and, praise be to Allāh, owing to his God-given talent and abilities, he was accepted wholly as a point of reference during his tenure there. Having rendered great and lofty services at Jāmiʿa Dabhel, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is currently the most senior lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Azaadville, South Africa. Together with his current services to ḥadīth, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is also doing praiseworthy work in the fields of tablīgh and īṣlāḥ (spiritual rectification). If it is said that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has conceived this publication on the fundamental needs of the people of daʾwa and tablīgh, gathering the relevant rulings of prayer, then it would not be untrue.

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is also the distinguished disciple (khalīfa) of Shāh Ḥakīm Akhtar (may Allāh protect him) and plays an indispensable role for many in the line of spiritual rectification and guidance (irshād). In Africa also, he carries the torch of spiritual rectification held by the elders. May Allāh accept all Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s efforts for the Muslim Umma, whether academic or spiritual, in the field of daʾwa or tarbiya (education), and may He grant him progress which increases by the day. Āmīn.

A Poem in Praise of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth by Shaykh Taha Karaan, Cape Town, South Africa

Lājpūrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) who is the grandfather of Shaykh Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī (may Allāh protect him) (translator).

44 Muftī Aḥmad Dewlā is from Jāmiʿa ‘Ulām al-Qurʾān, Jambusar, Bharuj, India
O my people, rise to his defence
And bear witness to his great station
And remove the ya’ of attribution from his surname
And say, ‘The greatest of all the people of knowledge’

C

Should you wish to remember a scholar of your time65
Thoroughly robust in knowledge, then begin with Azmi
He took charge of hadith and became the Shaykh of its Shaykhs
While his heart remained attached to pious devotion
Their spite towards him increased, and he increased in forbearance
Allāhu Akbar! That is the sign of sublime character

Shaykh Rashid Ahmad Pānchbhāiyā
(may Allāh protect him)

In the name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.66
Dear Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi (may Allāh protect him), Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, Darul Uloom Azaadville,

Peace be with you and the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.
I hope you are well. I present this humble book in your service in the hope that Shaykh al-Ḥadīth will write and forward his valuable impressions. Allāh has employed this lowly one for researching, referencing and numbering the Durūs al-balāgha and which, with all praise to Allāh, has now been published. The first edition has run out and the new edition that includes some additions is under preparation. Its Urdu commentary, with all praise to Allāh, has also been prepared and will soon be published. I will send both these books to you soon, if Allāh

45 The last three lines have been adapted from a poem in praise of ʿAlā al-Dīn al-Qānawī.
46 Shaykh Rashid Ahmad Pānchbhāiyā is a lecturer at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Dabhel.
so wills. Please pray to Allāh that he eases and quickens all the stages of publication and grant it general acceptance. Āmīn.

Though I haven’t officially received the honour of being a student of yours I did refer to the notebooks of some of your students, whilst teaching Safīnat al-bulaghāʿ, and was delighted. After reading these beneficial notes, the depth of your ingenuity was imprinted in my mind and heart. In this regard, I am indebted to you. I therefore thank you in abundance and am most grateful.

Requesting your pious ḍuʿāʾs. Peace be with you.

Your servant
Rashīd Aḥmad Pānchbhāiyā

A Letter from a Student

One of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s students went to Darul Uloom Deoband to listen in on the ḥadīth lectures (ṣamāʿa) after graduating from Azaadville. An extract from his letter addressed to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is as follows:

In this lesson we sit and listen, but the enjoyment that we gained with you is not found here. The well researched lesson and the interest you generated cannot be found elsewhere. We thank you because you did so much for us by creating the consciousness of the science of ḥadīth and other fields of knowledge, thus inculcating its importance and value in us. Due to our weaknesses we were unable to benefit from you fully but we are thankful for the little we did.

We make ḍuʿāʾ to Allāh that He removes your illness and grant you good health so that you can be of service to even more people and so that people can derive benefit from you. May Allāh protect you completely from the jealousy of the jealous ones.

Muftī Muhammad Fārūq Mirathi
(may Allāh protect him)

He writes:

From amongst the scholars is Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi who teaches Şāhiḥ al-Bukhārī and who previously was a teacher of ḥadīth at Jāmiʿa Islāmiyya, Tālim al-Dīn, Dabhel. He is worthy of mention here and of whom the term “mountain of knowledge” is most appropriate (Ifrīqiyā awr khidmār-e Faqīh al-Umma 1:161).

Shaykh Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī
(may Allāh protect him)

He writes:

Once I accompanied Mawlānā Fazlur Rahman Azmi in London to visit Mawlānā Abrār Aḥmad Dhubiyā, the Shaykh al-Ḥadīth of [Falāḥ al-Dārayn] Tarkeshwar (may Allāh have mercy on him). After shaking hands and embracing, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth mentioned to him that he was planning to go for ʿumrā and requested him to make ḍuʿāʾ that his visa would be granted. Mawlānā Abrār Aḥmad (may Allāh have mercy on him) replied, ‘If the faḍl (grace) of al-Raḥmān (Most Merciful) is with Faḍl al-Raḥmān, then what is the need to worry about a visa?’ (Ḥayāt-e Abrār pg. 229).

47 Muftī Muhammad Fārūq is a senior disciple of Muftī Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ghangōhī (may Allāh have mercy on him).
Chapter 5

C

PUBLICATIONS
Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s publications, both short and long, number around forty. Here is a list of them. They are in Urdu unless otherwise indicated.

Books

1. *Sīrat-e Imām Abū Yūsuf* (A biography of Imām Abū Yūsuf).


This was first published in India and then in Pakistan.

5. *Qawma awr jalsa mē īṭmi’nān kā wujāb awr in dōnō mē adbkār kā ṭhubūt* (The obligation of composure in *qawma* and *jalsa* and the proof of the supplications in them both) (Urdu and English).
This book is exemplary and the extent of acceptance which Allāh has granted it can be gauged from Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s own words:

All praise is due to Allāh, as I’m sure you must have noticed, this book is a summary of the research conducted by Imām Ṭaḥāwī, ‘Allāma Ibn ʿĀbidīn al-Shāmī, Shaykh al-Hind, ‘Allāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī and ‘Allāma Shabbīr Ahmad ʿUthmānī (may Allāh have mercy on them). When this book was prepared the first thing my father (may Allāh protect him) did was take it to Muḥaddith Kabīr (may Allāh have mercy on him) to approve, and he did so wholeheartedly. Then, when the book was presented to Muftī Taqi Usmani for review (may Allāh protect him) he gave his full support and wrote: “Due to the fact that it includes the research of ‘Allāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī (may Allāh have mercy on him), I have also been inclined to support this view for some time now.” Muftī Taqi Usmani (may Allāh have mercy on him) published his [Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s] work in his magazine al-Balāgh of Karachi (see al-Balāgh, Jumādā Thānīya 1414/December 1993).48 Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Shāmzai (may Allāh have mercy on him) (an eminent scholar of Jāmiʿa al-ʿUlūm al-Islāmiyya, Binnōri Town, Karachi) wrote a review of the book and expressed his support. After this, the book was published in Pakistan, with two editions in India. The Head Muftī of Darul Uloom Deoband, Muftī Niẓām al-Dīn Azmi (may Allāh have mercy on him) also wrote a review of it.49 Once Mawlānā Saʿīd Ahmad Khān (may Allāh have mercy on him), the head of Tablígh Jamāʿat in the Hijāz (Saudi Arabia), visited South Africa. I presented this book to him in a gathering of scholars and he was delighted and said: “In this issue the ghayr muqallidīn are better than us.” He would take the book with him wherever he travelled and would encourage the imāms especially to lead their prayer with composure.

A year ago Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn [of Pakistan] (may Allāh have mercy on him) came to the Durban ijtimāʿ and I presented the book to him. He then read a portion of this book to the scholars, in particular, to those who were from India. Then, when he was in Maputo, Mozambique for another ijtimāʿ he also read the book to the scholars and commented that the research was excellent. A reliable scholar also mentioned to me that Muftī Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (may Allāh have mercy on him) also raised the issue at Raiwind Markaz, adding that people from all walks of life were making this mistake. A student of mine who is currently spending one year in tablígh mentioned this incident to me.

When I gave this book to Mawlānā Ibrāhīm Dewlawī (may Allāh protect him) he read it and we discussed the issue for a while. He mentioned that it would be practiced upon at the Nizamuddin Markaz. All praise is due to Allāh that the qawma and jalsa there are now done with repose.

The book was also sent to Mawlānā Jamīl (may Allāh protect him) of Raiwind [Markaz] who leads the prayers there and delivers the talks in the absence of Ḥājī ʿAbd al-Wāḥhāb (may Allāh protect him). Some students of mine who were there wrote to me saying that he performs qawma and jalsa with composure and allows enough time for the appropriate duʿāʾs to be recited. They also added that he mentions this point in his talks.

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48 Muftī Taqi was not asked to publish the article by the author but decided to do so himself, suggesting that he was impressed with the research and wished that others would educate themselves and put it into practice. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth was not even aware that it was to be published in Al-Balāgh until after its publication. I [Muftī Atiqur Rahman Azmi] have also heard some very pious individuals praising the work in Madīna Munawwara. In 1424 AH, Muftī Taqi visited South Africa and said at the time that he had studied this issue before, together with ‘Allama Kashmīrī’s opinion, but did not focus on it too much at the time. However, after reading Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s booklet on the issue he became more inclined toward it and began practice on it. He added that the reward for this would go to Shaykh al-Ḥadīth.

49 He concluded with: ‘Al-salāmu ʿalaykum wa ʿalā man ladaykum’, Peace be upon you and upon those that are with you (i.e., agree with you).
and encourages it. When he was asked on the issue by some students he replied, “Since I have received the book, I drive the point home in my talks with regard to the importance of this issue.” 14 If the beloved ones of tablīgh have adopted this sunna then, if Allāh wills, it will spread to all four corners of the world.

Another student of mine published a second edition in Pakistan. Therefore, since the first English edition is also being prepared, I have felt the need to pen a few thoughts and feelings on the issue and to ultimately thank Allāh in abundance for the acceptance He has granted this book.

May Allāh reward our senior scholars of Deoband, whose hearts Allāh had bestowed with the enthusiasm to set the Umma right. Some refuted Ārya Samāj, others Shiism, others Mawdūdism, and some Radākhānism. ‘Allāma Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī (may Allāh have mercy on him) robustly refuted Qādiyānism and worked tirelessly for thirty years in proving that the Hanafi fiqh is in accordance with the Hadith. Allāh opened his heart to the importance of this issue as well [i.e., repose in the postures of prayer] and he continuously raised the issue in his lessons on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Sunan al-Tirmidhī. 15 The efforts of our pious were not in vain and if Allāh wills this sunna will live. May Allāh give us the good fortune of reviving each and every sunna and may He make this revival a means of our salvation. Āmin.

FāzluR Rahmān Azmi
Sha’bān 4, 1421 | November 1, 2000

6. Hadiyyat al-darārī li ṣāḥib Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (Muqaddima-e Bukhārī)

This book is an introduction to Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and is a collection of valuable notes dealing with all the important topics that are discussed before commencing the book itself. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rashtī Ṣū‘mānī (may Allāh have mercy on him) read through this and the introduction to Sunan al-Tirmidhī thoroughly. He added marginalia in a few places and these have been included in the book. The Shaykh al-Hadith of Darul Uloom Deoband, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Haq Azmī’s (may Allāh protect him) comments about this book [Introduction to Bukhārī] were: ‘This book is beneficial to students and teachers alike and is a testament to Shaykh al-Hadith’s knowledge of ḥadīth.’

Shaykh Ni’mat Allāh Ma’rūfī (may Allāh protect him) lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband writes:

The proof of Shaykh al-Hadith’s deeply rooted knowledge and sincerity in action can be ascertained from the fact that he has written explicitly: “We simply collate and gather the crumbs (of knowledge) from the predecessors (muqaddimān) and taking our begging bowls, we wander around their servings of knowledge and research.” Shaykh al-Hadith has taken the essential points and has skilfully presented them in an ordered fashion, supplying us with so much information that this book suffices and one does not need to look elsewhere. Some matters are such that to find all details about them in one book is difficult. [For instance,] the hadiths of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, are they mufīd al-yaqīn [i.e., do they
give the benefit of conviction]? In this regard he has gathered evidence from both sides and coupled them with the research of senior scholars (may Allāh have mercy on them) in a most adept manner. Furthermore, he has maintained reverence and respect for both parties involved to the extent that every reader will be assured of the research of the senior scholars of Deoband.

Muftī Niżām al-Dīn Shāmzai of Pakistan (may Allāh have mercy on him) writes:

This book is in print here as we speak and if Allāh wills the teachers and students will benefit from the well-researched discussions in the book. I’m afraid I am unable to write in detail due to my illness, but Allāh willing the excellence of this book will become clear from the tributes which will no doubt ensue from the people of knowledge.

7. **Hadiyyat al-aḥwādhi li ṭālib Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī (Muqaddima-e Tirmidhī).**

This introduction to **Sunan al-Tirmidhī** was described by Muftī Saʿīd Ahmad Pālanpūrī (may Allāh protect him) with the following acclamation:

I have read passages of the book from numerous places and was delighted. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth has collected some excellent material. I took particular liking to two discussions: the first is a detailed narrative on the terminology employed by Imām Tirmidhī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and the second is the addition of brief biographies of the various narrators. . . .

Shaykh Riyāsat ʿAlī Bijnōrī a lecturer of ḥadīth at Darul Uloom Deoband writes:

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi (muḥaddith of Madrasah Arabia Islamia Azaadvil, South Africa) writes authoritatively on the lives and works of the outstanding and distinguished ḥadīth scholars during the era of ḥadīth compilation. In this regard, some of his books have already been published, with many scholars and those in the teaching profession holding them in high esteem.

He then says:

One excellent aspect of the book is that all the information on Imām Tirmidhī has been compiled together, along with the valuable opinions of the illustrious scholars regarding his personality and works. Along with this, the book is structured in a very praiseworthy way . . . .

8. **Tanwir al-ḥāwī fī tadhkirat al-Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī (Muqaddima-e Ṭaḥāwī).**

This book, a biography of Imām Ṭaḥāwī (may Allāh have mercy on him) and an introduction to his **Sharḥ al-Maʿānī** was described by Muftī Saʿīd Pālanpūrī in the following manner:

Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Fazlur Rahman Azmi has written on this subject. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth is a great scholar and an accepted teacher who has collected excellent material in his book. I have had a quick glance at the draft version and will study and benefit from it in detail after publication. For the accuracy of the book and its contents, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth’s name alone is a guarantee. . . .

9. **Namāz ki pābandī awr uski ḥifẓat** (Punctuality in prayer and safeguarding it) (Urdu and English).

Muftī Aḥmad Dewlā, Principal of Jāmiʿa ʿUlūm al-Qur‘ān, Jambusar, Bharuj, writes:

This book, on the blessed subject of prayer has been written keeping in
mind the lofty purpose of its rectification and execution. All praise is due to Allāh that this subject has been treated in such a comprehensive manner that it is similar to filling an ocean into a cup.

Shaykh Ismā‘īl Bharkodrawī (may Allāh protect him) also writes:

In short, this book with regard to prayer is brief yet comprehensive and is of great benefit. Every Muslim male and female should study this book in order to perform prayer in the correct manner, according to the Sunna.

There is a need to discuss the correct šbar‘ī (legal) position of issues of this type and others that have been adopted by the Muslims. Let alone the public, some scholars insist on some of these [unfounded practices]. It is commendable that you have explicitly written on the subject, although the author was forthright, the point highlighted was totally in order.

All praise is due to Allāh that after the publication of this book many places have implemented the congregation of “Īd prayer outside of the town.

Muftī Taqi Usmani (may Allāh protect him) also agreed on the issue covered in this work. In his spiritual discourses (Iṣlāḥī khuṭbāt), he mentioned that the fast [of the fifteenth of Sha‘bān] is not sunna and for this reason the classical jurists in their books have not mentioned this particular fast in their lists of the sunna fasts.

In this book the shaykh establishes that the correct masāfāt-e qaṣr is 89 km/55 miles.

Muhammadawī and ‘Āshūrā’ (Muhammad and ‘Āshūrā’) (Urdu and English).

All praise is due to Allāh that after the publication of this book many places have implemented the congregation of “Īd prayer outside of the town.

Khuṭbāt-e baḥjat al-widā’ (Farewell sermons of the Prophet ﷺ) with translation and brief commentary (Urdu and English).

Muḥarram awr ‘Ashūrā’ (Muḥarram and ‘Ashūrā’) (Urdu and English).

Imāmat sē muta’allaq kuch abam awr darārī hidāyāt (Some important advices regarding leading prayer).

Dhārī, mūnch, bāl kē masā’īl (Rulings of the beard, moustache and other hair).
Originally an Arabic article on the beard written at the command of Shaykh Ĥāshim Bukhārī Gujarātī Muḥājīr Madanī (may Allāh have mercy on him). Shaykh Ĥāshim also took responsibility for its publication but passed away a few days after it was completed. Later, it was published in Urdu and English with some additions.

20. Ṭubah al-talābā’ Sharb Sāfīnāt al-bulaghā’ (Gift to the students: A Commentary of Sāfīnāt al-bulaghā’).

This commentary was written by two scholars from the UK, Shaykh Marghūb Aḥmad Lājpūrī and Shaykh Thāmīr al-Dīn Qāsmī. Shaykh al-Ḥadīth edited the entire book and wrote an introduction. This is the first commentary of Sāfīnāt al-bulaghā’ [in Urdu] and is short but wide-ranging.


This has been published by Madrasah Arabia Islamia Azaadville and is currently part of the syllabus at the institute.

22 and 23. Two works regarding the composure of the postures in prayer.

Urdu translations regarding the composure of the postures in prayer (the ruku’, sajda, qawma and jalsa) of the Arabic work of ‘Allāma Barkawī (may Allāh have mercy on him) entitled Mu’addil al-ṣalāt (Rectifier of prayer) and that of Mullā ‘Alī Qārī (may Allāh have mercy on him).

24. Kiyā tablīghi kām darūrī hē? (Is the work of tabligh necessary?).


Articles

1. Afdal al-dhikr fi ithubbát al-rak’atayn ba’d al-witr (The best reminder of the proof of two rak’as of prayer after witr).

2. Tahlīḥ târghib al-mutalāqiyayn fī il-muṣāfahā bi il-yadayn (A summary encouraging those who meet with both hands).

3. An Urdu translation of Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Dihlawī’s Mā yajibu ḥifzubhū li il-nāzīr, outlining the different classifications of ḥadīth books.

4. Tāḥqīq-e ḥadīth ‘Awwalu ma khalqa Allāhu al-qalam’ (Research of the hadith: ‘The first of the creation of Allāh was the pen’).

5. Dalā’il tark ra’f-e yadayn (Proof of not raising one’s hands during prayer) (in chart form).

6. Qirā’at kharṣ al-imām (Reciting Qur‘ān behind the imām).

7. Waḍ’ al-yadayn tāḥt al-surra (Placing both hands below the navel in prayer).

8. Arba’ rak’at ba’d al-‘Ishā’ (Four rak’as after ‘Ishā’).

9. Ḥadīths al-ṣalāt qabl al-Jumu’ā (Hadiths pertaining to prayer before the Friday prayer).

10. Waqt al-Zuhr, awwaluwa wa akhiruha (The time of Zuhr: beginning and end).

11. Mahr-e fāṭimī awr mahr-e azwāj-e Nabi ﷺ ki maqādir (The dowry of Fāṭima and the wives of the Prophet ﷺ).

12. Qabrastān mē murdō kēliyē hāt uthā kar du’ā’ māngnē kā thubūt (The evidence for raising hands and praying for the deceased at the graveyard).

13. Khulāṣa-e şāhib wa munāsib tar masāfat-e qaṣr (A summary of the
correct and most appropriate distance that necessitates shortening of prayer).


15. Mas’ala-e taqdir (The issue of predestination).

All these articles have been published together in one volume entitled Majmu’-e maqalat (A compilation of treatises). The Arabic and Urdu articles are separate. Shaykh al-Hadith’s oft-quoted poems [in Arabic, Urdu and Persian] have also been compiled and published under the title Ganjina asb’ar-e ma’rifat (A treasure of poems in recognition of the Divine). Some works have been written during travels to the Holy Sanctuaries, others in mosques, another blessed place or at a blessed time, for example, during the night vigil (tabajjud) time.

May Allâh send salutations on the best of His creation, Muhammad ﷺ his family and all his Companions ﷺ. All praise is due to Allâh, Lord of the Worlds.

Atiqur Rahman Azmi
Azaadville, South Africa
Rajab 1422 | September 2001

Glossary

Ärya Samaj. A reformist movement within Hinduism that retains traditional Hindu beliefs in reincarnation and karma, but rejects worship of idols and argues that Hinduism is, in essence, monotheistic.

Akbar (pl. akâbir). Older, more senior in rank. Often used in reference to senior Muslim scholars.

ʿAllama. Great learned scholar.

ʿAlim (pl. ʿulamâ’). Scholar, one who has been thoroughly trained and received teaching authorizations in the major Islamic sciences.

Anjuman. Assembly.

ʿAshara. Literally ‘ten.’ It is sometimes used to refer to the ten modes of Qur’anic recitation, i.e., qirâ’at ʿashara.

Balâgha. Arabic Rhetoric.

Bay’a. Oath of allegiance.

Barelwis. Adherents to the Barîlwi school of thought.

Dard-e dil. Heartache.

Dawrat al-Hadith. Final year of the ʿAlim Course in which the six main books of hadith are studied.

Deobandis. Adherents to the Deoband school of thought.

Dhikr (pl. adhkar). Remembrance of Allâh.
**Dīn.** Religion (Islam).

**Duʿāʾ.** Supplication.

**Fajr.** Prayer performed between true dawn and sunrise.

**Fayd.** Outpouring or blessing.

**Gasht.** Literally ‘walk’ or ‘stroll.’ When used in reference to Tablīgh Jamāʿat it denotes going out to meet fellow Muslims.

**Ghayr muqallid (pl. ghayr muqallidīn).** One who does not adhere to any school of thought in Islamic law.

**Ḥadr.** Applying the laws of Qurʾānic recitation (tajwīd) under the supervision of a qualified Qārī.

**Ḥafiz.** One who has memorized the Qurʾān. Also used for a ḥadīth master, one who has memorized one hundred thousand ḥadīths.

**Ḥajj.** Major pilgrimage.

**Ḥadīth.** Proposition or juridical ruling of Islamic law.

**Ḥalāl.** Permissible according to Islamic law.

**Ḥanafī.** Follower of the Ḥanafī school of thought.

**Ijrāʾ.** Applying the laws of the Qirāʾat Sabʿa (or otherwise) to one’s recitation.

**Ijtimāʿ.** Gathering

**ʿIlm.** Sacred knowledge.

**Imām.** Derived from the Arabic word ‘to lead,’ imām is widely used for the leader of the prayer or the leader of school of thought in Islamic law.

**Iqāma.** Call for the commencement of prayer.

**Iṣlāḥī taʿalluq.** Reformatory relationship.

**Iṭmiʿnān.** Composure, particularly in ṣalāt for the purposes of this book.

**Jalsa.** Gathering or sitting position between two sajdas (prostrations).

**Jamaat-e-Islami.** An Islamic political party in Pakistan founded by Abul Ala Mawdudi.

**Jamaʿat.** Group or congregation (for prayer etc.). See also Tablīgh Jamāʿat. **Jamaʿat khāna.** Temporary mosque or prayer area.

**Jumuʿa.** Friday or Friday prayer.

**Juzz.** (pl. ajzāʾ). Portion (esp. of the Qurʾān).

**Kalima.** Literally ‘word,’ also used in reference to testimony of faith.

**Khāngā.** A place for spiritual retreat and reformation under the supervision of a spiritual guide.

**Māmul (pl. māmulāt).** Habitual practices.

**Maktab.** Children’s madrasa or Qurʾānic school.

**Maʾāla (pl. māʿālū).** Proposition or juridical ruling of Islamic law.

**Masjid.** Mosque.

**Matn.** Text

**Mawdūdī.** Follower of Abul Ala Mawdudi.

**Mawlānā.** Literally ‘our leader,’ used as a title of respect.

**Molwi.** Graduates from a seminary.

**Muḥaddith (pl. muḥaddithūn).** A scholar of ḥadīth.

**Mulāqāt.** Meetings.

**Munshi.** This refers to the art or an expert in the art of writing and calligraphy.

**Muẓāfā.** Person performing prayer behind an imām in congregation.

**Nafl.** Supererogatory practice.

**Naḥw.** Arabic grammar.

**Nāẓim.** Rector.

**Nāẓira.** Recitation of the Qurʾān whilst looking inside.

**Nikāḥ.** Marriage.

**Nisba.** Connection.

**Qārī (pl. qurrāʾ).** One who recites, esp. the Qurʾān. Also used for an expert in the various forms of Qurʾānic recitation.

**Qawma.** Standing position after rukūʿ.
Qibla. The direction of the Ka’ba in Makka towards which Muslims face in prayer.

Qirā’āt. Qur’ānic recitation.

Raf’ al-Yadayn. Literally ‘raising of the two hands.’ Used in reference to raising of the hands before changing postures in prayer.

Radákhanīs. Followers of Ahmad Raḍā Khān. See Bareluwīs.

Sab’a. Literally ‘seven.’ It is sometimes used to refer to the ten modes of Qur’ānic recitation, i.e., qirā’āt sab’a.

Ṣadaqa Jāriya. Perpetual charity.

Ṣāhib. Sir. Used as a title of respect in Urdu or Persian.

Ṣamā’a. Listening (esp. of hadith transmissions).

Ṣanad (pl. isnād). Chain of transmission.

Ṣarf. Arabic morphology.

Ṣayyid/Sayyiduna. Liegelord/Our Liegelord. Title of respect.

Shaykh (pl. mashā’ikb). Spiritual or religious leader.

Shērwānī. A long coat-like garment worn in South Asia.


Ṣuffa. Raised platform in the Prophet’s Mosque in Madina Munawwara.

Ṣulūk. Spiritual path.

Sunna. Precedent and custom; the actions and practices of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. The second source of Islamic sacred knowledge called hadiths. Also used for acts of the category between wājib and mustaḥab in Islamic law (fiqh).

Ta’līq (pl. ta’liqāt). Explanatory remark or marginalia.

Ta’wīdh. An amulet, often hung around the neck or placed in the home in which verses of the Qur’ān are written as a means of attaining blessing or protection from evil spirits.

Tablīgh Jamā’at. Renowned Islamic missionary movement.


Tarāwīḥ. Twenty rak‘as of sunna prayer performed after the fard of ‘Ishā’ during the month of Ramadān.

Taṣawwuf. Islamic Spirituality.

Tawfīq. Guidance or inspiration.

Tazkiyat Al-Nafs. Purification of the self.

‘Umra. Minor pilgrimage.

Ustādh (pl. asātīdha) Teacher or Lecturer (esp. in Islamic sciences).

Wajd. A state of spiritual ecstasy.
Appendix

Map containing places regularly referred to in this book.
Other English publications by
MADRASAH DA’WATUL HAQ

Šalāt- Is Yours Correct?
The Sunna of the Muṣallā (ʿĪdgāḥ)
Farewell Sermon of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ
Muftī Mahmūd Hasan Gangōhī and the Tablígh Jamāʿat
Shab-e Barāʾat: The Fifteenth of Shaʿbān in the Light of
the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth
Daʿwa, Taʿlim and Tazkiya: Three Tasks of Rasūl Allāh ﷺ
Laws of the Beard and Hair in the Light of the Aḥādīth
Muḥarram and ʿAshūrā: Virtues and Laws
Turban, Kurta, Topee
Qawma and Jalsa