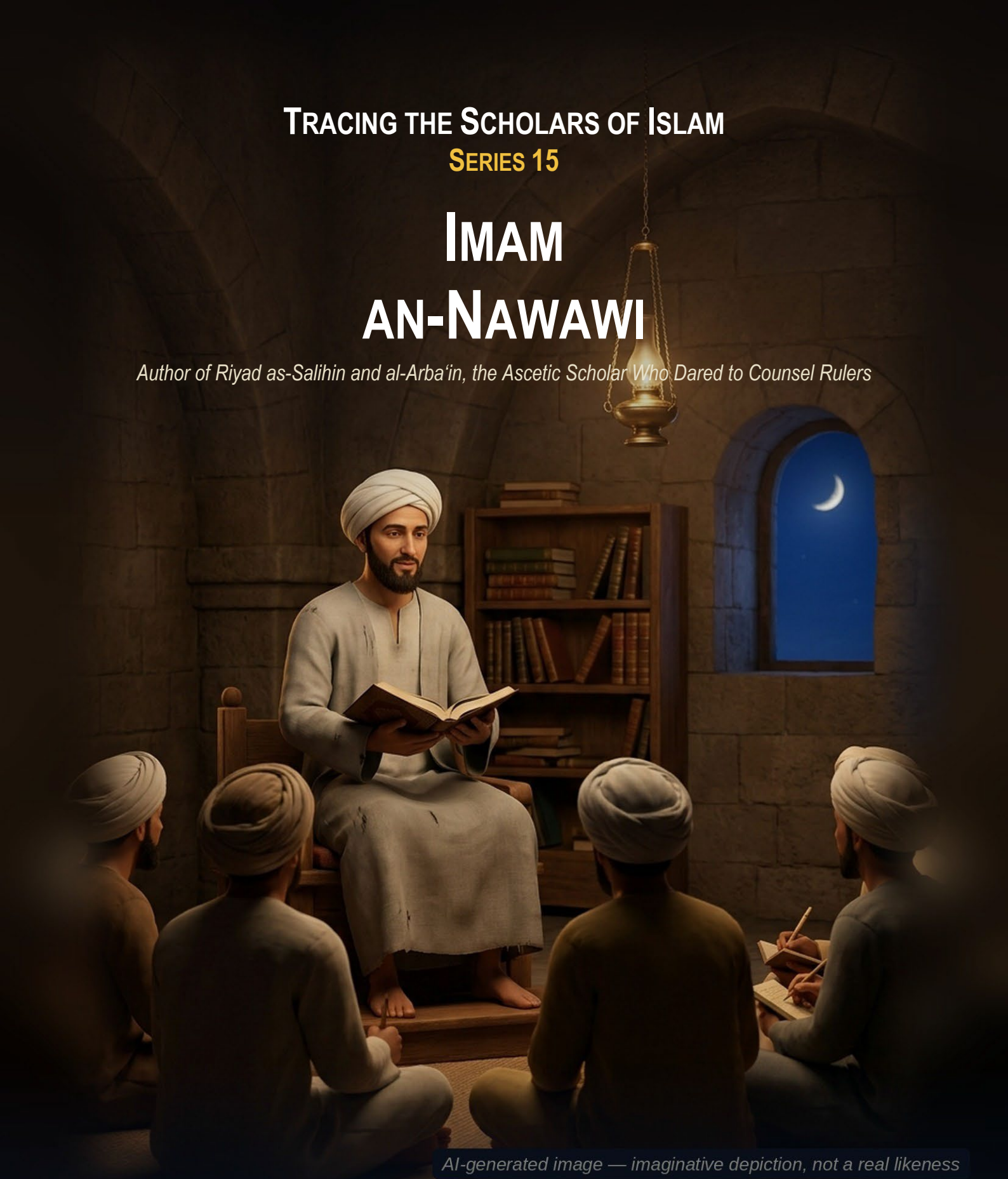
TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 15

IMAM AN-NAWAWI

Author of Riyad as-Salihin and al-Arba'in, the Ascetic Scholar Who Dared to Counsel Rulers



AI-generated image — imaginative depiction, not a real likeness

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

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IMAM AN-NAWAWI

Author of Riyad as-Salihin and al-Arba'in, the Ascetic Scholar Who Dared to Counsel Rulers

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ وَٱلدَّوَآبِّ وَٱلْأَنْعَٰمِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَٰنُهُۥ كَذَٰلِكَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى ٱللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ٱلْعُلَمَٰٓؤُا۟ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ

"And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colors similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving."

SURAH FATIR 35:28

HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who made those with knowledge the servants who fear Him most. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This fifteenth book of Tracing the Scholars of Islam tells the story of the imam whose books are read in almost every mosque in the Malay world — Riyad as-Salihin and the Forty Hadith. May his story make us aware of the value of time, and may this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook, in a **3D** illustration style, is an **image generated by artificial intelligence (AI)** — an ***imaginative depiction, not a real likeness*** of Imam an-Nawawi. This label is also printed on the cover. This time he is shown **from the front**, **teaching a small study circle**.

He is **slim** and dressed **very plainly** — for he was known for his asceticism. In his hands is **an open book of Hadith**, and behind him **a bookshelf** — a symbol of his works such as ***Riyad as-Salihin*** and ***Sharh Sahih Muslim***.

The **students** are seen only from behind. The setting is the stone hall of **Dar al-Hadith al-Ashrafiyyah in Damascus** at night, lit by **a hanging lamp**, with **a crescent moon** in the window.

Two gold lines at the bottom frame the author's name, while the image runs in full to the edge of the page.

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CONTENTS

IMAM AN-NAWAWI — *Introducing the scholar*

1. ONLY THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE TRULY FEAR ALLAH — *Fatir 35:28*

2. WHO WAS IMAM AN-NAWAWI? — *Name, childhood, Damascus; timeline*

3. SYRIA IN THE AGE OF AN-NAWAWI — *Mongols, Mamluks and Crusaders*

4. FROM NAWA TO DAMASCUS — *Family, the journey for knowledge and the first Hajj*

5. TEACHERS AND STUDENTS — *Teachers and students; Dar al-Hadith*

6. TWELVE LESSONS A DAY — *Sahih al-Bukhari 6412*

7. THE ETIQUETTE OF THE STUDENT ACCORDING TO AN-NAWAWI — *Introduction to al-Majmu'*

8. A DAY WITH IMAM AN-NAWAWI — *History note*

9. THE RELIGION IS SINCERE COUNSEL — *Ali 'Imran 3:104; Sahih Muslim 55; history note*

10. OPPOSING AN UNJUST TAX — *Sahih Muslim 1827; history note*

11. BOOKS THAT OUTLIVE THEIR AUTHOR — *Sahih Muslim 2674*

12. AL-MINHAJ: COMMENTARY ON SAHIH MUSLIM — *Sahih Muslim 2699*

13. AL-ARBA'IN AN-NAWAWIYYAH — *Sahih al-Bukhari 1; table of themes*

14. RIYAD AS-SALIHIN: GARDENS OF THE RIGHTEOUS — *Sahih al-Bukhari 10*

15. AL-ADHKAR: REVIVING THE HEART WITH REMEMBRANCE — *Sahih al-Bukhari 6407*

16. AT-TIBYAN: ETIQUETTE WITH THE QUR'AN — *Sahih Muslim 804*

17. MINHAJ AT-TALIBIN AND FIQH IN THE MALAY WORLD — *Diagram of the chain of fiqh books*

18. AN-NAWAWI IN THE SURAU AND PONDOK OF THE ARCHIPELAGO — *His legacy in the Malay world*

19. ASCETICISM AND AN EARLY DEATH — *History note; the last farewell*

20. ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES — *Assessing the reports*

21. LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

REFERENCES

SUPPORT & DONATIONS

Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = history note (reports from the books of history and biography); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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IMAM AN-NAWAWI

The fifteenth book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** tells the story of ***Imam Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Sharaf an-Nawawi*** رحمه الله, author of ***Riyad as-Salihin***, ***al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyyah*** (the Forty Hadith), ***al-Adhkar*** and ***Sharh Sahih Muslim***. His books are read in almost every mosque in the Malay world.

What is remarkable: he ***died at about the age of 45***, yet left dozens of works that have been read for more than seven hundred years.

Note: The translation of Qur'anic verses in this eBook is that of Sahih International. The grading of each Hadith is stated in the Hadith box. Information from books of history and biography is placed in the brown "History Note" boxes. A cover image that shows the scholar's face is an AI-generated image and is marked as such.

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ONLY THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE TRULY FEAR ALLAH

SURAH FATIR 35:28

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ وَٱلدَّوَآبِّ وَٱلۡأَنۡعَٰمِ مُخۡتَلِفٌ أَلۡوَٰنُهُۥ كَذَٰلِكَۗ إِنَّمَا يَخۡشَى ٱللَّهَ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِ ٱلۡعُلَمَٰٓؤُاْۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٞ ٢٨

And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colors similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/35:28

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 35:28

Allah says: ***"Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge"***. True knowledge produces ***fear of Allah***, not arrogance. The life of Imam an-Nawawi is an example of knowledge bearing the fruit of piety and asceticism. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 35:28.

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WHO WAS IMAM AN-NAWAWI?

His full name was ***Yahya ibn Sharaf ibn Murri al-Hizami an-Nawawi***, with the kunyah ***Abu Zakariyya***. He was ***born in Muharram 631 AH*** in ***Nawa***, a village in the region of Hauran (today in southern Syria). The name "an-Nawawi" refers to that village.

HISTORY NOTE: THE CHILD WHO RAN FROM PLAY

The books of biography report that when he was about ten years old, other children forced him to play, but he ***ran away in tears*** and went on reading the Qur'an. His father placed him in a shop, but he was ***busier reading the Qur'an than trading***.

A scholar, ***Shaykh Yasin ibn Yusuf***, saw him and told his teacher: "This boy is hoped to become ***the most learned and most ascetic man of his time***."

In ***649 AH***, at the age of 18, he came to ***Damascus*** and lived in the Rawahiyyah College. In 665 AH, he was appointed ***head of Dar al-Hadith al-Ashrafiyyah***, the famous school of Hadith, until the end of his life.

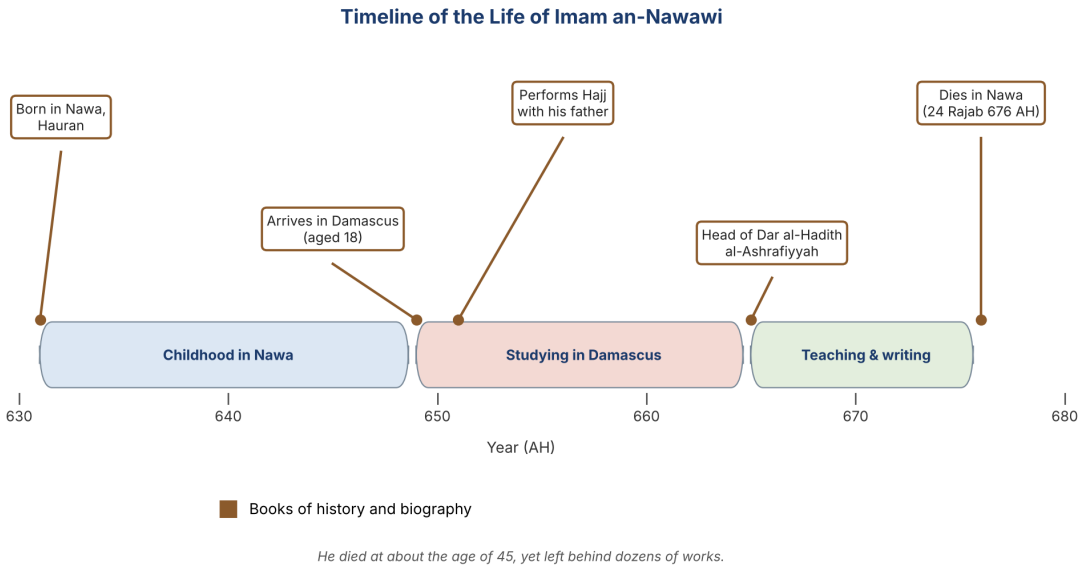


Figure 1: Timeline of the life of Imam an-Nawawi.

THE VERDICTS OF THE SCHOLARS

Adh-Dhahabi described him: "***Shaykh al-Islam, the hafiz, the jurist, the ascetic***… he was a leader in knowledge, asceticism and scrupulousness." **Taj ad-Din as-Subki** said he was ***the teacher of the generations after him*** and Allah's proof upon the scholars who came later. **As-Suyuti** wrote a whole book on his life, ***al-Minhaj as-Sawi***.

HISTORY NOTE: A TITLE HE DISLIKED

Imam an-Nawawi is known by the title ***Muhyi ad-Din*** (Reviver of the Religion). Yet as-Sakhawi relates that he himself ***disliked*** being called by it, out of ***humility*** — Allah's religion lives by Allah's preservation, not by any one man.

This matches his asceticism: he did not seek fame or praise, yet Allah raised his name across the world. This is a biographical report (not a Hadith).

REFERENCES:

As-Sakhawi, al-Manhal al-'Adhb ar-Rawi fi Tarjamat Qutb al-Awliya' an-Nawawi; as-Suyuti, al-Minhaj as-Sawi.

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SYRIA IN THE AGE OF AN-NAWAWI

Imam an-Nawawi lived in one of the ***most turbulent*** periods of Islamic history. To understand his courage and asceticism, we need to see the world around him.

THE THREAT FROM THE EAST: THE MONGOLS

In ***656 AH***, the Mongol army under ***Hulagu*** destroyed ***Baghdad***, killing the 'Abbasid caliph and hundreds of thousands of its people. Two years later, in ***658 AH***, they entered ***Syria*** — including Damascus, the city where an-Nawawi studied and taught. The Muslims truly felt ***on the brink of destruction***.

VICTORY AT 'AYN JALUT

In Ramadan ***658 AH***, the ***Mamluk*** army from Egypt defeated the Mongols at the ***Battle of 'Ayn Jalut*** in Palestine — the Mongols' first great defeat. One of its commanders, ***az-Zahir Baybars***, later became sultan — and he was the ruler who often received ***letters of advice*** from Imam an-Nawawi.

CRUSADERS ON THE COAST

At the same time, ***Crusader states*** still held several coastal cities of Syria, such as Acre and Tripoli. Sultan Baybars spent many years fighting them. War needed much money — the background to the ***unjust tax*** that Imam an-Nawawi opposed, as told in chapter 10.

A CITY OF LEARNING AMID WAR

Though surrounded by war, ***Damascus*** remained a city of learning, with dozens of ***madrasahs***, ***houses of Hadith*** and ***mosques***, including the great ***Umayyad Mosque***. Scholars fleeing the Mongols from Iraq also came to Syria and Egypt. In this setting a village youth from Nawa built himself into a great imam.

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FROM NAWA TO DAMASCUS

Imam an-Nawawi's father, ***Sharaf ibn Murri***, was a ***shopkeeper*** in the village of Nawa known for his piety. He saw his son's love for the Qur'an and allowed him to leave the village to seek knowledge — a sacrifice for a father who needed his son's help in the shop.

> **HISTORY NOTE: TWO YEARS WITHOUT LYING DOWN**
>
> His student ***Ibn al-'Attar*** quotes an-Nawawi himself: when he arrived in Damascus in ***649 AH***, he lived in the ***Rawahiyyah Madrasah*** and ate only the ***bread provided by the madrasah***.
>
> He said that for ***about two years*** he ***did not lay his side on the ground*** to sleep comfortably — he only dozed when overcome by tiredness, so absorbed was he in seeking knowledge. This is a biographical report (not a Hadith).
>
> **REFERENCES:**
> Ibn al-'Attar, Tuhfat at-Talibin fi Tarjamat al-Imam an-Nawawi.

HAJJ WITH HIS FATHER

In ***651 AH***, he performed ***Hajj with his father***. On the way he was struck by a severe ***fever***, yet remained patient and never stopped remembering Allah. His father later said that throughout the journey his son never once complained. After Hajj he returned to Damascus and ***devoted his whole life*** to knowledge.

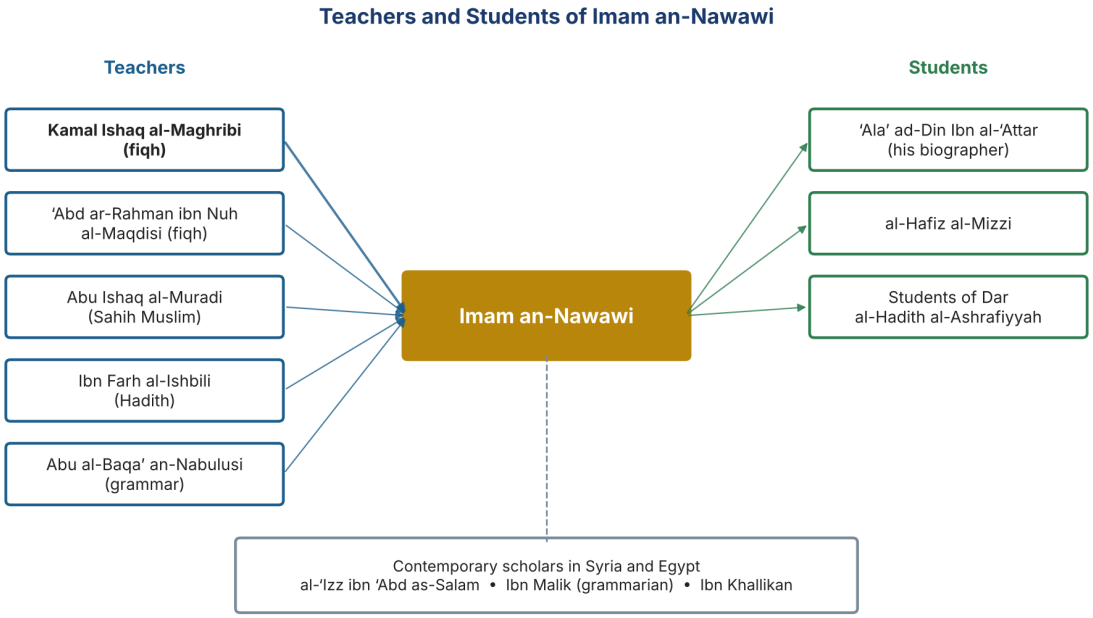
A LESSON

Behind every great scholar are ***parents who sacrifice***. An-Nawawi's father let his son go, and Allah made that son an imam of the Ummah. Parents today can also be "an-Nawawi's father" by ***supporting their children in seeking religious knowledge***.

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TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Imam an-Nawawi learned from many teachers in Damascus. His foremost fiqh teacher was ***Kamal Ishaq ibn Ahmad al-Maghribi***, who loved him dearly and made him his teaching assistant. He read ***Sahih Muslim*** to Abu Ishaq al-Muradi, and learned Hadith and the science of narrators from scholars such as Ibn Farh al-Ishbili.



Simplified diagram based on Tuhfat at-Talibin (Ibn al-'Attar) and Tabaqat ash-Shafi'iyyah al-Kubra (as-Subki).

Figure 2: Teachers and students of Imam an-Nawawi.

HEAD OF DAR AL-HADITH AL-ASHRAFIYYAH

In ***665 AH***, at about 34, he was appointed head of ***Dar al-Hadith al-Ashrafiyyah*** — one of the most prestigious Hadith institutions in Damascus. It is reported that he ***took no salary*** from the post for himself, living on what his father sent from Nawa.

A LOYAL STUDENT

His closest student, ***'Ala' ad-Din Ibn al-'Attar***, was nicknamed ***"the Abridgement of an-Nawawi"*** because he so resembled his teacher. He wrote the biography ***Tuhfat at-Talibin***, the main source of the stories in this eBook. The great Hadith master ***al-Hafiz al-Mizzi*** (teacher of Ibn Kathir — Series 12) also studied with and befriended an-Nawawi.

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TWELVE LESSONS A DAY

Imam an-Nawawi himself related that he attended ***twelve lessons every day*** with his teachers: fiqh, Hadith, Sahih Muslim, grammar, morphology, legal theory, the science of narrators, theology and more. He memorised the book ***at-Tanbih*** in ***four and a half months***.

HISTORY NOTE: A STUDENT'S DAILY TIMETABLE

Ibn al-'Attar lists those twelve lessons: ***two lessons*** in al-Wasit (fiqh), one in al-Muhadhdhab (fiqh), one in al-Jam' bayn as-Sahihayn (Hadith), one in Sahih Muslim, one in al-Luma' (grammar), one in Islah al-Mantiq (language), one in morphology, one in legal theory, one in the names of narrators, and one in theology.

An-Nawawi added that he ***wrote notes*** on every lesson — clarifying the difficult and correcting readings — and Allah ***blessed his time***. This is a biographical report (not a Hadith).

REFERENCES:

Ibn al-'Attar, Tuhfat at-Talibin.

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He understood the value of time, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6412

حَدَّثَنَا الْمَكِّيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ ـ هُوَ ابْنُ أَبِي هِنْدٍ ـ عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ، الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ». قَالَ عَبَّاسٌ الْعَنْبَرِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا صَفْوَانُ بْنُ عِيسَى، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي هِنْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِثْلَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما said: The Prophet ﷺ said: **“There are two blessings in which many people are deceived: health and free time.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Makki ibn Ibrahim, from ‘Abdullah ibn Sa‘id ibn Abi Hind, from his father Sa‘id ibn Abi Hind, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening of Hearts, Hadith No. 6412.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6412

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Many people ***lose out*** by wasting their health and free time. Imam an-Nawawi used both for knowledge and worship, so that in a short life he produced works that continue to benefit.

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THE ETIQUETTE OF THE STUDENT ACCORDING TO AN-NAWAWI

In the introduction to his great fiqh work, ***al-Majmu‘ Sharh al-Muhadhdhab***, Imam an-Nawawi wrote a long chapter on ***the etiquette of teachers and students***. Among his counsels, still relevant today:

1. Purify your intention. Seeking knowledge is worship; do not seek it to boast, argue or chase rank.

2. Cleanse the heart of envy, arrogance and self-admiration, for knowledge is a light that does not enter a corrupted heart.

3. Use your youth. Do not delay, for busyness increases with age.

4. Respect your teacher, even if younger or less famous. Do not walk ahead of him or interrupt him.

5. Be patient with a teacher’s sternness, and do not be shy to ask about what you do not understand.

6. Revise and take notes, and teach others, for teaching strengthens memory.

7. Do not be arrogant with knowledge, and say “Allah knows best” about what you do not know.

HISTORY NOTE: A TEACHER WHO PRACTISED HIS ADVICE

Ibn al-‘Attar relates that an-Nawawi himself ***practised*** each of these manners. He never wasted time; even while walking in the streets he ***revised his lessons***. He was also deeply humble with his teachers, though he later became more famous than they. This is a biographical report (not a Hadith).

REFERENCES:
An-Nawawi, Introduction to al-Majmu‘ Sharh al-Muhadhdhab; Ibn al-‘Attar, Tuhfat at-Talibin.

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A DAY WITH IMAM AN-NAWAWI

What was daily life like for a scholar who produced so many works in so short a life? His students recorded some remarkable glimpses.

HISTORY NOTE: ONE MEAL A DAY

Ibn al-'Attar mentions that Imam an-Nawawi ***ate only once a day***, after the 'Isha' prayer, and ***drank once*** at the time of suhur. He did not eat the fruits of Damascus, fearing they came from ***endowment land*** that was improperly managed.

His time was divided between ***teaching, writing, worship and giving counsel***. At night he prayed and remembered Allah much, and when he dozed off he would wake and resume writing or reading. These are biographical reports (not Hadith) illustrating his ***asceticism and dedication***.

REFERENCES:

Ibn al-'Attar, Tuhfat at-Talibin; adh-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam.

A LESSON FOR US

We are not obliged to live as strictly as an-Nawawi, but we can take his ***spirit***: guarding our food from what is ***doubtful***, valuing every hour, and arranging our day around ***worship and knowledge***. Start small: a fixed time each day to read a book of knowledge.

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THE RELIGION IS SINCERE COUNSEL

Imam an-Nawawi was not only learned, but also ***brave in speaking the truth***. The Qur'an commands:

SURAH ALI 'IMRAN 3:104

وَلۡتَكُن مِّنكُمۡ أُمَّةٞ يَدۡعُونَ إِلَى ٱلۡخَيۡرِ وَيَأۡمُرُونَ بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِ وَيَنۡهَوۡنَ عَنِ ٱلۡمُنكَرِۚ وَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡمُفۡلِحُونَ ١٠٤

And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:104

The following Hadith — which he included in al-Arba'in as the seventh Hadith — was his guide:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 55 — THE 7TH HADITH OF AL-ARBA'IN AN-NAWAWIYYAH

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبَّادٍ الْمَكِّيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، قَالَ قُلْتُ لِسُهَيْلٍ إِنَّ عَمْرًا حَدَّثَنَا عَنِ الْقَعْقَاعِ، عَنْ أَبِيكَ، قَالَ وَرَجَوْتُ أَنْ يُسْقِطَ، عَنِّي رَجُلاً قَالَ فَقَالَ سَمِعْتُهُ مِنَ الَّذِي سَمِعَهُ مِنْهُ أَبِي كَانَ صَدِيقًا لَهُ بِالشَّامِ ثُمَّ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ عَنْ سُهَيْلٍ عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ عَنْ تَمِيمٍ الدَّارِيِّ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «الدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ» قُلْنَا لِمَنْ قَالَ «لِلَّهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلأَئِمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ».

TRANSLATION:

Tamim ad-Dari رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"The religion is sincere counsel (nasihah)."**

We said: "To whom?" He said: **"To Allah, to His Book, to His Messenger, to the leaders of the Muslims and to their common people."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Muhammad ibn 'Abbad al-Makki, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Suhayl ibn Abi Salih, from 'Ata' ibn Yazid al-Laythi, from Tamim ad-Dari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 55; the 7th Hadith of al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyyah.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:55a

HISTORY NOTE: LETTERS TO SULTAN BAYBARS

The books of biography report that Imam an-Nawawi ***wrote letters of advice*** to Sultan az-Zahir Baybars, among them objecting to the unjust seizure of people's property and orchards. He advised with courtesy, but firmly.

It is reported that Sultan Baybars once said: ***"I am afraid of him."*** This story shows that sincere counsel, even from a poor man, carries weight.

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OPPOSING AN UNJUST TAX

The most famous story of Imam an-Nawawi's courage took place when Sultan Baybars was preparing to fight the enemy in Syria.

HISTORY NOTE: THE FATWA HE REFUSED

It is reported in history books such as as-Suyuti's ***Husn al-Muhadarah*** that Sultan Baybars asked the scholars of Damascus for a fatwa ***permitting him to take the people's wealth*** to fund the war. Many scholars wrote it. Baybars asked: "Is there anyone who has not written?" They said: "Shaykh Muhyi ad-Din an-Nawawi."

When summoned, an-Nawawi ***refused***, saying (in meaning): ***"I know you were once a slave who owned nothing, then Allah gave you a kingdom. I hear you own many slaves each wearing a belt of gold. If you spend all that first, then I will give a fatwa that you may take the people's wealth."***

Baybars was furious and ordered him out of Damascus. An-Nawawi returned to Nawa. The details of this story ***differ*** between sources, but its essence — the courage to oppose injustice against the people — is well known in the books of biography.

REFERENCES:

As-Suyuti, Husn al-Muhadarah; as-Subki, Tabaqat ash-Shafi'iyyah al-Kubra.

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This courage came from the conviction that ***just*** leaders hold a high place with Allah, while injustice against the people is a grave sin:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1827

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَزُهَيْرُ بْنُ حَرْبٍ، وَابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ بْنُ عُيَيْنَةَ، عَنْ عَمْرٍو، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ دِينَارٍ - عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ أَوْسٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، قَالَ ابْنُ نُمَيْرٍ وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ يَبْلُغُ بِهِ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَفِي حَدِيثِ زُهَيْرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « إِنَّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَلَى مَنَابِرَ مِنْ نُورٍ عَنْ يَمِينِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَكِلْتَا يَدَيْهِ يَمِينٌ الَّذِينَ يَعْدِلُونَ فِي حُكْمِهِمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ وَمَا وَلُوا ».

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Indeed, the just will be with Allah upon pulpits of light, at the right hand of the Most Merciful, Mighty and Majestic — and both His hands are right hands — those who are just in their judgements, with their families, and in whatever they are put in charge of."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, Zuhayr ibn Harb and Muhammad ibn 'Abdillah ibn Numayr, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from 'Amr ibn Dinar, from 'Amr ibn Aws, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Government (Kitab al-Imarah), chapter on the virtue of the just ruler, Hadith No. 1827.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1827

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Justice is not only the sultan's duty but that of everyone given responsibility — ***in government, the family and whatever is entrusted***. Imam an-Nawawi reminded Sultan Baybars that justice begins with ***oneself***: give up the palace's wealth first before taking the people's.

REFLECTION

An-Nawawi's counsel was not rebellion but ***saving both leader and people*** from injustice.

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BOOKS THAT OUTLIVE THEIR AUTHOR

Among Imam an-Nawawi's works: ***Riyad as-Salihin*** (a collection of Hadith on manners and character), ***al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyyah*** (42 foundational Hadith), ***al-Adhkar***, ***at-Tibyan fi Adab Hamalat al-Qur'an***, ***al-Minhaj fi Sharh Sahih Muslim***, ***Minhaj at-Talibin*** and ***Rawdat at-Talibin*** (Shafi'i fiqh), and ***al-Majmu'***, which he did not live to complete. The reward of these works keeps flowing, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2674

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ، قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - يَعْنُونَ ابْنَ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «مَنْ دَعَا إِلَى هُدًى كَانَ لَهُ مِنَ الأَجْرِ مِثْلُ أُجُورِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ لاَ يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أُجُورِهِمْ شَيْئًا وَمَنْ دَعَا إِلَى ضَلاَلَةٍ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الإِثْمِ مِثْلُ آثَامِ مَنْ تَبِعَهُ لاَ يَنْقُصُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ آثَامِهِمْ شَيْئًا».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Whoever calls to guidance will have a reward like the rewards of those who follow him, without that diminishing their rewards in the least.** And whoever calls to misguidance will bear a sin like the sins of those who follow him, without that diminishing their sins in the least."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Ayyub, Qutaybah ibn Sa'id and 'Ali ibn Hujr, from Isma'il ibn Ja'far, from al-'Ala' ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from his father 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Ya'qub, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Knowledge, Hadith No. 2674.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2674

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Every time someone reads Riyad as-Salihin in a mosque and acts upon it, in sha' Allah the reward also reaches its author. This is ***knowledge that brings benefit***.

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THE MAJOR WORKS OF IMAM AN-NAWAWI

BOOK	FIELD AND DESCRIPTION
Riyad as-Salihin	Hadith on character and manners; over 370 chapters.
Al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyyah	Foundational Hadith of the religion; 42 Hadith.
Al-Minhaj fi Sharh Sahih Muslim	Hadith commentary; a full explanation of Sahih Muslim.
Al-Adhkar	Daily remembrance and supplication by time and situation.
At-Tibyan fi Adab Hamalat al-Qur'an	Etiquette of the teacher, student and reciter of the Qur'an.
Minhaj at-Talibin	Shafi'i fiqh; an abridgement of ar-Rafi'i's al-Muharrar.
Rawdat at-Talibin	Shafi'i fiqh; an abridgement of ar-Rafi'i's al-'Aziz.
Al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab	Comparative fiqh; left unfinished (continued by other scholars).
At-Taqrib wat-Taysir	Hadith terminology; an abridgement of Ibn as-Salah's Muqaddimah.
Tahdhib al-Asma' wal-Lughat	Biographies of figures and meanings of terms in the fiqh books.

All these works were written in ***about 20 years***, from around 655 AH until his death in 676 AH — an extraordinary blessing in time.

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AL-MINHAJ: COMMENTARY ON SAHIH MUSLIM

An-Nawawi's greatest Hadith work is ***al-Minhaj fi Sharh Sahih Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj***. In it he explains Sahih Muslim (Series 9) Hadith by Hadith: the ***meanings of words***, the ***narrators***, the ***rulings of fiqh*** it contains, and the ***differences among the scholars***.

THE CHAPTER TITLES OF SAHIH MUSLIM

A fact few people know: Imam Muslim himself ***did not put chapter titles*** in his Sahih. The chapter titles we read in most editions of Sahih Muslim today are largely ***an-Nawawi's arrangement***. So every reader of Sahih Muslim also "reads" an-Nawawi.

Among the Hadith an-Nawawi explained at length — and included in al-Arba'in as the 36th Hadith — is this Hadith on the reward of helping others and seeking knowledge:

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HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2699

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى التَّمِيمِيُّ، وَأَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلاَءِ الْهَمْدَانِيُّ - وَاللَّفْظُ لِيَحْيَى - قَالَ يَحْيَى أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ الآخَرَانِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «مَنْ نَفَّسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ الدُّنْيَا نَفَّسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلاَّ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ وَمَنْ بَطَّأَ بِهِ عَمَلُهُ لَمْ يُسْرِعْ بِهِ نَسَبُهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Whoever relieves a believer of a hardship of this world, Allah will relieve him of a hardship of the Day of Resurrection. Whoever makes things easy for one in difficulty, Allah will make things easy for him in this world and the Hereafter. Whoever conceals (the faults of) a Muslim, Allah will conceal (his faults) in this world and the Hereafter. Allah helps His servant as long as the servant helps his brother. Whoever follows a path seeking knowledge, Allah will make easy for him, through it, a path to Paradise. No people gather in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, except that tranquillity descends upon them, mercy covers them, the angels surround them, and Allah mentions them among those who are with Him. And whoever is slowed down by his deeds will not be hastened forward by his lineage."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Yahya at-Tamimi, Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Muhammad ibn al-'Ala' al-Hamdani, from Abu Mu'awiyah, from al-A'mash, from Abu Salih, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Remembrance and Supplication, chapter on the virtue of gathering to recite the Qur'an and remember Allah, Hadith No. 2699.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2699a

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

An-Nawawi explains that this Hadith ***gathers many kinds of knowledge, principles and manners***: relieving people's hardship, concealing faults, helping one's brother, seeking knowledge, and gathering

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to recite the Qur'an in the mosque. Its ending is profound: ***whoever is slowed by his deeds will not be hastened by his lineage***.

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AL-ARBA'IN AN-NAWAWIYYAH

Al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyyah is a collection of ***42 Hadith*** chosen by Imam an-Nawawi as ***foundations of the religion***. The scholars say that every Hadith in it is ***a great principle*** of Islam. It is memorised by children, read in the surau, and explained by hundreds of scholars.

WHY WAS IT COMPILED?

In its introduction, an-Nawawi notes that many scholars before him compiled forty Hadith on various themes. He chose Hadith that are ***pivots of the religion***, most of them ***authentic***. He also ***honestly*** stated that the Hadith "whoever memorises forty Hadith…" is weak, but he compiled his book following the authentic Hadith: ***"Let the one present convey to the one absent."***

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The first Hadith of al-Arba'in — and also the first Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari — is:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1 — THE FIRST HADITH OF AL-ARBA'IN AN-NAWAWIYYAH

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّيْمِيُّ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عَلْقَمَةَ بْنَ وَقَّاصٍ اللَّيْثِيَّ، يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَقُولُ «إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى دُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ إِلَى امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكِحُهَا، فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ».

TRANSLATION:

'Alqamah ibn Waqqas al-Laythi said: I heard 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه say on the pulpit: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"Actions are only by intentions, and every person will have only what he intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly gain he would attain, or for a woman he would marry, his emigration is for that to which he emigrated."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari, from Muhammad ibn Ibrahim at-Taymi, from 'Alqamah ibn Waqqas al-Laythi, from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, Hadith No. 1 (the first Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari); also narrated by Muslim (No. 1907).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Imam an-Nawawi opened both his great books, al-Arba'in and Riyad as-Salihin, with ***intention***. The scholars call this Hadith ***a third of knowledge***, because every deed depends on the intention in the heart.

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SOME THEMES IN AL-ARBA'IN

HADITH (NUMBER IN AL-ARBA'IN)	THEME AND SOURCE
1. Deeds depend on intentions	Sincerity — Sahih al-Bukhari 1, Muslim 1907
2. The Hadith of Jibril: Islam, Iman, Ihsan	Foundations of creed and worship — Sahih Muslim 8
3. Islam is built on five	Pillars of Islam — Sahih al-Bukhari 8, Muslim 16
5. Innovations are rejected	Preserving the purity of the religion — Sahih al-Bukhari 2697, Muslim 1718
6. The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear	Scrupulousness and the heart — Sahih al-Bukhari 52, Muslim 1599
7. The religion is sincere counsel	Relations with leaders and the Ummah — Sahih Muslim 55
13. Love for your brother what you love for yourself	Brotherhood — Sahih al-Bukhari 13, Muslim 45
16. Do not become angry	Controlling emotion — Sahih al-Bukhari 6116
17. Excellence in everything	Perfecting one's work — Sahih Muslim 1955
24. "O My servants…" (Hadith Qudsi)	Allah's justice and mercy — Sahih Muslim 2577
36. Easing others' affairs	Helping one another — Sahih Muslim 2699
40. Be in the world like a stranger	Asceticism — Sahih al-Bukhari 6416

This table is only a selection. A small number of Hadith in al-Arba'in are narrated by sources other than al-Bukhari and Muslim, and the commentators have explained the grade of each.

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RIYAD AS-SALIHIN: GARDENS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Riyad as-Salihin (Gardens of the Righteous) is a collection of Hadith on ***character, manners and daily practice***. It contains ***over 370 chapters*** and ***about 1,900 Hadith***, most from Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Each chapter begins with ***verses of the Qur'an***, followed by related Hadith.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOOK

The book begins with ***sincerity and intention***, then ***repentance, patience, truthfulness, watchfulness, God-consciousness, certainty***, and goes on to cover the etiquette of eating, dressing, sleeping, travelling and visiting the sick, up to ***seeking forgiveness*** and ***the matters of the Hereafter***. It is suited to being read ***a little each day***, as is done in many mosques after prayer.

Among the Hadith in Riyad as-Salihin is the definition of a true Muslim:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 10

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ بْنُ أَبِي إِيَاسٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي السَّفَرِ، وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ، عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو - رضى الله عنهما - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ، وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ».

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"The (true) Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe; and the (true) emigrant is the one who abandons what Allah has forbidden."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam ibn Abi Iyas, from Shu'bah, from 'Abdullah ibn Abi as-Safar and Isma'il (ibn Abi Khalid), from ash-Sha'bi, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Chapter: The Muslim Is the One From Whose Tongue and Hand the Muslims Are Safe, Hadith No. 10. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 40).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:10

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The measure of one's Islam is not only personal worship, but ***the safety of others*** from our tongue and hand. In the age of social media, the "tongue" includes ***the fingers that type***. True emigration is ***abandoning what Allah has forbidden***.

READING RIYAD AS-SALIHIN AT HOME

1. Read ***one or two Hadith*** after Maghrib with the family, together with the translation.

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2. Ask each family member: ***"What can we practise from this Hadith tomorrow?"***

3. Begin with the chapters on ***sincerity, patience and good character*** before the longer chapters.

4. Use a translation that ***states the grade*** of each Hadith, and ask a teacher when unsure.

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AL-ADHKAR: REVIVING THE HEART WITH REMEMBRANCE

The book ***al-Adhkar*** (full name ***Hilyat al-Abrar wa Shi'ar al-Akhyar***) gathers the ***remembrances and supplications*** of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ by time and situation: on waking, leaving home, entering the mosque, after prayer, morning and evening, eating, travelling, in illness, visiting graves and more.

SCHOLARLY HONESTY

In the introduction to al-Adhkar, an-Nawawi states the scholars' position that weak Hadith ***may be acted upon in virtuous deeds*** under ***certain conditions***, but not in rulings or creed. He often mentions the grade of the Hadith he includes. Readers today are advised to use a ***critically edited*** edition of al-Adhkar.

The importance of remembrance is described by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with a very clear parable:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6407

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلاَءِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أُسَامَةَ، عَنْ بُرَيْدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنْ أَبِي بُرْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى - رضى الله عنه - قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم «مَثَلُ الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ رَبَّهُ وَالَّذِي لاَ يَذْكُرُ مَثَلُ الْحَىِّ وَالْمَيِّتِ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Musa رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ said: **"The likeness of the one who remembers his Lord and the one who does not is like the living and the dead."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn al-'Ala', from Abu Usamah, from Burayd ibn 'Abdillah, from Abu Burdah, from Abu Musa (al-Ash'ari) رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Supplications, Chapter: The Virtue of Remembering Allah, Hadith No. 6407. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 779).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6407

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

A heart that does not remember Allah is like ***a dead body***. Al-Adhkar keeps every moment of a Muslim's life ***connected to Allah***. Begin with the ***morning and evening remembrances***.

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AT-TIBYAN: ETIQUETTE WITH THE QUR'AN

The book ***at-Tibyan fi Adab Hamalat al-Qur'an*** (An Exposition of the Etiquette of the Bearers of the Qur'an) is a guide for ***teachers, students and reciters*** of the Qur'an. An-Nawawi, who memorised the Qur'an as a child, wrote about:

1. The etiquette of the Qur'an teacher — sincerity, not seeking worldly gain, gentleness with students.

2. The etiquette of the student — respecting the teacher, learning patiently, not being shy to ask.

3. The etiquette of recitation — purity, facing the qiblah, reciting with ***tartil*** and ***humility***, weeping at verses of punishment.

4. Honouring the mushaf — keeping it clean and never placing it in a lowly place.

The virtue of reciting the Qur'an is mentioned by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in a Hadith that an-Nawawi quotes in his books:

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HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 804

حَدَّثَنِي الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ الْحُلْوَانِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو تَوْبَةَ، - وَهُوَ الرَّبِيعُ بْنُ نَافِعٍ - حَدَّثَنَا مُعَاوِيَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَلاَّمٍ - عَنْ زَيْدٍ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَبَا سَلاَّمٍ، يَقُولُ حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو أُمَامَةَ، الْبَاهِلِيُّ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «اقْرَءُوا الْقُرْآنَ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شَفِيعًا لأَصْحَابِهِ اقْرَءُوا الزَّهْرَاوَيْنِ الْبَقَرَةَ وَسُورَةَ آلِ عِمْرَانَ فَإِنَّهُمَا تَأْتِيَانِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كَأَنَّهُمَا غَمَامَتَانِ أَوْ كَأَنَّهُمَا غَيَايَتَانِ أَوْ كَأَنَّهُمَا فِرْقَانِ مِنْ طَيْرٍ صَوَافَّ تُحَاجَّانِ عَنْ أَصْحَابِهِمَا اقْرَءُوا سُورَةَ الْبَقَرَةِ فَإِنَّ أَخْذَهَا بَرَكَةٌ وَتَرْكَهَا حَسْرَةٌ وَلاَ تَسْتَطِيعُهَا الْبَطَلَةُ». قَالَ مُعَاوِيَةُ بَلَغَنِي أَنَّ الْبَطَلَةَ السَّحَرَةُ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Umamah al-Bahili رضى الله عنه said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"Recite the Qur'an, for it will come on the Day of Resurrection as an intercessor for its companions. Recite the two bright ones — al-Baqarah and Al 'Imran — for they will come on the Day of Resurrection like two clouds, or two shades, or two flocks of birds in ranks, pleading for their companions. Recite Surah al-Baqarah, for taking it is a blessing, abandoning it is a regret, and the sorcerers cannot withstand it."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from al-Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Hulwani, from Abu Tawbah ar-Rabi' ibn Nafi', from Mu'awiyah ibn Sallam, from Zayd (ibn Sallam), from Abu Sallam, from Abu Umamah al-Bahili رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of the Prayer of Travellers, Chapter: The Virtue of Reciting the Qur'an and Surah al-Baqarah, Hadith No. 804.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:804

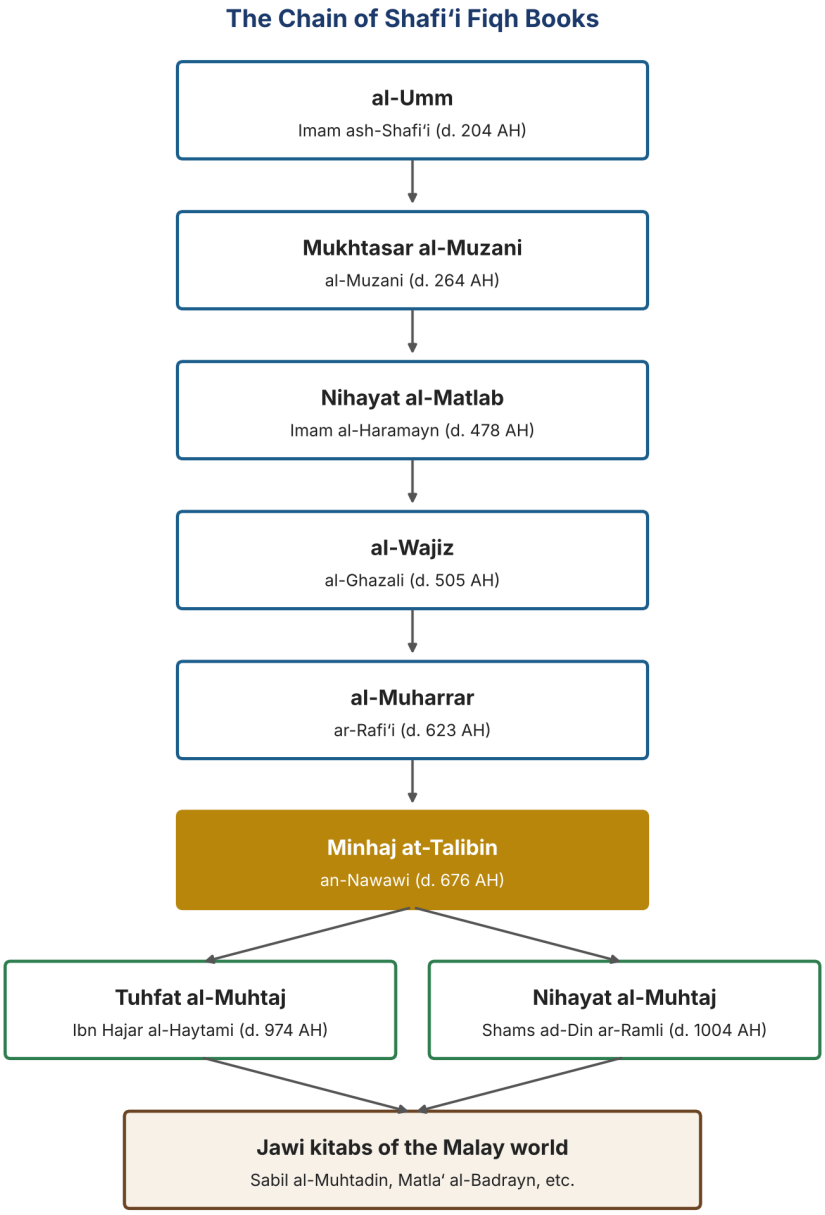
LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Qur'an will ***plead for its reciter*** on the Day of Resurrection. ***Al-Baqarah and Al 'Imran*** will come like clouds giving shade. In our homes, let us keep the recitation of Surah al-Baqarah alive — ***a blessing*** for whoever recites it, ***a regret*** for whoever abandons it.

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MINHAJ AT-TALIBIN AND FIQH IN THE MALAY WORLD

For Muslims in Malaysia, an-Nawawi's contribution closest to daily life may go unnoticed: the ***Shafi'i fiqh rulings*** we practise come to us largely through his book ***Minhaj at-Talibin***.



Simplified diagram. Each book explains, abridges or revises the one before it.

Figure 3: The chain of Shafi'i fiqh books, from al-Umm to the Jawi kitabs.

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THE TWO SHAYKHS OF THE SCHOOL

In the Shafi'i school, ***ar-Rafi'i*** and ***an-Nawawi*** are called ***"ash-Shaykhan"*** (the two shaykhs). When they agree, that view is ***the relied-upon position***; when they differ, the scholars generally give precedence to ***an-Nawawi's view***. Muftis in Malaysia still follow this principle today.

REACHING THE MALAY WORLD

Minhaj at-Talibin was explained by ***Ibn Hajar al-Haytami*** in ***Tuhfat al-Muhtaj*** and ***Shams ad-Din ar-Ramli*** in ***Nihayat al-Muhtaj***. The scholars of the Archipelago then wrote Malay fiqh books based on this chain, such as ***Sabil al-Muhtadin*** by Shaykh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari — a future figure in this series, in sha' Allah. So every time we learn the rulings of prayer, fasting and zakat in the surau, ***an-Nawawi's knowledge*** reaches us too.

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AN-NAWAWI IN THE SURAU AND PONDOK OF THE ARCHIPELAGO

There is hardly a surau or mosque in Malaysia that has never held a class on ***the Forty Hadith*** or ***Riyad as-Salihin***. This shows how far an-Nawawi's knowledge spread, to the very edge of the Muslim world.

IN THE PONDOK AND MADRASAH

In the traditional pondok schools of Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Patani and Indonesia, ***the text of al-Arba'in*** is often among the first Hadith books studied. Students memorise the text, then study its commentary. In fiqh, books based on ***Minhaj at-Talibin*** are the main references.

IN MOSQUES AND THE MEDIA TODAY

In modern times, Riyad as-Salihin and al-Arba'in have been ***translated into Malay*** in many editions and are used in ***post-Maghrib classes***, ***radio and television programmes***, and ***online classes***. Phone apps also contain both books.

REFLECTION

A village boy from Nawa, who died at 45 and left no children, now ***"speaks"*** to millions of Muslims in the Archipelago every week. This is the meaning of ***a deed that is never cut off*** — beneficial knowledge.

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ASCETICISM AND AN EARLY DEATH

HISTORY NOTE: THE LIFE OF AN ASCETIC

His student ***Ibn al-'Attar***, who wrote his biography, mentions that Imam an-Nawawi ***never married***, his clothing was very plain, and he ***rarely accepted gifts***. He would not eat the fruits of Damascus, fearing that they came from endowment lands that were improperly managed.

In 676 AH, he visited Jerusalem, then returned to Nawa and fell ill at his father's house. He ***passed away on 24 Rajab 676 AH***, at about the age of ***45***, and was buried in Nawa.

HISTORY NOTE: THE LAST FAREWELL

Ibn al-'Attar relates that before leaving Damascus for the last time, Imam an-Nawawi ***returned all borrowed books*** to their owners, visited ***the graves of his teachers***, prayed for them, and ***bade farewell*** to his companions — as if he knew his end was near.

A few weeks later he fell ill in Nawa and passed away. This is a biographical report (not a Hadith).

REFERENCES:

Ibn al-'Attar, Tuhfat at-Talibin.

REFLECTION

A short life but ***full of blessing***. Success is measured not by the length of life, but by ***what one leaves behind*** for the Ummah.

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ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

Many things about Imam an-Nawawi and his books are often confused. The following table separates what is established from what needs checking.

THE STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STATEMENT	STATUS
Born in Nawa in 631 AH and died there in 676 AH.	Established in the books of biography.
Never married and lived ascetically.	Reported by his student Ibn al-'Attar.
Wrote letters of advice to Sultan Baybars.	Well known in the books of biography.
Hadith: "Whoever preserves for my Ummah forty Hadith…"	Weak. Imam an-Nawawi himself states in the introduction to al-Arba'in that the scholars agree it is weak despite its many chains.
"Al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyyah contains exactly 40 Hadith."	Not accurate; it contains 42 Hadith.
"Every Hadith in Riyad as-Salihin is authentic."	Most are authentic or good, but scholars have marked a small number as weak.

REFLECTION — LEARNING FROM THE AUTHOR OF RIYAD AS-SALIHIN

Imam an-Nawawi honestly stated the weakness of the Forty-Hadith narration even though it was the reason his book was written. We too should be ***honest about the grading of Hadith***, even famous ones.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: True knowledge produces fear of Allah (35:28).

Second: Do not waste health and free time (Sahih al-Bukhari 6412).

Third: The religion is sincere counsel — to leaders and the public, with courtesy and courage (3:104; Sahih Muslim 55).

Fourth: Leave behind beneficial knowledge, for its reward keeps flowing (Sahih Muslim 2674).

Fifth: Be honest about the grading of Hadith, as Imam an-Nawawi was in the introduction to al-Arba'in.

Sixth: Parents who sacrifice produce scholars; support children in seeking knowledge.

Seventh: Be just and oppose injustice with wisdom (Sahih Muslim 1827).

Eighth: Begin every deed with a sincere intention (Sahih al-Bukhari 1).

Ninth: Guard your tongue and hand from harming others (Sahih al-Bukhari 10).

Tenth: Revive the heart with remembrance (Sahih al-Bukhari 6407).

Eleventh: Make the Qur'an your advocate by reciting it daily (Sahih Muslim 804).

CONCLUSION

Imam an-Nawawi رحمه الله passed away in Nawa in 676 AH. Riyad as-Salihin and the Forty Hadith are still read in mosques throughout the world, including the Malay world. In sha' Allah, the next book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** will tell the story of ***Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani***, author of Fath al-Bari. And Allah knows best.

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GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

GLOSSARY

TERM	MEANING
Dar al-Hadith	An institution for teaching the science of Hadith; an-Nawawi headed Dar al-Hadith al-Ashrafiyyah.
Al-Arba'in	"The Forty" — a selection of Hadith; al-Arba'in an-Nawawiyyah contains 42 Hadith.
Riyad as-Salihin	"Gardens of the Righteous" — a collection of Hadith on character and manners.
Ash-Shaykhan (in fiqh)	Ar-Rafi'i and an-Nawawi — the two main references for the relied-upon Shafi'i view.
Mu'tamad	The relied-upon position held and given as fatwa within a school.
Mamluks	The state ruling Egypt and Syria (648–923 AH).
Zuhd	Not attaching the heart to the world.
Tartil	Reciting the Qur'an slowly, clearly and with correct tajwid.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Imam an-Nawawi died at 45 but left dozens of books. How are we using our lives?

2. An-Nawawi's father let his son go to seek knowledge. What support can we give our children?

3. An-Nawawi dared to refuse a fatwa that wronged the people. When must we have the courage to speak the truth?

4. Which Hadith of al-Arba'in do we most want to practise this week?

5. Have we read Riyad as-Salihin or al-Adhkar consistently? How can we begin?

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

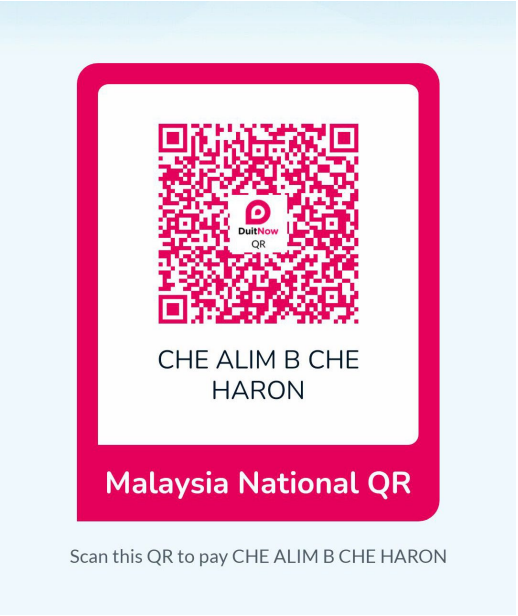
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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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