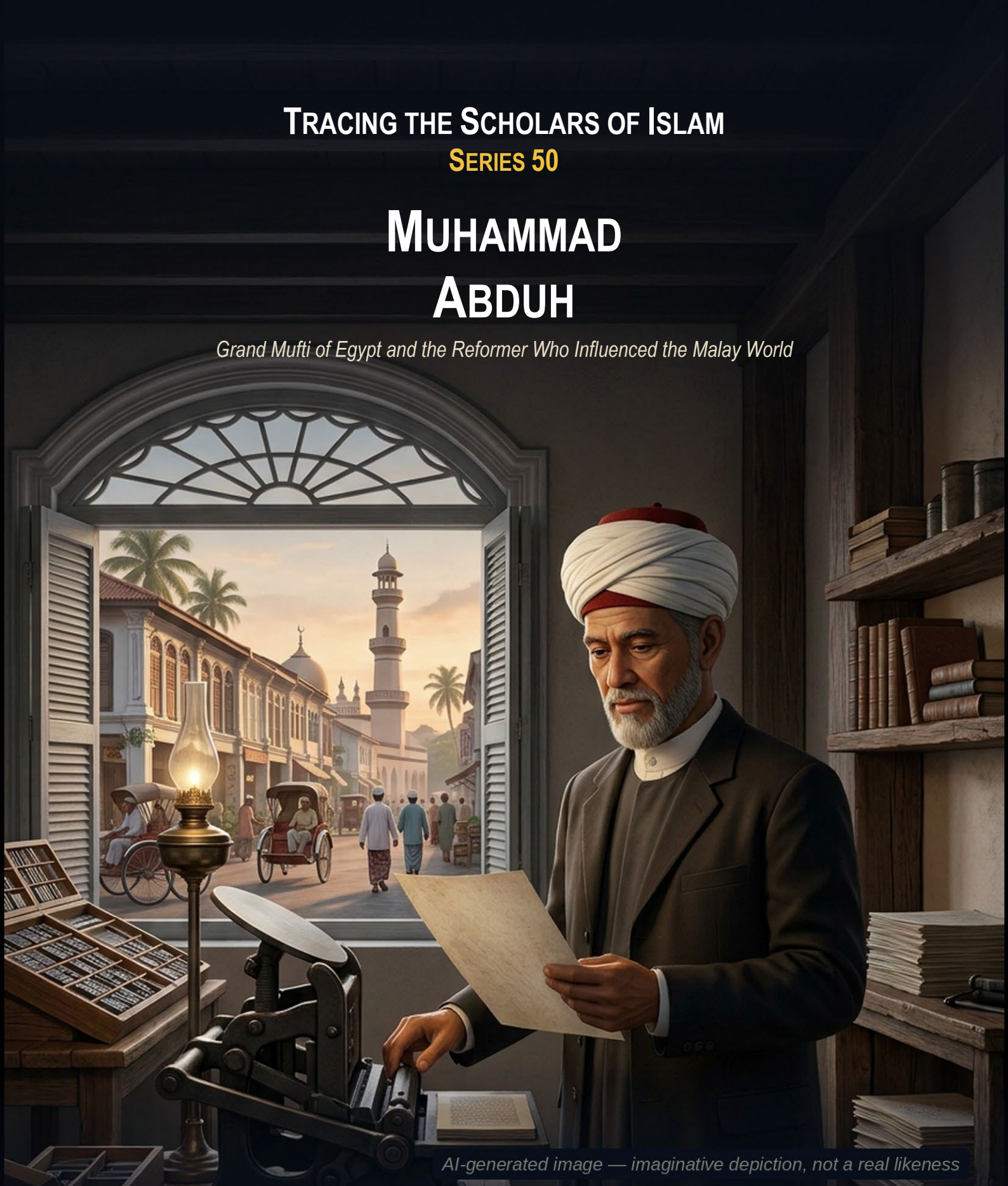
Tracing the Scholars of Islam

Series 50

Muhammad Abduh

Grand Mufti of Egypt and the Reformer Who Influenced the Malay World



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 50

MUHAMMAD ABDUH

Grand Mufti of Egypt and the Reformer Who Influenced the Malay World

لَهُۥ مُعَقِّبَٰتٌ مِّنۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِۦ يَحْفَظُونَهُۥ مِنْ أَمْرِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا۟ مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَإِذَآ أَرَادَ ٱللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوٓءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُۥ ۚ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ مِن وَالٍ

"For each one are successive [angels] before and behind him who protect him by the decree of Allah. Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron."

SURAH AR-RA'D 13:11

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. 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 fiftieth book of Tracing the Scholars of Islam tells the story of Shaykh Muhammad Abduh — a village boy of the Nile Delta who became a scholar of al-Azhar, a journalist, an exile, a judge and Grand Mufti of Egypt, and whose reformist ideas reached the Malay world through students such as Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin and Syed Syeikh al-Hadi.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook is an **AI-generated image** — an ***imaginative depiction, not the real likeness*** of Muhammad Abduh. This label is also printed on the cover. A white-bearded scholar in a white turban wound around a red cap and a dark robe stands in ***an old printing shop***, examining ***a freshly printed sheet***.

Beside him are ***an iron hand press***, ***cases of printing type***, a lamp, and ***stacks of paper and books*** — symbols of his role as ***editor of Egypt's official gazette, al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyyah*** (1880), and publisher of the journal ***al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa*** (1884).

Through ***an arched window*** is a town street with ***shophouses***, ***coconut palms*** and ***a mosque minaret*** — a reminder that his ideas, through ***al-Manar*** and ***al-Imam***, reached ***the port towns of the Malay world***.

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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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MUHAMMAD ABDUH

The fiftieth book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** tells the story of ***Shaykh Muhammad Abduh*** (1849–1905 CE) — scholar of ***al-Azhar***, journalist, exile, judge and ***Grand Mufti of Egypt***, and one of the leading figures of ***the islah (reform) movement*** in Islam in the late 19th century CE.

His lectures in Cairo were attended by students from across the Muslim world — including ***Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin*** (Book 48) and ***Syed Syeikh al-Hadi*** (Book 49) — and his ideas reached the Malay world through the magazine ***al-Imam***.

This eBook explains ***the verses on change and reflection***, the background of 19th-century Egypt, his journey from ***a village in the Nile Delta*** to ***al-Azhar***, ***exile***, ***the courts*** and ***the office of mufti***, his works such as ***Risalat at-Tawhid*** and ***Tafsir al-Manar***, and his influence.

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 modern research is **biographical narration (not Hadith)** *and is placed in the brown "History Note" boxes. The cover image is an AI-generated image and is marked as such. Some of Muhammad Abduh's views are disputed by scholars; this eBook tells the story of his life and states those differences honestly.*

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CHANGING WHAT IS IN OURSELVES

SURAH AR-RA'D 13:11

لَهُۥ مُعَقِّبَٰتٌ مِّنۢ بَيۡنِ يَدَيۡهِ وَمِنۡ خَلۡفِهِۦ يَحۡفَظُونَهُۥ مِنۡ أَمۡرِ ٱللَّهِۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوۡمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُواْ مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمۡۗ وَإِذَآ أَرَادَ ٱللَّهُ بِقَوۡمٍ سُوٓءٗا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُۥۚ وَمَا لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِۦ مِن وَالٍ ١١

For each one are successive [angels] before and behind him who protect him by the decree of Allah. Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/13:11

"Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 13:11.

This verse is the ***motto*** of this eBook because Muhammad Abduh's whole struggle centred on ***the inner change of the Ummah***: through ***education***, ***thought*** and ***character***, not merely through political power.

AREA OF CHANGE	MUHAMMAD ABDUH'S EFFORTS
Education	Reforming the curriculum at al-Azhar.
Thought	Linking revelation and reason (Risalat at-Tawhid).
Justice	Improving the courts as a judge.
Understanding the Qur'an	Tafsir close to people's lives.

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REFLECTING ON THE QUR'AN

SURAH MUHAMMAD 47:24

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَآ ﴿٢٤﴾

Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/47:24

Allah asks: ***"Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?"*** Tafsir Ibn Kathir 47:24.

Muhammad Abduh stressed that the Qur'an must be ***understood and reflected upon***, not only recited. This is the spirit of his tafsir, including ***Tafsir al-Manar***.

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LEARNING AND TEACHING THE QUR'AN

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5027

حَدَّثَنَا حَجَّاجُ بْنُ مِنْهَالٍ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَلْقَمَةُ بْنُ مَرْثَدٍ، سَمِعْتُ سَعْدَ بْنَ عُبَيْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ السُّلَمِيِّ، عَنْ عُثْمَانَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ». قَالَ وَأَقْرَأَ أَبُو عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ فِي إِمْرَةِ عُثْمَانَ حَتَّى كَانَ الْحَجَّاجُ، قَالَ وَذَاكَ الَّذِي أَقْعَدَنِي مَقْعَدِي هَذَا.

TRANSLATION:

'Uthman رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"The best of you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it."** (Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah) said: Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman (as-Sulami) taught the Qur'an from the caliphate of 'Uthman until the time of al-Hajjaj, and he said: "That is what has kept me sitting in this seat of mine."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hajjaj ibn Minhal, from Shu'bah, from 'Alqamah ibn Marthad, from Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah, from Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman as-Sulami, from 'Uthman ibn 'Affan رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtues of the Qur'an, Hadith No. 5027.

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:5027

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BACKGROUND: EGYPT IN THE 19TH CENTURY

In the 19th century CE, ***Egypt*** was ruled by ***Khedives*** of the dynasty of Muhammad ‘Ali, under nominal Ottoman suzerainty. The country sought to ***modernise***: building schools, newspapers and ***the Suez Canal*** (opened 1869 — see Book 45).

HISTORY NOTE: EGYPT BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Heavy debts led to European intervention. After ***the ‘Urabi revolt*** of ***1882***, the British ***occupied Egypt***.

In this setting Muhammad Abduh asked: how can Muslims ***progress*** without abandoning ***their religion***? His answer: through ***education and reform***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, “Muhammad Abduh”. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh

YEAR	EVENTS IN EGYPT
1869 CE	The Suez Canal opens.
1882 CE	The ‘Urabi revolt; the British occupy Egypt.
1899 CE	Muhammad Abduh appointed Grand Mufti.
1905 CE	Muhammad Abduh dies.

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AL-AZHAR: AN ANCIENT CENTRE OF LEARNING

Al-Azhar in Cairo is among ***the oldest centres of Islamic learning*** still in operation. In the 19th century CE, students came here from ***Africa, Syria, Turkey, India*** and ***the Malay world***.

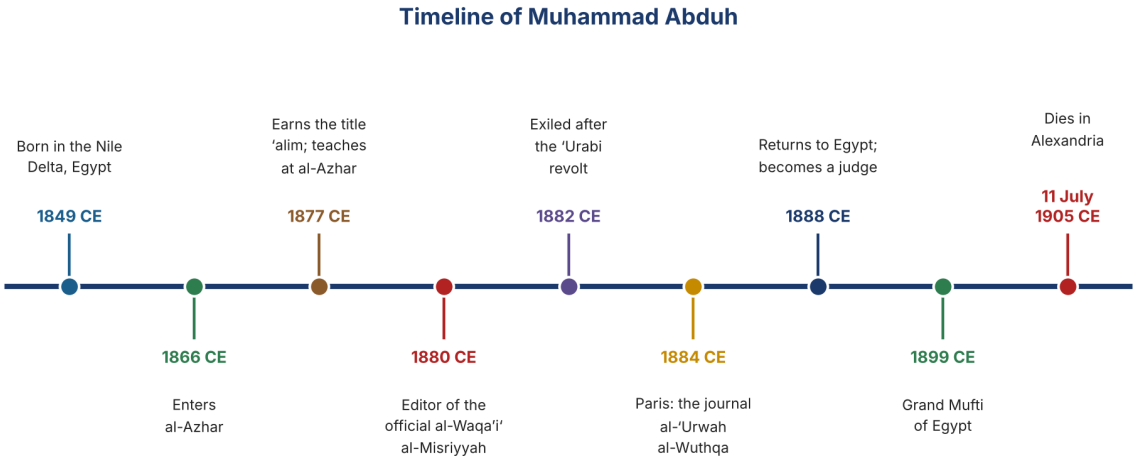
For Jawi students, Cairo was the second destination after Mecca. Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin (Book 48) obtained the ***Shahadah al-'Alamiyyah*** from al-Azhar, and Tok Kenali (Book 46) was taken to Cairo by his teacher in 1903.

FIGURE IN THIS SERIES	LINK WITH CAIRO
Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin (Book 48)	Studied at al-Azhar; attended Abduh's lectures (c. 1894/95).
Syed Syeikh al-Hadi (Book 49)	Attended Abduh's lectures (c. 1894/95).
Tok Kenali (Book 46)	To Cairo in 1903.
Hamka (Book 47)	Honorary doctorate from al-Azhar (1959).

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A VILLAGE BOY OF THE NILE DELTA

Muhammad Abduh was born in ***1849 CE*** in ***the Nile Delta***, Egypt. His father was of ***Turkish*** ancestry and his mother ***Egyptian***. According to one reference, his father's family settled in the village of ***Mahallat Nasr***, in ***Buhayrah*** province.



Source: Wikipedia, "Muhammad Abduh". He also joined the Council of al-Azhar in 1895.

Figure 1: Timeline of Muhammad Abduh.

Source: Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh

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THE AHMADI MOSQUE AND SHAYKH DARWISH

Muhammad Abduh studied at a private school in ***Tanta***. At ***the age of 13***, he was sent to ***the Ahmadi Mosque*** in Tanta, one of Egypt's important centres of learning.

HISTORY NOTE: AN UNCLE WHO GUIDED HIM

He also studied with his uncle, ***Shaykh Darwish***, a member of the ***Shadhili*** Sufi order. This guidance planted in him ***a love of learning*** and ***purification of the soul***.

This experience shows that ***a patient mentor*** can change the course of a young person's life.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muhammad Abduh". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh

THE PATH TO PARADISE

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 one of the hardships of this world, Allah will relieve him of one of the hardships 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 covers the faults of a Muslim, Allah will cover his faults in this world and the Hereafter. Allah helps His servant as long as the servant helps his brother. **Whoever follows a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him 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

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covers them, the angels surround them, and Allah mentions them among those who are with Him. And whoever is held back 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 Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

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

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

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

STUDENT AND TEACHER AT AL-AZHAR

In ***1866 CE***, Muhammad Abduh entered ***al-Azhar*** in Cairo. In ***1877*** he earned the title of ***'alim*** and began teaching ***logic, theology and ethics*** at al-Azhar.

YEAR	ROLE AS A TEACHER
1877 CE	Taught logic, theology and ethics at al-Azhar.
1878 CE	Professor of history at Dar al-'Ulum.
1878 CE	Taught Arabic at the Khedivial School of Languages.

Source: Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh

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UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELIGION

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 71 (MUTTAFAQ ‘ALAIH)

حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ عُفَيْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ، عَنْ يُونُسَ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، قَالَ قَالَ حُمَيْدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ سَمِعْتُ مُعَاوِيَةَ، خَطِيبًا يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ، وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا قَاسِمٌ وَاللَّهُ يُعْطِي، وَلَنْ تَزَالَ هَذِهِ الأُمَّةُ قَائِمَةً عَلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ لاَ يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ خَالَفَهُمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ».

TRANSLATION:

Humayd ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman said: I heard Mu‘awiyah رضى الله عنه delivering a sermon, saying: I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: **“Whoever Allah wishes good for, He gives him understanding of the religion. I am only a distributor, and Allah is the One who gives. This nation will remain upright upon the command of Allah; those who oppose them will not harm them, until the command of Allah comes.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sa‘id ibn ‘Ufayr, from Ibn Wahb, from Yunus, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Humayd ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman, from Mu‘awiyah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Hadith No. 71. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1037).

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:71

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WITH JAMAL AD-DIN AL-AFGHANI

In Cairo, Muhammad Abduh became a student of ***Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani***, a thinker and activist who called for ***the unity of the Muslims*** and ***resistance to colonialism***. Their teacher–student relationship lasted ***eight years***.

HISTORY NOTE: TEACHER AND STUDENT

After al-Afghani was expelled from Egypt in ***1879***, Muhammad Abduh too was ***exiled to his village***.

They worked together again in ***Paris*** in ***1884*** to publish the journal ***al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa*** (chapter 10).

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muhammad Abduh". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh

JAMAL AD-DIN AL-AFGHANI	MUHAMMAD ABDUH
A fiery political activist	A calmer educator.
Stressed unity and resistance	Stressed education and reform.
Moved from land to land	Later settled and served in Egypt.

This difference in approach shows that ***reform*** can follow many paths — and Muhammad Abduh in the end chose the path of ***education***.

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JOURNALIST OF EGYPT'S OFFICIAL GAZETTE

In ***1880***, Muhammad Abduh became ***editor of al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyyah***, the official newspaper of the Egyptian government. Through it, he wrote on ***education, character*** and ***social reform***.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6094

حَدَّثَنَا عُثْمَانُ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ، عَنْ مَنْصُورٍ، عَنْ أَبِي وَائِلٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «إِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ، وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَصْدُقُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ صِدِّيقًا، وَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ، وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ، وَإِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَكْذِبُ، حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَّابًا».

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise.** A man keeps telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person (siddiq). Lying leads to wickedness, and wickedness leads to the Fire. A man keeps lying until he is written before Allah as a liar."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Uthman ibn Abi Shaybah, from Jarir ibn 'Abd al-Hamid, from Mansur ibn al-Mu'tamir, from Abu Wa'il Shaqiq ibn Salamah, from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Manners (Kitab al-Adab), Hadith No. 6094; also narrated by Muslim (No. 2607).

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:6094

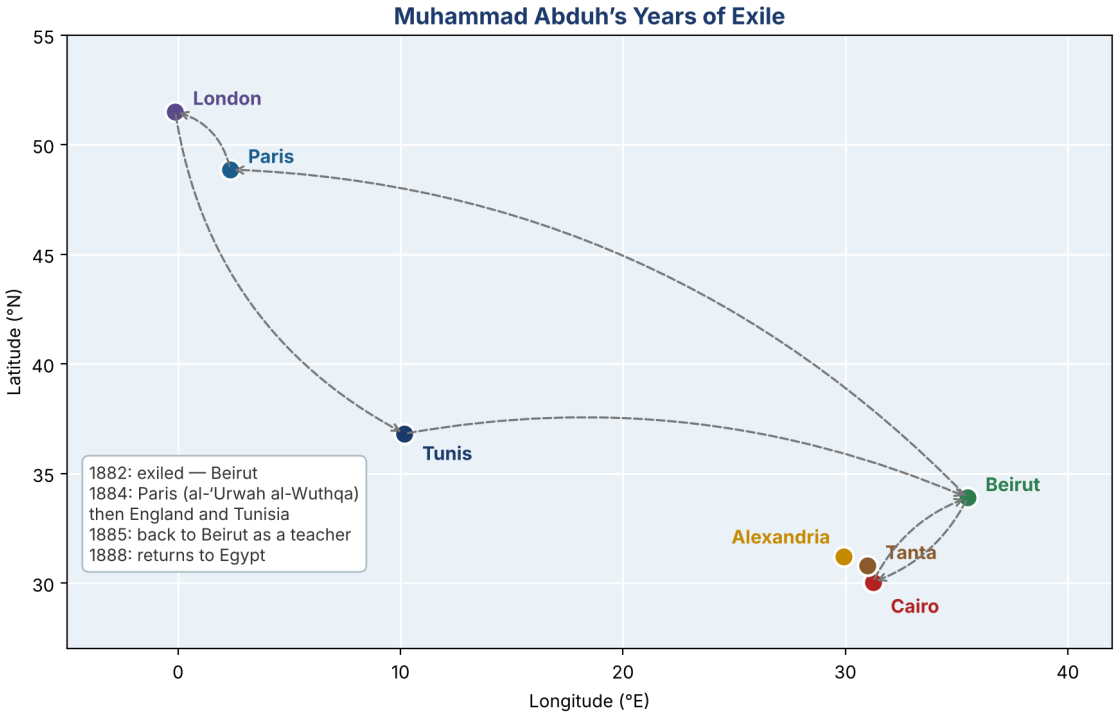
LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

A Muslim journalist must be ***truthful***. Like Syed Syeikh al-Hadi (Book 49) after him, Muhammad Abduh used ***the newspaper*** to educate the Ummah.

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THE ‘URABI REVOLT AND EXILE

In ***1882***, Muhammad Abduh supported ***the ‘Urabi revolt*** against foreign intervention. After the revolt failed and the British occupied Egypt, he was ***exiled for six years***.



Approximate positions; arrows show the order of places, not actual routes. Source: Wikipedia.

Figure 2: Muhammad Abduh’s years of exile (approximate positions).

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HISTORY NOTE: FROM BEIRUT TO PARIS AND BACK

He went first to ***Beirut***, then to ***Paris*** (1884), ***England*** and ***Tunisia***, before returning to ***Beirut*** in 1885 as ***a teacher***.

In ***1888*** he was allowed to ***return to Egypt***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muhammad Abduh". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh

Exile did not stop his work of learning. Like Hamka (Book 47), who completed his tafsir in detention, Muhammad Abduh kept ***teaching and writing*** abroad.

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AL-'URWAH AL-WUTHQA

In ***1884*** in ***Paris***, Muhammad Abduh and al-Afghani published the journal ***al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa*** ("The Firmest Handhold"), which opposed British colonialism and called for ***the revival of the Muslims***.

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:256

لَآ إِكۡرَاهَ فِي ٱلدِّينِۖ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ ٱلرُّشۡدُ مِنَ ٱلۡغَيِّۚ فَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ بِٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَيُؤۡمِنۢ
بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱسۡتَمۡسَكَ بِٱلۡعُرۡوَةِ ٱلۡوُثۡقَىٰ لَا ٱنفِصَامَ لَهَاۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٥٦

There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:256

The journal's name comes from verse 2:256: ***"has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it"***. The same verse also declares: ***"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:256.

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HISTORY NOTE: A JOURNAL FROM EXILE

Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa was published in ***Arabic*** from Paris and circulated in Muslim lands. It called on the Ummah to ***unite*** and ***rise*** through knowledge and faith.

This experience of publishing from abroad was later continued by his students — including ***Rashid Rida*** with al-Manar, and ***Syed Syeikh al-Hadi*** with al-Imam in Singapore.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muhammad Abduh". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh

MAGAZINE	PLACE AND YEAR
al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa	Paris, 1884 — Muhammad Abduh and al-Afghani.
al-Manar	Cairo — Muhammad Rashid Rida.
al-Imam	Singapore, 1906–1908 — Syed Syeikh al-Hadi and companions.
al-Ikhwan	Penang, 1926 — Syed Syeikh al-Hadi.

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A JUST JUDGE

After returning in ***1888***, Muhammad Abduh was appointed ***a judge (qadi)***, and later became ***a consultative member of the Court of Appeal***.

SURAH AL-MA'IDAH 5:8

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُونُواْ قَوَّٰمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَآءَ بِٱلۡقِسۡطِۖ وَلَا يَجۡرِمَنَّكُمۡ شَنَـَٔانُ قَوۡمٍ عَلَىٰٓ أَلَّا تَعۡدِلُواْۚ ٱعۡدِلُواْ هُوَ أَقۡرَبُ لِلتَّقۡوَىٰۖ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ خَبِيرُۢ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ ٨

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/5:8

"do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just". ***"Be just; that is nearer to righteousness"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 5:8.

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 7138

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ دِينَارٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ - رضى الله عنهما - أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « أَلاَ كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالإِمَامُ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ وَهْوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهْوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْهُمْ، وَعَبْدُ الرَّجُلِ رَاعٍ عَلَى مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ وَهْوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُ، أَلاَ فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ ».

TRANSLATION:

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **“Indeed, each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be asked about his flock. The ruler over the people is a shepherd and will be asked about his flock. A man is a shepherd over the people of his house and will be asked about them. A woman is a shepherd over her husband’s house and his children and will be asked about them. A servant is a shepherd over his master’s wealth and will be asked about it. Indeed, each of you is a shepherd and each of you will be asked about his flock.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Isma‘il ibn Abi Uways, from Malik ibn Anas, from ‘Abdullah ibn Dinar, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Judgements (Kitab al-Ahkam), Hadith No. 7138. Also narrated as No. 893, and by Muslim (No. 1829).

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:7138

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

A judge is ***a shepherd*** who will be ***asked*** about every decision. Muhammad Abduh, once exiled, returned to ***uphold justice*** in his own country.

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REFORMING AL-AZHAR

In ***1895***, Muhammad Abduh became ***a member of the Council of al-Azhar***, and worked to ***reform the system of study*** at that ancient university.

Allah says (9:122): ***"to obtain understanding in the religion"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 9:122.

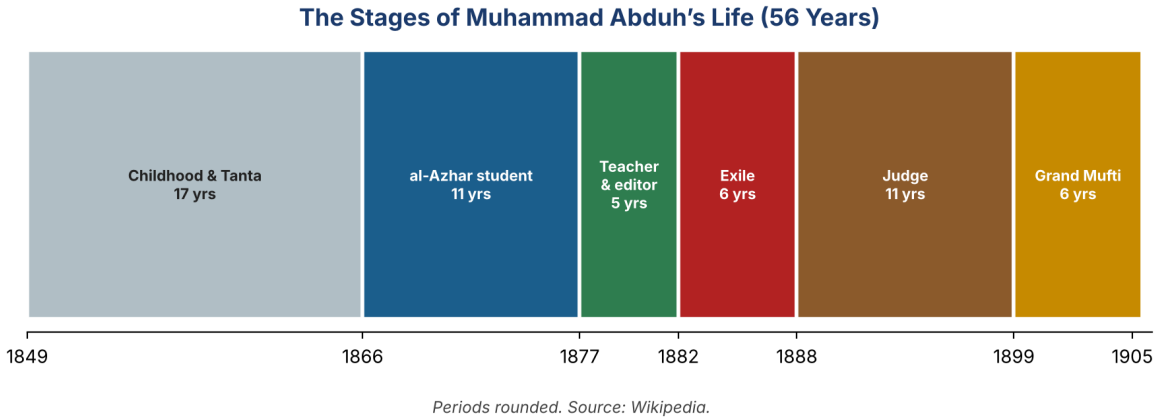


Figure 3: The stages of Muhammad Abduh's life.

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Areas of reform ***often associated*** with his efforts at al-Azhar (details differ between sources):

AREA OF REFORM	EXAMPLE
Curriculum	Adding subjects such as history and science alongside religious sciences.
Administration	Regulations, examinations and student facilities.
Teaching method	Understanding, not merely memorising commentaries.
Arabic	Reviving eloquent Arabic.

Some al-Azhar scholars ***did not agree*** with his proposals, and the debate continued. Yet many agree that he pushed al-Azhar to ***rethink*** its methods.

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GRAND MUFTI OF EGYPT

In ***1899***, Muhammad Abduh was appointed ***Grand Mufti of Egypt***, a post he held until his death in 1905. In ***1900*** he also founded ***the Society for the Revival of Arabic Literature***.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 69

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو التَّيَّاحِ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «يَسِّرُوا وَلاَ تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلاَ تُنَفِّرُوا».

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Make things easy and do not make them difficult; give glad tidings and do not drive people away."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Yahya ibn Sa'id, from Shu'bah, from Abu at-Tayyah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Chapter on the Prophet ﷺ Choosing Suitable Times for Advice, Hadith No. 69.

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:69

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

A mufti should ***make things easy, not difficult***, while holding firmly to ***the evidence***. Muhammad Abduh's fatwas sought to answer ***the needs of the age*** — though some were disputed by other scholars.

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RISALAT AT-TAWHID

His famous work on creed is ***Risalat at-Tawhid*** ("The Theology of Unity"), first edition dated ***1897*** (one reference gives 1898). It explains ***the oneness of Allah*** by combining ***the evidence of revelation*** with ***rational argument***.

Allah praises those ***"Who listen to speech and follow the best of it"*** (39:18). Tafsir Ibn Kathir 39:18.

HISTORY NOTE: REVELATION AND REASON

Muhammad Abduh held that ***revelation and reason do not conflict***: reason leads people to faith, and revelation guides reason.

This view influenced ***Ugama Islam dan 'Akal*** (1931) by ***Syed Syeikh al-Hadi*** (Book 49).

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Muhammad Abduh". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Abduh
Wikipedia, "Syed Sheikh al-Hadi". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syed_Sheikh_al-Hadi

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REASON AS A BLESSING

The Qur'an repeatedly invites people to ***think***, ***reflect*** and ***take lessons***. For Muhammad Abduh, using reason to understand religion is a form of ***gratitude*** for Allah's blessing.

THE QUR'AN'S CALL	EXAMPLE VERSES IN THIS SERIES
Reflecting on the Qur'an	Muhammad 47:24; an-Nisa' 4:82.
Choosing the best	az-Zumar 39:18.
Observing creation	Al 'Imran 3:190 (Book 48).
Using reason	al-Anfal 8:22 (Book 49).

Yet reason remains ***guided by revelation***. This is the balance sought in Risalat at-Tawhid.

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REJECTING BLIND IMITATION

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:170

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ٱتَّبِعُواْ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ قَالُواْ بَلۡ نَتَّبِعُ مَآ أَلۡفَيۡنَا عَلَيۡهِ ءَابَآءَنَآۚ أَوَلَوۡ كَانَ ءَابَآؤُهُمۡ لَا يَعۡقِلُونَ شَيۡـٔٗا وَلَا يَهۡتَدُونَ ١٧٠

And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:170

The Qur'an criticises those who say: ***"we will follow that which we found our fathers doing"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:170.

Muhammad Abduh criticised ***blind imitation (taqlid)*** — following something without understanding its evidence. Yet the Qur'an also commands (16:43): ***"So ask the people of the message if you do not know"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:43.

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BLIND IMITATION	ASKING THE PEOPLE OF KNOWLEDGE
Following without wanting to understand	Asking in order to understand.
Rejecting evidence because of custom	Accepting evidence even against custom.
Criticised in 2:170	Commanded in 16:43.

The balance between ***thinking for oneself*** and ***respecting scholars*** is an important lesson from this debate.

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TAFSIR OF SURAH AL-'ASR AND JUZ' 'AMMA

Muhammad Abduh wrote ***Tafsir Surat al-'Asr*** (1903) and ***Tafsir Juz' 'Amma*** (1904) — commentaries that are brief, clear and close to everyday life.

SURAH AL-'ASR 103:1–3

وَٱلۡعَصۡرِ ١

By time.

إِنَّ ٱلۡإِنسَٰنَ لَفِي خُسۡرٍ ٢

Indeed, mankind is in loss.

إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَتَوَاصَوۡاْ بِٱلۡحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوۡاْ بِٱلصَّبۡرِ ٣

Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/103:1-3

"Indeed, mankind is in loss", except those who ***"advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 103:1.

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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

Surah al-'Asr and the Hadith ***"religion is sincere advice"*** both teach that the Ummah must ***advise one another*** — the heart of ***reform***.

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TAFSIR AL-MANAR

His student, ***Muhammad Rashid Rida***, recorded and developed Muhammad Abduh's tafsir lectures, and published them as ***Tafsir al-Manar*** (12 volumes). Rida also published the magazine ***al-Manar*** — the model for ***al-Imam*** in Singapore.

Allah says (4:82): ***"Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 4:82.

HISTORY NOTE: FROM CAIRO TO SINGAPORE

The magazine ***al-Manar*** was read by Jawi students in Mecca and Cairo. According to NUS Libraries and Britannica, ***al-Imam*** (1906–1908) in Singapore ***was modelled on al-Manar***.

This was ***the bridge*** that carried Muhammad Abduh's ideas to the Malay world.

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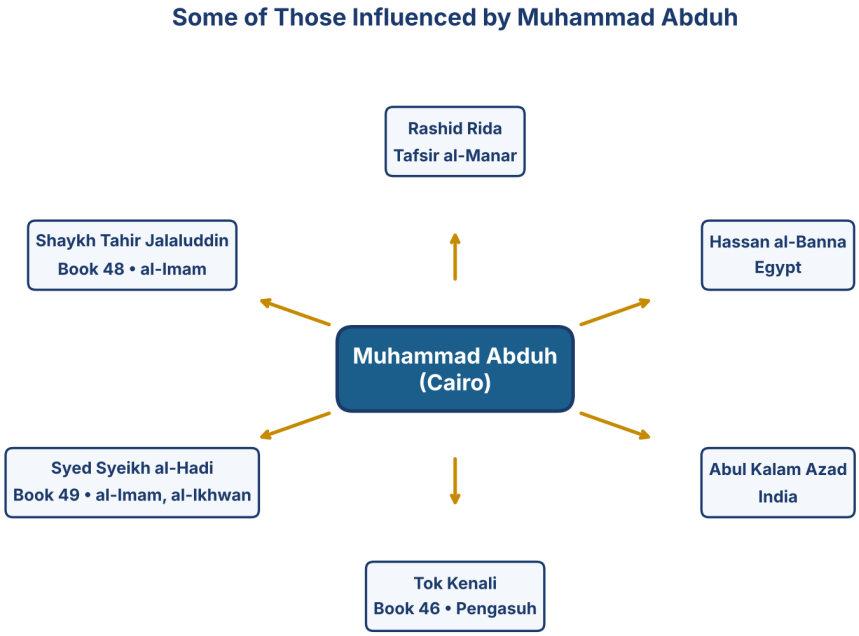
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Britannica, "Sayyid Shaykh bin Ahmad al-Hadi". https://www.britannica.com/print/article/251123

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INFLUENCE IN THE MALAY WORLD

Muhammad Abduh's influence reached the Malay world through ***students and readers***. Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin and Syed Syeikh al-Hadi ***attended his lectures in Cairo*** around 1894/95, and according to patanistudies.com, ***Tok Kenali*** also studied with him in 1903.



Sources: Wikipedia, Biblioasia and patanistudies.com. Influence does not always mean a direct teacher–student link.

Figure 4: Some of those influenced by Muhammad Abduh.

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 13 (MUTTAFAQ ‘ALAIH)

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ شُعْبَةَ، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم. وَعَنْ حُسَيْنٍ الْمُعَلِّمِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «لاَ يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **“None of you (truly) believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad, from Yahya ibn Sa‘id al-Qattan, from Shu‘bah, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه; and through a second chain from Husayn al-Mu‘allim, from Qatadah.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 13. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 45).

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:13

IN THE MALAY WORLD	EFFECT OF REFORMIST IDEAS
Kaum Muda	The reform movement in Malaya and Minangkabau.
Modern madrasahs	al-Iqbal, al-Hadi, al-Masyhur (Book 49).
Magazines and newspapers	al-Imam, al-Ikhwan, Saudara, Pengasuh.
Astronomy and science	Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin (Book 48).

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CONVEY EVEN ONE VERSE

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3461

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَاصِمٍ الضَّحَّاكُ بْنُ مَخْلَدٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا الأَوْزَاعِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا حَسَّانُ بْنُ عَطِيَّةَ، عَنْ أَبِي كَبْشَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً، وَحَدِّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلاَ حَرَجَ، وَمَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَىَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَبَوَّأْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ».

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Convey from me, even if it is a single verse. And narrate from the Children of Israel, there is no harm (in it). And whoever lies about me deliberately, let him take his seat in the Fire."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu 'Asim ad-Dahhak ibn Makhlad, from al-Awza'i, from Hassan ibn 'Atiyyah, from Abu Kabshah as-Saluli, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, Hadith No. 3461.

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:3461

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Muhammad Abduh conveyed knowledge through ***lectures, newspapers, journals, books and tafsir***. His students carried it on to ***Syria, India, North Africa*** and ***the Malay world***.

CHANNEL	EXAMPLE
Lectures	al-Azhar, Beirut and tafsir lectures in Cairo.
Newspapers and journals	al-Waqa'i' al-Misriyyah; al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa.
Books	Risalat at-Tawhid.
Tafsir	Tafsir al-'Asr, Juz' 'Amma and al-Manar.

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A CONTINUING REWARD

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

Everyone who benefits from knowledge conveyed becomes ***a continuing reward*** for the one who conveyed it, by Allah's will — and every teacher is also responsible for ***what he teaches***.

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ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:36

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا ﴿٣٦﴾

And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/17:36

"do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 17:36.

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, INTRODUCTION NO. 5 — FROM IMAM MUSLIM'S OWN INTRODUCTION

وَحَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُعَاذٍ الْعَنْبَرِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي ح، وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ مَهْدِيٍّ، قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ خُبَيْبِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ حَفْصِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ كَذِبًا أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ».

TRANSLATION:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"It is enough of a lie for a person to narrate everything he hears."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from 'Ubaydullah ibn Mu'adh al-'Anbari, from his father Mu'adh ibn Mu'adh; and from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mahdi, both from Shu'bah, from Khubayb ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Hafs ibn 'Asim. In the following narration, Imam Muslim narrates it with a connected chain: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from 'Ali ibn Hafs, from Shu'bah, with the same chain, from Hafs ibn 'Asim, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in the Introduction to Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 5; the connected narration through Abu Hurairah is in the Introduction, narration 7 (sunnah.com/muslim/introduction/7).

GRADE: SAHIH — Imam Muslim placed it in the Introduction to Sahih Muslim and narrated it with a connected chain through Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:5

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STATEMENTS AND THEIR STATUS

STATEMENT	STATUS
"I went to the West and saw Islam but no Muslims…"	A famous saying attributed to him; its original source should be checked.
He once joined a Masonic lodge.	According to Wikipedia, he joined at 28, later left, and denied being an active member.
Risalat at-Tawhid appeared in 1897.	One reference gives 1898.
He joined the Court of Appeal in 1891.	Wikipedia gives 1891 and 1899 in different places.
Tok Kenali studied with him.	Stated by patanistudies.com; details are limited.
All scholars accepted his views.	No; some were criticised and disputed.

REFLECTION — HONOURING WITHOUT EXAGGERATING

We can ***value the contribution*** of Muhammad Abduh in education and reform, while being ***honest*** about what is disputed — the attitude taught by verse 17:36.

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HIS DEATH AND LEGACY

Muhammad Abduh died in ***Alexandria*** on ***11 July 1905 CE***, aged 56.

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

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 100 (MUTTAFAQ ‘ALAIH)

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ أَبِي أُوَيْسٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا، يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ، وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يُبْقِ عَالِمًا، اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُءُوسًا جُهَّالاً فَسُئِلُوا، فَأَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا». قَالَ الْفِرَبْرِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا عَبَّاسٌ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ عَنْ هِشَامٍ نَحْوَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As رضى الله عنهما said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **“Allah does not take away knowledge by snatching it from His servants, but He takes away knowledge by taking away the scholars, until, when no scholar remains, people take ignorant leaders. They are asked and they give rulings without knowledge; so they go astray and lead others astray.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Isma‘il ibn Abi Uways, from Imam Malik, from Hisham ibn ‘Urwah, from his father, ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Hadith No. 100. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2673).

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:100

A LEGACY FOR US

LEGACY	LESSON FOR US
Reform of al-Azhar	Education must keep improving.
Risalat at-Tawhid	Revelation and reason complement each other.
Tafsir al-Manar	The Qur’an must be reflected upon and practised.
Students across the world	Knowledge spreads through those who are taught.
As judge and mufti	Justice and ease in the law.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: Change begins with oneself (13:11).

Second: Reflect on the Qur'an (47:24; 4:82; Sahih al-Bukhari 5027).

Third: A good mentor changes a life (the story of Shaykh Darwish; Sahih Muslim 2699).

Fourth: Understanding of the religion is a sign of good (Sahih al-Bukhari 71).

Fifth: Be truthful in writing (Sahih al-Bukhari 6094).

Sixth: Hold fast to the firmest handhold (2:256).

Seventh: Be just to all (5:8; Sahih al-Bukhari 7138).

Eighth: Renew education (9:122).

Ninth: Make things easy, not difficult (Sahih al-Bukhari 69).

Tenth: Avoid blind imitation, but ask the people of knowledge (2:170; 16:43).

Eleventh: Advise one another to truth and patience (103:1–3; Sahih Muslim 55).

Twelfth: Value contributions, be honest about disagreements (17:36).

CONCLUSION

Muhammad Abduh never set foot in Malaya, yet his ideas arrived through ***students and magazines***. The next book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam**, in sha' Allah, will tell the story of ***Badi'uzzaman Sa'id Nursi***, the Turkish scholar who wrote his great work in ***exile and prison***. And Allah knows best.

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GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

GLOSSARY

TERM	MEANING
Islah	Reform; improving the condition of the Ummah.
Taqlid (blind imitation)	Following without wanting to understand the evidence.
Mufti	A scholar who issues official fatwas.
Khedive	The title of the rulers of Egypt in the 19th century.
Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa	"The firmest handhold" — a journal named after 2:256.
Al-Manar	The magazine and tafsir of Rashid Rida.
Logic (mantiq)	The science of reasoning.
Theology (kalam)	The science of creed with rational argument.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How was verse 13:11 the heart of Muhammad Abduh's struggle?

2. Why was the journal al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa named after verse 2:256?

3. What is the difference between blind imitation and asking the people of knowledge?

4. How did Muhammad Abduh's ideas reach the Malay world?

5. Why should we be honest about views that are disputed?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Read a tafsir of Surah al-'Asr, and write three ways you can "advise one another to truth" this week.

Activity 2: Draw a diagram linking Muhammad Abduh with the figures of Books 46 to 49.

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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 رضي 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 رضي 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 رضي الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

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

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