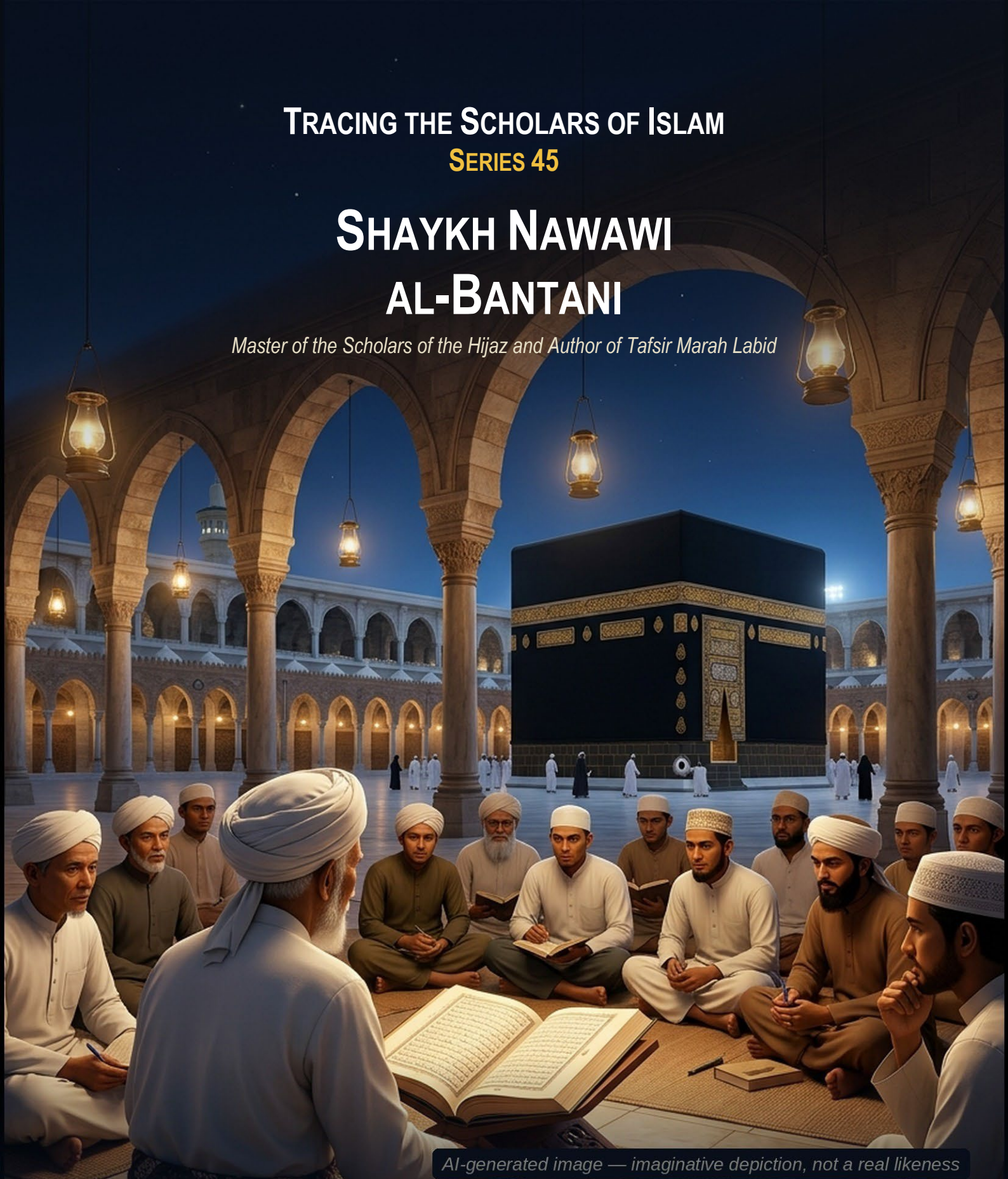
TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 45

SHAYKH NAWAWI AL-BANTANI

Master of the Scholars of the Hijaz and Author of Tafsir Marah Labid



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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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

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who raises in rank those who are given knowledge. 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 forty-fifth book of Tracing the Scholars of Islam tells the story of Shaykh Muhammad Nawawi ibn ‘Umar al-Bantani, a son of Banten who taught in Mecca, wrote a tafsir and dozens of books, and raised students who built Islamic movements across the Malay world. May his story teach us humility in knowledge, diligence in writing and sincerity in teaching.

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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 Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani. This label is also printed on the cover. An elderly teacher in a white turban is shown ***from behind***, seated on a mat in a ***batik sarong***, teaching from ***a book of tafsir open on a wooden reading stand***.

Before him sits ***a circle (halaqah) of students***, cross-legged and taking notes — a symbol of ***the students from Java and the Malay world*** who studied with him in Mecca.

The setting is ***the courtyard of al-Masjid al-Haram at night***: ***columns and pointed arches***, ***hanging lanterns***, and ***the Ka'bah*** at the centre, with pilgrims circling it. He lived, taught and wrote in ***Mecca*** for almost all of his life.

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SHAYKH NAWAWI AL-BANTANI

The forty-fifth book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** tells the story of ***Shaykh Muhammad Nawawi ibn 'Umar al-Bantani al-Jawi***, a scholar from ***Banten***, West Java, who settled in ***Mecca*** and taught beside ***al-Masjid al-Haram*** in the 19th century CE.

He was given the title ***"Sayyid 'Ulama' al-Hijaz"*** (Master of the Scholars of the Hijaz) and called ***"the Father of the Kitab Kuning of Indonesia"***. His tafsir, ***Marah Labid***, is ***the first complete Arabic tafsir*** by a scholar of the Malay world, and his books such as ***Kashifat as-Saja*** and ***Nasa'ih al-'Ibad*** are still read in pondok and pesantren today.

This eBook explains ***the verses on the honour of knowledge***, the background of ***the Sultanate of Banten***, his journey to Mecca, ***the Jawi community*** in the Sacred Land, ***his main books***, ***the students*** who built Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, and his legacy.

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. Sources differ on the year of his death (1897 or 1898 CE).*

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THE LEARNED WHO 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

Allah declares: ***"Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge"***. True knowledge produces ***fear and reverence for Allah***, not arrogance. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 35:28.

This verse is the ***motto*** of this eBook because Shaykh Nawawi was known as a scholar of ***great learning and great humility***. He dressed simply and disliked being praised.

ARE THOSE WHO KNOW EQUAL?

Allah asks (39:9): ***"Are those who know equal to those who do not know?"*** The question shows ***the excellence of knowledge***, especially when it is joined with ***worship at night***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 39:9.

BENEFICIAL KNOWLEDGE	ITS SIGNS
It produces fear of Allah	Avoiding sin even when no one is watching.
It produces humility	Not being proud of one's cleverness.
It is acted upon	Worship and character improve.
It is taught	Passed on to others sincerely.

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GOING FORTH TO UNDERSTAND THE RELIGION

SURAH AT-TAWBAH 9:122

وَمَا كَانَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنفِرُوا۟ كَآفَّةً ۚ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ
لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا۟ فِى ٱلدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا۟ قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/9:122

Allah tells a group from every division to go forth ***"to obtain understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 9:122.

This describes Shaykh Nawawi's life: he ***left Banten*** to understand the religion deeply, and his knowledge ***returned to his people*** — through the students and books carried home to Java and the Malay world.

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

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Understanding of the religion (fiqh) is a sign that Allah wants good for a person. Shaykh Nawawi wrote books on jurisprudence, creed, tafsir and Sufism so that people would ***understand*** their religion, not merely memorise it.

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BACKGROUND: THE SULTANATE OF BANTEN

Banten lies at the western tip of Java, near the ***Sunda Strait***. From the 16th century CE it was an important port and a centre of the ***pepper trade*** and ***Islamic learning***.

HISTORY NOTE: THE SULTANATE OF BANTEN

The Sultanate of Banten was founded in ***1527 CE***. Its first sultan was ***Maulana Hasanuddin*** (r. 1552–1570 CE), son of ***Sunan Gunung Jati***, one of the Wali Songo (Book 41).

Banten grew rich from the ***pepper trade*** and reached its height under ***Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa*** (1651–1683 CE). It then fell under the influence of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and ***was abolished in 1813 CE — the year Shaykh Nawawi was born***.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Banten Sultanate". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banten_Sultanate

YEAR	EVENTS IN BANTEN
1527 CE	The Sultanate of Banten is founded.
1552–1570 CE	Reign of Maulana Hasanuddin.
1651–1683 CE	Golden age under Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa.
1813 CE	The sultanate is abolished; Shaykh Nawawi is born.

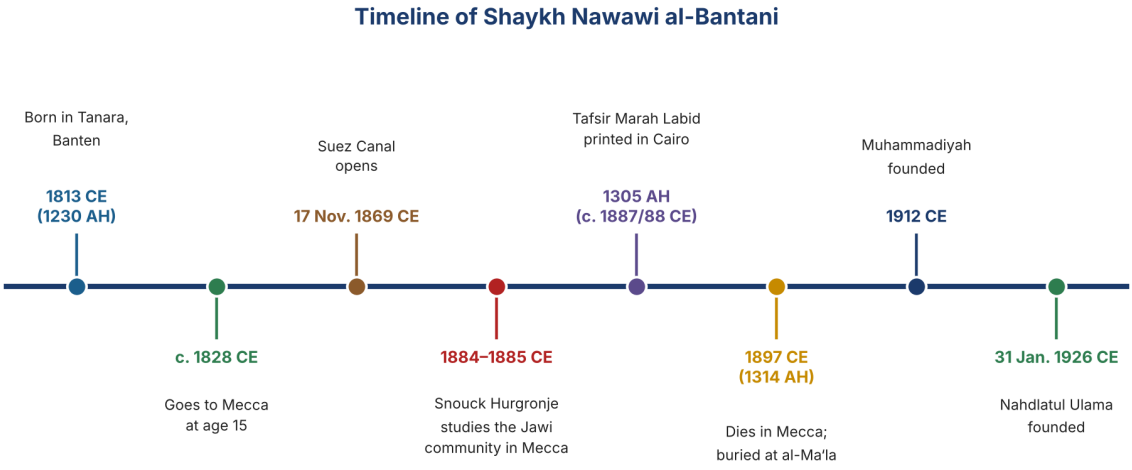
Shaykh Nawawi was born when ***Islamic political power in Banten had collapsed***. Yet Banten's legacy of ***knowledge*** lived on through him.

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BORN IN TANARA

Shaykh Nawawi was born in ***the village of Tanara, Tirtayasa, Serang, Banten***, in ***1230 AH (1813 CE)***. His full name was ***Abu 'Abd al-Mu'ti Muhammad Nawawi ibn 'Umar at-Tanari al-Bantani al-Jawi***.

His father, ***'Umar ibn 'Arabi***, was ***a scholar and religious official*** who led the village mosque. His mother, ***Zubaidah***, was a pious woman. He was ***the eldest of seven children***, and according to the family genealogy, ***a descendant of Sunan Gunung Jati***.



Sources: NU Online, tafsiralquran.id and Wikipedia. Some sources give his death as 1898 CE (1316 AH).

Figure 1: Timeline of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani.

HIS NAMES

NAME	MEANING
Nawawi	Named after Imam an-Nawawi (Book 15).
At-Tanari	From Tanara.
Al-Bantani	From Banten.
Al-Jawi	From "the land of Jawi" — the Malay world.
Sayyid 'Ulama' al-Hijaz	Master of the Scholars of the Hijaz — a title of honour.

Sources: NU Online and tafsiralquran.id. https://tafsiralquran.id/mufasir-mufasir-indonesia-biografi-syekh-nawawi-al-bantani/

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LEARNING FROM CHILDHOOD

Shaykh Nawawi's education began at home. At ***the age of five***, he studied with his own father — ***Arabic, jurisprudence and tafsir***. A scholar's house was ***his first school***.

> **HISTORY NOTE: TEACHERS IN JAVA**
>
> At ***the age of eight***, he was sent to study with ***Kiai Sahal*** in Banten, and then with ***Raden Haji Yusuf*** in ***Purwakarta***, West Java.
>
> While still young, he mastered the basics of ***grammar, jurisprudence and tafsir***, before setting out for Mecca at ***the age of 15***.
>
> **REFERENCES:**
> NU Online, "Syekh Nawawi Banten dan Beberapa Pemikiran Pentingnya". https://nu.or.id/tokoh/syekh-nawawi-banten-dan-beberapa-pemikiran-pentingnya-vDMUm

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Shaykh Nawawi's story shows ***the role of parents*** as the first teachers. His father did not only teach him, but also ***sought more learned teachers*** for his son, even at the cost of separation.

STAGE	TEACHER AND PLACE
Age 5	His father, 'Umar ibn 'Arabi, in Tanara.
Age 8	Kiai Sahal, in Banten.
After that	Raden Haji Yusuf, in Purwakarta.
Age 15	The scholars of Mecca and Medina.

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TO MECCA AT FIFTEEN

SURAH AL 'IMRAN 3:96

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾

Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Makkah - blessed and a guidance for the worlds.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:96

The first house of worship: ***"the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Makkah - blessed and a guidance for the worlds"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:96.

In ***about 1828 CE***, at ***the age of 15***, Shaykh Nawawi sailed to Mecca to perform the Hajj and ***seek knowledge***. The straight-line distance from Tanara to Mecca is ***about 7,840 km*** (calculated from coordinates).

HISTORY NOTE: TEACHERS IN MECCA AND MEDINA

In Mecca he studied with ***Sayyid Ahmad an-Nahrawi***, ***Sayyid Ahmad ad-Dimyati*** and ***Sayyid Ahmad Zaini Dahlan***, the Shafi'i mufti of Mecca. In Medina he studied with ***Shaykh Muhammad Khatib al-Hanbali***.

According to some sources, he also travelled to ***Syria*** and ***Egypt*** to increase his learning.

REFERENCES:

tafsiralquran.id, "Biografi Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani". https://tafsiralquran.id/mufasir-mufasir-indonesia-biografi-syekh-nawawi-al-bantani/

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HOME AND BACK TO MECCA

After about ***three years*** in Arabia, Shaykh Nawawi ***returned to Tanara*** around ***1248 AH (1831 CE)*** and taught in his village for about three years.

But life in Java under ***Dutch colonial rule*** was unsettled. He then ***returned to Mecca*** and, according to the biographical sources, ***never went home again*** until his death.

HISTORY NOTE: JAVA IN THAT ERA

In the 19th century CE, the Dutch colonial government controlled most of Java. Scholars and returning pilgrims were often ***watched***, because they were thought able to mobilise the people.

For many scholars, ***Mecca*** became a freer place to ***study, teach and write***.

REFERENCES:

tafsiralquran.id, “Biografi Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani”. https://tafsiralquran.id/mufasir-mufasir-indonesia-biografi-syekh-nawawi-al-bantani/

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LIKE A STRANGER

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 6416

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ أَبُو الْمُنْذِرِ الطُّفَاوِيُّ، عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ الأَعْمَشِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مُجَاهِدٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ أَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم بِمَنْكِبِي فَقَالَ «كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ، أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ». وَكَانَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ يَقُولُ إِذَا أَمْسَيْتَ فَلاَ تَنْتَظِرِ الصَّبَاحَ، وَإِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ فَلاَ تَنْتَظِرِ الْمَسَاءَ، وَخُذْ مِنْ صِحَّتِكَ لِمَرَضِكَ، وَمِنْ حَيَاتِكَ لِمَوْتِكَ.

TRANSLATION:

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ took hold of my shoulder and said: **“Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a traveller.”** Ibn ‘Umar used to say: “When evening comes, do not wait for the morning; when morning comes, do not wait for the evening. Take from your health for your sickness, and from your life for your death.”

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from ‘Ali ibn ‘Abdullah al-Madini, from Abu al-Mundhir at-Tufawi, from Sulayman al-A‘mash, from Mujahid, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Softening of Hearts, Hadith No. 6416.

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:6416

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Shaykh Nawawi lived as ***an expatriate*** in Mecca for more than ***half a century***. This Hadith reminds us that this world is ***a stopping place***, and the true provision is ***knowledge and deeds***.

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THE JAWI COMMUNITY IN MECCA

SURAH AL-HUJURAT 49:13

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقۡنَٰكُم مِّن ذَكَرٖ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلۡنَٰكُمۡ شُعُوبٗا وَقَبَآئِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوٓاْۚ إِنَّ أَكۡرَمَكُمۡ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ أَتۡقَىٰكُمۡۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٞ ١٣

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/49:13

Allah says: ***"made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another"***. And ***"the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 49:13.

In Mecca, people from the Malay world — Java, Sumatra, the Peninsula, Patani, Borneo and elsewhere — were known as ***"ahl al-Jawi"***, or ***the Jawi community***.

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HISTORY NOTE: AHL AL-JAWI

In the 19th century CE, the Jawi community in Mecca was ***a centre of learning*** for students from the archipelago. They lived close together, studied with Jawi teachers, and looked after pilgrims from home.

Famous Jawi scholars before Shaykh Nawawi include ***Shaykh Daud al-Fatani*** (Book 44). After him came ***Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi*** and many others.

REFERENCES:

NU Online, "Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani di Mata Snouck Hurgronje". https://nu.or.id/tokoh/syekh-nawawi-al-bantani-di-mata-snouck-hurgronje-pMKnn

LOVE FOR ONE'S BROTHER

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

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TEACHING IN THE SACRED LAND

Allah says (58:11): ***"Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 58:11.

After more than ***30 years*** of study, Shaykh Nawawi began teaching actively around ***1860 CE***. One source says his lessons were attended by about ***200 students***.

HISTORY NOTE: SHAYKH NAWAWI'S TEACHING DAY

According to ***Snouck Hurgronje***, every morning from ***about 7.30 until 12 noon***, Shaykh Nawawi gave ***three lessons***, adjusted to ***his students' levels***.

More advanced students sometimes ***taught the beginners***. In the 15 years before Snouck's visit, ***writing*** had reduced his teaching time.

REFERENCES:

NU Online, "Syekh Nawawi al-Bantani di Mata Snouck Hurgronje". https://nu.or.id/tokoh/syekh-nawawi-al-bantani-di-mata-snouck-hurgronje-pMKnn

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 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

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THROUGH THE EYES OF SNOUCK HURGRONJE

One of the most detailed accounts of Shaykh Nawawi comes from a ***Dutch orientalist***, ***Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje*** (1857–1936 CE).

HISTORY NOTE: SNOUCK HURGRONJE IN MECCA

Snouck arrived in ***Jeddah on 28 August 1884 CE*** and was allowed into Mecca on ***21 January 1885 CE***, using the name ***"'Abd al-Ghaffar"***. He stayed in Mecca for several months.

His findings were published in German as ***Mekka*** (volume 1, 1888 CE; volume 2, 1889 CE). Snouck later became ***an adviser to the Dutch colonial government*** on Islamic affairs in the East Indies.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christiaan_Snouck_Hurgronje

WHAT DID SNOUCK SAY?

SNOUCK'S OBSERVATION	WHAT IT MEANS
The most famous Banten-born scholar in Mecca	He held a high standing in the Jawi community.
His clothes and turban were plain and worn	He did not care about appearances.
Humble and unassuming	Snouck at first doubted this, then was convinced.
His Sufism was moderate, following al-Ghazali	Stressing character, not mystical secrets.
He had written about 20 works by then	His writing grew further afterwards.

Source: NU Online. https://nu.or.id/tokoh/syekh-nawawi-al-bantani-di-mata-snouck-hurgronje-pMKnn

Snouck also noted that he ***read Arabic fluently*** but spoke it with ***a Javanese accent***. This reminds us that ***knowledge is not measured by accent***, but by understanding and practice.

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MARAH LABID: THE FIRST TAFSIR

SURAH AN-NAHL 16:44

بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَٱلزُّبُرِ ۗ وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ٱلذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

[We sent them] with clear proofs and written ordinances. And We revealed to you the message that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/16:44

Allah revealed the Qur'an to the Messenger ﷺ ***"that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might give thought"***. The commentators continue this task of ***making clear***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:44.

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HISTORY NOTE: TAFSIR MARAH LABID

Its full title is ***Marah Labid li Kashf Ma'na Qur'an Majid***, also known as ***at-Tafsir al-Munir li Ma'alim at-Tanzil***. It was written in ***Arabic***, covers ***all 30 juz'***, in ***two volumes***.

He wrote it in Mecca at ***the request of his friends***. It was ***first printed in Cairo in 1305 AH*** (about 1887/88 CE), and later reprinted in Cairo (1355 AH) and Beirut (1994 CE). It is regarded as ***the first complete Arabic tafsir*** by a scholar of the archipelago.

REFERENCES:

tafsiralquran.id, "Mengenal Tafsir Marah Labid". https://tafsiralquran.id/mengenal-tafsir-marah-labid-tafsir-pertama-berbahasa-arab-karya-ulama-nusantara-syekh-nawawi-al-bantany/

TO BE REFLECTED UPON

SURAH SAD 38:29

كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلۡنَٰهُ إِلَيۡكَ مُبَٰرَكٞ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوٓاْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُوْلُواْ ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ ٢٩

[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:29

The Qur'an was revealed ***"that they might reflect upon its verses"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 38:29.

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THE METHOD OF MARAH LABID

Marah Labid uses the ***ijmali*** method (brief and concise) and follows ***the order of the mushaf***, from al-Fatihah to an-Nas. He drew on the great tafsirs before him.

SOURCE	AUTHOR
Mafatih al-Ghayb	Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi (d. 606 AH).
As-Siraj al-Munir	Al-Khatib ash-Shirbini (d. 977 AH).
Irshad al-'Aql as-Salim	Abu as-Su'ud (d. 982 AH).
Al-Futuhat al-Ilahiyyah	Sulayman al-Jamal (d. 1204 AH).
Tanwir al-Miqbas	Attributed to Ibn 'Abbas; compiled by al-Fayruzabadi.

Source: tafsiralquran.id. https://tafsiralquran.id/mufasir-mufasir-indonesia-biografi-syekh-nawawi-al-bantani/

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COUNTING VERSES, WORDS AND LETTERS

One feature of Marah Labid is that he states ***the number of verses, words and letters*** of each surah at the start of its tafsir. The figure below shows the number of verses in the 114 surahs.

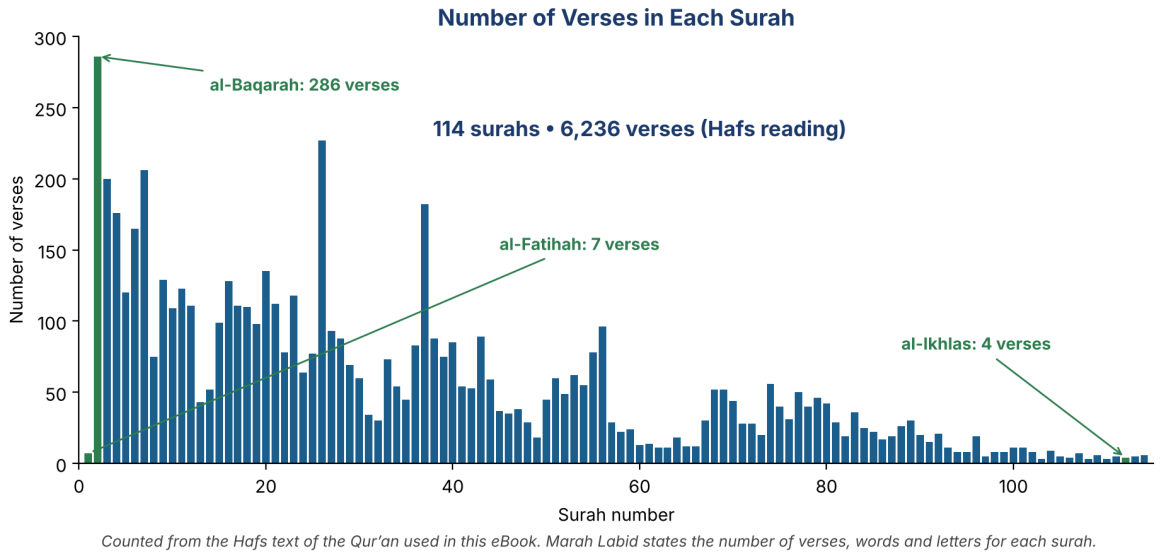


Figure 2: Number of verses in each surah (Hafs reading).

The longest surah is ***al-Baqarah (286 verses)***, and the shortest are ***al-Kawthar, al-'Asr and an-Nasr (3 verses)***. The total is ***6,236 verses*** by the Hafs count used in this eBook.

THE QUR'AN MADE EASY

Allah says (54:17): ***"We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 54:17.

A ***brief and concise*** tafsir like Marah Labid helps students understand the Qur'an before they read longer commentaries.

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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

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Shaykh Nawawi spent his life ***learning and teaching*** the Qur'an — in his circles in Mecca and through a tafsir still read today.

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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

The Qur'an will be ***an intercessor*** for those who recite it. Reading, understanding and acting on the Qur'an is ***the most valuable investment for the Hereafter***.

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KASHIFAT AS-SAJA AND BASIC FIQH

Kashifat as-Saja is a commentary on ***Safinat an-Naja*** by ***Shaykh Salim ibn Sumayr al-Hadrami*** — a short text on ***the basics of creed and the jurisprudence of worship*** in the Shafi'i school.

Safinat an-Naja ("The Ship of Salvation") and its commentary are ***the first books*** read by many students in pondok and pesantren — on the pillars of Islam and faith, purification, prayer, zakat and fasting.

SHAYKH NAWAWI'S FIQH BOOKS	DESCRIPTION
Kashifat as-Saja	Commentary on Safinat an-Naja — basic fiqh.
Nihayat az-Zayn	Commentary on Qurrat al-'Ayn by Zayn ad-Din al-Malibari.
At-Tawshih	Commentary on Fath al-Qarib by Ibn Qasim al-Ghazzi.
Sullam al-Munajat	A commentary on worship and supplication.

EXPLAINING, NOT MERELY COPYING

Most of Shaykh Nawawi's books are ***commentaries (sharh)*** on the texts of earlier scholars. This method continues ***the chain of knowledge*** and helps students understand dense texts.

MATN (BASE TEXT)	SHARH (COMMENTARY)
A short text to memorise	A longer explanation to understand.
Written by an earlier scholar	Written by a later scholar.
Example: Safinat an-Naja	Example: Kashifat as-Saja.

Source: NU Online. https://nu.or.id/tokoh/syekh-nawawi-banten-dan-beberapa-pemikiran-pentingnya-vDMUm

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NASA'IH AL-'IBAD: RELIGION IS SINCERE ADVICE

Nasa'ih al-'Ibad ("Counsels for the Servants of Allah") is a commentary on ***al-Munabbihat 'ala al-Isti'dad li Yawm al-Ma'ad***, a collection of counsels attributed to ***Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani***. It is arranged by number — counsels of two things, three things, and so on.

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 ورجوت 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

ADVISING ONE ANOTHER TO TRUTH AND PATIENCE

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

Allah swears by time: ***"Indeed, mankind is in loss"***, except those who believe, do righteous deeds, and ***"advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 103:1.

A book of counsel like Nasa'ih al-'Ibad is ***advising one another to truth*** in written form. The book also contains some ***weak narrations***, so readers should ***check the sources*** before attributing them to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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MARAQI AL-'UBUDIYYAH

Maraqi al-'Ubudiyyah ("The Steps of Servanthood") is a commentary on ***Bidayat al-Hidayah*** by ***Imam al-Ghazali*** (Book 9), a guide to ***daily worship, purifying the heart and good manners***.

PARTS OF BIDAYAT AL-HIDAYAH	CONTENTS
Acts of obedience	Manners of waking, purification, prayer and daily remembrance.
Avoiding sins	Guarding the eyes, tongue, stomach and heart.
Etiquette of companionship	Manners with Allah, teachers, parents and friends.

Source: Albalagh Bookstore. https://www.albalaghbooks.com/beliefs-and-practices/tasawwuf/maraqi-al-ubudiyya-sharh-bidayat-al-hidaya/

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A BALANCED SUFISM

Snouck Hurgronje noted that Shaykh Nawawi's Sufism was ***moderate***, following al-Ghazali's path which ***stresses character***. He did not urge students to join a tariqah, but ***did not forbid them*** either.

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.

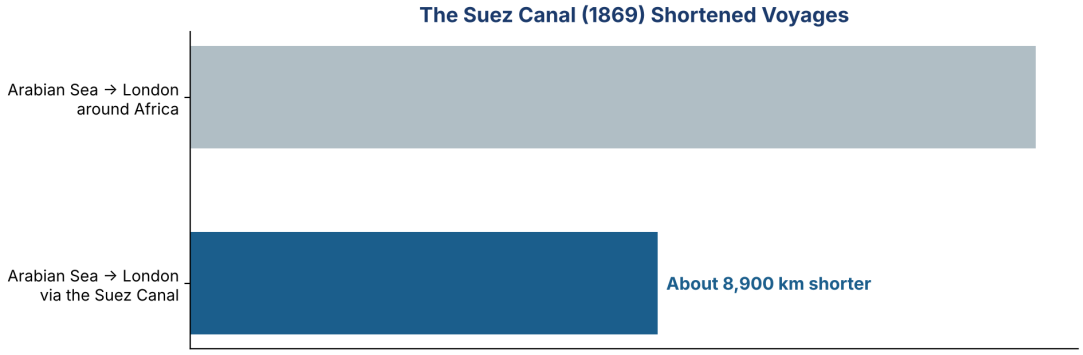
Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6412

Shaykh Nawawi filled his ***free time*** with ***teaching and writing***. He did not let the blessing of time slip away.

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THE SUEZ CANAL AND THE PILGRIMS

On ***17 November 1869 CE***, ***the Suez Canal*** opened, linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea. Voyages between Europe and Asia became ***much shorter***, and steamships became more common.



Source: Wikipedia, "Suez Canal" — 193.3 km long, opened 17 November 1869. Bar lengths are illustrative; the verified figure is a saving of about 8,900 km.

Figure 3: The Suez Canal shortened voyages (illustrative bars).

The ***193.3 km*** canal saves ***about 8,900 km*** on a voyage between the Arabian Sea and London. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Canal

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HISTORY NOTE: THE EFFECT ON THE JAWI COMMUNITY

Steamships and the new route made the Hajj journey from the archipelago ***faster and more common***. More students could study in Mecca, and ***printed books*** from Cairo and Mecca could be carried home more easily.

This was the era in which Shaykh Nawawi's books ***were printed and spread*** across the Malay world.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Suez Canal". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suez_Canal

THE BEST PROVISION

Allah says about the Hajj (2:197): ***"take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:197.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1773

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ سُمَيٍّ، مَوْلَى أَبِي بَكْرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ السَّمَّانِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «الْعُمْرَةُ إِلَى الْعُمْرَةِ كَفَّارَةٌ لِمَا بَيْنَهُمَا، وَالْحَجُّ الْمَبْرُورُ لَيْسَ لَهُ جَزَاءٌ إِلاَّ الْجَنَّةُ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"(The performance of) 'Umrah is an expiation for the sins committed between it and the next 'Umrah, and the reward of an accepted Hajj (Hajj mabrur) is nothing except Paradise."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf, from Malik, from Sumayy (freed slave of Abu Bakr ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman), from Abu Salih as-Samman, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of 'Umrah, Chapter on the Obligation and Virtue of 'Umrah, Hadith No. 1773.

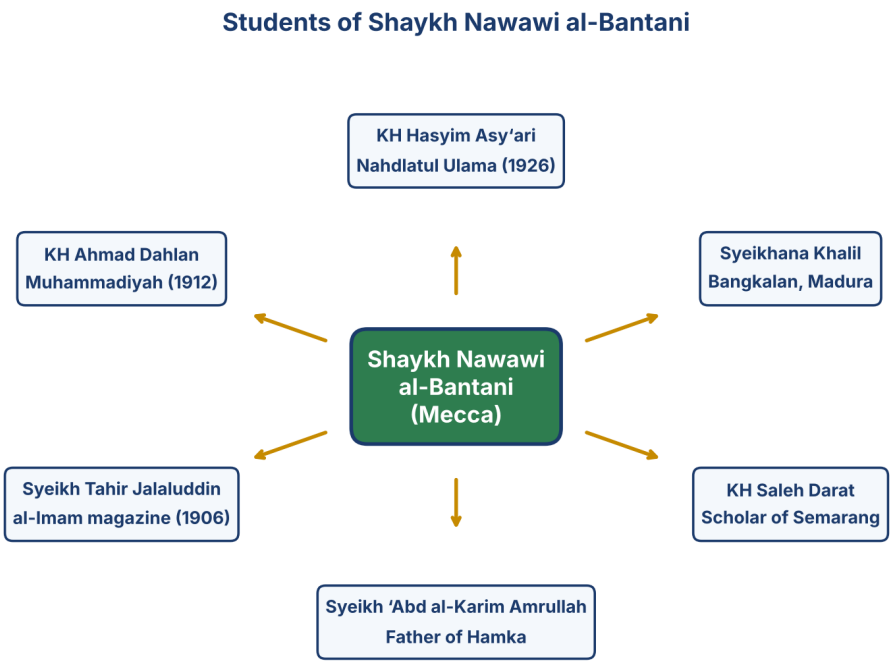
GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1773

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STUDENTS WHO BUILT THE UMMAH

Shaykh Nawawi's greatest legacy is ***his students***. They returned to Java, Madura, Sumatra and the Peninsula, opened ***pesantren***, wrote books and ***built Islamic movements***.



Students as listed by NU Online. Organisation dates from Wikipedia. Some of these teacher–student links come from tradition.

Figure 4: Some of the students of Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani.

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HISTORY NOTE: TWO GREAT ORGANISATIONS

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was founded on ***31 January 1926 CE*** by ***KH Hasyim Asy'ari***. It is now among ***the largest Islamic organisations in the world***, with over 40 million members (2023 estimate) and thousands of pesantren.

Muhammadiyah was founded in ***1912 CE*** by ***KH Ahmad Dahlan***, who had studied in Mecca. Both organisations — though different in approach — are linked to ***the network of teachers in Mecca***, including Shaykh Nawawi.

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Nahdlatul Ulama". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahdlatul_Ulama
Wikipedia, "Ahmad Dahlan". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmad_Dahlan

LINKS TO COMING BOOKS

STUDENT OR LINK	IN THIS SERIES
Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin	Book 48 — al-Imam magazine in Singapore (1906 CE).
Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim Amrullah	Father of Hamka — Book 47.
Shaykhana Khalil of Bangkalan	Teacher of many scholars of Java and Madura.

List of students according to NU Online; some of these teacher–student links come from ***tradition*** and should be read with care.

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CONVEY AND INVITE

Allah says (16:125): ***"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:125.

Shaykh Nawawi called people with ***wisdom***: teaching to each student's level, writing accessible books, and giving ***good counsel***.

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 عَلَيَّ 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

Even if it is only ***one verse***, knowledge must be conveyed. Shaykh Nawawi conveyed thousands of verses through his tafsir.

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».

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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 learns from Shaykh Nawawi's students — down to the pesantren of today — becomes ***a continuing reward*** for him, by the will of Allah.

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ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:36

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌۚ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ 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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STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STATEMENT	STATUS
He was born in 1230 AH (1813 CE) in Tanara.	Generally accepted in the biographical sources.
He died in 1314 AH (1897 CE).	Main view; some sources give 1316 AH (1898 CE).
He wrote 99 or over 115 books.	Traditional estimate. One catalogue records at least 34 works.
About 200 students attended his lessons.	One report; not from Snouck.
His body was found intact when his grave was opened.	Popular story; cannot be verified.
Marah Labid was printed in Cairo in 1305 AH.	Established in printing records.

Source: NU Online. https://nu.or.id/hikmah/kagetnya-pemerintah-arab-saudi-saat-membongkar-makam-syekh-nawawi-FAtUp

REFLECTION — HONOURING WITHOUT EXAGGERATING

We honour Shaykh Nawawi by ***reading and practising*** the knowledge in his books, and by being ***honest*** about stories that are not established.

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DEATH IN MECCA AND HIS LEGACY

Shaykh Nawawi died in Mecca on ***25 Shawwal 1314 AH (1897 CE)***, according to the well-known view, in the district of ***Shi'b 'Ali***, and was buried in ***the al-Ma'la cemetery***.

SURAH AL 'IMRAN 3:185

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ ٱلْمَوْتِ ۗ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَـٰمَةِ ۖ فَمَن زُحْزِحَ عَنِ ٱلنَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ۗ وَمَا ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَآ إِلَّا مَتَـٰعُ ٱلْغُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [his desire]. And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:185

"Every soul will taste death". What remains are ***righteous deeds, beneficial knowledge*** and ***the prayers of a righteous child***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:185.

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A SINCERE INTENTION

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

LEGACY	LESSON FOR US
Marah Labid	The Qur'an must be understood, not only recited.
Kashifat as-Saja	Begin with a firm foundation.
Nasa'ih al-'Ibad	Religion is sincere advice.
His students	Knowledge lives on through those who are taught.
His simplicity	High learning joined with humility.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: True knowledge produces fear of Allah (35:28; 39:9).

Second: Go forth to understand the religion, then teach your people (9:122; Sahih al-Bukhari 71).

Third: Parents are the first teachers (the story of Tanara).

Fourth: Mecca is a guidance for the worlds (3:96).

Fifth: Live in this world like a traveller (Sahih al-Bukhari 6416).

Sixth: Nobility is by righteousness, not race (49:13; Sahih al-Bukhari 13).

Seventh: Allah raises the people of knowledge in rank (58:11; Sahih Muslim 2699).

Eighth: Understand and reflect on the Qur'an (16:44; 38:29; 54:17).

Ninth: The best of you learn the Qur'an and teach it (Sahih al-Bukhari 5027).

Tenth: Religion is sincere advice (103:1–3; Sahih Muslim 55).

Eleventh: Invite with wisdom (16:125; Sahih al-Bukhari 3461).

Twelfth: Be honest about what is established and what is not (17:36).

CONCLUSION

Shaykh Nawawi al-Bantani never went back to Banten after returning to Mecca, but his knowledge went home through ***his students and his books***. The next book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam**, in sha' Allah, will tell the story of ***Tok Kenali***, the scholar of Kelantan who also studied in Mecca. And Allah knows best.

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GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

GLOSSARY

TERM	MEANING
Ahl al-Jawi	The Muslim community from the Malay world in Mecca.
Kitab kuning	Traditional religious books read in the pesantren.
Pesantren	A traditional Islamic school in Indonesia, like the pondok.
Tafsir	Explanation of the meanings of the Qur'an.
Ijmali	A brief and concise method of tafsir.
Matn and sharh	A base text and its commentary.
Halaqah	A study circle seated in a ring.
Al-Ma'la	A historic cemetery in Mecca.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. According to verse 35:28, what is the sign of true knowledge?

2. Why did Shaykh Nawawi return to Mecca and never go back to Banten?

3. What is special about the tafsir Marah Labid?

4. How did the Suez Canal change the flow of knowledge between Mecca and the archipelago?

5. Why should the story about his grave be read with care?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Choose a short surah and count its verses, as Marah Labid does.

Activity 2: Ask a religious teacher in your area whether Safinat an-Naja or its commentary is still taught.

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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."

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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 .

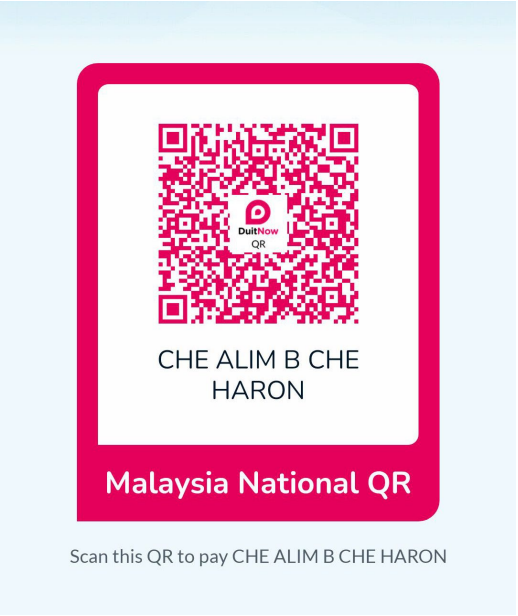
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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

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

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