



FOREWORD

By Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Ḥasanī an-Nadwī

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, Most
Merciful

PRAISE BELONGS TO ALLAH, the Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the Master of the Messengers, Muḥammad, and all his family and Companions.

The Islamic science to which the greatest scholarship has been devoted, as well as investigation, verification and exhaustive scholarly efforts in preserving, recording, learning and spreading it, and the one in quest of which extensive journeys have been undertaken is the science of hadith, which delights the Muslim nation and which it alone, among all other peoples and nations, possesses by transmission and currency, preservation and care. It has been presented to succeeding generations protected and secure, selected, studied and used. The collections of the first blessed Companions, like the Truthful Page (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīfah aṣ-ṣādiqah*) of ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAmr, and the *Muwattaʿa* of Mālik, the *Kitāb al-āthār* of Muḥammad and of Abū Yūsuf, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the *Sunan* of ad-Dāraquṭnī and al-Bayhaqī, and the later collections are immense, pure, scholarly efforts to which the esteemed hadith scholars, great imams, reputable masters and trustworthy hadith memorisers (*ḥuffāz*) devoted their lives. They continued to work at them night and day. A student will be astonished and amazed by these services to the science of hadith, which continued, increased and were perfected until this knowledge bore complete ripe fruit.

Many well-known books have been written on the history of the recording of hadith, the hadith scholars, and in review of the works and sciences of

THE GARDEN OF THE HADITH SCHOLARS

hadith. One of the most important and useful concerning the technical benefits of hadith is the *Bustān al-muḥaddithīn* by the son of Imām Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥīm better known as Walī Allāh ad-Dihlawī, Imām ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (1159-1239), who is described by the historian of the notable men of India, my father Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasanī, as the shaykh, notable Imām, hadith scholar, the best of the *ḥuffāz*, the master of the scholars of his time and son of their master entitled the Lamp of India and proof of Allah. He said about him:

“May Allah have mercy on him. He was one of the unique individuals in this world by virtue of his excellence, courtesy (*adab*), knowledge, intelligence, understanding and quick memorisation. He occupied himself with study and learning when he was fifteen. He studied until he became unique in India in terms of his knowledge. Excellent scholars trained with him and students came to him from all areas and flocked to him as thirsty people flock to water.”¹

Imām ad-Dihlawī was one of the exceptional people of his time, a remarkable scholar, and a great and accurate author. He has a large collection of *fatwas*. His book in refutation of the Shiʿah, *Tuḥfat al-Ithnā ʿAshariyyah*, is without equal. He also wrote *al-Ujālah an-nāfiʿah* in Persian on the basic principles of hadith.

As for his book, *Bustān al-muḥaddithīn*, which he wrote in Persian, it is an excellent scholarly resource for identifying the imāms of the hadith scholars, their books and works. It was one of the acknowledged books studied in the Department of Hadith in Nadwa al-ʿUlamāʾ. One of the excellent young scholars, Muḥammad Akram an-Nadwī, who graduated from the College of Sharīʿah and Uṣūl ad-Dīn at the Dār al-ʿUlūm in the Nadwa al-ʿUlamāʾ, and who is a researcher at the Islamic Centre in Oxford, translated it from Persian to Arabic, annotated it and divided it into sections, which the book needed so that it could emerge in a more ample and complete form.

We hope that seekers of knowledge and its people will receive and accept the book well and that students of the sciences of hadith will study it. May Allah bless this excellent person, accept his work and give him success in increased service to the noble hadith. Allah is in charge of success.

Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Ḥasanī an-Nadwī
16 Dhu'l-Qaʿdah 1417

¹ *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir*, 7: 276.



P R E F A C E

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful. Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessing be upon the Master of the Messengers, Muḥammad, and all his family and Companions and those who follow them until the Day of Reckoning.

The book *Bustān al-muḥaddithīn* deals with identification of the famous books of hadith and biographies of its people. Its author was the Imām and hadith scholar ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the son of Imām Walī Allāh Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm ad-Dihlawī. It is a famous book, which enjoys wide circulation. Students of higher studies devoted to the noble hadith of the Prophet ﷺ study it in many madrasahs in the Indian sub-continent. The author wrote the book in Persian because it was the language of knowledge and of the people in India during Islamic rule there. From the time of the establishment of British colonialism at the end of the 13th century hijrah, the Persian language began to lose its importance and standing so much so that the Islamic madrasahs were no longer concerned with it. This threatened a great loss of our scholarly and cultural inheritance heritage in the Persian language. Some scholars in at the Dār al-‘Ulūm of the Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’ in India suggested that the important books should be translated into Arabic. Accordingly, I undertook to translate the *Bustān al-muḥaddithīn* into Arabic, edit its text and trace the notable scholars mentioned in it. I wrote these lines as general information about the history of the hadith of the noble Prophet ﷺ and the biography of the author, may Allah have mercy on him, as a preface to the book.

ḤADĪTH IN THE PERIOD WHEN THEY WERE COLLECTED

The Generous Qur’ān and noble Prophetic hadith are the two basic sources of our true *dīn*. Islamic fiqh is based on them, and the Muslims rely on them in their personal, social, and political affairs. So they pay great attention to them, which is unparalleled in the history of other nations and religions. As for the Generous Qur’ān, Allah has promised to preserve it. As for the