

MODELS OF THE INTEREST OF ALGERIAN SCHOLARS IN THE SCIENCE OF HADITH DURING THE OTTOMAN ERA

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Abstract:

This article addresses the interest of Algerian scholars in the field of Hadith studies, by examining the most prominent figures who excelled in this science, foremost among them Abu Nasr al-Daoudi, who was the first to comment on Sahih al-Bukhari. The article also explores the Algerians' connection to Hadith and the reading of Sahih al-Bukhari through the works of 'Abd al-Razzaq ibn Hammadoosh, who detailed the celebrations upon completing Sahih al-Bukhari, and Ibn Maryam al-Tlemsani, who introduced a significant number of scholars who studied and authored works in Hadith. The article further presents two important examples of Algerian scholars involved in Hadith studies: Said al-Maqri and his nephew Ahmad al-Maqri.

Keywords: Algerian Scholars, Hadith Studies, Sahih al-Bukhari, Islamic Intellectual Heritage

1- Introduction:

Algerians have been generally associated with the Islamic sciences, and their interests varied across different periods. Among these was their engagement with the science of Hadith, honoring the Prophet ﷺ. Various circumstances contributed to the flourishing of sciences in different cities and towns, including the availability of libraries and the movement of pilgrimage and travel between different regions, from the Maghreb to Andalusia, reaching the Mashriq. Furthermore, the attention of some sultans to the cultural field also contributed to the development of sciences in general, including the science of Hadith. This article addresses the interest of Algerians in the science of Hadith by reviewing some examples in this field, allowing the researcher to present a conception of the status of Hadith knowledge within Algerian society at that time.

2- Ahmed ibn Nasr al-Dawudi, the First Commentator of Sahih al-Bukhari:

His origin is from M'sila, and it is said from Biskra, among the Maliki imams in the Maghreb in his era. He resided in Tripoli for a period, then moved to Tlemcen. Among his works is also the book *al-Amwal* on the rulings regarding the wealth of spoils and lands conquered by Muslims. It is said that he died in 307 AH, though some stated 442 AH (Noueihid, 1980, p. 141). Among his other writings is the book *al-Nami* in explaining the *Muwatta*, in which he reviewed the hadiths and explained each hadith separately (Al-Daoudi, 2008, p. 33).

Ahmed ibn Nasr al-Dawudi was the first to comment on Sahih al-Bukhari, naming it *al-Nasiha*. The author of the book *Ta'rif al-Khalaf* mentioned him, saying: "He is the imam Abu Ja'far Sidi Ahmed ibn Nasr al-Dawudi, buried east of Bab al-'Aqba in Tlemcen. He was an accomplished imam who died in Tlemcen in the year 442 AH, and his grave is known in Tlemcen, visited and blessed" (Al-Hafnawi, 1906, p. 556).

Abu al-Qasim Sa'dallah notes that the science of Hadith was among the sciences to which Algerians devoted attention in teaching, authoring, narration, and granting ijazah. Their care for Sahih al-Bukhari exceeded all others, reaching a level of sanctity; they wrote commentaries and marginal notes upon it. Sahih al-Bukhari was taught in the grand mosques out of respect, and 'Abd al-Razzaq ibn Hammadush undertook its narration in the Great Mosque. Some sources include references in this regard, such as the journey of Ibn 'Ammar and the notes of al-Sharif al-Zahhar (Saadallah, 1998, vol. 2, p. 26).

3- The Journey of Algerians with Sahih al-Bukhari through Ibn Hammadoosh's *Lisān al-Maqāl*:

Ibn Hammadoosh's journey is considered one of the most important Algerian journeys, rich with many aspects of social and cultural life in Algeria during the Ottoman era. He titled this journey: *Lisān al-Maqāl fī al-Naba' 'an al-Nasab wa al-Hasab wa al-Hāl*.

'Abd al-Razzaq ibn Hammadoosh was born in the city of Algiers in 1107 AH and grew up in a middle-class family engaged in tanning in Algiers, where he acquired knowledge through ijāzah, keen observation, travel, and experience, as his journeys to the Maghreb and the Mashriq demonstrate. His journey began with the pilgrimage, departing from Tunis in 1130 AH, then entering the Maghreb al-Aqsa in 1156 AH (Saadallah, 1980, vol. 2, pp. 438, 440).

Regarding the Algerians' engagement with Sahih al-Bukhari, numerous references appear in this journey, reflecting the high status of this book. Algerians devoted great attention to Sahih al-Bukhari, in teaching, reading, and commentary. Ibn Hammadoosh himself studied Sahih al-Bukhari at the Great Mosque, after receiving its isnads and verification from several scholars, as he mentions in his work.

As for Sahih Muslim, its importance is evident from what is recorded about it: when Muhammad al-Kabir in western Algeria built a fiqh school for the jurist Muhammad 'Ali Abu Talib after the second conquest of Oran, he gifted him a portion of Sahih Muslim. Even when he reopened the Oran ribat, he would visit students every week and provide each teacher with five sultani coins, and he also built for them a ribat where they gathered to read Sahih al-Bukhari.

Ibn Hammadoosh began to clarify the method of reading Sahih al-Bukhari, noting that the reader would read aloud, and corrections were made if the reading was not proper. The readings continued over several days, with multiple readers collaborating to recite the hadiths. These sessions concluded with the recitation of Al-Fātiḥah and sprinkling rosewater on the people.

Ibn Hammadoosh presents the total number of Sahih al-Bukhari's hadiths—7,275—in two verses of poetry:

All the hadiths of Sahih narrated by al-Bukhari are seventy-five in count
And seven thousand are added, and what passed to two hundred, count that, those are the main ones
(Ibn Hammadoosh, 1883, pp. 123–124)

These two verses also appear in *Bughiyat al-Ruwād* by Yāḥyā ibn Khaldūn, in the context of his discussion about the scholar of Tlemcen, Abu 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Haqq al-Battīwi (Al-Hafnawi, 1906, p. 80).

Ibn Hammadoosh presented this number to the students, some of whom disagreed and some agreed. Al-Mumallī attributed this number to al-Hamawī, according to his manuscript.

Regarding the well-known prayer after completing Sahih al-Bukhari, Ibn Hammadoosh records it as follows: “O Allah, send the best prayer upon the most honorable of Your creatures, our master Muhammad, and upon his family and companions, in the number of Your knowledge and the ink of Your words, as much as the ones who remember You have remembered him, and as much as the heedless have forgotten Your remembrance and his” (Ibn Hammadoosh, 1883, p. 125).

On another note, al-Sharif al-Zahhar, the head of the Algerian Ashraf during the Ottoman era, mentions in his memoirs that Sahih al-Bukhari was read daily at the Khidr Pasha Mosque, with the aim of completing it every month. Al-Zahhar also states elsewhere that the people of Algiers had a passion for narrating Bukhari, and the renowned scholars read it thoroughly, starting from its beginning to its end over three months from the first day of Rajab, completing it at the end of Ramadan according to the intention.

Ibn Hammadoosh mentions some classifications in which the hadiths were grouped by topics, such as: two hadiths on the obligation of prayer, thirteen on the qibla, twenty-five on Friday prayer, sixty-six on fasting, eighty on trials and tribulations, one hundred seventy on monotheism and the greatness of the Lord. Through Ibn Hammadoosh's journey, it can be said that the reading took place every day of the week except Thursday and Friday (Ibn Hammadoosh, 1883, pp. 128, 217, 218).

4- The Scholars of Tlemcen and the Science of Hadith through Ibn Maryam al-Tlemsani's *Al-Bustan*:

Al-Hafnawi translated about him in *Ta'rif al-Khalaf*, saying: "The pious jurist and historian Muhammad ibn Ahmad, nicknamed Ibn Maryam, al-Sharif al-Militi al-Madiuni, author of *Al-Bustan* on the scholars and pious of Tlemcen, which he selected from *Nayl al-Ibtihāj* and *Bughiyat al-Ruwād*, was alive in the year 1014 AH. Among his works: *Ghaniyat al-Murid* explaining the issues of Abu al-Walid; *Tuhfat al-Abrar*; *Shi'ar al-Akhyar* on duties and recommended invocations during night and day; *Fath al-Jalil* on medicines for the sick by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sanusi; *Fath al-'Allam* explaining *Al-Nasiha al-Tamam* for the private and public by Sidi Ibrahim al-Tazi; *Kashf al-Libs wa al-Ta'qid* on the creed of the people of monotheism; *Al-Ta'liqah al-Sunniyah* on the Cordoban *Arjuza*; explanations on *Mukhtasar al-Sughra*; compositions on Prophetic Hadith and tales of the pious; a summary of *Al-Risalah* for its regulation and interpretation of some of its terms; *Sharh al-Muradiyah* by al-Tazi; commentary on some terms of *Al-Hikam* not completed; *Tafsir al-Hisam* on the arrangement of al-Tazi's duties and the reward for its reader" (Al-Hafnawi, 1906, p. 151).

Tlemcen was a beacon of knowledge and a destination for scholars due to the policy of its rulers toward this group. It was therefore unsurprising that these scholars excelled in various scientific fields, including their attention to Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Several references regarding Bukhari and Muslim appear in the registration of scholars and their production in Ibn Maryam al-Tlemsani's *Al-Bustan*. For example, Ibn Zaghu al-Magrawi al-Tlemsani: "He surpassed his peers in *Dalā'il al-Subal wa al-Masālik* in precedence in Hadith, usul, and logic... and Ibn Maryam read to him the entire Sahih al-Bukhari, and from the beginning of Sahih Muslim up to the part on wills" (Ibn Maryam, 1908, p. 42).

Ibn Maryam also heard Sahih al-Bukhari and Jami' al-Tirmidhi from Abu 'Abd Allah al-Quri. Algerians contributed several works in Hadith science, including: "A small part in Hadith science in two concise sheets and a light commentary on Bukhari in about twenty booklets" by the jurist Ahmad al-Barnasi, known as Zarrouq (Ibn Maryam, 1908, p. 47). Al-Qalsadi authored *Sharh al-Anwar al-Sunniyah* on the Hadith of Ibn Juzayy, and a commentary on the *Rujz* of Abu 'Amr ibn Manzur on the names of the Prophet ﷺ (Ibn Maryam, 1908, p. 142).

Sidi Ibrahim al-Ansari al-Tlemsani composed poems on the Prophet's biography and praises. Sidi Hadou ibn al-Hajj ibn Sa'id al-Manawi "was a scholar and teacher of the seven readings, with poems in praise of the Prophet ﷺ" (Ibn Maryam, 1908, p. 69).

Among the jurists of Tlemcen and its preacher at the Great Mosque, Sidi Sa'id ibn Balish al-Maqri, "...excelled in the art of Hadith of Bukhari." Sidi Shu'ayb ibn al-Hasan was a prominent scholar and Hadith memorizer, particularly of Jami' al-Tirmidhi; he studied it and narrated it from his teachers (Ibn Maryam, 1908, pp. 105, 108).

Some Algerians became famous for their skillful recitation of Sahih al-Bukhari. For example, Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Tazi, resident of Oran: "...when he recited Bukhari or others, people gathered around him for his beautiful recitation. He was an accomplished scholar, eloquent poet, and Hadith memorizer, and he had read it to the Maliki chief judge Taqi al-Din Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Hasani al-Fasi in Mecca."

The recitation of Bukhari and Muslim usually took place in Ramadan. Ibn Maryam records: "...Sultan Ahmad also visited us one day in Ramadan while I was reading Sahih Muslim to the Shaykh..." (Ibn Maryam, 1908, p. 88).

Ibn Maryam adds that he learned from Ibn Marzooq al-Hafid al-Tlemsani: "...Qur'anic interpretation, Sahih al-Bukhari by his reading and others' reading repeatedly, Sahih Muslim, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, and Abu Dawud" (Ibn Maryam, 1908, p. 143). Ibn Marzooq al-Hafid also authored a book titled *Nur al-Yaqin* explaining the Hadith of the pious friends of God and various chapters. He also left an incomplete work: *Al-Mutajar al-Rabih wa al-Sa'y al-Rajih wa al-Rahb al-Fasih* explaining Sahih al-Bukhari (Ibn Maryam, 1908, p. 211).

Moreover, the celebration of the Prophet's Mawlid was not absent from Algerians' minds. Al-Tunisi mentions that Abu Hamu Musa II "...observed the night of the birth of the Chosen One ﷺ, celebrating it with ceremonies beyond ordinary observances" (Al-Tunisi, 2011, p. 162). Abu Tashfin II "...celebrated the night of the Prophet's birth ﷺ with the greatest ceremony, following his father's example, and received from the praise singers the most esteemed eulogies. He also celebrated the seventh night of the Mawlid" (Al-Tunisi, 2011, p. 186). Similarly, Abu Ziyar Muhammad ibn Abu Hamu "...celebrated the Prophet's birth ﷺ as his noble ancestors did, presenting to his high presence praises that rivaled the morning light" (Al-Tunisi, 2011, p. 212).

Additionally, Al-Mazari notes in *Tulu' Sa'd al-Su'ud* that scholars in Algeria would meet the Bey with Sahih al-Bukhari in hand, demonstrating the importance of this book (Ibn 'Awda Al-Mazari, n.d., vol. 1, p. 337).

5- The Al-Maqri Family and Their Role in the Science of Hadith:

The Al-Maqri family is considered one of the most important scholarly households, playing a leading role in the cultural life of the Maghreb and the Mashriq, in addition to their commercial activities through their connection with caravan movements toward the desert. Moreover, the scholars of the Al-Maqri family had other roles through pilgrimage journeys and the relationships they established in various cities of the Mashriq.

Said al-Maqri is among the most prominent scholars who devoted attention to the science of Hadith. He was born around 928 AH and studied under Sidi Haji al-Wahrani, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Wa‘azani, ‘Umar al-Rashidi, Shaqrun ibn Hiba al-Wajdiji, Muhammad Abi al-Sadat al-Madiuni, and ‘Ali ibn Yahya al-Silksini. He participated in every field of knowledge, mostly focusing on monotheism. Among his students were Muhammad al-‘Ashwi al-Nadrumi, Muhammad al-Shammur, Ahmad al-Yaznasni, Ahmad ibn Abi Madin, Ahmad ibn Raziya al-Madiuni, Muhammad ibn Qasim al-Hubul, and al-Haji ibn Malik al-‘Abadi. Ibn Maryam al-Tlemsani said about him: “He excelled in the art of Hadith of Bukhari and was a distinguished scholar in monotheism and jurisprudence. He possessed chastity, devotion, high ambition, and talent; he mastered all sciences, memorizing the Arabic language, poetry, proverbs, news of the flute and their methods, the days and biographies and wars of the Arabs, and the accounts of the pious and their biographies. He was also an imam in rational sciences: arithmetic, logic, jurisprudential obligations, geometry, medicine, anatomy, astrology, agriculture, construction, and many ancient and contemporary sciences” (Ibn Maryam, 1908, p. 105).

Said al-Maqri remained engaged in issuing fatwas and teaching in Tlemcen for forty-five years. He enjoyed high scholarly and social standing, which qualified him to serve as Mufti of Tlemcen and preacher of its Great Mosque. He became renowned for his skill in grammar, jurisprudence, Hadith, Arabic language, logic, and *usul*, as well as memorizing Arab poetry. Among his students were his nephew Ahmad al-Maqri, Sa‘id Qaddurah, ‘Isa al-Battīwi, his brother Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Battīwi, and Ibn Jalal al-Magrawi al-Tlemsani (Saadallah, 1998, vol. 1, p. 379).

His nephew, Ahmad al-Maqri, was famous for Hadith narration and taught Sahih al-Bukhari at Al-Azhar Mosque with such mastery that he astonished the attendees. He visited Madinah seven times and dictated Prophetic Hadith at the Prophet’s grave ﷺ. He also dictated Sahih al-Bukhari at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus during a lesson after the Fajr prayer, which was attended by most of Damascus’ notables. Al-Maqri spoke on doctrines and Hadith in a way unparalleled by anyone and discussed the translation of *Al-Bari*. People crowded to kiss his hand on the pulpit, a privilege unmatched by other scholars visiting Damascus. Among his works are *Fath al-Muta‘al* in praise of sandals, *Azhar al-Kimāmah* on the news of the turban, and *Al-Durr al-Thamin* on the names of the Guiding Trustworthy (Al-Muhibbi, n.d., p. 305).

Ahmad was described as “the memorizer of the Maghreb, eloquent in expression, unmatched in keen intellect, clarity of mind, and sharp wit. He was a brilliant exemplar in theology, exegesis, and Hadith, and an extraordinary prodigy in literature and lectures” (Al-Muhibbi, n.d., vol. 1, p. 302).

6- Conclusion:

The science of Hadith was among the most important fields in which Algerians excelled, both within Algeria and beyond. They worked on teaching it, preserving it, and authoring works in it. They also contributed to spreading their expertise in this science to the Mashriq and the Hijaz. The example of the Al-Maqri family in Damascus represents a luminous instance of this expertise. Their traditions in this regard reflected their profound connection to the Prophet ﷺ. Biographical works have preserved for us numerous writings that appeared in this field, in addition to its recitation in mosques and its completion in exceptional circumstances.

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