BOOK REVIEWS


This book is the first of its kind in Urdu and treats of prominent and leading traditionists who flourished during the 2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries and includes such great names as those of al-Bukhari, Malik, Muslim, Ibn Majah, Abu Daud, al-Tirmidhi, Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Nasa’i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal. The chapter on al-Bukhari was originally written by the late Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi, that on Muslim by the late Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah Nadwi, and the one on al-Tirmidhi by the late Shah Mu’in al-Din Ahmad Nadwi, the former editor of Ma‘ruf, the organ of the Dar al-Musannifin (Shibli Academy) and that on Malik is an abridgement of the full-length study on the great traditionists, the Imam Dari al-Hijra, by the late Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi. Others who have been treated include ‘Abd al-Razzaq ibn al-Humam ‘Abd Allah ibn Zubayr al-Humaydi, ‘Abd Allah ibn Muhammad al-Ju’fi, Abu Bakr ibn ‘Ali Shayba, Isbaq ibn Rahwayh, ‘Abd Allah al-Darimi, Abu Muslim al-Kashshi, and Abu Ja’far al-Tahawi. The pattern adopted by the learned author is this: the name, nasab, birth-place of the subject; his shumkh; his specialities; his field of study; his disciples and mu’attalhin; his works; his customs and habits and lastly an account of his death and the place of his burial. In this way a very clear image of the traditionist discussed emerges and the reader is able to grasp all the information that one generally needs about a well-known religious figure.

For instance, while writing on al-Bukhari it has been stated that he compiled his Ta’rikh al-Kabir in Medina by moonlight without the aid of lamps. Discussing the peculiarities and special features of his Sahih he relates a hadith, as recorded by al-Bukhari, which is fairly representative of the social conditions then obtaining in Medina, that once some one gave some Sadaqa meat to Burayra, a female attendant of ‘A’isha (u-a-Muminin). In her turn ‘A’ishma presented it to the Prophet without telling him that the meat had been given in charity and that he did not eat such meat. The Prophet said that the meat in question was no doubt Sadaqa in the case of Burayra but it as a gift (d-hadiya) in his case. While Muslim records this hadith in the chapter on Sadaqa, al-Bukhari records it in more than one chapters. On one occasion he derives the conclusion that the maid servants of those people who are precluded from receiving Sadaqa can also receive and accept such offerings even though given by way of alms. On the analogy of the same hadith he further concludes that something given by way of hadiya albeit having been given as Sadaqa originally can be accepted even by those who, as a rule, cannot accept Sadaqa offerings, for these have been declared barim (forbidden) by the Prophet both for himself, the ahl bayt and his progeny, i.e. the descendants of his daughter Fatima and his son-in-law ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib. Other descendants of ‘Ali from his other wives, however, do not come under this category.
Referring to the works of Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabāwi, the author categorically states that the original text of his *Ikhtilāf al-'Ulamā*, called *Kitāb al-Ikhtilāf bayan al-Fuqahā* by Ibn Nadīm (and simply *Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā* li-Ṭabāwi by Dr. Sāghir Ḥasan al-Maʿṣūmi) has been irretrievably lost; only its *Mukhtasar* by Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ al-Rāzi exists (pp. 417-18). For a fuller discussion of this controversy see the article “Life and Works of Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ al-Rāzi” by Saeedullah in *Islamic Studies*, vol. xvi, No. 2, for Summer 1977. The other well-known works of al-Ṭabāwi—the *Mushkīl al-Āthār* (ed. Hyderabad, 1914) and the *Maʿāni al-Āthār* (Cairo, 1968)—receive full notice and have been discussed at considerable length by the learned author. Quoting the comments by the late Anwar Shāh al-Kashmirī, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth, Dār al-ʿUlām, Deoband, on the *Maʿāni al-Āthār* it is said: “In our opinion the famous work of al-Ṭabāwi the *Maʿāni al-Āthār* is practically equal in standard to the (Sunan) of Abū Dāʾūd because all the ruwāt (narrators) of the *Maʿāni* are well-known, although some of them have been adversely criticized. The works of al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājā rank second to it”. (*Fayḍ al-Bārīl*, Cairo ed., vol. i, pp. 57-8).

The book is a very welcome and extremely useful addition to the bio-bibliographical literature on the science of ʿHadīth and the Mubaddithūn, especially in view of the fact that no authentic work on this topic existed in the Urdu language. The appearance of the second volume will be eagerly awaited and now that the Dār al-Muṣannīfīn has received a very liberal financial grant, being the amount paid for acquiring the copy rights of several hundred titles published by the Shibli Academy, from the Pakistan Government, it should not be difficult for them to go ahead with the production of this volume and many others awaiting publication. All the titles previously published in India or those to be published in future will now be republished by the National Book Foundation of Pakistan (Karachi) under an agreement with the Dār al-Muṣannīfīn concluded last year through its Secretary, Sayyid Ṣaḥāb al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ṛāhmān, presently co-editor of the well-known research and academic monthly Urdu Journal the *Maʿārif* (A'famgarh), who has been a frequent visitor to Pakistan and the Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad. The need for a bibliography and a full index, so very necessary in books of reference, is very badly felt. The Dār al-Muṣannīfīn should now start doing so.

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