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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AS-SUNAN IN THE SCIENCE OF NARRATORS

Abstract: This study explores the contributions of Imam Darimi, a distinguished hadith scholar, particularly focusing on his work "as-Sunan" and its significance in the science of narrators (*ilm al-rijal*). Imam Darimi's scholarly rigor in evaluating hadith narrators through the methods of *jarh wa ta'dil* (criticism and validation) is highlighted, demonstrating his alignment with scholars such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal. His meticulous approach is evident in the verification of narrator details, including their names, honorifics (*kunyas*), professions, and the detection of potential gaps in transmission (*isnad*).

The paper underscores his precise identification of ambiguous (*majhul*) narrators, correcting discrepancies within transmission chains, and resolving contradictions in reports. Imam Darimi's work, recognized for its comprehensive coverage of *fiqh*, hadith, and biographical studies, not only serves as a collection of narrations but also as a pivotal reference in the study of *ilm al-rijal*. The findings reveal that his records consistently align with other authoritative sources, confirming the authenticity and scholarly reliability of his contributions. This research affirms the enduring relevance of "as-Sunan" as a vital resource in Islamic scholarship.

Key words: "As-Sunan", "ilm al-rijal", narrator, *siqa*, *hafiz*.

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Introduction

Imam Darimi, known as Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Abdurrahman ibn Fazl ibn Bahram ibn Abdussamad Tamimi Samarqandi, was born in Samarkand in 181 AH (798 AD) [4:5]. His death is reported to have occurred in either 250 or 255 AH (864 or 869 AD). Growing up in a scholarly family greatly influenced his academic pursuits. After receiving his early education in Samarkand, he embarked on intellectual journeys to Khorasan, Iraq, and Hijaz—renowned centers of learning at the time. In these regions, he met prominent hadith scholars and acquired extensive knowledge related to *ilm al-rijal* (the science of narrators).

Historical sources attribute several significant works to Imam Darimi, including *as-Sunan*, *at-Tafsir*, *al-Jami'* (Collection), *as-Sulosiyyat fil-Hadis*, *Kitab*

as-Sunna fil-Hadis, and *Kitab Sawm al-Mustahazzat wal-Mutahayyirat* [9:58]. His *as-Sunan* holds a unique place in Islamic scholarship, compiling valuable narrations related to tafsir, hadith, *fiqh*, and *sira* (Prophetic biography). The collection provides critical insights into the reliability of narrators, the *isnad* (chains of transmission), and textual analysis of hadiths.

Imam Darimi began compiling *as-Sunan* during his scholarly travels, meticulously documenting and verifying narrations over many years. His collection not only includes hadiths related to Islamic jurisprudence but also addresses broader subjects such as the pre-Islamic era (*jahiliyyah*), the importance of acquiring knowledge, respect for scholars, and the virtues of Qur'anic verses. The recognition and popularity of *as-Sunan* are attributed to his stringent

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criteria for selecting and authenticating narrations. His work remains a key reference for comparative studies in *ilm al-rijal*, underscoring his dedication to the integrity and reliability of hadith literature.

MAIN SECTION

The word "راوي" (rawi) in Arabic, meaning "narrator" or "storyteller," derives etymologically from the root "ر-و-ي" (ra-wa-ya). This root encompasses meanings such as seeing, telling a story, or transmitting information.

In the science of hadith, the term "rawi" refers to a person who hears a hadith from Muhammad (peace be upon him) or another individual and subsequently transmits it. Narrators form the chain of transmission (isnad) for hadiths, each having heard the hadith from their teacher and later passing it on to their students.

Scholars like Imam Darimi placed significant emphasis on studying the narrators within the isnad chain when authenticating hadiths. The reliability of a narrator determines whether a hadith is considered sound (sahih) or weak (da'if), and whether it should be accepted or rejected. The findings from these studies are incorporated into works known as "kitab al-rijal" (books about the narrators).

Highlighting the importance of knowing the isnad (chain of transmission) of hadiths, Imam Shafi'i (died 204/819 AD) stated: "A person who seeks to learn hadith without its chain is like one who gathers firewood in the dark night. He might carry on his back a bundle of wood in which there is a snake, yet he does not know it" [1:21-22]. This illustrates that before accepting hadiths, it is crucial to thoroughly verify whether they indeed trace back to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), ensure the continuity of their isnad, confirm the reliability of their narrators, and understand the reasons behind their narration.

Imam Darimi, in his collection, has provided significant information related to the analysis of hadith isnads in more than 40 places, with specific information about narrators in 16 instances. These details cover the "jarh wa ta'dil" (criticism and validation) of narrators, their professions, statuses, names, fathers' names, kunyas (honorific names), breaks in their narrations, and identities of unknown persons in the isnad chain and text. Such detailed analysis further underscores the significance of his work. The following section will analyze these elements.

The "jarh wa ta'dil" of narrators. The hadith scholar has noted information regarding the reliability or weakness of narrators. For instance, in the "Book of Purification" from "as-Sunan," after presenting a narration by Abdul Karim ibn Abulmakhariq Basri [4:178], he also records a second report on the same topic. He then notes that the second narration is more reliable (sahih) because Abdul Karim is considered

"shibh al-matruk" (like abandoned), indicating doubts about his reliability.

This narrator has been criticized in other sources concerning "jarh wa ta'dil" with terms like "ghayr thiqah" (not reliable), "da'if al-hadith" (weak in hadith), and "layyin" (lenient). The term "layyin" refers to a level of criticism that, while indicating leniency, does not necessarily mean the narrator lacks integrity or that their narrations should be completely disregarded. Noted hadith scholar Ahmad ibn Hanbal assessed this narrator as "shibh al-matruk" [8:335-336].

Despite the criticism, this narrator has been utilized by several prominent scholars: Imam Bukhari included his narrations in "al-Jami' as-Sahih" conditionally, Imam Muslim in "as-Sahih," Abu Dawud in issues (masa'il), and Imam Tirmidhi, Nasai, and Ibn Majah have narrated from him in their respective "as-Sunan" works. This indicates that the narrator was not severely criticized, and Imam Darimi's view aligns with that of Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

The profession of narrators. Imam Darimi also notes the professions of certain narrators in his works. For example, he records information about Ya'qub Qa'qo and Abu Yusuf [4:238]. Specifically, Ya'qub Qa'qo was a judge in Marv, and Abu Yusuf was described as a sheikh from Mecca.

Break in the chain of transmission. In "as-Sunan," Imam Darimi also addresses cases where narrators omit their teachers from the chain of transmission. Specifically, he mentions a narrator named Abdulhamid who transmitted two reports from Miqsam [4:270]. The hadith scholar identifies this narrator as Abdulhamid ibn Zaid ibn Abdurrahman ibn Zaid and notes that he served as the governor of Kufa under Umar ibn Abdulaziz. Such a narrator does not appear in other sources related to the science of narrators ("ilm al-rijal").

Moreover, this same report is also mentioned in Abu Dawud's "as-Sunan," where the narrator's father's name is recorded not as Zaid but as Abdurrahman. However, additional information provided by Imam Darimi about Abdulhamid ibn Abdurrahman does appear in biographical entries in other sources. Thus, discrepancies in the manuscript versions of "as-Sunan" indicate errors, likely due to scribes' mistakes, as confirmed by notes in another edition of the collection and its commentary "Fath al-Mannan" [6:295, 2:305].

Furthermore, in the chapter on "Reversion from Bequests," Imam Darimi cites a hadith reported by Hammam from Qatadah, who narrated from Amr ibn Shuayb. He also notes a report directly transmitted by Hammam from Amr ibn Shuayb. Here, the hadith scholar clarifies that Hammam did not hear the hadith directly from Amr, but that Qatadah was in fact between them [5:502]. This highlights the significance of identifying breaks in the chain of

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transmission and resolving discrepancies in narrations within the work.

Kunyas (honorific names). Imam Darimi mentions a narration by Hafs ibn Umar ibn Sa'd and notes that he is referred to by the nickname "Al-Qarad" (the name of a tree) [4:291].

Correction of the narrator's name. Imam Darimi, in referencing a narration by Hilol ibn Humaid al-Wazzan, notes a correction, stating that the correct name is thought to be Hilol ibn Abu Humaid al-Wazzan [4:353]. This view is supported by referencing Imam Bukhari's "at-Tarikh al-Kabir" and Ibn Abu Hatim al-Razi's "al-Jarh wa at-Ta'dil" [3:8:207, 7:312].

In another instance, Imam Darimi mentions a narration by Buraid ibn Abu Maryam from Abul-Hawra Sa'di and notes that Abul-Hawra's real name is Rabia ibn Shayban [4:452].

Imam Darimi mentions a narration by Amr ibn Dinor transmitted through Said ibn Abu Huwayris from Ibn Abbas, noting that Said's father's name is not Abu Huwayris but Huwayris [5:146]. This correction aligns with Imam Bukhari's work in "at-Tarikh al-Kabir" [3:3:464].

In another instance, when mentioning Sahl ibn Hammoad's chain of narrators that includes Amr ibn Bayan, he corrects the name to Umar [5:155]. This view is also consistent with Imam Bukhari's "at-Tarikh al-Kabir" [3:7:132].

Further, while citing a narration from Abu Nuaym, he clarifies that in the chain of narrators, the individual known as Ismail ibn Rifo is Ismail ibn Ubaid ibn Rifo, contrary to what Abu Nuaym referred to as Abdullah ibn Rifo [5:323].

These examples highlight the critical work of verifying and correcting details in the transmission chains to maintain the integrity of the hadith literature.

Statuses of narrators. Imam Darimi notes that Abdurrahman ibn Muoz is recognized as a companion of the Prophet [5:86].

Identifying the identity of a Majhul (an unnamed or unknown) narrator. In the chapter on responses to sneezing, Imam Darimi cites a narration from Ahmad ibn Abdullah, who narrates from Zuhayr, who narrates from Sulayman, who narrates from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) [5:368]. He then identifies the previously unknown (majhul) narrator Sulayman as Sulayman at-Taymi. In another chapter, he cites a narration transmitted by Said ibn Umayr from Shu'ba, from Yazid ibn Abu Ziyad, from Isa, from an

unnamed person, from Sa'd ibn Ubada, and notes that the narrator Isa's father is Fayd [5:529].

In a chapter dedicated to the virtues of Surah Ali Imran, Darimi brings a narration transmitted by Jurayri from Abussalil [5:544], and subsequently identifies Abussalil as Zurayb ibn Nuqayr, also known as Ibn Nuqayr.

Elsewhere, he presents a narration from Haywan, transmitted by Abu Aqil from Said ibn Musayyab [5:551], and clarifies that Haywan's name is Zuhra ibn Ma'bad, and some considered him among the "abdals" (righteous servants of God).

A narration concerning an error in Quran recitation by A'mash [5:566] mentions "a person" as the narrator, who Darimi identifies as Ghurak ibn Abu Hazram, emphasizing the importance of identifying unknown (majhul) narrators in the sources.

These examples demonstrate Imam Darimi's meticulous approach in verifying and clarifying the identities of narrators, especially those who are lesser-known or unidentified in the transmission chains, which is crucial for ensuring the reliability and authenticity of the narrations.

CONCLUSION

Imam Darimi is widely recognized as an esteemed scholar in the field of hadith science, known for his meticulous approach to the evaluation and classification of narrators. His views on *jarh wa ta'dil* (criticism and validation) align closely with those of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and are consistent with the methodologies of other prominent hadith scholars.

Beyond being a hadith collection, *as-Sunan* serves as a crucial resource in the study of *ilm al-rijal* (the science of narrators), reflecting Imam Darimi's profound contributions to the authentication of hadiths. His detailed records of narrators' names, honorifics, ranks, and nicknames demonstrate consistency with other scholarly works and indicate the depth of his research.

Notably, there are no contradictions between his findings and the established sources of *ilm al-rijal*, further cementing his reputation as a trustworthy and authoritative figure in hadith scholarship. Imam Darimi's work remains a cornerstone for researchers and scholars, emphasizing the enduring importance of precision and authenticity in the transmission of Islamic knowledge.

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