MISHKĀT AL-MAṢĀḤĪḤ: A STANDARD SOURCE BOOK FOR ḤADĪTH AND ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

by

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Dedicated to the loving memory of my father who encouraged me to pursue studies in Islam but did not live to share the joy of this fruit.
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INTRODUCTION

Hadīth literature, which comprises of the sayings and mode of life of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.), is regarded by Muslims as sacred literature and ranks second in importance to the Qur'ān itself. It is recognised as a source of al-Shari'ah (Islamic Law), al-Akhlāq (Ethics and Morality), al-Mu'āmalāt (human transactions) and other general teachings pertaining to al-Dīn al-Islāmī (the religion of Islam). This phenomenon explains why the Hadīth literature has always played a significant and pivotal role in guiding the Muslims in practically all walks of life.

Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ is, in effect, part and parcel of the vast literary works in the field of Hadīth. It was originally compiled under the title of Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122). This scholar belonged to the Shafi'i School of Islamic Jurisprudence and was a noted jurist of that school. He was a prolific writer and wrote on various topics. However, al-Baghawī is most noted for his work entitled Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah. In this Hadīth compilation, which was written in Arabic, the Ahādīth (sing. Hadīth) were arranged under various headings covering a wide range of topics.

However, what is apparent in this work is the total omission of the full isnād (chain of narrators) of each Hadīth. This means that he only recorded the names of the Sahabah (r.a.) (Companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)) through whom each of the Hadīth included in his work could be traced. He found nothing wrong in omitting the full isnād in view of the fact that he extracted these Ahādīth from other well-known authoritative collections of Hadīth wherein their full isnād could be found.
Al-Baghawi's contemporaries regarded his compilation as a valuable contribution and acknowledged its importance in fulfilling the need of the time. But, the later scholars had certain reservations about his compilation due to its certain shortcomings, one of which was omission of the isnād.

In due course there appeared a number of commentaries on Maṣābih al-Sunnah. These commentaries primarily focussed on the isnād of the Aḥadīth which had been included in the abovementioned compilation. Likewise, al-Baghawi's classifications of the Aḥadīth have also been dealt with in these commentaries.

Some two hundred years later, al-Baghawi's compilation was revised and enlarged by Wali al-Dīn Muhammad al-Tabrizī (d. 749/1348). This edited version came to be known as Mishkāt al-Maṣābih.

T.P. Hughes describes Mishkāt al-Maṣābih as follows:

"A well-known book of Sunni traditions much used by Sunni Muslims in India..........."¹

AIM OF THIS STUDY

Two reasons may be put forth in order to substantiate the academic value of Mishkāt al-Maṣābih. Firstly, notable scholars found it necessary to translate it from Arabic into Persian, Urdu and English. These translations have undoubtedly contributed in widening its readership among the non-Arabic

speaking people who, due to the language barrier, had previously been unable to gain access to it. Secondly, Mishkät al-Maṣābiḥ was incorporated into the syllabus of the various Islamic Religious Educational Institutions (Dār al-‘Ulūm) in India from as early as the fourteenth century C.E.¹.

Today, even in South Africa, Mishkät al-Maṣābiḥ forms an integral part of the syllabus of all the local Dār al ‘Ulūm within the country. But, inspite of its wide readership and acceptance as a compulsory text book on Ḥadīth and al-Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) in India and Pakistan and in all such institutions which follow the Indo-Pak Islamic Sciences curriculum, Mishkät al-Maṣābiḥ has not received the same degree of importance and attention at the Islamic institutions of higher learning in the Arab world.

As yet, no study has been undertaken in order to investigate the reasons for the popularity of Mishkät al-Maṣābiḥ and to explain its academic value and indespensability as an elementary and introductory source work on Hadīth and Islamic Jurisprudence. Thus, the objectives of this study are threefold as enumerated hereunder:

1. To analyse its special features and characteristics.

2. To investigate the reasons for its popularity.

3. To evaluate its academic standing and value as a source work on Hadīth and Islamic Jurisprudence.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ḤADĪTH

1.1. Definition

Hadīth is a verbal noun derived from the Arabic root verb hadatha which means to occur, to relate, to speak, and to report.¹ Thus, the word Hadīth literally means "communication, story, conversation."² The word Hadīth in its literal sense appears both in the Qur'ānic texts and Hadīth literature. For example, in the Qur'ān we come across this citation:

"Has the Ḥadīth (story) of Mūsā reached you."

In the Hadīth literature it is reported that the Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.s.) said:

"The best Hadīth (communication) is the Book of Allāh."⁴

It may be appropriate to point out that the term Ḥadīth also has the connotation of 'new' being used as an antonym of 'old' (qādīm). The technical meaning of the term Ḥadīth has been defined by the fiqhah (Muslim jurists) as "the words and deeds of the Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.s.)", while the muḥaddithūn (scholars of Ḥadīth) define it as "the words, practices, tacit approval of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in private or public or description of his ṣifāt (features) meaning his physical appearance is part of the Ḥadīth literature."¹

1.2. Ḥadīth and Sunnah

Closely connected with the term of Ḥadīth is the term Sunnah. Sunnah (pl. Sunan) is a verbal noun derived from the Arabic root verb sanna which means to shape, form, introduce, prescribe or establish.² In the Islamic literature the technical meaning of the term Sunnah is the mode of life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).³

The two terms Ḥadīth and Sunnah are translated as Traditions of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). They are often interchangeably used but there is a subtle difference between the two terms. In short, Sunnah represents what was practised by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), while hadīth is the record of what the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said and practised. Thus, a Ḥadīth may not contain any Sunnah as in the following example:

1. Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature, op. cit., p. 3.
"The best of you is the one who studies the Qur'ān and teaches it".¹

Or, on the other hand, it may contain one or more Sunnah as, for example, in the Ahādīth (sing. Ḥadīth) dealing with matters pertaining to the mode of 'ibādah (worship) like the Sunnah of the salāh (obligatory prayers), the rites of hajj (pilgrimage), the etiquette of šiyām (fasting) etc. To Muslim jurists Sunnah is "what has been transmitted on the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) which includes his saying, practice, and approval or disapproval." The muhaddithūn (scholars of Ḥadīth) define this term as "that which has been reported on the authority of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and includes in it his saying, practice, and approval or disapproval, and, inter alia, description of his physical appearance, moral character and way of life, before and after prophethood was conferred upon him."²

1.3 The Three Types of Sunnah

a. Al-Qawl i.e. verbal teaching of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). For example, Ḥadrat Abū Hurayrah (r.a.) reported that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said " The best house, amid the Muslim community, is one in which an orphan is treated well, and the worst house is that in which an orphan is ill-treated."³

b. *Al-Fī' l* i.e. practical teaching done by the Prophet through practical demonstration like the method of performing the *wudū* (ablution), *ṣalāh* (obligatory prayers), the mode of *siyām* (fasting) and the performance of *hajj* (pilgrimage) etc.¹

c. *Al-Taqrīr* i.e. tacit approval which may be explained as an act done in the presence or in the absence of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and he either approved or disapproved it. For example the Ḥadīth of Jābir (r.a.), " We used to practise *ʿazl* (coitus interruptus) during the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) lifetime and he was informed about this and he did not forbid us."² Likewise, it comprises that which the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) instructed and acted upon and the *Sahābah* (r.a.) upheld it. For example, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) forbade his Companions (r.a.) from wearing silk and gold rings.³

1.4 Preservation of Ḥadīth

1.4.1 During the Lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) encouraged his Companions (r.a.) to acquire and teach his Ḥadīth/Sunnah to others.⁴ This resulted in their taking a keen interest in

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the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and thus they memorized everything that they heard from him and saw him do.

The course of study which the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) prescribed for the Aṣḥāb al-Suffāh (Companions of the Platform) included, inter alia, the study of the Qur'ān, his Sunnah and the art of writing.¹ The Prophet when appointing officials gave preference to those who were learned in the Qur'ān as well as the Ḥadīth.²

The Companions (r.a.) did not only commit many of the Ahādīth to memory, but, some of them went a step further and recorded them in writing them on stone-tablets, skin, bones and on some form of paper as well.³ Each of these written documents came to be known as a Sahīfah.

The Prophet’s (s.a.w.s.) written documents in the form of letters inviting the chieftains and Kings to Islam; the treaties and agreements he concluded with the different Arabian tribes, Jews and Christians in Arabia; and the letters addressed to the Muslim governors detailing the rules for zakāh and other legal matters, all fall under the category of the teaching of his Sunnah through the

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written medium.¹ Some of the Companions (r.a.) had written down the
Ahādīth. The scribes of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) for example, Abū Rāfiʿī, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr ibn Al-ʿĀṣ and Zayd ibn Thābit were entrusted with the writing down of the Ahādīth, treatises of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) laws, and letters etc. After the demise of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) (11/632) the importance of Ḥadīth increased even more.

1.4.2. After The Demise of The Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

From the very beginning Muslims were interested in what the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said and did. After the demise of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) his Ḥadīth began to be disseminated along with the spread of Islam beyond the confines of Arabia. Newcomers to the fold of Islam were anxious to hear and learn about him and his teachings. The Șahābah (r.a.) were given an eager hearing as they spoke about the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). In this way a great number of Ahādīth came to be disseminated.²

At this juncture it should be noted that the Ahadīth were constantly being memorised and repeatedly reported by the Companions (r.a.). In this domain the Ašḥāb al-Șuffah (r.a.) played a vital role. The most famous amongst them was Abū Hurayrah (r.a.) (d. 59/679) who chose to remain with the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in order to learn everything that the Prophet did or said and is noted

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1. For a detailed account of the letters written by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) see Qureshi, Sultan Ahmed, Letters of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), Karachi, International Islamic Publishers, 1983, pp. 123

to have transmitted the largest number of Ahadīth.¹ He, however, selected 138
Hadīth dealing with al-Akhlāq (Ethics and Morality) from the vast number of Ahādīth he had memorised and dictated them to his disciple Hammām ibn Munabbih and entitled this collection al-Sahīfah al-Ṣāhiḥah (The Correct Tract). This Sahīfah popularly known as the Sahīfah of Hammām ibn Munnabih has been edited and published by Dr Muhammad Hamidullah of Paris in 1953.²

It should be pointed out here that the writing down of the Ahadīth was not encouraged in the beginning lest the Companions (r.a.) confuse the Hadīth with the Qur’ānic text.³ However, after some time when the fear of confusion disappeared, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) permitted the Hadīth to be written. Consequently, the Companions (r.a.) wrote them down, even during the lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). For example, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Amr (r.a.) complained to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) that he had a problem in memorising what he heard from him, so the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) told him that he should seek the assistance of his right hand i.e. suggesting he should write them down.⁴ He called his collection al-Sahīfah al-Ṣādiqah (The Truthful Tract).⁵

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1.4.3 After the Companions (r.a.)

In the year 101/719 the Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (61-101 /680-719), fearing the loss of Ahādīth, appointed learned scholars like İmām Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) to compile Hadīth literature. Al-Zuhrī was a renown scholar and an authority on Hadīth.1 It is stated by Ibn Sa'd that al-Zuhrī had collected a considerable number of Ahādīth with the result "that after his death several riding beasts were needed to transport his manuscripts."2

'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz also wrote letters to scholars of Hadīth all over the then Islamic world and appealed to them to embark upon the task of compiling the Ahādīth that were then available in the form of books. Thus, through his initiative, the Ahādīth that were scattered throughout the Muslim domain came to be systematically collected and preserved.

However, the first comprehensive and systematic compilation of Hadīth was undertaken by İmām Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179/795). His compilation is entitled Al-Muwattā' (The Trodden Path), and contains Ahādīth dealing with different legal topics. Thereafter other compilations of Hadīth came into existence either in the form of Musnad or Musannaf collections.

1.5 Types of Compilations

There are two types of compilation of Hadith. The Musnad collection, is that in which Ahādīth are arranged alphabetically under the names of the Sahābah (r.a.) on whose authority these were reported. Among the earliest available in print are the Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal [d.164-241 /780-855] and the Musnad of Abū Da‘ūd al-Tayālīsī (d. 203/818).

As for the Musannaf collections, the Ahādīth are recorded under various headings dealing with juridical subjects. Famous collections belonging to this category are Al-Sītah al-Sittah (The Six Authentic Books of Hadīth), namely the compilations of Īmāms Abu ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/874), Ahmad ibn Shu‘ayb al-Nasā‘ī (d. 302/914), Abū Dā‘ūd al-Sījistānī (d. 200/835), Abu ‘Īsā Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsa al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), and Abu ‘Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Yazīd ibn Mājah al-Qazwīnī (d. 273/886).

1.6 Fabrication of Hadīth

The conflict between Ḥadrat ‘Alī (r.a.) and Ḥadrat Mu‘awiyah (r.a.) in regard to the question of Khilāfah, finally led to wars which in turn resulted into formation of various groupings and factions supporting one or the other. Each faction began to back up its claim or its political and theological standpoint by inventing a Hadīth in its favour or in opposition as the case may be.

It may be appropriate to discuss, at this juncture, some of the avenues through which the fabrication of Hadīth came about:
A. Political Differences

The Shi‘ah strongly felt that the Caliphate was the right of the Ahl al-Bayt (Family of the Prophet) and thus held that Ḥadīr ‘Alī (r.a.) was the legitimate successor to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). They therefore fabricated Ḥadīth i.e. they attributed to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) many sayings in which mention was made that Ḥadīr ‘Alī (r.a.) should succeed him.¹ Others who supported the claim of Ḥadīr Mu‘āwiyah (r.a.) to the Caliphate were equally guilty of such fabrications. The same is true with other later political groupings such as the Khawārij, the Ummayyads and the Abbasids.

B. Theological Differences

During the latter part of the Ummayyad Khilāfat and throughout the ‘Abbasid period a number of theological issues arose in relation to ʾImān (Faith) and Ṣifāt (Attributes of Allāh). This resulted in the creation of various theological sects such as the Qadariyah, Jabariyah, Mu‘tazilah, etc. Factions belonging to these different groupings made deliberate changes to the texts or isnād (chain of narrators) of certain Ḥadīth, and fabricated other Ḥadīth to lend support to their views.²

C. Al-Qussāṣ (storytellers)

It was a common practice among the Arabs to be entertained by storytellers during their time of leisure. These Qussāṣ related amusing anecdotes, stories.

¹ Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fi al-Tashri‘ al-Islāmi‘, op. cit., p. 75.
tales of bravery during battles to the common people. Thus, their main object was to please the audience who handsomely rewarded them. They invented many amusing anecdotes and tales of bravery during the course of narration and thus invented unwittingly Ahādīth to back up their narration.¹

D. Al-Wā‘izūn (The Preachers)

The Wā‘izūn were alarmed at the spiritual decay of the people. In order to rectify this, they fabricated Hadīth in which mention was made of increase of thawāb (blessings) for minor actions and severe punishments for minor sins. This was done with the good intention of encouraging people to do good and abstain from evil.

The Companions (r.a.) became alarmed at the rate of fabrication of Hadīth and laid down stringent rules for the reporting of Hadīth, laying down the foundation for the development of the Science of Criticism of Hadīth.²

Thus, a concerted effort was made during the early period of the defusion of Hadīth, to curb the fabrication of Hadīth.

By the second century Hijrī the Science of Criticism of Hadīth was fully developed. Every Hadīth consists of two sections: the isnād (chain of narrators) and the matn (text of the Hadīth). Specific rules were laid down by

¹. Hadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, and Special Features, op. cit., p. 34.
². ibid, p. 36.
the muhaddithūn (scholars of Ḥadīth) in order to examine the reliability of the ruwāt (narrators of the Aḥādīth) and this led to the compilation of their biographical data. Special investigation was also carried out in order to establish whether they were influenced by any particular religious view. Furthermore, a method was devised in order to scrutinize the matn (text) of the Hadīth. The muḥaddithūn also devised a system by which the authenticity of the Aḥādīth could be ascertained and laid down specific criteria for their acceptance.¹

1.6.1 'Ilm Asmā' al-Rijāl

'Ilm Asmā' al-Rijāl (The Biographies of the Reporters). This science deals with the personal details of the reporters of the Aḥādīth. The isnad (chain of authorities) of each Ḥadīth are closely examined in order to establish their integrity and reliability as reporters of the sayings of the Prophet (ṣ.a.w.s.).

Among others, the following principles were laid down:²

1. Each Ḥadīth has to be traced back to the Prophet (ṣ.a.w.s.) through a trustworthy chain of narrators. Thus their biographies were carefully examined.
2. The character of each reporter was studied carefully in order to assert his truthfulness and veracity.
3. If the reporter was noted to have a weak memory or was known to have spoken a lie his report was not excepted.

4. Every reporter had to furnish a complete chain of narrators that were all traced back to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

5. The reporter was to be a reputable educationist as well as a muhaddith. This was to ensure that he understood the correct implication of the Ḥadīth.

Thus, biographical works in which minute details of each narrator were recorded came into existence. An important work in this field is that of Ibn Ḥaṭīm al-Rāzī (d. 327/938) entitled Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Taḍīl.¹

1.6.2 ‘Ilm al-Jarḥ wa al-Taḍīl

‘Ilm al-Jarḥ wa al-Taḍīl (The Science of Criticism) was evolved so as to examine the veracity of the matn (text) of the Ḥadīth. Several principles were laid down by the muhaddithūn in this regard. Some of these principles are enumerated hereunder²:

1. The report must be established. This means that it has to be ascertained whether it was said or done by the Prophet (s.a.w.s).
2. Any Ḥadīth which went contrary to the explicit text of the Qur‘ān or Sunnah was rejected.
3. Any Ḥadīth that contradicted the established al-Sunnah al-Mutawātirah (successive practice of the Prophet) was rejected.
4. In the event that a particular Ḥadīth was against historical facts was not accepted.


1.6.3. Classification of Hadīth

Scholars of Ḥadīth have classified the Ahādīth into two broad categories which are termed as Mutawātir and Ḥadīth. Mutawātir Ḥadīth is one which has been reported by a large number of narrators and therefore it is inconceivable that all of them could have lied.

As for the Ḥadīth, the number of narrators are lesser than that of those reporting the Mutawātir Ḥadīth. The Ḥadīth is further divided into the following categories:

1. Al-Mashhūr (well-known). This type of Ḥadīth has been transmitted by two or more reporters at every stage.
2. Al-‘Azīz (strong). A Ḥadīth is said to be ‘azīz if it happens to have been transmitted by at least two reporters in every generation.
3. Al-Gharīb (Strange). A gharīb Ḥadīth is one in whose isnād there exists only a single narrator after the Ṣaḥābī.

The muhaddithūn further classified the Ḥadīth into two groups i.e. maqīl (accepted) and mardūd (rejected). The Maqīl Ḥadīth is further divided into the following two groups:

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1. *Al-Ṣahih* (Sound or Authentic)

A *Ṣahih Hadith* is one whose reporters in its *isnād* are all considered to be authentic, strong in memory and are all above any kind of criticism. The *Ahādīth* which belong to this category are included in the compilations of *Imāms* al-Bukhari and Muslim.

2. *Al-Ḥasan* (Good)

A *Ḥadīth* is said to be *ḥasan* if it has been reported by such reporters whose truthfulness and trustworthiness do not match that of those who reported the *Ṣahih Hadīth*. Most of the *Ahadīth* which have been included in the compilation of *Imām* al-Tirmidhī are regarded to be of this category.

The *Mardūd Hadīth* is that type of Hadīth which does not meet the criteria of *Ṣahih* and *Ḥasan Hadīth*. *Mardūd Hadīth* is termed as *daʿīf* (i.e. weak). *Daʿīf* *Hadīth* is classified into the following divisions:

1. *Al-Marfūʿ* is that type of *Ḥadīth* whose *isnād* is traced directly back to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) but there is a broken link in between.
2. *Al-Mawqūf* is such that its *isnād* stops at the *Ṣahabī* only and does not go back to the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).
3. *Al-Maqṭūʿ* is a *Ḥadīth* which goes back to the *tābiʿī* (successor to the *Ṣahābī*) only.
4. *Al-Muʿallaq* is such that one of the reporters in the beginning of its *isnād* is *majhūl* (unknown).
5. *Al-Mursal* is a *Ḥadīth* in whose *isnād* one of the reporters is unknown at the end.
CHAPTER TWO

HADĪTH AS THE SECOND PRIMARY SOURCE OF ISLAMIC LAW

2.1 The Shari'ah (Islamic Law)

The term Shari'ah is derived from the Arabic root verb shara'a which means to become apparent, manifest or plain. Literally, the term Shari'ah means 'the way to a watering place' or a source of water.¹ Technically, it stands for the commandments of Allāh (SWT) which deal with al-halāl (the permissible) and al-harām (the prohibited). These injunctions were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.). The Qurʾān, in several verses², exhorts Muslims to uphold the law of Allāh (SWT) in their daily lives. This is so because within the Islamic system, the Sovereign is Almighty Allāh (SWT) Himself.

The Qurʾān and Hadīth/Sunnah are the primary sources of the Shari'ah. The former being the verbatim word of Allāh (SWT) and the other being its elucidation in the form of the Sunnah of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.).

2.1.1. The Qurʾān

The Qurʾān is the Book of Allāh which contains the instructions and guidance

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2. Qurʾān, e.g. in the following verses 4:105, 5:44-45, 5:48-49.
revealed by Allāh for the benefit of mankind. The āhkām (injunctions) of the Qurʾān constitute the code of conduct for Muslims from birth to death.

The Qurʾān was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s) over a period of 23 years. Most of the verses which embody rules of law came about to settle questions that actually arose for decision. Some other verses were revealed in order to censure the evil practices that prevailed in the society like infanticide, gambling, usury, unlimited polygamy, etc. These rules of law are found in certain chapters of the Qurʾān e.g. al-Baqarah, Āl ʾImrān, al-Nisāʾ, al-Māʾidah, Banī Isrā’il, al-Nūr, and al-Ṭalāq. Some of these rules are in detail while others are not. The Qurʾān states:

"And We have sent down unto you also the Message that you may explain clearly to man what is sent for them, and that they may give thought".¹

From this verse one gathers that the Prophet (s.a.w.s) is the only reliable medium through which the Will of Allāh (SWT) was made known to mankind. Thus, one of his duties was to interpret the Qurʾānic injunctions.

2.1.2 The Ḥadīth/Sunnah

The Qurʾānic injunctions, as mentioned above, are further explained and translated into practice by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in the form of his Sunnah. Thus, the Sunnah constitutes the second most important source of the Shariʿah, second in authority only after the Qurʾān. That Muslims should

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1. Qurʾān, 16:44
accept the Ḥadīth/Sunnah as a source of Islamic Law is advocated by the Qur'ān itself:

"Whatever the messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you from, abstain from that."¹

"Obey Allah and obey the Prophet and render not your actions in vain."²

"Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allāh."³

Likewise, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) also emphasized the authoritative nature of his Sunnah. During the course of Khutbah al Wadā'ah (Farewell Sermon) the Prophet (s.a.w.s) is reported to have said:

"I leave behind two things, if you hold fast unto them you shall never go astray: the Book of Allāh and my Sunnah."⁴

He also exhorted his Companions (r.a.) to convey to others what they have heard from him saying:

"Haddithū 'anni" (relate my saying to others).⁵

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2. Qur'ān, 8:20.
Futhermore, he implored them to uphold his way of life saying:

"'Alaykum bi sunnati" (follow my example)\(^1\).

The Qur'ān without the Ḥadīth or Sunnah of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) remains unintelligible in certain instances and that is why the Qur'ān has, in several verses, commanded Muslims to follow the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in all his deeds and sayings. Therefore, if one believes in the Qur'ān, there is no other alternative but to uphold the Ḥadīth of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)

The Qur'ān makes it clear that it is not proper on the part of any Muslim to ignore or oppose the explanations given by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) to the commandments of Allāh as depicted in the following verse:

"And as for him, who opposes the Messenger after guidance has been made clear, follows a path other than that of a believer.\(^2\)

From the time of the Companions (r.a.) to this day, there has always been consensus amongst Muslims that the Qur'ānic revelation and the precepts of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) constitute the primary sources of Islamic Law.\(^3\)

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2. Qur'ān, 4:115.
Generally the Qurʾān lays down broad principles of Law and Sharʿah obligations which cannot be fulfilled without resorting to the Sunnah of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.). For instance, the Qurʾān orders Muslims to ‘perform Ṣalāh’ but does not provide details of how it should be performed and what is to be read in it. The details are found in the Sunnah. Again, the Qurʾān allows one to bequeath a share from one’s estate to any person and does not stipulate the maximum limit for such a bequest.¹ The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is the one who fixed its maximum limit at one third of one’s estate only.²

In other words then, the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) interpreted the verses of the Qurʾān and explained their meanings and implications to the Sahābah [r.a.] for practical application. In the process he [the Prophet] also made provisions for those aspects of the Law which were not specifically provided for in the Qurʾān. The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) interpreted the Qurʾānic injunctions by his own words and deeds which was transmitted by the Companions (r.a.) from generation to generation. Even the most common every day Sharʿah obligations such as salah (prayer), sawm (Fasting), hajj (annual Pilgrimage to Makkah) and zakāh (compulsory charity) cannot be carried out if Hadīth is not accepted.

It can therefore safely be said that the Hadīth supplements the Qurʾān as a source of the Islamic laws. The importance of the Hadīth in this domain can be realised fully when after the death of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) every case that came for decision had to be referred to the Qurʾān or the Hadīth. There are numerous cases on record in which judgement was given solely on the basis

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¹ Qurʾān, 2:180.
of the Hadīth. For instance, Ḥadrat Fātimah (r.a.) (d. 11/632) the Prophet’s (s.a.w.s.) daughter claimed that she was entitled to an inheritance from the Prophet (s.a.w.s). Ḥadrat Abū Bakr (r.a.) (d. 13/634) ruled against her claim on the basis of the following Ḥadīth:

"Our property cannot be inherited, and whatever we leave behind is to be spent in charity." ¹

Many other instances of this nature came about for decisions and were mostly resolved on the strength of the Ḥadīth of the Prophet (s.a.w.s).

There is agreement amongst most Muslim scholars that the contents of the Ḥadīth are from Allāh (SWT).² Hence they have described it as being the result of some form of inspiration and that is why Ḥadīth is termed as al-wahy al-khaft (hidden revelation). The contents of the Ḥadīth are expressed through the Prophet’s own words or actions, while in the case of the Qur’ān, the angel Jibrā’īl (Gabriel) (‘alayhi al-salām) conveyed the exact wordings and contents of the divine revelation to the Prophet (s.a.w.s).

Though the Hadīth has complemented the teachings of the Qur’ān in many respects, they are in essence distinct from each other. Muslim scholars have dealt extensively with the differences that exist between the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth and some of these differences are enumerated hereunder:³

². Shari‘ah: The Islamic Law, op. cit., p. 45.
1. Ḥadīth is not necessarily the exact words spoken by the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), while the Qur'ān is the actual words of Allah (SWT).

2. The Ḥadīth is not protected by Allah (SWT) from corruption while the Qur'ān is.

3. The Ḥadīth from or about the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) is the word or action of a human being and not the speech of Allah (SWT) as is the case of the Qur'ān.

4. Every word of the Qur'ān is transmitted by tawātur (i.e. many people throughout the generations) while the same cannot be said of each and every Ḥadīth.

2.2 Al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī (the Prophet's Ḥadīth) and al-Ḥadīth al-Qudsī (the Sacred Ḥadīth)

The Muhaddithūn have further differentiated between two distinct types of Ḥadīth which are termed as Al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī and al-Ḥadīth al-Qudsī. The former being restricted to the sayings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), while the latter case the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) quotes Allah (SWT) in the direct speech. Al-Quds means holy or sacred. The sayings that are termed as al-Qudsī are such that while the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) was relating them to his Companions (r.a.), he mentioned that Allah, in effect, had communicated them to him. However, these communications do not form part of the Qur'ān.

Such reports are included within the category of Al-Ḥadīth al-Qudsī. An example of this type of Ḥadīth is one which had been reported by hadrat Abū Hurayrah (r.a.) in which it is mentioned that the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) said that Allah said:
"If My servant likes to meet Me, I will love to meet him."\(^1\)

In what has been discussed above, it is evident that the Prophet's (s.a.w.s.) explanations in the form of Hadith and Sunnah serve as a source of guidance for every Muslim in every age. This is so because Allāh the Almighty (SWT) describes the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as the expounder of the Qur'ān\(^2\). Allāh (SWT) also emphasizes the fact that every Muslim must obey the Prophet (s.a.w.s.)\(^3\).

The importance of Hadith as a source of Islamic Law is recognised by the Muslim community. It is, as mentioned earlier, understood to be an exposition of the Qur'ān. Without the Hadith the science of Islamic Jurisprudence (al-Fiqh) could not have been evolved and the details of obligations and dos and don'ts would not have been known.

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2. Qur'ān, 16:44.
CHAPTER THREE

MAŠĀBĪH AL-SUNNAH

By the end of the third century Hijrī a large number of Hadīth compilations made their appearance. However, the momentum to compile other works on Hadīth never ceased. Each compilation was unique and served a particular purpose. Al-Baghwā’s (d. 516/1122) Mašābīh al-Sunnah was a welcome addition to the vast literature on Hadīth.

This collection is known by the title of Mašābīh al-Sunnah. Before discussing the contents and distinguishing features of the Mašābīh al-Sunnah, it would be appropriate to give a brief account of the life of its author.

3.1 Al- Baghwā

Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Muḥammad al-Farrā‘ al-Baghwā (commonly known as al-Farrā‘) was born in 435/1043 in Herat, ‘Irāq. He died at the age of 81 in 516/1122 in Baghshur, and was buried in the graveyard of Qādī al-Husayn in Herat, ‘Irāq.¹

He was a Shāfi‘ī scholar who hailed from a village called Bagh or Baghshūr, near Herat, ‘Irāq. He took the nisbah (title) al-Farra‘ from his father who was a furrier (farrā‘). He had good training in al-Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and in Hadīth. He was a favourite pupil of Qādī al-Husayn ibn Muḥammad al-

Marw al-Rūdhī (d. 462/1069), he also studied under other prominent scholars of his time such as Abū al-Ḥasan Da’ūdī (d. 465 A.H.), ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad Ya’qūb ibn Ahmad Sayrīfī¹, etc.

3.1.1. His Literary Works

Among the literary works of al-Baghawī are Shaḥ al-Sunnah (the explanation of the Sunnah) and Al-Mu’jam. Walī al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṭabrizī (d. 749 A.H.) in his Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ makes a mention of these two works. Shaḥ al-Sunnah is a collection of the Ahādīth of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) copies of which exist in manuscripts only. To this day, this manuscript remains unpublished. As far as Al-Mu’jam is concerned it has not survived but reference to it is made by ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) in his Tahdīb al-Tahdīb.² Although he wrote on many subjects, the work for which he is most known is his Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah.

3.2 Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah

This work was first printed in Bulāq in 1294/1877 and thereafter it was printed in two volumes in Cairo, Egypt in 1318/1900, with Imām Mālik’s al-Muwaṭṭā in its margin. This edition was again reprinted in Cairo in 1354/1935.

Al-Baghawi omitted to mention the *isnād* (chain of authorities) of the *Ahādīth* which are found in his *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah* but retained the name of the *Ṣahābah* through whom each of the *Hadīth* could be traced. He selected the *Ahādīth* which he included in his work from a large number of collections of *Hadīth*. These *Ahādīth* cover a variety of topics and are arranged accordingly under specific books (*kutub*) on the principle of the *muṣannaf* works.

In the introduction of *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah*, al-Baghawi outlines the aims and objectives for his compiling this work. He was particularly interested in compiling a work that would include such *Ahādīth* that could serve as a guide for Muslims in those matters of which the *Qurʾān* is silent upon.¹

The reason for his omitting to mention the chain of narrators of the *Ahādīth* may be attributed to the trust he had in the *muḥaddithūn* (scholars of *Ḥadīth*) from whose works he extrapolated these selected *Ahādīth*. The other possible explanation for omitting *isnād* could be the saving of space and avoiding repetitive reading of the *isnād*.²

Every book (*kitāb*) in this compilation is divided into a number of different chapters (*abwāb*). Every chapter consists of two sections (*faṣl*). The first section contains *Ṣaḥīḥ Ahādīth* (i.e. the authentic ones) which have been taken from the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* (i.e. the compilations of Imāms al-Bukhārī and Muslim).

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² *ibid*, p. 60.
The second section (faṣl) contains the Ḥadīth which are classified as hasan (i.e. good). These Ḥadīth have been taken from the compilations of al-Tirmidhi, Abū Dā‘ūd and others.¹

In preparing this work, al-Baghawī did not indicate the source of each Ḥadīth, but one ought to note that in the first section the Ḥadīth in every chapter have been taken either from Sahīh al-Bukhārī or Sahīh Muslim or from both. As far as the Ḥadīth which are to be found in the second section, al-Baghawī had taken them from a number of different compilations and does not make any mention of their sources. This shortcoming in the second section makes it cumbersome and difficult to trace the source of a Ḥadīth therein. However, after careful investigations one may finally come to know that the Aḥādīth in the second section have been taken from the works of Abū Dā‘ūd (d. 200/835), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), al-Nasā‘ī (d. 302/914), ibn Mājah (d. 273/886) and al-Dārimī (d. 255). Thus, these five works are the sources of the Aḥādīth in the second section of Masābīḥ al-Sunnah. It is perplexing that al-Baghawī, in the introduction of this compilation, restricted himself to mentioning that the Aḥādīth in the second section are from the works of Abū Dā‘ūd, al-Tirmidhī and others, without citing the other three works.²

The Masābīḥ al-Sunnah contains 4 434 Aḥādīth of which 2 434 were taken from Sahīh al-Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim. Of the 2 434 Aḥādīth, 325 are from Sahīh al-Bukhārī alone, 875 from Sahīh Muslim alone, and the remainder, i.e. the 1 234 Aḥādīth, are to be found in both these sources.³.

¹. Al-Bidā‘at al-Mizjāt, op. cit., p. 60.
Another observation one can make is that al-Baghawi mentions at the end of his introduction that he would indicate which Hadith in the second section is gharib (strange) or da'if (weak) and specifically states that he would avoid classifying any of the Hadith therein as munkar (rejected) and mawdūʿ (fabricated). But, he went a step further and gave a more elaborate classification of the Ahadith and actually pointed which were mursal, munqati and hasan and munkar.¹

3.4 Translations and Commentaries of Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah

Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah was held in high esteem by the learned contemporaries of al-Baghawi and thus, within a short span of time there appeared a number of commentaries on Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah.

The first brief commentary that appeared was that of ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Suhrawardī (d. 563/1163). Thereafter another two very important commentaries made their appearance. One of them being that of Shihāb al-Dīn Fadl Allāh al-Turabishī (d. 686) and entitled as Al-Mayassar. It was written in the year 666 A.H.. The other was that of Nasir al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar al- Baydawi (d. 675/1276) which was known as Tuhfat al-Abrār.²

It is unfortunate that nothing much can be said about these commentaries in view of the fact that they are not available. This means that what we know of them is restricted to what we read about them in the works of al-Qāri Mullā

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'Ali and Muḥammad Idrīs Khandihlwi. From the work of 'Abd al-Ḥalīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm Chishti we learn that the seventh and eighth centuries Hijri saw the compilation of many other commentaries on Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah, which unfortunately are not available, but none of them acquired the eminence of Al-Mayassar and Tuhfat al-Abīrār.

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CHAPTER FOUR

MISHKĀT AL-MAṢĀBĪḤ

As discussed in the previous chapter, Maṣābih al-Sunnah was an important contribution to the Hadith literature and its value was acknowledged by prominent scholars of Hadith of the time when it made its appearance. However, the later scholars felt that this work should be revised and modified in order to increase its utility and to make it accessible to the common man who does not possess a sound knowledge of the science of Hadith.

One such scholar who held this view was ‘Allāmah Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Tībī who lived in the eight century Hijrī. He therefore advised one of his students, Wālī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Tabrizī (d. 749/1348) to write a commentary on Maṣābih al-Sunnah, and to ameliorate all its shortcomings. Al-Tabrizī responded to the call of his teacher and his efforts bore fruit and the improved version of Maṣābih al-Sunnah came to be known as Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ.

Al-Tabrizī was a renown muḥaddith (scholar of Hadīth) of his time. He was well-versed in the intricacies of the Arabic language and rhetorics. It is unfortunate, however, that not much is known about his life.¹ Al-Tabrizī is to be commended for successfully improving upon Maṣābih al-Sunnah.

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¹ *Mirqāt al-Mafātiḥ*, vol. 1, op.cit., p. 64.
4.1 Improvements upon *Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah*

1. Al-Tabrizī added 1,511 *Hadīth* to the original number of *Hadīth* in *Maṣābiḥ al-Sunnah*, thus raising the total from 4,434 to 5,945.¹ He does not give any particular reason as to why he chose to increase the number of *Aḥādīth*. He only mentions that he was motivated to do so for an important reason, but fails to explain.² A plausible explanation may be that he felt that these additions would further his interpretation and were pertinent to the topics discussed in the *Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ*.

2. Al-Baghawī was somewhat hesitant in passing his own judgment on the quality of the *Aḥādīth* which he included in his work. At times, however, he would declare certain *Aḥādīth* to be *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound) although such *Aḥādīth* were not found in the compilations of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Likewise, he remained absolutely silent and gave no explanation as to why he had classified them as such. Al-Tabrizī, on the other hand, corrected the discrepancy by re-classifying these *Aḥādīth* and gave reasons for the same.³

3. It is interesting to note that al-Tabrizī devoted more attention to giving his views on the quality of the *Aḥādīth* which have been taken from the compilation of al-Tirmidhī.⁴ He did not explain as to why this was done.

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² *Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ*, op. cit., p. 11.
³ *Al-Bidā‘ah al Miṣjāri*, op. cit., p. 61.
⁴ *Al-Ta‘liq al Sabīḥ ‘alā Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 8
It may be inferred that he chose to do that primarily because al-Tirmidhī had commented more, in comparison to the other compilers, on the quality of the *Ahādīth* that are to be found in his compilation.

4. Al-Baghawī had divided his work into two sections. The first included only those *Ahādīth* taken from al-Bukhārī and Muslim and the second from other sources. Al-Tabrizī has added a third section (*al-Faṣr al-Thālith*) to most of the chapters in *Maṣābīh al-Sunnah*. In these sections he recorded additional *Ahādīth* from the works of al-Bukhārī, Muslim and other sources which he deemed relevant to the topics covered in the respective chapters. However, the sequence of the *Maṣābīh* chapters remains unchanged.

5. Some *Ahādīth* which appear in the second section of *Maṣābīh al-Sunnah* have been moved to the third section of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*. Likewise, certain *Ahādīth* which had appeared in the first section of *Maṣābīh al-Sunnah* have been moved to the second section of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*. The reason that is cited for this change from the first section to the second is related to the untraceability of these particular *Ahādīth* in their original sources.

6. Al-Tabrizī has identified at the end of every Ḥadīth the source or sources from where the particular Ḥadīth was taken. Thus, by doing so, he managed to overcome al-Baghawī’s shortcoming of not mentioning the *isnād* (chain of authorities of the Ḥadīth).

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2. *ibid.*, p. 11
3. *ibid.*, p. 11.
Thus, al-Tabrizī succeeded admirably well in accomplishing the task assigned to him by his teacher. The additions and technical improvements which he incorporated in his revised version were indeed significant and made his *Mishkāt al-Mašābīh* an academically popular work.

4.2 *Mishkāt al-Mašābīh*

*Mishkāt al-Mašābīh* is divided into twenty-nine books (*kutub*) and each book is divided into several chapters (*abwāb*). Thereafter each chapter is further divided into three sections (*fašl*). It has in all a total number of three hundred and twenty-seven chapters.

The first book is entitled *Kitāb al-Imān* (The Book of Faith). This Book of Faith is divided into five chapters dealing with sins (*dhunūb*), signs of a hypocrite (*‘alāmāt al- munāfiq*), Satan (*al-shayṭān*), the belief in predestination (*al-qadr*), the proof of punishment in the grave (*ithbāt al-‘adhāb fī al-qabr*), and steadfastness to the teachings of the *Qur‘ān* and the *Sunnah*.

Next come the books dealing with *tahārah* (cleanliness), *ṣalāh* (the five daily prayers), *zakāh* (compulsory charity), *sawm* (Fasting during the holy month of *Ramadān*) and *hajj* (annual Pilgrimage). These are then followed by other books which deal with business transactions, trusteeship and with the conditions of employment and other related legal matters in general.

The books dealing with marriage, divorce, and family maintenance come thereafter and are followed by the remaining books which deal with a variety of subjects, such as food, drinks, clothing, behaviour, *jihād* etc.
Each book has been given a particular title which indicates the nature of its contents. The chapters also have titles which indicate the aspects of the subjects being covered in the books. However, there are only a few chapters which do not have titles.¹

1. For example see Mishkāt al-Mašābīh, op. cit., pp. 66, 370 and 546.
CHAPTER FIVE

COMMENTARIES AND TRANSLATIONS OF
*MISHKĀT AL-MAṢĀBĪḤ*

*Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, within a short period of time, gained the acceptance of the scholars and this was a contributing factor for its popularity. The extent of its popularity and value can be estimated by the large number of commentaries and translations that have appeared in due course in various languages. Important commentaries and translations of *Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ* are discussed in this chapter.

5.1 Arabic Commentaries

1. *Al-Kāshif ‘an Haqā‘iq al-Sunan*, written by Sharf al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muhammad al-Ṭībī (d. 743/1342), was the very first commentary on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. Al-Ṭībī was well-versed in *Tafsīr* (Commentary on the Qur'ān), Arabic grammar and linguistics. He was equally recognised as an authority on the science of influencing juridical principles from the Ḥadīth.2 Interestingly, he was the teacher of al-Ṭabrizī, the compiler of the *Mishkāt*. This was indeed a matter of unique honour for the student, al-Ṭabrizī, that the teacher wrote a commentary on the student’s work. Al-Ṭībī may have undertaken to write this commentary in view of the fact that the *Mishkāt* is a complete compilation of *Ahādīth*, covering practically all aspects of the teachings of Islam. In his

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commentary, al-Ṭibī explained the difficult words, elucidated upon the grammatical structure of the *Hadīth* and provided details of the rules of rhetorics as applicable to the *Hadīth*.

Furthermore, he interpreted the *Ahādīth* of the *Mishkāt* in detail, and also explained the salient juridical deductions based on these *Ahādīth*. He relied, in his explanation, as he himself points out, on the work of the renowned Shāfi‘ī scholar ‘Allāmah Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) entitled *al-Minhāj ‘alā Sharḥ Muslim* which is a commentary on *Ṣahīh Muslim*.¹

*Al-Kashif ‘an Haqā‘iq al-Sunan* is not available in print but it seems that Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī (d. 1014/1605) had access to the manuscript since he made references to it in his famous *Mirqāt al Mafātih*.² Copies of the handwritten manuscripts of this commentary are available in Pīr Jhandū Muḥibb Allāh Shāh Library in Sind, Pakistan and in the University of the Punjab Library, Lahore, Pakistan. ‘Allāmah Yūsuf Binnūrī (d. 1977), the then Rector of *Madrasah al-‘Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah*, Newtown, Karachi, Pakistan, had in his possession a leather-bound copy of the manuscript on which were the signatures of some great Afghan scholars.³ Muslim scholars used to sign on the manuscripts of other scholars as a token of *tabarruk* and historicity (for obtaining blessings).

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¹ *Al-Bidā‘at al-Mizjat*, op. cit., p. 61.
³ *Al-Bidā‘at al-Mizjat*, op. cit., p. 63.
⁴ *ibid*, p. 64.
2. *Minhāj al-Mishkāt* was written by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Abhārī (d. 843/1439). Nothing much is known about al-Abhārī’s life. His commentary on the Mishkāt is brief. In it, al-Abhārī explained the unfamiliar words used in the *Aḥādīth* that are to be found in the *Mishkāt*.

3. *Hāshiyat al-Mishkāt* was written by ‘Allāmah ‘Alī ibn Muhammad al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413). Al-Jurjānī was called al-Sayyid al-Sharīf and was born in Tājū, near Astara badh, present-day Iran, in 740/1339. He studied in Herat, present-day Iran, and Egypt and taught in Shirāz where he finally passed away. His commentary was also a brief one. A copy of this commentary in manuscript form has survived and is being available in the University of the Punjab Library, Lahore, Pakistan.

4. *Mirqat al-Mafātīḥ* by ‘Alī ibn Sultān Muhammad al-Qārī (d. 1014/1605) is the most comprehensive and excellent Arabic commentary on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*. He came to be popularly known as Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī and belonged to the Ḥanafī School. He was born in Herat, Iran, where he received his basic Islamic education. Thereafter, he travelled to *Makkah al Mukarramah*, Saudi Arabia, and studied under the celebrated scholar Shaykh Ahmad ibn Hajar Haythamī Makkī. Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī eventually decided to remain in *Makkah al Mukarramah* where he taught, died and was laid to rest. It ought to be noted here that his commentary was the first one to have been written by a

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Hanafi scholar. In this commentary, the author touches upon the authenticity of the Ahadith based upon the opinions of the early Hadith scholars. He also points out that since al-Tabrizi was a Shafi'i scholar he had restricted himself to include only those Ahadith which were important and relevant to legal deductions and teachings according to the Shafi'i School.¹

In this commentary, al-Qari refutes the Shafi'i juridical opinions and puts forth the Hanafi opinions.² In certain instances he questions whether the Ahadith were of weak (da'i'f) ranking or alternatively he gives his reasons as to why a particular Hadith cannot be accepted to be a source for a specific Shafi'i ruling.³ Thus, he added in his commentary such Ahadith from which Hanafi legal deductions are made.

Mirqat al-Mafatih was published in Cairo for the first time in five volumes in 1309/1891 with the text of Mishkat al-Masabih in the margin.⁴ A beautiful edition of the same has recently been published in eleven volumes in Multan, Pakistan, but unfortunately the year of its publication has not been mentioned.⁵

5. Al-Ta'liq al-Sabih 'ala Mishkat al-Masabih of Mawlana Muhammad Idris Kandihwī (1394/1974). Mawlana Kandihwī was born in 1312/1894 in Kandihla, India, which is a village near Delhi. At the age of 11 he memorized the Qur'an. He studied Islamic Sciences at the renown Islamic institution,

1. Al-Bidarat al-Mizjat, op. cit., p. 75.
2. Ibid, op. cit., p. 80.
4. Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1., p. xv.
5. Its Publisher is Maktubah Imdadiyah, Multan, n.d.
Mazâhir al-‘Ulûm, in Sahâranpûr, India. He specialised in Ḥadîth under the renowned scholar ‘Allâmah Anwar Shâh Kashmîrî. Mawlânâ Kândîhlwî taught at the Dâr al-‘Ulûm, Deoband, and finally migrated to Pakistan in 1949. He passed away in that city.¹ His work happens to be the most recent commentary on Mishkât al-Masâbih. This commentary is in effect an abridged version of Mirqat al-Mafâtîh.² Mawlânâ Kândîhlwî did not manage to complete his commentary. Thus, his equally well-known son, Mawlânâ Muhammad Mâlik completed the work and published it in five volumes in Lahore, Pakistan.

6. Lamahât al-Tanqîh was written by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaq Sayf al-Dîn al-Dîhlawî (d. 1052/1642) and is a short Arabic commentary on al-Tabrizî’s Mishkât al-Masâbih.³ ‘Abd al-Ḥaq al-Dîhlawî was born in India and completed his studies of the Islamic Sciences in Delhi. Thereafter, he travelled to Makkah al Mukarramah, Saudi Arabia, and specialised in Ḥadîth under Mullâ ‘Ali al-Qârî and other notable scholars. He was a prolific writer and wrote on a wide variety of subjects. He passed away in 1052/1642 at the age of 94 and is buried in Delhi. A manuscript of his Lamahât al-Tanqîh is found in al-Āsafiyah Government Library, Hyderabad Deccan, India.⁴


2. Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1., p. xv.
5. Zujâjah al-Masâbih has been published by Tâj Press, Hyderabad Deccan, India, n.d. in five volumes.
wrote Zujiyat al-Masabih on the pattern of Mishkat al-Masabih. He attained his religious education in Hyderabad Deccan, India, under prominent scholars. He was a prolific writer and wrote on a variety of subjects. He passed away in Hyderabad, India, at the age of 92.

Abu al-Hasanat undertook writing his commentary on the Mishkat entitled Zujiyah al-Masabih while visiting Turkey and Afghanistan. Since the majority of the Muslim population in these two countries follow the Hanafi School of Islamic Jurisprudence, his commentary is based upon the Hanafi juridical opinions. Some salient features of his commentary are as follows: firstly, he has included at the beginning of every chapter relevant verses of the Qur'an pertaining to the topics discussed in the chapters; secondly, since Al-Tabrizi, the author of the Mishkat, had included only such Ahadith which have a Shafi'i bias, he, on the other hand, replaced these Ahadith with others that are in conformity with the Hanafi rulings; thirdly, unlike the Mishkat he grouped all the Ahadith which deal with juridical matters under relevant headings. This commentary has been translated into Urdu by a group of scholars and entitled as Naur al-Masabih.

5.2 Farsi Translation and Commentary

Ashiat al-Lama'at of Shaykh 'Abd al-Haq Sayf al-Din al-Dihlawi represents the first attempt at translating Mishkat al-Masabih into Farsi (the Persian language). It also incorporates a full commentary on the same. It was published for the first time in 1277/1860 in Lucknow, India and another edition of the same was later published in 1390/1970 in Lahore, Pakistan.¹

5.3 Urdu Translation and Commentary

Mażāhir al-Ḥaq of Muḥammad Quṭb al-Dīn Khan Dihlawi (d. 1289/1872) is in five volumes and is considered to be the most comprehensive commentary on Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, written in the Urdu language. The author was born in 1219/1804 in Delhi, India, and began his studies under the learned scholar Shāh Muḥḥammad Ishāq of Delhi. He then travelled to Saudi Arabia, where he studied under prominent scholars in Makkah al Mukarramah and al-Madīnah al- Munawwarah. He passed away in Makkah al Mukarramah.¹ In his commentary on the Mishkāt he quotes extensively from the other commentators. Though it is an excellent translation and commentary, it does not appeal to the laymen because of the fact that the style and language are too high-flown. The translation contains Arabic and Persian words² and constructions which make the language highly Arabicised and Persianised, making it difficult to follow.

2. Tarjamat al-Mishkāt is purely an Urdu translation of Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ. It is the work of Mawlānā Karāmat ‘Alī Jawnpūrī (d. 1290/1873). Karāmat ‘Alī was born in Jawnpūr, India, but the year of his birth is uncertain. He studied Islamic Theology and other Islamic Sciences under Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Muḥḥaddith al-Dihlawī (d. 1239/1824). He was a disciple of Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd of Breyli (d. 1246/1831), India. He was a trained qārī (i.e. reciter of

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2. For example see Mażāhir al-Ḥaq, op. cit., the beginning of its introduciton, p. 26.
the Qur'ān) and an expert calligraphist. He is buried in Rangpūr, India. All his literary works have been written in the Urdu language.¹

5.4 English Translations and Commentaries

It is appropriate to mention here that most of the relevant informations on the English translations and commentaries on Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ have been taken from Dr. James Robson’s Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ - English Translation with Explanatory Notes. Dr. Robson was an Irish clergyman and was Professor of Arabic at the University of Manchester, England.

1. The first English translation of Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ was done by A N Matthews in two volumes. His translation was printed in Calcutta, India, in 1809. Some of the shortcomings of this translation are as follows: Firstly, a substantial number of Ahādīth have been left out and therefore not translated. No reason has been given as to why this was done. Secondly, there are wrong translations of the Arabic texts. Thirdly, at certain places the commentaries on the Ahādīth are given in the midst of their translations, thus causing much confusion between the translation of the text and the commentary.²

2. There were some scholars, for example A.A.K. Muhammad, who attempted to translate into English only selected portions of Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ. His work entitled The Sayings of Hazrat Muhammad was published in Calcutta,

² Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1, p. xv.
India in 1918.\(^1\) Selections of texts is quite arbitrary and no explanation is given for his selection of the passages.

3. Another English translation of selections from *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* is that of W. Goldsack entitled *Selections from Muhammadan Traditions*. It was published in Madras, India in 1923.\(^2\) It has not been possible to establish as to why he chose to translate certain selections from the *Mishkāt*.

4. The celebrated translation and commentary of Moulana Fazlul Karim entitled *Al-Ḥadīs* was published for the first time in Calcutta, India in 1939 and includes the Arabic text as well. While the author calls it a translation of *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, it is evident that he has rearranged the order of the *Aḥādīth* and added some *Aḥādīth* on his own initiative and omitted some from the original text. It is, in effect, a new work based on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*.\(^3\)

5. In view of the previous shortcomings that existed in the abovementioned English translations, Professor James Robson felt that there was a need "to produce a translation in natural English".\(^4\) He undertook the translate the *Mishkāt*. His translation runs into five volumes and is entitled *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ - English Translation with Explanatory Notes*. It was published in Lahore, Pakistan in 1963. Its language is lucid and the modern system of transliteration has been employed. In his commentary on the *Aḥādīth* that are

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1. Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1, p. xvi.
2. *ibid*, vol. 1, p. xv.
3. *ibid*, vol. 1, p. xvi.
to be found in the *Mishkāt* he has incorporated brief explanations of certain *Ahādīth* based on the explanations found in *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ* and *al-Taʿlīq al-Ṣabīḥ ‘alā Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ*.¹

Professor Robson himself points out that, in his work, he did not discuss the questions of authenticity of the *Ahādīth*, nor did he elaborate on the salient meanings of the *Ahādīth*. Furthermore, he himself admits that the "notes (in his translation) mainly deal with explanations of some Arabic words, place names, incidents to which reference is made, and the references to the sūrah and verses of the *Qurʾān* which are quoted."²

6. ‘Abdul Hameed Siddiqui translated and annotated the *Mishkāt* and named his work *Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ*. In 1976 Islamic Publications Ltd, Lahore, Pakistan, published it in two volumes. In its introduction, ‘Abdul Hameed Siddiqui states that he encountered certain difficulties in translating the *Mishkāt* into English but nevertheless has "endeavoured to convey somehow or the other the meanings of the words of ahādīth to the English-knowing readers."³ The value of translation lies in the fact that the Arabic text of the *Ahādīth* have been retained. While he does explain, in some instances, the meanings of certain *Ahādīth*, a need still exists for a more comprehensive English translation and commentary on *Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ*.

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¹ Robson, James, op. cit., vol. 1, p. xv.
² ibid., vol. 1, p. xix.
5.5 Other Commentaries

The author of *Mazāhir al-Haq*, Muhammad Qutb al-Dīn Khān Dīhlawī\textsuperscript{4} cites numerous other commentaries on *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*. The writer of this thesis has not been able to have access to any one of them but their copies, either in old print or manuscript forms, should be available in India and Pakistan. Thus, only their titles and the names of their authors are listed in what follows:

CHAPTER SIX

EVALUATION OF MISHKĀT AL-MAṢĀBIḤ
AS A SOURCE BOOK OF
ḤADĪTH AND ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

From the very beginning Muslims concerned themselves with the Qur'ān and Hadīth. These two sources of Islam, in due course, gave rise to other branches of Islamic learnings such as Law and Jurisprudence, Theology, Grammar, History, etc.

Initially, Hadīth was linked to the Sīrah and Tafsīr literature (i.e. literature which dealt with the life of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and interpretations of the Qur'ānic text). It was only in the second century Hijrī that the Muhaddithūn (scholars of Hadīth) finally segregated Hadīth from tafsīr literature and thus an independent science of Hadīth came into being. This move was necessary for the development and preservation of Hadīth.

6.1 Evolution of Islamic Educational Institutions

Tafsīr, Hadīth and other Islamic Sciences form the core of the curriculum in educational institutions throughout the Muslim world and it may therefore be appropriate to give an account of the evolution of the system of education in the Muslim world. The Masjid (Mosque) that existed in towns and villages, was a convenient place to use it as an educational institution also. Then gradually maktabs (elementary religious schools), separate from the Masjid, came into existence. Thereafter, centres for higher education were established. For example, Madrasah al-Nūriyah in Damascus (Syria) Al-Azhar University
in Cairo (Egypt), and the Nizāmīyah in Baghdād (‘Irāq) came into existence. The curriculum of these institutions covered the religious and social sciences and Arabic language and literature. The Qurʾān and Ḥadīth, as mentioned earlier, formed an integral part of the curriculum. Here, it must be noted that all branches of Hadīth such as the Usūl (Principles), Naqd al-Ḥadīth (Science of Criticism of Ḥadīth), the Science of Reconciling apparently opposing Ḥadīth texts became fully fledged sciences and were all incorporated into the curriculum.

6.2 Selected Works on Ḥadīth

The process of collection of Hadīth, within a short period of time, gained momentum and this gave rise to the appearance of a large number of Ḥadīth compilations within the Muslim world. This phenomenon was a blessing for it served as an inspiration for later scholars to compile condensed works of selected and important Aḥadīth for the benefit of those who did not possess sufficient skill and had no time to consult the bulky and voluminous collections of Hadīth literature. These selected works on Hadīth were compiled either in the form of Musnad or Muṣannaf compilations. Each of these works reflected its compiler’s affiliation to a particular school of Islamic Jurisprudence.

It was during the eight century Hijrī, when ‘Allāmah al-Ṭibī was in the midst of writing his celebrated commentary on the Qurʾān entitled Al-Kashshāf that he felt the need of compiling a Hadīth textbook, free from any Fiqhī school bias.¹

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¹ Al-Bidāʾat al Mizjāt, op. cit., p. 25.
6.3 Compilation of Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ

Masābīḥ al-Sunnah was at that time the only concise Hadīth book. Its compiler took great care to provide such materials that were indispensable for regulating the practical lives of Muslims in accordance to the dictates of Islam. Thus, al-Ṭibī entrusted his student al-Tabrizī with the task of improving upon this work so that it could serve as an introductory book on Hadīth and Fiqh. This improved version of Masābīḥ al-Sunnah was entitled Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ and was completed on the eve of 'Īd al-Fitr (the Festival following the termination of the Ramadān Fast) in 737/1336. On the following day, the student presented it to his teacher, who wasted no time and wrote a commentary on it entitled al-Kāshīf. Al-Ṭibī was pleased with the efforts of his student and this may have prompted him to write a commentary on Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ.

6.3.1 Views of Some Muslim Scholars on Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ

Mishkāt al-Masābīḥ undoubtedly covers a wide variety of topics which are of vital importance to a student of Islam or a lay Muslim. ‘Allāmah Ibn Ḥajar al-Ḥaythamī al-Makkī (d. 973/1565) in his Fath al-Ilāh admitted that the Mishkāt was the best arranged compilation during his time. Mawlānā Muhammad Idrīs Kāndihlwī pointed out in the introduction of his commentary on the Mishkāt

2. ibid, p. 60.
3. ibid, p. 25.
4. ibid, p. 64
entitled *al-Taʿliq al-Ṣabīḥ ‘alā Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* that none would be able to be in a position to find among the collections of *Hadīth* a book that was more complete than the *Mishkāt*.\(^1\) Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥaq al-Dihlawī in his *al-Lamaḥāt al-Tanqīḥ* described *Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* as a book that was free from errors, containing such *Ahādīth* relevant to the knowledge and practice of Islam, and was of the opinion that any improvement on the *Mishkāt* was unimaginable in view of the fact that its competent author had exerted considerable intellectual acumen in the process of compiling it.\(^2\) The renown scholar, Shāh Wālī Allāh (d.1174/1762), advised potential Muslim scholars to acquaint themselves with the Arabic language so that they could be in a position to study the *Mishkāt*.\(^3\)

6.3.2 The *Mishkāt* as a Standard Textbook

The *Mishkāt*, since its compilation, became a standard textbook for studying *Hadīth* and also as an introductory source book of Islamic Jurisprudence. Its compiler, Al-Ṭabarzī, paved the way for this by taking it upon himself to teach it privately in Herat, Iran, and later he taught it at the Nizāmīyah in Baghdād, Irāq.\(^4\) Thereafter, the *Mishkāt* was also introduced in the curriculum of other religious institutions in Egypt, Syria, and in Makkah al-Mukarramah in 983/1575.\(^5\)

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Islamic education was at its zenith and perhaps past its meridian when Islam came to India as a permanent political force in the last decade of the 12th century C.E. It brought in its wake its own system of education and in the succeeding years, religious educational institutions came into existence. These institutions have more or less continued to function on the same pattern up to the present times.

*Mishkât al-Masâbîh* was taught at Madrasah of Fīrūz Shāh at Haus Khās in New Delhi (14th century C.E.), at the Institute in Bidar (15th century C.E.) which was named after Mahmūd Gāwān (d. 887/1482) and also at the Madrasah Purānā Awliyā' in New Delhi (16th century C.E.).

In the first part of the 18th century, some reforms were carried out in the religious curriculum by Shāh Wali Allāh and Mullā Nizāmuddīn of Sīhālī (d. 1160/1748). The syllabus that was designed by them came to be known as *Al-Dars al-Nizāmī*, named after Mullā Nizāmuddīn. It must be pointed out that the *Mishkât* was the only book of Ḥadīth that was included in the syllabus.

Thus, to this day, *Mishkât al-Masâbîh* remains part of the syllabus of hundreds of Islamic religious institutions in the Indo-Pak subcontinent, such as Dār al-ʿUlūm, Deoband, Nadwat al-ʿUlamā’, Lucknow, Jāmiʿah Mansabiyah, in Meerut, Mazāhir al-ʿUlūm, Shahāranpur, Madrasah Amīnīyah, Delhi, Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Islamiyyah, Karachi, Dār al-ʿUlūm, Karachi, etc. This is so because the Mishkât is a concise work dealing with the basic

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teachings of Islam, without delving into unnecessary and irrelevant details, hence its popularity.

Interestingly, the Mishkāt was also introduced in the higher Islamic educational institutions in South Africa. For example, Dar al-'Ulūm, Newcastle, Natal was established in 1973 and the Mishkāt was introduced in its curriculum for the first time in 1981 and since then onwards it has been and continues to be taught as a Ḥadīth textbook and also as an introductory source book of al-Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence).

6.3.3 Some Juridical Inferences

The importance of the Mishkāt lies in the fact that its compiler has included in it selections of Aḥādīth from the larger collections of Ḥadīth. Interestingly, these Aḥādīth were those that formed the basis of juridical inferences. This feature undoubtedly enhanced the value of the Mishkāt. Hence, both scholars and laymen alike found it to be a useful work. In what follows a few examples are given of some of the Aḥādīth which have been included in the Mishkāt and have juridical significance:

6.3.3.1 The Performance of Wuḍū (Ablution)

In the chapter entitled Kitāb al-Tahārah (The Book of Purification) the following Ḥadīth appears in connection with the performance of wudū (ablution):

"The key to Paradise is Ṣalāh and the key to Ṣalāh is wudū (ablution)."¹

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Muslim jurists inferred from this Hadīth that it is compulsory to perform wudū (ablution) before engaging in Ṣalāh (the five times' daily prayer)¹ and this complements the Qur'ānic injunction (5:6) which makes it obligatory upon Muslims to perform the wudū before praying.

6.3.3.2 Invoking the Name of Allāh Before Performing Wudū

In the chapter entitled Sunnah al-Wudū, the following Hadīth is recorded:

"Wudū is incomplete without Bismillāh (invoking the Name of Allāh)."³

Since Al-Tabrizī included this Hadīth in the chapter entitled Sunnah al-Wudū then it would be in conformity with the practice of the Prophet (s.a.w.s) to utter Bismillāh before performing the wudū.⁴

6.3.3.3 Recitation of Sūrat al-Fātihah During the Ṣalāh

In the chapter dealing with the recitation of the Qur'ān in the Ṣalāh the following Hadīth is recorded:

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"Ṣalāh is not valid except with the recitation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah, (the Opening chapter)."¹

The inference made from this Ḥadīth is that it is compulsory to recite Sūrat al-Fātiḥah in every raka‘ah of Ṣalāh. There is agreement amongst the jurists on this. However, the inference of the jurists based on the text of this Ḥadīth differ. The differences of opinion pertain to the nature of its recitation.²

6.3.3.4 The Validity of A Sale

In the chapter dealing with business transactions, the following Ḥadīth is recorded:

"Bargain not in that which is not in your possession".³

Muslim jurists are in agreement that, on the basis of this Ḥadīth, one may not sell that which is not in one’s possession.⁴

6.4 Some Literary Works Based on the Ahādīth of the Mishkāt

Interestingly, there are a number of literary works that have been based on the Ahādīth of the Mishkāt. According to Mawłānā Muhammad Quṭb al-Dīn Khān

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¹ Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ, op. cit., p. 78.
² For details in this regard see Al-Ta‘līq al-Sabīh, op. cit., vol. 1., p. 362.
⁴ Mirqāṭ al-Mafātīḥ, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 75.
Dihlawī, the renown Shāh Wafī Allāh of Dehli based his famous Hujjat Allāh al-Bālīghah on the Mishkāt.¹ Mawlānā Manzūr Nu‘mānī concedes that the Ahādīth which he translated in his book The Meaning and Message of the Traditions were taken from the Mishkāt.² Zād al-Ţālibīn is being taught in all Indo-Pak and South African Dār al-‘Ulūms as an Arabic vocabulary book. It was written by ‘Āshiq Ilāhī al-Barnī, a former teacher³ at Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband, India. In its introduction, the author states that the Ahādīth which have been included in his book are from the Mishkāt.⁴ Likewise, extensive references to the Ahadīth of the Mishkāt have been made in Tuhfat al-Khawāṭīḥ⁵ of Mawlānā ‘Āshiq Ilāhī Balandshahrī, former head Mufti⁶, Dār al-‘Iftā’, Dār al-‘Ulūm, Korangi, Karachi, also in Khawāṭīn Ke liye Shar‘ī‘ Ahkām⁷ of the late Dr. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Hayy, a homeopathic doctor, Karachi, Pakistan, and in al-Jihād of Mawlānā Ḥabīb Allāh Mukhtar⁸, present Rector, Madrasah al-‘Arabiyyah Islāmiyyah, Newtown, Karachi, Pakistan.

3. He is now retired.
6. He is now residing in al-Madinat al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
CONCLUSION

The divine guidance that came to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) was in the form of the Qur'ān which, in essence is the verbatim word of Allāh (SWT). Since the Qur'ān, in many instances does not provide the details for the divine injunctions, the Hadīth of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) supplements the Qur'ān in that it serves to elaborate upon the Qur'ānic teachings. This is so in view of the fact that since the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.s.) was the one who received the revelation directly, he was the one who could interpret the meanings of the Qur'ān. The words and deeds of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) came to be recognised as the second source of Islam and, as discussed earlier, the Qur'ān itself exhorted Muslims to obey and follow the Prophet (s.a.w.s).

The teachings of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.) in the form of his Hadīth (sayings) and Sunnah (deeds) were well recorded and preserved and transmitted by the Sahābah (r.a.) orally. Though the Ahādīth were recorded in writing during the lifetime of the Prophet (s.a.w.s.), it was only in the second century Hijrī that the first systematic compilation of Hadīth was accomplished by Imām Mālik bin Anas (d. 193/808). Thereafter other compilations appeared including what is termed as al-Sīhāh al-Sittah (The Six Authentic Books of Hadīth). However, later on, these compilations were found to be too bulky and not easily accessible to students and lay Muslims. There arose a need therefore for concise compilations of Hadīth that would cover all aspects of the teachings of Islam. One such distinguished compilation was Maṣābīḥ al-Sunnah which was later revised by al-Tabrizī and came to be known as Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ.

This study was undertaken in order to ascertain the importance of Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ as a standard textbook for Hadīth and Islamic Jurisprudence. It was
pointed out that from the time that the Mishkât was compiled, it attracted the attention of Muslim scholars and attained popular acceptance. The book was popular among laymen and scholars alike in view of the fact that it dispensed them from recoursing to the larger compilations of Ḥadīth. Many commentaries were written on it and it was subsequently translated into Farsi, Urdu and English. Moreover, it was also established that from as early as the 14 century C.E. the Mishkât was introduced in the curriculum of the Dār al-ʿUlūms in India. Furthermore, the Mishkât, up to the present time, is being used as an introductory work on Ḥadīth and students learn how to draw juridical inferences from the Ahādīth of the Mishkât.

In the final analysis, therefore, judging from the views expressed by Muslims scholars on the Mishkât, the commentaries that have been written on it, and the fact that the Mishkât is still being taught in religious institutions in various parts of the world, including South Africa, one has to concede that the Mishkât is undoubtedly a valuable work of Ḥadīth and Islamic Jurisprudence. Had it not been so, it would not have sustained consistently the popular academic recognition at all levels.
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