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CLASSIFICATION OF JALALUDDIN SUYUTI'S WORKS ON "ULUM AL-HADITH"

Abstract: *Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti is widely recognized as one of the most prolific scholars in the history of Islamic sciences, with a particularly significant legacy in the field of 'ulum al-hadith. This article systematically classifies his contributions to 'ulum al-hadith into two principal categories: diraya (theoretical framework) and riwaya (practical transmission).*

The study examines al-Suyuti's major works, including Tadrib al-Rawi and al-Jami' al-Kabir, alongside a number of specialized treatises (ajza') devoted to specific social, medical, and ecological themes.

Such a classification highlights al-Suyuti's systematic methodology in structuring the discipline of 'ulum al-hadith and demonstrates the enduring value of his works as a foundational resource for contemporary Hadith studies.

Key words: *Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, 'ulum al-hadith, dirayah, riwayah, Tadrib al-Rawi, al-Jami' al-Kabir, classification, hadith commentary, juz', takhrij.*

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Introduction

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries CE were a period of encyclopedic synthesis and scholarly codification in Islamic civilization. Among the most eminent figures of this epoch stands Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445–1505 CE). Although intellectual production during the Mamluk period experienced a relative deceleration, the need to systematize accumulated scholarly knowledge and render it accessible to subsequent generations remained urgent.

During his productive scholarly career, al-Suyuti authored more than six hundred works in various disciplines, including Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, jurisprudence, linguistics, and history. Nevertheless, the sciences of hadith ('ulum al-hadith) hold an important place in his scholarly work. Al-Suyuti did not merely compile the traditions gathered by his predecessors; rather, he advanced the discipline by analyzing these traditions, assessing their degrees of authenticity, and initiating a new phase in their methodological classification.

The breadth of al-Suyuti's contribution to hadith studies has led both his contemporaries and

subsequent scholars to rely upon the indices (*faharis*) he himself compiled to navigate this rich corpus. Today, his works remain core textbooks and reference sources in Islamic educational institutions worldwide.

The relevance of this article lies in its effort to classify al-Suyuti's works using contemporary methodological approaches, thereby facilitating a more precise understanding of his deep knowledge of hadith sciences, his research methods, and his service to the preservation of the Prophetic Sunna. The objective of this study is to systematically analyze al-Suyuti's writings on the theoretical (*dirayah*) and practical (*riwayah*) dimensions of hadith and to elucidate their continuing scholarly significance.

Main Part

Al-Suyuti's writings on 'ulum al-hadith exhibit a coherent logical structure and may be broadly classified into two major categories: *dirayat al-hadith* (the methodology and principles of hadith criticism) and *riwayat al-hadith* (the transmission and compilation of hadith texts).

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Dirayat al-hadith, also designated as *'ulum al-hadith*, is the discipline concerned with the rules governing the acceptance or rejection of prophetic traditions. Al-Suyuti's contributions to this field remain important scholarly works. Among the most significant works in this category is *Tadrib al-Rawi fi Sharh Taqrib al-Nawawi* (The Training of the Transmitter: A Commentary on al-Nawawi's *Taqrib*). In this work, al-Suyuti undertakes a commentary upon Imam al-Nawawi's *Taqrib*, elucidating meanings, clarifying expressions (*tahrir*), and incorporating supplementary information absent from the original text. As the author states in his introduction, the work comprehensively compiles, details, and investigates all relevant material; each chapter and each category is examined at length with illustrative examples, and, on certain issues, all possible examples are exhaustively enumerated. This thoroughness has rendered the book a primary source in its field. [1, Vol. 2, p. 9.]

Furthermore, al-Suyuti versified the rules of hadith criticism to facilitate memorization. His *Nazm al-Durar fi 'Ilm al-Athar* (The String of Pearls in the Science of Traditions), commonly known as the *Alfiyyah* (The Thousand-Line Poem), consists of one thousand verses. This work is considered one of the most important texts composed by al-Suyuti in *'ulum al-hadith*. Written in verse, it incorporates essential disciplinary knowledge and organizes it in a coherent arrangement. Al-Suyuti claimed that his *Alfiyyah* surpassed that of al-'Iraqi in three respects: comprehensiveness, conciseness, and systematic coherence.[2, p. 3.] He also authored a commentary on his own *Alfiyyah*. Contemporary hadith scholars acknowledge this superiority, as the logical sequencing and systematic exposition render the work considerably more accessible for study and memorization.

A crucial branch within *dirayah* is the study of hadith transmitters (*'ilm al-rijal*) and the verification of their reliability. Al-Suyuti produced several works in this domain, including:

- *Lubb al-Lubab fi Tahrir al-Ansab* (The Core of the Core: On Clarifying Lineages): an important work devoted to the rectification of genealogical attributions. It explains differences in transmitters' lineages, relative attributions (*nisbah*), and epithets (*laqab*), thereby addressing the problem of distinguishing individuals who share identical names—a matter of great significance for ascertaining the authenticity of hadiths.
- *Kashf al-Talbis 'an Qalb Ahl al-Tadlis* (Unveiling the Deception Concerning the Practice of *Tadlis*): in which al-Suyuti exposes those who engaged in *tadlis* (concealing defects in a transmission) and describes their methods.
- *Al-Mudraj ila al-Mudraj* (On Interpolated Traditions): a work devoted to *mudraj* hadiths—those

in which extraneous words have been interpolated into the text (*matn*) or chain (*isnad*).

- *Tabaqat al-Huffaz* (The Generations of Hadith Masters): an abridgment of Imam al-Dhahabi's *Tabaqat* (d. 748 AH / 1348 CE). This work presents the biographical profiles of scholars deemed reliable, along with their views on the authentication, criticism, correction, and classification of traditions. [3, p. 4.] Al-Suyuti divided the work into twenty-four generations (*tafaqat*), commencing with the senior Companions and concluding with Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 853 AH / 1449 CE). In organizing these generations, he considered the chronological strata of the hadith masters and arranged them according to the periods in which they lived.

In summary, al-Suyuti did not restrict himself to restating existing knowledge on *dirayat al-hadith*; rather, he reorganized it according to a novel methodological framework, enriched it with his own observations and additions, and thereby contributed to the further development of the discipline.

Alongside his contributions to *dirayah*, al-Suyuti also authored numerous works on *riwayat al-hadith*. His writings in this area have played a significant role in the evolution of the field and may be grouped into several categories.

a) *Commentaries (Shuruh) and Glosses (Hawashi) on Major Hadith Collections*

Al-Suyuti produced an extensive body of work on hadith commentary and was recognized as one of the four preeminent commentators on hadith.[4, p. 42-43.] Among his most significant efforts in this domain are his commentaries and annotations on the *Six Canonical Books (al-Kutub al-Sittah)* and on Imam Malik's *Muwatta'*.

One notable example is *al-Tawshiḥ 'ala al-Jami' al-Ṣaḥiḥ* (The Ornamentation upon the *Ṣaḥiḥ* Collection)—a commentary on Imam al-Bukhari's *al-Jami' al-Ṣaḥiḥ*. This commentary includes everything necessary for the reader and listener to correctly understand the text, explaining rare words (*gharib*), clarifying differences among transmitters, identifying ambiguous names, analyzing complex orthography and sentence structures, and reconciling variant transmissions. Despite its brevity and conciseness, *al-Tawshiḥ* possesses genuine scholarly value, for the true worth of academic works is determined by quality rather than quantity. Although numerous commentaries and glosses have been written on *Ṣaḥiḥ al-Bukhari*, *al-Tawshiḥ* retains its distinct position and standing. Al-Suyuti also authored a commentary on Imam Muslim's *Ṣaḥiḥ*, entitled *al-Dibaj 'ala Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim* (The Brocade upon *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim*).

His commentaries on the *Sunan* collections are equally noteworthy. He wrote: *Mirqat al-Ṣu'ud ila Sunan Abi Dawud* (The Ladder of Ascent to Abu Dawud's *Sunan*) on Imam Abu Dawud's *Sunan*; *Qut al-Mughthadhi 'ala Jami' al-Tirmidhi* (Nourishment for the Seeker of Knowledge on al-Tirmidhi's *Jami'*)

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on Imam al-Tirmidhi's *Jami'*; *Zahr al-Ruba 'ala al-Mujtaba* (The Flowers of the Heights upon *al-Mujtaba*) on Imam al-Nasa'i's *al-Mujtaba*; and *Misbah al-Zujajah 'ala Sunan Ibn Majah* (The Glass Lamp upon Ibn Majah's *Sunan*) on Imam Ibn Majah's *Sunan*. In these commentaries, al-Suyuti explains not only the meanings of the hadiths but also the inflection (*i'rab*) of difficult words and the conditions of their transmitters. He also authored a celebrated commentary on Imam Malik's *Muwatta'*, entitled *Tanwir al-Hawalik 'ala Muwatta' Malik* (Illuminating the Dark Paths: A Commentary on Malik's *Muwatta'*).

b) Independent Hadith Collections and Abridgments

Al-Suyuti undertook extensive work in the compilation of hadiths. The largest of his compilatory works in this regard is *Al-Jami' al-Kabir* (also known as *Jam' al-Jawami'*), in which he compiled traditions from the *Six Canonical Books* and other sources. The work encompasses approximately eighty thousand hadiths. In this collection, al-Suyuti aspired to gather all the prophetic traditions, though he passed away before fully realizing this goal. [5, p. 112] The work is divided into two parts:

1. The section on sayings (*aqwal*, verbal hadiths): Arranged alphabetically, this section organizes hadiths lexicographically, taking into account the first letter of the initial word and subsequent ordering.

2. The section on actions (*a'fal*, behavioral hadiths): This section is organized according to chains of transmission (*asanid*). [6, p. 43.]

In the introduction to this work, al-Suyuti explains his methodology, the symbols and abbreviations he employs, the cross-referencing system, and the technical terminology used throughout the collection.

Al-Suyuti's second major hadith collection is *al-Jami' al-Saghir min Hadith al-Bashir al-Nadhir* (The Small Compendium of the Traditions of the Bringer of Glad Tidings and Warner). In this work, al-Suyuti abridged the section of verbal hadiths from *al-Jami' al-Kabir*, introduced additional material, and arranged the traditions alphabetically. According to *al-Risalah al-Mustatafah*, this collection contains 10,934 hadiths. [7, p. 182.] This book is considered one of the most important hadith resources available to students of the discipline, as it enables them to locate the traditions they seek, identify their original sources, and ascertain their grades of authenticity. Al-Suyuti also composed a supplement to this work entitled *Ziyadat al-Jami'*.

Furthermore, al-Suyuti compiled collections of short, easily memorizable hadiths, such as *Durar al-Bihar fi al-Ahadith al-Qisar* (The Pearls of the Seas: On Short Hadiths). Among his works in this category, *Lubab al-Hadith* (The Choicest Hadiths) holds particular importance. This work comprises forty

chapters, each containing ten hadiths—totaling four hundred traditions—focused on ethics and moral conduct (*adab*). The hadiths in this collection are notable for their thematic coherence, each complementing the others. It is worth noting that this work was translated into Uzbek by Olimxon Isaxon o'g'li in 2018. The work continues to serve as a spiritual and educational manual for imams, preachers, and the broader public. [8, p. 5.]

Al-Suyuti also introduced an innovative methodological approach to the *Arba'un* (Forty Hadith) genre. His works in this area are not merely collections of forty traditions but rather scholarly investigations based on specific chains of transmission or other criteria. For example, *Arba'un Hadithan* (Forty Hadiths) is designed to facilitate the rapid memorization of the most essential and concise hadiths for Muslims, whereas *Arba'una Hadithan min Riwayati Malik 'an Nafi' 'an Ibn 'Umar* (Forty Hadiths Transmitted by Malik from Nafi' from Ibn 'Umar) is a collection based on the so-called “golden chain” of transmission.

c) Thematic Hadith Collections and Specialized Treatises (*Ajza'*)

During al-Suyuti's lifetime, there was a growing need among the populace to understand hadiths easily and apply them to daily life. Consequently, the scholar devoted particular attention to issues of social life, health, and the natural environment in his writings.

To demonstrate the importance of physical activity for human development, al-Suyuti wrote a series of specialized treatises. Noteworthy among these are *al-Buhjah fi al-Sibahah* (The Beauty on the Art of Swimming), on the benefits of swimming for the human body, and *al-Musara'ah ila al-Musara'ah* (The Race Toward Wrestling), which analyzes the place of wrestling in the Sunna and its technical aspects. These works rank among the earliest sources that systematically articulate, on the basis of hadiths, an Islamic conception of a healthy lifestyle.

By compiling traditions related to ecological and biological themes, al-Suyuti provided a profound illumination of the attitude toward the natural world within the Islamic thought of his era. In this vein, *al-Nazrah fi Ahadith al-Ma' wa-l-Riyad wa-l-Khudrah* (A Look at Hadiths Concerning Water, Gardens, and Greenery)—a work describing natural landscapes, bodies of water, and plants—occupies an important place in the development of the natural sciences in that period.

Al-Suyuti also addressed the spiritual and psychological needs of populations afflicted by natural disasters and personal bereavement. For example, *Ma Rawahu al-Wu'at fi Akhbar al-Ta'un* (What the Knowledgeable Have Transmitted Concerning the Plague), written during an epidemic, and *Kashf al-Salsalah 'an Wasf al-Zalzalah* (Unveiling the Chain: On the Description of Earthquakes), devoted to the description of seismic

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phenomena through prophetic traditions, served as important religious works for people affected by these events. Likewise, he composed a *juz* entitled *Juz' fi Mawt al-Awlad* (A Treatise on the Death of Children) to console parents who had suffered the loss of their offspring. The thematic diversity of these treatises demonstrates that al-Suyuti took hadith sciences beyond the narrow confines of formal worship and presented them as solutions to social, medical, and ecological problems. These works also increased the practical relevance of hadith studies in the intellectual life of the period.

Another distinctive feature of al-Suyuti's output is the large number of small hadith collections (*ajza*) dedicated to narrowly defined topics. These treatises are important for the study of specific topics. Among them are: *al-Mu'jizat wa-l-Khaṣa'is* (Miracles and Unique Prophetic Qualities) on the miracles of the Prophet; *Sharḥ al-Ṣudur bi-Sharḥ Ḥal al-Mawta wa-l-Qubur* (Expanding Hearts with the Explanation of the State of the Dead and the Graves) and *al-Budur al-Safirah 'an Umur al-Akhirah* (The Radiant Full Moons Concerning the Affairs of the Hereafter) on the condition of the grave and eschatological matters; and *al-Tibb al-Nabawi* (Prophetic Medicine) and *al-Manhaj al-Sawi wa-l-Manhal al-Rawi fi al-Tibb al-Nabawi* (The Straight Path and the Quenching Spring in Prophetic Medicine).

Beyond the works mentioned above, al-Suyuti also compiled specific categories of hadiths into separate books. For instance, *al-Azhar al-Mutanathirah fi al-Aḥadith al-Mutawatirah* (The Scattered Blossoms on Massively Transmitted Reports) is a collection of *mutawatir* hadiths. In this book, al-Suyuti assembles these widely transmitted traditions and demonstrates their degree of *tawatur* (mass transmission). The work contains a total of 111 such hadiths and serves as an essential source for studying and utilizing *mutawatir* traditions.

One of the most critical responsibilities within hadith transmission is the distinction between authentic traditions and fabricated (*mawḍu'*) ones. On this subject, al-Suyuti authored *al-La'ali al-Maṣnu'ah fi al-Aḥadith al-Mawḍu'ah* (The Artificial Pearls among Fabricated Traditions). This work is recognized as a major reference in the field of *mawḍu'* hadiths. Through it, al-Suyuti purified the field of the Sunna from false attributions to the Prophet. He also composed a supplement to this work, entitled *Zayl al-La'ali al-Maṣnu'ah*, in which he included a number of fabricated hadiths that Ibn al-Jawzi had omitted from his own work.

To analyze traditions that are widely circulated among people but lack clear documentation-so-called "famous" (*mashhur*) hadiths-he wrote *al-Durar al-Muntathirah fi al-Aḥadith al-Mushtahah* (The Scattered Pearls among Well-Known Hadiths). This

work renders great service in determining the extent to which popular sayings conform, or fail to conform, to authentic hadiths.

It should also be noted that al-Suyuti authored works dedicated to defending the Sunna and adhering firmly to it, such as *Miftaḥ al-Jannah fi al-I'tiṣam bi-l-Sunnah* (The Key to Paradise: On Holding Fast to the Sunna).

Al-Suyuti is also among those scholars who composed works on *takhrij* (the science of identifying the sources of hadiths). In this area, he wrote several books. One such work, *Manahil al-Ṣafa fi Takhrij Aḥadith al-Shifa'* (The Springs of Purity: On the Source Attribution of the Hadiths in *al-Shifa'*), presents the hadiths cited in Qaḍi 'Iyāḍ's *al-Shifa'*. In his introduction, al-Suyuti explains the nature of the book and his methodology. [9, p. 29.] This work is a valuable resource for those seeking to ascertain the original status of the traditions cited in *al-Shifa'*. The scholar al-Khafaji, who wrote a commentary on *al-Shifa'* entitled *Nasim al-Riyaḍ*, quotes from this work. [10, Vol. 1, p. 86.] Another work by al-Suyuti in this field is *Takhrij Aḥadith Sharḥ al-Mawaqif*, in which he traces the hadiths found in *Kitab al-Mawaqif*.

Thus, al-Suyuti's legacy in *riwayat al-ḥadith* elevated hadith scholarship to a new level - not only through the compilation of texts but also through their systematic arrangement, commentary, and thematic classification. These works continue to remain important scholarly and educational resources in Islamic institutions of learning today.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti's intellectual legacy in the sciences of hadith encompasses two principal domains: *dirayat al-ḥadith* (theoretical and methodological hadith sciences) and *riwayat al-ḥadith* (practical transmission and compilation). In the domain of *dirayah*, works such as *Tadrib al-Rawi*, the *Alfiyyah*, and *Tabaqat al-Ḥuffaḥ* serve as a scholarly foundation that systematized hadith methodology. In the domain of *riwayah*, major collections like *al-Jami' al-Kabir* and *al-Jami' al-Ṣaghir*, together with his commentaries on the six celebrated hadith books, represent important examples of the preservation and explication of hadith texts. Al-Suyuti's specialized treatises devoted to social, medical, and ecological themes introduced a novel methodological path for applying hadith scholarship to issues of everyday life.

Al-Suyuti's methodological approach remains significant not only as a historical source but also as a practical guide for contemporary scholarship. His system of arranging hadiths alphabetically and thematically continues to serve as a fundamental basis for modern hadith research.

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