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ANALYSIS ON AL-NAWAWI'S CRITICISM ON AL-DARAQUTNI'S METHODOLOGY IN *'ILAL AL-HADITH*

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Abstract

Al-Daraqutni was no stranger to the fraternity of past hadith scholars. Some scholars criticized his commentaries on several hadiths from the *al-Sahihayn*, particularly pertaining to al-Daraqutni's mastery of the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith*. Al-Nawawi, one of the critics, considered al-Daraqutni's methodology in hadith criticism to be corrupted and weak. This research, which is wholly qualitative, involving data collection through library research, analyzes those criticisms and concludes on the question whether they coincide with al-Nawawi's own views. The research findings show that al-Daraqutni's methods was neither corrupted nor weak as alleged but had firm footing in the methodologies previously practiced by hadith scholars in ancient times. The study finds among others that the methodology of al-Daraqutni in assessing narrations of hadith which has auxillary part added by a thrustworthy narrator (*ziyadah al-thiqah*) as well as sole narration by one narrator (*al-tafarrud*) were based on correct indicators (*qarinah*). Therefore, he does not accept nor reject such narration completely. The method of al-Nawawi on the other hand sees that *ziyadah al-thiqah* and *al-tafarrud* narrations from trustworthy narrators are acceptable.

1. Introduction

Al-Daraqutni was one of the renowned scholars who made an imprint in the Islamic world circa the 4th century. His mastery in various fields of knowledge was recognized by scholars. Al-Dhahabi (d. 784 H) in *Siyar* described him as a sea of knowledge and one of revered Imam in the world (1984). Al-Azhari (d. 370 H) also stated that when al-Daraqutni conveys knowledge in any field, it is probable that he knows everything (Al-Dhahabi, 1984). However, al-Daraqutni's mastery in the discipline of hadith was, to the agreement of many scholars, regarded to be the most prominent. According to 'Abd al-Ghani (d. 409 H), the finest commentators of the hadiths of the Prophet (pbuh) were among the following three: 'Ali bin Al-Madini in his time, Musa bin Harun in his time and al-Daraqutni in his time (Al-Baghdadi, 2001). In addition, Abu 'Abd Rahman al-Sulami (d. 412 H) also said: "I bear witness in the name of Allah that no one compares to our teacher al-Daraqutni on the surface of the earth in the knowledge of the Prophet's hadiths, the *athar* of the companion, the *tabi'in* and *atba' al-tabi'in* (Al-Dhahabi, 1984). The testimony of these two scholars indirectly revealed al-Daraqutni's high stature in the field of hadith.

Al-Daraqutni was also known as a prolific scholar in the production of academic works. According to 'Abd Allah al-Ruhayli, the works written by al-Daraqutni across multi-disciplines of knowledge resulted in an impressive number of books, amounting to sixty-one writings (Al-Ruhayli, 2000). One of his famous works is *al-Ilzamat wa al-Tatabbu'*. In essence, al-Daraqutni wrote it in order to comment on the status of several hadiths found in the *al-Sahihayn*. However, in light of the *al-Sahihayn'*s status as an authoritative scripture second only to the al-Quran, some scholars retaliated against al-Daraqutni's commentaries, one of whom was al-Nawawi (d. 676 H).

1.1. Introduction to the Discipline of Sciences of *'Ilal al-Hadith*

A discussion on the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith* would be incomplete without the definition of the word *illah* itself. According to Ibn Manzur (n.d.) (d. 711 H), the word '*illah* literally means *al-marad,* which means disease. From the point of terminology, *'illah* according to Ibn al-Salah (2002) and al-Nawawi (1985) means a phrase that appears to be authentic yet contains hidden defects affecting that authenticity. Accordingly, the defective hadith or *al-mu'allal* hadith would mean a hadith containing defects effecting its authenticity yet seemingly having a perfectly authentic appearance (Ibn al-Salah, 2002).

Scholars often paid attention to discussions on the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith*. Abdul Rahman bin Mahdi (d. 198 H), for instance, viewed that knowing the *'illah* of a hadith was more interesting than composing twenty hadiths from other narrators (Ibn Abi Hatim, 2006). However, most hadith scholars admitted that the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith* was not easy to master. This was because the defects or *'illah* in a hadith were sometimes hidden, resulting it being categorized as authentic. Therefore, scholars who were experts in this field certainly had keen eyes and broad knowledge on the intricacies of the narrations and narrators of hadiths. In furtherance to the above, according to Ibn al-Salah (d. 643 H) this discipline can only be mastered by scholars from among those who memorized the al-Quran who also had deep understanding (2002). Concurring with that view, Ibn Hajar (d. 852 H) believed that this discipline of knowledge is so hidden and so detailed that only those endowed by Allah with extensive and in-depth knowledge of *maratib al-ruwah* were able to conquer it (Ibn Hajar, 1994). Thus, 'Iwad Allah states that

only a few scholars have had this expertise and most of them were from the *mutaqaddimin* era such as 'Ali bin al-Madini (m. 231 H), Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 241 H), al-Bukhari (d. 254 H), Ya'qub bin Syaybah (d. 262 H), Abu Hatim (d. 277 H) and Abu Zur'ah (d. 263 H) while scholars from the *muta'akhkhirin* phase the likes of al-Daraqutni (d. 385 H), Ibn 'Adi (d. 365 H), al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) and Ibn Hajar (d. 852 H) (2017). According to the researcher's survey, the main issues involved in the debate or discussions of this discipline revolves around *al-tafarrud*, *al-mukhalafah*, *ziyadah al-thiqah*, *tadlis* etc.

1.2. Biodata of al-Daraqutni and his Scholastic Repertoire

The full name of al-Daraqutni is Abu al-Hasan 'Ali bin 'Umar bin Ahmad bin Mahdi bin Mas'ud bin al-Nu'man bin Dinar bin 'Abd Allah al-Daraqutni (Ibn Khallikan, n.d.) al-Baghdadi (Al-Subki, n.d.). He was born in the month of Zulkaedah in 309 H in an area named Dar al-Qutn in the city of Baghdad (Al-Zirikli, 2002). Therefore he is better known as *laqab* al-Daraqutni (Ibn Kathir, 1998).

Al-Daraqutni's leadership in the jurisprudence of hadith reached its pinnacle when he mastered the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith*. This was mentioned by many later scholars such as al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463 H) who said: "… ends at him the knowledge of *athar* and understanding of *'ilal al-hadith*, names of the narrators, and their conditions…" (Al-Khatib, 2001, pp. 487-488). Al-Dhahabi (d.748) also celebrated him with similar praise, "… ends at him *al-hifz* and the knowledge of *'ilal al-hadith* and the narrators" (Al-Dhahabi, 1984, p. 450). The same was the case with Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) in *al-Bidayah*, attributing al-Daraqutni as an *Imam* in his time mastering the names of the narrators, *sina'ah al-ta'lil, al-jarh wa al-ta'dil* (1998).

Al-Daraqutni's expertise in this discipline is more pronounced with the writing of his book entitled *al-'Ilal al-Waridah fi al-Ahadith al-Nabawiyyah.* This work is generally an explanation of *al-mu'al* hadith proposed to him by his disciple named al-Barqani (d. 425 H). There are over four thousand hadiths recounted by al-Barqani in this work, all of which were answered by al-Daraqutni by providing various chain of narrators and explaining the existence of *'illah* that could be present in those hadiths. Al-Daraqutni's prominence in this field became outstanding when al-Barqani stated that the latter answered and explained the matters in question by way of *imla'* based on memory (Al-Baghdadi, 2001). Al-Dhahabi in *Siyar* expressed admiration for al-Daraqutni's exceptional ability. To al-Dhahabi, if it were true that the book of *al-'Ilal* was conveyed by way of *imla'* by al-Daraqutni based on his memorisation as told by al-Barqani, then it was astounding and proved al-Daraqutni to be the best memoriser in this world (1984). There are other works where discussions by al-Daraqutni demonstrated his mastery in the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith,* two being *al-Sunan* and *al-Ilzamat wa al-Tatatabbu'.*

2. Problem Statement

Although al-Daraqutni is a distinguished figure in the field of hadith, he is not absolved from criticism by other scholars, one of whom is a great figure in the Islamic world, al-Nawawi. Al-Nawawi's disapproval involved al-Daraqutni's commentaries and reviews on the status of a number of hadiths compiled in the *al-Sahihayn*. The former was seen as defending the status quo of the concerned group of hadiths and thereby responding to the commentaries and reviews of al-Daraqutni. What is more interesting

to the researcher is that al-Nawawi did not only respond to the above but also was seen to dispute al-Daraqutni's method in producing commentaries on the group of hadiths. One such case could be found in his commentary contained in *Syarh Sahih al-Bukhari* as follows:

"Al-Daraqutni had criticised hadiths al-Bukhari and Muslim and he had criticized part of the hadiths. Those criticism are corrupted *(fasid)*, built on rules of some of the *muhadithin*, very weak and contrary to the methods of the majority of *ahl al-fiqh* and *al-usul* and others. As such you must not be misled by it" (Al-Nawawi, 2008, p. 245).

In other instances, al-Nawawi was again seen arguing against al-Daraqutni's methods. This can be found in his review on a hadith compiled by Muslim narrated by Ibn Wahab from Makhramah bin Bukayr from his father from Abi Burdah bin Abi Musa RA whereby Ibn 'Umar RA asks him:

Meaning: Did you hear your father (Abu Musa RA) reciting a hadith from the Prophet (pbuh) on a Friday (prayer)? Abu Burdah said: I said: yes I heard my father say: I heard the messenger of Allah (pbuh) (that time) is one of the times when the imam is sitting on the pulpit until he performs the prayer" (Muslim, 2006, p. 811).

According to al-Daraqutni, this hadith was not narrated in the *mawsul* way but instead from Makhramah bin Bukayr and from Abi Burdah only. Whereas other group of narrators recount the hadith from Abi Burdah by *mawquf* (Al-Daraqutni, 1985). According to al-Nawawi, al-Daraqutni's criticism was built on *ma'ruf* for him and for most *ahl al-hadith*; that is, in the event of conflict between *mawquf* and *marfu', mursal* and *mawsul* narrations, they would exercise *tarjih* to give weight on *mawquf* and *mursal*. Al-Nawawi further added that this method was weak and unacceptable (*mamnu'ah).* The proper methods are the ones practiced by the *al-usuliyyun*, *al-fuqaha'*, al-Bukhari, Muslim and *muhaqqiq ahl al-hadith* that is by engaging *tarjih* on *marfu'* and *mawsul* because it is included in the discussion of *ziyadah al-thiqah* (2001).

The above two excerpts are examples of al-Nawawi's criticism on al-Daraqutni's methods. Given the esteemed position of al-Nawawi in the Islamic world, the researcher humbly submits that his criticisms needs to be heeded meticulously in order to determine whether the allegations are founded.

3. Research Questions

Based on the research issues mentioned above, a number of research questions have been raised as follows:

3.1. What topic of *'ilal al-hadith* is the subject of al-Nawawi's dispute over al-Daraqutni's method?

3.2. How does their respective methods fare in the topic?

3.3. Was al-Daraqutni's practice in that topic weak and corrupted (*fasid)*?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is as follows:

4.1. To identify the topic in *'ilal al-hadith* that is the subject of al-Nawawi's dispute over al-Daraqutni's method.

4.2. To study the ruling of al-Daraqutni and al-Nawawi of the issues.

4.3. To analyse the ruling practised by al-Daraqutni in the issues.

5. Research Methods

This research is a fully qualitative study and involves data collection sourced from library research. Accordingly, the primary works of al-Daraqutni and al-Nawawi shall be the main source of reference for the researcher i.e *al-Ilzamat wa al-Tatabbu', Syarh Sahih al-Bukhari, Syarh Sahih Muslim* and *Irsyad Tullab al-Haqa'iq ila Ma'rifah Sunan Khayr al-Khala'iq Sallallah 'Alayh wa Sallam.* In addition, the researchers have also referred to several other sources such as *Al-Imam al-Nawawi wa Atharuh fi al-Hadith wa 'Ulumih*, *Al-Sina'ah al-Hadithiyyah fi Syarh al-Nawawi 'ala Sahih Muslim*, *Manhaj al-Imam al-Daraqutni fi Kitabih al-Sunan wa Atharihi fi Ikhtilaf al-Fuqaha'* dan *Manhaj al-Imam al-Daraqutni fi Naqd al-Hadith fi Kitab al-'Ilal*. The data collected will be analysed based on inductive and deductive methods. According to De. Groot (1969), inductive method refers to rules of analyzing data through facts finding from something specific into general. In the context of this research, the researcher shall study the types of criticism levelled by al-Nawawi against the methodology engaged by al-Daraqutni contained in two major works i.e *al-Ilzamat wa al-Tatabbu'* and *Syarh Sahih Muslim*. Thereafter, the criticism will be analyzed based on common theory formulated by hadith scholars. Deductive method on the other hand, according to De. Groot (1969), refers to data analysis based on facts finding from something general into specific. From this perspective, the researcher shall scrutinize each theory made guidelines by hadith scholars; in particular in matters revolving around the criticism made by al-Nawawi against the method employed by al-Daraqutni further analyse the said methodologies specifically in order to respond to the question of whether or not the criticism compromised al-Daraqutni's standing in the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith.*

6. Findings

6.1. The topic in *'ilal al-hadith* that is the subject of al-Nawawi's dispute over al-Daraqutni's methods

The findings of this study illustrate the topics in the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith* disputed by al-Nawawi on the methods implemented by al-Daraqutni is about the issues of *ziyadah al-thiqah*. Al-Nawawi's criticism, according to al-Wadi'i (Al-Daraqutni, 1985), 'Abd al-'Aziz (1988) and Ibrahim (2008), largely revolves around *ziyadah al-thiqah* that is in the preferential (*tarjih)* hadith between *marfu'* and *mursal* or *mawsul* and *mawquf* (2008). To illustrate, the researcher provides a hadith narrated by Muslim through the narration of Ibn Wahab from Makhramah bin Bukayr from his father from Abi Burdah bin Abi Musa RA from Ibn 'Umar RA (Muslim, 2006). Apart from the issues of *ziyadah al-thiqah,* al-Nawawi also disputes al-Daraqutni's methods in the *al-tafarrud* narration from a reliable narrator. This is evidenced by his commentary on a hadith reported by Muslim from the narrator's chain of Ibn Abjar from Wasil from Abi Wa'il from 'Ammar from the Prophet (pbuh):

Meaning: the length of a man's prayer and the brevity of his sermons infer his shallow understanding. Hence, extend your prayers and shorten your sermon because part of *bayan* (beautiful phrases) becomes a spell to the listeners (Muslim, 2006, p. 813).

According to al-Daraqutni (1985), this hadith was narrated by way of *al-tafarrud* by Ibn Abjar from Wasil. The former further explained that this narration conflicted with that of al-A'mash and he was more *ahfaz* with the hadith by Abi Wa'il than Wasil. This review was objected by al-Nawawi who viewed that the above hadith review by al-Daraqutni exemplified rejected criticism because Ibn Abjar was a reliable narrator, thereby it was compulsory to accept his narrations. These two types of narrations namely *ziyadah al-thiqah* and *al-tafarrud* from reliable narrator are the main issues in the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith*. Hence al-Nawawi's criticism of al-Daraqutni's method on both indirectly affected his eminence in *'ilal al-hadith* discipline.

6.2. The ruling of al-Daraqutni and al-Nawawi in *ziyadah al-thiqah* and *al-tafarrud*.

It is found that the methods used by al-Nawawi and al-Daraqutni on the issues of *ziyadah al-thiqah* and *al-tafarrud* from reliable narrators were different. In the context of *ziyadah al-thiqah*, al-Nawawi opined that this type of hadith was admissible in total. Accordingly in the event of conflict between *marfu'* and *mursal* and *mawquf* and *mawsul* narrations, the correct stance is to give weight on *marfu'* and *mursal* even though the narrators of the conflicting hadiths are of the same number or more, or more *ahfaz* than the other. This assessment according to al-Nawawi was the practise of the *muhaqqiqun* from amongst the *ahl al-hadith* and the *fuqaha* and *ashab al-usul* and endorsed by al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (Al-Nawawi, 2001). In the context of *al-tafarrud* narration by reliable narrators, the ruling espoused by al-Nawawi was to accept the hadith due to the attribute of the narrator which was reliable (*thiqah*). This ruling is found in his work entitled *al-Irsyad*. He further explained that if *al-tafarrud* came from a narrator who was just ('*adil*), a memoriser (*hafiz*) and his memory is believed to be of excellent state (*dabit*), then his narration would be classified as authentic (*sahih*). Furthermore, if the *al-tafarrud* came from a narrator who was not *dabit*, his hadith became *hasan.* However, if *al-tafarrud* came from a narrator who was far from *dabit,* and '*adil,* his narration became *syadh, munkar* and rejected (Al-Nawawi, 2009). As for al-Daraqutni's ruling on the two situations above, the question on accepting or rejecting depended on the strength of the evidence (qarinah) inherent in the hadiths. In other words, these two types of narrations were not outrightly accepted nor rejected. This was acknowledged by some researchers the likes of Kilani (2010) and Judah (2011). Since the ruling of both al-Nawawi and al-Daraqutni were different on the two issues mentioned above, therefore it was fitting for al-Nawawi to disagree with the assessment of al-Daraqutni.

6.3. The methodology practised specifically by al-Daraqutni.

Nonetheless, what remains to be answered is whether the methodology practised by al-Daraqutni is as weak and corrupted as al-Nawawi alleges. Through this research, it is found that al-Daraqutni's method is no stranger to the scholars at large particularly from amongst the *mutaqaddimin*. In the matters of *ziyadah al-thiqah*, for example, the ruling of al-Daraqutni was in line with the ruling of *ahl al-hadith mutaqaddimin.* This observation coincided with the reality as pictured by al-'Alla'i (d.761 H) where he said the Imams of *mutaqaddimin* such as Yahya bin Sa'id al-Qattan, 'Abd al-Rahman bin Mahdi, 'Ali bin al-Madini, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Yahya bin Ma'in, al-Bukhari, Abu Hatim, Abu Zur'ah, Muslim, al-Nasa'i, al-Tirmidhi, al-Daraqutni and al-Khalili evaluated the element of *al-ziyadah* based on the stronger preference (*tarjih*) of each hadith. He further remarked that these group of scholars do not evaluate the element of *al-ziyadah* in

a mass manner for all hadiths. Their method was the truth (Kamil, 1986). In line with the views above, Ibn Hajar (d. 852 H) also stated that the *mutaqaddimin* hadith scholars such as 'Abd al-Rahman bin Mahdi, Yahya al-Qattan, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Yahya bin Ma'in, 'Ali bin al-Madini, al-Bukhari, Abu Zur'ah, Abu Hatim, al-Nasa'i, al-Daraqutni and others assessed the element of *ziyadah al-thiqah* based on *qarinah.* In addition, none of them accepted this element as absolute (Ibn Hajar, 2000).

As for the issue of *al-tafarrud* narration from reliable narrators; as well as the ruling formulated by al-Daraqutni, both elements were no stranger in the discourse of criticism in sciences of hadith among the hadith jurists. In fact they were in line with the methods and policies already employed by the *mutaqaddimin* hadith scholars. The same observation is demonstrated by contemporary research similar to al-Durays (2005), al-Lahim (2012) and al-Malyabari (2001).

7.   Conclusion

Al-Nawawi's disputations on the methods implemented by al-Daraqutni in the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith* pertained to the issues of *ziyadah al-thiqah* and *al-tafarrud* narration from reliable narrators. Al-Nawawi opined that these issues are admissible in total. Besides, al-Daraqutni's ruling on these issues whether to accept or to reject depends on the strength of the evidence. Based on the discussions above, it is found that the methods of al-Daraqutni on the two issues that come under the fire of criticism of al-Nawawi are already the methods in practice by the *mutaqaddimin* hadith scholars. On al-Nawawi's criticism that al-Daraqutni's methods were weak and corrupted, the researcher is of the opinion that those assessments were inaccurate and they do not compromise al-Daraqutni's reputation, particularly in the discipline of *'ilal al-hadith.* This finding also reinforced the methods practiced by him since those were also the practice of the hadith scholars in the past *ahl al-hadith mutaqaddimin.*

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