

## Atraf al-Hadith

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Taraf (pl. *atraf*), literally means 'a part' or a 'fringe'<sup>1</sup> and when applied to a collection of *hadith* it denotes a collection that contains only a part of *hadith*.<sup>2</sup> It means copying only a part of *hadith* to serve as an aide to memory. A study of *hadith* material reveals that in the third quarter of the first century A.H., a new technique, *atraf*, was introduced for the learning and recording of *ahadith*. The earliest recorded employment of this method seems to be that of Ibn Sirin (d. 110/728), in the lecture room of his teacher 'Abidah b. 'Amr al-Salmani (d. 72/691),<sup>3</sup> and appears to have been continued by the traditionists.

A student of *hadith* is aware of the fact that especially in the first two centuries of Hijrah, the majority of traditionists did not approve of writing down of *ahadith* while some of them allowed their students to write down only *atraf*. Ibrahim al-Nakha'i (d. 96), who belonged to this group, allowed his students to write down only *atraf*.<sup>4</sup> 'Abd Allah b. 'Awn is reported to have said that once Ibrahim al-Nakha'i scolded his student Hammad b. Abi Sulayman (d. 119) for holding some written material in his hands mistaking it for *ahadith*. But when Hammad clarified that he was holding nothing but *atraf* he was pacified.<sup>5</sup> Sufyan al Thawri (d. 161) who was given the sobriquet of *amir-al-momineen-fil-hadith*,<sup>6</sup> used to keep *atraf* with him<sup>7</sup> and was justly proud of his memory.<sup>8</sup> 'Awf b. Abi Jamilah al-'Abdi (d. 146) noted down the *atraf* in Hasan al Basri's sessions,<sup>9</sup> which were inherited by Yahya b. Sa'id al Qattan (d. 198). We also come across the *atraf* of Ibn Abi Najih (d. 131)<sup>10</sup>, given to 'Abd-al-Rahman (d. 198) by Ibn Ulayyah (d. 198)<sup>11</sup>; Yahya b. Sa'id (d. 194) and 'Ali-al-Madini (d. 234) are also credited as having the *atraf* from Hammad b. Salamah (d. 167)<sup>12</sup>; Yazid b. Zuray' (d. 182) and Ibn 'Ulayyah noted down the *atraf* in the sessions of Hisham b. Hassan (d. 148)<sup>13</sup>; Waki' (d. 197) had the *atraf* from Isma'il b. Abi Khalid (d. 146), which he gave to Isma'il b. 'Ayyash (d. 182).<sup>14</sup>

Later many books were compiled according to this technique and were used as an index or concordance of *hadith* literature. The compilers of *atraf* books were concerned neither with the subject matter like the *musannaf* compilers, nor with informants like the *musnad* compilers.

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1- *Lisan*, ix / 216, 217

2- *Risalah*, 137 f

3- *Ilal A*, I/387; *Jami'*, I/72

4- *Akhlaq*, I/227

5- *Akhlaq*, I/227; *Siyar*, v/232

6- *Siyar*, vii/238

7- *Akhlaq*, I/227

8- *Siyar*, vii/238

9- *Tah*, viii/ 167 *Taqdimah*, 236

10- *Taqdimah*, 236

11- *K. Ma'rifah*, II, 134

12- *K. Ma'rifah*, II, 133

13- *Majruhin*, I/341

14- *Tah*, I/324

# Foreword

The war of civilisations has got a new impetus after the demise of socialism in Soviet Union. Islam, undoubtedly, is the answer to the problems of modern man. Cloyed of materialism, where man has become a saleable commodity, the modern man has realised the necessity of revealed religions. The newly emerging politico-religious scenario on the globe is demanding the Islamic scholars to be more research oriented.

His majesty, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan al Nahyan, of United Arab Emirates, realising the necessity of the modern challenges set-up the Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centres to provide academically salubrious surroundings to the Islamic scholars.

Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore initiated the research journal in the very first year of its inception with the name of *The Journal of Research* Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre. The second issue is in your hands with a new nomenclature. The very fact of its being a bilingual stands testimony to our belief in determination, development and devotion.

The issue contains a diverse variety of research articles ranging from regional Islamic movements to the studies in computer science.

We are grateful to our worthy contributors and hope that they will continue their cooperation in future as well.

The next issue is proposed to be published in September 1993. We request our learned contributors to send their articles by June 1993.

We cannot help expressing our thanks to Dr. Munir-ud-Din Chughtai, Vice Chancellor, University of the Punjab, Lahore, for not only encouraging us but extending practical cooperation in bringing out *Al-Adwa* as well as establishing the centre as a great seat of Islamic learning.

We will be anxiously awaiting your comments and suggestions.

Chief Editor

## Vice Chancellor's Message

Modern man, despite making great strides in the fields of science and technology, has begun to realise the problems created by the increasing impacts of materialism on his life and is now reverting to religion for mental peace and spiritual satisfaction. Communism and capitalism have crumbled like the house of cards and from their ashes the movements of Islamic resurgence are blazing across the globe.

Despite the desperate efforts of the opponents of Islam to paint Islam as a religion of fanaticism, impeding the onward march of civilisation, Islam is emerging as the only solution to the problems besetting the world these days. Under these circumstances Islamic scholars have an onerous responsibility to shoulder.

Research through intensive and extensive effort is what a university – the highest seat of learning in an educational setup – must encourage and patronise. The launching of a research journal during the very first year of its establishment was a commendable effort on the part of Sheikh Jayed Islamic Centre. It provides a forum to research scholars to project results of their works. This matter of great satisfaction to me that second issue is bilingual. I am hopeful that this centre will develop into a prestigious institution for advanced research on Islamic ideology and learning.

*Munir-ud-Din Chughtai*

Dr. Munir-ud-Din Chughtai.

***In the name of Allah, the most gracious,  
the most merciful.***

***Behold! In the creation of  
the heavens and the earth  
And the alternation of  
Night and Day, -  
There are indeed signs  
for men of understanding,-.***

**(Al-Quran: S. III-190)**