

Series:

Arafat Al-Muhammadi's Reckless Approach to the Science of Hadith, His Evil Manners Toward Senior Scholars, and His Deliberate Targeting of Imam Al-Albani—may Allah have mercy on him

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28 March 2026

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=3485075631640828&id=100004152756286

Part Three: The Hadith of Wa'il bin Hujr (may Allah be pleased with him)—the additional phrase “and he moves it while supplicating,” his ruling that this addition is shadhdh (anomalous/irregular), and his disparaging remark regarding Imam al-Albani: “If this is not shudhudh (irregularity), then I do not know what shudhudh is.”

All praise is due to Allah, prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his companions, and those who follow him. To proceed:

One of the greatest trials facing the student of knowledge in this era is the audacity shown toward the Imams of Hadith—specifically, the tendency to seek out points of disagreement with them without possessing firm grounding in the discipline, mastery of its principles, or experience with the methodologies of its critical scholars.

The Salaf—may Allah have mercy on them—held a different stance; they were wary of delving into the 'ilal (subtle defects) of Hadith, regarding it as one of the most precise and perilous fields of study.

They established that discussing this subject is a perilous path where one might easily stumble; it is a realm entered only by the towering masters who have thoroughly examined the chains of transmission

(turuq), scrutinized the narrations, and grasped the nuances of variation and the subtle contextual indicators (qara'in).

Thus, the approach of seeking disagreement for its own sake—rather than for the sake of verification based on the discipline's established principles—is a modern, misguided practice. It leads to the weakening of the Sunnah, the confusion of students of knowledge, and the erosion of confidence in the Imams of this field. It shifts the scholarly balance from understanding the words of the Imams to actively opposing them, and from sound foundational analysis to contrived, forced objections.

This third installment in the rebuttal of Arafat al-Muhammadi serves to reinforce this very point.

It is evident from his approach to the preceding issues—and to this specific issue¹—that he is prone to hasty judgments, the misapplication of principles, and the neglect of the principle of reconciliation (al-jam')—a fundamental tenet among the masters of Hadith criticism. He displays audacity in contradicting a seasoned authority like Imam Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) regarding the intricacies of this discipline.

All of this clearly demonstrates his lack of firm grounding in the science of Hadith—particularly in the study of 'Ilal (hidden defects)—and reveals that what he mistakes for rigorous verification is, in reality, undisciplined inquiry and a challenge to the Imams without adequate scholarly preparation.

A student of knowledge ought to recognize his own limitations and adhere to the methodology of the Imams regarding comprehension, reconciliation, and the weighing of evidence; for they possessed deeper knowledge, keener insight, and were less prone to error.

First: The point of contention—the issue at hand:

The addition of the phrase “(he moves it, supplicating with it)” in the Hadith of Wa'il bin Hujr (may Allah be pleased with him).

¹ <https://t.me/Arafatbinhassan/17274>

Arafat al-Muhammadi ruled this addition to be *shadhdh* (anomalous/irregular), citing the narration of Za'idah bin Qudamah as an example of such an anomaly. In doing so, he deliberately and intentionally contradicted Imam Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him)—as becomes apparent in this series—in more than forty instances.

A careful examination of his objections reveals them to be characterized by excessive and hasty judgments, the arbitrary application of technical terms, and audacity toward the Imams.

Furthermore, they are marked by glaring scholarly inadequacy and insolence in dissent—faults for which there is no excuse, given his vitriolic tongue and his attacks on this eminent Imam.

Second: Clarifying the scope of the rule (regarding *Shudhūdh* [anomaly] or the *Ziyādat al-Thiqah* [addition by a trustworthy narrator])

Shādh (Anomalous): A trustworthy narrator (or an acceptable narrator, such as the *Sadūq* [truthful/reliable] narrator) contradicting someone more trustworthy than themselves, where reconciliation between the reports is impossible.

Ziyādat al-Thiqah (Addition by a trustworthy narrator): This occurs when a trustworthy narrator reports an addition—whether in wording or meaning—that was not mentioned by others who shared in narrating the core of the hadith from the same source (*makhraj*).

Thus, it is not necessarily a contradiction, but rather an addition to the original report.

Here, there is a vital principle that must be established: “Recourse to *Tarjīh* (weighing/preferring one report over another) is not made until reconciliation proves impossible.”

This is a principle affirmed by scholars of *Usūl* (legal theory), Imams of Hadith, and others.

Third: Is the addition of “movement” (during the gesture) a contradiction or merely an addition?

Answer: It is not a contradiction at all; rather, it is an addition. Why? Because other narrations mention “gesturing with the index finger,” while an additional narration mentions “gesturing with movement.”

Does this constitute a conflict? The answer is no. Rather, it falls under the category of an “explanatory addition” (*ziyādat bayān*) rather than a “contradictory addition” (*ziyādat tadād*), as will be explained further.

Fourth: The principle that reconciliation takes precedence over weighing/preference (Tarjih):

The Imams established the rule: “Reconciliation is preferable to weighing/preference whenever possible,” or “Recourse to weighing/preference is not made until reconciliation proves impossible.”

In this case, reconciliation is possible without forced interpretation:

The gesture is the fundamental action. The movement is a characteristic or attribute of that action.

This is analogous to: Raising the hands while moving them. Or gesturing with the head while moving it.

Fifth: Evidence from the Sunnah regarding the reconciliation of reports:

As for our Imam, Shaykh al-Islam—the Commander of the Believers in the Science of Hadith, the erudite scholar and Muhaddith Al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him)—he established, through irrefutable evidence free from any doubt or ambiguity, that this constitutes an addition by a trustworthy narrator (*ziyadat thiqah*) rather than an anomaly (*shudhudh*).

He demonstrated that the act of moving [the finger] neither contradicts nor conflicts with the act of gesturing. He supported this position with the following:

1- The Hadith of Asma' bint Abi Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them both), who said: "I entered upon 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) while she was praying standing up and the people were standing. I asked, 'What is the matter with the people?'" She gestured with her head toward the sky. I asked, 'Is it a sign [from Allah]?' She indicated 'yes' with her head." Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih [2/213, no. 1244].

It is noted therein that she gestured with her head toward the sky; it is certain that she moved it by raising it, yet she termed this action a "gesture" (ishārah). Furthermore, the statement "She said with her head: 'Yes'" indicates that she moved her head up and down, yet she still described the action as a gesture; this demonstrates that gesturing is not incompatible with movement.

2- The hadith of Aisha, Mother of the Believers, who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed in his house while he was unwell; he prayed sitting, while a group of people prayed behind him standing. He gestured to them to sit. When he finished, he said: "The Imam is appointed only to be followed; so when he bows, bow; when he rises, rise; and when he prays sitting, pray sitting." Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih [1/244, no. 656].

Her statement—"He gestured to them to sit"—provides clear evidence that a gesture may be accompanied by movement; for the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) gesture was not merely a static raising of the hand, but rather an action indicating the intended meaning—namely, the command to sit. Aisha referred to it as a "gesture" (isharah), even though it involved movement (tahreek).

This demonstrates—as established by Imam Al-Albani—that a gesture is not incompatible with movement; rather, the two can coexist without the action losing its classification as a gesture.

3- The hadith of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: A young girl went out wearing silver ornaments. A Jew seized her, crushed her head with a stone, and took the jewelry she was wearing. She was found while still clinging to life and was brought to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He asked, "Who

killed you? Was it so-and-so?” She shook her head to say “No.” He asked, “Was it so-and-so?”—naming various people—until the Jew was named, at which point she nodded her head to say “Yes.” He was apprehended and confessed, and the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered that his head be crushed between two stones. Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Al-Tirmidhi (with the wording belonging to the latter).

The phrases “she said with her head: ‘No’” and “she said with her head: ‘Yes’” clearly indicate that the gesture described—“speaking with her head”—involves a perceptible movement from which the intended meanings are understood. For it is inconceivable to express negation or affirmation with the head without moving it—either from side to side or by lowering and raising it. Yet, the narrator described the action using terms denoting both “speech” and “gesturing,” thereby indicating that gesturing is not incompatible with movement.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) acknowledged this gesture—which was accompanied by movement—and accepted it as a valid indication of intent; indeed, he even exacted retribution against a Jew based on it, ordering his execution.

All of this supports the conclusion reached by Imam Al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him): that the addition of “movement” in the hadith regarding the Tashahhud is an “addition by a trustworthy narrator” (*ziyadat al-thiqah*) and is not *shadhdh* (anomalous or irregular).

This is because movement does not contradict the gesture; rather, it is an integral part of its very nature.

There are numerous examples in the Sunnah of a gesture being combined with movement. However, there is a crucial point that must be noted here: the fact that the trustworthy narrator Za'idah ibn Qudamah was the sole narrator to report this specific addition—namely, his statement in the hadith of Wa'il ibn Hujr: “Then he raised his finger, and I saw him moving it”—constitutes an “addition by a trustworthy narrator” rather than a contradiction that would warrant a ruling of *shudhudh* (anomaly). It falls under the category of a reliable

addition due to the narrator's exceptional precision, meticulousness, and high standing in terms of accuracy and religious integrity.

Sixth: The status of the narrator Zā'idah ibn Qudāmah:

This is the crucial point regarding Zā'idah ibn Qudāmah:

Al-Dhahabī said in al-Siyar: "The Imam, the reliable authority (thabt), the Ḥāfiẓ [master memorizer], Abū al-Ṣalt, al-Thaqafī al-Kūfī."

Al-Nasā'ī said: "Trustworthy (thiqah)." Uthmān ibn Zā'idah said: "I arrived in Kūfah and asked al-Thawrī, 'From whom should I hear [hadith]?' He replied, 'You must go to Zā'idah.'"

Abū Usāmah said: "Zā'idah narrated to us; he was among the most truthful and righteous of people."

Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī said: "Zā'idah ibn Qudāmah narrated to us; he would not narrate to a Qadarī [adherent of the doctrine of free will] nor to a proponent of religious innovation (bid'ah)."

Imam Aḥmad said: "There are four who are most meticulous (mutathabbitūn) regarding Hadith: Sufyān, Shu'bah, Zuhayr, and Zā'idah." He also said: "If you hear a Hadith from Zā'idah and Zuhayr, you need not worry about hearing it from anyone else—except for the Hadith of Abū Ishāq."

Abū Zur'ah said: "Truthful (ṣadūq); a man of knowledge." Abu Hatim said: "He was trustworthy and an adherent of the Sunnah; he is dearer to me than Abu 'Awanah, and possesses a better memory than Sharik and Abu Bakr ibn 'Ayyash."

Al-'Ijli said: "He was trustworthy and an adherent of the Sunnah."

Ibn Sa'd said: "He was trustworthy, reliable, and an adherent of the Sunnah."

Consider, furthermore, this unique characteristic—which serves as strong corroborating evidence in the present context. Ibn Hibban stated in al-Thiqat (The Book of Trustworthy Narrators):

“He was among the precise and meticulous memorizers (huffaz); he would not count a narration as truly heard until he had heard it three times.”

These converging indications regarding the reliability of this eminent master (jahbadh) demonstrate that his solitary narration (tafarrud) containing the additional detail of movement (tahrik) cannot be attributed to error or irregularity (shudhudh). Rather, it is an addition from a precise memorizer—someone from whom a solitary narration implies nothing less than verification and certainty.

Thus, the additional detail he provided falls into the category of an acceptable addition by a trustworthy narrator (ziyadat al-thiqah), not that of a rejected, irregular narration (shadhdh).

Seventh: Based on the foregoing, did Za'idah contradict the other memorizers? Answer: He did not contradict them; rather: They mentioned the basic act of gesturing, While he specified its manner (movement).

This does not constitute a contradiction; rather, it is: An addition that does not conflict with the original report.

Eighth: The error of applying the concept of shudhudh (irregularity/anomaly) in this context:

The statement made by that uncouth, pretentious individual—“If this is not shudhudh, then I do not know what shudhudh is”—is a sweeping claim unsupported by evidence or rigorous analysis.

For the leading scholars of this discipline, shudhudh is not a label to be casually applied whenever a difference of opinion arises; rather, it is a precise, well-defined ruling invoked only when there is a clear contradiction that cannot be reconciled. Such a condition is entirely absent in this case.

Indeed, in response to him, we say: If this line of reasoning were accepted, a vast number of “additions by trustworthy narrators” (ziyādāt al-thiqāt) in the Sunnah would be invalidated, and a firmly established principle of this discipline would collapse.

This is because the specific instance in question involves neither a contradiction warranting rejection nor a conflict requiring a choice between competing reports. Instead, it falls under the category of an addition that can be reconciled with the original report without difficulty; and—as established among the critics of Hadith—applying all the texts is preferable to discarding some of them without clear proof.

This hasty application of the ruling of *shudhūdh* (irregularity) is merely a superficial judgment based on a cursory view; it does not originate from a scholar who has rigorously scrutinized this discipline or mastered its intricacies and depths—as was the case with the great critical Imams.

Foremost among them was Imam Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him), who dedicated his life to serving the Sunnah. He exerted his utmost effort in tracing its chains of transmission and distinguishing the authentic from the defective, eventually becoming a leading authority in this field during his era.

The praise bestowed upon him by scholars was well-deserved; an example of this is what is narrated from our Sheikh, the Imam, Sheikh Rabee' bin Hadi al-Madkhali—may Allah have mercy on him of his high regard for his (Al-Albani's) efforts and the fact that he rendered a service to Islam that vast armies could not accomplish, or words to that effect.

As for what has been issued by this pretentious individual (that cunning fox), it does not fall under the category of rigorous scholarly investigation. Rather, it is characterized by undisciplined overreach, audacity regarding the terminology of the Imams, and a manifest deficiency in understanding their methodological approaches.

In truth, the cause for astonishment is not that someone disagrees with Imam Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani—may Allah have mercy on him—or other Imams of Islam; for disagreement in itself is not blameworthy if it is grounded in solid knowledge, refined etiquette, and credible scholarly inquiry.

Rather, the true cause for astonishment lies with:

A weak individual—manifestly so—who has thrust himself to the forefront without having mastered this discipline or established a firm footing in it. Yet, he deliberately seeks to contradict the great Imams, positioning himself as their equal in the intricacies of ‘Ilal (subtle defects in Hadith).

This is accompanied by harshness of expression, poor manners in presentation, and an air of arrogance and haughtiness—as if this noble science could be attained through grand claims, or its ranks reached through mere audacity and disrespect toward the Imams, rather than through sleepless nights, toil, prolonged companionship with scholars, sitting at their feet to learn, and progressing through the stages of study until the doors of understanding are opened and one is granted the light of discernment.

Far be it—such a matter can only be approached through its proper channels; it is attained through patience, arduous effort, and humility before the truth and its proponents—not through arrogance toward them or by clashing with them without the necessary preparation or tools.

Indeed, such an approach does not demonstrate scholarly rigor; rather, it reveals a confused conceptual understanding, a weakness in foundational grounding, and a flaw in one’s sense of propriety—even before any deficiency in scholarly knowledge becomes apparent.

We ask Allah for safety and well-being, and that He grant us and our brothers the grace to steadfastly follow the path of the Imams, to observe proper etiquette with them, and to recognize their true worth; for he who does not know his own worth cannot know the worth of others.

We also ask Allah to bestow His vast mercy upon the Imam, the erudite scholar and Muhaddith (Hadith authority) Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, and to reward him abundantly on behalf of Islam and the Muslims.

He dedicated his life to serving, disseminating, and defending the Sunnah, making it accessible to people through verification, source-tracing, and teaching. He became a beacon in this field—a guiding light in the darkness and a reference point during times of dispute.

How excellent an Imam he was: he served Hadith and its scholars, championed and exalted the Sunnah, and defended its sanctity with the knowledge and insight Allah had bestowed upon him.

By Allah, we hold love for him as an act of devotion to Allah, and we acknowledge the reverence and fairness due to him.

We ask Allah to place us among those who follow his path in championing the Sunnah and defending the Imams, to let us live and die upon this way, and to grant us the reward for defending and emulating them throughout our lives.

He is the Guardian of this and the One capable of it; He is the One whose aid is sought and upon whom we rely—and there is no power nor strength except through Allah.

Note: I have a lecture (approximately 50 minutes long) on the distinction between *shudhūdh* (anomaly/irregularity) and *ziyādat al-thiqah* (an addition by a reliable narrator).

You can find it on the “Prophetic School for Shari’ah Sciences” (Al-Madrasah al-Nabawiyyah) channels on Telegram and YouTube; a transcript will be provided in the first comment, God willing.

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The night of Sunday, 10 Shawwal 1447 AH.