

Al-Zuhri His Life and Services for Hadith

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Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, a profound scholar of hadith has been given more attention than his contemporaries. Some of reasons for this are as follows:

1. His high position in the sciences of hadith in the first and a quarter of the second centuries and his role in compiling the hadith.
2. His stress on preservation of isnad.
3. His contribution to Seerat al-Nabawiyah and to Islamic history.

A famous orientalist, Gold Ziher is deadly against him and he wrote much against him. Some of the Muslim scholars like Dr. Mustafa al-Siba'I in his *al-Sunnah wa Makanatuha fi al-Tashri' al-Islami* Muhammad Hanif al-Nadawi in his *Mutali'al hadith* (urdu) and Dr. Ajjaj al-Khatib in his *al-Sunnah qabl al-Tadwin* have joined issue with Gold Ziher. The present paper is organised as follows:

1. His tribe;

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2. His name and birth;
3. His early education;
4. His teachers;
5. His students;
6. His services for hadith;
7. His death;

(1) His Tribe

The tribe of Quraysh is mentioned in the Holy Quran ⁽¹⁾ . It was the tribe of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and His caliphs. The tribe of Quraysh consisted of several branches, like Banu Muttalib, Banu Asad, Banu Hashim and Banu Zuhrah etc. al-Zuhri belonged to Banu Zhurah ⁽²⁾ .

The People of Quraysh began embracing Islam since the dawn of Islam. Among them were Abdul Rahman b. Awf (d.32 A.H) and Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas (d.55 A.H) ⁽³⁾ The mother of Holy Prophet (peace be upon Him) Aminah bint Wahb belonged to this clan of Quraysh ⁽⁴⁾. Many people of Banu Zuhrah played a prominent role in the history of Islam during the first century and afterwards ⁽⁵⁾, but none of them is known by his nisbah instead of his real name except al-Zuhri. His nisbah is so famous that some of the people do not know his name. Besides his nisbah he was also known with the name of one of his great grand fathers, al-Shihab. So al-Zuhri or Ibn Shihab are the names of one person.

(2) His name and Birth

His name was Muhammad b. Muslim b. Ubaydullah b. Abdullah b. Shihab b. Abdullah b. al-Harith b. Zuhrah b. Kilab b. Murrah b. Ka'b b. Lu'ay b. Ghalib b. Fihr. Fihr one of his grandfather was known as Qureysh (6). Ibn Shihab's mother A 'shah was a pious woman (7). His parents lived in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah, where al-Zuhri was born in 51 A.H., who was named as Muhammad and given Kunyah of Abou Bakr (8).

(3) Early education

Al-Zuhri got his early education from the kuttab that was an established institution of learning in early Islamic period(9). He was an intelligent student and had very strong memory. He learnt the Holy Quran by heart in eighty days(10). He used to go to the houses of sahabah and knocked their doors to get knowledge(11). Al-Madinah al-Munawwarah was the centre of excellence for Islamic knowledge in those days. He got knowledge from some Sahaba like Anas b. Malik and Abdullah b. Tha'labah. His narrations from some Sahabah like Anas b. Malik and other sahabah are scattered in the different books of hadith (12).

The Mosque in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah was the centre of all educational activities, where the classes were held, the lectures were delivered and seminars were conducted. Every teacher in this mosque had established his own study circle with the students. The number of the students was different in

different circles, according to the reputation of the teacher. Education was free and the teachers were not payed for teaching and educational activities (13), because payment for imparting religious education in mosques was regarded as blameworthy act (14).

Teaching hours were according to the timetable of prayers. It started after morning prayer and continued all the day except the time of prayers and taking little rest in the afternoon (15). Teachers had command over all disciplines usually taught at that time; they did not bound themselves to one subject. So that the students should not feel bore. In this way the knowledge of poetry was compulsory for a teacher to be competent (16).

Participation in Study Circles

During studentship al-Zuhri was associated with famous study circles. Some profound circles were established under the supervision of Sa'id b. al-Musayyib(d.94 A.H) Abu Bakr b. Abdul Rahman b. al-Harith b. al-Hisham (d.94 A.H) Ubaidullah b. Abdullah b. Utbah b. Mas'ud (d.94 A.H), Kharijah b. zayid b.Thabit (d.100 A.H) Abou Salmah b. Abdul Rahman b. Awf (d.104 A.H), suleman b. Yasir (d. 107 A.H) and of Urwah b. al-Zubayr (d.94 A.H.), the scholar of Quraysh (17).

Al-Zauri was not atached permanently to these circles only, he had joined the circles of language, poetry and genealogy also. But his major subject was hadith of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) ﷺ.

One day when al-Zuhri was sitting in the circle of

Abdullah b. Tha'labah, a man came and asked about juristic decision about divorce, Abdullah could not answer the question and asked him to go to the study circle of Sa'id b. al-Musayyib (18). Al-Zuhri was surprised to listen no answer from his teacher about the issue. When the man of this question left the place and went to meet Sa'id b. al-Musayyib, al-Zuhri got permission from his teacher and went behind him to the circle of Ibn al-Musayyib, and listened his satisfactory answer. He was very much impressed by his knowledge of fiqh (19). After he left the circle of Abdullah and joined the circle of Ibn al-Musayyib for his study of hadith and fiqh. He remained in this circle for a time of ten years according to the report of some scholars (20).

Study circles of the other Scholars

When al-Zuhri learned all he could be from Ibn-Musayyib, he left his study circle and joined the study circles of other scholars in the Prophet's peace be upon Him, mosque. Foremost among these may be mentioned those of Abu-Bakr b. Abd-ar-Rahman b. al-Harith b. Hisham (d.94 A.H), Abu-Salama b. Abd-ar-Rahman b. Awf (d. 104 A.H), Salim b. Abd-Allah b. Umar b. al-Khattab (d. 106 A.H) and Qasim b. Muhammad b. Abi-Bakr al Siddiq (d.108 A.H). Al-Zuhri also attended the lectures of those scholars who had no permanent circles in the mosque but taught privately in their homes. Among such scholars were Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 94 A.H), Ali b. al-Husayn b. Ali b. Abi-Talib (d. 94 A.H) and Ubaydullah b. Abdullah b. Utba b. Masud (d.98 A.H) (21).

Al-Zuhri did not attend the lectures of male scholars only, but he used to visit the famous female scholars of al-Madinah al-Munawwarah and heard from them the traditions and consulted them on juristic problems. Among these scholars were Amra-bint Abd-al-Rahman(d.103/104 A.H), the illustrious traditionit and jurisprudent (al-muhadditha al-faqiha) and Hind-bing-al-Harith al-Firasiyyah (22). Al-Zuhri's education under the guidance of these scholars(both men and women) in mosque and private houses increased his store of knowledge, and he memorised a large number of the ahadith of the Prophet, peace be upon Him, and the athar of the Companions. Moreover, he collected a great deal of material regarding Qur'anic sciences, sunnah, sirah and maghazi (23).

To sum up, al-Zuhri's brilliant academic career rested in the main on the following four factors.

(i) Perseverance and Patience

All that al-Zuhri achieved was due to his perseverance and patience. He worked hard during his student days. He used to learn his lessons and do his home-work till late at night. He bore with great patience the hardships which he suffered in persuit of knowledge. He himself says, "No one was as patient in the pursuit of knowledge as I was (24). It was his love of knowledge and his perseverance, which urged him to follow Ibn al-Musayyib for three consecutive days in order to learn only one hadith from him. Thus Malik reports al-Zuhri as saying " I pursued Sa'id b. al-

Musayyib for three days in search of only one hadith"(25).

It was his usual practice to serve and wait on each scholar till he learnt all from him. For this reason, he remained attached to his blind teacher, Ubaydullah b. Abdullah, for a very long time and served him like a domestic servant. Seeing his behavior, Ubayd-Allah's maid servant thought that he was really another servant like her and not a student. Malik reports that al-Zuhri himself said: I used to serve Ubayd-Allah b. Abd-Allah b. Utba so much that I could draw water from the well for his ablution. Whenever I called at his house and he enquired who was at the door, his maid-servant used to reply your blear-eyed servant (26). The reason why she took him to be another servant of Ubaydullah was the fact that he used to serve him with utmost humility.

Al-Zuhri was not attached to one teacher in particular. On the contrary, he used to move from one study circle to another. In this way, he attended the lectures of several scholars in one day. Thus he spent all his day acquiring knowledge from various available sources from any person at any place. This, according to Ibrahim b. Sa'd: the main cause of al-Zuhri's surpassing us only is one thing. When we attended the lectures, he was bent upon learning and used to pull his clothes to his chest to ask from the teacher anything he wanted to know (27).

Not only did al-Zuhri study under the scholars of repute, but he unhesitatingly called on anyone-man or woman, young or old-possessing knowledge. Ibrahim

b. Sa'd b. Ibrahim asked his father: Why al-Zuhri surpassed you? The father replied: He used to enter the meetings from the front and not from the back and asked questions from young and old present in the meetings .He used to go to the houses of the Ansar and gained knowledge from old and young, men and women alike. He approached for this purpose even the noble womenfolk living behind the curtains (28).

Al-Zuhri used to ask questions from his teachers. In order to learn from his teachers, he made them speak by asking questions. Describing the method by which he was benefitted by the scholars of his time he says: Knowledge is a treasure and its keys are question (29). He himself says: Extension of knowledge is due to non-memorization (30). It was his habit that whatever he listened from some teacher he used to revise although it may be in front of some illiterate person. It is reported that he used to revise in front of his made-servant. She used to get bored and said: By God, I do not know what you are saying. He used to reply, I know that you do not know what I am saying, but this is what I heard and what I want to remember it (31). Advising patience and perseverance to his pupil Yunus b. Yazid he said: O Yunus, do not try to overcome knowledge, for it is like a chain of valleys; when you cross one of them it alone will make you tired before you attempt to another one. Cross it therefore, day by day and night by night. Do not try to acquire the knowledge as a whole, for one who tries to get the whole of it looses all of it. The right way to achieve it is to work gradually, day by day and night by night (32).

(ii) Strong memory

Strong and sharp memory was natural gift given by God to al-Zuhri. This was evident from the childhood, he memorised Quran in a few days. It is reported from al-Zuhri: When I pass through al-Baqi' I close my ears lest some bad speech enter into them, by God, nothing has even entered my ears which I have forgotten (33). There is another report from him. I used to visit Humayd, Sa'd b. al-Musayyib, Abu Salamah, Salim, Urwah, Qasim and other scholars. I attended their study circles every day. I used to hear from each of these scholars fifty to one hundred ahadith which I memorised on returning home without mixing up one with the other (34).

No wonder that he got annoyed with his own students if they failed to learn his lectures by heart. Once he did not repeat a hadith to his pupil Malik b. Anas (35). On another occasion Imam Malik stated: Ibn Shihab narrated to me a lengthy hadith. I asked him to repeat it he said: "No" wanting to embarrass him. I asked: Did not you yourself like things to be repeated to you. He said: no (36). Whether he would like a hadith he repeated to him?

Once he was asked: Did not you yourself wish that a hadith should be repeated to you? He replied: No(37). Malik says: Once when I got suspicious about the isnad of a hadith and called on him, he rebuked me saying: we were not like this(38). He was of the opinion that his students should not ask him to repeat any

hadith. He said: Neither did I get suspicious regarding any hadith except one. About this hadith, I consulted my colleague. When I checked with I found that it was exactly the same as I had memorized (39). Al-Zuhri was very much disappointed when he saw his students forgot the ahadiths he taught them Imam Malik narrated: Once he narrated one to hundred ahadith and turned to me and asked. How many have you learnt by heart? I replied: Forty. He put his hand on his forehead with sadness and said: O God, what s decline in the power of memorization (40). The power of memoration was a gift of God for him. But inspite of this he used to take care of memory power, he used to drink honey and say: It helps in memoration (41). He was of the opinion that apples and vinegar damaged the power of memorisation, so he did not use them (42). He used to advise the students of hadith to eat the things which were helpful in the power of memorisation. Once he said: one who wants to memorise hadith should eat raisins (43). On another occasion he said: one who intends to memorise hadith should drink honey (44).

(iii) Writing

Al-Zuhri used to write whatever he listened from the ahadith of Prophet (peace be upon Him) and the athar of the companions. This was also a reason for his supermacy upon his temporaries. Salih b. Kaysan says: I and al-Zuhri intended to get knowledge together. We decided to write down the ahadith of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon Him) after writing the

ahadith of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon Him), al-zuhri suggested that we should also write down whatever is narrated from the athar of the companions, because it was also sunnah. I said: It is not sunnah. So, he wrote while I did not write. So he succeeded, and I did not succeed (45). Similarly to this is the statement of Abu al-Zinad (46). In another report Abu al-Zinad says: We used to write only lawfull and unlawfull while al-Zuhri used to write down everything that he heard. Later when we had to consult him I fould that he was the best scholar (47). He used to keep with him the tools of writing (48). It is also reported that people used to laugh at him because of his carrying his writing sheets and tools (49). It was his writing that helped him when the caliph Umar b. Abdul Aziz asked him to codify sunnah (50).

(iv) Abundance of teachers

The abundance of great teachers was another factor for the familiarity of al-Zuhri. He spent most of his time in al-Madinah al-Munawwarah, that was a great cente of muslim scholars in those days. He attended most of these scholars and their circles. The teachers also paid full attention to their brilliant student.

Once when al-Zuhri joined the study circle of Qasim b. Muhammad, the latter said to him: "O boy, I find you fond of seeking knowledge. May I guide you to its real place(wi'aihi)?" Al-zuhri replied in the affirmative. Where upon Qasim said: You should go to Amra-bint-Abd-ar-Rahman who used to live under the

guardianship of A'isha. Al-zuhri says: "Then I came to her and found her an inexhaustible ocean (of learning) (51)".

To take another example, when Urwa recollected an important hadith containing a sunnah, he hastened to transmit it to al-Zuhri. Instead of waiting till he came to his lectures at the scheduled time, Urwa sent for him asking him to come and listen to the said hadith at once. Al-Zuhri himself describes this event and says: Urwa sent for me asking me call on him and hear a hadith containing a sunnah" (52).

These reports clearly show the amount of interest taken by his teachers in imparting knowledge to al-zuhri who, for his part, paid full respect to them during conversation, while asking questions and in all other dealing with them. Referring to the respect which he showed to his teacher, Urwa b. al-zubayr, he said: "when I called at Urwa's residence, I remained sitting at the door without entering into the house. Had I wished, I could have entered the house, but I refrained from doing so as a mark of respect for him" (53).

(4) His Teachers

Al-Zuhri received knowledge from many great scholars. Some of them were companions of the Holy Prophet, some of them were their followers and the others were traditionists and very famous narrators. The detail of these can be found in the Tadhīb-al-Kamal of al-Mizzī, Siyar A'lam al-Nubalā of al-Dhahabī

and Tahdhib al-Tahdhib of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani.

The names of his teachers are: From companions of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon Him), Abdullah b. Umar (d.74 A.H), Anas b. Malik (d.91 A.H) al-Sa'ib b. yazid (d. 91 A.H), Sahl b. Sa'd al-Sa'idi (d. 91.A.H); from followers of the companions, Sa'id b. al-Musayyib (d.94.A.H), Ali b. Husayn b. Ali b. Abi Talib (d.94 A.H.), Abu Bakr b. Abdul Rahman b. al-Harith b. Hisham al-Makhzumi (d.94 A.H), Urwah b. al-Zubayr (d.94. A.H), Humayd b. Abdul Rahman b. Awf (d.95 A.H) Ubaydullah b. Abdullah b. Utbah b. Mas'ud (d.98 A.H) Kharijah b. Zayd b. Thabit (d. 100 A.H), Abu Salman b. Abdul Rahman b. Awf (d.104 A.H), Salim b. Abdullah b. Umar b. al-Khattab (d.106 A.H), Qasim b. Muhammad b. Abi Bakr(108 A.H). Abu Idris b. Abdullah al-Khawlani (d.80 A.H), Alqamah b. waqqas al-Laythi (d.81 A.H) Ata b. Yazid al-Laythi (d.105 A.H), Sa'id b. Ubayd (d.98 A.H), Taus b. Kaysan(d.106 A.H), Sulayman b. Yasar (d.107 A.H) Ata b. Abi Rabah (d.114 A.H).

There were some women from whom he received knowledge directly. Some of them are; 'Amrah bint Abdul Rahman al-Ansariyah (d. 103 A.H) and Hind bint al-Harith al-farisiyya (54).

(5) His Students

Ata Ibn Abi Ribah,(older than him) Umar, b. Abdul Aziz (died before him more than twenty years) Amr b. Dinar, Salih b. kaysan, Amr b. Shu'ayb, Qatadah b.

Di'amah, Zayd b. Aslam, Ayyub Sukhtiyani, Yahya b. Sa'id al-Ansari, Ibrahim b. Sa'd al-Zuhri, Anas b. Malik, al-Awza'I, Ibn Abi Zi'b, Iyadh b. Sa'd, Suleman b. Kathir, Sufyan b. Uyainah, his brother Abdullah b. Muslim al-Zuhri Ibn Jurayj, Muhammad b. Ali b. Husayn, Muhammad b. Abdullah al-Zuhri (nephew of al-Zuhri) (55).

(6) His Services for Hadith

Advisor to Umar b. Abdul Aziz:

Both al-Zuhri and Umar b. Abdul Aziz studied under the same teachers in al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah (56). In 87 A.H Walid appointed Umar b. Abdul Aziz as a governor of al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah (57). The people of al-Madīnah were very happy on this appointment. It was natural that al-Zuhri should be with Umar after his ascension to throne (58). When Umar intended to revive the sunnah which in his words died away (59), and wished that people who had been neglecting it for sometime should once again realise its importance and regulate their lives in its light, he called upon al-Zuhri to codify the sunnah. Al-Zuhri responded to the caliph's call and agreed to undertake the task of codification and accomplished it with great success (60). Umar himself acknowledges that Al-Zuhri possessed a more powerful memory. Thus Ma'mar quotes al-Zuhri as saying: I spent a night with Umar b. Abdul Aziz narrating the ahadith to him. The caliph remarked although I have that you have narrated tonight, yet I have forgotten while you still remember (61). His status as a traditionist is very much famous.

The scholars of that time acknowledged his position. Malik b. Anas says: Ibn Shihab was unrivaled (62). In another report he says: He unrivaled in the whole world (63). Makhul says: Ibn Shihab was the best scholar (64). Ayyub al-Sukhtiyani says: I have not seen a person more learned than Ibn Shihab (65). Yahya b. Sa'id al-Ansari says: None has the knowledge as al-Zuhri (66). Al-Awaz'I says: There was not anyone more learned in the rule of Hisham than al-Zuhri (67).

Among his pupils were Ibrahim b. al-Walid b. al-Walid b. Abd-al-Malik, who later become the caliph, Muhammad b. Abd-Allah (d. 152 A.H) al-Zuhri's nephew Ubayd-Allah b. Abi-Ziyad (d.158 A.H) Hisham's brother-in-law and Shu'ayb b. Abi-Hamza(d.162 A.H) (68). Umar b. Abd-al-Azia stated: I have never seen any one who is more beautiful in the narration of hadith than al-Zuhri (69).

Al-Zuhri regarded the hadith as a revelation from God to his Prophet (Muhammad), and as a trust which the Prophet had bestowed upon his community (Umma). He considered it to be one of the duties of the learned to engage in the teaching and in the spreading of them: because in these activities lie the honour of which he had for the hadith, with great zeal and enthusiasm he engaged in the task of teaching them and spreading them, spending much of his efforts and time in this noble task. He used to hold private classes and public lectures in hadith in his residence at Mahallat al-Rahib in Damascus and in his study circle in the mosque of Damascus. Sometimes he would visit some of the cities and villages of Syria and

palestine to deliver lectures on the ahadith to the students, and to teach the people of these cities and villages in their mosques (70). Malik b. Anas said: Ibn-Shihab would go to the desert in order to teach hadith to the bedouins (al-a'rab). If it happened to be winter, he used to feed them with dates and fresh butter (al-Zubda); and if it was summer he would feed them with tharid (boiled meat with bread crumbled into it) and samn(fat) (71).

Besides his activities in the teaching and spreading of hadith in syria, al-Zuhri used to go to Hijaz during the season of the annual pilgrimage to fulfil the obligation of Hajj and to meet the Hijazi scholars, and other scholars who visited Makkah al-Mukarramah and al-Madinah al-Munawwarah. He would exchange narrations of ahadith with them; and deliver lectures to the Hijazi students, and to other students who would come to Hijaz from various countries to perform Hajj and to study. During his visits to Hijaz, he used to hold sessions for the teaching of hadith in his house at Mecca and in his circle in the Sacred Mosque; and in his house at al-Madinah al-Munawwarah and in his circle in the prophet's mosque (72).

As a result of the lively interest which he displayed in the teaching and spread of hadith in Syria and Hijaz, al-Zuhri attained great fame and popularity. Many Syrian, Hijazi, Egyptian, Iraqi and Yemeni students learned from him (73). He encouraged his students to study hadith, and to be concerned about them, saying to them: "Hadith is masculine. Masculine

men seek it while the effeminate shun it"(74). In holding fast to the sunna is deliverance (75). He was especially kind and affectionate to the young students of hadith. During the course of his sessions on hadith, he would narrate the traditions to his students slowly and clearly so that they would never miss any of them; and he would explain the meanings of strange and difficult words and phrases. He would explain to them the ways of following the sunna, teach them the legal aspects of the hadith (76). The great enthusiasm which al-Zuhri displayed in the teaching of hadith, and the efforts he made to spread them, is beautifully illustrated in his own statement, in which he says:

No-one exercised such patience in teaching this ilm(hadith) as I did. No one spread the ilm for the benefit of the people as I have done (77).

Verification of the Soundness of ahadith

Al-Zuhri was so seriously concerned about hadith that he went to great lengths to ascertain the soundness of all the ahadith which he received and to check them against the possibility of error and defect. Whenever he received a hadith from a narrator, he would go to another narrator who was at least equal in knowledge and reliability to the narrator from whom he had received the tradition. He would either narrate the tradition as he had received it or ask questions about it until he had assured himself about the trustworthiness of the narration, and verified that there were no errors or defects in the material, which he had received. In this way, al-Zuhri confirmed the

soundness of the ahadith which he received, and corrected any defects and errors which he found in them. The following examples will serve to illustrate this practice.

Al-Zuhri said: Muhammad b. Jubayr b. Mut'am narrated part of a tradition to me on the authority of Malik b. Aws b. al-Hadthan. I went to Malik b. Aws and asked him about it; and he narrated it to me completely, as follows: I went to Umar b. al-Khattab at the end, al-Zuhri comments: I narrated this tradition to Urwa b. al-Zubayr. He said to me: Malik b. Aws was right. I heard Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, narrating it in the same form (78).

Al-Zuhri engaged in the task of warning the people against fabricating traditions and falsely attributing them to the Prophet an act which he regarded as being destructive of the very foundation and edifice of hadith (79). The writing of hadith witnessed two stages of development during the first century and the first third of the second century after the Hijra. Each stage of this development has a name by which it had its dominating influence and has its characteristic features.

Taqyid al-ilm implies the writing down of the ahadith and sunnah without any order or arrangement, on al-alwah (wooden tablets), alshuhuf (loose sheets of writing material), al-ruquq (parchments) al-tawamir (rolls of papyrus) and al-qaratis (loose sheets of papyrus) (80). Tadwin al-ilm implies the collection of the ahadith (recorded as described above) and writing them down in dafatir, kutub, kararis, ajza, nusakh and

fanadiq (books) (81). All are comprehended in the single word dawawin, the plural of diwan. Diwan is an arabicised persian word which connotes, among other things, a collection of loose sheets of papyrus or thin leather which are joined together by stitching or by pasting together the end of the sheets. From the word diwan is derived the verbal noun tadwin which joined with al-ilm form the phrase tadwin al-ilm (82).

Al-Zuhri was the first to compile hadith in dawawin. He said: None compiled this al-ilm (hadith) before my compilation (tadwini) (83). Al-Darswardi stated: The first to compile al-ilm was al-Zuhri. Malik b. Anas said: The first to compile al-ilm and write it down in dawawin for the people was Ibn_shihab (84). Umar b. Abd-al-Aziz assumed the caliphate of the Umayyad dynasty in the year 99 A.H. He attached great importance to the hadith. And because of his eagerness and enthusiasm for its practical application and his fear of it being lost, he sent letters to the scholars of the various provinces in which he ordered the collection and compilation of the ahadith and their teaching to the people. Abu-Nuaym wrote: "Umar b. Abd-al-Aziz wrote to various provinces(afaq): "Search for the traditions of the Prophet and collect them (85). Abd-al-Aziz b. Muslim stated: Umar b. Abd-al-Aziz wrote to al-madina al-Munawwarah: "Search and find out the hadith of the Prophet and write them down, for I fear the extinction of knowledge(dhahab al-ilm) and the passing away of the scholars (86). He wrote letters to Abu-Bakr b. Amr b. Hazm his governor in Madinah, ordering him to collect the original letters

and documents written on the instructions of the Prophet, Abu-Bakr and Umar b. al-Khattab to their emissaries, governors, army commander and judges, which were preserved by the families of older companions in Madinah. He also ordered him to collect some of the sunan relating to financial and legal matters which he had heard (when he was governor of Madinah) from al-Qasim b. Muhammad and Amra bint ` Abd-ar-Rehman and send them to him (87).

He also sent letters to some of the governors of other provinces ordering them to collect the sunan relating to blood-money (diyyat) from the reliable scholars in their provinces, and to send them to him (88). When the letters, documents and sunan which he had requested reached him, he formed a committee of distinguish scholars of Syria and others whom he had called from Hijaz and Iraq and entrusted them with the study of the letters, documents and sunan, and the assessment of their suitability for implementation (89). When the committee had completed the work entrusted to it, Umar b. Abd-al-Aziz ordered al-Zuhri to write down the selected materials. Al-Zuhri wrote them down in a daftar, arranging them according to the subjects of jurisprudence. He explained and commented upon some of them, indicating the manner of their adoption and implementation. Thereafter, Umar b. Abd-al-Aziz ordered copies to be made from this daftar and sent a copy to each province which came under his rule (90). Sa'id b. Ziyad stated: I heard Ibn-Shihab talking to Sa'd b. Ibrahim. He said: Umar b. Abd-al-Aziz ordered us to collect the sunan. We wrote

them in dafatir, and then he sent a daftar to every land over which he exercised his authority (91). In the rule of Hashim b. Abdul Malik the caliph asked al-Zuhri to compile hadith. Al-Zuhri agreed to carry out the task on condition that Hisham would help him by giving him the assistance of one or two scribes. Hisham appointed two scribes from the state office (ad-diwan), who were noted for their skill in writing in clear and beautiful script (92). With their assistance, therefore, al-Zuhri commenced the work of compilation. Every day, he would dictate to them the ahadith, sometimes from memory, Sometimes from the collections which he had written when was a student at al-Madinah. The scribes used to write down what al-Zuhri dictated to them in dafatir (93). The work continued for at least a year (94). It took thirty dafatir to contain his ahadith (95). From these dafatir several copies were made. When al-Zuhri had completed the task of compilation, he handed over the dafatir and some of the copies to Hisham b. Abd-al-Malik, who deposited them in the library of the royal palace (96).

Of the remaining copies, one was given to Muhammad b. Abdullah and one was given to Shu'ayb b. Abi-Hamza (97). For the rest, it seems to me that al-Zuhri distributed them among his students (98) and asked them to lend them to any of their colleagues who wished to borrow them. Yunus b. Yazid reported: al-Zuhri said to me, O Yunus; Beware of the dishonesty of the books (ghulul al-Kutab). I asked him, what do you mean by the dishonesty of the books? He replied: Withholding them from our friends (habsuha an

ashabina) (99).

Ab-Zuhri's compilations of ahadith for Umar b. Abd-al-Aziz and Hisham b. Abd-al-Malik led to the spread of the art of compilation of hadith and sunan among the tadinionists and jurists who were his colleague and contemporaries; and to the growth and development of compilations in the realm of hadith and sunna.

(7) His death

Al-Zuhri was recognized a most prominent scholar by the beginning of the second century. He died in 124 A.H (100).

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15. Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, v, 141.
16. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *al-Jami*, 1,136, Ibn Abd-al-Barr, *Jami Bayan al-ilm, lal tiha'ah al-Muneeriyah*, cario)1, 125.
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24. Abu Nu'aym, *Hilyah* (Cario, 1938) III, 366; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa-al-Nihayah*, ix, 345.

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Ibn Asakir, al-Zuhri (Tarikh Madinah Dimashq), p.52;
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41. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, al-Jam'i, II, 20.
42. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, al-jam'i, II, 264.
43. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi al-Jami li-akhlaq al-Rawi II, 262.
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