

**IMAM AD-DARIMI'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC SCIENCES**

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**ABSTRACT:** The article offers a comprehensive examination of the life and scholarly legacy of the ninth-century muhaddis Imam ad-Darimi of Samarkand and highlights his pivotal role in the development of ilm al-islamiya. Through a source-based analysis of his only fully preserved work, Sunan ad-Darimi, the study identifies his methodological contributions and evaluates his influence on the evolution of hadith scholarship. Recognized as one of the significant early collections of authentic prophetic traditions, Sunan ad-Darimi provides valuable insights into the formation of hadith sciences during a formative period. The research also uncovers another component of ad-Darimi's scholarly heritage as-Sulasiyyat, a compilation of fifteen narrations integrated within his Sunan. These findings confirm Imam ad-Darimi's essential place in the intellectual history of the Islamic tradition and underscore his enduring impact on the systematization and transmission of hadith knowledge.

**KEYWORDS:** Imam ad-Darimi, "Sunan", hadith, ilm al-islamiya, teachers, Transoxiana, ravi, isnad, fiqh.

Imam ad-Darimi's full name was "Abdullah ibn Abdurrahman ibn al-Fadl ad-Darimi as-Samarqandi. Recognized as a prominent muhaddith, he is considered one of the leading representatives of the Transoxian scholarly tradition. From an early age, he dedicated himself to the pursuit of knowledge, undertaking extensive scholarly journeys to major intellectual centers including Basra, Baghdad, Hijaz, Kufa, and Sham, where he studied Hadith, fiqh, and theology under distinguished scholars.

Among his teachers were notable figures such as Yahya ibn Ma'in, Abdullah ibn Qutayba, Isa ibn Yunus, Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, and Abdullah ibn Amr al-Raqi. These mentors emphasized a methodological approach in Hadith studies that combined both narration and critical analysis, thereby shaping al-Darimi's scholarly methodology. His intellectual influence extended through his students, who themselves became leading scholars in the Islamic tradition. Among the prominent muhaddiths who transmitted Hadiths from him were Imam al-Bukhari,

Imam Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Huzaymah, underscoring his authoritative position in the science of Hadith.<sup>1</sup>

Ad-Darimi's most significant work is Sunan al-Darimi, also referred to occasionally as Musnad ad-Darimi. This text represents one of the earliest comprehensive Hadith collections, containing over 3,500 prophetic narrations systematically arranged according to fiqh-related topics. The collection addresses a wide range of subjects, including ritual purification, prayer, fasting, zakat, pilgrimage, creed, ethics, personal conduct, and social interactions. Structurally and thematically, Sunan ad-Darimi is considered one of the earliest examples of the Sunan genre. Its reliability and methodological rigor have ensured its continued reference in subsequent Hadith compilations, establishing it as a foundational source for both scholars and students of Hadith sciences.<sup>2</sup>

During his Hajj, Imam ad-Darimi reached the city of Kufa, where he engaged in discussions with Yahya ibn Abdullah al-Hammuni (d. 842 CE) and other prominent muhaddiths. These scholarly conversations often evolved into debates, focusing on the reliability of narrators and the consistency of isnads. As a result, Imam ad-Darimi critically assessed Yahya al-Hammuni's reliability, sometimes expressing reservations regarding his transmission of Hadith and advising others against relying on him. Among those involved in this assessment was Ibn Sulayman al-Balkhi (d. 860 CE). Even among Hanbali scholars, he was addressed with the title "Imam", and a widespread cessation of accepting Hadith from Yahya al-Hammuni ensued. This episode demonstrates Imam ad-Darimi's profound knowledge of narrators and his authoritative status in the critical evaluation of Hadith transmitters.

According to al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, these interactions indicate that Imam ad-Darimi undertook his pilgrimage around the age of forty, during which he compiled and disseminated a significant number of Hadiths. His extensive travels and scholarly engagements contributed to his recognition as a master in Hadith, tafsir, and fiqh, earning him widespread renown. Many sources unanimously assert that Imam played a pivotal role in the advancement of Hadith and related sciences in Samarqand.

His work, Sunan ad-Darimi, is often mentioned alongside other foundational texts such as Sihah al-Sitta and the collection of Ibn Majah, highlighting his status as a leading muhaddith. Historical records note a conversation between Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and his student Abu Dawud, wherein Imam ad-Darimi was classified among the four most prominent scholars of Khorasan and described as a muhaqqiq with impeccable transmission chains.<sup>3</sup>

In U. Uvatov's article titled "Imam ad-Darimi", valuable information is provided regarding the life and intellectual-spiritual legacy of the muhaddith, particularly highlighting the close and sincere relationship between Abdullah ad-Darimi and Imam al-Bukhari. According to the account, upon hearing of Imam ad-Darimi's passing, Imam al-Bukhari was deeply grieved, reflecting the strong bond and mutual respect that existed between the two scholars; he did not hide his sorrow at the loss of his esteemed colleague. Conversely, Imam ad-Darimi held Imam al-Bukhari in the highest regard, praising him as a preeminent muhaddith:

<sup>1</sup> Al-Baghdadi. Tarih al-Baghdad. – V 2. – P. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup> Alimova, M. (2005). Imam ad-Darimi's role in the development of Hadith studies. Imam al-Bukhari Lessons, (2), 40–41. Tashkent.

<sup>3</sup> Alimova, M. (2005). Imam ad-Darimi's role in the development of Hadith studies. Imam al-Bukhari Lessons, (2), 40–41. Tashkent.

"I have met many scholars in Mecca, Medina, Hijaz, Sham, and Iraq, including Abu Zur'a, Abu Hātim, Abu Dawud, and Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. Among them, none surpassed al-Bukhari in excellence and scholarly distinction."<sup>4</sup>

This mutual recognition underscores both the scholarly eminence of Imam ad-Darimi and the exceptional status of Imam al-Bukhari in the classical Hadith tradition.

Imam ad-Darimi made substantial contributions to the development of Islamic sciences, particularly in Hadith, fiqh, and aqidah. His scholarly influence was widely recognized not only in Central Asia but throughout the Islamic world.

He was esteemed as one of the most reliable transmitters of his time. His seminal work, *Sunan ad-Darimi* (sometimes referred to as *Musnad al-Darimi*), is among the earliest systematically arranged Hadith compilations, encompassing over 3,500 narrations on subjects including ritual purification, prayer, fasting, zakat, pilgrimage, ethics, social conduct, and theological matters. Notably, Imam ad-Darimi did not merely transmit Hadiths; he analyzed their isnads, distinguishing authentic from weak narrations and laying the foundation for the science of isnad.<sup>5</sup>

He was recognized for his critical and analytical approach, particularly in identifying weak or fabricated narrations. Imam ad-Darimi maintained a firm stance against groups such as the Jahmiyya and other sects, consistently defending the creed of Ahl as-Sunna wal-Jamaa, basing his theological positions on the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah.

In the field of fiqh, his Hadiths were considered highly reliable sources for deriving legal rulings. He trained his students not only to memorize Hadith but also to understand their meaning, their isnads, and their relevance to legal rulings. Through his scholarly travels, he disseminated Hadith and other Islamic sciences across Basra, Kufa, Hijaz, Sham, Iraq, and Central Asia. In Samarqand, he served as a Shaykh ul-Islam, establishing a Hadith school that became a major center of learning.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond Hadith, Imam ad-Darimi contributed to the development of critical methodology, isnad sciences, and the etiquette and principles of narration. He emphasized the importance of both the matn and sanad, which are text and the chain of narrators, elevating Hadith studies from mere transmission to a critical and analytical discipline. He clearly articulated standards for identifying weak narrators and broken chains.

Through his scholarly school, Samarqand emerged as a major center for Hadith learning. Historical sources note Imam ad-Darimi as a hafiz who had memorized thousands of Hadiths, with Abu Hafs an-Nasafi referencing him more than fifty times. Imam ad-Darimi emphasized accuracy, integrity, and justice in narration, and his Hadiths were corroborated in subsequent collections. Consequently, he earned the title "Imam", and leading scholars such as Imam al-Bukhari and Muslim relied upon his transmissions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Uvatov, U. (2002). Imam ad-Darimi. In *Buyuk allomalarimiz* (p. 7). Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University.

<sup>5</sup> Alimova, M. (2005). Imam ad-Darimi's role in the development of Hadith studies. *Imam al-Bukhari Lessons*, (2), 40–41. Tashkent.

<sup>6</sup> Abu Tohirxo'ja. (1991). *Samariya*. In *Meros series* (pp. 54–55). Tashkent: Kamalak.

<sup>7</sup> Rahimjonov, D. A. (2003). *Abu Hafs an-Nasafi's Kitab al-qand waal-Ma'rifa fi ulamai Samarqand: Scholars of Samarqand – an important source on the history of Hadith in Samarqand* (Doctoral dissertation, Tashkent), p. 16.

Moreover, Imam ad-Darimi demonstrated the application of fiqh principles, including qiyas, istihsan, and ijtehad—in alignment with Hadith, thus integrating the disciplines of Hadith and Islamic jurisprudence. His influence extended beyond Hadith and fiqh to the development of Islamic intellectual methodology, and his legacy continues to be studied by contemporary scholars with great interest.

The ninth century represents one of the highest stages in the development of Islamic sciences, particularly in the field of Hadith studies. Notably, Transoxiana the region between the AmuDarya and SyrDarya rivers, including cities such as Bukhara, Samarqand, Termez, Merv, Nasaf, and Fergana—emerged during this period as a major center of Islamic culture and scholarship. In these areas, disciplines such as fiqh, kalam, logic, and Hadith studies advanced rapidly.<sup>8</sup> This intellectual flourishing was largely facilitated by the deep penetration of Islam into Transoxiana from the second century of the Hijra, the establishment of cohesive Muslim communities, and the creation of a favorable scholarly environment. During the Abbasid period (750–1258 CE), cities like Bukhara and Samarqand became major academic centers recognized throughout the Islamic world.

Within this rich intellectual milieu, an independent school of Hadith scholarship developed in Transoxiana. Among its leading figures he holds a distinguished place. Imam ad-Darimi not only transmitted Hadiths but also critically assessed them, classifying, compiling, and arranging narrations according to their reliability. His renowned work, Sunan ad-Darimi, is among the earliest sources that organize Hadiths according to fiqh-related topics, making it a foundational text in the development of Islamic legal thought.<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, Imam ad-Darimi contributed significantly to the evolution of Hadith studies, not only in terms of transmission but also in the understanding and application of Hadith knowledge, which is diroa. His contributions to Islamic sciences, however, extend beyond Hadith alone. Evidence from his works demonstrates his engagement with almost all branches of Islamic learning. For instance, the division of Sunan into fiqh sections reflects his expertise as a jurist, while the integration of Qur'anic explanations and commentary indicates his competence as a mufassir.

Studying these contributions in comparison with the development of other Islamic sciences provides valuable insights into the intellectual history of the region and opens opportunities for further scholarly research.

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