# The Term Ṣāliḥ in Abū Dāwūd's *al-Sunan*: An Evaluation in Terms of Authenticity

## Ebû Dâvûd'un *es-Sünen*'inde Sâlih Terimi: Sıhhat Düzeyi Açısından Bir Değerlendirme

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## Makale Bilgisi / Article Information

# The Term *Ṣāliḥ* in Abū Dāwūd's *al-Sunan*: An Evaluation in Terms of Authenticity

## Abstract

This article examines the degree of authenticity of the narration material as defined by Abū Dāwūd's concept of *ṣāliḥ*. Although he answered some of the questions about *al-Sunan* that were directed to him in a small treatise he wrote for the Meccans, some aspects of the book remain ambiguous. The term *ṣāliḥ* and the scope of authenticity are perhaps the most important of these. Because Abū Dāwūd mentioned this concept in his letter, he did not explain what he meant. This situation caused the ḥadīth scholars after his death to present some different opinions around this term and to argue about what kind of meaning Abū Dāwūd attributed to the concept of *ṣāliḥ* in the categorization of ḥadīths in terms of authenticity. Considering the term's emergence, contrary to popular belief, this study contends that the term *ṣāliḥ* does not only cover *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound) or *ḥasan* (fair) ḥadīths but also refers to a wide level of authenticity that includes *ḍaʿīf* (weak) ḥadīths, although not severe.

**Keywords:** Ḥadīth, Abū Dāwūd, al-Sunan, Ṣāliḥ, Authenticity, Ṣaḥīḥ, Ḥasan, Ḍaʿīf.

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### Öz

Bu makale, Ebu Dâvûd'un *es-Sünen*'inde sâlih kavramıyla çerçevesi çizilen rivayet malzemesinin sıhhat düzeyini incelemektedir. O, *es-Sünen* hakkında kendisine yöneltilen bazı soruları Mekkelilere yazdığı küçük çaplı bir risale ile cevaplamış, ancak esere ilişkin birtakım teknik detayları açıklığa kavuşturmamıştır. Bu hususlardan biri de sâlih terimi ve sıhhat kapsamıdır. Ebû Dâvûd mektubunda bu kavrama değinmekle beraber bununla neyi kastettiğini net olarak ortaya koymamaktadır. Bu durum, kendisinden sonraki hadis âlimlerinin bu terim etrafında birtakım farklı görüşler serdetmelerine ve hadislerin sıhhat açısından taksimatında onun sâlih kavramına nasıl bir anlam yüklediğine dair tartışmalara neden olmuştur. Bu çalışma, terimin ortaya çıkış sürecini de dikkate almak suretiyle yaygın kanaatin aksine sâlih teriminin sadece sahih veya hasen hadisleri kapsamadığını, aynı zamanda şiddetli olmamakla beraber zayıf hadisleri de içine alan geniş bir sıhhat düzeyine gönderme yaptığını ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Hadis, Ebû Dâvûd, es-Sünen, Sâlih, Sıhhat, Sahih, Hasen, Zayıf.

## Introduction

Although ḥadīths are classified into various categories such as *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, and *ḍaʿīf*, in terms of authenticity, the narrations contained in these categories differ in degrees of strength or weakness between them. For example, *mursal* (loose ḥadīths) are classified as *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths, along with *muḍal (*perplexing) and *muʿallaq* ḥadīths to be equal in weakness. However, when examining their intrinsic value, it is not appropriate to consider the *mursal* ḥadīth and the *muḍal* ḥadīth to be equal in weakness. A similar situation exists for the authenticated narrations.[1]

So much so that from the early beginning of ḥadīth history, muḥaddiths used a variety of concepts for the narrations that would later be expressed with a common term as *ṣaḥīḥ*. Although a significant portion of them have a common dictionary meaning, the question of why muḥaddiths of the narration period used different words to express the authenticity of narration needs to be addressed. Many words, for example, such as *thābit*, *jayyid*, *qawī*, *maʿrūf*, *mustaḥsan*, *maḥfuẓ*, *mujawwad*, and, *ṣāliḥ* were used for an acceptable ḥadīth in the early stages of the ḥadīth.[2] According to al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), it is no coincidence that a scholar well-versed in the science of ḥadīth preferred the word *jayyid* over the word the *ṣaḥīḥ*.[3]

In this direction, how should it be understood that Abū Dāwūd favored the word *ṣāliḥ* in some hadiths of his work? Did he mean *maqbūl* (elegant) ḥadīths like *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan* according to popular belief, or did he intend to indicate that the narrations have different degrees of authenticity? What degree of authenticity did he attribute to the *ṣāliḥ* word he utilized for such ḥadīths, which structure is a critical piece of his work? To determine this, the study centers primarily on the idea of *ṣāliḥ*. It examines the framework of this concept used to express both the skill of the *rāwī* (narrator) and the authenticity status of the *marwī* (narrated material), before Abū Dāwūd. From that point forward, the concept of *ṣāliḥ* is discussed around the details of what kind of method he followed in *al-Sunan* in the letter that Abū Dāwūd wrote to the Meccans. Finally, in the following periods, the meaning of the word *ṣāliḥ* is emphasized and the context of this word is pointed out in terms of its authenticity.

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[1] Ṣubḥî al-Ṣāliḥ, *Hadis İlimleri ve Hadis Istılahları*, trans. M. Yaşar Kandemir (Istanbul: IFAV Yayınları, 2010), 136.

[2] Nūr al-Dīn ʿItr, *Manhaj al-Naqd fī Ulūm al-Hadīth* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1979), 273; Ahmet Yücel, *Hadis Istılahlarının Doğuşu ve Gelişimi* (İstanbul: IFAV Yayınları, 1996), 177-179.

[3] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī fī sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawāwī*, ed. Abū Qutayba Naẓar Muḥammad Firyābī (Beirut: Maktaba al-Kawthar, 1415), 1/194.

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Although many studies have addressed Abū Dāwūd and his *al-Sunan* from various aspects, this study differs in method and content from previous studies in that it focuses specifically on the term ṣāliḥ and seeks to determine how this term corresponds to the degree of authenticity.[4]

This study examines the position of the concept of ṣāliḥ in terms of authenticity when examined together with Abū Dāwūd's other explanations, taking into account the emergence process. It is understood that the related concept mostly has a rank that can be called ṣaḥīḥ (sound) or ḥasan (fair), and it is emphasized that it is used in some places to indicate a rank that can be seen as the same as a ḍaʿīf (weak) ḥadīth. Because, according to the common opinion of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth, even if the ḥadīth and the *athar* (account) are weak; it takes precedence over mental activities such as *raʾy* (personal judgment), *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) and *qiyās* (analogical reasoning). In this direction, the study is important in that it focuses on a controversial concept of ḥadīth methodology and sheds light on the meaning of a technical term in understanding a work in terms of form and style. In this direction, the study is important in that it focuses on a controversial concept of ḥadīth methodology and sheds light on the meaning of a technical term in understanding a work in terms of form and style.

## 1. The Term *Ṣāliḥ* and its Framework

The concept of ṣāliḥ, which is presented in the dictionary as the inverse of *fasād* (deformity) and includes the areas such as useful, convenient, proper, and good, has been used in this direction in the al-Qurʾān and ḥadīth, generally parallel to its dictionary meaning.[5] It can be seen that a term specific to the science of Ḥadīth is used to describe both the *rāwī* and *marwī*.[6] There is also a version of this term in the form of "*ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*", which is generally used in

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[4] James Robson, "The Transmission of Abū Dāwūd's 'Sunan.'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14/3 (1952), 579-588; Lütfü İmamoğlu, *Ebû Dâvûd ve Sünen'i* (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2000), 76-148; Mehmet Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâvûd'un Sünen'i Kaynakları ve Tasnif Metodu* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2012), 401-410; Zeynep Ekici, "Hadis İlminde "Sâlih", "Sâlihu'l-hadîs" ve "Suveylih" Terimleri", *Hadis ve Siyer Araştırmaları* 4/1 (2018), 7-39; Harun Özçelik, "Ebû Dâvûd'un Sünen'de Haklarında Sükût Ettiği Hadislerin Sıhhat Durumu İle İlgili Görüşlerin Değerlendirilmesi" *İlahiyat Tetkikleri Dergisi* 51 (2019), 131-160; Ahmet Aktaş, *Hadis Usulünde Sâlih Hadis Kavramı* (Yalova: Yalova Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2022), 22-25.

[5] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār al-Sadr, n.d.), "ṣlḥ", 2/516; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾan*, Critical ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Kaylānī (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, n.d.), "ṣlḥ", 489; al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Taʿrīfāt* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1403/1983), "Ṣāliḥ", 131.

[6] Abdullah Aydınlı, *Hadis Istılahları Sözlüğü* (Istanbul: IFAV Yayınları, 2011), "Sâlih", 271-272; Mücteba Uğur, *Ansiklopedik Hadis Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2018), "Sâlih", 352; Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâvûd'un Sünen'i*, 401-403; Mehmet Efendioğlu, "Sâlih", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2009), 36/32.

evaluations of *rāwī*s rather than *marwī*, and a use a "*ṣuwayliḥ*", which denotes a relatively lower level of competence concerning the *rāwī*. The last two terms are understood to be used in the evaluation of the situation only for the *rāwī*, and the first term for both the *rāwī* and the *marwī*.[7]

The word *ṣāliḥ*, whose first traces are thought to have been discovered in the 2nd/8th century, was used as much as the meaning of the word permitted in the first uses; it did not gain a conceptual identity in the middle of this century. From the beginning of the next century, particularly in the middle, the word *ṣāliḥ* was used both to express a *rāwī*'s level of competence as well as to indicate the soundness of the narration material. The term appears in this context as a phrase used to reveal the status of both the *rāwī*s whose narrations are written for *i'tibār* (analysis) and the ḥadīth whose isnāds are *ṣaḥīḥ* and do not have *wahn* (severe weakness).

Given that critics such as Wakī' ibn al-Jarrāḥ (d. 197/812) and Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān (d. 198/813) use the term *ṣāliḥ*, we can say that this concept was in used by the end of the 2nd/8th century. However, evaluating usages in this century as a technical concept of the science of Ḥadīth would be inappropriate. Although it is stated that 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī (d. 198/813) used the term *ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*, it is well known that in practice he evaluates no *rāwī* with this wording.[8]

Similarly, it is mentioned that Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān used this wording for *ḍa'īf rāwī*s, but it is unclear whether this usage is an evaluation of the *rāwī* based on the lexical meaning of the word *ṣāliḥ* or a *jarḥ-ta'dīl* term. He used this expression for Muḥammad ibn 'Amr al-Laythī saying, "Although he is a *ṣāliḥ* person, he is not a person with the best memorization among the *rāwī*s."[9] Again, the record of Wakī' ibn al-Jarrāḥ about the *rāwī* named Muḥammad ibn 'Ubeyd Allāh al-Arzamī as "He was a *ṣāliḥ* man, but when his books were lost, he started to recite them from memory and he made a mistake", leads us to believe that this word is not a terminological usage.[10]

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[7] Ekici, "Hadis İlminde "Sâlih", "Sâlihu'l-hadîs" ve "Suveylih" Terimleri", 22-23.

[8] Halil İbrahim Turhan, *Ricâl Tenkidinin Doğuşu ve Gelişimi (Hicrî İlk İki Asır)* (Istanbul: IFAV Yayınları, 2015), 443-444. For the record that Ibn Mahdī describes that *rāwī* as *ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*, when mentioning a ḥadīth of a *rāwī* who has a slight weakness and is a *ṣadūq* (truthful), see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Kifāya fī 'Ilm al-riwāya* (Hyderabad: Dā'irāt al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmaniyah, 1357), 22.

[9] Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, Critical ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1405/1985), 26/215.

[10] Fort he example Muḥammad ibn 'Ubeyd Allāh al-Arzamī, see Turhan, *Ricâl Tenkidinin Doğuşu ve Gelişimi*, 251.

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Ibn Ḥibbān's description of Dāwūd ibn al-Zibriqān as "He was a *ṣāliḥ* person, he would memorize *ḥadīth* and discuss it, but he would make mistakes in his narration and fall into delusions in his discussion" demonstrates that this word retained its lexical meaning in later dates.[11] Although this usage corresponds with the use of the word *sâlih* as terminology for expressing low-level accreditation, it can be said that this concept was used for the evaluation of *rāwīs* and *marwī* at the beginning of the 3rd/9th century.

On the other hand, records show that Imām Mālik (d. 179/795) and Sufyān bin ʿUyayna (d. 198/814) used this wording in the literal sense as of *ṣāliḥ* person".[12] Furthermore, it is claimed that ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) uses this word to describe the authenticity of the *marwī* in the sense of *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan.* However, not only the word *ṣāliḥ* but also many phrases such as *thābit*, *qawī*, *nabīl*, *mustaḥsan,* and *jayyid* were in use at the time to reveal the status of *maqbūl* ḥadīth In these terms, the meaning of the dictionary takes precedence over the terminology of the muaddiths.[13] According to the most optimistic scenario, the use of the word *ṣāliḥ* and its derivatives as an independent term for evaluating both the competence status of the *rāwī* and the authenticity of the *marwī* cannot date back to the beginning of the 3rd/9th century.

Another aspect of the problem is when it is conceptually based, and whether it is sufficient to demonstrate the status of the *rāwī's* competence in ḥadīth narration in terms of *jarḥ-taʿdīl*. This alone implies getting a hint as to what this word refers to, at least based on the terms being used together for a certain period. This term is sometimes used in conjunction with *thiqa, ṣadūq, lā baʾsa bih, laysa bi al-qawī,* and *laysa bi shayʾ.* This demonstrates that at least the level of competence of the *rāwī*, who is referred to as *ṣāliḥ*, is debatable and that scholar critics assign different meanings to this term. This demonstrates that it is used not only in evaluating the *rāwī* but also in determining the authenticity of the *marwī*.

It is generally believed that the word *ṣāliḥ* does not express a high level of accreditation when considered with other *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* terms. It is understood that it mainly refers to the lowest level of *taʿdīl* and sometimes a *rāwī* is used for *jarḥ* because of a small error of *ḍabṭ* (powers of memory).

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[11] كان داود بن الزبرقان شيخا صالحا يحفظ الحديث ويذاكر به ولكنه كان يهم في المذاكرة ويغلط في الرواية see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn min al-muḥaddithīn*, Critical ed. Mahmūd Ibrāhīm Zāyad (Aleppo: Dār al-Vaʿy, 1396), 1/292. For similar records, see Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, 1/312, 333, 2/110, 131, 167, 3/99, 136.

[12] Ekici, "Hadis İlminde "Sâlih", "Sâlihu'l-hadîs" ve "Suveylih" Terimleri", 10-11.

[13] Ṣubḥî al-Ṣāliḥ, *Hadis İlimleri ve Hadis Istılahları*, 128-131.

The inclusion of this concept of the *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* scales by famous scholars' critics provides a general impression of the concept's content. Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938) and al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) use the term *ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth* for the level of *taʿdīl* and state that the narration of such a *rāwī* will be recorded for *iʿtibār*.[14]

Similarly, Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1404) states that the ḥadīths of the *rāwī*, who are described as *ṣāliḥ*, will be written for i*ʿtibār*.[15] On the other hand, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) and Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) state that they refer to this word in the sixth level of *taʿdīl*, expressing *iʿtibār*.[16] However, although it is uncommon in *jarḥ - taʿdīl* sources, this word is also seen to be used ( وصلحه فلان ) as an evaluation for the *rāwī*.

While citing Ibn ʿAdī's (d. 365/976) assessment of Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī, al-Dhahabī states that no one except Ibn ʿAdī considers him to be *ṣāliḥ*.[17] It is said that Abū Ḥātim saw Ḥammād ibn al-Jaʿd as *ṣāliḥ*.[18] It is also said that he also mentioned Ḥammād ibn al-Nujayḥ in Ibn ʿAdī's work, accepted him as *ṣāliḥ*, and, accredited him.[19] Ibn Ḥajar also records that the *rāwī* named Ismāʿīl ibn ʿĪsā al-Baghdādī is *ḍaʿīf* according to Azdī and *ṣāliḥ* by others.[20]

Hence the concept of *ṣāliḥ* is well known and used before Abū Dāwūd. In terms of lexical meaning, this term is a current concept to indicate the status of the *rāwī* and the *marwī*. *Muḥaddith*s began using it as a term in the early third century. There is no consensus, however, on which *rāwī* group it describes in

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[14] وإذا قيل صالح الحديث فإنه يكتب حديثه للاعتبار see Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1371/1902), 2/37; Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, Critical ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad Muʿawwiḍ - ʿAdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1416/1995), 1/114-115; ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī, *Al-Rafʿ wa al-Takmīl fī al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*, Critical ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (Beirut: Dār al-Salām, 1421/2000), 131.

[15] Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī, *Taqyīd wa-l-īḍāḥ li-mā uṭliqa wa-uġliqa min Muqaddimat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, Critical ed. Muhammad Rāghib al-Ṭabbakh (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1405/1984), 135.

[16] Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī, *Fatḥ al-mughīth bi-sharḥ Alfiyyat al-ḥadīth lil-ʿIrāqī*, Critical ed. ʿAlī Ḥusayn ʿAlī (Egypt: Maktabat al-Sunnah, 1424/2003), 2/119; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Critical ed. Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq - ʿĀdil Murshid (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1416/1995), 1/10.

[17] وما علمت أحدا صلحه إلا ابن عدي see Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 1/370.

[18] وصلحه أبو حاتم see Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 2/358.

[19] وذكره ابن عدي في الكامل وصلحه وقواه see Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, 2/371.

[20] ضعفه الأزدي وصلَّحه غيره see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, Critical ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (Beirut: Maktabat al-Matbaʿāt al-ʿIlmiyya, 1423/2002), 2/156.

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terms of *jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* or what types of narratives it describes in terms of its authenticity.

## 2. Notes on the Abū Dāwūd's *al-Risāla*

In his explanations of the technical features of his work, Abū Dāwūd states that *al-Sunan* contains 4800 ḥadīths in his own words, that all of them are the *aḥkām* (legal tradition) ḥadīths, and thus he did exclude ḥadīths on subjects such as *zuhd* (pious), *riqāq* (softening the hearts), and *faḍāil* (excellence). Because it aims to create a concise work, in order not to increase the volume and make it easier to benefit from, it is contented with citing a few ḥadīths in each *bāb* (sub-chapter) that he believes are appropriate according to his criteria. Although not as meticulous as Muslim (d. 261/875) and Nesāī (d. 303/915), he noted the differences in wording in the ḥadīths that reached him with different *isnāds* (chain of the transmitter) and pointed out to who the word belonged to. After sending the *isnād*, he gave some information about the *rāwī* that he deems necessary, and rarely mentioned some *al-jarḥ* and *al-taʿdīl* (discretization and accreditation) records about him. Although not as much as Bukhārī, he used the method of *taqṭīʿ* (abbreviation) in places and explained why by saying, "If I had mentioned the ḥadīth in its entirety, it would not have been known to those who read it, where the part about the *aḥkām* is." Abū Dāwūd explained the *isnād* and *matn* (text) of some ḥadīths he mentioned, as well as his jurisprudence views on the relevant issue. He stated that the *masāil* (fiqh issues) were those of Sufyān al-Thawrī, Imām Mālīk, and Imam Imām Shāfiī and that the ḥadīth in question was not proof for fiqh practice, with the note "The action is not like that!" He also stated that he received *ḍaīf* ḥadīth from *Sunan*, but not a ḥadīth of a matrūq *rāwī* (abandoned in ḥadīth) who was unanimously abandoned by the scholars.[21]

After finishing his work, his teacher Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), praised it for its scientific value.[22] Following that, the work gained popularity in Egypt and Iraq, as it reflects the purpose of its writing to a large extent, gathers the

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[21] This is because jurists act on or consider relevant ḥadīth, even if it is ḍaīf, superior to reason, qiyās, and, raʾy. For the letter, see İsmail Lütfi Çakan, *Hadis Edebiyatı* (İstanbul: IFAV Yayınları, 2008), 109-113. İnitially, there are about 100 *mursals*, about 200 *munkaṭiʿ* (interrupted ḥadīth) and around 1000 *muʿallaq* ḥadīths in *Sunan*. All of the *muʿallaq* ḥadīths, which account for almost one-fifth of the work, are not directly derived from the *marfūʿ* (raised) ḥadīth; it is due to the criticism of a narration or the supporting narrations brought as *mutābaʿah* (follow-ups) and *shawāhid* (witnesses). see Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâvûd'un Sünen'i*, 392-399.

[22] al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, ed. Bashshār ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1422/2002), 10/75; Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1402/1982), 13/209.

fiqh ḥadīth and facilitates access to them, and serves as a source of reference for issues on which the *madhhabs* (sect) disagree. Furthermore, even though the Ṣaḥīḥs of Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and Muslim in the Khurāsān region were accepted, Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998) highlighted Abū Dāwūd's *al-Sunan* in terms of benefit; asserting that he was superior to them in terms of both subjects and fiqh knowledge.[23]

Despite this, it appears that the issue of the authenticity of the ḥadīth, which is critical in determining the intrinsic value of the work and whose authenticity is declared as *ṣāliḥ* by Abū Dāwūd, has remained closed. Although he mentioned this special term in his *al-Sunan* statements in the letter he wrote to the Meccans, he did not provide details or explain what this concept corresponds to in terms of authenticity. As a result, this term sparked some discussions in the years that followed, with various points of view expressed about the meaning and framework of the concept of *ṣāliḥ*.

The letter contains the following statements about this term: "In my work, I mentioned the ḥadīth with *wahn* (severe weakness). It also includes ḥadīths whose isnāds are not authentic. The ḥadīths about which I made no explanation and remained silent are *ṣāliḥ.* Some of them are more *ṣaḥīḥ* than others."[24] "The majority of the ḥadīths I have included in *al-Sunan* are *mashūr* (famous). They are also *mashūr* in the eyes of those who wrote works on ḥadīth. However, not everyone can choose from these ḥadīths."[25] "It is not for anyone to reject a *mashūr*, *muttaṣil* (uninterrupted) and *ṣaḥīḥ* ḥadīth."[26] "Among the narrations in *al-Sunan* are some non-*muttaṣil* ḥadīth, such as *mursal* and *mudallas* (deceitful)."[27]

## 3. The Term of *Ṣāliḥ* in *al-Sunan* and its Frame

Scholars differ in their opinions, approaches, and evaluations of which ḥadīths Abū Dāwūd refers to in terms of their authenticity with his *ṣāliḥ* wording in *Sunan*, and what kind of an authenticity framework he draws with this wording. This concept is understood to be a type of *taʿdīl* expression that points to the *rāwī's* competence, albeit at a low level, in the composition of *ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*, which was created by attaching to the word ḥadīth. However, some scholars have used the same wording to express the authenticity of the *marwī*. It can be seen that the concept of *ṣāliḥ*, which was used before Abū Dāwūd - generally with the meaning of the dictionary- was used both independently and

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[23] Khaṭṭābī, *Maʿālim al-sunan* (Aleppo: al-Matbaʿa al-ʿIlmiyya, 1351/1932), 1/6.

[24] Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, *Risālat Abī Dāwūd ilā ahl Makkah fī waṣf Sunanih*, ed. Muhammad Lutfī al-Ṣabbāgh (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-Islāmī, 1405), 27-28.

[25] Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, *Risālat Abī Dāwūd*, 29.

[26] Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, *Risālat Abī Dāwūd*, 29.

[27] Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, *Risālat Abī Dāwūd*, 30.

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in conjunction with some other words to indicate the reliability of a narration. As a result, the word *ṣāliḥ* appears to refer to acceptable ḥadīths that can be described as *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan*. Many words such as *ṣāliḥ*, *maʿrūf*, *thābit*, *maḥfūẓ*, *qawī*, *nabīl*, *mujawwad*, *mustaḥsan*, and *jayyid* were used for *iḥtijāj* (argumentation) and *maqbūl* narrations at the end of the 2nd/8th century, when the technical terms describing the authenticity of the narrated materials were not yet settled.[28] Although there are records indicating that there are various nuances between these words that point to authenticity in the following process, it can be said that the word *ṣāliḥ* did not become a settled term at that time.

Although Abū Dāwūd is not known to have made any direct assessments of the narrations omitted in his *Sunan*, some of Ibn Manda's views on the authenticity of the ḥadīths in the work are considered the earliest assessments on the subject. Because he stated that four books contain *ṣaḥīḥ* ḥadīths and explained how these books distinguish between right and wrong, *thābit* from *maʿlūl*, and *ṣawāb* from *khaṭaʾ*. These works, according to him, are the as of *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, as well as the *Sunan*s of Abū Dāwūd and "al-Nasāʾī.[29] Furthermore, according to Ibn Manda's report, Abū Dāwūd compiled ḥadīth from the *rāwī*s who had not unanimously agreed to his abandonment; if he could not find a *ṣaḥīḥ* one in a *bāb*, he added a ḥadīth with a *ḍaʿīf* attribution. For a ḥadīth, even if it is *ḍaʿīf*, is stronger than a *raʾy*.[30] According to Ibn Manda, *al-Sunan* generally includes *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations, but due to the method chosen by the author, the work also includes *ḍaʿīf* narrations.

He mentioned and said in his letter that it can be used as *ḥujjah* (proof) even if in cases where there is no *musnad* (supported) ḥadīth it does not take its place in terms of authenticity. Because he stated in his letter that *mursal* ḥadīth can be used as *ḥujjah* (proof) even though it does not replace it in terms of authenticity in cases where there is no *musnad* (supported) ḥadīth.[31] Similarly, he claims that

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[28] من الألفاظ المستعملة عند أهل الحديث في المقبول: الجيد، والقوي، والصالح والمعروف، والمحفوظ، والمجود، والثابت see Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Nuket ʿalā Kitāb Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, Critical ed. Rabīʿ b. Hādī ʿUmayr (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāya, 1415/1994), 1/490; al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, 1/194; Ṭāhir al-Jazāirī, *Tawjīh al-Naẓar ilā uṣūl al-athār*, Critical ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (Aleppo: al-Matbaʿāt al-Islāmiyya, 1416/1995), 1/508.

[29] Ibn Manda, *Shurūṭ al-aimma risāla*, Critical ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Faryawāī (Riyadh: Dār al-Muslim, 1416/1995), 42.

[30] Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī, *Ulūm al-ḥadīth*, Critical ed. Nūr al-Dīn ʿItr (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1406/1986), 37; al-Nawāwī, *al-Ījāz fī sharḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, ed. Abū ʿUbayda Āli Salmān (Jordan: Dār al-Athariyyā, 1428/2007), 55-56; Ibn al-Wazīr, *al-ʿAwāṣim wa-al-qawāṣim fī al-dhabb ʿan sunnat Abī al-Qāsim*, Critical ed. Shuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1412/1992), 2/90; al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, 1/183.

[31] Abū Dāwūd, *Risālat Abī Dāwūd*, 24.

because he could not find any other ḥadīth than this, he included the *munkar* (denounced) ḥadīth, but noted that it was *munkar*.[32]

The earliest assessments of what the word *ṣāliḥ*, used by Abū Dāwūd for ḥadīths representing a large sum in *al-Sunan*[33], corresponds to with authenticity are from al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998), who wrote the first commentary on *al-Sunan* about a century ago and wrote: "It should be known that experts divide ḥadīths into three: *Ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan,* and *ṣaqīm* (infirm). *Ṣaḥīḥ* are ḥadīths whose isnād is *muttaṣil* and whose *rāwī*s are just *Ḥasan* are the ḥadīth whose source is known, whose *rāwī*s are *mashhūr* (well-known), which are compatible with other narrations, widely accepted by scholars, and are used by jurists. Abū Dāwūd's book incorporates both of these genres. The *ṣaqīm* ḥadīth in it is like *maqlūb* (inverted) and *majhūl* (unknown), and they are placed above fabricated narrations. These and similar narrations are not found in the book of Abū Dāwūd. If some types of these *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths are included in the *al-Sunan*, it means that they must be included in the work. In this situation, Abū Dāwūd has already given the ḥadīths that reveal the *illats* (blemish) of these ḥadīths, and releases himself from responsibility (for having weak ḥadīths)."[34] According to al-Khaṭṭābī, the word *ṣāliḥ* includes the *maqbūl* ḥadīths at the level of *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan* in *al-Sunan*.

Farrāʾ al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122) is known to divide the ḥadīths into two groups as *ṣiḥāḥ* and *ḥisān*, and evaluate the ḥadīths in al-Bukhārī and Muslim or either of them with the first concept, and the ḥadīth choices in the works of scholars such as Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmidhī with the second.[35] This generalization of his, however, is technically far from the definition of *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan*, and it is not accurate to fix the narrative material in the mentioned works at a single level of authenticity. Abū Dāwūd himself states that there are *ṣaḥīḥ* ḥadīths in his work, as well as those close and similar to *ṣaḥīḥ* and that some of the ḥadīths in the work are more or less *ḍaʿīf*. To that extent, Baghawī's approach regarding the narrations in *al-Sunan* as *ḥasan* is an assumption and is incorrect. It would be inconsistent to regard the narrative choices in this work to be entirely *ḍaʿīf*, and it would not be appropriate to regard them entirely *ḥasan*.

The ḥadīths of Abū Dāwūd, which have no explanation, are in the degree of *ḥasan*, according to Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245). Referring to the method sentences

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[32] Abū Dāwūd, *Risālat Abī Dāwūd*, 26.

[33] For example Aktaş states in his study that this rate is 97%. See for the table, Aktaş, *Hadis Usulünde Sâlih Kavramı*, 24.

[34] al-Khaṭṭābī, *Maʿālim al-Sunan* (Aleppo: al-Maṭbaʿāt al-ʿIlmiyya, 1351/1932), 1/6.

[35] Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī, *al-Nukat ʿalā Muqaddimat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, Critical ed. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn b. Muḥammad b. Balāfarīj (Riyadh: Maktaba ʿAdwāʾ al-Salaf, 1419/1998), 1/178.

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in Abū Dāwūd's letter, he explains that the narrations that are not in al-Bukhārī or Muslim and whose authenticity is not given by an expert who can distinguish ṣaḥīḥ from ḥasan, are at the level of hasan according to Abū Dāwūd. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, on the other hand, is not convinced. He states that among the narrations in this area, there may also be those that are not considered ḥasan according to other scholars, and there may even be narrations that do not fit the definition of ḥasan that he has drawn.[36] As a result, it is assumed that Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ regarded the narrations that were not explained in the *al-Sunan* as at least suitable for *iḥtijāj*.

On this point, al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) disagree with his contemporary Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, arguing that if the scholars whose authenticity is trusted call the ḥadīths ḍaʿīf in this context, they may be ḍaʿīf regardless of Abū Dāwūd's silence. According to him, the ḥadīths in *al-Sunan* that are absolute, there is not an explanation for them and a competent scholar has not evaluated whether they are ṣaḥīḥ or ḥasan, are considered ḥasan by to Abū Dāwūd.[37]

Al-Nawawī; according to Abū Dāwūd, the ḥadīths that are not explained in the *Sunan*, that are not in the Ṣaḥīḥayn or either of these two works and that a reliable scholar has not given as the judgment of ṣaḥīḥ or ḥasan, may be ḥasan or ṣaḥīḥ; however, he states that it would be more correct to call such ḥadīths ḥasan. Unlike Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, al-Nawawī extends the reserve here, stating that if a trustworthy scholar finds such ḥadīths ḍaʿīf, or if a competent scholar identifies an *illat* that will cause weakness in them, the weakness of these ḥadīths should be judged.[38]

As stated by al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), among the *al-Sunan* ḥadīths, in addition to those in the Ṣaḥīḥayn, there are those whose isnāds are jayyid and those whose isnāds are ḍaʿīf due to the heavy dabṭ faults in their rāwīs. Furthermore, there are narrations with severe flaws in the work and rāwīs with severe flaws in them.[39] As a result, according to Dhahabī, it is inappropriate to use the word ṣāliḥ to directly refer to maqbūl ḥadīths such as ṣaḥīḥ or ḥasan. According to Abū Dāwūd states, he took those whose work is ṣaḥīḥ, similar to it, and those

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[36] ما وجدناه في كتاب أبي داود مذكوراً مطلقاً وليس في واحد من الصحيحين، ولا نصَّ على صحَّته أحدٌ ممن يميز بين الصحيح والحسن عرفنا بأنه من الحسن عند أبي داود، وقد يكون في ذلك ما ليس بحسن عند غيره see Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Ulūm al-hadīth*, 36.

[37] Shuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ, "Muqaddima", Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Auth. Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (Beirut: Dār al-Risālat al-ʿĀlāmiyyah, 1430/2009), 51; al-Nawawī, *al-Taqrīb wa-al-taysīr fī maʿrifat aḥādīth al-bashīr al-nadhīr*, Critical ed. Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Khasht (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 1405/1985), 30.

[38] al-Nawawī, *al-Ījāz fī sharh Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 50-54.

[39] al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 13/213-215.

close to it, that he referred to those with severe weakness,[40] and that he remained silent about some ḥadīths.[41]

Dhahabī divides the narrations in *al-Sunan* into six parts, the first of which includes the ḥadīths shared by that al-Bukhārī and Muslim. The second section contains ḥadīths mentioned by at least one of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, while the third section contains ḥadīths that al-Shaykhayn did not receive, but whose *isnād* is correct, far from *shādh* (eccentricity) and *illat* (blemish). Dhahabī devotes the fourth section to ḥadīths that scholars consider *maqbūl* because they come from several different *ṭarīqs* (variants) and refer to those whose *isnāds* are *ṣāliḥ*. There are ḥadīths in the fifth part that are *ḍaʿīf* due to the memory weakness of their *rāwī*s. The sixth group of ḥadīths is those whose weakness is severe due to their *rāwī*, and Abū Dāwūd explains such ḥadīths.[42] As a result, Dhahabī does not consider the word *ṣāliḥ* to be entirely *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan* ḥadīths. It is possible that the accepted ḥadīths are more authentic than each other, and it cannot be said that *ḍaʿīf* narrations share flaws such as being suitable for *iḥtijāj* or *iʿtibār* or being completely *mardūd* (rejected) or *matrūq*.

According to Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1404), there is no clear argument to support our preference for *al-Sunan* ḥadīths as *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*. Because, while they can be counted *ṣaḥīḥ*, they can also be counted as *ḥasan* based on those that place the degree of *ḥasan* somewhere between *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḍaʿīf*. Because Abū Dāwūd did not make a clear statement in this regard, it is unclear whether the ḥadīths that are kept silent are *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*.[43] With these explanations, it is possible to conclude that al-ʿIrāqī believes the narrations in *al-Sunan* are not *ḍaʿīf*.

As stated by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), the narrations that Abū Dāwūd did not explain are the least *ḥasan*. In his opinion, since Abū Dāwūd stated that he explained the ḥadīths that contained severe weakness, the narrations about him that he did not explain should not be *ḍaʿīf*. For, as he stated in his letter, although he did declare those with severe weakness, Abū Dāwūd did not develop a specific explanation for ḥadīths whose weakness was not severe. Ibn Ḥajar divides the ḥadīths in the work into four groups and explains that the first

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[40] al-Khaṭṭābī, *Maʿālim al-Sunan*, 4/365; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 10/75; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 13/210.

[41] Abū Dāwūd, *Risālat Abī Dāwūd*, 27-28, 30; al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, 1/181-182.

[42] al-Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 13/213-215; ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī, *al-Ajwiba al-fāḍila liʾl-asʾila al-ʿashara al-kāmila*, Critical ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 1423/2003), 67-68.

[43] al-ʿIrāqī, *Taqyīd wa-l-īḍāḥ*, 40-41.

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part consists of the ḥadīths in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* or the narrations that meet the condition of authenticity.

In the second part, there are *ḥasan li-dhātihī* (fair by itself) narrations, and in the third part, there are *ḥasan li-ghayrihī* (fair by external considerations) narrations that need *ʿādıd* (consideration). According to him, these two groups of narrations hold great importance in *al-Sunan*. The fourth part consists of weak ḥadīths in the work; however, these are weak ḥadīths that are not unanimously rejected. As a result, Ibn Ḥajar claims that all these parts are narrations suitable for *iḥtijāj* according to Abū Dāwūd.[44]

Burhān al-Dīn al-Bikāī (d. 885/1480) states that the narrations in *al-Sunan* in which the author is silent, can be classified as slightly *wahn*. Contrary to popular belief, Bikāī believes the narratives in this group reports suitable for *iʿtibār rather than iḥtijāj*. Based on Abū Dāwūd's statement, he divides the ḥadīths in *al-Sunan* into six groups.

As stated by him, the phrase *ṣaḥīḥ* in the first group refers to *ṣaḥīḥ li-dhātihī* (sound in itself), and the phrase *similar to ṣaḥīḥ* in the second group refers to *ṣaḥīḥ li-ghayrihī* (sound by external considerations) and the phrase *near to ṣaḥīḥ* in the third group refers to *ḥasan li-dhātihī* narrations. The fourth group includes the narrations in which Abū Dāwūd recorded "I explained severely *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths". The *ṣāliḥ* narrations, about which the author has remained silent, are those with a minor flaw and belong to the fifth group. According to al-Bikāī, the sixth group consists of *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths that, with supporting narrations, can rise to the level of *ḥasan li-ghayrihī*. Therefore, contrary to popular belief, al-Bikāī regards the narrative material known as *ṣāliḥ* as having a lower level of authenticity position in terms of authenticity. In his opinion, if the narrations in the fifth group, when deprived of *ʿādıd*, express *iʿtibār*. When supported by other reinforcing narrations, they rise to the level of *ḥasan li-ghayrihī*.[45]

According to al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), when examining the narration material in *Sunan*, the word *ṣāliḥ* may contain appropriate to *iḥtijāj* but also the ḥadīths appropriate to *iʿtibār*. This concept, in other words, is a concept that includes *ḍaʿīf* narrations. Because, since Abū Dāwūd stated, "The ones I have not explained about are *ṣāliḥ*," he did not consider it necessary to explain the narrations whose weakness was not severe.[46] He quotes Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), as saying "The ḥadīths about which I do not explain are *ḥasan*", and says, "If

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[44] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Nuket ʿalā Kitāb Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 1/435.

[45] Burhān al-Dīn al-Bikāī, *al-Nukat al-wafiyya bi-mā fī sharh al-Alfiyya*, Critical ed. Māher Yāsīn al-Faḥl (Riyadh: Maktaba al-Rushd, 1428/2007), 1/256-257.

[46] al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, 1/186.

this transmission is correct, then there is no problem".[47] Therefore, al-Suyūṭī claims that most acceptable narrations at the level of ṣaḥīḥ or ḥasan are considered ṣāliḥ, possibly because he doubts the authenticity of the transmission in question, but he also claims that weak ḥadīths recorded for iʿtibār should be included within the framework of this wording.[48]

Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 1182/1768) states that the scope of the ṣāliḥ is the ḥadīths of ṣaḥīḥ and ḥasan after stating that the narrations on which he has remained silent refer to the letter of Abū Dāwūd. Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī, criticizing al-Tirmidhī commentator Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 734/1334)'s approach to this issue, stated that it is not correct to approach the ḥadīths within the framework of ṣāliḥ to the ṣaḥīḥ common limit denominators stand alone[49], and that there may be ḥadīths at the level of ḥasan, which are less reliable in terms of degree, in addition to the ṣaḥīḥ ones.[50]

al-Sunan has two types of ḥadīths categories, according to Dincoglu: wahn-i shadīd (severe weakness) and ṣāliḥ. Those about which statements are made fall into the first group, and those that are not made into the second group. He evaluated the narration selection, which he did not explain about Abū Dāwūd in this context because it was suitable for iḥtijāj or iʿtibār. Hereby, it is understood that there is an intension-extension relationship between the words ṣāliḥ and the terms ṣaḥīḥ and ḥasan, which are used for maqbūl ḥadīths. As a result, while all ḥadīths that are ṣaḥīḥ and ḥasan are within the scope of ṣāliḥ, not every narration expressed with the word ṣāliḥ may not be at the level of ṣaḥīḥ or ḥasan.[51] There are many different interpretations of what level of authenticity Abū Dāwūd means by the concept of ṣāliḥ, and each of them approaches the issue from a different perspective. While some argue that al-Sunan does not contain ḍaʿīf ḥadīths, others argue that, in addition to maqbūl narrations, narrations that do not contain severe weakness are also within the scope of ṣāliḥ.

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[47] al-Suyūṭī, Tadrīb al-rāwī, 1/184.

[48] al-Suyūṭī, Tadrīb al-rāwī, 1/195.

[49] Here, by conveying his views, ʿIrāqī criticizes both Ibn Sayyid al-Nās and his teacher, Ibn Rushayd, see al-ʿIrāqī, Taqyīd wa-l-īḍāḥ, 39-40.

[50] Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī, Tawḍīḥ al-afkār li-maʿānī tanqīḥ al-anẓār, Critical ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Madina: al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, n.d.), 1/202-203. Although he is correct in this criticism, it is seen that Amīr al-Ṣanʿānī also generalizes when it is taken into account that the ḥadīths at the level of ḥasan are also divided into two according to whether they need ʿāḍıd or not. However, in order for it to be ḥasan li-ghayrihī, the narration that does not have severe weakness must find ʿāḍıd, and according to some scholars, this type of narration can also be evaluated in the ḍaʿīf group, especially see Dinçoğlu, Ebû Dâvûd'un Sünen'i, 405-406.

[51] Dinçoğlu, Ebû Dâvûd'un Sünen'i, 404-405.

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This issue is also related to the method used by the authors in their works in an indirect way.

As Ibn al-Zubayr al-Thaqafī (d. 708/1308) points out, the reasons for writing these sources differ.[52] Because, like some authors of the century in which he lived, Abū Dāwūd did not prefer a classification of works consisting entirely of ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīths, but instead created his *al-Sunan* by arranging the narrations with the content of aḥqām by criteria. As a result, the motivation that prompted al-Bukhārī and Muslim to write the work and the motivation that prompted Abū Dāwūd to the *al-Sunan* classification are distinct. For example, Muslim aimed to write his book entirely from ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīths, whereas Abū Dāwūd did not. In general, he chose to include the ḥadīths with severe weaknesses in his book, by stating their status, based on his criteria.[53]

Therefore, discussing whether there is a ḍaʿīf ḥadīth in Abū Dāwūd's *al-Sunan* on this level may be inconsistent due to the authors' preferences, which are reflected in their methodological differences. Because the author's classification purpose can be considered alongside the authenticity of the ḥadīths in *Sunan*. Whether or not the work contains ḍaʿīf ḥadīth is a matter related to the method of a writer who does not set out to categorize a work with the theme of ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth. So much so that Abū Dāwūd does not claim that his *al-Sunan* is devoid of ḍaʿīf ḥadīths. Because he states that there are ḥadīths containing *wahn* in his letter and he explains them in his work. Therefore, claiming that there are no ḍaʿīf ḥadīths in *al-Sunan* is incorrect. As a result, in *al-Sunan*, there are narrations suitable for *iḥtijāj*, as well as narrations suitable for *iʿtibār*. Because the author does not explain these, it is concluded that the framework of the concept of ṣāliḥ is not limited to the narrations at the level of ṣaḥīḥ and ḥasan.

Although Abū Dāwūd stated at the start of his letter that the ḥadīth in his work was the most ṣaḥīḥ he knew, it would not be inappropriate to consider all the narrations he saw within the scope of ṣāliḥ as maqbūl. Because there is an issue with authenticity in some narrations that the author does not explain and regards as ṣāliḥ. For example, some narrations in *al-Sunan* disparage the city of Basra, and Abū Dāwūd makes no explanations for these narrations, which have been criticized by some scholars such as Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201). As a result, according to him, these and other narrations, in which the author is silent are within the scope of ṣāliḥ but contain various problems. Although this can be explained by the fact that authenticity assessments for a narration, like the ḥadīth acceptance criteria, are relative, it can still be interpreted as a hint that all of the narrations about which Abū Dāwūd remained silent are not ṣaḥīḥ. The

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[52] al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, 1/186.
[53] al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, 1/185.

text of the *al-Sunan* narration with the chain of Anas b. Mālik (d. 93/712) → Mūsā b. Anas (?) → Mūsā al-Ḥannāṭ (d. 141/758) → ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad (d. 181/797) → ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṣabbāḥ (d. 250/864) *isnād* is as follows: "O Anas, people will build some cities. Among them will be a city called Basra or Busayra. If you happen to stop by there, go to the outskirts; stay away from its deserted lands, beaches, bazaars, and the gates of the rulers. Because there will be ground depression, stones falling, and shaking. So much so that community will go to bed in the evening, but will wake up in the morning as monkeys and pigs."[54]

In that case, because all narrations for which no explanation is given are *ṣāliḥ*, *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīth that are not severe are also included in this scope. Because, while Abū Dāwūd included some of these narrations in his *Sunan*, he did not explain them. *Saḥīḥ* and *ḥasan* narrations, on the other hand, are also within the scope of *ṣāliḥ*, because the Abū Dāwūd's record that some of them are more authentic than others should also be related to this issue. However, it is understood that some of the *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths that Abū Dāwūd included in his *al-Sunan* were *maʿmūlun bih* (the ḥadīth that which is followed in practice) that is, they were practiced by some sects of the period. As a result, according to Abū Dāwūd, *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths that fall within the scope of *ḥasan* hadith should not be considered as *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths in the absolute meaning.

## Conclusion

The word *ṣāliḥ*, and its various derivatives, was used before Abū Dāwūd to express both the competence of the *rāwī* and the level of authenticity of the *marwī*. However, the limits of its use in both aspects are not clearly defined. There are records that this concept, which is understood to mean a low level of *taʿdīl* for the *rāwī*, was used to indicate the authenticity of acceptable ḥadīths, which were previously described as *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*. He used this phrase to describe the authenticity of some of the narrations in his *al-Sunan*, but because he did not make a comprehensive statement about it, it is unclear which level of authenticity he meant. The fact that he only had a passing encounter with the word *ṣāliḥ* in the letter he wrote to the Meccans, as well as the lack of strong narrations that could be used as evidence in this direction, makes determining the framework of the word *ṣāliḥ* difficult.

The activity of determining the scope of the authenticity of the concept of *ṣāliḥ*, begun by Ibn Manda, has been carried on for centuries with efforts in this direction. In this study, which chronologically conveys the main views from

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[54] Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Ed. Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 1420/1999), "Malāḥim", 10 (no. 4307)

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almost every century, it is seen that different frameworks are drawn for the concept of *ṣāliḥ* based on various parameters. Although it is understood that the narration material described as *ṣāliḥ* is acceptable, it is also understood that the narrations in question have varying levels of authenticity from one another and that there are even *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīth (suitable for iʿtibār) among them, though they are not severe.

This study concluded that the ḥadīth described in *al-Sunan* with the concept of *ṣāliḥ* cannot be fully qualified as *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*. Because it was stated in the letter that some of the *ṣāliḥ* ḥadīths were more authentic than others, it was understood that technically *ṣaḥīḥ li-dhātihī, ṣaḥīḥ li-ghayrihī, ḥasan li-dhātihī,* and *ḥasan li-ghayrihī* narrations are inherent in the term *ṣāliḥ*. Therefore, it has been concluded that some of the ḥadīth in the category of *ṣāliḥ* are narrations suitable for *iḥtijāj* and others for *iʿtibār*. It has been determined that the word *ṣāliḥ*, which in its dictionary meaning refers to a degree of authenticity at the level of *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*, will not be consistent with one of these two terms. Rather than limiting the narration material, which is framed with the word *ṣāliḥ*, to a single level of authenticity, it is a reasonable conclusion that it includes both *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan* narrations that are suitable for addition and *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīth that are suitable for reputable due to their minor flaw.

Furthermore, despite Abū Dāwūd's clear statements in his letter, the insistence of some scholars that there is no weak ḥadīth in the *al-Sunan* significantly hinders the determination of the intrinsic value of the narration material in the work's content. Each work, however, should be examined in conjunction with the author's intention in classifying that work. Because neither Abū Dāwūd nor other *al-Sunan* scholars claim that the ḥadīth selections in their works are entirely made up of *ṣaḥīḥ* ḥadīths. I should point out that Abū Dāwūd's classification purpose differs significantly from al-Shaykhayn's purpose here. In this regard, it is clear that ignoring the *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths in the *al-Sunan*, strong *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths in the work, according to Abū Dāwūd will result in inaccurate determination and evaluations.

It is known that Abū Dāwūd, as a member of Ahl al-hadīth tradition, prioritizes ḥadīth over his raʾy, ijtihād, and qiyās even if it is *ḍaʿīf*. In this context, the fact that he took *ḍaʿīf* ḥadīths for his work for such reasons should not be viewed as a factor that diminishes the intrinsic value of the work when viewed through the lens of Abū Dāwūd's classification method. In this regard, aside from acceptable narrations such as *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḥasan*, narrations that do not have significant flaws should be considered within the scope of the *ṣāliḥ*. Examining the framework drawn for the term *ṣāliḥ* through the narrations is important in terms of the testability of the results reached in this study. For this purpose, by

examining the narrations within the scope of ṣāliḥ in *al-Sunan* one by one, it can be determined which sub-types (for example ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan, ḍaʿīf suitable for iḥtijāj or iʿtibār) of the ṣāliḥ ḥadīth they belong to.

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