

Abû Dâwûd's Letter in which He Discussed His Method in as-Sunan: The Text and Translation with Notes

Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'indeki Yöntemini Ele Aldığı Mektubu:
Metin ve Notlandırılmış Tercüme

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Abstract

This study deals with the well-known letter of Abû Dâwûd (d. 275/889), who is one of Kutub al-Sittah's authors, which he sent to the Meccans in order to introduce his as-Sunan book. The letter has importance in terms of hadith history and methodology regarding the information it contains. Despite its short volume, the letter has managed to remain on the agenda in the past and today, for the information it gives about in particular as-Sunan, and about the hadith methodology in general. The fact that many publications of the letter both with and without critical editions have been made especially in the recent periods confirms that. Moving both from the original sources and from the critical editions, it is significant to understand the text of the letter and the messages between the lines correctly. The aim of this study is to provide a translation of the text by remaining royal to the original text, in a way that will contribute to a better and more reasonable understanding of the letter with the explanations given where necessary. After the Introduction which gives short information about as-Sunan and the letter, the study consists of two main chapters which are called The Original Letter and The Translation of the Letter and Conclusion.

Keywords: Hadith, Abû Dâwûd, as-Sunan, Meccans, Letter, Risalah.

Öz

Bu çalışma, Kütüb-i Sitte müelliflerinden Ebû Dâvûd'un (ö. 275/889), Sünen kitabını tanıtmak gayesiyle Mekkeliler'e yolladığı meşhur mektubunu ele almaktadır. Mektup, ihtiva ettiği bilgiler bakımından hadis tarihi ve usûlü açısından önem arz etmektedir. Ayrıca bir müellifin kendi eserini tanıttı benzerleriyle karşılaştırması ve devrinde pek adet olmayan bir usûlü ortaya koyması bakımından da mühimdir. Küçük hacmine rağmen özeld Sünen'e genelde ise hadis usûlüne dair verdiği bilgilerle geçmişte de günümüzde de gündemde kalmayı başarmıştır. Özellikle son devirlerde tahkikli ve tahkiksiz birçok neşrinin yapılmış olması da bunu teyid etmektedir. Gerek asıl kaynaklardan gerekse bu neşirlerden hareketle, mektubun metninin ve bu metnin satır aralarındaki mesajlarının doğru anlaşılması mühimdir. Amacımız metnin aslına bağlı kalarak, gerekli görülen yerlerde verilen açıklamalarla mektubun daha iyi ve sağlıklı anlaşılmasına katkı sağlayacak şekilde tercümesini sunmaktır. Çalışma Sünen'e ve mektuba dair kısa bilgiler içeren Giriş kısmının ardından, Mektubun Aslı ve Mektubun Tercümesi diye iki ana başlık ve bir Sonuç'tan oluşmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hadis, Ebû Dâvûd, Sünen, Mekkeliler, Mektup, Risale.

INTRODUCTION

Abû Dâwûd's well-known book *as-Sunan* about which scholars speak highly¹ as follows: "Abû Dâwûd's book *as-Sunan* is a really valuable book a similar of which was not sorted before."², "In terms of knowing nabawi hadiths (sunnah), it is enough for a mujtahid to know it (Abû Dâwûd's *as-Sunan*)."³, "Abû Dâwûd's *as-Sunan* is the mother of ahkâm books."⁴ gained reputation even when its author was alive⁵ and over time it has become one of the classics known as Kutub al-Sittah.⁶

No matter how many *as-Sunan* book had been sorted before it,⁷ Abû Dâwûd's *as-Sunan* can be considered as the greatest of all in terms of compiling ahkâm reports within the hadith literature.⁸

Abû Dâwûd lived in the city of Tarsus for a long time of twenty years during his migrations. In that city, after completing⁹ *as-Sunan* which he was working on and after his work gained reputation, on some questions asked about *as-Sunan*, he wrote a letter addressing to Meccans¹⁰ in order to introduce his work and to state

¹ For these and such praising see Abû Dâwûd Sulaimân b. al-Ash'as b. Ishâq al-Azdi as-Sijistâni, *Risâle al-Imâm Abî Dâwûd as-Sijistâni ilâ ehli Makkah fi waṣfi Sunanih* (in *Thalâthu rasâil fi 'ilmi muṣṭalah al-hadîs*), ed. Abd al-Fattâh Abû Ghuddah, 3rd Edition (Beirut: Maktaba al-Matbûat al-Islâmiyya, 1435/2014), Investigator's Introduction, 9-12.

Abd al-Fattâh Abû Ghuddah, who edited the risalah, almost produced a new work with rick ta'liqs he noted to the text. For this reason, both for ensuring ease and for not confusing it with Sabbâgh's edition, references to this source will be given "Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*". Also see. Halil Ahmad as-Sahârânpurî, *Baḍl al-majhûd fi halli Sunani Abî Dâwûd* (with Muhammad Zakariyyâ al-Kandahlavî's ta'liqs), ed. Takiyyuddîn an-Nadwî (Beirut: Dâr al-Bashâir al-Islâmiyya, 1427/2006), 1: 109-117.

² Abû Sulaimân Hamd b. Muhammad b. Ibrâhîm b. al-Khattâbî al-Bustî, *Ma'âlim as-Sunan* (Alappo: al-Matbaat al-Ilmiyya, 1351/1932), 1: 6.

³ Abû al-Fidâ Imâduddîn Ismâil b. Omar Ibn Kasîr al-Kurashî ad-Dimashqî, *al-Bidâya wa an-nihâya*, ed. Abdullâh b. Abdilmuhṣin at-Turkî (Cairo: Dâru Hacr, 1424/2003), 14: 616.

⁴ Abû al-Fadl Shihâbuddin Ahmad b. Ali Ibn Hajar al-Askalâni, *at-Talḥîṣ al-khabîr fi takhriṣi aḥādîth ar-Râfi'î al-kabîr*, ed. Abû Âsim Hasan b. Abbâs (Misir: Muassasatu Qurtuba, 1416/1995), 2: 40.

⁵ Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 13.

⁶ *Sunan*, gained reputation and value in Anduluth even before Bukhârî (d. 256/870) and Muslim's (d. 261/875) *Sahîh* works. (See. Mehmet Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i (Kaynakları ve Tasnif Metodu)* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Pub., 2012), 89-90, 439).

⁷ Makhûl b. Abî Muslim ash-Shâmî's (d. 112/730) *Kitâb as-Sunan fi al-fiqh* and Sa'îd b. Abî Arûba's (d. 156/773) *as-Sunan*, which classifies hadiths according to their subjects for the first time, are the first examples of this kind. Awzâi's (d. 157/774) *Kitâb as-Sunan fi al-fiqh*, Ibn Abî Zi'b (d. 159/776) and Ibn Abî Zâida's (182/798) *Kitâb as-Sunan* and Imam Shafî'i's (d. 204/820) *as-Sunan al-ma'sûra* are among the important works of this kind (M. Yaşar Kandemir, "Sünen", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Pub., 2010), 38: 141-142. For other works see. Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i*, 73-77; Abû Abdillâh Muhammad b. Ca'far b. Idrîs al-Kattâni, *Hadîs Literatürü: er-Risâletü'l-müstatrafe li-beyâni meşhûri kutubi's-sünneti'l-muşerrefe*, trn. Yûsuf Özbek (İstanbul: İz Pub., 1994), 24-30.

⁸ Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i*, 72. Bukhârî also sorted a *Sunan* called *Kitâb as-Sunan fi'l-fiqh*. However, nothing is known about that he is as successful and well-known as Abû Dâwûd in the field of *Sunan* as well as compiling the precise (saheeh) hadiths (Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i*, 83).

⁹ Khattâbî, *Ma'âlim as-Sunan*, 4: 366; Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 12; M. Yaşar Kandemir, "Ebû Dâwûd es-Sicistâni", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Pub., 1994), 10: 120.

¹⁰ In M. Lutfî as-Sabbâgh, Abû Ghuddah editions, and in Suyûtî's report there is the record it was sent to "others" as well (...وسئل عن رسالته التي كتبها إلى أهل مكة وغيرها جواباً لهم...) (See. Abû Dâwûd Sulaimân b. al-Ash'ath b. Ishâq al-Azdi as-Sijistâni, *Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ ahli Makkah fi waṣfi Sunanih*, ed. Muhammad b. Lutfî as-Sabbâgh, 3rd edition (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Islâmi, 1405), Introduction by the last editor, 24 [To make it easy and not to cause confusion, references to this source will be given as "Sabbâgh, *Risalah*" in the following parts]; Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 30, 167; Calâluddîn Abû al-Fadl Abdurrahmân b. Abî Bakr as-Suyûtî, *al-Baḥru'llazî zaḥar fi sharḥi Alfîyya al-aşar*, ed. Abû Anas Anîs b. Ahmad al-Andûnûsî (al-Mamlaka al-Arabiyya as-Suûdiyya: Maktaba al-Ghurabâ al-Asariyya, nd.), 3: 1113), In the narration of the reporter

the method he followed in the book. This letter by Abo Dâwûd includes beneficial information for history of hadiths and in terms of style.¹¹ Despite its short volume of two pages¹² the letter has managed to stay on the agenda in the past and today for the information it contains about *as-Sunan* in particular and about the method of Hadith in general. However, in spite of its short volume, it is not very comprehensible in terms of its content as it does not have the characteristics of a book. It can be said for this situation that the work is eventually a letter and it was written via dictation.

On the other hand, it is quite significant for a book to be understood correctly by those in the later ages that the author of a book introduces his own book and describes the method he followed in authoring the book. In this respect, Abû Dâwûd is one of the exceptional authors among the writers of *Kutub al-Sittah*, who

(Muhammad b. Abdilazîz al-Hâshimî) who listened that risalah, given by Mizzî in his *Tahzîb al-Kamâl*'s introduction, from Abû Dâwûd (... و سئل عن رسالته التي كتبها إلى أهل مكة جوابا لهم...) there is a record (See. Camâluddîn Abû al-Haccâc Yûsuf b. Abdirrahmân b. Yûsuf al-Mizzî, *Tahzîb al-Kamâl fî asmâi ar-ricâl*, ed. Beshshâr Awwâd Ma'rûf (Beirut: Muassasa ar-Risâla, 1400/1980), 1: 168). While referencing to the risalah in his book *an-Nukat* Ibn Hajar says (رسالة أبي داود إلى أهل مكة في وصف السنن) (See. Abû al-Fadl Shihâbuddîn Ahmad b. Ali Ibn Hajar al-Askalânî, *an-Nukat 'alâ Kitâbi Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâh*, ed. Rabî' b. Hâdî Umair, 4th edition (Riyadh: Dâru ar-Râya, 1417), 2: 567). Ashraf Salah Ali indicates this and such cases in the letter and makes criticisms about the letter in his short article called "Nazarât fî Risâlati Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah" (See. Ashraf Salâh Ali, "Nazarât fî Risâlati Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah", *Dirâsât* 554 (Shawwal 1432/August 2011): 45-47). For the related article and the pdf document See. Multaqâ Ahl al-Hadis, "Nazarât fî Risâlati Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah", accessed: 30 July 2018, <https://www.ahlalhadith.com/vb/showthread.php?t=262245>).

When the statement just before the letter (... و سئل عن رسالته التي كتبها إلى أهل مكة وغيرها لهم...) is considered carefully, it is understood that the letter was, actually, first sent to Meccans, then it was (at least) heard in other cities/places, (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 30; Mizzî, *Tahdhib al-Kamâl*, 1: 168; Suyûtî, *al-Baḥru'llazî zaḥar*, 3: 1113) Abû Dâwûd was asked to have the letter written one more time in Basra and by this the letter was reported not only as to Meccans, but also "to others". However, the statements used by Zarkashi while mentioning *an-Nukat* (في رسالته التي كتبها إلى أهل الأمصار في سبب كتابة السنن) cancels such a possibility even from the beginning (Abû Abdillâh Badruddîn Muhammad b. Bahâdir b. Abdillâh at-Turkî al-Misrî Zarkashî, *an-Nukat 'alâ Muḳaddimati Ibn aṣ-Ṣalâh*, ed. Zaynulâbidîn b. Muhammad (Riyadh: Advâu as-Salaf, 1419/1998), 1: 493). Yet, it is not a distant possibility that this statement in *al-Nukat* is a personal comment by Zarkashî.

Biqâ'î (d. 885/1480) who makes references to the letter in *Alfiyya* sharh used a more inexplicit expression by saying (في الرسالة التي أرسلها إلى من سأله عن اصطلاحه في كتابه) to "those asking the technical terms in (*Sunan*) book" Abû al-Hasan Burhânuddîn Ibrâhîm b. Omar b. Hasan ar-Rubât al-Hîrbawî al-Biqâ'î, *an-Nukat al-wafiyya bimâ fî sharḥ al-alfiyya*, ed. Mâhir Yâsîn al-Fahl (Riyadh: Maktabat ar-Rushd Nâshirîn, 1428/2007), 1: 257).

Ashraf Salah, moving from all these asks these questions: "Where are the scholars asking Abû Dâwûd his method in his *Sunan* and causing the letter to be written? Why are not there any records from them about the letter? If there are others who are respondents to the letter, why are not there reporters, who report from others, but there is only this report in Basra?" (Ali, "Nazarat", 46).

Also, according to Ashraf Salah, the statement used for the letter by Suyûtî "*Abû Dâwûd's letter to introduce his Sunan to Meccans is well-known; however, it is a hard-to-find risalah.*" (Suyûtî, *al-Baḥru'llazî zaḥar*, 3: 1110) is another weird case. According to him, this statement makes people feel the doubt about the certainty of this risalah (Ali, "Nazarat", 47).

However, as-Sabbâgh, draws attention in his critical edition's Introduction under the title of "Tawsih ar-risalah" to the fact that there are explicit visual and oral recordings showing the certainty of the risalah (Sabbâgh, *Risâla*, 12, 15-18). Also see. Muhammad Muhammadî b. Muhammad Jamîl an-Nûristânî, *Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî waṣfi Sunanih (al-Madkhal ilâ Sunan al-Imâm Abî Dâwûd ile beraber)* (Kuwait: Maktab ash-Shu'ûn al-Fanniyya (Mashrû'u Qirâa wa Samâ' al-Kutub as-Sab'a), 1429/2008), 180-181.

¹¹ See. Ahmet Yücel, *Hadis Usûlü* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Pub., 2008), 53.

¹² See. Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 15; Princeton University Library, "Risâlat Abî Dâwûd Sulaimân ibn al-Ash'ath as-Sijistânî", access: 30 July 2018, <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/4803866>, vr. 222^b - 223^a.

introduced the method in his book and who left written information behind that arrived up to present.¹³ The letter is of importance in respect to this.

The Risalah was first published by M. Zâhid al-Kawtharî (d. 1371/1952) in Cairo with the taliq and introduction based on the manuscript¹⁴ found via Hafîz Abd al-Ghanî al-Maqdisî (d. 600/1203), who is numbered as Hadith 348 (vr. 188^a - 191^a) in the library called Damascus al-Zahiriyyah. Later, a second critical edition, which was also based on the al-Zahiriyyah copy, was published by Muhammad b. Lutfi as-Sabbâgh in the fifth issue of *Macallah Awda as-Shariah* published by Riyadh Faculty of Shariah in 1394/1974.¹⁵ Within the same year, Dar al-Arabiya (Beirut) copy was published and in 1405/1985 al-Maktab al-Islamî publication was made. Finally, Abdulfattah Abû Ghuddah (d. 1417/2002) published the risalah (letter) again in 1426/2005 with rich explanation and important determinations in his work called *Thalâthatu Rasâil fi 'Ilmi Mustalah al-Hadith* in 1426/2005.

¹³ Imam Muslim, - with a practice that cannot be seen quite often in that period- started his *Saheeh* with an *introduction* and here he discussed the reason of authoring this book, -partly- the method and of some topics about hadith methods. Also, Imam Tirmidhî's (d. 279/892) book's final chapter can be said to give explanatory information about the method he followed in sorting and that his *Kitâb al-Ilal* has the characteristics of an *introduction*. Apart from these, although the *Sunans* by Dârimî (d. 255/869) and Ibn Mâce (d. 273/887) have the *introduction* title, these introduction chapters give information about jahiliyya Arabs, the case and moral values of the Prophet, the bliss of scholar and knowledge, some reports about avoiding from personal opinions and comparison but not information introducing the work and explaining the method followed in it (Dârimî: 57 babs and 649 reports, Ibn Mâce: 24 babs ve 266 reports) (See. Abdurrahman Kurt, *Sahih-i Müslim Mukaddimesinin Hadis İlmi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi* (MA Thesis, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, 2013), 21-23). Yet, Abû Dâwûd's letter is a lot more extensive and detailed compared to the information given by Muslim and Tirmidhî.

¹⁴ Zâhid al-Kawtharî, indicated that there are some problems (gaps) in writing and opted for expression according to the context -moving from the sources-. Abû Ghuddah stated that he personally saw that copy that Kawtharî bases on, and he also reached to the second copy which is both complete and earlier in date. However, he does not give a record information about this second copy. He only transfers the better and different line and introduces the reporters shortly (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthatu rasâil*, 14-15). During our study, it has been understood that this second copy is the one in Princeton University, which will be mentioned soon. Moreover, Abû Ghuddah speaks of three other copies apart from these (Suyûtî, Hasan Hân an Sahâranpûri copies), and criticizes the statement by Muhammad b. Lutfi as-Sabbâgh in his works' first two editions for his own copy "This beautiful copy which we rely upon in publishing is only in the world." (See. Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthatu rasâil*, 13-15). Ashraf Salah -as far as he was able to determine- talks about the presence of only two copies about the risalah. One of these is the Zahiriyyah copy, which is based on for critical editions, the other one is the copy in the USA, Princeton University, recorded as Yahuda no 597. The reporter of the Princeton copy is Abû Ca'far Ahmad b. Isa b. Mâhân al-Hamadâni (Ali, "Nazarât", 45). Though there are various wording differences, prominences-postponements, there are not significant differences to completely change the meaning. For the mentioned manuscript See. Princeton University Library, "Risâlat Abi Dâwûd Sulaimân ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistâni", access: 30 July 2018, <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/4803866>, vr. 222^b - 223^a. On the other hand, the line of the risalah reported completely by Suyûtî in his *Alfiyya's Sharh*, in *hasan* title is the same as Zahiriyyah copy's line until Abd el-Ghanî el-Maqdisî. In this line, instead of Maqdisî Abû Hafîs Shihâbuddîn Omar b. Muhammad b. Abdillâh b. Ammûya al-Qurashî al-Bakrî as- Suhrawardî (d. 632/1234), who is as famous as him and the founder of the Suhrawardî sect, a mufassir and a muhaddith, takes place. After Suhrawardî there are three other reporters until Suyûtî (See. Suyûtî, *al-Bahru'llazî zahar*, 3: 1110-1111^r).

¹⁵ Sabbâgh said in the Introduction part of his critical edition by ignoring al-Kawtharî's scholarly personality and efforts "This risalah was first published with a (critical!!) edition in 1369 in Egypt. (However), the editor disposed the text of the risalah in a way that can sometimes change the meaning by objecting the scholarly consignment. And that is not something unexpected from him. Because, he has committed such crimes in this fields previously..." (Sabbâgh, *Risâla*, 13-14; Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthatu rasâil*, 15-16). Abû Ghuddah, who could not keep quiet after these statements, drew attention to scientific mistakes and unfair criticism in Sabbâgh's edition (See. Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthatu rasâil*, 16-25).

Apart from these, the letter was published¹⁶ by Sayyid Siddik Hasân Khan al-Qinnawcî (d. 1307/1887) in 1283/1863 inside *al-Hitta fî dhikri as-sihâhi as-sittah*,¹⁷ and by Halîl Ahmad Sahâranpûrî'nin (d. 1346/1927) in 1392/1972 inside the first edition's introduction part¹⁸ of *Bazl al-Majhûd*, which is an explanation of *as-Sunan*.

Moreover, the voice records of Abdülkarîm al-Hudair's explanations while he was having the risalah read in five sessions and the written-out form of these recordings as 56 pages¹⁹ with the name *Sharh al-Risalatî Abî Dâwûd*, and the video recordings of Mahmûd Said Mamdûh's two-hour-long lesson²⁰ can be found on the Internet. As far as we have examined, here al-Hudair mentions wordly elaborations and some cases that are not present in both of the critical editions from which he benefited. Mahmûd Said Mamdûh makes explanations predicating on the Abû Ghuddah critical edition when he considers necessary and sometimes, he answers the questions of students.²¹

¹⁶ Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 25. The Risâlah was partly or completely reported from method books as well, apart from the ones mentioned here (See. Suyûtî, *al-Baḥru'llazî zaḥar*, 3: 1110-1127; Sabbâgh, *Risâla*, 12; Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 25, 167-169).

¹⁷ Abû at-Tayyib as-Sayyid Siddik Hasan Khân al-Qinnawcî, *al-Hitta fî zikr aş-şihâh as-sitte*, ed. Ali Hasan al-Halabî (Beirut: Dâr al-Cil - Dâru Ammâr, 1405), 384-388. Siddik Hasan Khan, without giving any record information about the risalah, (without lines, and without salam and salat expressions at the beginning and the end of the letter) makes reports. Here, there are some deficiencies and (little) differences according to critical editions. Perhaps, the record (ملخصاً) "in short" at the end of the report is because of this.

¹⁸ Sahâranpûrî, *Bazl al-majhûd*, 1: 5-6, 140-146. Takiyyuddîn an-Nadwî, who makes a critical edition of the risalah, does not give any record information about the risalah, but he says he made some quotations from Abd al-Fattâh Abû Ghuddah's ve M. Lutfî as-Sabbâgh's critical editions in completing some of the incorrectness in the original copy. In the text, he gives these with (square brackets) [] (See. Sahâranpûrî, *Bazl al-majhûd*, 1: 141, 142, 143, 144, 146).

On the other hand, when the letter texts in *al-Hitta* ve *Bazl al-majhûd* are compared, it is understood that - almost all of the - differences and lacking sentences (paragraphs) are in the same places. It is also remarkable that in both works the letter is given without lines. In addition to all these things, both works' owners' being scholars from India supports the idea that this letter given place in both works is actually transferred benefiting from one source. For a comparison See. Qinnawcî, *al-Hitta*, 384-388; Sahâranpûrî, *Bazl al-majhûd*, 1: 140-146.

¹⁹ Internet Archive, "Sharhu Risâlati Abî Dâwûd ilâ ahli Makkah fî wasfi Sunanih: esh-Shayh ad-Duktûr Abdülkarîm al-Hudair (PDF + MP3)", accessed: 25 July 2018, https://archive.org/details/Risalat_Abi_Daoud. Hudair allocated almost a session for the line part of the letter and for the technical terms used here (See. Hudair, *Sharḥu Risâlati Abî Dâwûd*, 4-9, 13). He indicates some (little) differences between copies (and reports in the books) and that these are actually resulted from the letter not being in circulation (See. Hudair, *Sharḥu Risâlati Abî Dâwûd*, 10). He also gives details in the mursal subject (See. Hudair, *Sharḥu Risâlati Abî Dâwûd*, 22-27).

²⁰ See. Muhib li-Âli wa az-Zehrâ, "Sharhu Risâlati Abî Dâwûd li-ahli Makkah li ad-Duktûr Mahmûd Sa'îd Mamdûh ad-Dars al-awwal Cüz' 1", accessed: 25 July 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjw2l5X7dI0>.

²¹ Mahmood Said Mamduh, while evaluating Nâsiruddîn al-Albânî's (1914-1999) *Sunan* books, to show that differentiating hadiths with a two-way distinction as saheeh-weak in books such as *Şaḥîḥu Sunani Abî Dâwûd*, *Şaḥîḥu Sunan at-Tirmidhî*, *Za'ifu Sunani Abî Dâwûd*, *Za'ifu Sunan at-Tirmidhî* is something wrong, penned a refutation named *at-Ta'rif bi awhâmi man qassama as-Sunan ilâ şaḥîḥin wa za'ifin*. At the beginning of this six-volume work, it is remarked with the references to the letter sent by Abû Dâwûd to Meccans that two-way distinction would not be precise in the first volume (See. Mahmûd Said Mamdûh, *at-Ta'rif bi awhâmi man qassama as-Sunan ilâ şaḥîḥin ve za'ifin*, 2nd edition (Dubai: Dâr al-Buhûs li ad-Dirâsât al-İslâmiyye wa Ihyâ at-Turâs 1423/2002), 1: 55-63). Ashraf Salâh Ali, too, wrote a six-volume refutation to Saïd Mamdûh, named *at-Tawqîf 'alâ mâ fi "at-Ta'rif bi awhâmi man qassama as-Sunan ilâ şaḥîḥin ve za'ifin" min al-ḥaṭai wa al-mucâzafati wa at-tahrîf*.

When it comes to the Turkish translation of the letter, to the extent we have confirmed the first and the complete translation of the letter was made by M. Kavaklıoğlu based on based on as-Sabbâgh's copy which was in the fifth issue of *Macallah Awda as-Shariah*, and it was published after being controlled by İsmail Lütfi Çakan.²² The same translation was published in Lütfi Çakan's book called *Hadith Literature* -by stating the translator- under the title "Abû Dâwûd and his as-Sunan".²³ The same translation was also given place in master's degree dissertation called *Abo Dâwûd and his as-Sunan* under the title "Abû Dâwûd's Hadith Traditioning" by referencing to the book *Hadith Literature*.²⁴ However, in addition to some deficiencies²⁵ and mistakes²⁶ in the present translation, a new translation "with notes" has become necessary on account of the fact that a text with a lot of expressions that need explanation cannot be understood "correctly" by a word-for-word translation.

The aim of this study is to translate this letter in a more comprehensible way adhering to the text of the letter and to contribute to a better understanding of the letter by providing explanations in footnotes when considered necessary. With reference to the content of the letter, it is another research subject to what extent Abû Dâwûd followed the characteristics he stated for his *Sunan* in his work *as-Sunan*.²⁷

1. THE ORIGINAL LETTER²⁸

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم

أَخْبَرَنَا الشَّيْخُ أَبُو الْفَتْحِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْبَاقِيِّ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ سَلِيمَانَ الْمَعْرُوفِ بِإِسْنِ الْبَطْنِيِّ إِجَارَةً إِنْ لَمْ أَكُنْ سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْهُ، قَالَ: أَنْبَأَنَا الشَّيْخُ أَبُو الْفَضْلِ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ خَيْرِیُونَ الْمَعْدَلِ قِرَاءَةً عَلَيْهِ وَأَنَا حَاضِرٌ أَسْمَعُ، قِيلَ لَهُ: أَقْرَأْتَ عَلَى أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ

²² Necati Yeniei - Hüseyin Kayapınar, *Sünen-i Ebû Dâwûd Terceme ve Şerhi* (İstanbul: Şamil Pub., 1987), 1: (Mukaddime), 32-35. Apart from this translation, in Mehmet Dinçoğlu's Abû Dâwûd's *Sunan* book under the title "Abû Dâwûd's Sunan According to the Letter He Sent to Meccans" some remarks were made, and it was partly translated (See. Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i*, 48-55).

²³ See. İsmail Lütfi Çakan, *Hadis Edebiyatı Çeşitleri - Özellikleri-Faydalanma Usulleri*, 6th edition (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Pub., 2008), 109-113.

²⁴ See. Lütfü İmamoglu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i* (MA Thesis, Atatürk University, 2000), 58-63.

²⁵ For instance; See. 1- "... this hadith consists of a report with no value." (Yeniei - Kayapınar, *Sünen-i Ebû Dâwûd Terceme ve Şerhi*, 34; Çakan, *Hadis Edebiyatı*, 110) and the exception sentence in the following part (إِلَّا) "أخبرنا الشَّيْخُ أَبُو الْفَتْحِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْبَاقِيِّ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ سَلِيمَانَ الْمَعْرُوفِ بِإِسْنِ الْبَطْنِيِّ إِجَارَةً إِنْ لَمْ أَكُنْ سَمِعْتُهُ مِنْهُ، قَالَ: أَنْبَأَنَا الشَّيْخُ أَبُو الْفَضْلِ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ خَيْرِیُونَ الْمَعْدَلِ قِرَاءَةً عَلَيْهِ وَأَنَا حَاضِرٌ أَسْمَعُ، قِيلَ لَهُ: أَقْرَأْتَ عَلَى أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ" (Cf. 2.2. Turkish Translation of the letter, paragraph number 10). 2- "The ones I said nothing about are salih ones." (Yeniei - Kayapınar, *Sünen-i Ebû Dâwûd Terceme ve Şerhi*, 34; Çakan, *Hadis Edebiyatı*, 111) and the following expression (ويعضها أصح من بعض) "... and some of them are more precise than some others." sentences (Cf. 2.2. Turkish Translation of the Letter, paragraph number 12).

²⁶ For instance; See. 1- "... if I gave place to a munqar hadith, I certainly explained that the hadith is a munqar one." (Yeniei - Kayapınar, *Sünen-i Ebû Dâwûd Terceme ve Şerhi*, 33; Çakan, *Hadis Edebiyatı*, 110) in this sentence the "certainly" expression (Cf. 2.2. Turkish Translation of the Letter, paragraph no 8). 2- "... About 600 of these are mursal reports." (Yeniei - Kayapınar, *Sünen-i Ebû Dâwûd Terceme ve Şerhi*, 35; Çakan, *Hadis Edebiyatı*, 112) in this sentence "of these" expression (Cf. 2.2. Turkish Translation of the Letter, paragraph no 21).

²⁷ For evaluations on this subject see. Nüristânî, *Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ ahli Makkah*, 105-175; Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i*, 48-55 and under other related titles.

²⁸ Here the text in Abû Ghuddah critical edition is based on. However, thinking that the cohesion and fluency would be better, differences were made in paragraphing. To be able to compare with the translation, the paragraphs were numbered.

عبد الله الصوري الحافظ، قال: سمعت أبا الحسنين محمد بن أحمد بن محمد بن أحمد بن أحمد بن جميع العسائي بصيدا، فأقرّ به، قال: سمعت أبا بكر محمد بن عبد العزيز بن محمد بن الفضل بن يحيى بن القاسم بن عون بن عبد الله بن الحارث بن نوفل بن الحارث بن عبد المطّلب الهاشمي بمكة يقول:

سمعت أبا داود سليمان بن الأشعث بن إسحاق بن بشير بن شداد السجستاني بالبصرة، وسئل عن رسالته التي كتبها إلى أهل مكة وغيرها جواباً لهم، فأملى علينا:

١- سلام عليكم، فإنّي أحمدُ إليكم الله الذي لا إله إلا هو، وأسأله أن يُصَلِّيَ على مُحَمَّدِ عَبْدِهِ ورسوله صلى الله عليه وسلم كلُّما دُكِرَ.

أما بعد، عافانا الله وإياكم عافية لا مكرهه معها، ولا عقاب بعدها، فإنكم سألتم أن أذكر لكم الأحاديث التي في "كتاب السنن" أهي أصحّ ما عرفت في الباب؟ ووقفت على جميع ما ذكرتم.

٢- فاعلموا أنّه كذلك كلُّه، إلا أن يكون قد روي من وجهين صحيحين، فأحدهما أقدم إسناداً، والآخر صاحبه أقوم في الحفظ، فربما كتبت ذلك، ولا أرى في كتابي من هذا عشرةً أحاديث.

٣- ولم أكتب في الباب إلا حديثاً أو حديثين وإن كان في الباب أحاديث صحيحاً فإنه يكثر، وإنما أردت قُرْبَ منفعتة.

٤- وإذا أعدت الحديث في الباب من وجهين أو ثلاثة، فإنما هو من زيادة كلام فيه، وربّما فيه كلمة زائدة على الأحاديث.

٥- وربّما اختصرت الحديث الطويل، لأني لو كتبت بطوله، لم يعلم بعض من سمعه المراد منه، ولا يفهم موضع الفقه منه، فاخصرته لذلك.

٦- وأما المراسيل فقد كان يحتجّ بها العلماء فيما مضى، مثل سُفيان الثوري، ومالك بن أنس، والأوزاعي، حتى جاء الشافعي فتكلم فيها، وتابعه على ذلك أحمد بن حنبل وغيره.

٧- فإذا لم يكن مستنداً ضدّ المراسيل، ولم يوجد المسند فالمرسل يُحتجّ به وليس هو مثل المتصل في القوة.

٨- وليس في "كتاب السنن" الذي صنّفته عن رجل مذكور الحديث شيء، وإذا كان فيه حديثٌ منكرٌ بيّنٌ أنه منكر، وليس على نحوه في الباب غيره.

٩- وهذه الأحاديث ليس منها في كتاب ابن المبارك، ولا كتاب وكيع، إلا الشيء اليسير، وعامته في كتاب هؤلاء مراسيل، وفي كتاب "السنن" من "موطأ مالك بن أنس" شيءٌ صالح، وكذلك من "مصنّفات حماد بن سلمة" وعبد الرزاق. وليس ثلث هذه الكتب فيما أحسبه في كتب جميعهم، أعني مصنّفات مالك بن أنس، وحماد بن سلمة، وعبد الرزاق.

١٠- وقد ألفته نسقاً على ما وقع عندي، فإن ذكر لك عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم سنة ليس مما خرّجته، فاعلم أنّه حديث واهٍ، إلا أن يكون في كتابي من طريق آخر، فإنّي لم أخرج الطرُق، لأنّه يكثر على المتعلّم.

١١- ولا أعرف أحداً جمع على الاستقصاء غيري، وكان الحسن بن علي الخلال قد جمع منه قدر تسع مئة حديث، وذكر أنّ ابن المبارك قال: "السنن عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم نحو تسع مئة حديث". فقيل له: "إنّ أبا يوسف قال: هي ألف ومئة"، قال ابن المبارك: "أبو يوسف يأخذ بتلك الهنات من هنا وهناك نحو الأحاديث الضعيفة".

١٢- وما كان في كتابي من حديث فيه وهنٌ شديد فقد بيّنته، ومنه ما لا يصحّ سنده، وما لم أذكر فيه شيئاً فهو صالح، وبعضها أصحّ من بعض.

١٣- وهذا لو وضعه غيري لقلت أنا فيه أكثر، وهو كتاب لا ترد عليك سنة عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بإسنادٍ صالح إلا وهي فيه، إلا أن يكون كلامٌ استخرج من الحديث، ولا يكاد يكون هذا.

١٤- ولا أعلم شيئاً بعد القرآن ألزَمَ للتَّاسِ أَنْ يتعلَّموا من هذا الكتاب، ولا يَضُرَّ رجلاً أَنْ لا يكتب من العلم . بعد ما يكتب هذا الكتاب . شيئاً، وإذا نظر فيه وتَدَبَّرَهُ وَتَمَهَّمَهُ حِينَئِذٍ يعلم مقداره.

١٥- وأما هذه المسائلُ مسائلُ الثَّوْرِيِّ ومالك والشافعي، فهذه الأحاديثُ أصولُها. ويُعجِبُنِي أَنْ يكتب الرجلُ مع هذه الكُتُبِ مِنْ رأي أصحاب النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، ويكتب أيضاً مثل "جامع سفيان الثَّوْرِيِّ" فَإِنَّهُ أَحْسَنُ ما وَضَعَ النَّاسُ مِنَ الجوامع.

١٦- والأحاديثُ الَّتِي وَضَعَهَا فِي "كتاب السنن" أَكْثَرُها مشاهيرُ، وهي عند كلِّ مَنْ كتب شيئاً من الحديث، إِلَّا أَنْ تَمَيَّزَهَا لا يَقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ كُلُّ النَّاسِ، والفخرُ بِهَا أَمَّا مشاهيرُ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُحْتَجُّ بِحَدِيثِ غَرِيبٍ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ رِوَايَةِ مَالِكٍ وَيَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدٍ وَالثَّقَاتِ مِنْ أَيْمَةِ الْعِلْمِ. وَلَوْ اخْتَجَّ رَجُلٌ بِحَدِيثِ غَرِيبٍ، وَجَدَتْ مَنْ يَطْعَمُ فِيهِ وَلَا يُحْتَجُّ بِالْحَدِيثِ الَّذِي قَدْ اخْتَجَّ بِهِ، إِذَا كَانَ الْحَدِيثُ غَرِيباً شاذّاً. فَأَمَّا الْحَدِيثُ الْمَشْهُورُ الْمُتَّصِلُ الصَّحِيحُ، فَلَيْسَ يَقْدِرُ أَنْ يَزِدَّهُ عَلَيْكَ أَحَدٌ.

١٧- وقال إبراهيم النَّخَعِيُّ: "كانوا يكرهون الغريب من الحديث." وقال يزيد بن أبي حبيب: "إذا سمعت الحديث، فأشده كما تُشَدُّ الصَّالَةُ، فَإِنْ عُرِفَ وَإِلَّا فَدَعُهُ."

١٨- وإنَّ مِنَ الْأَحَادِيثِ فِي "كتاب السنن" ما ليس بمتصل، وهو مرسلٌ ومدلسٌ، وهو إذا لم تُوجد الصحاح عند عاتمة أهل الحديث على معنى أنه متصل، وهو مثلُ الحسن عن جابر، والحسن عن أبي هريرة، والحكم عن مِقْسَمِ بْنِ عَدَسَانَ، وليس بمتصل. وسماعُ الحكم من مِقْسَمِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَحَادِيثَ، وَأَمَّا أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ عَنِ الْحَارِثِ عَنِّي، فَلَمْ يَسْمَعْ أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ مِنَ الْحَارِثِ إِلَّا أَرْبَعَةَ أَحَادِيثَ، لَيْسَ فِيهَا مَسْنَدٌ وَاحِدٌ. وَأَمَّا مَا فِي "كتاب السنن" مِنْ هَذَا النَّحْوِ فَقَلِيلٌ، وَلَعَلَّ لَيْسَ لِلْحَارِثِ الْأَعْوَرِ فِي "كتاب السنن" إِلَّا حَدِيثٌ وَاحِدٌ، وَإِنَّمَا كَتَبْتُهُ بِاخْتِرَةٍ.

١٩- وَرَبَّمَا كَانَ فِي الْحَدِيثِ مَا تَثَبُّتْ صِحَّةُ الْحَدِيثِ مِنْهُ، إِذَا كَانَ يَخْفَى ذَلِكَ عَلَيَّ، فَرَبَّمَا تَرَكْتُ الْحَدِيثَ إِذَا لَمْ أَقْفَهُ، وَرَبَّمَا كَتَبْتُهُ وَبَيَّنَّتهُ، وَرَبَّمَا لَمْ أَقِفْ عَلَيْهِ، وَرَبَّمَا أَوَقَّفْتُ عَنْ مِثْلِ هَذَا، لِأَنَّهُ ضَرُرٌّ عَلَى الْعَامَّةِ أَنْ يَكشِفَ لَهُمْ كُلُّ مَا كَانَ مِنْ هَذَا الْبَابِ، فِيمَا مَضَى مِنْ عِيُوبِ الْحَدِيثِ، لِأَنَّ عِلْمَ الْعَامَّةِ يَقْصُرُ عَنْ مِثْلِ هَذَا.

٢٠- وَعَدَدُ كُتُبِ هَذِهِ "السنن" ثمانية عشرَ جُزْءاً مَعَ الْمَراسيلِ، مِنْهَا جُزْءٌ وَاحِدٌ مَراسيلِ، وَمَا زُوِيَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مِنَ الْمَراسيلِ، مِنْهَا مَا لَا يَصُحُّ، وَمِنْهَا مَا هُوَ مَسْنَدٌ عِنْدَ غَيْرِي، وَهُوَ مُتَّصِلٌ صَحِيحٌ.

٢١- وَلَعَلَّ عَدَدَ الَّذِي فِي كِتَابِي مِنَ الْأَحَادِيثِ قَدْرُ أَرْبَعَةِ آلَافٍ وَثَمَانِ مِئَةِ حَدِيثٍ، وَنَحْوُ سِتِّ مِئَةِ حَدِيثٍ مِنَ الْمَراسيلِ.

٢٢- فَمَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يَمَيَّزَ هَذِهِ الْأَحَادِيثَ مَعَ الْأَلْفَاظِ، فَرَبَّمَا يَجِيءُ حَدِيثٌ مِنْ طَرِيقٍ، وَهُوَ عِنْدَ الْعَامَّةِ مِنْ طَرِيقِ الْأُمَّةِ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مَشْهُورُونَ، غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ رُبَّمَا طَلَبَ اللَّفْظَةَ الَّتِي يَكُونُ لَهَا مَعَانٍ كَثِيرَةٌ. وَمَنْ عَرَفَتْ مَنْ نَقَلَ مِنْ جَمِيعِ هَذِهِ الْكُتُبِ.

٢٣- فَرَبَّمَا يَجِيءُ الْإِسْنَادُ فَيُعْلَمُ مِنْ حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ أَنَّهُ غَيْرُ مُتَّصِلٍ، وَلَا يَتَبَيَّنُّ السَّمْعُ إِلَّا بِأَنْ يَعْلَمَ الْأَحَادِيثَ، وَيَكُونُ لَهُ فِيهِ مَعْرِفَةٌ، فَيَقِفَ عَلَيْهِ، مِثْلُ مَا يُرْوَى عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ، قَالَ: "أَخْبَرْتُ عَنِ الزَّهْرِيِّ"، وَرَوِيهِ الْبُرْسَانِيُّ "عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ عَنِ الزَّهْرِيِّ." فَالَّذِي يَسْمَعُ يَظُنُّ أَنَّهُ مُتَّصِلٌ، وَلَا يَصْحُحُ بِنْتَهُ، فَأَمَّا تَرْكَنَاهُ لِذَلِكَ، لِأَنَّ أَصْلَ الْحَدِيثِ غَيْرُ مُتَّصِلٍ، وَلَا يَصْحُحُ، وَهُوَ حَدِيثٌ مَعْلُولٌ. وَمِثْلُ هَذَا كَثِيرٌ، وَالَّذِي لَا يَعْلَمُ يَقُولُ: "قَدْ تَرَكْتُ حَدِيثاً صَحِيحاً مِنْ هَذَا، وَجَاءَ بِحَدِيثٍ مَعْلُولٍ."

٢٤- وَلَمْ أَصْنَفْ فِي "كتاب السنن" إِلَّا الْأَحْكَامَ، وَلَمْ أَصْنَفْ كِتَابَ الزَّهْدِ وَفَضَائِلِ الْأَعْمَالِ وَغَيْرِهَا، فَهَذِهِ الْأَرْبَعَةُ آلَافٌ وَالثَّمَانُ مِئَةٌ، كُلُّهَا فِي الْأَحْكَامِ. فَأَمَّا أَحَادِيثُ كَثِيرَةٌ صَحَّاحٌ فِي الزَّهْدِ وَفَضَائِلِ وَغَيْرِهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ هَذَا فَلَمْ أُخْرِجْهَا.

٢٥- وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتِهِ، وَصَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ وَعَلَى آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ، وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْمُنْتَحَبِينَ وَأَزْوَاجِهِ أُمَّهَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، وَسَلِّمْ تَسْلِيماً، وَحَسْبُنَا اللهُ وَنَعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ.

2. TRANSLATION of the LETTER

2.1. Reference Chain of the Letter

The letter's²⁹ reference chain from the beginning to the end is as follows:

1. Abd al-Ghanî b. Abd al-Wahîd al-Maqdisî (d. 600/1203)
2. Abû al-Fath Muhammad b. Abd al-Baqî b. Ahmad Ibn al-Battî (d. 564/1169)
3. Abû al-Fadl Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. Khayrûn (d. 488/1095)
4. Abû Abdillah Muhammad b. Ali b. Abdullah as-Sûrî (d. 441/1049)
5. Abû al-Husayn Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Ghassânî (d. 402/1012)
6. Abû Bakr Muhammad b. Abd al-Aziz b. Muhammad al-Hashimî (d. ?)
7. Abû Dâwûd Sulaimân b. Ash'ath as-Sijistânî (d. 275/889)³⁰

2.2. Translation of the Letter into English³¹

In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

There is no might nor power except in Allah.

(Hafiz Abd al-Ghanî b. Abd al-Wahîd al-Maqdisî said so:) Shaikh Abû al-Fath Muhammad b. Abd al-Baqî b. Ahmad b. Salman who is known as Ibn al-Battî informed us -if I did not listen this from him (in person) by ijâzah-³² (and) said that: Abû al-Fadl Ahmad b. al-Hasan b. Khayrûn al-Mu'addal informed us -when I was listening (in the gathering)- via qiraah.³³ He was asked: Did you read (this risalah) to Hafiz Abû Abdallah Muhammad b. Ali b. Abdallah as-Sûrî? Then he said so by confirming this: I listened to Abû al-Husayn Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Ahmad Ibn Jumayy al-Ghassânî in Saydâ, he said: I listened to Abû Bakr Muhammad b. Abd al-Azeez b. Muhammad b. al-Fazl b. Yahyâ b. al-Qâsim b. Awn b. Abdallah b. al-Kharîs b. Nawfal b. Abdulmuttalib al-Hashimî in Mecca

²⁹ Damascus al-Zahiriyah Library, Hadith-copy numbered 348.

³⁰ See. Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 29-30.

³¹ In the translation of the letter, first publication of the letter by M. Zâhid al-Kawtharî, who is the first publisher, Abdulfattâh Abû Ghuddah's publication by making additions to the first publication and M. Fatih Kaya's lesson proposals in ISAM were based on (See. Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfî Sunanih (M. Fatih Kaya)", accessed: 25 July 2018, https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDIK15_ISIzrqovORuncOuq5JHhEUxuWR). Along with them, other works written on the risalah were benefited from, as well.

³² Hafiz Abd al-Ghanî al-Maqdisî either because he listened a very long time ago, or because -as it is a tradition of the muhaddiths- he had the determination to listen a lot from as many as possible different teachers, cannot exactly remember whether he listened the risalah from his teacher Ibn al-Battî, and so he recorded it with expressing his hesitation. That's to say, he says "I might have taken the letter via listening, yet if that is not the case, I must certainly have taken it with ijazah." (See. Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfî Sunanih -01- M. Fatih Kaya - 07.10.2017", accessed: 25 July 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFCpgFsdjKI&list=PLDIK15_ISIzrqovORuncOuq5JHhEUxuWR, 39:13-40:17).

³³ This method, which is called *Arz* or *arz al-qiraat* means a student's reading a hadith before his teacher, who has the reporting right of this hadith, or listening to someone reading the hadith and by this way learning the hadith from the teacher (See. Abdullah Aydınli, *Hadis Istihlaları Sözlüğü*, 3rd edition (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Pub., 2009), 150).

saying this: I listened to Abû Dâwûd Sulaimân b. Ash'ath as-Sijistânî in Basra, he was asked about the letter he had written in response to Meccans and others, and after that he had us write as follows:

1. As-Salam Alaikum

Together with you³⁴ I thank to Allah apart from whom there is no God and I wish Him to send His blessings on the Prophet (pbuh), whenever his name is pronounced.

Now; May Allah give both you and us a welfare that does not bear any disturbance with itself, or a punishment after it.

You wanted me to tell whether the hadiths in the book called *as-Sunan* are the most precise ones that I know in the related babs. And I had a grasp of all (other) things that you stated.

2. You should know that all of them are like this.³⁵ However, among two precise reports, I preferred the one (whose reporter is unfavorable but) with more references -even though the reporter of the other one was better at memorizing (better but lower in degree).³⁶ I suppose there are 10 hadith like that in my book.

3. In every bab, although there are many precise hadiths (in my memory or with me), I wrote one or two hadiths so that it shall not extend in volume but shall gain more favor.³⁷

4. When I reported one hadith from two or three angles in a bab, this is because of an extra (fiqhi) statement or sometimes because of an extra word that are not in the other ones.

5. Sometimes I shortened a long hadith. Because, if I were to give it in a longer version, some of the listeners would not know what is meant by the hadith and could not understand the place of the fiqh (provision) given by it.

6. When it comes to mursal; in the past scholars such as Sufyân al-Thawrî (d. 161/777), Malik b. Anas (d. 179/795), al-Avdaî (d. 158/775) used to prove these. Then as-Shafi'î (d. 204/820) came and brought forward some conditions about

³⁴ See. Abû Abdirrahmân al-Halîl b. Ahmad b. Amr b. Tamîm al-Farâhîdî, *Kitâb al-'Ayn*, ed. Mahdî al-Mahzûmî - Ibrâhîm as-Sâmarrâî (Dâru wa Maktabat al-Hilâl, nd.), 3: 189.

³⁵ That's to say, I gave place to the most saheeh hadiths I know about the bab, in every bab of the *Sunan*.

³⁶ For the differences preferred in critical editions (أقدم/أقوم) see. Sabbâgh, *Risâla*, 24; Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 17-18, 31.

³⁷ However, when the first part of the *Sunan*, Kitâb at-Tahara's 52nd bab, the Prophet's (pbuh) Wudu's Characteristic is considered, it is seen that there are 29 hadiths here. Apart from this, there are a considerable amount of babs with 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20 hadiths (See. Abû Dâwûd Sulaimân b. al-Ash'as b. Ishâq al-Azdî as-Sijistânî, *Kitâb as-Sunan Sunanu Ebî Dâwûd*, ed. Muhammad Avvâma, 3rd edition (Jiddah: Dâr al-Yusr - Dâr al-Minhâc, 1431/2010), 1: 232-248, 320-325, 368-375, 432-444, 2: 86-93, 195-204, 273-290, 362-370, 380-389, 393-401, 409-430, 560-572, 572-580, 3: 121-131, 570-583, 583-598, 4: 120-127, 440-448, 452-460, 5: 5-19, 69-76, 119-131).

proving them.³⁸ Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241/855) and others (from companions of hadith) followed him about proving according to these conditions.³⁹

7. If there is not a hadith (invalid-contiguous) that is predicate to the opposite of mursals (in any subject) (merfu-muttasil), and if there are not any other predicates (apart from mursals) -though it would not be like contiguous in terms of power- the mursal is proved. (However) it is not as powerful as contiguous (in terms of proving).⁴⁰

8. In the *Sunan* book I sorted, there are not any reports by reporters who are (unitedly)⁴¹ matruk al-hadith.⁴² If there are any munkar⁴³ hadiths in the book, I

³⁸ Imam Shafi'i deals with the case of proving via mursal in a detailed way in his *ar-Risalah*. In short, Shafi'i is of the opinion that proving can be made via mursals with certain conditions (See. Abū Abdillāh Muhammad b. Idris b. Abbās sh-Shāfi'i, *ar-Risāla*, ed. Ahmad Shākīr (Egypt: Maktabat al-Halabi, 1358/1940), 461-465; Abū al-Farac Zaynuddīn Abdurrahmān b. Ahmad Ibn Rajab al-Baghdādī ad-Dimashqī al-Hanbalī, *Sharḥu 'Ilal at-Tirmidhī*, ed. Hammām Abdurrahīm Sa'īd (Jordan: Maktabat al-Manār, 1407/1987), 1: 545-557).

³⁹ There are different reports about whether Ahmad b. Hanbal used mursals to prove or not. On the subject See. Ibn Rajab, *Sharḥu 'Ilal at-Tirmidhī*, 1: 552-553; Ibn Hajar, *an-Nukat*, 2: 567-569; Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasā'il*, 35; Ali, "Nazarāt", 46-47.

⁴⁰ For detailed information about mursal see. Ibn Hajar, *an-Nukat*, 2: 540-571; Selahattin Polat, *Mürsel Hadisler ve Delil Olma Yönünden Değeri* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Pub., 1985).

⁴¹ Here the record 'unitedly' needs to be made; because in *Sunan* for people such as Amr b. Vākid ad-Dimashqī, Muhammad b. Abdurrahmān el-Baylamāni, Abū Canāb al-Kalbī, Sulaimān b. Arkam, Ishāq b. Abdillāh b. Abī Farva there are reports by matruk reporters (reported from Kawtharī Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasā'il*, 33). As a matter of fact, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalī: "Abū Dāwūd's wish is that there are no reports by a reporter who is matruk al-hadith according to him, or a reporter who is unitedly considered matruk al-hadith. Because, there are ones among his reporters who are even called muttahaam bil-qazeb." (Ibn Rajab, *Sharḥu 'Ilal at-Tirmidhī*, 2: 612).

Also, Ibn Taher al-Maqdisi (d. 507/1113) in his *Shurūt al-eimmeti as-sittah* reporting from Ibn Manda (d. 365/975), says that the cases of Abū Dāwūd and Nesāi is to report hadiths from reporters who don't have unitedly rejected characteristics and who are with contiguous line without hadith, discontinuity and ırsal (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasā'il*, 89). Also see. Muhammed Sabrān Afandī al-Andūnisi, *al-Matrūkūn wa al-majhūlūn wa marwiyātuhum fī Sunani Abi Dāwūd* (MA Thesis, Cāmiatu Umm al-Qurā, 1396/1976).

In addition to all of these, it is also known that Abū Dāwūd had his book read many times and he made some additions and removals as a result of his later convictions during these readings. Similar to Imam Mālik's *Muwatta* having different reports and their differing in content and volume, it is also seen that there are a number of differences in *Sunan*'s reports. Hence, some reports by Abū al-Hasan Ibn al-Abd (d. 328/939) and Abū Bakr Ibn Dāsa (d. 346/957) says Abū Ali Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Lu'lu' (d. 333/944), who made the last reading to Abū Dāwūd and who was with him when he died. Therefore, while saying something about these reports, this fact should not be ignored (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risālatu Abi Dāwūd ilā Ahli Makkah fī Vasfi Sunanih -02- M. Fatih Kaya - 07.10.2017", accessed: 25 July 2018, https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDIK15_ISIzrqovORuncOuu5JHhEUxuWR, 1:21:13-1:22:30). For differences between *Sunan* reports See. Qinnawci, *al-Hitta*, 388-389.

⁴² The hadith he reported was never taken (See. Aydınlı, *Hadis İstilahları Sözlüğü*, 181).

⁴³ The munkar here has a more general meaning than (defined by Ibn Hajar and the widely known) the *munkar* in the later period and it has many different forms. Ibn Hajar's definition is only one of them.

As far as it is determined Abū Dāwūd used these "munkar" for the following in his *Sunan*:

1. When a reliable reporter had opposition to another reliable reporter (in Ibn Hajar's definition *shāzz*),
2. For the opposition of an unfailing reporter wishing to be the only one (in Ibn Hajar's definition *shāzz*),
3. For the opposition of a weak reporter who wishes to be the only one (if he opposes *munkar* according to Ibn Hajar),
4. When a weak reporter opposed a reliable reporter (defined by Ibn Hajar as *munkar*),
5. When the reporter did not personally hear the hadith from the reporter whom he takes as the source, (*munkati, mursal*),
6. In the report of a matruk reporter,
7. In the report of a weak reporter.

Therefore, the munkar here should be understood in this way (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risālatu Abi Dāwūd ilā Ahli Makkah fī Vasfi Sunanih -02- M. Fatih Kaya - 07.10.2017", 1:23:50-1:26:25). Also See. Aydınlı, *Hadis İstilahları Sözlüğü*, 210-213.

stated that it is munkar. I must have taken that because there are not any other hadiths in that bab similar to that one.

9. Only a small part of the hadiths in the book also take place in Ibn al-Mubarak's (d. 181/797) and Waki' (b. Jarrah)'s (d. 197/812) books.⁴⁴ Most of the reports in their books are mursal, as well.⁴⁵ In (this) *Sunan* book, there are a number of hadiths taken from Malik b. Anas's *al-Muwatta*. Similarly, there are hadiths taken from Hammād b. Salamah's (d. 167/783) and Abd al-Razzaq's (d. 211/826) *Musannafs*, as well.⁴⁶ I think that one third of the chapters in my book⁴⁷, does not take place in all of their books, that is to say Malik b. Anas, Hammād b. Salamah and Abd al-Razzâq's books.⁴⁸

10. I authored this book in an organization that I considered appropriate according to myself.⁴⁹ (If) you are narrated a hadith from the Prophet (pbuh) that I did not give place in my book, you should know that it is a really weak hadith.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Although it is stated in sources that Ibn al-Mubarak has a *Sunan* called *Kitâb as-Sunan fi'l-fiqh* (Ismâil b. Muhammad Amin al-Bâbâni al-Baghdâdi, *Hadiyya al-ârifin asmâi al-mu'allifin wa âsâr al-muṣannifin* (Beirut: Dâru Ihyâi at-Turâs al-Arabî, nd.), 1: 438) most probably this information is incorrect. Waki' b. Carrâh has a *Musannaf* (Abû Bakr Muhammad Ibn Khayr al-Ishbîli, *Fihristu Ibn Khayr al-Ishbîli*, ed. Muhammad Muâd Mansûr (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1419/1998), 106; Kattâni, *Hadis Literatürü*, 35). (See. Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfi Sunanih -02- M. Fatih Kaya - 07.10.2017", 1:35:49-1:37:31).

⁴⁵ They give place to mursals a lot in their books, and this shows that they prove with mursals (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 34).

⁴⁶ To illustrate, the number of reports from Imam Malik in *Sunan* via al-Ka'nabî (d. 221/836) is determined as 226 (Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i*, 159). It requires another research how many of them are from *al-Muwwatta*, yet even when all of them are considered to be from *al-Muwwatta*, that would consist only one twentieth of *Sunan*.

Here, it is also significant that Abû Dâwûd compares his book to other books of *musannaf* an *Jami* kind (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 25:20-26:08).

⁴⁷ Abû Dâwûd here indicates the authenticity of his book by implying parts called *Kitâb at-Tibb*, *Kitâb as-Sunnah*, *Kitâb al-Adab* in his *Sunan* and the hadiths in these parts as well as implying that other do not have these parts. Therefore, the word (الكتب) translated as "chapters" above is seen as (الاحاديث) "hadiths" in Princeton copy (See. Princeton University Library, "Risalat Abî Dâwûd Sulaimân ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistâni", accessed: 30 July 2018, <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/4803866>, vr. 222^b).

⁴⁸ To see the sources in Abû Dâwûd's *Sunan* and how and how much he benefited from these sources in detail see. Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i*, 132-232.

⁴⁹ In fact, Abû Dâwûd followed a different organization in *Sunan*. His organization does not harmonise with Tirmidhî and Nesâi's. For example, he gave place to some practice parts among the prayer chapters such as "lukata", "niqah", "talaq". This is, as he stated above, the organization that is appropriate to his own conviction and ijthihad (See. Hudayr, *Sharhu Risâlati Abî Dâwûd*, 30).

⁵⁰ This claim by Abû Dâwûd shows his trust in his book, yet it is not well-directed. Imam Nawawî (d. 676/1277), about this case, says: "Abû Dâwûd's *Sunan* does not cover all of the ahkâm hadiths, and not even most of them. This is quite obvious, even it is necessary for someone who handles the jandals to know this fact. There are many ahkâm hadiths in Bukhârî's and Muslim's *Sahihs* which are not in Abû Dâwûd's *Sunan*." (Suyûtî, *al-Baḥru'llaḡî zaḡar*, 3: 1138). Also, the ahkâm reports which do not take place in *Sunan* but in books such as Ibn Taymiyya al-Cadd's (d. 652/1254) *al-Muntaḡâ min aḡbâr al-Muṣṭafâ*, Ibn Hajar's (d. 852/1449) *at-Talkhiṣ al-khabîr* and Zayla'i's (d. 762/1360) *Naṣb ar-râya* make this claim invalid, either (See. Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 34-35). However, if we say "Abû Dâwûd, involves most of the reports about **method of ahkâm (usûl-i ahkâm)**," that would be adequate (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfi Sunanih -02- M. Fatih Kaya - 07.10.2017", 1:54:33-1:54:45).

it can be in my book from a different line.⁵¹ Here my aim is not to give the lines. Because that is too much for learners.

11. I do not know anyone else apart from me who completes all of the Sunan completely. Hasan b. Ali al-Hallâl⁵² (d. 242/856) gathered for about nine hundreds of them (900) and told that Ibn al-Mubarak said so:⁵³ “The sunnah⁵⁴ reported from the Prophet (pbuh) are about nine hundred (900) hadiths.” When he was told that: “Abû Yûsuf (d. 182/798) says they are about one-thousand and a hundred (1100).”, he answered⁵⁵: “Abû Yûsuf takes these weak hadiths from here and there.”

⁵¹ It is ambiguous -to our opinion- what Abû Dâwûd means by this last sentence. Because while he says a sunnah “he did not give place” in his book is almost groundless in the previous sentence; in the next sentences he tells that the sunnah/hadith “he did not give place” in his book might have taken part in the book via another line. This seems contradictory. When the paragraph is considered as a whole, Abû Dâwûd’s intention may be understood in the following way: I have a certain organization in Sunan 1. If you are asking a hadith coming with a definite line, I did not take it to my book as it is problematic in terms of its validity, however that hadith takes place in my book as a valid one via another line. 2. The thing stated by this hadith, which does not take place in other hadith books but in mine, already takes part in my book in a different way/indirectly. Because I did not give all of the lines of hadith not to make students tired.

Here it is a matter to be noted that Abû Dâwûd uses sunnah and hadith instead of each other.

⁵² Meccan muhaddith Hasan b. Ali al-Huzalî al-Hulvânî al-Hallâl. Buhârî, Muslim, Abû Dâwûd, Tirmidhî and Ibn Mâce made references from his reports (Abû Abdillâh Shamsuddîn Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Osmân az-Zahabî at-Turkmânî, *al-Kâshif fi ma’rifati man lahû rivâya fi al-Kutub as-sittah* (with *Burhânuddîn Abû al-Wafâ Ibrâhîm b. Muhammad Sibî Ibn al-Ajamî al-Halabî’s Khâshiya*), ed. Muhammad Avvâma - Ahmad Muhammed Namir al-Hatib, 2nd edition (Jeddah: Dâr al-Yusr – Dâr al-Minhâc, 1430/2009), 2: 274).

⁵³ In the Princeton copy, it is not Hasan b. Ali al-Hallâl who reported from Ibn al-Mubarak. The owner of the sentence is Abû Dâwûd like in the previous sentence, the expression is (ونكروا عن ابن المبارك أنه قال) “They said Ibn al-Mubarak said as follows” (See. Princeton University Library, “Risalat Abî Dâwûd Sulaimân ibn al-Ash’ath al-Sijistânî”, accessed: 30 July 2018, <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/4803866>, vr. 222^b).

⁵⁴ Saheeh and constant ones.

⁵⁵ Shu’be b. Hajjaj (d. 160/776), Sufyân as-Saurî (d. 161/778), Yahyâ b. Saïd al-Kattân (d. 198/813), Abdurrahmân b. Mahdî (d. 198/813), Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241/855) and some others say there are 4400 (saheeh) hadiths -without repetition- reported from the Prophet as musnad; Ishaq b. Râhûya (d. 238/852) says it is about 7000. Also, Ahmad b. Hanbal, from Ibn Mahdî; Ishaq b. Râhûya from Yahyâ b. Saïd al-Qattân reported the statement “Harams and halals are 800 hadiths among them.”. About the subject, Abû Bakr Ibn al-Arabî (d. 543/1148) said: “The ahkâm hadiths in *Sahîhân* are about 2000 in number. Abû Dâwûd as-Sijistânî, reporting from Ibn al-Mubarak said there are 900 hadiths. What they mean with these numbers is the ones about haram and halal among the direct sentences by the Prophet (pbuh) -God knows the best -. (Actually) each of them said according to the one he reached, for this reason they stated different (numbers) from each other.” (Ibn Hajar, *an-Nukat*, 1: 299-300; Also see. Abû Abdillâh Shamsuddîn Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Osmân az-Zahabî at-Turkmânî, *Siyaru a’lâmi an-nubalâ’*, ed. Shu’aib al-Arnaûd et al., 3rd edition (Beirut: Muassasat ar-Risâla, 1405/1985), 7: 39, 9: 544).

The reasons of this controversy about the numbers of ahkâm hadiths are:

1. Counting different lines of the same text, as well,
2. Difference of opinion on which hadiths are ahkâm hadiths,
3. Divergency about whether most of the ahkâm ahkâm hadiths are valid (whether they have the recognition conditions),
4. Having different information about Sunan.

Like this, it is also said that there are 500 ahkâm verses in Quran. This knowledge must be understood as the number of verses which directly speak of ahkâm is 500. Otherwise, there are a lot of verses from which ahkâm can be inferred (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 36-37).

12. I indicated all of the hadiths that are in my book and that show weakness in a high level.⁵⁶ Some of the hadiths in my book do not have precise references.⁵⁷ Those hadiths, about which I did not say anything, are suitable ones⁵⁸ and some of them are more precise than others.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ “Abū Dāwūd -May Allah mercy him- actually followed the conditions of his own ijtihad and indicated the ones which are really weak and are not suitable for reinforcement; and he tolerated the ones which are not very weak and are suitable for reinforcement and did not make any statement about them. From his silence (on some occasions), it cannot be understood that this report is fine (makbul) for him. Especially if we consider the definition of “fine (hasen)” in the technical terms which emerged later: as the one from the parts of saheeh in the tradition of predecessor, and which requires practice according to most of the scholars, or which Bukhārī did not prefer (to take in his book), but Muslim took in his book (used) or vice versa (to which Muslim did not give place but Bukhārī did), it constitutes the lowest part of saheeh. If it is to go lower, it becomes out of proof and it goes between weakness and hasen (finess).”

The most outstanding reports of those in Abū Dāwūd's *Sunan* are the ones excluded by Bukhārī and Muslim together which form almost half of the book.

After that, there comes the reports which one of them take but the other did not.

Following that, there comes the saheeh-lined reports that neither of them took in their books but away from being illat and shāzz.

Next, there are reports with salah (good) lines that scholars accept by supporting each other and comes from two or more moderate ways.

Right after that, there are reports whose lines are weak because of the deficiency of its reporters' memorization and Abū Dāwūd gives place to such reports and he mostly keeps quiet.

Finally, there are reports with obvious weakness because of their reporters and Abū Dāwūd does not keep quiet about them and mostly shows their weakness. On some occasions, he keeps silent depending on their reputation and being munkar. Allah knows the best.” (Zahabī, *Siyar*, 13: 214-215).

⁵⁷ It is in the level of hasen or weak with tolerable weakness (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 38). The expression in the text “some of their lines are not saheeh” (ومنه ما لا يصح مسنداً), is seen as (ومنه ما لا يصح مسنداً) “some of them are not saheeh as musnad” in Princeton copy (See. Princeton University Library, “Risalat Abi Dāwūd Sulaimān ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistāni”, erişim: 30 Temmuz 2018, <https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/4803866>, vr. 222^b).

⁵⁸ Sālihun li'ī-ihitjāj wa al-i'tibār wa al-istishhād (Biqā'ī, *an-Nukat al-wafiyya*, 1: 257, 259; Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 40).

“Abū Dāwūd's statement “If there are hadiths with severe weakness, I must have stated it.”; makes us feel that he **would not make explanations** for the reports without severe weakness. Moving from here, the reports that Abū Dāwūd kept quiet about are not like (salah), fine with terms and they are different:

1. Ones in the *Sahihān* part or ones with the validity condition,
2. Ones with the characteristic of Hasen li-zatihy,
3. Ones with the characteristic of hasen only when supported (hasen li-ghayrihy),
4. Ones which are weak, but without a united rejection about the reporting of its reporter.

According to Abū Dāwūd all these kinds of reports can be proven with.

As Ibn Mandah says, as well, Abū Dāwūd, gives a weak hadith “if he cannot find other hadiths in the related bab”; because according to him is a stronger proof than common view (Ibn Hajar, *an-Nukat*, 1: 435-436).

However, it is seen after careful examination that: although it is a fact that 'he proved with the weak ones and preferred them to comparison, the truth is that: Abū Dāwūd is not of the opinion that weak reports can be proven with about the reports he kept quiet for (See. Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 39-45).

Other similar evaluations on the subject are in Ibn as-Salāh's (d. 643/1245) *Ma'rifatu anwā'i 'ilm al-hadīth* in “hasan” chapter, Zarkashī's (d. 794/1392) *Hāshiyah*, Zaynuddin al-İrāqī's (d. 806/1403) *at-Taayid wa al-izāh*, Biqā'ī's (d. 885/1480) *an-Nukat al-wafiyya*, Sakhawī's (d. 902/1496) *Fath al-mughīth*, Suyūtī's (d. 911/1505) *Tadrīb ar-rāvi*, Amīr San'āni's (d. 1182/1768) *Tawzih al-afkār*, Laknawī's (d. 1304/1886) *al-Ajwiba ve Zafar al-amāni*, Tāhir al-Cazāiri's (d. 1338/1920) *Tawcih an-naẓar*, Zafar Ahmad at-Tahanawī's (d. 1892-1974) *Qawā'id*. For more information see. Muhammad Hadī Ali Madkhalī, *Mā sakata 'anhu Abi Dāwūd mim mā fi isnādih za'if* (MA Thesis, Cāmiat al-Islāmiyya, 1414); Nūristāni, *Risālatu Abi Dāwūd ilā ahli Makkah*, 127-139. Also, about the subject, there is a long article called *Sukūtu Abi Dāwūd 'ala al-hadīth fi Sunanih mafhūmuh wa āṣāruh* written by Nihād Abdulhalīm Ubaid who is a Hadith-i Sharif and Sciences lecturer in Kuwait University Shariah and Islamic Studies Faculty.

⁵⁹ The saheeh here does not mean saheeh in a certain meaning, but as he himself stated at the beginning of the letter, (أصح ما عرفت في الباب) “it is the most saheeh hadith he knew about the related subject” (See. Biqā'ī, *an-Nukat al-wafiyya*, 1: 257, 259).

13. In the event that someone else -but not me- had authored this book, I could say a lot more things about it.⁶⁰ This is a book in which all of the sunnah that come from the Prophet (pbuh) via suitable references take place, and yet those fiqhi statements/provisions inferred from the hadiths do not take place in it.⁶¹

14. For people, I do not know anything else that is more necessary than learning this book after Qur'an. It would not harm a person not to write any scholarly things⁶² after authoring this book and he understands the value of the book by looking at what is in the book, by thinking and trying to comprehend them.

15. The sources of the matters⁶³ that al-Sauri, Malik and Shafi'i examine are those hadiths. I find it nice for someone to write the opinions⁶⁴ of the Prophet (pbuh) along with these books⁶⁵, and to write books such as *Jami'* by Sufyân as-Sawrî, which is the best book ever written by the companions of the Prophet and by the people.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ I would speak in a more comfortable way and would praise my book which I cannot do now (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 1:00-1:40).

⁶¹ In Abû Dâwûd's view, his book contains all of the sunnahs. However, statement (provisions, fatwas and ijtihads) that are gained via inference from the Companions, the Tabi'in and from the others following them hardly ever take place in his book (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 45-46).

⁶² Abû Dâwûd's purpose by "scholarship" must be meaning "hadith" with its widely known meaning in the first years. In addition to this, it is possible that he might have meant other shar'i scholarships such as fiqh and tafsir.

⁶³ Of his fiqhi evaluations.

⁶⁴ This statement by Abû Dâwûd brings to mind the importance of oral expressions by the Companions and of the ijtihads. Because, these have a big and important role in understanding the difficulties and solutions of sunnah. Because of that, it is seen that in the hadith books of tabi'in scholars and other scholar following them until the early 2nd hijri century also include the fatwas and statements of the Companions. Even, Imam Bukhârî is the one who uses the statements of the Companion and the fatwa of the tabi'in most commonly in the translation of the book he named *al-Musnad (al-Câmi' al-musnadu aş-şahîh...)*. This results from the importance of these in understanding sunnah properly and from the need to them (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 46). Therefore, there are 176 mawkuuf and 65 maqtu' reports in *Sunan* near marfu ones (Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i*, 440).

⁶⁵ Here, as books constituting his *Sunan* can be understood by the word "books", also the books by Sawrî, Malik and Shafi'i who are the pioneers both in religion and in scholarship (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 11:00-13:34).

⁶⁶ The meaning by "jami" used here is not the kind of book which is known by covering eight parts which are: siyar al-Nabî, adâb, tafsir, aqaid, fitaan, ahkâm, ashrat and manaqib according to the following scholars. On the contrary, for the previous ones, even if "jami": is musnad (merfu'-muttasil(contiguous) or not, even if it contains the mentioned eight chapters or not, even if it is organized in fiqhi babs with an organization that can be seen in Sufyân as-Sawrî's and Ma'mar b. Râshid's (d. 153/770) *jamis* or with another organization that was known by the previous muhaddiths or not, it is a detailed book constituted of hadiths (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 47).

In the respect above, Muslim's book is considered as a jami book. However, in the original name of the book (*al-Musnad aş-şahîh al-mukhtaşar min as-Sunan bi-nakl al-'adli 'an al-'adli 'an Rasûlillâh şallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) the "jami" expression does not take place in Bukhârî's (*al-Câmi' al-musad aş-şahîh al-mukhtaşar min umûri Rasûlillâh şallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam wa Sunanih wa ayyâmih*). For this reason, there are people who hesitate about whether Muslim's book is a *jami* or not. Therefore, some of them are of the opinion that the book cannot be called as a *jami* as the tafsir chapter in the book is really brief (little if any). Whereas according to others' usage Muslim's book is a *jami*. Also, in Tirmidhi's book's original name, (*al-Câmi' al-mukhtaşar min as-Sunan 'an Rasûlillâh şallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam wa ma'rifet aş-şahîh wa al-ma'lûl wa mâ 'alayh al-'amal*) "jami" expression takes part, yet it is widely known as a *Sunan*. However, for the following ones "Sunan" is the name given to book that only contain ahkâm hadiths. Yet, Tirmidhi's book does not only contain chapters about ahkâm.

Moving from all of these, the difference between the **technical terms** in the time of the descendent and the **usages** in the time of the predecessor should be paid attention and the old usages should not be evaluated with later well-established/reduced definitions (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 24:00-25:20).

16. Most of the hadiths I took in my book *Sunan* are well-known.⁶⁷ These are available with everyone who wrote a fair number of hadiths. However, everyone does not have the capacity to classify⁶⁸ them. Praise can be accorded as these are well-known (hadiths). Because even when it is a report by Malik Malik, Yahyâ b. Saïd and prominent trustees in the field of hadith, a contradictory⁶⁹ hadith cannot be proven. Even if someone proves a contradictory hadith, you can see those whose criticize that hadith and those who does not prove the contradictory-munkar⁷⁰ hadith. However, no one has the power to reject a well-known, contiguous and precise hadith.

17. Ibrahim an-Nakhaî (d. 96/714) said: "Scholars do not welcome contradictory hadiths." Yazid b. Abû Habîb (d. 128/745) also said: "When you hear a hadith, announce it like you do in the case of a lost entity; if it is known by everyone, that is great, if not just throw it away."⁷¹

⁶⁷ The point in the "well-known" here, is not the well-known which is a technical term known among later muhaddiths and method-makers; but the hadiths that are prevalent among the companions of fuqaha and fatwa and which are practiced by some of them, although there is single news (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 47).

In the later period, hadith consists of two parts (in terms of the number of reporters) which are unknown and well-known. While *unknown* (*ghareeb*): is the report whose reporter opposed or acted selfishly about, well-known (*mashhûr*) is not like this. "Azeez", which we know as the third one, does not take part in their technical terms. Therefore, in Hakem Naysabûri's (d. 405/1014) *Ma'rifa* or Hatîb Baghdâdi's (d. 463/1071) *Kifâya*, there is no distinct title as *azeez*. Yet, there is used the expression not as a characteristic of the report, but as a characteristic of the reporter, meaning "with a low number of reports", *azîz al-hadîs* (*cidden*) (See. Abû Abdillâh Muhammad b. Abdillâh al-Hâkim an-Naysabûri, *Ma'rifatu 'ulûm al-hadîth wa kammiyyati ajnâsîh*, ed. Ahmad b. Fâris as-Salûm, 2nd edition (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma'ârif, 1431/2010), 587, 629, 683, 685, 691, 694. (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfî Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 33:10-34:50).

⁶⁸ Choosing and differentiating the well-known and respected ones from the other ones or knowing aspects such as what the hadiths are about, their organization and determining the ahkâm to be inferred from them.

⁶⁹ "The unknown" he means: has the meaning of opponent to the well-known (the known/the preserved) like the reporting of a hadith from someone else while everyone reports it from a certain person (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 47).

⁷⁰ Abû Dâwûd recorded "the unknown" as being *shâzz* here. The "shâzz" here means *munkar* and it also means the one which is not known by hadith circles for the reasons of being opponent and egocentric. "The unknown" is not a term: meaning a single hadith which is directed criticism for its reporter or its text. On the contrary, they are *mufrad*/single reports which are criticized/considered weak because of a problem in its text or line like one with problematic text by the fatwa leaders, and whose egocentrism cannot be eliminated with an amenable, which is opposed by the reports of better or more reliable ones. In the following paragraph, it is meant by "unknown" in Ibrâhîm an-Nakhaî's (d. 96/714) statement (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 47).

Hatîb Baghdâdi in his work *al-Câmi' li-ahlâk ar-râvi wa âdâb as-sâmi' mavzû'* after hadiths, starts a new thread called "Reporting Well-Known Hadiths's Being Fine and Rejecting Unknown and Munkar Ones" in which *unknown* and *munkar* mean the same as *gharîb-shâzz* statement above (See. Abû Bakr Ahmad b. Ali b. Sâbit al-Hatîb al-Bagdâdi, *al-Câmi' li-ahlâk ar-râvi wa âdâb as-sâmi'*, ed. Muhammad Acâc al-Hatîb (Beirut: Muassasat ar-Risâla, 1412/1991), 2: 136). (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfî Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 46:10-51:38).

⁷¹ A similar statement by Avdaî is: (كنا نسمع الحديث، فنعرضه على أصحابنا كما يعرض الدرهم الزائف، فما عرفوا منه أخذنا به، وما (أنكروا تركنا goldsmith (to understand whether it is pure or adulterated). We used to take the ones they knew and accepted; and we used to eliminate the ones they did not know.) (Abû Muhammad Ibn Hallâd al-Hasan b. Abdîrrahmân b. Hallâd ar-Râmhurmuzî, *al-Muḥaddith al-fâsil bayna ar-râvi wa al-wâ'i*, ed. Muhammad Muhibbuddin Abû Zaid (Cairo: Dâru az-zahâir, 1437/2015), 323; Abû Bakr Ahmad b. al-Husain b. Ali al-Bayhaqî, *Ma'rifat as-Sunan wa al-âṣâr*, ed. Abdulmu'tî Amin Qal'aci (Beirut: Dâru Qutaiba, 1991/1412), 1: 143). (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfî Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 45:29-46:00).

18. In the *Sunan* book, there are also hadiths that are not contiguous.⁷² These are *mursal*⁷³ and *mudallas*, as I must have taken them when there are not contiguous precise hadiths (in any subject) in accordance with the definition of most hadith scholars. The report al-Hasan (al-Basrî d. 110/728) took from Jabir (d. 78/697),⁷⁴ and again al-Hasan took from Abû Huraira⁷⁵ (d. 58/677), al-Hakîm (d. 115/731) took from Miqsam (d. 101/719) and he took from Ibn Abbâs (d. 68/687) is an example to this. Al-Hakem Miqsam listened only four hadiths.⁷⁶ When it comes to the report of Abû Ishaq (as- Sabî'î d. 127/745) from al-Harîs (al-A'war d. 65/684)⁷⁷ and his report from Ali, Abû Ishaq listened⁷⁸ only four hadiths from al-Harîs and there is not even a single *musnad* hadith among them. There are really few hadiths of these kind in *Sunan* book. Perhaps there is one hadith reported by al-Harîs al-A'war in the *Sunan* book, and I wrote it afterwards.⁷⁹

19. Sometimes in a hadith there are signs showing that it is precise, however when it remained hidden from me or I did not understand it, I did not take that hadith to my book.⁸⁰ Sometimes I took the hadith in my book and I explained it (its reason).⁸¹ Sometimes I could not have a grasp of it (the reason).⁸² And on some

⁷² He gives place to such reports that are not contiguous, and this is because he cannot find a contiguous report according to the method of the ahl al-Hadith (hadith scholars) in the related bab (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 48).

⁷³ It is observed that when Abû Dâwûd uses the words “*mursal*” and its plural form “*marasil*”, he has different intentions. It is understood that when he mostly means the reports of *tabi'in* with “*merâsil*” in the plural form, with “*mursal*”, which is its singular form, he means *munkati* in its widely-known usage in earlier times, both from his statements which were previously used in 6th, 7th and 9th paragraphs and from his usages in his *Kitâb al-Marâsil*. Therefore, Hakem Naysabûri, in his *Ma'rifa* in the eighth chapter under the title “*Ma'rifat al-Marâsil al-Muhtalaf fi al-ihitjâj bihâ*” speaks of the reports by *tabi'in* (See. Hâkem Naysâbûri, *Ma'rifatu 'ulûm al-hadîth*, 174-179). Here (18th paragraph) Abû Dâwûd wishes the *munkati* which has the meaning of not the contiguous one (See. Klasik Metin Okumaları, “*Risâlatu Abi Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fi Vasfi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017*”, 55:26-56:36).

⁷⁴ Although Hasan Basrî lived in the same age as (contemporary) Jabeer, he did not listen any hadiths from him, and his reports from Jabeer are *mursal*, that's to say *munkati* (Abû al-Fadl Shihâbuddîn Ahmad b. Ali Ibn Hajar al-Askalânî, *Tahdhîb at-Tahdhîb* (India: Matba'atu Dâirat al-Ma'ârif an-Nizâmiyya, 1326), 2: 267).

⁷⁵ Hasan listened only one hadith from Abû Huraira (Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhîb at-Tahdhîb*, 2: 269-270).

⁷⁶ al-Hakam b. Utaiba al-Kindî, Kufan faqîh (See. Zahabî, *al-Kâshif*, 2: 304-306). Miqsam b. Bucra (or Nacda) (See. Zahabî, *al-Kâshif*, 4: 337-338). According to the report by Shu'ba from Yahyâ b. Saïd al-Qattân, Hakam listened five hadiths from Miqsam, his other reports from him are from the book by means of (wecadeh) obtaining (Zahabî, *Siyar*, 5: 210).

⁷⁷ al-Haris al-A'war, according to most of the muhaddiths, is a severely weak reporter (See. Zahabî, *Siyar*, 4: 153-154).

⁷⁸ Abû Ishaq listened four hadiths from al-Haris, and his other reports from al-Haris are from the book. Both of them lived in Kufa for a long time and they are contemporary (Zahabî, *Siyar*, 4: 153, 154). Moreover, it is also reported that Abû Ishaq saw Hazrat Ali (r.a.) (Zahabî, *Siyar*, 5: 393).

⁷⁹ In *Sunan* there are four reports from al-Haris al-A'war in total. Three of them are via Abû Ishaq ash-Sabî'î and one of them is via Amir ash-Sha'bi (See. Camâluddîn Abû al-Hajjâj Yûsuf b. Abdîrrahmân b. Yûsuf al-Mizzî, *Tuhfat al-ashraf bi-ma'rifat al-a'raf*, ed. Abdussamad Sharafuddîn, 2nd edition (Beirut: el-Maktab al-Islâmî - ad-Dâr al-Kayyima, 1403/1983), 7: 350-357). Most probably, when he could not find another report to take part in a bab that he determined previously, he had to give place to his report (See. Klasik Metin Okumaları, “*Risâlatu Abi Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fi Vasfi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017*”, 1:09:10-1:09:55).

⁸⁰ Sometimes the line of the hadith is really *saheeh* and the hadith is away from deficiencies; however, as Abû Dâwûd cannot determine its validity and correctness, he does not give place to it in his (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 50).

⁸¹ Sometimes he takes a deficient hadith and explains the deficiency in it to announce that it is deficient (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 50).

⁸² He sometimes may have taken a deficient hadith as he did not know its deficiency, and he is excusable in this (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 50).

occasions, for ones like this I stopped (on purpose).⁸³ Because, it would give harm to the society to show all of the deficiencies of the hadith. Because the society cannot easily comprehend such things.⁸⁴

20. The number of these *Sunan* books⁸⁵ is eighteen juzs together with mursals. Mursal hadiths⁸⁶ comprise one of these juzs.⁸⁷ Some of the mursals reported from the Prophet (pbuh) are not precise,⁸⁸ and some of them are musnad together with others (books): contiguous (and) precise.⁸⁹

21. The number of hadiths in my books (juzs) is about four-thousand and eight-hundred (4800),⁹⁰ and about six-hundred (600) hadiths are mursals.⁹¹

22. Whoever wants to compare these hadiths (to their reports in other books), considering their statements as well (should well know): Sometimes, even though a hadith is reported via well-known imams in addition to majority, (in my book) it comes from a line (which is not well-known) because it contains statements with a lot of meanings.⁹² (I acted choosily about statements; however) Among all these books,⁹³ I known ones with reports (which are not choosy and use random reports), as well.

⁸³ Sometimes, he might have given place to a deficient hadith; yet he also might have kept quiet about it without expressing its deficiency (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 50).

⁸⁴ Because they cannot understand such matters, or they misunderstand and their wishful belief in hadiths (sunnahs) is spoiled (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 50).

Ibn Rajab, who agrees totally with Abū Dāwūd's this sentence, speaks longly on this matter: "This matter is exactly as Abū Dāwūd says. Common people cannot comprehend such things... Most of them hit at the scholars of hadith because of this... However, those who are competents of scholarship, its practices and sunnah, determine and state these deficiencies with a religious sincerity/effort and with the aim of saving the sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh), so their effort is to reveal other hadiths which are not deficient... ." (See. Ibn Rajab, *Sharḥu 'Ilal at-Tirmidhī*, 2: 892).

⁸⁵ Here he means "juzs" by the word "books" (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 51).

⁸⁶ With "mursals" here and later, he means the reports by tabi'in (Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risālatu Abi Dāwūd ilā Ahli Makkah fī Vasi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 1:24:03-1:24:09).

⁸⁷ The first and the original work of the field, *al-Marāsīl*, was first published in Cairo in 1310 by Ali as-Sunni at-Trablusi without mentioning its lines (Kandemir, "Abū Dāwūd es-Sijistāni", 10: 121). Later, the publications of Abd al-Aziz as-Seirawan (Beirut 1406), Shu'aib al-Arnaūd (Beirut 1408) ve Abdallah al-Zahrāni (Riyadh 1422) were made with its lines.

⁸⁸ Because there is another deficiency apart from its references or because it was referenced to weak and matruk reporters (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 51). The case of mural's being saheeh is when there is no other deficiency in the hadith and when it is only references, according to those who prove with mural (See. Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risālatu Abi Dāwūd ilā Ahli Makkah fī Vasi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 1:24:10-1:25:28).

⁸⁹ When he could not find the hadith as musnad (contiguous) and gave as mural, or when he reports it as mural because of another reason (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 51).

⁹⁰ Abū Dāwūd here, gives the number of hadiths in seventeen (17) juzs. That's to say, he gives separately the number in his *Sunan* and the number in his *Marāsīl*. The ballpark number which he gives soon after that means the number of mural hadiths in the single juz left.

⁹¹ This number in *Sunan*'s different editions and publications is different for four or five hundred hadiths. This results from the difference in the method for counting the hadiths (See. Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risālatu Abi Dāwūd ilā Ahli Makkah fī Vasi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 1:26:49-1:25:28). On the other hand, differences in reports are influential in this. For instance, according to Muhammed Muhyiddin Abdulhamid's publication, the number of hadiths in *Sunan* is 5274. The number of mursals in Shu'aib al-Arnaūd's *Kitāb al-Marāsīl* critical edition is 544 (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 52). Also, while the number of hadiths in Muhammad Avvāma's edition is (reported by Ibn Daseh) as 5232, (See. Abū Dāwūd, *Kitāb as-Sunan*, 5: 595), the number of hadiths in Shu'aib al-Arnaūd's edition is 5274 (See. Abū Dāwūd Sulaimān b. al-Ash'ath b. Ishāq al-Azdi as-Sijistāni, *Sunanu Abi Dāwūd*, ed. Shu'aib al-Arnaūd - Muhammad Kāmil Karaballī, 2nd edition (Damascus: Dāru ar-Risālat al-Ālamiyya, 1437/2016), 7: 544).

⁹² The aim of this sentence is: If a hadith comes from ways more than one, even if its line which is not well-known, I preferred the one with more/gathered indications for ahkām (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 52).

⁹³ From books and journals written about ahkām hadiths (Abū Ghuddah, *Thalāthu rasāil*, 53).

23. Sometimes it is known via another one's hadith that the line (of a hadith) is not contiguous. And one who hears this (line) can only notice that (it is not contiguous) by knowing other reports and having information about them. For instance, the line, which one was reported as from Ibn Curaic (d. 150/767) "I was informed by al-Zuhri' (d. 124/742) ..."⁹⁴, as this is reported by (Ibn Curaic's student) al-Bursâni⁹⁵ (d. 203/818) "from Ibn Curaic, and he reported from al-Zuhri"⁹⁶. Whoever hears this, thinks it is contiguous, however it is certainly not precise. For this reason, we have given up that. Because the original of the hadith⁹⁷ is not contiguous, (therefore) it is not precise; it is a hadith with contradiction. There are many hadiths alike. Those who does not know the fact would say "He rejected the precise hadith reported from that person, but took the contradictory hadith reported from this person."⁹⁸

24. (This) *Sunan* book covers only ahkâm hadiths; *Zuhd*, *Fazâili 'Amâl* and the other parts are not covered. All of these four thousand eight hundred hadiths are ahkâm hadiths. I did not exclude many precise hadiths outside of ahkâm such as *Zuhd*, *Fazâil* and other parts.⁹⁹

25. Wa's-salamu alaikum wa rahmatullah wa beraqatuh,

Allah (Te'ala) shall bless to our Prophet Muhammad his clean stainless family, outstanding companions, his wives who are the mothers of believers with mercy and a with a complete salam. Sufficient for us is Allah, and (He is) the best disposer of affairs.

CONCLUSION

Abû Dâwûd's *Sunan*, which is regarded one of the perfect works among the classified Hadith books in terms of compiling ahkâm reports, has become famous in the Islamic world soon after its compilation. Scholars who were knowledgeable about the book asked questions to the author of the book, who was still alive then, in order to get more solid, durable and satisfactory information about the content of the book. Among those who asked these questions were Meccan scholars, as

⁹⁴ An expression which indicates discontinuity openly.

⁹⁵ Muhammad b. Bakr b. Osmân al-Bursâni al-Azdi al-Basri. Sika, sâhib al-hadis (See. Zahabi, *al-Kâshif*, 4: 89).

⁹⁶ An expression that has the possibilities of both *inkita* (discontinuity) and *ittisal* (continuity). The report that Bursâni's transferred by a statement; which openly means *discontinuity*, Ibn Curaic's expression "I was informed from al-Zuhri ...", "I was informed by Ibn Curaic and he was from Zuhri (I was informed that) ..." as if it was contiguous (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 53).

⁹⁷ The statement "I was informed from al-Zuhri..."

⁹⁸ Here attention is drawn to that: Abû Dâwûd gives place to the deficient report if there is no better one in the related bab. However, among those he gave place, he rejects the ones whose deficiencies are severe. However, this may not be noticed by someone who criticizes the report and it can be said "He took the deficient one while there was a saheeh one". Yet, this is not the case. Because, the report that Abû Dâwûd did not take in his book but those who criticize consider as saheeh, is actually weaker and more deficient than the one he took in his book. The example he gave is a good example to this. With this example, he stresses that knowing such hidden deficiencies depends on knowing the hadiths well (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 53-54).

⁹⁹ His feeling the necessity to express that he did not include *Zuhd* and *Fazail* parts in his *Sunan*, means in other *Sunan* books, these parts were given place (See. Klasik Metin Okumaları, "Risâlatu Abî Dâwûd ilâ Ahli Makkah fî Vasfi Sunanih -04- M. Fatih Kaya - 14.10.2017", 1:38:13-1:38:49). Other than that, in *Sunan* there are also subjects such as *al-Hurûf wa al-qirâât*, *al-Malâhim*, *as-Sunna* apart from ahkâm (Abû Ghuddah, *Thalâthu rasâil*, 54). For an evaluation about this case see. Dinçoğlu, *Ebû Dâwûd'un Sünen'i*, 265-300.

well. Abû Dâwûd wrote a letter in order to introduce *Sunan* and explain his method in the book, in particular for them, and in general for others.

The letter, which can rarely be found despite its fame, only has two copies now. One of them is in Damascus Al-Zahiriyah Library, and the other one is in Princetown University. The studies done on the letter are mostly based upon the copy in the Zahiriyah copy, yet there are publications conducted on the Princeton copy, as well.

The letter is of vital importance both for hadith history and method and for *Sunan* book itself. On one hand, it provides an opportunity to identify, understand and evaluate *Sunan* via its author, on the other hand it presents information and evaluations about hadith history and method within the frame of ahkâm hadiths. The fact that there are references to the letter when it is necessary in most of the method books confirms this fact, too.

The letter is profoundly rich and obscure text as well in spite of its short volume. Its having been written in a time when the technical terms had not yet gained acceptance, distinctions in language and style, and some special meanings' being given by some terms used in letter, can be listed among the reasons of this obscurity.

It has also been seen that some of the cases indicated by Abû Dâwûd in the letter are not like he said in *Sunan*:

- Although he says there are one or two hadiths in every bab, there are many babs in which he wrote a lot of hadiths.
- Though he says he had not given place to the reports of any matruk al-hadith reporters, according to the scholars' detections he narrated the reports of such reporters.
- Most probably, he made his mark in one of the most controversial issues of hadith history and style by stating that he predicated hadiths with severe weakness and also the ones about which he did not say anything are "salih". It is confirmed that some of the reports about which he made no remark are really weak and they need explanations as well as others.
- Knowing that he indicated the munkar reports present in his book, it is determined that there are reports that he did not point as munkar.
- The fact that he claims that his book contains all the sunnah practices, and the book is enough for someone about the knowledge of sunnah and even that a sunnah practice which is not in his book is almost groundless is both contrary to facts and really hyperbolic.
- The number he gives for the number of hadiths in his book is nearly 400 more than the actual number.
- He says that he only took the hadith al-Ahkâm in his book; he did not give place to reports about chapters Zuhd (detachment), Fazâil al-A'mâl and etc. However, there are chapters such as al-Hurûf wa al-Qiraat, al-Malâhem, as-Sunnah in his work, as-Sunan.

Certainly, all of these can be answered as such; the evaluations of hadiths and reporters was ijtihadi in the end, Abû Dâwûd made some differences in his book over time, some of the words had not yet become terms so his intention for using them was different, his reliance to the book was perfect and the cases which can be considered as controversial are actually resulted from the differences in reports. However, these questions and other ones similar to them, which were also criticized by the scholars of the next periods, have not yet been answered clearly.

After all, what we are trying to do is to make efforts to be able to understand. As it can be seen in the historical process, it should not be forgotten that there are and may be different evaluations about the addressed subjects. Along with that, it seems necessary that *as-Sunan* should be examined in detail to be able to understand the letter correctly and exactly by taking the differences of copies into consideration, and that some studies should be done specific to *as-Sunan* about each subject expressed in the letter.

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