

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## LESSONS FROM AHÂDEETH SHAREEF

BY MOULANA NAEEM MOTALA

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COMMENTARY ON

40 AHÂDEETH | ARBA'EEN | OF IMAAM NAWAWI رحمة الله عليه

WITH EMPHASIS ON PERFECTING ONE'S CHARACTER

| LESSON ONE |

...

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ ،  
وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ ،  
وَنَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

*Verily all praise is for Allah, we praise Him and seek His aid and ask for His forgiveness and we believe in Him and we place our trust upon Him, and we seek refuge with Allah from the evils of ourselves and our evil actions. Whomsoever Allah guides there is none who can misguide him, and whomsoever Allah misguides there is none who can guide him, and we bear witness that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah alone, having no partner, and we bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger*

...

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ ، وَعَلَى آلِ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ

*Allahumma Salli 'ala Sayyidina Muhammad Wa'ala Aali Sayyidina Muhammadin Wa Baarik Wa Sallim | Oh Allah shower blessings and peace upon our Master Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam and upon the family of Muhammad Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam*

## INTRODUCTION

**ARBA'EEN** أَرْبَعِينَ in Arabic means '40' and 'Nawawi' refers to Imaam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh*. This Hadeeth kitaab is a comprehensive collection of 40 authentic Ahaadeeth of Rasulullah *Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam* compiled by Imaam Nawawi رحمه الله عليه

Imaam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* mentions with regard to his Arba'een, that the main point of consideration in the compilation of these all encompassing, all embracing Ahaadeeth, is that, they convey some important Usool (principle) of Deen, upon which the pivot of Islam rotates. If one observes carefully, there are actually 42 Ahaadeeth gathered in total in his compilation.

Many other famous Muhadditheen, were compilers of their Arba'een as well. The first being the great Aalim, jurist, faqeeh, Abdullah bin Mubarak *Rahmatullahi Alayh*. Other Arba'een Kitaabs include well known authors namely ; Daraquthni, Haakim (Mustadrak). They composed Arba'een of some specific Usool (fundamental) of Deen pertaining to specific topics eg: 40 Ahaadeeth on Salaah; 40 Ahaadeeth relating to Zuhd (asceticism) ; 40 Ahaadeeth on Adaab (Islamic etiquette) etc.

In every Islamic period, scholars have compiled innumerable Arba'een's, however, till today, Allah *Subhaanahu Wa Ta'ala* has granted this renowned kitaab of Imaam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* special acceptance.

Mufti Shafee Saheb *Rahmatullahi Alayh* mentioned that Imaam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* has compiled these Ahaadeeth, because he realised that there is decay in our environment and hence, has brought such Ahaadeeth that will show the prevention and cure from the problems that the Ummah is suffering from.

## WHY SPECIFICALLY 40 AHADEETH?

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : من حفظ على أمّتي أربعين حديثاً من أمر دينها، بعثه الله تعالى يوم القيامة في زمرة الفقهاء والعلماء

*Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam said : "Whosoever memorizes and preserves for my people (Ummah) forty hadith concerning matters of it's religion, Allah Subhaanahu Wa Ta'ala will resurrect him on the Day of Judgment in the company of jurists and religious scholars. (Kanz ul-'Ummāl)*

Imaam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* commenced, with attributing this specific Hadith of *Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam*, outlining the noteworthy virtues of a person who memorises and preserves 40 Ahaadeeth, as one of his reasons for his compilation of the *Arba'een*.

The Hadith mentioning the merits of preserving the 40 Ahaadeeth has been narrated by the following illustrious Sahaabah *Radiallahu Anhum* : Ali bin Abi Taalib *Radiallahu Anhu* ; Abdullah bin Mas'ood *Radiallahu Anhu* ; Muadh bin Jabal *Radiallahu Anhu* ; Abu Darda *Radiallahu Anhu* ; Ibnu Umar *Radiallahu Anhum* ; Ibnu Abbaas *Radiallahu Anhum* ; Anas bin Maalik *Radiallahu Anhu* ; Abu Hurairah *Radiallahu Anhu* and Abu Sa'eed Al Khudri *Radiallahu Anhu*.

Other narrations, that mention further merits, are as follows : *Whosoever from my Ummah memorizes forty Ahaadeeth regarding matters pertaining their Deen ;*

بعثه الله يوم القيامة فقيهاً عالماً

- Allah *Subhaanahu Wa Ta'ala* will resurrect him on the Day of Judgment as a jurist and religious scholar.

كنت له شفيحاً أو شهيداً يوم القيامة

- On the Day of Judgment, *Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam* shall be an intercessor or a witness for him.

كتب في زمرة العلماء وحشر في جملة الشهداء

- He will be written in the company of religious scholars and he will be resurrected with the group of martyrs.

قيل له: ادخل من أي أبواب الجنة شئت

- It will be said to him by Allah *Subhaanahu Wa Ta'ala* : Enter by whichever of the doors of paradise you wish.

NOTE : Imaam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* and the vast majority of scholars have mentioned that this Hadith is da'if (weak). However, they have agreed, that this Hadith has gained strength due to it being narrated via various chains of narrations, and has been accepted by very many Muhadditheen.

The Ulema explain, that a da'if (weak) Hadith does not imply that the Hadith should be discarded. One can acknowledge and use weak Ahaadeeth's highlighting Fadhaail (virtuous deeds), with conditions.

Indeed, a Hadith which is maudu (*fabricated*) can never be accepted and is rejected.

## BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF IMAAM NAWAWI رحمة الله عليه (631-676 A.H)

Imaam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* was one of the foremost scholars of the Shafi'i Madhab. His title was Muhyiddin (reviver of Deen) and his complete name is Abu Zakaria Yahya ibn Sharaf An-Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh*. He was born in 631 A.H in the month of Muharram at Nawa in Hauraan, close to Damascus (Syria), and passed away at the age of 45, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of Rajab 676 A.H.

Despite his short and limited life span, he was incredibly productive and able to achieve great contributions towards Deen, with his compilations of vast volumes of scholarly books and academic works. His lasting legacy through his momentous works, some of which include, these 40 *Arba'een*, the famous *Riyadh as-Saaliheen* and a commentary on *Sahih Muslim*, have made him respected in all Madhabs, despite him being of Shafi'i jurisprudence.

From a very young age he showed signs of great intelligence, and other boys of his age used to force him to play with them, but Imaam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* would always avoid play and would remain busy with the recitation of the Noble Qur'aan. When they tried to domineer and insisted on his joining their games, he bewailed and expressed his no concern over their foolish actions saying to them : "*Have we been created for this purpose?*".

Before attaining puberty, Imam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* memorized the Noble Qur'aan, and in his early teens, on account of his endless thirst for knowledge, pursued his studies at Madrasah Rawahiyah in Damascus and acquired knowledge of Imaam Abu Is-haq al-Shirazi's, *Al-Muhazzab*. Amongst memorizing many other kitaabs, his intelligence, hard work, love, devotion and absorption in his studies, amazed his teachers and they became fond of him and began to praise and admire him.

Once, whilst studying Ilm-e-Deen, a thought came to Imam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* to study a course in medicine. He mentioned : “*I purchased a copy of the ‘Qanun’ of Ibn Sina and began to study it, whereupon darkness filled my heart ... Upon realizing that this was not meant for me, I again devoted time and attention to gaining knowledge of Ilm-e-Deen, which brightened my heart again!*”.

To understand the caliber of this Zaahid (ascetic), we discover that he did not live a luxurious or ostentatious life but instead followed the way of the Sahaabah *Radiallahu Anhum* and opted for a simple life. His clothes consisted of a small turban and patched garments. He sufficed on just one simple meal for the day. As a routine, he used to sleep very little at night and spent the hours of darkness studying and drinking from the fountains of Qur'aan, Ahaadeeth and Fiqh.

His famous student, Imam Ibn al-'Attar *Rahmatullahi Alayh* has mentioned : “*I had seen such great qualities in An-Nawawi Rahmatullahi Alayh, that if I had to compile all these talents and virtues in him, it will not be held within one book but will require volumes ...*”

Imaam Al-Yafee *Rahmatullahi Alayh* has mentioned in his kitaab, *Miraat-al-Jinaan*, that : “*It is very difficult to find a person parallel to Imaam Nawawi Rahmatullahi Alayh, in his Zuhd (becoming aloof from the world), in his piety, in his etiquettes, in his beautiful character ...*”

Taj al-Din al-Subki *Rahmatullahi Alayh*, in his masterpiece *Tabaqat-Al-Shaafi'iyyah*, (a compilation of the biographies of the a great Shaafi'i scholars), has mentioned : “*Eyes have not seen a greater Zahid (ascetic) than Imaam Nawawi Rahmatullahi Alayh...*”

There was no extravagance in his life and he broke himself from the attractions of the world to such an extent that in addition to this modest lifestyle, he never married, for fear of the responsibilities of Nikah and not being able to fulfil the rights of a wife, taking him away from his engrossment in studies.

During his studies, Imam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* embarked on Hajj with his father. Departing from Shaam (Syria), they proceeded to Madinah Munawwarah, where they spent a month and then to Makkah Mukarramah on pilgrimage. For the entire duration of the journey, Imam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* was ailing and extremely ill with fever. His father mentioned that he never complained, even once! Such was the excellent Akhlaaq (character) portrayed by this great servant of Islam.

He adorned his life with Taqwa (piety) of a very high level ; forbearance ; sacrifice ; humility ; simplicity ; spending his time correctly ; remaining in solitude and aloof from the world ; contemplating on the Akhirah ; focusing and turning to Allah *Subhaanahu Wa Ta'ala* ; acquiring knowledge and imparting Deen and making *Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding wrong).

He was a beacon of guidance and was unanimously accepted and praised by the scholars of his time and even those after him. He had distinctive commendable qualities as a person, and scholars have written that people as far as the east and west have borne testimony to his virtue and knowledge, good character, piety and honesty that stood against, even the Kings and judges of the time. He was fearless in addressing those in power and admonished those in authority when they were unjust and cruel or exceeded the limits of Shariah.

He was once summoned by one of the Kings and told to sign a document, passing a verdict, in which there was a Fatwa (ruling) legalizing something that was Haraam in Islamic law. Imam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* refused. The King became furious and told his subordinates to strip this man of his rank. The people said : “Oh King! This man has no high standing for us to demote him from ...”. The King further ordered that this person be removed from his dwelling and to raze it to the ground. The people said : “Oh King! This man has no home ... He lives in *Dar-ul-Hadith* in a small room ...”. The King further ordered that the wealth and riches of this person be seized. The people said : “Oh King! This man has no money and owns nothing ...”.

*“That person who owns nothing, nothing can own him”*

Imam Nawawi *Rahmatullahi Alayh* had the goal of Akhirah in front of him, and clearly understood that we are all travellers on this journey from Dunya which is Faaniyah (transient) towards Akhirah which is Baaqiyah (everlasting). And therefore, he mentioned, that the essence of the choice of Ahaadeeth in his kitab *‘Riyadh as-Saaliheen’*, centred around the theme of Tazkiyah-al-Nafs (purification of the self) and Tahzeeb-ul-Akhlaaq (polishing of the heart), for the betterment of humankind.