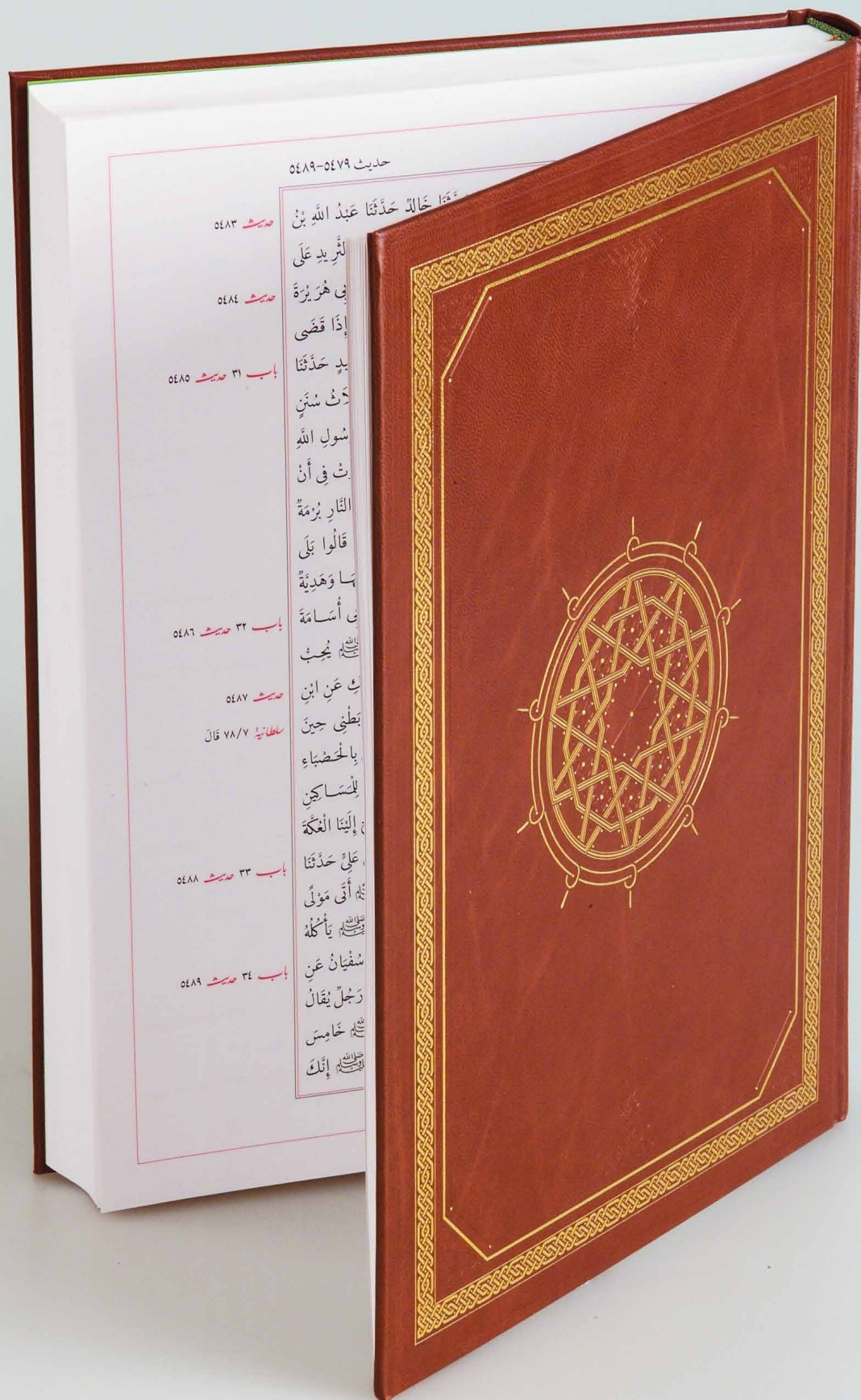THE
SUNNA
PROJECT
Encyclopaedia of
HADITH
The
IHSAN
NETWORK

THESAURUS ISLAMICUS FOUNDATION

THE SUNNA PROJECT

Encyclopaedia of HADITH

The IHSAN NETWORK

SUNNA PROJECT SYNOPSIS

From the earliest days of Islam the Muslim has sought to have at his disposal everything known from, about, and surrounding the Prophet ﷺ. Because of the vastness of the ḥadīth literature, however, an inexhaustibly rich body of information covering subjects as diverse as law, language, doctrine and prayer, that desire has never been fulfilled.

It has been the vocation of great scholars and their disciples in past ages to bring together as much of this literature as possible. In recent times, however, scholars of this type have become rare. Nonetheless, we now have, technically, the possibility of bringing this enormous body of literature together from all the sources, all the libraries, and all the printed books. It is now possible to organise it digitally and to access any part of it with extraodinary rapidity. Thanks to this timely breakthrough a new tool is available for the continuous renewal of the Islamic response to the world, a response which changes through the ages, but which is based always on two sources, the Qur'ān and the Sunna. The Qur'ān, being relatively small, presents no real problems of access, but the Sunna, which is vast and scattered, poses a much greater problem. The Ḥadīth Database allows the researcher access to this authoritative source. The intention of the Foundation is to create one vast library which contains everything that remains on earth that concerns the Prophet ﷺ.

BACKGROUND

One of the largest and most diverse literatures in the world, the ḥadīth of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ has for fourteen centuries supplemented the Qur'ān as a source of guidance for followers of Islam. Ranging over topics as varied as doctrine, prayer, taxation, government, fasting, pilgrimage, and spirituality, this unique reservoir of religious guidance is an indispensable foundation for the study and understanding of any aspect of the Muslim religion.

The sheer volume of this material has, however, frustrated all efforts to collate it as a single, all-embracing anthology. Instead, scholars have always made use of a large number of individual collections, each of which brings together material reported by certain types of narrators, on a certain range of topics, or selected according to a particular standard of authenticity.

Since the decline of the manuscript tradition, with its meticulous and detailed methods of presenting texts by use of coloured inks, diverse calligraphic styles, and certificates of authorised transmission, printing techniques have presided over the progressive deterioration in the visual and academic quality of these collections. Attempts were made in the late nineteenth century to mobilise traditional scholarship in the creation of authoritative and careful editions, but these trailed off in the twentieth century, a time of declining scholarly input and the growing prevalence of commercial pressures. The result is that although several hundred ḥadīth collections are today available in print, there are few editions which can be trusted implicitly by scholars. Many major ḥadīth collections have never been made available to the public in a complete or accurate form, the current editions simply reproducing first editions made fifty or more years ago on the basis of single, late manuscripts. More worrying still, from the traditional Muslim perspective, has been the failure to consult living scholars who are qualified in the traditional manner, and whose oral memory and knowledge of proper Arabic style might have enormously enhanced the reliability and academic value of the printed books. Even those texts which have appeared in some semblance of a scholarly guise nevertheless typically fail to supply the indexes without which the use of such large and complex texts becomes a laborious and inefficient task.

The rise of computer technology in recent years, however, offers

promising means of transforming this situation. It has become possible to process enormous quantities of data in a matter of seconds, and software supporting an almost infinite variety of search methods may open up whole new horizons for the researcher. The ḥadīth texts, previously consulted only by a fairly narrow category of specialists, now become accessible to people with an interest in virtually any aspect of Islamic studies, who can make use of them without the need to acquire a detailed familiarity with the format and peculiarities of each text.

The ink of the pen
of scholars is more
precious than
the blood of martyrs.

THE SUNNA PROJECT

Although the use of computer technology opens new vistas for work in ḥadīth studies, the field continues to suffer a dearth of serious projects directed towards academic rather than commercial purposes. To remedy this, the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, a non-profit charitable foundation registered in the Duchy of Liechtenstein, was founded in 1989 at the instigation of the late Shaykh al-Ḥussayni Hashim, vice-rector of Al-Azhar in Cairo. With centres in Egypt and the United Kingdom, and a fellowship of affiliated scholars and computer specialists in many other countries, the Foundation leads the world in serving the ḥadīth literature of Islam. It seeks to raise ḥadīth publishing, in both traditionally printed and electronic form, to the highest standards of excellence, enabling this literature to serve as a model for the editing and processing of other substantial bodies of Islamic and world literature.

PUBLICATIONS PROGRAM

To further its aim of serving the aesthetic and scholarly aspects of the ḥadīth texts, the Foundation has launched several projects of fundamental importance, many of which have revolutionary implications for all other areas of Arabic-language publishing and electronic retrieval.

CREATING A RELIABLE TEXT

The Foundation employs a full-time team of qualified ḥadīth specialists, whose task is the creation of a properly edited and reliable text. This has involved the identification and careful collation of early manuscripts, so that, for example, our edition of the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal has been based on six ancient manuscripts as well as upon the several printed texts already in existence. Our edition of the *Jāmiʿ* of Tirmidhī uses a printed edition, two printed commentaries, and one manuscript, together with the text embedded in the *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf of al-Mizzī*. Throughout, the process has benefited from the guidance of living ḥadīth authorities. Names of narrators have been carefully analysed and identified through the use of the relevant Arabic biographical literature, and unusual words which are frequently misspelled in the texts are checked with reference to the dic-

Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.

tionaries. The result has been the first critically edited version of the ḥadīth literature ever produced.

CERTIFICATION

All of our ḥadīth texts are submitted for approval to the Islamic Research Academy of Al-Azhar, Cairo, and are only released in printed and digital form once its approval has been given.

OUR ARABIC TYPEFACE

One of the Foundation's projects has been the development of the world's finest Arabic typeface. This is based on the font used for the 1932 King Fu'ād Edition of the Qur'ān, generally acclaimed as the summit of Arabic typography. With the assistance of some of the world's leading experts in Arabic calligraphy, at least a thousand additional characters have been added to enhance the text's readability and beauty, enabling the creation of the most beautiful Arabic pages seen since the demise of the manuscript tradition.

THE PRINTED EDITIONS

Our specially developed font has been used throughout in the first ḥadīth collections published by the Foundation. These, printed for the first time in October 2000, were produced in Germany according to the highest technical specifications. The nineteen volume set, handsomely bound using a gold and blind embossed motif inspired by the celebrated Sultan Oljeitū Qur'ān preserved in the Egyptian National Library, and using both red and black ink on each page, sets wholly new standards for the production of Ḥadīth texts.

The texts included are as follows:

1. **Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.** Three volumes. Our edition has been prepared on the basis of the following textual traditions:
◆ *The Sulṭānīyya edition* (Cairo) which was in turn drawn from the celebrated and authoritative copy of Imām al-Yūnīnī.
◆ *Fatḥ āl-Barī*, the commentary by Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī. (Cairo, 1319 AH).

◆ *Al-Kawākib al-Darārī,* commentary by al-Kirmānī. (Cairo, 1356 AH).
◆ The *Ḥāshiya* (gloss) of al-Sindī (Cairo, 1343 AH).
◆ *Irshād al-Sārī,* the commentary by al-Qasṭallānī. (Cairo, 1285 AH).

1a. **Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.** Three volumes. This is a facsimile reprint of the Sulṭānīyya edition upon which every subsequent edition of al-Bukhārī Ṣaḥīḥ has been based. The Turkish Sultan 'Abdul Hamīd II commisioned the publication of the all important and authoritative over 700 year old al-Yūnīnī manuscript and distributed it to 1000 of Islam's greatest scholars.

2. **Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.** Two volumes. A new numeration has been adopted for the Foundation's edition, based on *isnād* rather than *matn* number. The following texts have been used to create our edition:
◆ The Taḥrīr edition of 1384 AH, which is based on the Sulṭānīyya edition of 1329.
◆ The edition of Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqi (Cairo, 1374/1955).
◆ *Al-Minhāj,* the commentary of al-Nawāwī (Cairo, 1347 AH).
◆ *Fatḥ al-Mulhim,* the commentary of Shabbīr Aḥmad Osmānī (1979).
◆ The commentaries of al-Ubbī, al-Qāḍī Iyaḍ, and al-Sanūsī (printed together in Beirut, n.d.).

The Seven Great Collections
of ḥadīth with the introduction
and CD-ROM database
appearing in its hand made
presentation box.

3. **Sunan Abī Dāūd.** Two volumes.
◆ The edition of Muḥyi'l-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1979.).
◆ The edition of 'Izzat al-Da'ās (Hims, 1388/1969).
◆ An Indian lithographed edition.
◆ *Awn al-Ma'būd,* the commentary by Aẓīmābādi (Beirut, 1410/1990).

◆ *Badhl al-Majhūd,* the commentary by Sahāranfūrī (Lucknow, 1972-3).
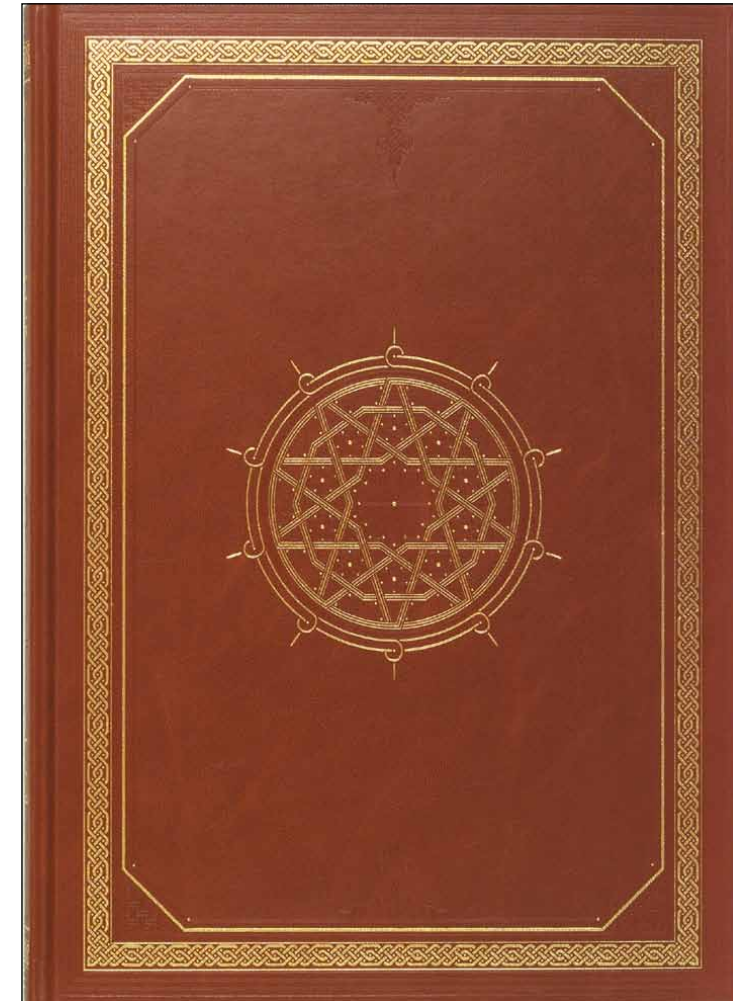◆ *Al-Manhal al-'Adhb,* the commentary by al-Subki (Cairo, 1351 AH).

4. **Jāmi'al-Tirmidhī.** Two volumes. The extremely inadequate nature of existing editions makes this the only adequate version of Tirmidhī in existence. The Foundation's scholars have completely revised the internal numeration system.
◆ The edition by Aḥmad Shākir and others (Cairo, 1356/1937).
◆ *'Āriḍat al-Aḥwadhī,* the commentary by Abū Bakr ibn al-'Arabī (Cairo, 1350/1931).
◆ *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī,* the commentary by al-Mubārakfūrī (Beirut, 1410/1990).
◆ Manuscript No. 648 ḥadīth preserved at the Egyptian National Library, dated 726 AH.

God does not judge according to your bodies and appear-ances but He scans your hearts and looks at your deeds.

www.IHSANetwork.org

Certificate of approval of the Islamic Research Academy of Al-Azhar.

www.thesaurus-islamicus.li

5. **Sunan al-Nasā'i.** Two volumes.
◆ The Tijārīyya edition with the numeration of 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda.
◆ The Delhi edition.
◆ The Dār al-Ma'rifa edition (Beirut, 1412/1992).

6. **Sunan Ibn Māja.** Two volumes.
◆The edition of Muḥammad Muṣṭafa al-A'ẓamī (Riyadh,1403/1983).
◆ The edition of Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī (Cairo, 1952).

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◆ The *Ḥashiya* (gloss) of al-Sindī (Cairo, 1349 AH).
◆ *Miṣbāḥ al-Zujāja fi Zawā'id Ibn Māja* of al-Būṣīrī.
◆ Manuscript Taymūr Pasha No. 522 ḥadīth, preserved at the Egyptian National Library, copied in 561 AH.

7. **Muwaṭṭā' Mālik.** One volume.
◆ The edition of Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqi (Cairo, n.d.).
◆ *Awjaz al-Masālik,* the commentary by al-Kandahlawī (Cairo, 1393/1973).
◆ The commentary of al-Zurqānī (Cairo, 1355/1936).
◆ *Al-Tamhīd,* an analytic study of the Muwaṭṭa' by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (Rabat, commencing 1387/1967).
◆ *Al-Istidhkār,* a further study by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (Aleppo and Cairo, 1414/1993).
◆ *Tanwīr al-Ḥawālik,* the commentary by al-Suyūṭī (Cairo, 1353 AH.).

Say each of your
prayers as if it were
your last prayer.

INDICES

Two volumes of analytical indices to all the printed texts are supplied, entitled *Maknaz al-Mustarshīdin*. This takes the form of a subject index which lists, for each ḥadīth collection, each ḥadīth by number, and then supplies references to all replicated or similar ḥadīths in the other collections, together with the relevant number in al-Mizzī's *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf.* Many unusual words (*gharīb*) are also defined. The analytical index also contains a comprehensive list of chapter titles in each ḥadīth collection and the relevant page numbers in the Foundation's printed edition. It is planned that new volumes of the *Maknaz al-Mustarshīdin* will subsequently be added, which will contain more detailed exegetic material, including biographical data on narrators and information on places and events, together with variant readings and the critical apparatus which has been generated by the editing of each collection.
◆ In this connection, there will be available online for IHSAN Network members (see **The IHSAN network**): Facsimiles of major manuscripts; Bibliographical information on major manuscripts as well as other useful reference material.
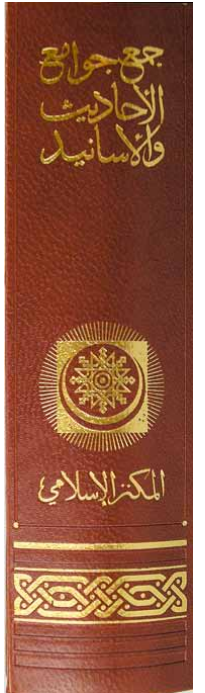
CD-ROM BOX WITH INTRODUCTION

A separate hand-crafted case-bound volume includes a detailed Arabic-language introduction to the system and to the traditional science of ḥadīth, plus a CD-ROM of the entire Database (see *Electronic Publishing*).

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE PRINTED EDITIONS

All the texts issued by the Foundation, either in printed or digital form, are fully vocalised throughout.
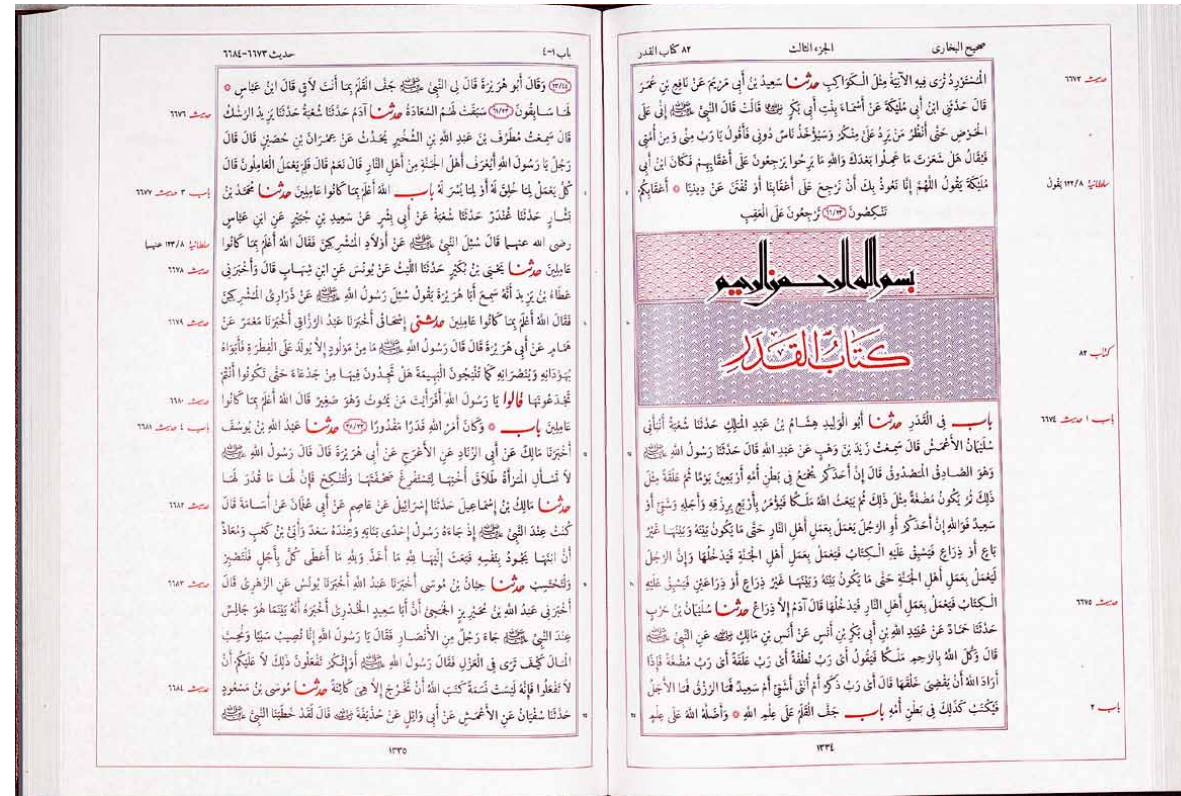 Features of the Foundation's definitive printed edition of the ḥadīth collections include:
◆ Integral ribbon bookmark in each volume.
◆ Traditional *ijāza* certification from Shaykh 'allah ibn al-Siddīq al-Ghumārī, together with his own list of authorities.
◆ Broad margins provide space for reader's annotations, and also indicate book and chapter numbers as well as the volume and page numbers of the Sulṭānīyya edition to allow for easy cross-referencing.

Where are those who love each other for the sake of My glory? Today I will shelter them with My shade, as there is no shade today except My shade.

◆ Where the chapter number in our text differs from that used in the *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf* of al-Mizzī, the latter is given, following a backslash (/), in addition to our own number.

◆ The inside ('gutter') margin indicates line numbers.

◆ Headers above the right-hand text area specify the book title, volume number, and kitāb number and title. The left-hand headers give the chapter and ḥadīth numbers applicable to the two pages.

◆ Each new chapter, subsection or ḥadīth is clearly indicated by the use of a caption or word in red.

◆ Qur'anic quotations are indicated with a special symbol printed in red, and are followed by sura and verse numbers.

◆ No Western-style punctuation is used, given its frequent inappro-

priateness to the Arabic language and the absence of generally accepted rules for its use.

◆ Poetry is indicated with a special red symbol, and each stanza begins on a new line.

◆ Each ḥadīth collection is followed by a table of contents giving the number and name of each chapter, and the relevant page number.

ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING

The printed edition of the ḥadīth collections released by the Foundation in 2000 includes a Windows-compatible CD-ROM. This contains a revolutionary database which includes all the ḥadīth col-

lections provided in printed form, which may be accessed by searches of various kinds and of various degrees of complexity.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE CD-ROM DATABASE

1. Printing
The user of the database may save the data collected either to paper or to word processing files. This data may include lists of references as well as the vocalised texts of the ḥadīths themselves.
'Add to favourites' function
  This function allows the user at any point in his searching to seamlessly add any ḥadīth or other reference to a favourites list simply by a right-click of the mouse.
  At the end of his searching he can print out or save this favourites or reference list for use later or for looking up the references in the printed ḥadīth volumes.

> None of you will truly believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself.

2. Choosing a Search Range
The high-speed search algorithm facilities are rendered more efficient still by selecting the ḥadīth collection or collections in which the search is to be made.

3. Searching the Database
Any word, or series of letters or numbers, can be the basis of a search. The programme displays the number of 'hits', and also allows the user to make simultaneous searches for separate items. Double-clicking on the segment of text found brings up the entire vocalised ḥadīth.

The following search types are available in the computer database:
◆ Qur'anic Verses. These may be searched for by either sūra name or number.
◆ *Aṭrāf.* Searching by these 'key phrases' is easier than searching the entire database, and also yields information on similar but not identical material.
◆ *Ḥadīth Qudsī* (ḥadīths spoken by God). Rapid searches of the entire *Ḥadīth Qudsī* content of the Database are possible under this head.
◆ 'Famous Ḥadīths'(*al-aḥādīth al-musamma*). This index allows a

ḥadīth to be located by the name by which it is popularly known.
◆ Poetry. Arabic poetic quotations appearing in the Ḥadīth database may be located readily by entering part of the poem, or the name of the poet or narrator.
◆ Place Names. Searches may be made for the names of cities, seas, mountains and other geographical features.
◆ Numbers. Any number or fraction appearing in the Database can be accessed using this function.
◆ Peoples and Tribes.
◆ Proper Names. Any individual named in the text, even very briefly, can be located and identified by his full name. Integration of information

An introductory screen from the CD-ROM database.

from the commentaries means that individuals referred to in ḥadīth texts simply as 'so-and-so' can also be fully identified.
◆ Subject Headings. Rapid searches can be made of the names of topics appearing in chapter headings in the ḥadīth collections.
◆ Historical Events.
◆ Unusual (*gharīb*) Words. The Database allows the user to access information from the commentaries and the dictionaries when encountering unusual Arabic words in a ḥadīth.
◆ *Isnād* (chain of transmission). The Ḥadīth Database makes available a series of operations which facilitate study of this characteristic feature of the literature. For instance, where a single narrator is identified using different forms of his name, these are all identifiable by the system as referring to the same individual. It is also possible to create graphic representations of the relationships between teachers and their pupils.
◆ Ḥadīth Assessment. Where the compiler of a ḥadīth collection has himself passed judgement on the reliability of a text or an individual narrator, this is indicated in the Database. The system allows several ways of sorting and displaying this information, so that, for instance, all the judgements on or by a named individual may be displayed together.
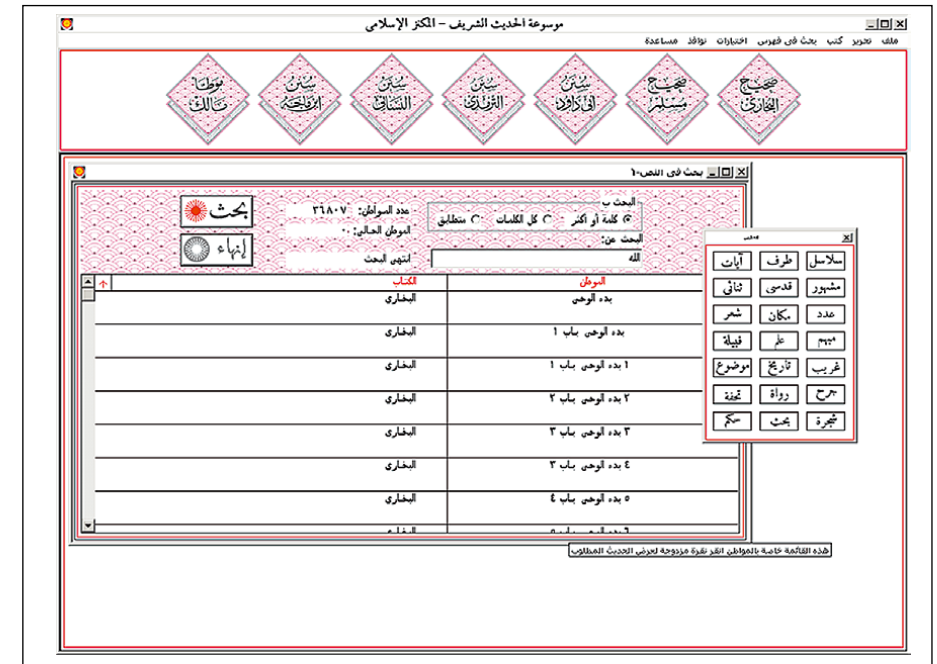
Screen shot from the CD-ROM database.

THE IHSAN NETWORK

The International Ḥadīth Study Association Network

The IHSAN Network comprises:
- (a) Publishing House
- (b) Journal and Newsletter
- (c) Website and Forum
- (d) Conferences
- (e) Funding
- (f) Bibliographic research

The second aspect of the Foundation's Sunna Project is the formation of the International Ḥadīth Study Association Network. This body is made up of the institutions and individuals in receipt of the Database from the Foundation. The intention behind the formation of the Association is twofold: first, to encourage, facilitate and advance world-wide, work in all the disciplines of ḥadīth study by means of the Database, and through mutual assistance and encouragement between members of the

Association; and second, continually to enrich the Database by means of the research it encourages and the interaction of all the members working in the field. The Association will be governed by the Association Management Committee, which will define its constitution and function, and which will be made up of Association members.

While membership of IHSAN is automatically conferred by receipt of the Database, there is one fundamental condition to this membership: the willingness of members to share the results of their research with each other within the framework of the Association. The Foundation/IHSAN recognizes that the copyright in independent research belongs to the individual or institution generating it, with all that implies regarding its use. The Association, however, requires that the research be shared within the Association at the appropriate time. The Association retains the right of first refusal to publish any of this research, or where applicable, to co-publish with an institutional or academic press. What the Foundation does not encourage is any attempts to exploit its formidable resources for personal or other self-interested ends. By providing a clearinghouse for all that relates to the field, the Association will bring tremendous benefit both to its

www.IHSANetwork.org

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members and to the discipline itself.
The IHSAN Network website (www.IHSANetwork.org) is divided into the following categories:

◆ Online digital library with manuscripts
◆ Online searchable Ḥadīth database
◆ Online marginalia ('*hawāmish*')
◆ Online bibliographical data
◆ Online journal
◆ Online IHSAN forum (multilanguage)

IN CONCLUSION

The Foundation's work has met with acclaim and admiration from specialists in the ḥadīth disciplines around the world. This long-over-due scholarly production opens new possibilities for research into early Islamic history, into Arabic literature, and into the complex dis-ciplines of Islamic doctrine, law, and spirituality. Hardly any area of Islamic studies will find that its research methods and perspectives are not substantially refined and reshaped by the availability of the ḥadīth literature in this form.

The Foundation invites correspondence from institutions of Islamic research throughout the world who wish to acquire or benefit from the Ḥadīth Database and join the IHSAN Network. The system is already installed and in use at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, and the Foundation hopes that many other institutions in the Islamic and the Western worlds will follow suit.