

## The Thematic Comparison of Hadiths on the Virtues of Knowledge in *Jami' At-Tirmidzi* and *Riyadhus-Shalihin*

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### Abstract:

This study examines the virtue of knowledge (*fadl al-'ilm*) in Islam through a comparative analysis of two major Hadith compilations: *Jami' at-Tirmidhi* by Imam at-Tirmidhi and *Riyadhus Shalihin* by Imam an-Nawawi. In Islamic teachings, knowledge occupies a central position in shaping character, building civilization, and serving as a spiritual means of drawing closer to Allah. The first revelation commanding humankind to "read" underscores the fundamental importance of knowledge in Islam. Both Hadith collections selected for this research present narrations on the excellence of knowledge with distinct approaches and structures, making them particularly interesting to explore thematically. This study employs a qualitative methodology using a library research approach and thematic (*maudhu'i*) analysis. The research procedures include identifying Hadiths related to knowledge, classifying them into subthemes, conducting a comparative analysis of their wording, meaning, and context, and drawing conclusions on the similarities and differences in their presentation. The findings are expected to enrich the understanding of the methodological characteristics of both works in addressing the theme of knowledge, as well as to contribute to the development of thematic Hadith studies and Islamic thought in general.

**Keywords:** Virtues of Knowledge, Hadith, *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*, *Riyadhus Shalihin*

### Abstrak:

Penelitian ini mengkaji keutamaan ilmu (*fadl al-'ilm*) dalam Islam melalui analisis komparatif dua kitab Hadits utama: *Jami' at-Tirmidhi* karya Imam at-Tirmidhi dan *Riyadhus Shalihin* karya Imam an-Nawawi. Dalam ajaran Islam, pengetahuan memegang peran sentral dalam membentuk karakter, membangun peradaban, dan berfungsi sebagai sarana spiritual untuk mendekatkan diri kepada Allah. Perintah wahyu pertama yang memerintahkan manusia untuk "membaca" menyoroti pentingnya pengetahuan dalam Islam. Kedua koleksi Hadits yang dipilih dalam penelitian ini menyajikan narasi tentang keunggulan pengetahuan dengan pendekatan dan struktur yang berbeda, menjadikannya menarik untuk dieksplorasi secara tematis. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif dengan pendekatan penelitian perpustakaan dan analisis tematik (*maudhu'i*). Prosedur penelitian meliputi identifikasi Hadits yang berkaitan dengan pengetahuan, pengelompokan ke dalam sub-tema, analisis perbandingan terhadap redaksi, makna, dan konteksnya, serta penarikan kesimpulan mengenai kesamaan dan perbedaan dalam penyajiannya. Temuan diharapkan dapat memperkaya pemahaman tentang karakteristik metodologis kedua karya dalam menangani tema pengetahuan, serta berkontribusi pada pengembangan studi Hadis tematik dan pemikiran Islam secara umum.

**Kata kunci:** Keutamaan Pengetahuan, Hadis, *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*, *Riyadhus Shalihin*

## Introduction

Islam places knowledge in a highly noble and essential position in human life. The virtues and lofty status of knowledge are repeatedly emphasized in the Qur'an, which consistently connects knowledge (*'ilm*) with guidance, reflection, and moral responsibility. The very first revelation received by the Prophet Muhammad—*Iqra'* (QS. al-'Alaq [96]: 1–5)—is widely understood by Muslim scholars as a symbolic affirmation of the foundational importance of knowledge in Islam. This revelation does not merely command the act of reading, but also highlights that knowledge must be anchored in awareness of the Creator, thereby implying that knowledge functions as a means of cultivating character, building civilization, and drawing closer to Allah.<sup>1</sup>

As the second primary source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an, the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad also give significant attention to the virtues of knowledge. Numerous narrations encourage Muslims to seek knowledge, honor teachers and students, and embody the ethical responsibilities associated with learning. Among the most frequently cited is the hadith stating that seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim, which underscores the universal and non-exclusive nature of intellectual pursuit in Islam.<sup>2</sup> Such narrations also demonstrate that knowledge in the Islamic tradition is not only theoretical but integrally connected to righteous action, moral refinement, and communal benefit.

Two important classical works that serve as major references in understanding hadiths on the virtues of knowledge are *Jāmi' at-Tirmidzī* by Imām at-Tirmidzī and *Riyāḍ as-Ṣalīḥīn* by Imām an-Nawawī. *Jāmi' at-Tirmidzī* is one of the six canonical Sunni hadith collections (*Kutub as-Sittah*) and uniquely combines hadith compilation with the author's commentary on the reliability of transmitters and legal implications. It contains dedicated chapters on knowledge (*Kitāb al-Ilm*) that gather prophetic traditions emphasizing the honor of scholars, the reward of teaching, and the moral responsibilities of those who possess knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, *Riyāḍ as-Ṣalīḥīn*—a widely studied anthology—selects hadiths relevant to spiritual refinement, ethical conduct, and devotional practice. Within it, an entire section is

<sup>1</sup> Kartika Wanojaleni, Tri Yugo, "Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Dalam Surat Al-'Alaq: Tauhid, Literasi, Dan Integrasi Ilmu", *QALAM: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 (2025): 1-12.

<sup>2</sup> Jasmaludin Jasmaludin, Syabuddin Syabuddin, "Hadist Tarbawi tentang Kewajiban Belajar dan Mengajar Profesional", *CARONG: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial Dan Humaniora* 2, no. 2 (2025): 672-685.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 55–60.

devoted to the virtues of knowledge, the manners of students and teachers, and the relationship between knowledge and religious consciousness.<sup>4</sup> Compared to *Jāmi' at-Tirmidzī*, an-Nawawī's work is more thematic and spiritually oriented, aiming to guide the moral and devotional life of Muslims rather than offering technical evaluation of hadith transmitters. These two works, therefore, complement one another in providing a comprehensive understanding: at-Tirmidzī offers a systematic and scholarly framework, while an-Nawawī highlights the ethical and spiritual dimensions of knowledge in Islam.

Studies on hadiths concerning the virtues of knowledge (*fadā'il al-'ilm*) have attracted the attention of Hadith and Islamic education researchers, although a specific focus on thematic comparisons between *Jāmi' at-Tirmidzī* and *Riyāḍuṣ-ṣalīḥīn* has not been widely found in academic literature. Previous studies have generally examined the theme of the virtues of knowledge in general through content analysis or a *maudhu'i* approach, without directly comparing the two hadith books. One such study is that by Muhammad Abdullah Fauzan et al., which examines hadiths about the virtues of knowledge in the context of Islamic education. This study shows that hadiths concerning the obligation to seek knowledge, respect for scholars, and moral values in the learning process have a significant contribution to the character building of students.<sup>5</sup> However, this study does not focus on a systematic analysis of *Jāmi' at-Tirmidzī* or *Riyāḍuṣ-ṣalīḥīn* specifically.

Another study was conducted by Revi Yulianti et al., who examined the concept of knowledgeable people and their position in the perspective of hadith.<sup>6</sup> The study emphasized that hadiths about the virtue of knowledge emphasize the integration of knowledge and action, as well as the importance of morals for seekers of knowledge. However, this study also did not place the two classical books as objects of comparison, so its contribution was more conceptual than comparative.

On the other hand, research that is closer to a thematic approach to hadith can be found in the work of Roychan Abdul Aziz Altsaury and Ana Rahmawati, who used the *maudhu'i* method to analyze scientific hadith (*al-ahādīts al-'ilmīyyah*) in the context of the

<sup>4</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 89–94.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Abdullah Fauzan, Amanah Qurota A'yun, Alfi Nur Azizah, Ngatmin Abbas, "Analisis Hadis Keutamaan Ilmu dalam Konteks Pendidikan Islam," *SETYAKI: Jurnal Studi Keagamaan Islam* 2, no. 4 (2024).

<sup>6</sup> Revi Yulianti, Shifa Azzahra, Sri Mulyani, Tsania Tazlila Wardani, Wismanto, "Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Keutamaan Orang Berilmu Menurut Perspektif Hadits," *MARAS: Jurnal Penelitian Multidisiplin* 2, no. 2 (2024).

Islamic education curriculum.<sup>7</sup> This research emphasizes the importance of thematic analysis in exploring the messages of hadith across books, but its object of study does not comprehensively cover *Jāmi' at-Tirmidzī* or *Riyāḍuṣ-ṣalīḥīn*.

Based on this review, it can be seen that there has been no research that explicitly compares two influential hadith works—*Jāmi' at-Tirmidzī*, as one of the main books in *Kutub as-Sittah*, and *Riyāḍuṣ-ṣalīḥīn*, an ethical-spiritual anthology—in the context of the theme of the virtue of knowledge. Your research thus has the opportunity to fill this scientific gap (research gap), while offering a new contribution in the form of a structured analysis, both in terms of theme categorization, hadith editorial characteristics, and methodological orientation that distinguishes the two works.

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of hadiths concerning the virtues of knowledge found in *Jami' At-Tirmidzi* and *Riyadhus Shalihin*. This analysis includes comparisons of themes, textual formulations, contexts, and the messages contained within each hadith. Through this study, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be attained regarding how hadith scholars highlight the theme of the virtues of knowledge and enrich insight into the significance of knowledge from an Islamic perspective.

This study employs a qualitative method with a library research approach as the primary technique for data collection and analysis. The primary data sources of this research are *Jami' At-Tirmidzi* by Imam at-Tirmidzi and *Riyadhus Shalihin* by Imam an-Nawawi, both of which contain hadiths related to the virtues of knowledge.<sup>8</sup> The analysis is conducted using a thematic (*maudhu'i*) approach, by gathering hadiths that share a similar theme — in this case, the virtues of knowledge — and then examining and comparing them comprehensively from various aspects. The steps of this research include:

1. Identification and data collection, by tracing and gathering hadiths that discuss the virtues of knowledge in both books being studied.
2. Classification of hadiths, based on sub-themes such as the virtues of seeking knowledge, the status of knowledgeable individuals, and the rewards for seekers of knowledge.

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<sup>7</sup> Roychan Abdul Aziz Altsaury & Ana Rahmawati, “The Epistemology of Sunnah as a Pillar of Transformative Curriculum in Islamic Education: A Thematic Study of Scientific Hadith,” *Takwīk: Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies* 4, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>8</sup> Yahyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Riyāḍuṣ-ṣalīḥīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2004).

3. Comparative analysis, by examining the textual formulations (*lafadz*), meanings, context of the narrators and chains of transmission (*sanad*), as well as the thematic emphases within both works.
4. Interpretation and conclusion, by formulating the similarities and differences in the presentation of hadiths on the virtues of knowledge, and assessing their relevance to the development of Islamic intellectual discourse.

Secondary data sources used in this study include supporting literature such as commentaries on hadith collections (*syarah*), books on *ulumul hadith*, academic journals, and other scholarly works discussing the methodology and content of the two collections. The analysis is carried out descriptively and analytically, with careful attention to source validity and the broader context of Islamic scholarship.<sup>9</sup> Through this method, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the distinctive characteristics of each work in presenting the theme of the virtues of knowledge, as well as to highlight their contributions to the development of thematic hadith studies within the Islamic intellectual tradition.<sup>10</sup>

## Results and Discussion

### Biography of Imam at-Tirmidhi

His full name is Abu 'Isa Muhammad bin 'Isa bin Thurah bin Musa bin ad-Dahhak. He is known by several titles and *nisbah*, including *As-Sulami*, *Ad-Darir*, *Al-Bughi*, and *At-Tirmidhi*, which reflect his tribal background, physical condition, and place of origin. He was born in the city of Tirmidh, a region formerly part of Transoxiana, located on the banks of the Amu Darya River in Central Asia.<sup>11</sup>

Historians differ regarding his exact year of birth. Some mention the year 200 AH (815 CE), while others state 209 AH (824 CE). The title *Ad-Darir*, meaning “the blind,” was attributed to him because he lost his eyesight in his later years, whereas *As-Sulami* indicates his connection to the tribe of Banu Sulaym.<sup>12</sup>

From a young age, Imam at-Tirmidhi showed a deep interest in religious sciences, particularly hadith and jurisprudence. He undertook long journeys to seek knowledge from

<sup>9</sup> Muṣṭafā al-Šabābī, *al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashri‘ al-Islāmī* (Beirut: al-Risālah, 1985).

<sup>10</sup> Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1967).

<sup>11</sup> Ali Abbas o'gli Hamzayev, “Imam Tirmidhi's Contribution To The Science Of Hadith,” *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Development* 14 (2023): 79–83.

<sup>12</sup> Jurayeva Ulmas Choriyevna, “The Importance of Imam Tirmidhi's ‘Sunan’ in Islamic History,” *American Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences* 31 (2024): 60–63.

prominent scholars in various regions such as Khurasan, Iraq, and the Hijaz. Among his most influential teachers were Qutaibah bin Sa‘id, Ibrahim bin Abdullah al-Harawi, Abdullah bin Mu‘awiyah al-Jumahi, Ali bin Hujr al-Marwazi, Suwaid bin Nashr, Abu Mus‘ab al-Zuhri, and Muhammad bin Abdul Malik.<sup>13</sup>

Around the age of forty, he studied extensively under Imam al-Bukhari, especially in the field of *‘ilal al-hadith*—the study of subtle defects in the chains of transmission (*sanad*) and the textual content (*matan*) of hadiths. His deep expertise in this discipline earned him the title *al-Hafizh an-Naqid*, referring to a hadith scholar with exceptional memorization and critical abilities. Besides Imam al-Bukhari, he also learned from eminent scholars such as Imam Muslim, Imam Abu Dawud, and their senior teachers.<sup>14</sup>

In his scholarly career, Imam at-Tirmidhi produced a notable group of influential students. Among his well-known students were Ahmad bin Abdullah al-Marwazi, al-Haytsam bin Kulaib al-Syasyi, Muhammad bin Mahbub al-Marwazi, Ahmad bin Yusuf al-Nasafi, and Dawud bin Nashr al-Bazzawi. He was known for his profound teaching methods, emphasizing scholarly discussion and actively writing significant works in the field of hadith.

Toward the end of his life, Imam at-Tirmidhi became blind and spent his later years in that condition. He passed away on Monday, 13 Rajab 279 AH (9 October 892 CE) in the region of Buqh, located not far from his birthplace, Tirmidh.<sup>15</sup>

### Biography of Imam an-Nawawi

The life and thought of Imam al-Nawawi have been extensively examined through various classical works that document his intellectual journey and contributions to the development of Islamic scholarship. Information about his biography is widely found in *tabaqat* literature and authoritative historical texts written by earlier scholars. Among the figures who wrote about him are ‘Ala’ al-Din ‘Ali bin Ibrahim bin al-‘Attar in *Tuhfat al-Tālibīn fī Tarjamat Shaykhina al-Imam al-Nawawi*, Ibn Kathir in *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, Ibn al-Subki in *Tabaqat al-Shāfi‘iyyah al-Kubrā*, and al-Dhahabi in *Tadhkīrat al-Huffāz*.

<sup>13</sup> Abdusattorov Ilhom Bakhriddinovich, “The Place and Significance of Sunan at-Tirmidhi in Hadith Studies,” *Oriental Journal of History, Politics and Law* 5, no. 11 (2025): 133–141.

<sup>14</sup> Temirov Ibrahimjon Kabiljonovich, “Teachers and Students of Abu Isa Tirmidhi,” *ISO Journal* 4, no. 2 (2024).

<sup>15</sup> Desy Nuryani Karo Karo, “Kitab Sunan Al Tirmizi” (2020): 2–10, [https://www.academia.edu/download/63580193/Makalah\\_Hadist\\_Sunan\\_Al\\_Tirmizi-dikonversi20200609-64386-np2fd8.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/download/63580193/Makalah_Hadist_Sunan_Al_Tirmizi-dikonversi20200609-64386-np2fd8.pdf).

In addition to classical sources, numerous contemporary studies have also highlighted Imam al-Nawawi's major contributions in the fields of hadith, jurisprudence, Sufism, Qur'anic exegesis, and theology. One such example is the "Seminar on Islamic Thought of Imam al-Nawawi" organized by religious institutions such as the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). These studies examine in depth the legal framework and methods of *istinbāt* developed by him within the Shafi'i school, including the principles of *tarjih* and *istidlāl* that he employed in deriving legal rulings.<sup>16</sup>

Many works also discuss Imam al-Nawawi's commentaries and explanations of hadith and jurisprudential texts, such as his *Sharh Riyāḍ al-Ṣalīḥīn*, *al-Adhkār*, and *al-Arba'in al-Nawawīyyah*. Several scholars later produced further commentaries (*sharḥ*) on these works, including Muhammad bin 'Allān with *Dalil al-Fālīḥīn*, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani with *Natā'ij al-Afsār*, al-Suyuti through *Tadrib al-Rāwī*, and Mustafa Bugha along with Muhy al-Din Mastu in *al-Wāfi*. Additionally, al-Khaṭīb al-Syarbīni and al-Ramli contributed commentaries on *al-Mīḥāj*. In the modern era, Nuh Ha Mim Keller wrote an English-language work titled *Al-Maqāṣid*, which serves as a contemporary guide to the teachings of Imam al-Nawawi.<sup>17</sup>

Al-Sakhawi, in his writings, provides detailed accounts of Imam al-Nawawi's family background, his childhood in the town of Nawa, and his intellectual development at Madrasah al-Rawāhiyyah in Damascus. This educational journey laid a strong scholarly foundation, eventually leading him to be entrusted with teaching circles at Madrasah 'Ulum al-Syarifah and the Umayyad Grand Mosque.

From a young age, Imam al-Nawawi's brilliance was evident, especially in his courage to defend the weak and oppose acts of innovation (*bid'ah*) and wrongdoing. He became known not only as an expert in hadith and jurisprudence but also as a significant figure in Sufism, ethics, theology, and Qur'anic interpretation—demonstrating the breadth of his knowledge and the firmness of his intellectual commitment.

Imam al-Nawawi's role in strengthening the tradition of *ijtihād* and preserving the authority of the Shafi'i school greatly enriched the body of Islamic legal scholarship. His works have become references across generations in various fields of Islamic knowledge.

<sup>16</sup> M. Ysril Iza Mahendra & Wahyudi Buska, "Al Ṭibāqu fi al-Āḥādīṣ fi Kitābi Riyāḍi al-Ṣalīḥīn," *Al-Uslub: Journal of Arabic Linguistic and Literature* 8, no. 2 (2024).

<sup>17</sup> Ahmad Nabil Amir, "Imam Al-Nawawi: Latar Pemikiran dan Pengaruhnya," *Abdurrauf Journal of Islamic Studies* 1 no. 3 (2024), 218–227.

One important modern study on his life is *Al-Imam al-Nawawi: Shaykh al-Islam wa al-Muslimin* by 'Abd al-Ghani Daqr, which comprehensively discusses Imam al-Nawawi's scholarly stature across hadith, jurisprudence, and Qur'anic exegesis, as well as his efforts in upholding *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* during the rule of Sultan Baibars. The work also explores his writing methods and intellectual framework in understanding the texts of Islamic law, along with the broader impact of his thought on society.

Overall, both classical and modern sources present a complete picture of Imam al-Nawawi's profound contributions to Islamic scholarship. His systematic and meticulous approach—evident in works such as *al-Tahrir fi Sharh Alfāz al-Tanbīh*—demonstrates his expertise in analyzing jurisprudential terminology through classical linguistic references such as *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, *al-Tahdhīb*, and *al-Muḥkam*.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Virtues of Knowledge in *Jami' at-Tirmidhi* and *Riyadhus Shalihin***

Knowledge is a collection of understandings that serves as a guide for humans in traversing the path of life toward the pleasure of Allah SWT. Every Muslim is obligated to seek knowledge, for the activity of learning and studying it is part of the duty affirmed in the Qur'an and the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad.

#### **1. The Meaning of Knowledge in Islam**

In Islam, knowledge is not merely understood as a collection of information, but as an essential foundation that shapes a sound and profound way of thinking. Knowledge plays a crucial role in helping humans understand the dynamics of life, while also serving as a means to draw closer to the truth that originates from Divine revelation.

One of the most prominent fields of knowledge in the Islamic tradition is *fiqh*, the discipline that discusses legal and ethical aspects of life based on the principles of the Sharia. Imam Abu Hanifah stated that *fiqh* is the knowledge that guides humans toward benefit and protects them from harm. According to him, the essence of knowledge does not lie solely in theoretical mastery but in its actualization through deeds that prioritize the Hereafter over worldly interests. Therefore, a Muslim is expected to discern between benefit and harm in all aspects of life. From the Islamic perspective, knowledge is not viewed as an intellectual

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<sup>18</sup> Ahmad Nabil Amir, "Imam Al-Nawawi: Riwayat Ringkas Tentang Latar Pemikiran Dan Pengaruhnya," *International Journal of Islam and Contemporary Affairs* 2, no. 1 (2023): 17–38.

burden but as a light that guides human steps toward happiness in this world and the Hereafter.

The Qur'an and the authentic hadiths emphasize the urgency of knowledge as the primary foundation for righteous action. Every deed in Islam must be grounded in knowledge so that it aligns with the guidance of the Sharia. Without a solid basis of knowledge, actions are susceptible to losing their proper orientation and the spiritual meaning intended by religion.

As a comprehensive system, Islam mandates the pursuit of knowledge for every individual. In essential matters of religion, this obligation is personal (*fard 'ain*), while in fields that support communal welfare, it becomes a collective duty (*fard kifayah*).

The initial step in the pursuit of knowledge begins with knowing Allah through the understanding of *tawhid* and strengthening faith with sound evidences. Sincerity of intention becomes the primary pillar: seeking knowledge solely to attain Allah's pleasure, preparing oneself for the Hereafter, eradicating ignorance within oneself and society, and preserving the continuity of Islamic teachings. Indeed, the existence of Islam is deeply connected to the preservation of knowledge. Knowledge brings true benefit to those who honor it, respect scholars, and uphold proper etiquette with teachers and educators.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. The Virtues of Knowledge According to *Sunan At-Tirmidhi*

مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَقِّيْ يَرْجِعُ

“Whoever goes out to seek knowledge is considered among those who strive in the cause of Allah (sabilillah) until he returns.”<sup>20</sup>

The hadith that has been presented contains an important message regarding the essential value of knowledge. The substance of this hadith provides strong encouragement for Muslims to continually seek and explore knowledge, for it is through this process that a person experiences positive transformation in life. Such transformation includes the shift from ignorance to understanding, from incapability to competence, and from imprudence to true wisdom. The knowledge one acquires not only guides a person in improving their

<sup>19</sup> Burhān al-Dīn al-Zarnūjī, *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li al-Turāth, t.th), 168.

<sup>20</sup> Abu Isa Muhammad bin Isa bin Saurah bin Musa bin Ad-Dahhak As-Sulami At-Tirmidzi, *Sunan At-tirmidzi* (CD. Digital Maktabah Syamilah), Juz 4, 386, no. 2467.

character but also becomes a path that leads to goodness and, ultimately, to Paradise as a reward for righteous deeds performed on the basis of knowledge.

From this hadith, it can be understood that the pursuit of knowledge is a spiritual and intellectual journey toward self-improvement. Through knowledge, a person is motivated to evaluate and correct past mistakes. Furthermore, the meanings contained in these hadiths affirm that Muslims are encouraged to continually learn, reflect, and broaden their intellectual horizons. The emphasis on the importance of knowledge in this hadith is not limited solely to religious sciences but includes all branches of knowledge that bring benefit to human life.

The hadith recorded in Sunan al-Tirmidhi no. 2572 is therefore worthy of being used as a source of motivation in the learning process. Knowledge, from the Islamic perspective, is a light that illuminates the path of life, as expressed in the well-known phrase *al-ilm nūr*—“knowledge is light.” With that light, a person is able to see the direction of their life more clearly and responsibly.<sup>21</sup>

The hadith in question conveys an important message regarding the urgency of seeking knowledge as a fundamental means of improving the quality of oneself. Its content indicates that knowledge serves as a driving force for positive transformation in a person’s life. Through knowledge, an individual who initially lacks understanding becomes aware, one who was previously unskilled becomes proficient, and one who was once less wise develops into a more mature person in thought and conduct. This knowledge becomes the foundation that guides a person to act righteously, ultimately resulting in reward and the promise of Paradise.

Thus, this hadith emphasizes that the pursuit of knowledge is not merely an effort to broaden one’s understanding, but is also part of the process of spiritual purification and the cultivation of noble character. Knowledge becomes a means of self-reflection that leads a person to recognize past mistakes and gradually correct them. Moreover, this hadith reflects the spirit of Islam in encouraging its followers to continually seek knowledge and expand beneficial understanding, both in religious matters and in broader social life.

The narration found in Sunan al-Tirmidhi number 2572 is worthy of being a source of motivation for every Muslim who seeks continuous self-development. Knowledge is

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<sup>21</sup> Muwahidah Nur Hasanah, Ratna Utami Nur Ajizah, “Islamic Character Education Based on Hadith: A Comparative Study Between the Books of Riyadhus Shalihin and Thya Ulumuddin”, *Bunayya: Islamic Education and Teaching Journal* 1, no. 4 (2024).

depicted as a light that illuminates one's life journey, as expressed in the saying *al-ilm nūr*—“knowledge is light.” Through knowledge, a person can discover the right direction in life, understand their responsibilities as a servant of God, and make their life more meaningful, conscious, and well-guided.

The hadith under discussion affirms that seeking knowledge is an essential element in shaping a better personality and conduct. It illustrates that knowledge possesses an extraordinary transformative power—raising a person from ignorance to understanding, from incompetence to proficiency, and from a lack of wisdom to maturity of attitude. Through knowledge, one may even attain the reward of Paradise, for knowledge serves as the foundation for righteous and meaningful deeds.

In other words, the pursuit of knowledge is a concrete step in the process of purifying and improving oneself. Knowledge shapes a sound and critical way of thinking, and it helps a person recognize past mistakes and strive to rectify them. This hadith also contains an important message for Muslims to continually study, understand, and develop knowledge that brings benefit. This knowledge is not limited to religious sciences alone, but encompasses all fields that contribute to personal and social well-being.

The narration recorded in Sunan al-Tirmidhi number 2572 serves as a lasting source of motivation to always keep learning. Knowledge equips a person with a clear perspective on life and the purpose they pursue. As expressed in the saying *al-ilm nūr*—“knowledge is light”—knowledge illuminates a person's path so that they may live with awareness, responsibility, and wisdom.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

The study of the biographies of Imam al-Tirmidhi and Imam al-Nawawi, along with the discussion of the virtue of knowledge in their works, demonstrates that knowledge occupies an exceptionally important position in Islamic teachings. Imam al-Tirmidhi—a hadith scholar renowned for his sharp analysis of sanad and matn—and Imam al-Nawawi—an encyclopedic scholar whose contributions extended across the fields of hadith, jurisprudence, Sufism, and exegesis—both exemplified a profound love for knowledge and a steadfast commitment to scholarly integrity. They were not only transmitters and commentators of hadith but also pioneers in promoting an intellectual spirit grounded in

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<sup>22</sup> Hasanah, Utami, and Ajizah, “Bunayya.”

sincerity, dedication, and humility. Through their works, such as *Jami‘ al-Tirmidhi* and *Riyadhu al-Salihin*, they emphasized that knowledge is not merely a collection of information but a path toward self-improvement, the cultivation of noble character, and a means of drawing closer to Allah SWT.

The hadith recorded in *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 2572 serves as strong evidence that seeking knowledge is part of *jihad fi sabillillah*. Knowledge transforms ignorance into understanding, incapability into skill, and foolishness into wisdom. Through knowledge, a person can live more consciously, responsibly, and with an orientation toward the Hereafter. Thus, it can be concluded that seeking knowledge in Islam is a spiritual and intellectual journey that every Muslim is obligated to undertake. This process not only shapes a sound and upright way of thinking but also contributes to building a civilization founded upon the values of monotheism, ethics, and public welfare. Therefore, reviving the tradition of scholarship is a collective responsibility of the Muslim community to preserve the authenticity of Islamic teachings and uphold the honor of the Sharia.

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