

A Comparative Study of the Book *Fadhāil al-A'māl*: A Study of Hadith Manuscripts from the Early 12th Century AH and the Book by Sheikh Muhammad Zakariyya Al-Kandahlawi

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Abstract:

The tradition of writing *Fadhāil* books is one of the ways in which scholars contribute to grounding the spiritual values of Islam. This study examines two *fadhāil* books from two different periods: an anonymous manuscript from the early 12th century AH stored in the Daiber Collection, University of Tokyo, and the book *Fadhāil al-A'māl* by Sheikh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi from the 14th century AH. This study aims to compare the methods, structure, and scientific content of the two books in order to understand the trends in the compilation of *fadhāil* books in the development of hadith studies. The approach used is qualitative with bibliographic and philological studies, namely by examining the texts in depth through primary and secondary source searches, as well as conducting philological stages such as manuscript description, transliteration, and text criticism to assess the authenticity and context of the writing. The analysis was conducted descriptively and comparatively to reveal the characteristics and scientific orientation of each book. The results of the study show that these two books reflect the development of hadith science at that time, although they differ in terms of composition, systematic presentation of hadith, and the background of their authors. The anonymous book from the early 12th century AH is more thematic and simple, while *Fadhāil al-A'māl* shows the influence of systematic preaching and spiritual guidance within the framework of the Tabligh movement.

Keywords: *Fadhāil A'māl*, Hadith, Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi, Classical Manuscripts

Abstrak:

Tradisi penulisan kitab-kitab *Fadhāil* merupakan salah satu bentuk kontribusi ulama dalam membumikan nilai-nilai spiritual Islam. Penelitian ini mengkaji dua kitab *fadhāil* dari dua masa berbeda: sebuah naskah anonim dari awal abad ke-12 H yang tersimpan di Daiber Collection, University of Tokyo, dan kitab *Fadhāil al-A'māl* karya Syekh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi dari abad ke-14 H. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan metode, struktur, dan konten keilmuan dari kedua kitab tersebut guna memahami kecenderungan penyusunan kitab *fadhāil* dalam perkembangan studi hadis. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan studi pustaka dan filologis, yaitu dengan menelaah teks-teks secara mendalam melalui penelusuran sumber primer dan sekunder, serta melakukan tahapan filologis seperti deskripsi naskah, transliterasi, dan kritik teks untuk menilai keotentikan dan konteks penulisannya. Analisis dilakukan secara deskriptif-komparatif guna mengungkap corak dan orientasi keilmuan masing-masing kitab. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa kedua kitab ini mencerminkan geliat perkembangan ilmu hadis pada masanya, meskipun berbeda dalam aspek penyusunan, sistematika penyajian hadis, dan latar belakang penulisnya. Kitab anonym dari awal abad ke-12 H lebih bersifat tematik dan sederhana, sementara *Fadhāil al-*

A'māl menunjukkan pengaruh dakwah dan pembinaan ruhani secara sistematis dalam kerangka gerakan Tabligh.

Kata Kunci: *Fadhā'il A'māl*, Hadis, Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi, Naskah Klasik

Introduction

The tradition of writing *faḍā'il* (virtues of good deeds) works is one form of scholarly effort to ground Islamic spiritual values within society. These works generally provide motivation for righteous deeds by presenting the virtues of specific acts of worship, supported by scriptural evidence or stories of the early pious generations. *Faḍā'il* books offer strong moral encouragement for ordinary Muslims to engage in worship, remembrance, charity, and other good deeds, using language that speaks more directly to the heart than theoretical approaches.¹ One classical *faḍā'il* manuscript identified by the author is preserved in the Daiber Collection at the Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, in Volume 1 of the Hadith section, manuscript code Ms. 129 no. 1380. It was written in 1111 AH/1699 CE,² although the author of the manuscript is unknown.

In the mid-14th century AH, another influential work emerged: *Faḍā'il al-A'māl* by Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyyah al-Kandahlawi, a highly renowned book and one of the primary references of the Tablighi Jamaat worldwide. The book was begun in 1348 AH and has since spread across the world and been translated into many languages.³ Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyyah al-Kandahlawi was a prominent hadith scholar in India and a highly productive author. Among his major works are *Aujāz al-Masālik ilā Muwaṭṭa' Mālik* (16 volumes), *Lami' al-Dharārī*, a commentary on *Jāmi' al-Bukhārī* (3 volumes), and *Kawkab al-Durī*, a commentary on *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* (2 volumes). He also trained many notable hadith scholars, including Maulana Muhammad Yusuf al-Kandhlawi and Maulana Ali Saharanpuri.⁴

These two works emerged at a time when hadith studies began to experience renewed vitality after having gone through a period of stagnation. This study aims to analyze both

¹ Deddy Ilyas, Eko Zulfikar, "Discourse of Faḍā'il al-Qur'an: Muhammad Shadiq's Presentation of the Quran's Privileges in the Book of Qalb al-Qur'an", *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 31, no. 1 (2023): 20-32, <http://dx.doi.org/10.24014/jush.v31i1.19357>.

² "http://ricasdb.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/daiber/db_index_eng.html," website, t.t.

³ Muhammad Eirfan Bin Shamsul dan Mohd Farhan Bin Md Ariffin, "Biografi Maulana Zakariya al-Kadahlawi dan Metodologi Penulisannya Dalam Kitab Fadhail A'mal," *Seminar pelajar tahun akhir prasiswazah program pengajian al-quran & al-sunnah (setia 2022)*, Malaysia, 2022.

⁴ Shamsul dan Ariffin, "Biografi Maulana Zakariya al-Kadahlawi dan Metodologi Penulisannya Dalam Kitab Fadhail A'mal", *eProsiding Seminar Pelajar Tahun Akhir 2022*, 2022.

books in terms of their methods and characteristics. This is important for identifying scholarly tendencies in writing *faḍā'il* literature, particularly in these two works.

Previous research related to this topic can be divided into two categories. The *first* concerns *Faḍā'il al-A'māl*. In his study, Muhammad Yusram discusses the ruling on transmitting and practicing weak (*da'if*) hadiths in *faḍā'il al-a'māl*. He notes that scholars differ on this issue, forming three views: (1) weak hadiths may not be practiced at all, whether in legal matters, creed, or *targhib wa tarhib*; (2) weak hadiths may be practiced in *faḍā'il al-a'māl* and *targhib wa tarhib*, but not in matters of creed and law; (3) weak hadiths may be practiced generally in jurisprudence, creed, and other areas when no authentic or sound hadith exists.⁵

In addition, there is a study by Fatony Syadam that discusses the da'wah messages in *Faḍā'il al-A'māl* in fostering motivation for righteous deeds. This research shows that the da'wah content in *Faḍā'il al-A'māl* falls into three main themes: creed, law, and ethics. (1) Da'wah messages related to creed are found in the section "The Virtues of Ramadan." (2) Messages related to law appear in the section "The Virtues of Prayer." (3) Messages related to ethics are found in the section "The Virtues of Tabligh."⁶

Second, the research related to Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi. Muhammad Sofian, in his study, discusses Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi's interpretation of the Qur'anic verses on zakat in *Fadhilah Sedekah*. His findings show that: (1) Zakat has two important functions: first, for the *muzakki*, it enables a person to have rightful ownership and purity over his wealth; second, for the *mustahiq*, zakat improves the economic condition of the Muslim community. (2) The virtues for the *muzakki* include purification from sins, elevation of spiritual rank, fostering sincerity, and cultivating praiseworthy character. (3) There are two forms of warning for those who do not pay zakat: punishment in this world and in the hereafter.⁷ Another study by Alfi Syahriyati examines the authenticity of hadiths on the virtues of reciting the Qur'an and their influence on the interaction of the Tablighi Jama'at with the Qur'an, shaping their daily religious practices. Her research shows that *Faḍā'il al-A'māl* contains 22 authentic (*ṣaḥiḥ*) hadiths, 1 *ḥasan* hadith, 9 weak (*da'if*) hadiths,

⁵ Muhammad Yusram, "Hukum Meriwayatkan dan Mengamalkan Hadis Daif untuk Fadhail al-A'māl," *Nukhbatul 'Ulum* 3, no. 1 (2017): 221–36, <https://doi.org/10.36701/nukhbah.v3i1.17>.

⁶ Syadam Fatony, *Pesan Dakwah Pada Kitab Fadhailul Amal Dalam Meningkatkan Semangat Beramal*, (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Raden Intan Lampung, 2021).

⁷ Muhammad Sofian, et al., "Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Zakat Oleh Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Al-Kandahlawi dalam Buku Fadhilah Sedekah," *Istinarah: Riset Keagamaan, Sosial dan Budaya* 1, no. 2 (2020): 55, <https://doi.org/10.31958/istinarah.v1i2.1776>.

5 very weak (*da'if jiddan*) hadiths, 1 fabricated (*mauḍū'*) hadith, and 2 narrations classified as *lā aṣḥā labu* (no known origin).⁸

In addition, Muhsin analyzes the concepts of *khurūj* and *jaulab* in al-Kandahlawi's thought from the perspective of *Tafsir al-Azhar*. His study finds that the concept of *khurūj* in *Tafsir al-Azhar* refers to Prophet Moses' departure for forty days to seek the pleasure of God. The concept of *jaulab*, from the perspective of *Tafsir al-Azhar*, may refer to Q. Ali 'Imran 3:104, which represents da'wah activities carried out by Tablighi groups to promote good and prevent wrongdoing.⁹

In general, previous literature has focused on the authenticity, legal status, and da'wah aspects of *Faḍā'il al-A'māl*. This study seeks to examine two *faḍā'il* works from two different periods—an anonymous 12th-century Hijri manuscript preserved in the Daiber Collection at the University of Tokyo, and *Faḍā'il al-A'māl* by Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi from the 14th century Hijri—in order to trace differences in method, structure, and scholarly orientation. This study also aims to highlight the developmental dynamics of the *faḍā'il* writing tradition and its continued relevance to the spiritual formation of contemporary Muslim communities.

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research and philological methods. These approaches are chosen because the research focuses on analyzing the texts and contexts of two *Faḍā'il* works from different periods—an anonymous 12th-century Hijri manuscript from the Daiber Collection at the University of Tokyo and *Faḍā'il al-A'māl* by Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi from the 14th century Hijri. Data are collected from primary and secondary sources, including manuscripts, classical works, and relevant previous studies. The analysis aims to identify the writing style, the system of hadith presentation, and the scholarly orientation underlying the compilation of both texts.¹⁰

The philological approach is applied mainly to the anonymous manuscript through stages such as manuscript description, transliteration, textual criticism, and text

⁸ Alfi Syahriyati, "The Use of Hadith in Faḍā'il A'māl book," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 7, no. 1 (2018): (1-24).

⁹ Muhsin, *Konsep Khuruj dan Jaulab Al-Kandahlawi dalam Prespektif Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Negri (UIN) Raden Intan Lampung, 2021).

¹⁰ See for example the qualitative research methodology in Islamic studies by John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2013), and the concept of library research in Zed Mestika, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008).

reconstruction to obtain an authentic and analyzable version.¹¹ The data are then examined descriptively and comparatively through content analysis to describe and compare the structure, methodology, and spiritual values found in the two works. Through this process, the study seeks to uncover the trends and developmental dynamics of the *fadhā'il* writing tradition within the field of hadith studies.¹²

Results and Discussion

The Development of Hadith Studies in the 12th–14th Hijri Centuries

In the 12th century AH, the development of hadith studies entered the pre-contemporary phase. This period was a time when the vibrancy of hadith scholarship began to re-emerge, after several previous centuries—starting from the 6th to the 10th century AH—had experienced stagnation in its development. The corpus of hadith studies in the pre-contemporary period began to expand into a more established scientific discipline. From this point, it can be seen that during this era there were two major divisions within hadith studies, namely *hadith riwayah* and *hadith dirayah*.¹³

In practice, *hadith riwayah* focuses on the process of transmitting hadiths, preserving them through memorization, and conveying them to others either orally or in writing—thus it can be said that this discipline is more descriptive in nature. Meanwhile, *hadith dirayah* emphasizes the assessment of narrators' reliability, determining whether a hadith should be accepted or rejected. From this discipline, various other branches of hadith sciences emerged, such as *Ilm Rijāl al-Hadīth*, *Ilm al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, *Ilm Fan al-Mubhāmāt*, *Ilm al-Ilal*, *Ilm Gharīb al-Hadīth*, *Ilm al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, *Ilm Talfiq al-Hadīth*, *Ilm al-Taṣḥīf wa al-Tahrīf*, *Ilm Asbab al-Wurūd*, and *Ilm Muṣṭalah al-Hadīth*.¹⁴

The revitalization of hadith studies did not occur only in regions with a strong Islamic base; in Indonesia, the development of hadith scholarship also began to appear. Many

¹¹ See, Siti Baroroh Baried et al., *Pengantar Teori Filologi* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1994), and Louis-Jean Calvet, *Pour une linguistique de l'écrit* (Paris: Payot, 1996).

¹² See, Jonathan Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), and M. Musthafa al-A'zami, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1977).

¹³ Luthfi Maulana, "Periodesasi Perkembangan Studi Hadits (dari Tradisi Lisan/Tulisan Hingga Berbasis Digital)," *ESENSLA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 17, no. 1 (2016): 111, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v17i1.1282>.

¹⁴ Maulana, "Periodesasi Perkembangan Studi Hadits (dari Tradisi Lisan/Tulisan Hingga Berbasis Digital)."

Indonesian scholars—most of whom came from pesantren backgrounds—started to travel to the Middle East, especially Mecca and Medina, to study the Prophet’s Hadith directly from the scholars of the Haramayn. For example, Mahfudz al-Tirmasi was among those recorded as a hadith scholar while studying in Mecca, and he became well known as a hadith expert in the Middle East due to his involvement in teaching *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in Mecca.¹⁵

After the era of al-Tirmasi, his student Hasyim Asy‘ari also contributed as a hadith scholar in the following period. During Hasyim Asy‘ari’s time, hadith studies began to develop in Java, particularly in East Java. Hasyim Asy‘ari advanced hadith scholarship in Java by holding lessons on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Long before Mahfudz al-Tirmasi and Hasyim Asy‘ari, there were already prominent scholars in hadith studies in the 17th century CE, such as Nur al-Din al-Raniri and ‘Abd al-Ra’uf al-Sinkili. These two figures represent the earliest phase of hadith development in the 17th-century Nusantara.¹⁶

Meanwhile, according to Ahmad Shalaby, the 13th century AH until the present marks the contemporary phase of hadith development. At the early stage of this period, the progress of hadith studies remained limited and showed no significant advancement. The possible cause was the domination of Eurocentric cultural influence during that era, which led many Muslims to adopt a passive attitude toward hadith scholarship. Only in the 20th century did several Middle Eastern scholars—such as Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh—begin to stir major reform movements, urging Muslims to “return to the Qur’an and the Sunnah” within a modernist framework.

At the beginning of this period, the development of hadith studies remained ordinary without substantial progress, likely because the Islamic community at the time had been overshadowed by Eurocentric cultural hegemony, resulting in Muslims becoming passive toward hadith studies. It was only in the 20th century that Middle Eastern scholars like Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh sparked renewed enthusiasm by promoting their reform agenda encouraging Muslims to “return to the Qur’an and the Sunnah” in their modernist expression.¹⁷

¹⁵ Maulana, “Periodesasi Perkembangan Studi Hadits (dari Tradisi Lisan/Tulisan Hingga Berbasis Digital).”

¹⁶ Junaid Bin Junaid dan Muh. Nasruddin A, “Historitas Perkembangan Hadis (dari Periode Klasik Hingga Kontemporer)”, *CARITA: Jurnal Sejarah dan Budaya* 2, no. 2 (2024).

¹⁷ Maulana, “Periodesasi Perkembangan Studi Hadits (dari Tradisi Lisan/Tulisan Hingga Berbasis Digital).”

Manuscript Study of the Kitāb *Fadhā'il*: A Hadith Manuscript from the Early 12th Century Hijri

1. Manuscript Identity

This manuscript is a collection of *faḍḥā'il* compiling several Prophetic hadiths on various Islamic themes, including knowledge, creed, monotheism, jurisprudence, faith, and others. It is preserved in the Daiber Collection, Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, in Volume 1, Hadith section, with the code Ms. 129, no. 1380. It was written in 1111 H / 1699 CE, consisting of 67 pages, written on paper measuring 9 × 14 cm, with 9 lines per page. The author is unknown.¹⁸ The initial pages of the manuscript are missing, as indicated by the table of contents beginning only from chapter 8 to chapter 40. Meanwhile, the main text contains only 22 chapters of *faḍḥā'il* out of the 40 listed in the table of contents. Based on the researcher's examination, several chapters are missing, namely chapters 3, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40.

Of the 40 *faḍḥā'il* chapters listed in the table of contents, only 22 chapters containing collections of hadiths are found. Starting from chapter 1 titled *Fī Faḍīlat al-'Ilm wa al-'Ulamā'*, which includes 10 hadiths on the virtues of knowledge and scholars, and ending with chapter 27 titled *Fī Faḍīlat al-Liwāṭḥah*, containing 10 hadiths. Across the 22 chapters, the manuscript contains 193 Prophetic hadiths, with each chapter containing a varying number of narrations, from as few as 6 to as many as 11. In addition to the *faḍḥā'il* chapters, the manuscript also includes sections on *ma'rīfatullah*, *qawā'id al-islam wa al-iḥsān*, and *kaifiyyat al-sharī'ah wa al-ḥaqīqah*, which present questions and answers concerning issues related to knowledge of God, Islamic principles and spiritual excellence, and the nature of *sharī'ah* and truth.

Considering its date of composition—1111 H, the early 12th century H—this manuscript is contemporaneous with several hadith scholars, such as: Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari (1036–1111 H / 1626–1699 CE), a scholar from Makassar, Indonesia, who studied hadith in the Middle East; Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi (1050–1143 H / 1641–1731 CE), a Damascus hadith scholar who wrote a commentary on *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*; Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Baqi al-Zurqani (d. 1122 H / 1710 CE), a hadith and fiqh scholar from Egypt known for his commentary on *al-Muwatṭa'*; and Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-

¹⁸ "http://ricasdb.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/daiber/db_index_eng.html."

Shawkani (1173–1250 H / 1760–1834 CE), a major Yemeni scholar known for his works in hadith, tafsir, and fiqh, including *Nayl al-Awtār*, a commentary on *Muntaqā al-Akḥbār*.

2. The Structure of Writing in the Kitāb *Fadḥā'il* (Early 12th-Century Hadith Manuscript)

The book is divided into 40 subchapters, each containing 8–11 Prophetic hadiths. The author only cites the hadiths relevant to each subchapter without providing commentary or explanation. Based on the surviving manuscript, many chapters are missing. In brief, the chapter titles and number of hadiths in this *fadḥā'il* manuscript can be seen in the table below.

No	Chapter Title	Number of Hadiths	Description
1.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-ʿIlmi wa al-ʿUlamāʾ</i>	10	There is
2.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Lā Ilāha Illallāh Mubammad Rasūlullah</i>	8	There is
3.	<i>Not found</i>	-	There isn't
4.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Shālatu ʿAlā al-Nabi SAW</i>	10	There is
5.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Imān</i>	8	There is
6.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Wudhu</i>	10	There is
7.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Siwāk wa al-Khilāl</i>	10	There is
8.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Aḥḡan</i>	9	There is
9.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Jamāʿat</i>	8	There is
10.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Jumʿah</i>	8	There is
11.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Masājīd</i>	9	There is
12.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-ʿAmāʾim</i>	8	There is
13.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Qaumi</i>	10	There is
14.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Farāid</i>	6	There is
15.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Sunan</i>	9	There is
16.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Zakāh</i>	6	There is
17.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Salām</i>	10	There is
18.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Sadāqah</i>	8	There is
19.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-duʿā</i>	8	There is
20.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Istighfār</i>	8	There is
21.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Zikru Allah</i>	9	There is
22.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Tasbīh Subḥānallah wa al-Hamdulillāh</i>	11	There is
23.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Taubah</i>	-	There isn't
24.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Fuqarā</i>	-	There isn't
25.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Nikāh</i>	-	There isn't
26.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Fī Tasydid al-Zinā</i>	-	There isn't
27.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Liwāṭḥob</i>	10	There is
28.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Manʿi Syarbi al-Khamar</i>	-	There isn't
29.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Rama bi al-Nisabi</i>	-	There isn't
30.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Walidaini</i>	-	There isn't
31.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Anlad</i>	-	There isn't
32.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Fī Haqqi al-Tawāduʾ</i>	-	There isn't

33.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Sukūt</i>	-	There isn't
34.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Fī Man'i al-Akli wa al-Syarab</i>	-	There isn't
35.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Man'i al-Dhibāk</i>	-	There isn't
36.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Iyādati al-Maridh</i>	-	There isn't
37.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Fī Zikri al-Maut</i>	-	There isn't
38.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Fikri wa Ahwālibi</i>	-	There isn't
39.	<i>Fī Fadīlati Fī Man'i al-Niyābah</i>	-	There isn't
40.	<i>Fī Fadīlati al-Shabru 'Inda al-Musībah</i>	-	There isn't

Table 1: Hadiths about *faḍḥā'il*

In this book, the author mentions only the hadith texts (*matan*) without providing complete chains of transmission (*sanad*). The author merely compiles hadiths that he considers relevant to the theme or chapter being presented, without offering any explanation or commentary. Among the major themes discussed in this book are knowledge and scholars, monotheism, faith, jurisprudence, worship, remembrance, Sufism, deeds, and charity. As an example, the following image illustrates this:

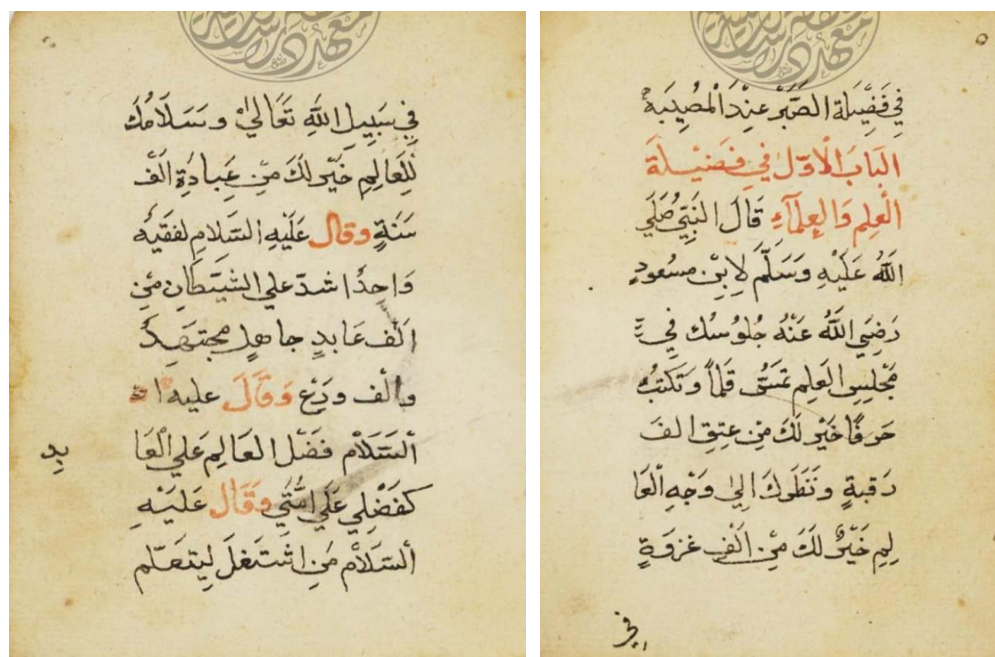


Figure 1: *Faḍḥā'il* manuscript of the 12th century AH

Study of the Book *Faḍḥā'il al-A'māl* by Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi

1. Biography of Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi

His full name is Muhammad Zakariyya bin Muhammad Yahya bin Ismail al-Kandahlawi. He was born on 11 Ramadan 1315 H, corresponding to 2 February 1898 CE.

Regarding the year of his death, the researcher did not find information about it. He studied extensively under his father, Shaykh Maulana Muhammad Yahya al-Kandahlawi. Besides studying with his father, among his other teachers were Shaykh Sahanpuri, Shaykh Maulana Muhammad Ilyas al-Kandahlawi, Maulana al-Wahid Sanbuli, Maulana Abdul Latif, and many other *mashayikh*.¹⁹

After completing his studies, Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi began to occupy himself with teaching; more than half of his life he served at the Mazahir al-‘Ulum Madrasah in Saharanpur. While teaching at that madrasah, he taught approximately 35 religious books, among them books of *ṣarf* and *naḥw*, up to major works such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Sunan Abi Dāwūd*. He also completed the teaching of several important books such as *Nūr al-Anwār* three times, *Mishkāt* three times, *Sunan Abi Dāwūd* thirty times, and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* sixteen times.²⁰

Many students learned hadith from him. Some of his students who later became well-known scholars and taught in various madrasahs include Maulana Muhammad Yusuf, Maulana In‘ām al-Ḥasan, and teachers at the Kasyiful ‘Ulum Madrasah in Delhi. There was also Maulana Ganggoḥi (hadith teacher at Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband), Maulana Munawwar Husain (Shaykh al-Hadith at Jāmi‘ah ‘Ulūm Lahifi Kethar), and many others.

While teaching, he did not receive payment or assistance; he taught purely for the sake of Allah SWT. Although at first he was forced by the *mashayikh* at the madrasah to accept a small teaching allowance, he later returned the wages he had received to the madrasahs that had given them. Alongside his teaching activities, he wrote many books. It is reported that the number of his written works is approximately 89 books, 29 of which have been published, while the others have not yet been published. Among them are:

- *Faḍḥāil al-A‘māl*, a compilation of the works of Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi in the *Faḍḥāil* series.
- *Anjāz al-Masālik ilā Muwaṭṭa’ Mālik* in 16 volumes, a commentary on Imām Mālik’s *Muwaṭṭa’*.
- *Nadīr Syurūḥ* and *La Zawāl Ta’līqāt*.

¹⁹ Azwar Khalid, “*Studi Kualitas Sanad Hadis Kitab Fadha’l A’māl Karya Syaikh Muhammad Zakariyya Al-Kandahlawi (kajian Hadis-Hadis Keutamaan Tabligh)*” (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2004).

²⁰ Khalid, “*Studi Kualitas Sanad Hadis Kitab Fadha’l A’māl Karya Syaikh Muhammad Zakariyya Al-Kandahlawi (kajian Hadis-Hadis Keutamaan Tabligh)*.”

- *Lami' al-Dharārī*, a commentary on *Jāmi' al-Bukhārī* in 3 volumes.
- *Kaukab al-Durri*, a commentary on *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* in 2 volumes.
- *Jāmi' Shamā'il al-Tirmidhī* and *Sharḥ Khaṣā'il Nabawī*.
- *Juz' Hujjat al-Wadā'* and *al-Abwāb wa al-Tarājim li al-Bukhārī*.
- *Faḍīlah al-Ṣadaqah*, consisting of two volumes.
- *Faḍhāil al-Darūd al-Sharīf* (virtues of sending blessings upon the Prophet), which contains the merits and etiquettes of *ṣalawāt*.
- *Faḍīlah Ḥajjī*.
- A book on the virtues of keeping the beard, translated by Muhammad Qasim al-Timori FZ.
- *The Causes of the Rise and Fall of the Muslim Ummah*, translated into Indonesian by Abdul Rasyad Siddiq, containing his comments on the condition of the Muslim community at that time.
- *Asbāb Sa'ādah al-Muslimīn wa Sa'ādatihim fī Daw' al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah*.²¹

2. Description of *Faḍhāil al-A'māl* by Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi

Sheikh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi began writing *Faḍhāil al-A'māl* in 1328 H. Many scholars sent him letters expressing admiration for the book and noting its influence and impact on the hearts of Muslims. However, he responded humbly, saying, “This lowly servant has no contribution in it.” In addition, many readers offered critiques and questions, all of which he addressed graciously and wisely.

Faḍhāil al-A'māl contains hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that bring glad tidings to those who perform righteous deeds, such as memorizing the Qur'an, regularly engaging in dhikr, performing the five daily prayers with their recommended units, and others. The book references approximately 197 Qur'anic verses and around 200 hadiths as its main sources.²² Sheikh Zakariyya did not fully cite the isnad of each hadith, only noting the source and the name of the companion who transmitted it. Similarly, the authenticity or grading of the hadiths is not explained.

²¹ Syadam, “Pesan Dakwah Pada Kitab *Fadhoilul Amal* Dalam Meningkatkan Semangat Beramal’.

²² Shamsul dan Ariffin, “Biografi Maulana Zakariya al-Kadahlawi dan Metodologi Penulisan Dalam Kitab *Fadhail A'mal*.”

Sheikh Zakariyya presents *Faḍḥāil al-A'māl* in a narrative style, using simple and easily understandable language. He does not provide scientific arguments or complex reasoning that would require deep scholarly analysis to comprehend.

3. Structure of *Faḍḥāil al-A'māl* by Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi

The book is divided into seven main sections (*kitāb*) and thirty-four chapters (*bab*), as follows:

- a. Book of the Virtues of the Qur'an. This was the first book in the *Faḍḥāil al-A'māl* series. It includes forty virtues of the Qur'an based on the Prophet's hadiths, with translation and explanation. Seven additional hadiths discuss the rulings on reading the Qur'an, and one more hadith with its translation is added at the end.
- b. Book of the Virtues of Ramadan. Covers the virtues of Ramadan, Laylat al-Qadr, i'tikaf, and related topics, explained through hadiths with translation and commentary. It also includes an explanation of Surat al-Qadr, and concludes with some additional hadiths.
- c. Book of the Virtues of Prayer. Discusses the virtues of prayer, warnings, and punishments for neglecting it. It also covers the benefits of congregational prayer and the consequences of abandoning it. This book was written on the recommendation of Sheikh Maulana Muhammad Ilyas and completed in 1358 H.
- d. Book of the Virtues of Tabligh (Preaching). Contains seven chapters emphasizing the importance of preaching, proper etiquette for preachers, and the general obligation of dawah to all people. This book was completed in 1350 H.
- e. Book of the Virtues of Dhikr. Divided into three chapters: the virtues of dhikr, the virtues of the *kalimat thayyibah*, and the virtues of the *kalimat tasbihat*. At the end, it includes a discussion of *salat tasbih*. Completed in 1358 H.
- f. Book on the Decline of the Muslim Community and How to Restore It. Contains Sheikh Zakariyya's opinions on the causes of the decline of the Muslim community in the present and future times, and ways to restore and improve the situation.
- g. Book of the Stories of the Companions. Consists of twelve chapters, each detailing the lives and characteristics of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), highlighting their blessed qualities.²³

²³ Muhammad Zakariyya Al-Khandahlawi, *Faḍḥāil al-A'māl* (Era Ilmu Sdn. Bhd, 2007).

Comparative Analysis of *Fadhāil al-A'māl* (Early 12th H Hadith Manuscript) and the Work of Sheikh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi

A comparison between the anonymous 12th H *Fadhāil al-A'māl* manuscript and Sheikh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi's 14th H *Fadhāil al-A'māl* shows thematic continuity but fundamental differences in methodology, structure, and scholarly orientation. Both works emerged from different social and religious contexts, reflecting the intellectual style and needs of their respective eras.

1. Historical Aspect

The 12th H *Fadhāil* manuscript was compiled in the pre-contemporary period when hadith studies were reviving after a phase of stagnation. Its compilation reflects a simple effort to gather thematic hadiths on the virtues of deeds as a spiritual guide for the classical Muslim community. In contrast, al-Kandahlawi's *Fadhāil al-A'māl* emerged in the 14th H in the context of the revival of Islamic preaching and spiritual formation through the Jama'ah Tabligh movement. Consequently, al-Kandahlawi's orientation is more devotional-dakwah oriented than purely philological.

2. Structural and Systematic Aspect

The 12th H manuscript contains 40 chapters and 193 hadiths, but without explanation or commentary. The chapters are thematic (e.g., *Fī Fadīlati al-ʿIlmi*, *Fī Fadīlati al-Imān*, *Fī Fadīlati al-Salām*) and arranged concisely without systematic classification. Meanwhile, al-Kandahlawi's *Fadhāil al-A'māl* is organized into seven books and 34 chapters, with a more complex writing pattern. Each chapter includes hadiths, explanations, and inspiring stories (*hikayat*) that reinforce moral and spiritual messages, showing the evolution of *fadhāil* compilation from simple collections to more structured forms.

3. Methodological Aspect

The 12th H manuscript only cites the text (*matan*) of the hadith without isnad or commentary, serving primarily to preserve and compile texts for moral and spiritual purposes. In contrast, al-Kandahlawi cites the source and the companion transmitting the hadith, though he does not fully assess the isnad quality. He also provides explanations, brief interpretations, and reflections for da'wah, demonstrating a more integrative approach connecting text, context, and moral application.

4. Scholarly Orientation

The classical 12th H *Fadhāil* is oriented toward *ta'abbudi* (personal worship) and strengthening individual spirituality, with no evident social or collective preaching agenda. Al-Kandahlawi's work, however, is oriented toward *ta'dib* (moral education) and *tabligh* (mass preaching), aiming to mobilize the community to practice Islam comprehensively. Sufi influences and the Islamic revivalist spirit in India strongly shape his approach.

5. Language and Writing Style

The 12th H manuscript uses simple and direct language, without additional narrative, which may be difficult for laypeople to understand. In contrast, al-Kandahlawi's *Fadhāil al-A'māl* employs a narrative, communicative style, full of stories and motivational content, making it more accessible to ordinary readers and the Tabligh audience. The language supports the movement's da'wah objectives.

6. Function and Influence

The 12th H manuscript holds spiritual and academic value, illustrating the early style of fadhāil compilation as a means to strengthen faith and morality through hadith texts. Its primary role was to motivate righteous deeds and enhance religious awareness among classical Muslims. Al-Kandahlawi's work, however, has a broad social and religious impact: it became core literature for the Jama'ah Tabligh movement, translated into multiple languages, and influenced millions of Muslims in daily religious practice. Thus, al-Kandahlawi's book functions transformatively, not merely informatively.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the *Fadhāil* manuscript from the 12th H century and Sheikh Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi's *Fadhāil al-A'māl*, written in the 14th H century, each have their own distinct characteristics, reflecting the context and purpose of their composition. The early 12th H *Fadhāil* manuscript focuses on presenting thematic virtues of deeds in a simple arrangement without specifying the author's identity. In contrast, al-Kandahlawi's *Fadhāil al-A'māl* not only compiles hadiths on virtues but also provides contextual explanations, inspiring stories, and a systematic organization of material to support preaching (*dakwah*) and spiritual formation, particularly within the framework of the Tabligh movement.

Both works represent the revival of hadith studies in the post-stagnation period and demonstrate that the writing of *Fadhāil* books has played a strategic role in shaping the spiritual life of the Muslim community. A comparison between them reveals the methodological and functional evolution—from merely compiling hadiths to utilizing them as instruments for preaching and moral education. This study also opens the door for further research on less-studied *Fadhāil* manuscripts and highlights the importance of examining the role of such books in the dynamics of Islamic preaching and religious education.

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