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Al Manhajiyyah Fī Talabil 'Ilm

- The Methodology Of Seeking Knowledge -

*The blueprint every student needs to seek
knowledge like a scholar*

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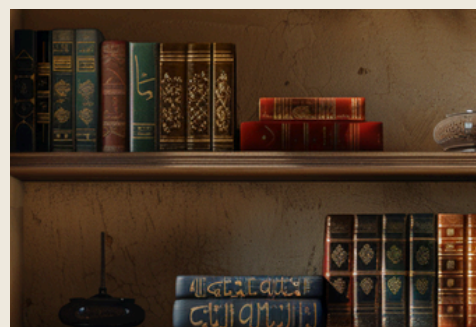
What does it mean to follow a **Manhajiyyah** in seeking knowledge?

Learning Islam is not something that can be completed and set aside, but rather a lifelong journey. Many students rush through books or subjects simply to claim completion, but true understanding only comes with steady progress, careful study, and consistent reflection. The scholars of the past would spend years mastering works that some today attempt to cover in a matter of weeks.

Part of seeking knowledge correctly is following a structured curriculum and a clear method. The scholars did not jump from book to book according to what they felt interested in, nor did they follow their desires. Instead, they studied step by step, beginning with the foundations and moving gradually to more advanced texts, each stage preparing them for the next.

This gradual progression (known as Tadarruj) and following a structured methodology (known as Manhajiyyah) is what allowed them to build a firm grounding in every science and prevented them from falling into confusion or contradiction.

The mindset of a student of knowledge should not be “I am finishing a course just to complete it” but rather “I am a traveller on this path until I meet Allah.” With patience, consistency, and by following the structured way of the scholars, knowledge becomes stable, beneficial, and transformative.





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Why do we need a **Manhajiyyah** in seeking knowledge?



Once a student has worked on purifying themselves and adopting the right manners and attributes required for seeking knowledge, the next essential step is to follow a clear methodology. Without it, confusion is inevitable, because knowledge is an ocean with no shore.

This is one of the main reasons why many students give up at an early stage. They become overwhelmed, unsure which books to study or which sciences to prioritise, and in what order. Without the guidance of a curriculum, a student cannot progress far. They end up repeating the basics without moving forward, or they jump from subject to subject without any sense of direction.

A methodology provides discipline and consistency. It ensures that each stage of study builds on the one before it, allowing steady growth across the sciences rather than scattered attempts that quickly fade away. Without this, inconsistency becomes the norm, and the student risks wasting years without true progress.

Another reason why following a methodology is so vital is because our time is limited. No one from this Ummah will live for a thousand years to study every single branch of knowledge. The Prophet ﷺ said:

((أَعْمَارُ أُمَّتِي مَا بَيْنَ السِّتِّينَ إِلَى السَّبْعِينَ، وَأَقَلُّهُمْ مَنْ يَجُوزُ ذَلِكَ))

A'māru ummatī mā bayna as-sitteena ilā as-sab'eena, wa aqalluhum may yajūzu dhālika

“The lifespan of my Ummah is between sixty and seventy, and few go beyond that.”





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Why do we need a **Manhajiyyah** in seeking knowledge?



This hadith reminds us of the urgency of time. We are not going to live forever, nor will we ever be able to encompass all knowledge. Allah reminds us in the Qur'an:

{وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا}

Wa mā ūtītum mina al-'ilmi illā qalīlā

"You have been given only a little knowledge." (Surah 17, Ayah 85)

Because our time in this world is short and our capacity is limited, it is essential that we take the most effective path to seek knowledge. That means choosing the path that brings the greatest benefit in the shortest time.

How do we know which path that is? The answer is by looking at those who already reached the levels we aspire to — the scholars of the past and present. We ask: How did they reach that stage? What books did they study? In what order did they progress?

This is what we mean by following a methodology and a curriculum. It is not about guessing what to read next or experimenting through trial and error. That only wastes precious time. Instead, it is about following the structured path laid down by the scholars who have already walked this journey, tested it, and shown us what works. By following their manhajiyyah, we are not just studying; we are walking in their footsteps, treading a path that leads to real progress and clarity.





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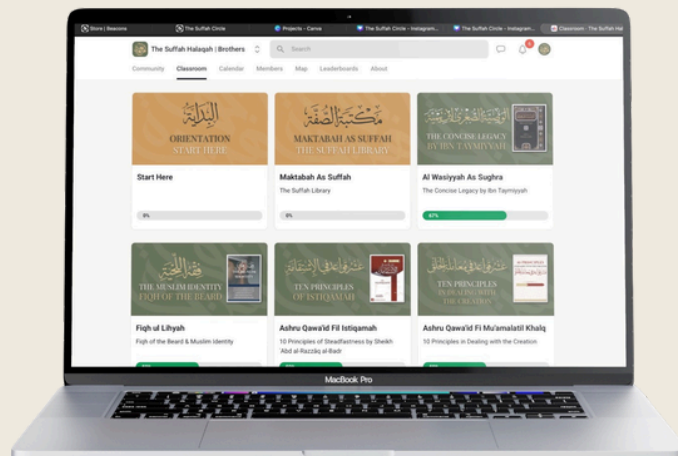
Why do we need a **Manhajiyyah** in seeking knowledge?

This guide is only a brief introduction to the methodology of seeking knowledge.

The scholars of the past did not begin with information alone, but with building the foundations of a student; sincerity, adab, and purification of the soul.

For those who wish to continue this journey in a structured environment, we have a private student community called The Suffah Halaqah, where we focus on studying the heart softening works of the scholars to nurture the character and build the discipline of a student of knowledge.

Join nearly 100 brothers and sisters already building their foundations inside [The Suffah Halaqah here](#).





The categories of Islamic sciences

Islamic sciences are divided into two category:

العلوم الغاية

Objective Sciences

- Aqīdah
- Fiqh
- Tafsīr
- Hadīth

العلوم الآلة

Tool Sciences

- Arabic
- Usūl ul Fiqh
- Qawā'id Fiqhiyyah
- Ulūm ul Qur'ān
- Ulūm ul Hadīth



The categories of Islamic sciences

Islamic sciences are divided into two main categories:

1. Al-'Ulūm al-Ghāyah (also called 'Ulūm Maqāsidah).

These are the objective sciences, so called because they are the ultimate aim of seeking knowledge. The objective sciences are four: 'Aqeedah, Fiqh, Ḥadīth, and Tafsīr.

Everything else that we study in the Islamic sciences is for the sake of understanding and applying these four. They form the foundation of a Muslim's religion and are the goal towards which all other learning is directed.

2. Al-'Ulūm al-Ālah.

These are the tool sciences. They include all the remaining branches of knowledge which serve as means to access and understand the objective sciences. For example, when we study Arabic, Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth, or Uṣūl al-Fiqh, these subjects are tools. While studying them is rewarding, their purpose is to equip the student to properly benefit from the objective sciences of 'Aqeedah, Fiqh, Ḥadīth, and Tafsīr.



The categories of Islamic sciences

When studying any of these sciences, it is essential that we look to the methodology recommended by the scholars. They are the ones who have already reached the levels we aspire to, and they have laid out clear paths to follow. Instead of wasting valuable time on trial and error, the wise student follows their direction, progressing along the path they themselves took.

For each science, we have broken down the recommended texts into **beginner**, **intermediate**, and **advanced** levels.

- At the beginner stage, we recommend studying at least three texts in each science. This repetition ensures that your foundations are firm and consistent before moving on.
- At the intermediate stage, you should study at least one or two works. It is important to note that very few books are written with the explicit aim of being “intermediate.” Most of the time, scholars authored books either for beginners or for advanced students. This is why you will sometimes find that a book labelled “intermediate” by some scholars is considered “beginner” by others.
- At the advanced stage, you should study at least one text, and if you wish to specialise in that particular science, then you will naturally study more. Advanced works are where deeper discussions, differences of opinion, and intricate details are explored in depth.

By following this methodology, the student ensures that their knowledge grows in a structured, stable way, just as the scholars of the past intended.



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How to study the Ulūm ul Ghāyah (Objective Sciences)





Aqīdah

Discusses the correct belief in Allah, His names and attributes, Tawheed, the unseen (al-ghayb), the pillars of imān, and protects the Muslim from shirk, doubts, and misguidance.

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
<p>Thalāthatul Usūl wa Adillatuhā - Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab</p> <p>Al Qawā'id Al Arba' - Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab</p> <p>Nawāqidul Islām - Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab</p> <p>Kashf Ash Shubuhāt - Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab</p>	<p>Kitāb At Tawhīd - Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab</p> <p>Al Qawā'id Al Muthlā - Sheikh Muhammad ibn Sālih Al Uthaymīn</p> <p>Al Aqīdah Al Wāsitiyyah - Sheikh Ul Islām Ibn Taymiyyah</p> <p>Sulamul Wusūl ilā ilm il Usūl - Hāfidh Al Hakami</p>	<p>Al Aqīdah At Tahāwiyyah - Abu Ja'far At Tahāwi</p> <p>Ar Risālah At Tadmuriyyah - Sheikh Ul Islām Ibn Taymiyyah</p> <p>Al Fatwa Al Hamawiyyah - Sheikh Ul Islām Ibn Taymiyyah</p>



Fiqh

Covers the rulings of worship (‘ibādāt) such as prayer, fasting, zakāh, and ḥajj, as well as transactions, marriage, contracts, and daily dealings; teaching the Muslim how to live according to the Sharī‘ah. There are four main schools of thought in this science.

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Hanafi	Mukhtasar Al Qudūri - Al Qudūri Al Mukhtār Lil Fatwa - Al Mawsili Kanzud Daqā‘iq - An Nasafi Multaqal Abhur - Al Halabi	Al Hidāyah - Marghīnāni Fathul Qadīr - Ibn Al Hammām	Raddul Muhtār Ala Durr il Mukhtār - Ibn Ābidīn
Shāfi‘i	Matn Abi Shujā‘ - Abu Shujā‘ Safīnatun Najāh - Sālim Al Hadrami Ad Durar Al Bahiyyah - Abu Bakr Ash Shāfi‘i	Al Muqaddimah Al Hadramiyyah - Abdullāh Al Hadrami Alfiyatuz Zubad - Ibn Raslān	Umdatus Sālik - Ahmed Al Misri Minhāj ut Tālibīn - An Nawawi Irshād ul Ghāwi - Ibn ul Muqri‘
Māliki	Al Murshid ul Mu‘īn - Ibn Āshir Aqrabil Masālik - Ad Dirdīr Ad Durr Ath Thamīn - Muhammad Mayyārah	Ar Risalah Al Fiqhiyyah - Ibn Abi Zayd Al Qayrawani Ash Sharh As Saghīr Alā Aqrabil Masālik - Ad Dirdīr	Mukhtasar Khalil - Khalīl Ibn Ishaq Al Jundi
Hanbali	Akhsarul Mukhtasarāt - Ibn Bulbān Umdatul Tālib - Al Bahūti Dalīl ut Tālib - Mar‘i Al Karmi Umdatul Fiqh - Ibn Qudāmah	Zād ul Mustaqni‘ - Al Hajjāwi Muntahaḥ Irādāt - Ibn un Najjar Al Futūhi	Al Iqnā‘ - Al Hajjāwi Al Muqhni - Ibn Qudāmah Al Insāf - Al Mardāwi



Tafsir

Explains the meanings of the Qur'an, its rulings, lessons, and linguistic subtleties, so the Muslim can understand and apply the speech of Allah in their lives.

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
<p>Tafsir Surah til Fātihah wa Qisāril Mufassal - Sheikh Sālih Al Usaymī</p> <p>At Tafsir Al Muyassar - Majma' Malik Al Fahd</p> <p>Tafsir Al Jalālayn - Al Jalālayn</p> <p>Zubdah ut Tafsir - Muhammad Al Ashqar</p> <p>Mukhtasar Tafsir ibn Kathir - Muhammad Ali As Sābūni</p>	<p>Tafsir Ibn Kathir - Ibn Kathir</p> <p>Tafsir Al Baghawi - Imām Al Baghawi</p> <p>Tafsir As Sa'di - Ibn Sa'di</p>	<p>Tafsir Al Qurtubi - Al Qurtubi</p> <p>Tafsir At Tabari - At Tabari</p> <p>Adwā'ul Bayān - Ash Shanqīti</p>



Hadith

Preserves the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet ﷺ, clarifying the meanings of the Qur'an and providing guidance for belief, worship, and character.

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Al Arba'ūn An Nawawiyah - An Nawawi	Umdatul Ahkām - Abdul Ghaniyy Al Maqdisi	Saheeh Al Bukhāri - Al Bukhāri
Al Adab Al Mufrad - Al Bukhāri	Bulūghul Marām - Ibn Hajar	Saheeh Muslim - Muslim
Riyād us Sālihīn - An Nawawi	Al Muharrar Fil Hadīth - Ibn Abdil Hādī	Sunan Abi Dāwūd - Abu Dāwūd
Ash Shamā'il At Tirmidhi - At Tirmidhi	Mishkātul Masābīh - At Tabrīzi	Sunan Tirmidhi - At Tirmidhi
		Sunan Nasā'i - An Nasā'i
		Sunan Ibn Mājah - Ibn Mājah
		Al Muwatta' - Mālik bin Anas
		Musnad Ahmad - Ahmad Ibn Hanbal



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How to study the Ulūm ul Ālah (Tool Sciences)





Arabic

The key to accessing the Qur'an and Sunnah in their original form. It has three main branches:

- Naḥw (Grammar): Teaches sentence structure.
- Şarf (Morphology): Explains word patterns, conjugations.
- Balāghah (Rhetoric): Covers eloquence and style.

Together, these branches equip the student to understand texts with precision and depth.

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
<p>Al Ājurrūmiyyah - Ibn Ājurrūm</p> <p>Madinah Books - Dr V. Abdur Raheem</p> <p>Al Arabiyyatu Bayna Yadayk Series</p> <p>Tashīl us Sarf</p>	<p>Mutammimah Al Ājurrūmiyyah - Al Hattāb Ar Raṭni</p> <p>Qatrun Nadā wa Ballus Saba - Ibn Hishām Al Ansāri</p> <p>Shudhūr al-Dhahab - Ibn Hishām Al Ansāri</p> <p>Sharh Sarf Al Bahā'i</p> <p>Al Jawhar Al Maknūn - Al Akhdari</p>	<p>Qawā'id ul l'rāb - Ibn Hishām Al Ansāri</p> <p>Alfiyah ibn Mālik - Muhammad bin Abdullāh bin Mālik</p> <p>Lāmiyatul Af'āl - Muhammad bin Abdullāh bin Mālik</p> <p>Al Kāfiyah - Ibn Al Hājjib</p> <p>Al Mufasssal - Zamarkhashi</p> <p>Mughni Al Labīb - Ibn Hishām Al Ansāri</p> <p>Uqūd ul Jammān - As Suyūti</p>

Usūl ul Fiqh

Lays down the principles by which rulings in fiqh are derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. It discusses proofs, evidences, and methods of deriving laws, giving the student tools to understand how jurists reached their conclusions.

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Hanafi	Usūl ush Shāshi - Ash Shāshi	Usūl ul Husāmi - Al Husāmi	Al Manār - An Nasafi
Shāfi'i	Al Waraqāt - Al Juwayni	Minhājul Wusūl - Baydāwi	Qawāti'ul Adillah - As Sam'āni
Māliki	Muqaddimah Ibn Al Qassār - Ibn Al Qassār	Maraqī as-Su'ud - Abdullah Al Shinqīti	At Taqrīb wal Irshād - Al Bāqillāni
Hanbali	Mukhtasar At Tahrīr - Ibn An Najjār Al Usūl Min Ilm il Usūl - Ibn Uthaymīn	Qawā'idul Usūl wa Ma'āqidul Fusūl - Safiy ud Deen Al Baghdādi	Rawdatun Nādhir - Ibn Qudāmah



Qawā'id Fiqhiyyah

General principles extracted from fiqh that apply across many rulings. These maxims simplify complex issues and train the student to think with fiqh-based reasoning.

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Hanafi	Usūl ul Karkhi - Abul Hassan Al Karkhi Ta'sīs un Nazhr - Ad Dabūsi	Al Ashbāh wan Nazhā'ir - Ibn Najīm	Majallatul Ahkām Al Adliyyah
Shāfi'i	Qawā'id ul Ahkām - Ibn Abdus Salām Al Ashbāh wan Nazhā'ir - Ibn ul Wakīl	Al Majmū' - Al Alāṭ Al Ashbāh wan Nazhā'ir - As Subkī	Al Manthūr Fil Qawā'id - Zarkashi Al Ashbāh wan Nazhā'ir - As Suyūti
Māliki	Idāh al Masalik - Al Wansharīsi	Al Furūq - Al Qarāfi	Qawā'id ul Fiqh - Al Muqri
Hanbali	Al Qawā'id Al Nūrāniyyah - Ibn Taymiyyah Al Qawā'id - Ibn Rajab	Qawā'id Majallatul Ahkām	Al Qawā'id wal Usūl - As Sa'di



Ulūm ul Qur'ān

Covers the various disciplines needed to study the Qur'an, such as the reasons for revelation (asbāb an-nuzūl), the types of verses (makkī and madanī), abrogation (nāsikh and mansūkh), modes of recitation (qirā'āt), and the preservation of the Qur'an. It gives a comprehensive understanding of the Qur'an as a text and revelation.

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
<p>Muqaddimah Fī Usūl Tafsīr - Ibn Taymiyyah</p> <p>Usūl fit Tafsīr - Muhammad ibn Sālih Al Uthaymīn</p> <p>Risālah Fī Usūl Tafsīr - As Suyūti</p> <p>Muqaddimat ut Tafsīr - Ibn Al Qāsim</p>	<p>At Tahreer Fī Usūl Tafsīr - Musā'id At Tayyār</p> <p>Al Muharrar Fī Ulūm il Qur'an - Musā'id At Tayyār</p>	<p>Al Itqān Fī Ulūm il Qur'ān - As Suyūti</p> <p>Al Burhān Fī Ulūm il Qur'ān - Az Zarkashi</p>



Usūl ul Hadīth

Explains the methodology used to preserve and authenticate hadith. It covers the classifications of narrations (ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan, ḍaʿīf), the conditions for accepting narrators, chains of transmission (isnād), and terminology used by hadith scholars. It allows the student to appreciate the precision with which the Sunnah was preserved.

Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Al Manzhūmah Al Bayqūniyyah - Al Bayqūni	Ikhtisār Ulūm il Hadīth - Ibn Kathīr	Muqaddimah Ibn Salāh - Ibn Salāh
Nukhbatul Fikr - Ibn Hajar Al Asqalāni	Al Mūqizhah - Adh Dhahabi	Tadrīb Ar Rāwi - As Suyūti
Nuzhatun Nadhr - Ibn Hajar Al Asqalāni	Muqaddimah Sahīh Muslim - Imām Muslim	Fathul Mughīth - As Sakhāwi
	Al Madkhal Ilā Ulūm il Hadīth - Al Hākīm	Al Kifāyah Fī ilm Ar Riwāyah - Al Khatīb Al Baghdādi
	At Tadhkirah Fī Ulūm il Hadīth - Ibn Al Mulaqqin	Al Jāmi' li Akhlaqir Rāwi wa Ādābis Sāmi' - Al Khatīb Al Baghdādi
		Alfiyat ul Irāqi - Al Irāqi



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How to **combine** between the sciences



When a student begins studying the different sciences of Islam, there are two possible approaches.

The first approach is to study one science at a time. For example, a student may start with Aqeedah and study all of the foundational texts in that field. Once he has built a strong base, he moves on to Fiqh, then to Tafseer, then to Hadith, and so on. After completing the foundations of each science, he then returns to the moves into the intermediate stage, before eventually specialising in one science at the advanced level.

The second approach is to combine between the sciences. In this case, the student studies one foundational text in Aqeedah, while at the same time studying a foundational text in Fiqh, and perhaps another in Tafseer or Hadith.

Some scholars have encouraged one of these approaches over the other. In reality, however, the matter goes back to the student himself.

A student should honestly analyse his own ability. If he is capable of managing multiple sciences at once, then this is beneficial, because he gains an overview of the deen and begins to see the overlap and connections between different fields. If, however, he finds it overwhelming, then there is no harm in focusing on one science at a time, mastering its foundations before moving on.





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Common mistakes to avoid



There are a number of common mistakes that hold students back from progressing in their knowledge.

1. Lack of Structure

Without a clear methodology, a student does not know what to study or in what order. This prevents them from progressing from beginner texts to intermediate and advanced works in the correct way. A curriculum gives direction and ensures steady growth.

2. Taking on Too Much Too Soon

Many students attempt to study works far above their level, which only leads to confusion and burnout. The scholars emphasised *tadarruj* — gradual progression — and warned against expecting to become a scholar overnight. Knowledge is built step by step, not in haste.

3. Not Studying with a Teacher

Islamic knowledge has always been passed down through teachers, beginning with the Prophet ﷺ himself. He said:

تَسْمَعُونَ وَيُسْمَعُ مِنْكُمْ وَيُسْمَعُ مِمَّنْ سَمِعَ مِنْكُمْ

Tasma'ūna wa yusma'ū minkum wa yusma'ū mimman sami'a minkum

“You hear from me, and others will hear from you, and people will hear from those who heard from you.” (Sunan Abī Dāwūd)

This chain of transmission shows that knowledge is not taken from books alone. The teacher is the key to unlocking the author's words, clarifying the correct meaning, and correcting mistakes. While recordings of scholars are beneficial today, every student should have at least one teacher they can refer back to for personal guidance.





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Common mistakes to avoid



4. Neglecting the Tool Sciences

Some students think the tool sciences are unnecessary. In reality, without them, the objective sciences cannot be understood in depth. A mujtahid, for example, must have knowledge of Uṣūl al-Fiqh in order to derive rulings. Similarly, without Arabic, the Qur'an and Sunnah cannot be truly understood in their original language. These sciences are essential tools for excelling in every discipline.

5. Ignoring Scholarly Advice

The scholars have already reached the levels we aspire to. It is a mistake to disregard their guidance on what to study and in what order. To ignore their advice is to waste time in trial and error instead of following the proven path they outlined.

6. Lack of Consistency

Discipline and consistency are the hallmarks of a successful student.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ

Aḥabbu al-a'māli ilallāhi adwamuhā wa in qalla

“The acts most pleasing to Allah are those done most consistently, even if small.” (Bukhārī and Muslim)

A student should never let a day go by without engaging in some form of study or revision. Even a small amount of consistent effort, built into a daily routine, is better than large amounts done irregularly.





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Seeking knowledge was never meant to be a solitary or unstructured journey.

The scholars of the Salaf cultivated students by grounding them in adab, tazkiyatun nafs, and the foundational sciences, building them slowly book by book.

If you wish to continue this path with structure and companionship, you are welcome to join our Suffah Halaqah, where we revive this approach in a weekly study circle.

Join nearly 100 brothers and sisters already building their foundations inside [The Suffah Halaqah](#) here.

