

Contribution of Anwar Shah Kashmiri to the Hadith Literature in India

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ABSTRACT

Anawr Shah Kashmiri, a versatile genius, occupies a prominent position among the commentators of hadith literature that India has ever produced. The hadith Literature means the literature which consists of narration of the sayings of the Prophet and the things approved by him. Allamah Kashmiri is said to have ushered in a new era in the commentary of hadith literature in India. He was a great scholar, poet, philosopher, orator and above all, a great commentator of hadith Literature. He will be remembered with his matchless contribution in imparting Islamic education. His nature and mental set up had been shaped to be a great Islamic jurist and a momentous commentator of hadith literature. Since his child hood, he embarked upon the colossal task of interpretation of the Holy Quran and hadith. His vision was mainly confined to the Quranic problems as dealt with the different religious sects in a manner which tended to threaten the very existence of Islam. His sophisticated arguments, having been based upon authentic prophetic traditions and Quranic verses proved very active and decisive. His contribution particularly in the field of hadith literature cannot be ignored or overestimated. The aim of this paper is to discuss the development of Hadith Literature and its significance of Muslim culture. This paper also aims to highlight the contribution made by Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri to the Hadith literature who was admittedly the leader of his time in Islamic sciences and prophetic traditions.

Key Words: *Quranic Verses, Hadith Literature, Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Islamic Sciences.*

1. Introduction

Hadith is the branch of science of knowledge which elucidates the words of God and explains the Quranic revelations. The *hadith* Literature means the literature which consists of narration of the sayings of the Prophet and the things approved by him. *Hadith*, the sayings attributed to the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) form a sacred literature which for the Muslims ranks second in importance only to the

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Quran itself. As a source of law, ethics and doctrine, the vast corpus of hadith continue to exercise decisive influence. Indian Islamic scholars have devoted immense efforts to collect classify, evaluate and comment on hadith. *Hadith* is the integral part to the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran and *hadith* are inseparably linked to each other. It is impossible to understand the meaning of the Quran without going through the hadith. The Arabic word *hadith* has the primary connotation of 'new' being used as an antonym of *Qadeem* 'old'. The term hadith applied to specific reports of the Prophet's words and deeds as well as those of many of the early Muslims. The *hadith* Literature means the literature which consists of narration of the sayings of the Prophet and the things approved by him. *Hadith* is the branch of science of knowledge which elucidates the words of God and explains the Quranic revelations. *Hadith* literature along with other Islamic religious sciences started spreading in Indian subcontinent and in this connection we find a good number of Islamic scholars of India came out and devoted their lives to the service of this noble and sacred task. Anwar Shah Kashmiri occupies a prominent position among the commentators of *hadith* literature that India has ever produced. Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri was a great scholar, poet, philosopher, orator and above all, a great commentator of Prophetic traditions in India. He will be remembered with his matchless contribution in imparting Islamic education particularly in the field of hadith literature. He was admittedly the leader of his time in Islamic sciences and hadith literature.

2. The Significance of Hadith Literature

Hadith is the integral part to the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran and hadith are inseparably linked to each other. It is impossible to understand the meaning of the Quran without going through the hadith. The Quran is the message and the hadith is the explanation of the message by the messenger himself. Hadith explains clarifies and removes the ambiguity about the Quran. The commentary of Prophetic traditions is a noteworthy phenomenon in Arabic Prose. Hadith, the discourse of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) though emanated from his lips, is said to be the *Wahee Ghair Matluoo* (Uninspired revelation). The Prophet of Islam never uttered a single word from his own will. Rather all his words were animated by the divine impulses. It is categorically stated in the Holy Quran that under no circumstances, he holds talks out of passion. The Prophet received the *Wahee Ghair Matloo* hadith, a revelation in which was declared the sense only of what he afterwards delivered to his followers in his own words. But the Prophet himself has informed us that all his sayings deeds and acts are not to be considered as revelations. The Quran is the full and final authority in all religious and social matter. Prophet of Islam has said

clearly: "I am nothing more than a mortal. Accept and act according to what I say relative to your religion: but when I order you anything on my own accounts, then, On I am a man".¹ In the course of time, an elaborate system of traditions was built up by the Muslim scholars to cope with the exigencies of time, particularly when the Holy Quran was found insufficient for the complicated issues that required of the rapid expanding empire. The companions had treasured his obiter dicta with utmost care and attentively watch all his action to seek the guidance. During the first century of Islam, from the prophetic mission of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) to the year 110 A.H. There was multitude of living witnesses from whom traditions were collected to memory and orally handed down.² Besides clarifying and supplementing the Quran, Hadith literature provided the Muslim community with prophetic precept and examples covering the whole range of man's duty.³ The nocturnal journey vaguely reported in one solitary Quranic verse developed in the hadith an extensive and colorful crop of elaborate traditions. The hadith literature further served as a vehicle for transmitting wise sayings, anecdotes, parables and miracles.⁴

Hadith is to be said the ways and methods to execute the Quranic ordains in practical life. It is clear that hadith is practical whereas the Quran is the theory. Like all other religious scriptures, the Quranic verses, have been abstruse and unintelligible, required elaboration from proper grasping of ideas. Its importance assumed great dimension, especially after the fall of Mecca to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) when the illiterate people of Mecca started to come in the fold of Islam at large number, the urgency of the situation raised need to illustrate and explain the meaning of the Quranic verses according to their intellect level. Over and above the work of reading out the revelations to his companions, the Prophet Mohammad (pbhm) used to teach them the book and wisdom which was supposed to mean the laws of Shariat and secrets of the religion. The Holy Quran categorically declares: Undoubtedly, Allah had done favor to the faithful when He sent a messenger from among themselves. He recites His verse to them, exhorts them and teaches them the Quran and wisdom.⁵

Abu Ali Shah al-Yamani- the first companion who asked permission from Prophet to put into writing some of his sayings, is credited with leadership in Hadith literature before the formal commentary of the Holy Quran and consequently of hadith emerged from the hands of Ubai b. ka'b Mujahid and Abdullah b. Abbas.⁶ According to them, Better understanding of the implications of the Quranic verses rest upon the prophetic traditions that help exposing the exact intention of Allah. After the departure of the Prophet Mohammad (pbhm), the importance of hadith

grew leaps and bound. In this regard, Von Kremer says: “life of the Prophet, his discourses and utterance, his actions, his silent approval and even his passive conduct constitute next to the Quran the second most important source of law for the young Muslim empire.⁷ It was Quran and hadith that had been the main cause of the origin of many branches of Arabic literature. Quran and hadith have been the basis if all the scientific activities of the Muslim and became the central theme of their intellectual exercise.

3. Origin and Development of Hadith Literature

The beginning of hadith must be traced back to the letters, laws and treaties which were dictated by the Prophet of Islam himself and were presented in his time. The formal commentary work began at hands of Anas b. Malik. And Abdullah b. Masoud, the tow very closes associates of the Prophet. Though, the compilation of hadith in book forms came in the period of the most pious Ummyad caliph Umar b. Abdul Aziz at the instance of a Medinite Qazi, Abu Bakr b. Hazm al- Khazrazi who is a subsequent historical fact the same judicial necessity which prompted the caliph to assimilate the prophetic traditions, induced the new Muslims of later generations, especially the judges and preachers to seek the help of the commentators in rendering social justice and including the ideology of Islam.⁸

The Abbasid period saw the rise of four leading personalities with the emergence of various schools of thoughts. These leading personalities are Abu hanifa, Malik b. Anas, Mohammd Idris Shafiee and Ahmad b. Hanbal. All of them dedicated themselves to the cause of Islamic jurisprudence. They had set up four different schools of thoughts with minor differences in their view points. Within a very short span of one hundred forty one years, these eminent savants, some of who were Tabyeen and other Tabe Tabyeen brought about revolutionary changes in the field of Hadith literature. Their contribution enriched the treasury of Shariat law.

The third Islamic century witnessed the compilation of the various collection of hadith into six major books that became later the highest standard. The compilers of these six canonical works, Imam bukhar, Imam Muslim, Tirmidhi and Imam Abu Daud, Nasai and Ibn Majah rendered a remarkable contribution to the Islamic theology. In the course of time, a number of hadith commentators flourished in different parts of world that devoted their entire life to interpret the hadith literature from the stand point of the various schools of thoughts.

4. Development of Hadith Literature in India

The early Arab rationalists who came to India and settled in the western coast of the country, particularly Daibul and Mansura of Gujrat, were all famous commentators of the Holy Quran and hadith Literature. It was due to their untiring efforts and zeal the hadith literature developed and spread in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. Since the occupation of Sind by Mohammad b. Qasim, a galaxy of savants made its appearance in the horizon in India. Among the prominent personalities whose contribution is considerable and remarkable, Sahikh Ahmed Sirhindi, Shah Waliullah, Shah Abdul Aziz deserved especial mentioning. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi known as mujaddid Alfe Sani devoted his life to defense Islamic sharia against the Din -e- Ilahi launched by Moghal Empire Akbar. He was a commentator of hadith of some repute, as manifested in his arguments.⁹ Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, a master in the realm of theology, whose epoch making monumental work, Hujjatulah al-Baligha provided operational facilities on a wide scale to the traditionalists of the later generation and his able son Shah Abdul Aziz who evinced keen interest in Islamic jurisprudence, and commentary of the Holy Quran as well as the prophetic traditions has laid the foundation of Islamic sciences in India. Having been a spiritual and educational descendent, Anwar Shah Kashmiri was really indebted to Shah Abdul, Aziz for his commentary works.¹⁰ Similarly, Maulana Qasim Nanotivi, Haji Imadullah, Rasheed Ahmad Gangiohi, Maulana Mahmudul Hasan and Ahmad Ali Sahanpuri – all of them being his contemporary well known traditionalists and under whom he acquired proficiency in Islamic sciences played no less important role in papering his mind and at the same time imparting him the technique of interpretation of Hadith literature.

5. Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri

He was born in the valley of Doulab Kashmir in the year 1875. He started his primary education under the guidance of his father Muazzam Shah who was a learned man of his time. He noted uncommon intelligence and genius of his son from his very childhood. Within a few years, he completed his studies in different branches of Islamic learning. He associated with Darul Uloom Deoband when he was a young boy at the age of twenty first years to higher studies and became a student of Maulana Mahmudul Hasan who later known by his remarkable contribution in the freedom struggle of India as Shaikhul Hind. He learned there and trained at the hands of prominent scholars like Khalil Ahmad Sahanpuri, Maulana Ishaque Amritsari, Maulana Ghulam Rasool and many others. Later he

proceeded to Gangoh and attached with Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi, a famous authority on hadith literature in India.¹¹

Having been completed his higher education in Islamic sciences like Fiqh, Tafseer, and specialized in Hadith he, started his professional life as teacher at Aminia Madrasa, m Delhi, He served there three years then he decided to go back his home town where he established a Madarsa known as Faize Aam.¹²

6. Anwar Shah Kashmiri as Hadith Teacher

He joined Darul Uloom Deoband as Muhaddith in 1333A.H. when Maulana Mahmudul Hasana left for Mecca and became busy in his political life. Later he became the Head of the institute but very soon he had to resign the post in protest against some whimsical activities of the governing body. He left for Dhabil in Surat the state of Gujrat and managed to establish a new Madarsa known by Jamia Islamia. Later he returned to Deoband, he was attacked by disease and it was there he was breathed his last in 1933. Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri was a admittedly the leader of his time in Islamic Sciences. Islamic theology was the main subject he developed a keen interest in it he had also gone through a considerable numbers of books in modern sciences.

7. Anwar Shah Kashmiri as Arabic Poet

Anwar Shah as a poet was eclipsed by the commentator and Jurist Anwar shah. His nature and mental set up led him to respond to the call of duties towards religious studies. Very soon, He embarked upon the colossal task of interpretation of the holy Quran and hadith with special reference to the juristic laws that aimed at defending the fundamentals of Islam.¹³

8. Anwar Shah Kashmiri as a commentator of the Quran

His vision, first of all, was mainly confined to the Quranic problems as dealt with by different religious sects in manner which tended to threaten the very existence of Islam. By writing articles on intricate Islamic question such as; Yajooj Majooj, Aqidah Khatm-e- Nubuwat, Masalah takfiaya, qirat Khalf al- Imam, Aameen bil-jahr, Masalah Witr, Raf'a Yadain, Aqeedah Nozool'Isa, Yaum -e- Shurah ki Yareekh and others alike Anwar Shah Kashmiri evoked stir among the religious thinkers. His sophisticated arguments having been based on authentic Prophetic traditions and Quranic verses proved very active and decisive.

9. Anwar Shah Kashmiri as Commentator of Hadith

The hadith Literature means the literature which consists of narration of the sayings of the Prophet and the things approved by him. So far as his contribution to the commentary of hadith literature is concerned, his service and devotion in this field cannot be ignored or overlooked. The root and foundation of all religious sciences as described by Mahmood Ahmad Siddiqie, is the depth knowledge of hadith, jurisprudence and interpretation of Quranic verses are closely related to it. So his inclination as well as interest is towards the prophetic sayings.¹⁴ (14) According to him, a commentator is not likely to excel in his work of exposition unless and until he is equipped with adequate knowledge of the principles of traditions and juristic laws underlying them, or the tracts of the four Imams in respect of controversial issues and their divergent comments and views over the issue. The sources and the foundations of such disputed opinions, Anwar Shah Kashmiri was adorned with these qualities.¹⁵

Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri decided to advocate the Hanafi view of points in juristic laws by interpretation of the prophetic traditions. At the outset, he undermined the position of the traditionists, then he proceeded to explain the ambiguity, and arrest the just meaning of the text through proper investigation. The objections raised by others were duly met by him logically. For this he was fully aware that his predecessors were apt to narrate tradition keeping in view the chains of narrators and the text themselves without going into their possibilities or impossibilities. Anwar Shah had also propounded certain basic principles relating to the procedure of interpretation of the Quranic verses like Tafseer bir-Rai Interpretation of the Quran as per one's own opinion and personal judgment not backed by Sahih, Hasan or even Dhaif hadith- a method which was not upheld by orthodox scholars. The views of the Imams were taken into consideration while dealing with any particular problems. Imam Abu Hanifa used to explain many verses in the light of his own judgment, even when Khabar wahid – kind of traditions of suspicious nature was available. Imam Shafee raised plausible questions about the fate of the Quranic verses over which the traditions were completely silent. The number of traditions pertaining to the Quranic verses as narrated by famous companion Abdullah b. Abbas being limited around one hundred only, they failed to encompass the entire sphere of revelations. Whereas Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal observed that Tafseer literature has no foundation for itself. Even in Bukhari Sharif, the tradition having bearing on the Quranic verses are meager compared to those in other chapters of the book. That is why; Imam

Bukhari directed his attention to the interpretation of the words deployed in the verses instead of the ideas contained therein.

Anwar Shah Kashmiri is of opinion that any person, learned in Islamic science, is capable of interpreting the meaning of Quran and anyone who has basic knowledge can ascertain the real meaning and ideas after giving due consideration to the contexts as well as the words involving the faith of the earlier scholars whose contribution to the exposition of ambiguous ideas are beyond measure. This kind of Tafseer bir-Rai, according to Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri is acceptable in Islam.¹⁶ In course of teaching tradition hadith, Allamah Anwar Shah used to extract the true sense of the text in pursuance the rules of Arabic Grammar. The process of subjecting the sense of the tradition to the scientific technicalities, which constituted a gross violation of the norms of etiquette, was not preferred by him. While teaching and discussion on hadith, he dealt with important rhetorical points, just as the Quran commentators do. The method of explaining the sources of hadith especially related to the Quranic verses was adopted with view in solving the difficulties involved in the Quran. When necessity arose, he entertained discussion *Asamaur- Rijal*- Chain of the narrations of hadith, particularly those about whom the tradionists differ in their views. After pointing out the differences, in the science of tradition *Jarha wa tadeel*, he advanced his own considered opinion regarding the reliability of the narrator. Whenever he examined any juridical law under laying a tradition, he first of all, referred to the views of the four schools of thoughts and then dealt with proof which was looked upon the strongest one according to the jurist. Thereafter he explained his personal views on the concern hadith and then established the superiority of Imam Abu Hanifa's point of view in comparison to other school of thoughts but in every case, he kept in his mind the actual goal of Shariyat.

Anwar Shah Kashmiri was a real Mujtahid in the appropriate sense of the term. He was aware of the whole conditions of the Shariyat. In the matter of quoting the different opinions from different school of thoughts, he put forward the original arguments of the leaders of Ijtehad followed by the statements of the philosopher of the laws.¹⁷

He was apt to express his standpoint on a particular issue even when discussions on controversial topic were in progress. This was treated as a kind of verdict given by him on the subject. So far as teaching of Bukhari is concerned, his attention was firstly directed towards the solution of the Trajim, set at the heading of each chapter for the purpose of demonstrating the ideas of the compiler. Then, he used to point

to any of the four Imams whose tract was actually chosen and traversed by him. On an examination of the entire work of Bukhari, one can easily understand that in most cases, barring a few known problems, both Imam Abu Hanifa and Abdul Malik agreed in principles. It is further observed that since Ibn Hajr Asqalani was a follower of Imam Shafuiee, the decisions and deduction of Imam Thavi were quoted profusely in Futuhul bari, a commentary on Bukhari, as remarkable noble service to Shafiee's cause. No juristic problems can be traced wherein Ibn Hajr Asqalani went unnoticed and unheeded by Anwar Shah Kashmiri. To make a breakthrough in the Shariyat relation, recourse was taken to the4 comments of Muhiuddin Ibn Arabi and Shaikh Abdul Wahab Sharani. His lectures delivered in the course of teaching were deemed very compact, terse, brief and consequently beyond the comprehension of the common folk. Hakimul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi maintained that independent article could have been written over each sentence of his dissertation. Since a great bulk of his time spent in studies and teaching work, he could not concentrate his mind on complication or collection of Hadith Literature. In spite of his uncommon experience and greatness in science of Hadith, his productions did not approach the standard of Hafiz Ibn Qaim, Qurtabi, Suyyuti and Ibn Hazam. Among his celebrated works on Hadith literature the followings are worth mentioning:

- ***Anwarul Mahmood Fi Sharh Sunan Abi Daud:*** This book is in two volumes. Basically it is commentary on the Sunan of Abu Daud. It comprises the annotations and discourse of Anwar Shah, while teaching his students Sunan Aabu Daud. One of his noble students Mohammad Siddique Nazib Abidi has compiled this commentary works and inserted not only the lectures he delivered in the classroom at Dabhil Madradsa in Gujrat but also put many others views of the earlier commentators. In addition, it has been observed in this book, that the author has exemplified a lot of the terms, expressions and various words explained in detail.
- ***Al-Arf al-Shaddi ala Jami al- Tirmidhi:*** This is an Arabic commentary on *Jami Tirmidhi*. This book contains the annotations and lectures of Anwar Shah delivered during his teaching life. It was compiled and edited by his noble student Moulvi Chrag Mahammad Punjabi in the year 1338 A.H. On the a close scrutiny of the text, It was observed that Allamah anwar Shah Kashmiri was considerably influenced by such commentators as Khutabi, Ibn Abdul Bar, Hafiz Fezlullah, Ibn Taimia , Ibn Qayyim and many others. As an exponent of Hanafi Scholl of

thoughts, Allamah Kashmiri 's aim , besides exposition of ideas and grammatical complexities as is evident in his work was predominantly the determination of Abu Hanifa's exalted position in regard to the juristic problems.

- ***Sharah Urdu Sahih Bukhari:*** This commentary on Bukhari Sharif was recorded into Urdu from Arabic by his student Syed Ahmad Bigmuri for the common definite if the general Urdu knowing people. Maulana's discourser during his teaching career spread over various branches of religious learning. From his treatment, it is apparent that a balance was sought to be maintained between the literary and juristic aspects in a tradition.
- ***Faidh al-Bari fi Sharh-e- Sahih al- Bukhari:*** This is one of the famous books. It is a collection of his lectures on Bukhari. This compilation of this work was done by Bedre Alam Marathi, one of his most trustworthy disciples. After the compilation he placed before him for necessary correction. Maulna Kashmiri has adopted a novel plan; he picked up only those words that implied religious significance. Nowhere in his discourse, he strived to identify the narrators through whom the tradition actually came and attributed. The he opted the approach of linguistic obscurities contained in the text as was done by his predecessors. To explore new avenues in the realm of commentary work, he followed the Arabian traditionists like Badruddin Ainee, Ibn Hajr, Asqlanee and Qastlani and many others. He had displaced a critical outlook both in accepting others views and was very much care full in quoting genuine prophetic traditions. In many cases he was found to have abandoned the traditional path of earliest annotators and paved the new ways for the posterity. While dealing with the juristic issues, He was often tended to place the viewpoints of other school of thoughts.

Apart from this, Maulana Kashmiri had to his credit certain other commentaries. As to his annotations on Sahih Muslim those were only the collections of his lectures delivered at the time of teaching the students. Maulana Munazir Ahsan Geelani, his noble student recorded them with utmost care but it could not be published.¹⁸ He is beloved to be having written marginal notes on Sunan Ibn Maja that is kawnn by Hashaye Ibn Maja in his own handwritings. These appendixes assumed the shape of voluminous commentary work. He mentioned some issues which previous commentators did not touch. His books on Islamic jurisprudence in the light of Imam Abu hnifa's school of thought are the cause of his permanent

place of respect and honor in the hearts of hanafis. He proved to all Christians of the world that the real admirers of Jesus are the only Muslims by writing *Aqeedatul Islam fi hayat Eisa Alaihs Salam*.

10. Conclusion

The hadith, the sayings attributed to the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) form a sacred literature which for the Muslims ranks second in importance only to the Quran itself. As a source of law, ethics and doctrine, the vast corpus of *hadith* continue to exercise decisive influence. Muslim scholars have devoted immense efforts to collect classify, evaluate and comment on hadith. It is embodiment of literature that functions as the most authoritative interpretation of the text of the Quran. Anwar Shah Kashmiri was a great Islamic scholar who tried his level best to revive all Islamic sciences particularly prophetic traditions in India and facilitated to the common people as well. He was very brilliant in explaining scientific expressions and solving the complex Arabic words and terminology in a very simple and easy manner. His writing style seems to be quite good, impressive with easy expression and minute investigation. We may come to conclusion that Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri was an outstanding Indian scholar who contributed a lot in the field of hadith literature. Maulana Mohammad Idris Kandhlavi would call his Imam Zuhri of our times. His hadith commentary books have been acknowledged not only by India scholars but also Arab scholars. Noted scholar Rasheed Radh al- Misri said: I have never seen a more distinguished scholar of hadith than Allamah Kashmiri.¹⁹ We may compare him with the great scholars of the Arab world. He had mastered all branches of Islamic sciences but occupies special position in the commentary of hadith. He will be remembered by his matchless contribution to field of *Hadith* Literature in India.

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