

SHEIKH AHMAD SIRHINDI'S UNDERSTANDING AND INSIGHT INTO HADITH

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Abstract:

When Sheikh Ahmed began his reform movement Muslim society was ridden with un-Islamic practices and trends. The mystics and Sufis of those days openly denied authenticity of Sharia by declaring Sharia as Superficial and unnecessary covering. They even proudly manifested their indifference towards the Sunnah. The Ulama and Theologians ceased to refer to the Quran and Hadith in their commentaries and considered jurisprudence as the only religious knowledge. By these trends the religious spirit excessively got diminished and gave rise to the juristic view of Islam. Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi adopted an effective method of persuasion by writing letter to the leading nobles of the royal court. His letters are known as Muktubat-e-Imam Rabbani. Sheikh Sirhindi was greatly opposed to the atheism and openly denounced un-Islamic society. He worked very hard to restore the original teaching of Islam. He declared that mysticism without Sharait was misleading.

The Ahadith of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) have a very basic importance in the Islamic Shari'ah. A Muslim keeps on trying to arrange his life under the light of Prophet's Sahri'ah. The companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) preserved the actions and sayings of the Prophet (S.A.W) for Ummah and then, in the form of knowledge and practice, they transferred Ahadis generation after generation. The path of "self purification" chosen by Sufis was exactly under the glorious light of the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W) life. This is why in sufi literature there are many examples of argumentation and authentication from Ahadis.

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi also adopted this way and maintained the tradition of argumentation from Ahadis. We can found an element of extreme love in following the Hadith as compared to other Sufis

According to him ideal life was the life spent under the laws of Shari'ah and in any case never tolerated even a little deviation from the Holy Shari'ah. He condemned the division (distribution) of Bidah done by Ulama, and adopted the opinion that there can be never any state of "hassan" in bidah. (1) According to him the self purification was almost impossible without following Shari'ah that is why he used to quote following verse from Saadi:- (2)

محال است سعدی که راه صفا
توان رفت جز در پی مصطفی

His investigation (research) is that the quotations from Sufis those which are under the jurisdiction of hadith would be accepted but those which even minutely clash would be rejected no matter how great is the sufi who says it. (3) The way he wrote about following Shari'ah its examples are seldom found. Have a look at the letter wrote to Syed Shah Muhammad.

There are seven grades in following to follow Rasulallah (S.A.W.)

The first one is to learn, believe and do the rules of Islam. All Muslims savants, zahids [those who do not set people their hearts on worldly possessions] and abids {Peoples who try to perform all kinds of worships] following Rasulallah(S.A.W) are in this grade. Their nafs [a malignant power in man that forces him to do what Allah prohibits and not to do what Allah commands] haven't fully believed or surrendered to Allah. Allah hu ta'ala, with His great pity, accepts only the belief in their hearts.

The second grade, together with doing the commands, is to follow all the instructions and habits of Rasulallah (S.A.W.) and to purify the heart from evil inclinations. Those who walk on the path of tasawwuf are in this grade.

The third grade involves confirming oneself to all the states, spirituals pleasures, and things that come to the heart which occurred to Rasulallah (S.A.W.) This grade is obtained in the rank which tasawwuf calls wilayat-e-Hassa. Here, the nafs, too, believes and obeys and all worships become real and perfect.

The forth level consists of being real and faultless in all auspicious deeds as well as in all acts of worship. This is peculiar to the great ones who are called "Ulama-e-Rasikheen." These savants with perfect knowledge understand the deep meanings and denotations in the Quran and Hadith. The nafs of all of them believed and became obedient. Blessings of this sort falls to the lot of either those who advance in the way of tasawwuf and wilayat or those who obey all the sunnats and abstain from all the bidets. Today, bidets have invaded the whole world, and sunnats have been loost; so much so that it is beyond possibility to recover the sunnats and adhere to them and to save oneself from this ocean of bidets. However, customs cannot build up the religion or the Shariat, no matter how widely they have settled and spread or how beautiful they look. Things that are haram or cause disbelief can never be halal or jais (permitted), even if they are customarily done or used [It means that to reach this grade it is obligatory today to

advance on the way of tasawwuf. In the early centuries of Islam it was easy to follow all the sunnah. There was no specific need of tasawwuf then].

The fifth grade is to adapt oneself to the perfect, high qualities peculiar to Rasulallah (S.A.W.). These qualities can't be obtained through knowledge or worshipping. They come only through Allah's blessing. In this grade are great Prophets (S.A.W.) and very few great ones of the ummat of Rasulallah.

The sixth grade is to adapt oneself to the perfect qualities of mahbubiyat [to receive the hidden blessings that are given to the darling himself, Rasulallah] and ma'shuqiyyat [to receive the hidden blessings that are given to the darling himself, Rasulallah] in Rasulallah (S.A.W.). This is peculiar to those whom Allahu ta'ala loves very much; it can't be obtained through blessings, muhabbat (love) is necessary.

The seventh grade involves all the motes of a man's body adapting themselves to him. The follower is so similar to the one followed that a state of imitation no longer exists. He, too, as if like Rasulallah(S.A.W), takes everything from the same source.(4)

If we deeply study this letter it becomes apparent that he wanted to see every outer and inner aspect under the obedience of Shari'ah and as much a person will mold himself in this way he would get that much awareness of Allah and would get the status of Allah's beloved people.

In his days of acquiring knowledge and education Sheikh Ahmad not only got the words of hadith from famous scholars but also got the meaning and practice of those words. Other than his father Sheikh Abd-al-Ahad he got the understanding of hadith from Imams of hadith like Muhammad Kamal-ud-din Yoqoob Kashmiri and Bahlol Badakhshi. (5)There are nearly three hundred Ahadis in letters copied by him. It was the result of his taste (passion) for hadith that scholars like Abd-Al-Ghani, M. Saeed, Moulana Saeed Naqshbandi and Dr. Babar Baig conducted research work on these Ahadis from his letters. The argumented from Ahadith in Risial (pamphlets) other than letters. The importance of hadith in his thought could be judged from the booklet he compiled in which 40 Ahadis are collected from Bukhari and Muslim which are a guidance for every major aspect of life.

In the 10th century there was a widespread trend of (fiqa) jurisprudence, but with his efforts this trend diverted to Ahadis from the fiqa.

One of his sons wrote explanatory notes on Mishkat-Al-Masabih the other compiled the prayers practiced by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) from Ahadis. The grandson of Khawaja Masoom(R.A) wrote an explanation of Sahih-al-Bukhari with the name of Faiz-Al-Bari and the efforts in spreading of Hadith in Sub-Continent by Shah Wali-Ullah were influenced by Sheikh Ahmad. Shah Wali Ullah's certification of Hadith reached Sheikh Ahmad.

As a result of his laborious efforts a strong group of Muhaddis, Sufis came into existence.

The scholars of hadith, as a result of his efforts and service to hadith, copy his quotations in explanation of hadith. In this regard the explanations of Ahmed Raza Bijnori, Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Shah Abdul Ghani, Shabir Ahmed Usmani, Idrees Kandhooli, Siraj Sirhindi, Saleem Ullah Khan, M. Zakariya and Ghulam Rasool Saeedi could be seen.

Following points can be extracted from the above discussion:-

- 1) In Sufi thought hadith have the same status as considered by Mufassereen, scholars of hadith and jurists.
- 2) Self purification is not possible without obedience of shari'ah.
- 3) Sheikh Ahmed play a vital role in spreading the knowledge of hadith in the Sub-Continent.

If we look at his Asaanid in Hadith and note that he acquired the knowledge of Hadith from authentic and expert scholars and also note how capably and proficiently he explains and interprets the Ahadith, the fact will become all the more clear that Sufis have always based their arguments and teachings on the Qur'an and Sunnah. Only Qur'an and Hadith have been the axis of their ideas and basis of their approach towards life. The way the Sufias figured out issues and the manner they adopted to infer facts and the approach which they developed to interpret and explain Hadith, all may differ from those of Mufassarin (Commentators of Holy Qur'an). Muhadditheen and Fuqaha (Jurists). But the fact remains that their conclusions and judgments, more or less are quite in harmony with the collective spirit of Islamic thought and ideology. The explanation and elucidation of forty Ahadis in his book not only prove the point but also enlighten the reader.

References

1. Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rahbani, to Vol.1, Letter No. 186
2. Ibid, Vol.1,Letter # 78/ Dewan-i-saadi, P.148
3. Ibid Vol.1, Letter No. 100,152,198
4. Ibid, Vol.2 Letter No. 54
5. For life history of the teachers see:
 - i. Maqamat-i-Masoomi Vol.3, P.31
 - ii. Zubdatul maqamat P.192