

IMAM TIRMIDHI AS A MUHADDITH AND FAQIH IN THE LIGHT OF INTERNAL EVIDENCES

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ABSTRACT:

The next source of Islamic law after the Holy Quran is Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). So Muslims always attach great importance to it. They made painstaking efforts to collect and preserve the Ahadith with authenticity since the Holy Prophet's life. Though the preservation of Ahadith passed through various stages but the final shape was given to it by the compilers of six authentic books (sihah sittah). As Muslims mostly rely on these books, that was why they made their best of efforts to provide further detail of these books.

In this article I tried to highlight on the position of Imam Tirmidhi in Hadith and Fiqah. The most important thing to be noted here that I tried to give internal evidences (the references from his own work) wherever available while talking his conditions about acceptance of Hadith, his school of thought in Fiqah, his taking benefit from the compilers of other authentic books etc. This way of research is the most reliable to get the most accurate information about someone's thoughts as internal evidences can never be denied.

Imam Tirmidhi's birth:

He was born in 209AH. Rasheed Ahmed Gangohi writes in his book:

“Sheikh Ahmed Muhammad Shakir has narrated in the preface of his Ta’leeq on Jami’ Tirmidhi that he was born in 279 AH. The same is written in the marginal notes of Al-Ikmal by the writer of Mishkat, and the same is written in the commentary of Siraj Ahmed Sarhindi.”¹

His full name was Muhammad b. ‘Isa b. Sawrah b. Sakan. Some Muhaddithin wrote Muhammad b. ‘Isa b. Sawrah b. Sharar b. ‘Isa.² But Ibn Hajar and Ibn Kathir accepted Muahmmad b. ‘Isa b. Sawrah b. Musa b. Zahhak.³

His ascription is said to be al- Sulami al- Boghi al-Tirmidhi. Al- Sulami represents his relation with the tribe of Banu Sulaim of Qays A’ilan and Bogh was a village in Tirmidh and Tirmidh was an old and historical town on the bank of the lake of Balkh. Sama’ani writes:

“This (al-Tirmidhi) refers to an old town on the bank of the lake of Balkh known as Jayhoon.”⁴

BEGINNING OF HIS EDUCATION:

Any sound information is not available about the beginning of his education but can take help by the internal evidences so we should see which of his teachers died first. Through research we can say that he started his expeditions in the search of knowledge in about 235 AH, when his age was twenty as the Muhaddithin from whom he narrated the Ahadith with mean of another narrator had died before 235 AH. For example:

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1. Ali Ibn Al-Madini, d. 234
2. Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Umar Al-Kufi, d. 234
3. Ibrahim Ibn Al-Mundhir Al-Madani, d. 236

According to the research of Dr. Habibullah Mukhtar, he started gaining knowledge in about 220 AH. According to his research his first teacher, who died in 220 AH, was Abu Jaffar Muhammad Ibn Jaffar Al-Samnani Al-Qaumasi. The other teachers who died early were Ahmed Ibn Muhammad Ibn Musa Al-Marozzi d. 235, Muhammad Ibn Amr Al-Sawwaq Al-Balkhi d. 236 and then Ishaq Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Makhlad d. 238.

But here arises a question that if he started learning before 220 AH so why the names of the teachers who died before 220 AH are not mentioned in the books?

Imam Tirmidhi was from Khurasan. Khurasan had the importance of being the center of Muhaddithin. So first he quenched his thirst of knowledge from the experts of Hadith in Khurasan and then for further knowledge he started expeditions through out the Islamic world.

Hafiz Mizzi writes:

“He travelled to various cities and heard from the traditionists of Khurasan, Iraq, Hijaz and others.”⁵

Hafiz Dhahabi, while discussing his expeditions, refused his entry in Egypt and Syria. He writes:

“Then he travelled in the search of knowledge. He heard Ahadith in Khurasan, Iraq and Haramain and did not travel to Egypt and Syria.”⁶

During these journeys he heard hundreds of Muhaddithin. Dr. Habibullah Mukhtar mentioned 221 traditionists. Out of them 10 traditionists are common among the compilers of six sound books. There names are as follow:

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Ziyad b. Yahya Al-Hisaani | 2. Abbas b. Al-Azeem Al-A'mbari |
| 3. Abdullah b. Saeed Al-Ashajj | 4. A'mr b. Ali Al-Fallas Al-Bahili |
| 5. Muhammad b. Bashshaar Bundaar | 6. Muhammad b. Al-Muthanna |
| 7. Muhammad b. Ma'mar b. Rabi'i | 8. Nasr b. A'li Al-Azdi |
| 9. Ya'qoob b. Ibrahim Al-A'bdi | 10. Hannad b. Al-Suri |

His famous students include the names of:

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Muhammad b. Sahal | 2. Bakr b. Muhammad Al-Dahqaan |
| 3. Abu Al-Nasr Al-Rashawi | 4. Hammad b. Shakir Al-Warraq |
| 5. Abu Al-A'bbas Al-Mahboobi | 6. Makhhol b. Fadal |
| 7. Abu A'bdllah Al-Bukhari | 8. Muhammad b. Al-Mundhir |
| 9. Dawood b. Nasr b. Sohail | 10. Muhammad b. Makki b. Nooh |

And many other experts of Hadith.

MUHADDITHIN'S OPINION ABOUT HIS ARRIVAL IN BAGHDAD

Imam Tirmidhi, like other experts of Hadith, travelled a lot but the researchers negated his entry in Baghdad. Sheikh Ahmed Shakir writes in the preface of his Ta'leeq (marginal notes).

“Abu I’sa travelled to many cities but I think that he never entered Baghdad, otherwise he must have heard Hadith from the chief of Muhaddithin (Imam Ahmed b. Hambal) and Hafiz Abu Bakr Khateeb must have mentioned his biography in ‘Tareekh-e-Baghdad’.”⁷

Even then when we have a look on his teachers we find the traditionists of Baghdad there. e.g.

1. Ahmed b. Ibrahim Al-Dauraqi d. 246
2. Ahmed b. Al-Hasan b. Kharaash Al-Khurasani Al-Baghdadi d. 243
3. Saeed b. Yahya b. Saeed Al-Umawi Abu Uthman Al-Baghdadi d. 249

If he did not go to Baghdad he might have met these teachers in any other town or in Haramain during the season of Hajj.

THE PRAISING WORDS OF MUHADDITHIN FOR JAMI' TIRMIDHI

Jami' Tirmidhi is an evidence of Tirmidhi's expertise in Hadith and Fiqh. Whoever will read his book with some knowledge about the science of Hadith, he can not resist praising his unique and deeply researched work.

It will more appropriate to quote the saying of the experts of this field here. There is no doubt about the fact that their praising words are based of the internal evidences of the book.

Sheikh Abdul Aziz writes in his book:

“Tirmidhi has many compilations about the knowledge of Hadith and the best among them is this Jami' but it is better than all other Hadith compilations. Some reasons of this statement are as follow;

1. beauty of arrangement and no repetition
2. mention of opinions of the different schools of thought and their way of argument
3. description of the names, surnames and titles of the narrators and informative notes about Asma-ul-Rijal
4. description of the different types of Hadith like Sahih, Hasan, Dai'f, Gharib and Mua'llal.”⁸

Ibn Al-Atheer writes in ‘Jami’-ul-Usool’:

“His book ‘Sahih’ is the best book and contains the most benefits and beautiful arrangement. There is very less repetition and it contains such qualities which are not found in other books e.g. the discussion of schools of thought of legal experts, the ways of argument, the clarification of the state of Hadith as Sahih, Hasan and Gharib. There is also the knowledge of Jarh wa Ta'deel (Hadith criticism).”⁹

THE SUMMARY OF THE STYLE OF IMAM TIRMIDHI IN JAMI' TIRMIDHI

Imam Tirmidhi had a unique style in the compilation of his book which distinguished him from other Muhaddithin of his time. Below is the identification of his unique habits in his Jami':

1. He made 'chapter heading' for every such chapter in which any famous Hadith has been quoted from a companion and that chain is true and that has also been quoted in other sound books. Then he quotes such a Hadith in this chapter which is not very famous and which has a different chain but outcome of Hadith is correct here also. Afterwards he says: 'and in this chapter (Ahadith have been quoted) from so and so.' There are some benefits for a reader in this particular style;
 - people come to know about another infamous hadith
 - after mentioning the chain he identifies the I'llah (hidden weaknesses) of that chain. He is considered an Imam in I'lal-ul-Hadith and finds pleasure talking about it. He got dexterity in this field due to Imam Bukhari as he mentioned his name repeatedly in his book of I'lal.¹⁰
 - the difference of words in the two narrations also becomes clear.

2. After placing chapter heading he mentions one or more Ahadith. Then he mentions the names of other companions who also quoted that Hadith. About this particular habit of Tirmidhi Hafiz Suyuti says:

“He does not mean that particular Hadith but he means other Ahadith which can be written in that chapter. Iraqi said: This is the right opinion but many people think that the companions who he named narrated the same Hadith and the matter is not like this but at times it is similar to that and at times it is not.”¹¹

3. Sometimes he says, “from so and so from his father”, which means that he mentions the companion's name and not the name of his father. It is also because of some benefits :
 - He wants to show that from this companion no one quoted the Hadith except for his son e.g. from Osamah b. U'mair Al-Hudhali Al-Basri only his son Abul Maleeh quoted the Hadith. Similarly in chapter 'severity quoted from the Prophet in refusal of Zakat' he says: “In this chapter (a Hadith is narrated) from Qubaisah b. Hulb from his father”¹²
So it means that from Hulb only his son Qubaisah narrated Hadith.
 - Sometimes he does not mention the name of the companion due to the difference of opinions about his name e.g. in the chapter about the share of horses (in spoils) he said: “In this chapter there is a Hadith from Abu A'mrah from his father.”¹³ So there is a difference of opinion about Abu A'mrah. The writer of 'Tuhfat-ul-Ahwadhi' quotes the words of Ibn Hajar:

“and the name of Abu A'mrah is A'mr b. Mohsin and it is said as 'Tha'libah b. A'mr b. Mohsin' and it is said as 'Osaid b. Malik' and it is also said as 'Yaseer b. A'mr b. Mohsin b. A'teek b. A'mr b. Mabdhul b. Malik b. Najjar.”¹⁴

4. He does not mention the name of the companion in the end of the Hadith from whom he has quoted the Hadith in that particular chapter but he mentions only the names of other companions who also has quoted that Hadith but sometimes he violates this practice. In answer to this objection the experts say that he repeats his name when he wants to refer to another tradition of the same companion. e.g. In the chapter about the tree of paradise he quotes:

“It is narrated by Abu Saeed Khudri that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said: There is a tree in Paradise that a rider can ride in its shadow for hundred years.”¹⁵

After that he said: “In this chapter (there is a Hadith) from Abu Saeed. So by mentioning Abu Saeed’s name again he meant another tradition of Abu Saeed quoted by Ibn Hibban in his Sahih. He quoted:

“Once a man asked the Holy Prophet (pbuh) what is Tooba? He replied: A tree of the journey of 100 years.”¹⁶

Similarly in the chapter about the prohibition of gold he quoted the tradition of Ali:

“The messenger of Allah forbade me from wearing the ring of gold and the dress of silk.”¹⁷

Then he again mentioned the name of Ali in the list of the names of the companions who narrated the this Hadith so he meant another tradition of H. Ali mentioned by Abu Dawood and Nisai. It says:

“The Prophet took silk in his right hand and gold in his left hand then he said: Indeed these two are unlawful for the man of my Ummah.”¹⁸

5. Sometimes he quotes a Hadith without any chapter heading and then according to his habit he gives the hint to other traditions related to the same chapter. In this situation according to the experts of Hadith he wants to refer to such Ahadith which are similar to the one he quoted there. e.g. In the Ahadith about fate he left a chapter without heading and in this chapter he quoted the Marfu’ Hadith of Abu Hurairah:

“Adam and Musa argued”¹⁹

Then he said: “and in this chapter (Hadith is related) from A’mr Ibn Jundub.”

6. Sometimes he summarizes the Ahadith but he informs about it by saying, “and there is a story about it.” Or “There is more detail than this.”
7. He also informs about the difference between the similar names. e.g. Yazeed Al-Raqashi and Yazeed Al-Farsi. Similarly he elaborates the difference between the same surnames e.g. “Abu Hazim Al-Zahid, he was from Madinah and his name was Salamah b. Dinar and Abu Hazim Al-Ashji’I, he was from Kufa and his name was Salman.

The purpose of mentioning such minor differences is to remove doubts and to protect the students of Hadith from mistakes.

8. After setting up a chapter he mentions such a Hadith in which there is a difference inits Raf’ (which goes back to the Prophet) and Waqf (which goes back to the companion only) though the Marfu’ Hadith is also available .

The purpose of this practice is to comment on the weak Hadith and then he brings the Sahih Hadith for evidence (istishhaad).

This was the identification of the few things of Jami Tirmidhi, otherwise there are lots of other aspects which make his book better than many other books of Hadith. To produce such a book was possible only for such a scholar who had learnt the techniques of Hadith from experts of Hadith, who spent his life into research and who had the ability to collect the maximum knowledge in the shortest way.

Each of the six sound books has some unique qualities which distinguish it from other books. Here we mention the ten prominent qualities of Jami’ Tirmidhi which Allama Yousuf Binnori mentioned in “Majilla Al-Majma’ Al-Ilmi Al-Arabi”.

- 1) He collected Ahadith about all eight topics which cover the entire literature of Hadith. These topics are Aqaid, Ahkam, Tafseer, Aadab, Shama'il, Manaqib, Rifaq and Ashrat-ul-Saa'h. Due to this quality his book is known as Jami'.
- 2) He marked the Ahadith as Sahih, Hasan, Gharib and Dai'f. That was why he didn't follow the particular conditions in narrating Ahadith like other compilers.
- 3) He particularly mentioned the different opinions of the legal experts. His book makes us independent from the need of the books written on differences of legal experts. We come to know about the opinions of those jurisprudents whose school of thought is not in practice by anyone today like Awzai'I and Sufyan Thawri.
- 4) In Islamic ruling (Ahkaam) he quotes the contrary Ahadith in two different chapters. Then he gives preference to one of them according to fiqh (Jurisprudence) or according to practice of Muslims (Ta'amul) or he mentions the possibility of practicing both the Ahadith at the same time if possible.
- 5) The narrators whose surnames are mentioned in the chains. He mentions their names and sometimes contrary to this he mentions the surnames.
- 6) He always mentions Jarh Wa Ta'deel after quoting the Ahadith. That was why he didn't follow the particular conditions in the narration of Ahadith like the compilers of other sound books.
- 7) He mentioned I'lal-ul-Hadith and other information about Sanad like his discussions about "Wasl, Irsal, Wuquf and Raf".
- 8) He mentioned only one Hadith in most of the chapters especially in the chapter about Ahkaam and then he mentioned the name of other companions who narrated the same or similar Ahadith.
- 9) Sometimes he elaborates the meaning of difficult Ahadith with his own opinion or with the reference of other experts.
- 10) He mentioned the Gharib Ahadith in most of the chapters and leaves the Sahih and famous (Mashhur) Ahadith and gives only a hint to them after the Ahadith so that he can talk about I'lal-ul-Hadith (Hidden Weaknesses of Hadith). This is similar to the practice of Nisai who starts with a wrong Hadith and then mentions the Sahih Hadith.²⁰

THE COMPOUND TERMS OF IMAM TIRMIDHI

Imam Tirmidhi used, to a great extent the four terms in his Jami' These terms are Sahih, Hasan, Gharib and Daif.

He used these terms as individual as well as compound e.g Sahih Hasan, or Hasan Sahih or Hasan Sahih Gharib. Here arises a question that how can a Hadith be Sahih and Hasan at the same time.

There are various opinions of traditionists in the answer to this question. We quote some of them here.

THEME OF SAHIH GHARIB:

Dr. Habibullah Mukhtar writes in his work "Imam Al-Tirmidhi wa Takhreej Kitab-ul-Taharah min Jami'hi".

"When Imam Tirmidhi says Sahih Gharib so he means that there is only one chain (Sanad) for that Hadith. That is why it is Gharib and because all conditions of Sahih are present in it so it is Sahih as well. No one has made it a

conditions for a Sahih Hadith to have numerous Asanid. So the meaning of Sahih Gharib is clear and there is no room of objection”²¹

THEME OF HASAN GHARIB:

When Imam Says “Hasan Gharib”, there arises a question that Gharib is that Hadith which has only one Sanad and for a Hasan Hadith he himself made a condition to be narrated by numerous chains. So these two things are totally opposite.

It can be answered saying that he means that it is Gharib from this particular Sanad not in general. Again a question will arise that sometimes he says. “Hasan Gharib” and we do not know this except through this chain.

In answer to this question Dr. Habibullah Mukhtar writes that over here Hasan does not refer to a Hadith with numerous chains but refers to a Hadith which has attained the rank of Hasan in authenticity.²²

THEME OF HASAN SAHIH:

After many Ahadith Imam Tirmidhi said: “Hasan Sahih” Here a question arises that Hasan is a Hadith which is not equal to Sahih in its credibility and many conditions of Sahih are absent in it. So how can a Hadith be Sahih and Hasan at the same time.

There are various opinions of the experts of Hadith about this:

- 1) It is because of the two different chains of a Hadith, according to one chain it is sahih and according to the other it is Hasan. So we can say about such a Hadith Hasan Sahih.²³
- 2) Sometimes it is said that over here Hasan means something good and acceptable by the heart of a Muhaddith not the technical Hasan.²⁴
- 3) Some said that it means that it is Hasan according to its text and Sahih according to its Sanad, but we see that Imam Tirmidhi said this after the Ahadith which talk about Hell and punishments.
- 4) Ibn al-Salah said that in this case the Hadith will be considered better than Hasan but inferior than Sahih.²⁵
- 5) Ibn Daqeeq al-I'd said in the answer of this question:

“It is not mandatory for a Hasan Hadith to be inferior than a Sahih Hadith. It will be considered inferior than Sahih only when he declared the Hadith as Hasan only”.²⁶

This answer can be explained with an example that if a narrator has the quality of ‘sidq’ (truthfulness) it does not negate the presence of a better quality like ‘Itqan’ (retentive memory) in him, but both qualities can be present in the same person.

According to his answer every Sahih Hadith is Hasan but every Hasan Hadith is not Sahih. Ibn Daqeeq’s point of view is supported by the words of Mutaqaddimeen who applied the words of Hasan on Sahih Ahadith.
- 6) Hafiz Ibn Kathir said that it is a Hadith better than Hasan and inferior than Sahih. But Zain-ul-Din al-I’raqi says:

“What Ibn Kathir said is his own opinion no evidence supports it and it is far away from the understanding of traditionists the meaning of Tirmidhi’s words”.²⁷
- 7) Ibn Hajar writes in his book “Al-Nikat” that some Mutaakhhireen said that it means that there are narrators in the chain whose Hadith is Sahih according to some experts and Hasan according to some others.

But there will arise a question that he has used these terms together where there is no difference about the credibility of any narrator. Secondly Tirmidhi gives his opinion about the Hadith and not of others, even than Ibn Hajar considers this answer the best.²⁸

- 8) Some said that these two words are same in the opinion of Tirmidhi and he mentions the second word to support the first one as we say: 'Sahih Thabit'. This answer is supported by the fact that other traditionists also did this like Dar al-Qutni says: "Hadha Hadith Hasan Sahih Thabit."
- 9) Hafiz Suyuti said that it means that according to Sanad it is Hasan but it is the most authentic Hadith available in this chapter though itself a Hasan Hadith. He says that Imam Bukhari has used these terms before Tirmidhi as Zarkashi and Ibn Hajar has mentioned.²⁹

THEME OF HASAN SAHIH GHARIB:

Some times Tirmidhi says: Hadha Hadith Hasan Sahih Gharib min hadha al-wajh". It means that the Hadith is Sahih as well as Hasan according to two different chains but the one which is quoted by Tirmidhi is also Gharib either in Sanad or in Matn. In this way 'min hadha al-wajh' will be related with Gharib.

HIS LEARNING FROM THE COMPILERS OF SIHAH SITTAH

To estimate the position of a Muhaddith it is very important to see from whom he learnt Ahadith. Imam Tirmidhi heard the best and most authentic traditionists of his time. Here we are going to give internal evidences of his learning from the compilers of six sound books.

1) Imam Muslim:

He heard traditions from Imam Muslim but he quoted only one tradition in his compilation.

"Muslim b. Al-Hajjaj related to us (saying that) Yahya b. Yahya related to us from Muhammad b. 'Amr from Abi Salama from Abu Hurairah that he said: The messenger of Allah said: "Calculate the moon of Sha'ban for Ramadan."³⁰

2) Imam Abu Dawood:

The meeting of Imam Tirmidhi with Imam Abu Dawood has been proved as he says in the chapters of witr.

"I heard Abu Dawood Al-Sijzi, i.e. Sulaiman b. Al-Asha'th saying that I asked Ahmed b. Hambal about Abdul Rahman b. Zayd b. Aslam so he replied: His brother is Abdullah no harm in him."³¹

In chapters of Sawm (Fasting) again he mentioned his learning from Abu Dawood "I heard Abu Dawood Al-Sijzi saying: I asked Ahmed b. Hambal about Abdul Rahman b. Zayd b. Aslam so he replied: "His brother is Abdullah no harm in him."³²

3) Imam Bukhari:

Besides other traditionists Imam Tirmidhi learnt a lot on regular basis from the chief of all traditionists, Imam Bukhari. He learnt a lot from Bukhari in I'lal-ul-Hadith

Asm-ul-Rijal and other relevant branches of Hadith knowledge. He remained his student for a long period of time.

He writes in his 'Kitab-ul-I'lal':

"Whatever is mentioned in it from 'I'lal-ul-Hadith, Rijal and Tareekh, I took it from 'Al-Tareekh' (Bukhari's book) and most of it is what, I learnt from Muhammad b. Ismail, Abdullah b. Abdul Rahman and Abu Zura'h. And most of it is what I learnt from Muhammad and very less is from Abdullah and Abu Zurah"³³

Though Imam Tirmidhi had learnt Ahadith from other great traditionists of his time but when he met Bukhari he felt that he got what he wanted to get since a long time. He decided to devote his time in the company of Imam Bukhari and finally became one of the top most experts of Hadiith.

EXAMPLE OF BUKHARI'S LEARNING FROM TIRMIDHI:

We can estimate the level of Tirmidhi's knowledge in Hadith and his sound credibility that even Bukhari narrates a Hadith from him. The one from whom Bukhari quotes a Hadith, his credibility can never be doubted.

Imam Tirmidhi says after quoting the Hadith of Ibn Abbas in the Tafseer of Surah Hashr:

"Muhammad b. Ismail heard this Hadith from me"³⁴

Similarly he says about the Hadith of Abu Saeed in the Chapter about Manaqib-e-Ali.

"Muhammad b. Ismail heard this Hadith from me and considered it Gharib"³⁵

Considering a Hadith Gharib by Imam Bukhari who had memorized six hundred thousand Ahadith is a sign of Imam Tirmidhi's vast knowledge. Imam Bukhari once said to Imam Tirmidhi:

"The benefit which I took from you is more than the benefit you took from me"³⁶

IMAM TIRMIDHI'S KNOWLEDGEABLE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITH BUKHARI AND MUSLIM:

Though Imam Tirmidhi learnt a lot from Bukhari and Muslim but wherever his knowledge demanded him something different from the opinion of his teachers he expressed it.

The purpose of giving their internal evidence is to prove Imam Tirmidhi's sound knowledge and his position among the traditionists of his time.

In the chapter of 'Al-Istinja bil-Hajarain' after quoting the Hadith of Abdullah b. Masood with its different chains he says:

“There is ‘Idtirab’ (confusion) in this Hadith. I asked Abdullah b. Abdul Rahman that which of the tradition is more authentic from Abu Ishaq but he was unable to decide. Then I asked Muhammad about it, he even did not decide but I felt that he preferred the chain of Zuhayr from Abu Ishaq from Abdul Rahman b. Al-Aswad from his father from Abdullah’ that was why he included it in his Jami’. But I consider the chain of Israil and Qays from Abu Ishaq from Abu Obaida from Abdullah’ more authentic as Israil was most authentic memorizer of the Hadith of Abu Ishaq and Qays b. Al-Rabi’ also followed him in this narration. I heard Muhammad b. Al-Muthanna saying that Abdul Rahman b. Mehdi used to say that the traditions which I missed was of Sufyan Al-Thawri from Abu Ishaq just because I used to rely upon Israil in their narration as he used to narrate them completely and Zuhayr was not that good in the traditions of Abu Ishaq as he heard Abu Ishaq in the last stage of his life (when due to old age Abu Ishaq’s memory did not remain retentive).

I heard Ahmed b. Hasan saying that Imam Ahmed used to say that leaving Abu Ishaq’s Hadith if you have heard a Hadith from Zaidah or Zuhayr then do not worry about hearing it from other.”³⁷

Similarly in the chapter “What to be said after wudu”, after quoting the Hadith of H. Umar with its different chain he writes:

“There is Idtirab (confusion) in the Isnad of this Hadith and nothing from the Holy Prophet (pbuh) reached the degree of authenticity in this chapter.³⁸ Though this Hadith is present in Sahih Muslim.

IMAM TIRMIDHI’S DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITH IMAM BUKHARI IN RIJAL:

In a few places Imam Tirmidhi’s opinion differs from that of Imam Bukhari which proves that he used to take Bukhari’s comments about Rijal with full understanding and that he also had his own position in this field of knowledge

He writes after quoting the Hadith of Ibn Abbas in a chapter.

“I asked Abdullah b. Abdul Rahman about Rishdayn b. Kurayb. I said he was more reliable or Muhammad b. Kurayb? He replied that he (Muhammad) was very sound but I prefer Rishdayn b. Kurayb. And I asked Muhammad b. Ismail about it so he replied that Muhammad b. Kurayb was more reliable but I think that what Abu Muhammad Abdullah b. Abdul Rahman said is more correct as Rishdayn b. Kurayb was elder and more reliable, he found Ibn Abbas and saw him. They both were brothers and they had ‘Munkar’ Ahadith with them”³⁹

HIS SCHOOL OF THOUGHT IN JURISPRUDENCE

About his school of thought in (Fiqh) jurisprudence there are different opinions of scholars. Many of them declared him as Shafi’i. Even Anwar Shah Kashmiri, under the influence of this famous saying, included him in Shafi’i school of thought in his book ‘Faid-ul-Bari’ he writes:

“As far as Tirmidhi is concerned so he was a Shafi’i, he never opposed him clearly except for the matter of ‘Ibraad’.”⁴⁰

But if we try to find out the reality with the help of internal evidences, we come to know that he was not a Shafi'i as otherwise he would must have preferred his school of thought as it is a general practice of Muqallideen. Tirmidhi did not do this, but he even opposed Shafi'i's opinion.

He says in the chapter "Takheer-ul-Zuhr Fi Shiddat-il-Harr"

"And a party of scholars suggests delay in Zuhr prayer during severe hours and this was said by Abdullah b. Mubarak, Ahmed and Ishaq and Shafi' said: Zuhr will be delayed only when the people have to come to the mosque from far away but when someone has to offer it alone or if the mosque is near so I think that it should not be delayed even in hot days. I think the opinion of those who suggest delaying prayer in severe hotness in more worthy to be followed.

And what Shafi'i said that delay is allowed only for those who have to come from far away so Abu Dharr's Hadith rejects his opinion. Abu Dharr said: "We were with Prophet (pbuh) in a journey when Bilal delivered Adhan so prophet (pbuh) said:

"O Bilal! wait for the colder time". If the matter was like as Shafi'i said then ordering for colder time would not make any sense as during the journey everyone was there and no one had to come from far away"⁴¹

It proves that he was not the follower of Shafi'i but had his own opinion in some matters. When we go through his book, we learn that he has mentioned Shafi'i's opinion in Jurisprudence like the opinion of other jurists. e.g. he said:

"And it is the practice of our fellows (Ashabina) Al-Shafi'i and Ahmed and Ishaq".⁴²

In the chapter about prohibition of Muhaqalah and Muzabarah, he said:

"And this is the opinion of Al-Shafi and our fellows (Ashabina)"⁴³

These words of Tirmidhi prove that he was not a follower of Shafi'i school of thought but he mentioned his sayings like other jurists.

Here arises a question that what did Tirmidhi mean by the word 'Ashabina' [Our Fellows] so most of the researchers say that he meant those who had full command in Hadith and who were considered the experts of this field.

Allama Teebi took the same meaning when he explained the saying of Tirmidhi about a narrator named 'Kharijah'. Mulla Ali Qari writes:

"He is not strong in the opinion of 'Ashabina' i.e. Ahl-ul-Hadith, Teebi said this".⁴⁴

Similarly after quoting the Hadith of Hadat A'isha, he said:

"and our fellows (Ashabina) left the Hadith of Aisha over here because it is not Sahih in their opinion because of their Isnad"⁴⁵

Allama Abu Al-Tayyab Al-Sindi writes in his commentary on Jami' Tirmidhi:

“and ‘Ashabuna’ i.e. Ahl-ul-Hadith or Shafi’iyyah as some scholars said but first one is obvious”.

Another evidence of his not being a Shafi’i is that Al-Taj Al-Subki did not mention him in his “Al-Tabaqat Al-Shafi’iyyah”, though he includes everyone in book about whom it was said that he was a Shafi’i.

The outcome of this discussion is that no one called him a Hanafi, Maliki or Hambali and if someone said this, his saying does not contain any weight and we have given the arguments to prove the fact that he was not a Shafi’i. It makes it clear that he was himself a Mujtahid. He used to follow the other jurists if his opinion was similar of their opinion otherwise he expressed his different opinion. That was why Shah Waliullah writes:

“And Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi were Mujtahids related to Ahmed and Ishaq and so were Ibn Maja and Darimi in our opinion.”⁴⁶

Shah Waliullah related him to Ahmed and Ishaq as he always mentioned their sayings clearly and never opposed them as he opposed Al-Shafi’i.

Sheikh Abdul Rasheed Al-Naumani Quotes the words of Muhammad Hashim Al-Sindhi:

“Muslim and Tirmidhi, though it is famous among the masses that they were Shafi’i but it does not mean that they followed him (in every matter like common people) but they were Mujtahids (jurists themselves) and were related to him as their jurisprudence was similar to that of Shafi’i.”⁴⁷

Imam Dhahabi also said in his book, Meezan-ul-I’tidal, that Imam Tirmidhi was a Mujtahid.

Anwar Shah Kashmiri writes:

“I say, as Bukhari was the follower of Sunnah and a Mujtahid not a Muqallid (follower) of any of the four Imams, similarly Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, Nisai and Ibn Maja were the followers of Sunnah. They were Mujtahids not the Muqallid (followers) of anyone”.⁴⁸

HIS DEATH:

About his death two sayings are famous. First says that he died in 279AH and second says that he died in 275AH. The first saying is more accurate. The writer of Al-Kaukab Al-Durri quoted the same from different books and rejected the other sayings he writes:

“And two sayings are famous about his death first is 279AH and second is 275AH and majority accepts first so that is preferable. Ibn Khallikaan said that he died on 13th of Rajab 279AH in Tirmidh. Dhahabi in his Al-Tadhkirah, Ibn Kathir in his Al-Bidayah and Ibn Hajar in Taqreeb Al-Tahzeeb mentioned this. (i.e. 279AH)”⁴⁹

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