

Services of Imam Ahmedbin Hanbal and Imam Muslim in
Hadith

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To cite this article:

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, Jan –June (2023). urdu ISSN No. 2790-0460 , Online No . 2790-9451

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Al-Bahis Research Journal of Islamic Sciences , 4(1), 35–48.

Retrieved from

<https://brj isr.com/index.php/brj isr/article/view/14>



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Abstract

Abu Abdullah, Ahmed ibn Hanbal (died 241 AH) is a renowned scholar of Muslim world. He was the great scholar of Hadith at that time. Ibn Hanbal went about collecting all the Ahadith and in his later life ,he compiled 30,000 Ahadith and known as "Musnad Ahmad" .It was named because he arranged his compilation by the narrators rather than by subject ; sothat he first brought the Ahadith narrated by four Khulafa' , then by the rest of ' Ashrara' Mubashahra' those who followed them.

Ibn Hanbal's knowledge of texts and narrators was prodigious.

Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal was recognised as the authority on the scientific study of Hadith. His classic work is compilation of " Al Musnad " which has got recognition and is his scholarly approach toward Hadith. He was well-versed with the principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqha) and he is the pioneer of one of the four schools of Jurisprudence, the rest are Hanafi, Malikee and Shafae .He led pious and an upright life. He was fearless and boldly and patiently faced the hardships of the rulers but he was undaunted and was the firm believer that God's man fears none. It was his consistency and steadfastness on the right path that he is admired from nook and corner and commanded the respect. And this achievement of Ahmed Ibn Hanbal shall ever keep him endeared to the faithful. All the contemporaries of Ahmed Ibn Hanbal who had witnessed the calamity of the dispute when it ran highest, had handsomely acknowledged his unrivalled achievement. His popularity among the masses was evident when he left this mortal world to his heavenly abode in 241 AH ,the people thronged from far and wide to participate in his funeral prayer in Baghdad. The history never witnessed such huge crowd. The historians mentioned that his Namaz e Janaza had been attended about 80,000 and 60,00 women.³

Imam Muslim belonged to Qushayr clan. He was born and brought up in Khurasan and he was Arab in origin.

He was educated and looked after in a renowned literary family. His father was always anxious to teach inculcate quality education to his siblings. Imam Muslim sought knowledge not only from his worthy father but also acquired knowledge from about 220 renowned scholars of that time. His master piece "Saheeh Muslim " is well known in all over the world.

Imam Muslim's 'Sahih' differs from others collections of Hadith in that the books are not subdivided into chapters. It is not difficult to trace in the order of the traditions in Muslim's Sahih a close connection with corresponding ideas if FIQH .

The second difference between Muslim and the other collections consists in the fact that he pays peculiar attention to 'isnads ' to such an extent that the tradition in his work is often followed by several different isnads which serve as an introduction to either the same or to slightly different 'matn'.

In my paper light will be thrown on life and works of these two great scholars of Islamic World.

Keywords : Sahih , Musnad , Hadith , Compilation , Khalq e Quran

Introduction

Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal is one of the prominent Islamic scholars and has been given title of Shaikh-ul-Islam (outstanding scholars of the Islamic sciences). He was an Imam in Fiqh, Hadith, and many other Islamic Jurisprudence. In fact, he is the founder of one of the four schools or rites of Islamic legal knowledge (fiqh) within the Sunni schools of law. As per different sources, Imam Ahmad performed pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj) five times in his life.

Muslim scientists and scholars led from the front .The 3rd Century Hijra produced many Muslim theologians and scholars, who got recognition in the World History. I'll throw light on life and works of Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal and Imam Muslim.

Bertrand Russell, the great thinker and philosopher of the 20th century in his essay "Reflections on the Re-awakening East" , says that after the fall of the Roman Empire ,the supremacy of the East was not only military but science, philosophy, poetry and the arts also flourished in China and the Muhammadan world at a time when Europe was sunk in barbarism. Europeans, with unpardonable insularity, call this period "The Dark Ages"; But it was dark- indeed only in Christian Europe ,for Spain ,which was Muhammadan, had a brilliant culture.¹¹

Importance

Third century Hijra plays an important role in the literary history of Islam. Hadith books were compiled and Islamic Jurisprudence allsp flourished. Imam Hanbal and Imam Muslim played a very role and tried their best to serve Islamic cause.

Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal and Imam Muslim are two of the most important figures in the collection and preservation of hadith literature . They were both renowned

¹ - D.Y Morgan, “ Reflections on the Re-awakening East “, Intermediate English book two , Sindh Text book Board , Jamshoro , 2010, pg 19

scholars of hadith whose works continue to be widely studied and used by scholars today .

Imam Ahmad did not sit on the desk of teachings and ifta until he became perfect (as we have explained in the previous attributes).and when the sound of this advice and piety , asceticism , chastity and grateness began to ring among the people and the events of sitting still for the study of hadith and traveling and far wide places for the sake of hadith gained full fame . In this way , they passed the steepest gorges ,the places where the feet slipped and the steps wobbled , so that they could reach a world that could benefit from it.²

Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal is considered one of the great imams of Sunni Islam , known especially for his rigorous methodology in the field of hadith. His collection of hadith , the Musnad, is among the most important works in the field and is still studied widely today.

He also played a significant role in defending the integrity of hadith transmission, particularly against the influence of political power in the Abbasid era.

Imam Muslim is another important scholar of hadith , known for his collection of hadith called Sahih Muslim , which is considered one of the most authoritative collections in the field . Muslim travelled extensively to collect hadiths and was known for his strict criteria for authenticating them. His work are considered crucial in establishing the authenticity of hadiths and are widely used for religious and academic purposes.

Overall, the contributions of Imam Ahmed bin Hambal and Imam Muslim have been crucial in shaping the development of Islamic scholarship, particularly in the field of hadith. Their works continue to be studied and used widely and their emphasis on the importance of authenticating hadith transmission has had lasting impact on the Islamic tradition.

² -Muhammad Abu Zehra ,Hayyat Ahmed Bin Hanbal ,Tarjuma , Syed Raees Ahmed Jaferi , Ashat 1994 , August , pg 86

1. Imam Ahmed Bin Hanbal

Abu Abdullah Ahmed bin Hanbal (died 241 H) who became orphan at the age 3 years as his father died and was brought up by his uncle. At the age of 15 ,he decided to quench the thirst of knowledge and travelled far and wide and was recognised as the scholar of Hadith, theology and jurisprudence .Originally ,he belonged to Baghdad. He repeatedly travelled many times to Kufa and Basra. He went to Makkah and obviously touching on Madina.He also travelled to Yemen, Ray,Syria and Egypt in search of direct sources of Hadith, covering approximately 50,000 kms. He was one of the trio known for travelling together with Yahya bin Mueen and Ali bin Madanee , all teachers of Imam Bukhari.

He lived hand to mouth and worked as labourer to meet his expenses, especially when travelling and never asked his friends, acquaintances and colleagues.³

At that time, there were hundreds of thousands of Ahadith in vogue and were circulated everywhere. The most authentic to scholars were those Ahadith that a narrator had personally heard from the previous narrator and so on until the Prophet (Sanad Muttasil). Imam Ibn Hanbal collected about 700,000 and then rectified those Ahadith and placed in certain order. In his later life , he compiled 30,000 correct and genuine Ahadith which is known as " Musnad Ahmed" . It was so because he arranged his compilation by the narrators rather than by subject; so that he first brought those Ahadith narrated by the four Caliphs ,then by the rest of the "Ashra e Mubashara " , those who followed them and then those of Hazrat Ali and so on by the names of initial transmitter.⁴ That is ,he place all the narratives od Abu Saeed Khudri under one chapter titled, " Musnad e abi Saeed Khudri " .From the text(Matn) point of view there is many repetitions in the collection. The opinion of Hadith scholars have reached is that in the 'Musnad' there are either sound (Sahih)

³ - Imam Al Dahbi , “Al Siyar A'lam an-Nubala” , Maktaba e IlmiyaBeirut, 2013, Vol 11 pg 177,178

⁴ - Ibn Kathir ,“Al-Bidayah wan-Nihya” , Darul Ishaat Karachi 2017 , Vol 3 , pg 346-347

traditions , good (Hasan) ,or, in some rare cases, rare(Gharib) traditions ,but none that is saying something that can be rejected as unsound ,unacceptable text.

Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal's knowledge of texts and narrators was remarkably great. His name and fame circulated everywhere, traditionists started arriving from all parts of the world to learn from him. Imam Hanbal himself did not codify the law but his followers in Fiqh gradually worked it out based on principles that were apparent in his works.

A new group arose and they were called Ahl al-Kalam. One such group was of the Rationalists led by Mu'tazilah who claimed that the Quraan was a created word of God, created in Time. The traditionaists (Muhaddithun) were of the opinion that the Quraan was an uncreated word of God, being His Quality and Attribute. It was Maamun's time and under the influence of Mu'tazilah, he asked the scholars to embrace the doctrine of the Quraan being created word of God. Imam Hanbal refused and was imprisoned for two years and was released after flogging during which he lost his consciousness. He was not allowed to teach publicly until a new Caliph reinstated the opinion of Ahl-e-Sunnah wa Jammah. In Fiqh also, it was methodology of Imam Hanbal which finally prevailed against that of the Rationalists. Much later, Al-Mutawakil invited him to Samarra to teach but he was never happy to be among the rulers and was allowed to go back to Baghdad.

He breathed his last on Friday ,12 Rabiul awwal 241 Hijra .

Historians relate that his funeral was attended by 800,000 men and 60,000 women.

His disciples, particularly his sons Salih and Abdullah compiled his opinions compiled his opinions in juridical matters as as those pertaining to dogma and rituals and also commented upon his father's Musnad . The Hanbaliya school developed with these and successive generation of scholars who followed Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal's methodology.

Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal has been rated in piety, following of the Salaf , and asceticism in the ranks of great pious persons who led upright lives.

Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal puts the modern scholars to shame who can not read through once in their life time the Musnad that he compiled.

Different scholars have written voluminous commentaries and interpretations of Musnad Ahmad Bin Hanbal . But the commentary of Sheikh Abul Hassan Kabeer Al-Sindhi, who originally belonged to Sindh, which is very dear to me, is on top of the list. His commentary has got recognition from the religious scholars of all over the world.

Analytical studies of Imam Ahmed bin Hambal’s works have focused on his methodology , his approach to Islamic Law , his contributions to Hadith studies and his views on theological controversies.

2.Imam Muslim

Abul Hussain was the eldest grandson of Qushayr bin Ka'b of the Qushayr clan. Imam Muslim was Arab in origin who belonged Qushayr clan of Nishapur in Khurasan and was born in 202 AH. He was educated in a reputed literary family.

Imam Muslim travelled widely to collect traditions ,in Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Iraq ,where he heard famous authorities such as Ahmed bin Hanbal, Harmala , a pupil of Shafae and Ishaq bin Rahuya . His classic book "Sahih" is said to have been composed out of 300,000 Ahadith collected by himself.⁵

The Muhadith is a person who can differentiate between true and false traditions. It needs alot of knowledge and struggle and he must have command on the principles and obligations on which the true Ahadith should be memorized and be kept in black and white . He should know perspective and prospective of the Ahadith .

He followed the footprints of his teacher Imam Bukhari.

He set rules and regulations to check the authenticity of Hadith and his book Sahih is considered the second authentic book of Hadith after asahih Bukhari. He was trader

⁵ - Abu Zuhra Muhammad, Professor, “Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal ”, Shekh Ghullam Ali Sons Lahore, 2014 pg 213

of clothes and earned his livelihood by selling clothes. He was quite satisfied and lived a contented life.⁶

Analytical studies of Imam Muslim's works have focused on his methodology in compiling Hadith , the criteria he used to verify the authenticity of Hadith , his contributions to the science of Hadith and his views on Hadith criticism

DEATH

He was so devoted and committed that one day authenticity of one Hadith which he wanted to clarify. In his house at night he turned on the lamp and became busy to search the authenticity. A gift of freshly brought dates was placed in the room. He took the dates and chewed them slowly and continuously and in result he fell ill and breathed his last and met his ancestors.⁷

Allama Abul Hassan Kabeer Muhadith Sindhi Madani also wrote the commentary on Sahih Muslim.

Imam Muslim compiled a lot of books, the most important of which are

- Al-Musnad As-Sahih(Sahih Muslim)
- At-Tamiyiz
- Kitab Al-Ilal
- Kitab Al-wuhdan
- Kitab Al-Afrad
- Kitab Al-Aqran
- Kitab Al-Mukhadramin
- Kitab Awham Al-Muhaddithin

⁶ - Sahih Muslim,Mehran Academy, Shikarpur ,Sindh , year 2010 , pg 26

⁷- Muhammad Abu Zehra ,Hayyat Ahmed Bin Hanbal ,Tarjuma , Syed Raees Ahmed Jaferi , Ashat 1994 August ,pg 20

- Kitab At-Tabaqat⁸

Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhab Al-Farra’ said, “Muslim was one of the prominent scholars and vessels of knowledge.”

Muhammad ibn Bashshar said, “The memorizers of hadiths are four; AbuZur’ah, Muhammad ibn ismaill Al-Bukhari, Ad-Darimi, and Muslim.”

Al-Husain ibn ‘Ali An-Naysaburi said, “There is no book under the canopy of the sky more authentic than the book of muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj in the knowledge of Hadith.”

Ahmed ibn Salamah said, “I saw Abu Zur’ah and Abu Hatim advancing Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj in knowing the authentic hadiths upon the sheikhs of theirage.”

Ibn Khalkan said, “He is the compiler of the Sahih, one of the greatestmemorizers and leading scholars of hadith.”

IbnAl-Jawzi said, “He is a prominent scholar of Hadith and one of the vessels of knowledge.”

Sadi’ ibn Hasan Al-Qanuji said, “Imam Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj Al-Qushairy Al-Baghdadi is one of the outstanding memorizers and knowledgeable scholars of hadith, he is the leader of Khurasan in the knowledge of hadith following Al-Bukhari.”⁹

Literature Review

Allah Ta'ala revealed the Holy Qur'an to His last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad bin Abdullah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, for the guidance of all mankind and took the responsibility of protecting it himself, in the same way that the Prophet, peace be upon him, was responsible for its explanation and interpretation. He also handed over the possession.

The Ahadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ contains the description of the Holy Book of Allah. Therefore, the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ used to make a special effort to

⁸ - A.R Gibb and J.H. Kramers ,“Shorter Encyclopedia ofIslam”,Leiden ,1953, pg 417

⁹ - Syed Iqbal Zaheer, “An Educational Encyclopedia of Islam”,Banglore ,Karnatak , pg 990

remember and understand the Ahadith of the Prophet ﷺ, and they used to convey what they heard from the Prophet ﷺ to others. , there was a discussion in the assemblies.

After the time of the Sahaba, the following followers also kept this chain and the memorization of hadiths continued.

During the reign of Caliph Rashid Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz, may Allah have mercy on him, with his advice, Ibn Shihab Zahri, may Allah have mercy on him, started the work of collecting hadiths regularly, and then this process continued through many scholars, Ibn Jarir, Muhammad bin Ishaq, Imam Dar al-Hijra, Imam Malik, Hamad bin Salama, Saeed bin Abi Arooba Neshapuri, Muammar bin Rashida, etc. - may Allah bless him and grant him peace - a large number started the work of compilation in their own style.

All kinds of hadiths were collected in his books, the works of the Companions were also collected, later some scholars thought that these hadiths should be sorted and prepared in separate collections.

In the 3rd century, under his system of occultism, Allah the Exalted created such brilliant personalities who undertook the revision of hadiths,.¹⁰

May Allah's blessings be upon the Muhadditheen, that they have put more efforts than human beings in collecting and compiling the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). As a result of this, a book like Sahih Bukhari was compiled, regarding which Islamic scholars have decided that Sahih al-Kitab is after Kitab Allah. Sahih Muslim and Sunan books were compiled. A continuous chain of Musnad books was formed, Musnad Imam Ahmad, Musnad Abi Awana, Musnad Firdous etc. The central point of all this effort and struggle of the Muhadditheen was the compilation and preservation of the Prophet's sayings.

The scholars of Islam have rendered valuable services for the interpretation and explanation of the Qur'an and Hadith, and for clarifying the demands and meanings. Now it is our duty to participate fully in the dissemination of the Holy Quran as well

¹⁰ . Muhammad Abu Zehra ,Hayyat Ahmed Bin Hanbal ,Tarjuma , Syed Raees Ahmed Jaferi , Ashat 1994 August ,pg 18

as the Hadith Sharif while living in our own circle.

The period of authorship of Musnad Imam Ahmad Reza:

At that time, while the existence of any of the modern facilities was far-fetched, it was impossible to imagine, and all the comforts that today's students enjoy, and yet they faced their troubles and difficulties. Weeping, crying, was beyond the grasp of imagination, doing such a great literary work and undertaking such a great service could certainly be the work of a brave man. Having perfect trust in a person, having strong willpower and memory is one of the sure essentials and conditions for this great work, that is why Imam Ahmed, may Allah have mercy on him, first of all, Baghdad, Kufa, Wasit, Basra, Ibadan, Medina, He obtained the collection of hadith from Makkah, Jazira, Syria and Yemen by listening to and writing it down from hundreds of Mashaikhs. A great collection of books was collected, his foreign travels were completed and he became self-referential, so the idea and prayer arose in his heart to compile a book that could be a guide for people, and he put all his efforts into it. To be able to transfer from your chest to the paper box, so that the future generations can benefit from their hard work.¹¹

Summary

Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal set Islamic Fiqh and widened the horizons of knowledge. This statement is from a Fiqh and Muhaddith who was a contemporary of Hazrat Imam, it does not mean only to describe the importance of Imam Ahmad's knowledge, but he wants to tell that the value and dignity of Hazrat Imam is in the hearts of all his contemporaries. I had gone home. The world of Islam was unanimous on this matter that they are righteous men, their piety, asceticism, strength of faith, all these things were on every tongue. If Ijmaa is a proof, then without a doubt, this proof has been established on the reformation and piety of Hazrat Imam, neither can any doubt be cast on it, nor is there room for doubt. If Ijmaa is a proof, then without a doubt, this proof has been

¹¹ - Ibid , pg 19

established on the reformation and piety of Hazrat Imam, neither can any doubt be cast on it, nor is there room for doubt.

The fact is that Hazrat Imam saw the temptation far away, and fought it well. Purified and cleansed his soul, succumbed to calamities and sufferings, and came out of it like gold comes out of a furnace. And he described himself as free from all kinds of impurities and imperfections. Ahmad was tested about the world and its adornment, even from this he came out unscathed

If they had a soul, they would be attracted to the good things of life. But they rejected these things. He cut and broke the snares of worldly comforts. . Abandoned everything that was doubtful and accepted that which was beyond doubt. Jah and Mansib invited him but he rejected this invitation.

Don't set your heart on any luxury of life. In the same way, mail does not stay on a polished and transparent body. Ahmad's trials of hardship, poverty and calamity did not make his intellect fall into temptation.

Four caliphs one after the other dragged Ahmad to the examination hall of trial, but he emerged from this field as a pure man and a pure character.

Imam Muslim started listening to hadiths in 218 AH. Among his teachers are Imam Ahmad, Imam Hanbal, Imam Ahmad bin Yunus, Saeed bin Mansoor, Abu Abdullah bin Muslimah, Harmala bin Yahyareh, etc.

Imam Muslim received the best training under the tutelage of his parents and the effect of this pure training was that from his early age to the last moments of his life, Imam Muslim led a very pious and pious life and never hurt anyone with his language.

He said that he neither backbited anyone nor beat anyone with his hand. He received his primary education in Nishapur, his power of memory was such that he acquired formal sciences and arts in a very short period of time and turned his attention to the hadiths of the Prophet. Khak Khani visited Iraq, Hijaz, Egypt, Syria several times and continued to travel in Baghdad until his last life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both Imam Ahmed bin Hambal and Imam Muslim made notable contributions to Islamic scholarship and their works have been studied and analyzed extensively. Their impact on Islamic jurisprudence and hadith studies are significant and continue to influence Islamic scholarship today.

Undoubtedly, the knowledge that Imam Sahib organized in Tahsil and spent his precious life was the knowledge of Hadith and the works of the Prophet ﷺ and the Fatwas of the Companions, and their scholarly works as well as their supreme ijthadat in matters and problems ----- ! Imam Sahib memorized, understood and analyzed all these things. Knowing their purpose and goal, and guiding them in the same way.



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