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## A study on history of Ahl-i-Hadith movement in Kashmir

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### Abstract

The Ahl-I-Hadith Movement did not register much progress in its earlier phase. Its membership was, in fact, limited to certain families. In 1891 the strength of membership in the Ahl-I-Hadith organization was 1340 in the Punjab and its feudatories. Keeping in view present study was carried to made an detailed analysis of Ahl-I-Hadith Movement in Kashmir. This sect has adopted the gradual devolvement in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. The Ahl-I-Quran opted to use only the revealed statements of the Quran, treating the Hadith as relevant only to the human situation of the Prophet, and taking only the injunctions of the Quran as compulsory. The controversy between Maulana Husain Batalwi and Abdullah Chakralwi, on the question of ways of prayer, reached such a pitch of virulence that the Government of India had to intervene in order to protect the latter's life.

**Keywords:** Ahl-i-Hadith movement, Kashmir

### Introduction

There were a number of customs prevalent in the Muslim society some of these were the practice of preston before the Sheikh, veneration of Pirs and supplication at the tombs of Sufis. The practices were criticized by the Ahl-I-Hadith leaders in vehement terms. They went to the extent of declaring such practices as polytheistic and similar to those observed by Hindus. Their movement could succeed to a very limited extent in making some Muslims conscious of the futility of such practices. The purpose behind such reform was bring Islam its pristine glory. Consequently, the Ahl-I-Hadith produced a number of ulama who assumed the religious leadership of the Muslim community in north-eastern India. According to Fazal Husain there number was 500. It is worth-noting that Punjab was one of the main centers of Ahl-I-Hadith in northern India. The reason why the movement did net register considerable progress in its earlier phase may be explained mainly in terms of elitist character of the Ahl-i-Hadith leadership. In the united provinces, for instance, there was preponderance of Sayyids who formed 1/5 of the total number of members of the Ahl-I-Hadith. It is also worth-noting that a further 10% was provided by the descendants of the Mughals. About 1/4 of the whole were in Government services having higher status Ahmed, Irfan & Saklani, D. P. (2016) [2]. In order to increase the membership of the party some of the leaders founded new madrasas where Islamic knowledge was imparted to the students and simultaneously knowledge on the religious thought of Ahl-I-Hadith was also imparted to them. Thus madresa-i-Sayyidiya, medrase-i-Mohammadiya, Madrasa Ahmadiyya. The subjects generally taught in these schools were Quran, Hadith, tafsir and a little information about fiqh. The secular sciences were totally rejected in these schools. Large number of the research studies has been carried out in this context. However, there seems no any study on the present topic under discussion. So the statement of the research problem is as under.

**Problem statement:** The statement of the research problem is as under:

**Purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study is given as under: "To made a detailed analysis of Ahl-I-Hadith Movement in Kashmir".

**Methodology of the study:** The study was carried with the help of historical method.

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**Rationale of the study:** It is to be noted that these schools were run mostly on the income derived from popular contribution of some of the teachers of the aforesaid madrasas used to receive their monthly salaries from contributions. The various organizations of Ahl-I Hadith at different places kept records of the donors and annually published in the form of book-lets the names of the donors, who thus received recognition for their generosity. The donors were listed in order of the size of their gifts but even the humblest contributor was included. There are records that some people donated books, and even food for the students and equipment to furnish the madrasas. Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan and Maulana Abdul Rehman Mubarakpuri are said to have distributed books among the students as well as the teachers free of cost or sometimes at cheap rates. This attitude of the Ahl-I-Hadith leaders provided an opportunity to the students belonging to poorer sections of society to enter schools. Consequently, students from the remotest parts of their respective states came to seek admission to these madrasas.

The impact of the madrasa system was felt by Sena-ullah. Amritsari who once said "this is the only method to enhance the membership of the Ahl-I-Hadith It is also a record that those who studied in the madrasas left no stone unturned in preaching the Ahl-I-Hadith tenets where-ever they went either as teachers or Imams of the Mosques".

The Ahl-I-Hadith movement continued to launch a crusade against rampant corrupt practices in the Muslim society. It also rejected any kind of taqlid before the two sources of law i.e., Quran and Hadith, which it regarded as the only guide and source. It was mainly because of their severe criticism against any kind of taqlid that they began to be called as "Salafis" "Ghair-Muqalies" and "Nadji's" by Deobandi and Bareli's. Some other terms were given to the Ahl-I-Hadith at different places in India. For example, in Farrukhabad (U.F.) they came to be termed as "Wahabada", while as in Kashmir they were called as Kutas. Beside In the same way the Hanafi's were termed as Bidatis.

It should be borne in mind that there was a kind of ecclesiastical race going on among the Sunni Muslims of India. Their main object in calling one another's name was to check the progress of one sect and thereby to exhibit the superiority of its own (particular) sect.

The Ahl-I-Hadith community became increasingly disaffected is being styled "wehabis", which was generally understood as rebel. Thus, Husain Batalwi entered into official correspondence with Government of British India with a view to deleting the term "Wahabi" in Government records. He at times requested the British authorities in the Punjab that punishment of severe kind be inflicted upon such persons as termed the Ahl-I-Hadith Kahabis. He also desired that a separate entity be given to the Ahl-I-Hadith in India. He gave due coverage to this issue in Ishatu-Sunna thereby focusing attention of the British officials. The latter were reluctant and could not take any decision in this regard because it involved the sentiments of other Muslims as well. Thus, Home Department referred the case privately to Sayyid Ahmad Khan for his opinion. Since he was the accepted leader of the Muslims of India it is, therefore, necessary to quote the extracts of his opinion which follows. There is no doubt that in India the term "Wahabi partly suggests the nation of disloyalty and therefore a various political ground I am decidedly of opinion that the word "Wahabi" should not be used in the official papers of

Government. The use of the word Ahl-i-Hedith especially be the Government is far from desirable because it has a special religious significance and is not a common ward for any sect. It is likely that it will not be accepted by the majority of the Mehammedens. I don't think it advisable that it should be used officially by the Government.

Sayyid Ahmad went on to suggest that the name of Ghair Muqalid (one who does not follow any Imam) be used for the persons then called "Wahabis. But this suggestion although approved by C.J. Lyell, was indignantly repudiated by Husain Batalwi in several interviews with Home Secretary 26. The former abused Sayyid Ahmed roundly for having suggested the term Chair Magalia which according to Hussein Betawi was a suggestion of evil one end virtually jeopardized the Ahl-I-Hadith sentiments in India. Finally, the matter was discussed in Council, and the decision arrived at was that the use of the term "Wahabi" should be discontinued in official correspondence, but that no decision should be arrived at as regards the substitute for it.

The Under Secretary to Government of Punjab after entering into official correspondence with the members of the Home Department and governor General mentions in his dispatch NO: 131 dated the "Wahabis" henceforth should be called as Ahl-i Hadith his decision was enforced first in the Punjab as it was regarded purely a local matter. It was during the Governor Generalship of Lord Daffern (1884-1888 A.D.) that the term "Wahabi" was dropped in British Indian territories. The Ahl-I Hadith paid great tributes to the Marquis of Lord Daffern for his keen interest taken in this regard. In their memorandum presented to Lord Daffern besides the names of the members of Ahl-I-Hadith the names of other Muslims too were found therein.

The latter showed their willingness with the object of avoiding any misunderstanding amongst themselves as they thought it was not the right time to divert attention to such trivial issues which would prove a no importance to the Muslim community as a whole. As said by Khan Bahadur Mohammed Barkat Ali Khan, "this is not the time to escalate our differences 35 but to bury these in the ground According to him the Hindus had become conscious of their rights and duties, whereas, the condition of Muslims was deplorable owing to their petty conflicts over religious issues".

There was somewhat formidable opposition to the Ahl-I Hadith Movement from the majority of the continued to call the former as "Wahabis. Sunni Musalmans who Some even appealed their followers that they should not enter into matrimonial alliances with the Ahl-I-Hadith and should resort to social boycott against them. Fatwas were issued that the dead bodies of Ahl-I-Hadith should not be buried in the Muslim grave-yards.

What actually became a dividing factor between Ahl-I Hadith and Hanafi's was the style of canonical prayer. The Ahl-I hadith said Amin loudly, lifted their hands at the time of genuflection and preston repeated Fathia aloud and folded their hands at the chest and not on the navel like Hanafi's. The Hanafi's alleged that Ahl-i-Hadith followed abdicated Hadith The latter, of course, denied that charge, and claimed that great and learned Muslims of the past among them Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani and Ismail Shahid had prayed exactly as the Ahl-I Hadith did. They often quoted Shah Wail-Ullah as a follower of their sect. They were also of the firm belief that Shah Wail Ullah liked the act of Rafiyadan and Amin-I-llaha The Hanafi's, on the

other hand, did not like to recite Namaz behind an Ahl-I-Hadith Imam. They often shut the doors of their Mosques for the Ahl-I-Hadith. They believed the presence of Ahl-I-Hadith in their Mosques harmful to their prayer. This attitude of Hanafi's compelled the Ahl-I-Hadith to knock at the doors of courts in British India. Thus, the first case of kind was lodged by Hafiz Karim Baksh-a Ghair Muqallid in Meerut High Court. After prolonged discussions and proceedings in the court of Law, the decision was heard in favor of the Ahl-I-Hadith in the year 1871.

This decision proved of vital importance to the Ahl-I-Hadith. They began to preach courageously against the Firs and the tomb-worship, and also worshipped in the Mosques (previously controlled by the Hanafi's) in what-ever style they liked. This attitude of the Ahl-I-Hadith forced the Hanafi's to sue them in the courts of law at different places in northern India. Thus, the case was lodged at Banaras against Ramzan-e Ghair Muqallid and two other respondents namely Mohammad Husain and baul Rehman. According to appellants, Ramzan and his two other friends had deliberately entered the Hanafi Mosque at Midnipur in Banaras to create confusion. They prayed in a quite different way for a few days which resulted in a scuffed 22nd August, 1884 between the two sects in which the police had also to intervene. After the prolonged proceedings in the court of law the decision. Was heard in favor of Hanafi's and a fine of rupees fifty only (50/-) was imposed on Ramzan and his two other colleagues.

Ramzan in order to delay the court proceedings raised certain issues of greater significance, owing to which the case was referred to the Division Bench consisting of Old Field and Justice Mahmud (Son of Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan) The issues were whether Ahl-I-Hadith should be allowed to enter the Hanafi Mosques; whether they should pronounce Amin loudly and d of Rafi-Yadin The case was thoroughly sorted out by Jus Mahmud where decision of 1889 argued that a Mosque cannot be dedicated or appropriated exclusively to any particular school or "Wahabis" are Mohammadans and as such entitled to perform devotions in a Mosque. Any Mohammedi would commit a criminal offence who, not in a bonafide performance of his duties, but mala-fide, for the purpose of disturbing others engaged in their devotions, made any demonstration, oral and ether-wise-justice Mahmud was also of the opinion that Mosque should be open to all.

The privy Council also gave its decision in favor of the Ahl-I-hadith in 1891 in the Tajpora Darbhanga case In this case an Imam of a Mosque in Tajpora, Hafiz Maulana Baksh, turned a "Wahabi: The use of Rafiyadain and Amin-I-Bil Jahar not liked by the followers of the Hanafi sect (Muqallids) who number was twelve. They argued that they should only fellow Imam Hafiz Baksh when the letter would give up the act of Rafi-yadain and Amin-1-Biljahar. But after prolonged proceedings in Privy Council, the case was decided in favor of the Ahl-I Hadith and Mosque came under their control. The Hanafi's since then ceased to use it.

The Privy Council many a time reversed the initial decision of the High Courts and Session Courts. As far as the case of Ramzan is concerned, the Privy Council described that there was a dispute over the control of the finances of Mosque, and not such questions of Amin-1-Biljahar and Rafiyadain as were rested by Hanafi Muqallids in the same way in Jabalpur Banaras case of 1884 the District Magistrate had awarded the Mosque to the Hanafi's, but the subordinate

judge, ruling on behalf of the Ahl-I-Hadith declared that Mosque should not be closed to anyone.

To reach a decision could be a long process and the very length of time and the number of stages involved, were, no doubt, a further factor in intensifying competition. When a decision was given in favor of one side, that side saw the decision as proof of its strength while the other side saw it as a point of initiation to re-assert itself.

The British officials were much interested in maintaining order rather than to solve the controversial issues of different sects of Muslims of India. In Meerut for example, on the question of the pronouncement of Amin and Khalf-ul-Imam, the Magistrate was compelled to divide the Mosques of the city. Five were turned over to Ahl-I-Hadith, the rest were left to the Hanafi's In Etowah, much the same was done after the Session Judge and High Court had turned down the request of the Ahl-I-Hadith to award a decision. This action was interpreted as a victory for the Hanafi, although the case had been logged by the Ahl-I-Hadith. The Ahl-I-Hadith then constructed their own Mosque in the city of Etowah.

The issues like Amin Bil Jahar and Rafiyadain created a lot of confusion in various parts of India. In 1889 in Agra, a quarrel arose at the Shahi Masjid over the pronouncement of Amin. The Ahl-I-Hadith were beaten by Muqallids, who were in large number. The Ahl-I-Hadith were driven out of Shahi Masjid On that occasion the Ahl-I-Hadith turned to the District Magistrate who entrusted the job to the Deputy Collector latter gave the decision that Amin was not to be pronounced The Ahl-I-Hadith ceased to use the Mosque. At certain places the Hanafi's and the Ahl-I-Hadith entered into mutual alliance in order to avert the possibility of a fuss over the questions of the pronouncement of Amin and Rafiyadain. A paper reported that in Delhi 1882, a reconciliation had lately been affected between two sects of Musalmans, called the Ahl-I Hadith and Ahl-I-Fiqh. The two sects of Musalmans owing to a difference of opinion on some minor points of their belief hate each other. But the leaders of the two classes at Delhi lately executed and signed a deed and compromise in the presence of a Commissioner. According to this agreement the members of the two sects are not to hate each other, but to treat each other as friends who could offer prayers at the same Mosque Angha, N., (2017) <sup>[11]</sup>.

The Ahl-i-Hadith leaders, at times had to enter into polemical scenes with Deobandi Muqallids. The most important of these polemical scenes occurred in places like Moradabad and Darbhanga. In the former the Muqallids were represented by Mulla Mohammad Arif, Maulvi Karim Baksh, Maulvi Rehman Sahib end Maulvi Sayyid-ud-Din Sahib 80 while the Ahl-I-Hadith were represented by Moulvi Ibrahim Arvi, Moulvi Sayyad and Moulvi Ahmed Mongol Koti. The discussions continued for several days over the question of taqlid. In another Munazira there was a lot of controversy on the question of Khalf-ul-Imam between Moulvi Anwar Shah Kashmir, Muhadith Deoband and Moulvi Abdul Noor-an Ahl-I-Hadith leader. A number of letters that exchanged between them in support of their arguments clearly reveal that both the leaders had a deep knowledge of Islamic works, especially of Siha-Sitta.

It is a fact that the followers of the Ahl-I-hedith Movement on many occasions had to scuffle which the Hanafi's especially of Deoband. The former was always beaten by the latter. It was mainly in order to save the life and property

of Ahl-I-Hadith that Husain Batalwi entered into official correspondence with the Government of British India. In his official letter addressed to the secretary Government of Punjab, he stated categorically that such Munzirahs (polemical scenes) should not ever be held. Besides Deobandi, the Ahl-I-Hadith had to face the challenges of Bareili's. Munshi Mohammad Lal Khan Sahib Rizvi one of the protagonists of the Bareili ideology mentions that "Wahabis are such persons as do not believe in Islamic schools and as such they are hellish because if there is anything to save mankind from hell that is to follow strictly the four schools. He also wrote vehemently against Moulvi Ismail Shahid who according to Lal Khan Rizvi misappropriated the property of Shah Abdul Aziz and laid the foundation of a new sect which later on came to be known as Ahl-I-Hadith a derogatory language have also been used against Shah Ismail Shahid.

### Conclusions

This sect has adopted the gradual devolvement in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. The Ahl-I-Quran opted to use only the revealed statements of the Quran, treating the Hadith as relevant only to the human situation of the Prophet, and taking only the injunctions of the Quran as compulsory. The controversy between Maulana Husain Batalwi and Abdullah Chakralwi, on the question of ways of prayer, reached such a pitch of virulence that the Government of India had to intervene in order to protect the latter's life.

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