Conclusion

Islam is the final form of all previous revealed faiths. Islam enjoins: belief in one Allah, the Angels, the Books of Allah, and all the Prophets and in the day of resurrection. Islam does not profess to be a new religion as instructed by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but a continuation of the religious principles established by other Prophets of Allah. It is an inclusive religion which contains within itself all previous faiths which went before it. Islam is also a living and potent force in the modern times. The Qur’ān is the fundamental or basic source of Islamic jurisprudence. Next in the importance and authority comes the Sunnah (way) or Ahādīth (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Ḥadīth itself derives its authority and legal validity from the Qur’ān. Ḥadīth here refers to the sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). Sunnah literally means a way or rule or manner of acting or mode of life. In its Islamic legal terminology, Sunnah indicates the doings, deeds and tacit approval of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him). The Qur’ān generally deals with the broad principles or essentials of religion, going into detail in very rare cases. The details were generally supplied by the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) himself through the Ahādīth.

The four orthodox Caliphs took great pains to see that only the correct tradition is narrated. The narrator was asked to swear that he was speaking the truth. Among the judges and traditionists of this period where the four Caliphs i.e., Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (R.A.), Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (R.A.), Ḥaḍrat ‘Uthmān (R.A.) and Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (R.A.) and various other prominent Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) like Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās, Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (R.A.), Ḥaḍrat Zayd Bin Thābit (R.A.), Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh Ibn Abū Bakr (R.A.) etc. The Ahādīth in this sense of the reports of the sayings and doings of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) has been subjected to keen pursuit and constant study by the Muslims since the very beginning of the history of Islam up to present times. Some of them wrote down what he said in Ṣuḥuf (sing., Ṣaḥīfah) which were later on read by them to their students and which were preserved in their families and also by their followers (Ṭābi‘ūn). After the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), some of his Companions as well as their followers undertook long arduous journeys, courted poverty and penury in order to collect the Ahādīth together. Imām Mālik’s
great work *Kitab-al-Muwatta* (beaten path) is an example of such an arduous task. It is the oldest corpus of the *Sunnah* that has survived from the early periods. The *Muwatta* was not intended to serve as a collection of *Ḥadīth* but it may be said with equal justice that it is not a book of *Fiqh* either. The books compiled later on in this direction are known as *Al-Sihāh al- Sittah* or the “Six *Saḥihs*”. The Collections of Imām Al-Bukhārī and Imām Muslim rank high and are known as “*Al-Saḥīhayn*” i.e. authentic and authoritative. The best known collection on the ‘*Musnad*’ pattern is the Collection of Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (d. 855 C.E). The six collections of *Aḥadīth* are recognised by Ahl- al-Sunnah as the *Sīhāh-e Sittah* or the six reliable collections. These are the collections by Muḥammad Ibn Ismail Bukhārī, Imām Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Imām Tirmizī, Ibn Mājah and Imām Nasā’ī. Among *Sīhāh al- Sittah*, the *Sahīh* of Bukhārī, holds the first place in several respects.

The earliest compilation of such recorded traditions, supported in each instance by a chain of authorities tracing it back to the beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), was the first biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) by Ibn Ӏṣḥāq. This was followed Imām Mālik’s famous hand book, *Muwatta* based on the same Principle on *Sanad* (chain of narrators) and *Matn* (subject-matter). Thereafter followed by Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal’s work, *Musnad*.

“The *Ahadith* have elaborated and fixed the academic and practical meaning of the Quranic ayat [Āyāt/verses] from every angle. The *Ahadith* have explained the principles relating to all branches of human life in such a miraculous manner that no room has been left for any fraud to resort to his fraudulent methods. The *Ahadith* of Prophet (peace be upon him) have provided the Ummat [Ummah] with guidance in detail for every aspect of life which will arise until the day of Qiyamah [Qiyāmah] be it faith or practice, free will or fatalism, obedience to government or speaking up against oppression and injustice. Thus, noble Qur’ān has designated this Ummat [Ummah] as the “*Ummat Wast*” or “balanced nation”.

Imām Mālik had based his Fiqh on the traditions or *Aḥādīth* whether it may be *Musnad* or *Mursil*, Abu Bakr Abhari stated that in *Muwatta* the total number of Mulasil (connected) Ahadith are 1720 and among them 600 *Muwqoof* and 275 are the *qual* of Tabayeen (Sayings of Tabayeen).
**Istihsān** which means the law of preference or suitableness of an act or juristic equity was accepted by Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal as source of law. He says that **Istihsān** is to abandon a rule or command to adopt another better rule.

Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal’s method of formulating legal doctrines was of Ashāb-e-Ḥadīth, therefore very few books on principles of Fiqh in Ḥanbalī legal literature can be traced, whereas there are numerous works on Ḥadīth. Among Ibn Ḥanbal’s works, the great collection of traditions known as “Musnad Aḥmad” was actually compiled by his son ‘Abdullah from his lectures and was amplified by supplements (Zawā’id). It consists of 28,000 – 29,000 traditions. Apart from the *Musnad*, Ibn Hanbal’s *Kitāb al-Salāt wa mā Yalzam Fīha*, on the discipline at prayer—was written in prison, is frequently quoted in works of Hanbalite dogmatists; *Al-Radd ‘Ala’l-Zanādiqa Wal-Jahmiyya Fī Mā Shakkat fīhi Min Mutashabih al-Qur’ān*, in which he refutes the Tāwil—explanation introduced by the Mutazilites to the Qur’ān. Likewise a book entitled *Kitāb Tā’at al-Rasūl* is quoted, in which he discusses the line one must follow in those cases where the Ḥādīth seems to be in contradiction with the text of certain Quranic passages.

The Ashāb-e-Ḥadīth (people of the traditions) appear to have developed out of a pious reaction to the assassination of Caliph Yazīd bin Walīd (d.744). Prior to Yazīd’s assassination, scholars who emphasized Ḥadīth (traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad) as the primary source for interpreting the will of Allah were disorganized and fairly removed from the widespread emphasis on applying varying levels of reason to the Qur’ān. Yazīd’s assassination was interpreted by more conservative groups as a revolution against the predestined plan of Allah. After the Abbāsid revolution (c.720-750), the *Ahl-e-Ḥadīth* or Ashāb-e-Ḥadīth (Salafī) developed into the main group opposed to the dominance of the rationalist theology of the *Mu’tazilah*. During the religious inquisition or *Mihna* (833-850) many of the *Ahl-e-Ḥadīth* or Ashāb-e-Ḥadīth were imprisoned for refusing to agree to the doctrine of the created Qur’ān. Members of the *Ahl* or Ashāb-e-Ḥadīth, such as Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal(d.855), became important religious and social leader due to the refusal to recant their beliefs in the eternal nature of the Qur’ān. After the *Mihna*, the Ashāb-e-Ḥadīth led an anti-rationalist movement that forced advocates of rationalist thought underground. The Ashāb-e-Ḥadīth formed a school of legal thought named
after Ḥāmid Ibn Ḥanbal that continued to pursue legal methods that focused less on uses of reason and more on tradition. The contemporary influence of Ashāb-e-Ḥadīth ideology continues to be important for a number of diverse groups like the contemporary Ahl-e-Ḥadīth or Salafis or Wahabis.

The Ahl-e-Ḥadīth, literally the ‘people of tradition’, is not a distinct group of thinkers, but refers variously to the Ḥanbalī jurists, and or to those who see themselves as particularly enthusiastic about the Prophetic traditions (Ḥadīth reports) in Islam. Ḥanbalī Fuqahā (jurists of Islamic law) are expected to master the Ḥadīth Collections, to be experts in judging their varying levels of reliability and in using them to resolve legal issues. The different legal schools in Islam take different attitudes toward the Ḥadīth reports. The Ḥanbalī School does embody a particularly enthusiastic commitment to the Ahādīth in its definition and justification of legal validity. It sees other schools as not being appropriately committed to them and as excessively privileging the Rā’y (personal opinion) of jurists. Those who emphasize the significance of traditions set themselves up as the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth against the Ahl-al-Ra’y (people of opinion).

In the ninth century (3rd century A.H.) the Abbasid leader in Baghdad directly attacked the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth for their theory that the Qurʾān was uncreated. The Caliph al-Mamūn insisted that the community support the view that the Qurʾān was created, a view that was propounded by the Muʿtazilah. This view was later on reversed and the Ashāb or Ahl-e-Ḥadīth (Salafī) became the new orthodoxy, a condition in which they persisted for many centuries in the Sunni world. Ibn Ḵanḍīm in his Al-Fihrist used the expression Ahl-e-Ḥadīth to replace the more common Ahl-al-Sunnah, perhaps as a result of his Shiʿi sympathies on the other hand, those with in the Islamic world who argue for a new approach to longstanding issues criticized the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth as a group of reactionary thinkers, and as people often aligned with radical and violent groups.

Islam quickly spread in many parts of the world and the Islamic empire included in its orbit men of various tribes and nationalities. It spread in Western Central Asia, Africa, Spain, India and other parts of the world; it is sometimes supposed that the spread of Islam in India was due to force employed by the conquerors. This view is not correct for there are no instances in history of whole sale persecutions of non-Muslims. A study of Islam in India in the eighteenth century is inextricably entwined with two strands, both of which were of primary importance.
Great controversies, ideological and sectarian, whether over pantheism or Imamate, that shook other parts of the Islamic world, in due course, extended to India. On the other hand the entire question of co-existence of Islam with Hinduism presented a unique feature hardly paralleled in any other part of the world. Islam in India was particularly affected by successive waves of ideas and practices of Sufi thought from the Islamic world. The early Sufi Saints who came to India and permanently settled here had lived with the common people and propagated the laws of Islam and tied it had flourished invite them to embrace Islam. It is largely due to their missionary zeal that Islam in the early centuries in India had flourished.

It is true to say that since 13th century C.E. Sufis started organizing themselves into various orders like Chishtiyah, Suhrawdiyyah, Qādiriyyah and Naqshbandiyah etc. Ahl-e-Hadith Movement is an extension for Islamic revivalism and the main Slogan is back to the Qurʾān and Sunnah of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him). In the India Ṭariqah-i-Muḥammadiyyah movement was founded by Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd and Shāh Ismāʿīl Shahīd as a religious reform movement during C.E. 1818, it took a political turn within a few years and spread throughout Indo-Pakistan subcontinent with extraordinary rapidity. In course of time, it also split up into three distinct groups, namely the Patna school, Taʿāiyuni and the Ahl-e-Hadith.’’

Muinuddīn Aḥmad (the author of Faraizi Movement) states ; ‘‘on the whole, the Faraizi and the Ahl-e-Hadith appear to have been largely indifferent to each other…..Although the Faraizi are followers of the Hanafi School of law, they do not oppose the idea of following prophetic traditions. The Ahl-e-Hadith does not appear to have come into direct conflict with the Faraizi.’’ Besides, writers have identified Ahl-e-Ḥadīth with three main principles: They place emphasis on the principle of Tawḥīd (unity of Allah); they believe in direct Ijtihād (in the light of Qurʾān and the Sunnah), accepted the four main Sunnī schools of law in the light of Qurʾān and Sunnah. They want to eradicate from the society all un-Islamic customs and traditions. Writers and chroniclers have reported different titles for the Nawāb Siddīq Ḥasan in regard to his works, views and contributions, some of them called him leader of the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth in the nineteenth century India; others gave him the name of Wahhābī; and there were some whose historical assessment can be interpreted as describing him the successor of Ḥājī Shariʿatullah, the founder of Farāʾīzī movement in Bengal. The real nature of the above differing remarks about the Nawāb and Ahl-e-Ḥadīth and whether it were
the Ahl-e-Ḥadīth only who enunciated the above three main principles, or there were some other people too who shared their opinions, need to have a bird’s–eye view of the entire Muslim society; to look for the likely causes responsible for its decadence, and also find out what steps were taken, and who took them, to resuscitate it. The following account would reveal that the factors that brought about Muslim degeneration in India were also responsible for Muslims’ loss of power in other parts of the world.

After a brief period, people began to rely mostly on the works of the four A‘immah Abū Hanīfa (R.A.), Mālik Ibn Anas (R.A.), Ḥāmid Ibn Ḥanbal (R.A.), and Imām Shāfi‘ī (R.A.). Many factors in various parts of the world provided opportunities for these four schools to flourish. The outcome of these tragic issues- to confine religious ideas to only four schools- was a complete check on the intellectual growth of the Muslim Ummah. Muslims never remained in any era without some appropriate, guidance which came through people like Al-Ghazālī, Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328 C.E.), Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, Al-Suyūtī, Shāh Waliyullah (1703-1762 C.E.), ‘Abdul Wahhāb (1703-1792 C.E.), Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī al-Shawkānī, Sayyid Ḥāmid Shahīd (1786-1831 C.E.), Muḥammad ‘Abduh and many others. They attempted, in one way or another, to reform the Socio-religious, political, economic and educational systems of the Muslims and performed their duties as best as they could. In the light of this background, this fact can be established that the reforms introduced by Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdul Wahhāb al Najdī, Ḥājjī Sharīṭulullah, Sayyid Ḥāmid Shahīd, Shāh Isma‘īl Shahīd, Sayyid Nazīr Ḥusayn Batalwī and Muḥammad Siddīq Ḥasan Khān were not a novelty- these were part of the Tajdīd-i-Dīn (renovation of religion), a procedure which the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Islam enunciated more than 1400 years ago. Ahl-e- Ḥadīth, Farāizī and the followers of Tarīqah-i-Muḥammadīyyah, were once termed as “Wahhābī,” “traitors” and “religious fanatics” and were executed on these bases by Ranjit Singh and the British Government.

Farāizī means one who emphasizes the practice of the five pillars of Islam, i.e. Tawhīd (belief in the unity of Allah), Namāz (prayer), Roza (fasting), Zakat (legal alms) and Pilgrimage to Makkah. Ahl-e-Ḥadīth place great emphasis on the unity of Allah, fight against sinful innovations.

‘Ulamā-e-Ahl-e-Ḥadīth emphasise on the unity (Tawhīd) of Allah, and a denial of occult power and knowledge of the hidden things (‘ilm-ul-ghayb) to any of
his creatures. They criticised on the belief in saint worship, which has been so commonly adopted throughout India. They rejected to follow the four recognized schools of canon law blindly, and instructed to follow the Qur’ān and traditions, as accepted by the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), are the only worthy guide for true Muslims. They reject the common notion that Taqlīd of the founders of these four schools are of final authority. ‘Ulamā-e-Ahl-e-Ḥadīth accepted the four Sunni Schools in the light of Qur’an and Ḥadīth. It is wrong to say that ‘Ulamā-e-Ahl-e-Ḥadīth outrightly rejected the four Sunni Schools of Jurisprudence rather they say there is no question of rejection of any fatwa or Qiyās if it is based in the light of Qur’an and authentic Ahādīth. ‘Ulamā-e-Ahl-e-Ḥadīth rejected of following any particular ‘Imām’ and say our ‘Imām’ is the beloved Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), and say we do firmly believed the Taglid of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him).

Ibn Taymiyyah’s main intention was to follow the Qur’ān and Ahādīth “to describe Allah only as He has described Himself, in His Book and as the Prophet (peace be upon him) has described Him in the Sunnah”. His doctrine was centred on and inspired by the spirit of Ḥanbalism, a doctrine of synthesis or of conciliation “the happy mean” (wast), which would accord to each School its rightful place in a strongly hierarchical whole in conformity with the precepts of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. “The dogmatic theologians”, “based their system on reason (aql), the traditionists based theirs on hadith (nakl), and the Sufis theirs on free-will (irada)”

The Muwahḥidūn (Unitarians) or Salafis strongly disagreed with their opponents on the question of Tawassul (intercession). For Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb, Ibādah (worship) refers to all the utterances and actions- inward as well as out word- that Allah desires and commands. The common practice of seeking intercession from dead saints is prohibited, as is excessive devotion at their tombs, the doctrine of intercession led the Muwahḥidūn to denounce vehemently the widely followed practice of visitation of tombs and the building of domes near them. Initially Muhammad bin ‘Abdul Wahhāb had considered visitation, if performed in the true spirit of Islam, a pious and praiseworthy act. However, the Muwahḥidūn believe that people have transformed the prayers for the dead into prayers to the dead; gravesites became places of assembly for worshipers. The excessive veneration of the deceased who enjoyed a holy reputation was a first step that had led people to idol-worship in the past. To avoid polytheism, they consider it an obligation to destroy all such
existing tombs. The Muwaḥḥidūn also believe that mere affiliation with Islam is not sufficient in itself to prevent a Muslim from becoming a polytheist. The Unitarians developed strict procedures to direct the discussion of doctrinal issues. To judge religious questions, they first search the texts of the Qurʾān and the Aḥadīth and define their views accordingly. If reference is not found in these texts, they look for the consensus of the “virtuous ancestors”, particularly the Companions and their successors; Ijmā, however, is restricted to those who follow the Qurʾān and the traditions.

When it is evident that worship is due to Allah alone, then to associate anyone in that worship is Shirk (polytheism). Shirk is evil, no matter what the object is, it may be ‘King or Prophet, or Sufi Saint or tree or tomb. It is also Shirk to seek refuge with anyone other than Allah. To call and seek help from other than Allah is defined by Ibn ‘Abdul Wahhāb as ‘Grave Shirk’ (Shirk al-Akbar). Ibn Wahhāb further says that no one is more misguided than the one who calls other than Allah and the person called will have enmity with the caller on the day of judgement. ‘Abdul Wahhāb defines hypocrisy as a ‘Small Shirk’ (Shirk al-Asghar) and says that the pious men are more prone to hypocrisy. A hypocrite, he says, is one who ostensibly prays for the sake of Allah but his real motive is to show piety.

Their main doctrines are enumerated below:

- Strongly opposed the position of Taqlīd-i-Shakhshi.
- Muhsinul Mulk said: ‘if we do not cleanse our religion of this sin (Taqlīd), it is unjust for us to criticize those of other religions’.
- Prohibited Urs, Qawwālī and Saint Worship.
- Against B-e Shara‘ Sufis (un Islamic Sufi Practices).
- Opposed elaborate ceremonies and adopted simple marriage and modest dowry.
- Styles of prayer as stated in the Aḥādīth and Sunnah: say Āmīn loudly, lift hands before bowing, fold hand.
- ‘Ulamā-e-Ahl-e-Ḥadīth allowed the offering of prayers even the Imam is known to be a Fāsik.
- ‘Ulamā-e-Ahl-e-Ḥadīth accepted all the four Imams and Imams of the Ahl bait in the light of the Qurʾān and Sunnah.
- ‘Ulamā-e-Ahl-e-Ḥadīth does believe in Ijtihād.