Abstract

Title of the Ph.D Thesis

Impact of the Ahl-e-Hadith Movement on Contemporary Muslim Society in India

Ahl-e-Hadith

The term ‘Ahl-e-Hadith’ literally means ‘people of the Hadith’, signifying the claim of this Movement to be the strict followers of the Prophet’s (peace be on him), Sunnah or practice, as reflected in the Hadith tradition. In addition to the term Ahl-e-Hadith, they refer to themselves, as do the Saudi ‘Muwahhidun’ (the Unitarians), as Salafis, or those who follow the Salaf-e-Salih or the ‘pious predecessors’ and as ‘monotheists’.

Ahl-e-Hadith Movement in India

Ulama-e-Ahl-e-Hadith traced its origin from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) Khulafa-e-Rashidun, Sahaba, the four Sunni Imams (in the light of the Qur’an and Sunnah) and Sunni Mujtahid (true followers of Qur’an and Sunnah). In India scholars are of the opinion that this movement is an off-shoot of Walliullah-i-Movement and the Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah movement of Syed Ahmad Shaheed and Shah Ismail Shaheed. Hence we are given here a background of Shah Waliullah and his Thoughts.

In the eighteenth century, the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent witnessed two important processes: the decline of the Mughal Empire, which may conveniently be dated from the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, and the beginning of an intellectual and political re-awakening signalled Shah Waliullah (1703-1764), which laid the foundations for a Muslim resistance against British rule in India. The first process, the fall of the Mughal Empire and its causes, does not concern us here. What we are really concerned with is the second process: the beginning of the intellectual and political re-awakening, an event to which the works of Muhammad Siddique Hasan Khan, Nawab of
Bhopal, are closely related. His works were an attempt from an important, if idiosyncratic, angle towards the re-awakening of Muslim on an international level. In order to assess the importance of his life and works in their historical perspective, a brief account of the Indian context in which Shah Waliullah worked will be given. This will be followed by a short description of the activities of Muhammad Siddique Hasan Khan and his followers.

It was the time when Muslim on the whole was indifferent towards their religion. They drifted away from their religious institutions and clung instead to time-honoured customs and traditions. Caste differences and social discrimination which were characteristic of Hindu society found their way into the Muslim social order. The Hindus, according to the Muslim point of view, worshipped their idols in the temples; the Muslims, on the other hand, started showing undue respect to their Pir's and Sufi Saints. They gave charity and devotion in their names, hoping that they would grant their requests. They strongly believed that these Pir's and Sufi Saints, living or dead, were capable of helping them in adversity. Blind faith (Taqlid) was the order of the day. The Fatawa (religious decrees) of the so-called ‘Ulama’ had replaced the tenets of the Qur‘ān and the Sunnah. These Fatawa were considered to have the binding force of the commands of God and His Apostle. Anyone who did not follow one of the four a‘immah, viz. Imam Abu Hanifa (d.150/767), Imam Malik (d.179/795), Imam Shafii (d. 204/819), and Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 241/ 855), was considered to be no more within the pale of Islam.

Sectarianism was also very common. Religious rivalries and squabbles were prevalent among the followers of the four a‘immah and Sunni and Shi'ah which blinded their reason. These activities exhausted the energies and capabilities of Scholars without yielding any useful result; on the contrary, they were damaging the common interest of the people. Social conditions were even worse. Widow Remarriage was thought to be immodest- another Hindu influence. Lavish spending on ceremonies on the eve of wedding, funerals, marriages and circumcision was thought being honourable, and Muslims borrowed and got into debt to maintain ceremonial pomp. Islam favours simple celebrations on these occasions, but long association with Hindus made these ceremonies more and more complicated.

Being a gifted man, Shah Wali Allah realised the weaknesses and deficiencies of the Muslims and determined to make them good. After a thorough study of the situation he diagnosed the following symptoms of the underlying factors responsible for the decadence of the Muslim
community: firstly, indifference towards religious institutions and lack of concern for the study of the Qurʾān and its understanding; secondly, economic imbalance; and finally, lack of impressive, dynamic and reliable leadership.

Shah Waliullah first tried to reform the current belief of the people that the Qurʾān could not be translated into another language and to alter their attitude towards the Qurʾān, which they had confined to recitation, regarding it good for curing physical rather than spiritual diseases and for removing of evil spirits from children. Shah Waliullah knew that the main cause of Muslim decadence throughout the world was their complete ignorance of the meaning of the Qurʾān. The Qurʾān, the Will of God, was intended to be properly understood and applied in various aspects of individual and communal life, but being in Arabic the people were not familiar with it. Shah Waliullah thus embarked upon the urgent but controversial and dangerous task of rendering the Qurʾān into a language which the ‘Ulama’ generally spoke and understood. Therefore, he selected Persian- the only language which could serve the purpose- and rendered the Qurʾān into it. It was a clear break with the long and persistent belief of the people, but he convinces them about its necessity, and so they welcomed. His Persian rendering was following by an interlineal Urdu rendering by his son Shah Abdul Qadir which proved a further great help in the understanding of the Qurʾān, and on which Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan later on based his own exegesis called Tarjuman al-Qurʾān.

Secondly, Shah Waliullah explained to the people that ijtihad (independent judgement in a legal or theological question, based on the interpretation of the four usul) was necessary throughout the ages and that Islam could not be confined merely to the pronouncement of the four Schools. He gave due importance to the contributions of the four aʾimmah, but added that the necessity of ijtihad has been and would be realised throughout the history of the Islam because the problems of the people have been increased with the passing of time, and, if the processes of ijtihad were to be confined to the eras of the four aʾimmah, it would prevent Islam providing a complete code of conduct for life.

Thirdly, Shah Waliullah argued that the necessary qualifications for the practitioners of ijtihad were a sound knowledge of the Qurʾān, Hadith, nasikh wa mansukh (abrogating and abrogated verses of the Qurʾān), the decisions and analogies derived by the previous mujtahidun (interpreters of the law), and of the Arabic language. He believed in the dynamic nature of Islam
and its capability for guiding people in all eras and in all circumstance, but warned the ‘ulama’ that if they did not change their stubborn attitude in favour of the inevitability of ijtihad, its consequences would be disastrous. Describing the attitude of the ‘ulama’ who went beyond the genuine limits of Taqlid (accepting blinding as final authority the opinion of a particular Imam), Shah Wali Allah said that they persistently accepted and preserved the decisions and interpretations of past mujtahidun who were men like themselves and liable to err, and considered their Fatawa an undisputed and authentic code of conduct. This made them ignore the Qur’ān and the Hadith and lay at the root of their intellectual stagnation.

Shah Waliullah also attacked the false belief of Muslims in Pirs and Sufi Saints. He explained to them that it was sheer ignorance and folly to call on Pirs and Sufi Saints for help, or to go to their tombs and show them undue respect. He said that this kind of reverence shown to the tombs of pirs and saints was equivalent to the acts of shirk (polytheism), which Islam came to extinguish. Shah Waliullah also made a shrewd analysis of the causes of economic deterioration which had brought about the decadence of Muslims in India. He said that two things were largely responsible for the instability of the Muslim society: the dependence of a large number of people on the state treasury, without contributing anything in return and, secondly, the exorbitant taxation on the public which they could not afford and which led to revolts against the rulers. Unless these economic ills could be alleviated, society would not lie in peace. Food, clothes, shelter, and rising a family were the basic requirements of life, and without proper provision of these necessities, stability in society is impossible.

Referring to the luxurious life of the rulers, Shah Waliullah warned that when the ruling class indulges in extravagance and pleasure, society suffers, and administration deteriorates, and the people have to pay the price. The consequences must be chaos and disorder, deterioration of fundamental values, and national demoralisation. At this stage, a people lose their independence and the yoke of subjection is put on their shoulders.

Shah Waliullah also emphasised the need for the rulers to respect all professions and to allow the people to adopt professions according to their choice. A barber, Shah Waliullah argues, is as important and necessary as a shoemaker, or a weaver. He condemned those who favoured class or professional discrimination in society, but suggested agriculture, the backbone of society, should be given top priority over other callings. “The ratio between agriculture and other
professions should be like that of flour and salt,” he wrote. Even this cursory account shows how Shah Waliullah concerned himself with the entire structure of Muslim political, social, economic and religious institutions in India, and his importance to the history of Muslim revivalism is unquestioned.

Although Shah Waliullah did not succeed in arresting the decline of Muslim power, yet his fresh and dynamic ideas had a vast impact on Muslim history. After his death in 1764, his mission was carried on by his sons ‘Abdul Aziz (d. 1827), Shah Rafi al-deen (d. 1833), Shah ‘Abd al- Qadir (d.1826), and Shah ‘Abdul Ghani. They all were noted scholars of their times and each of them tried his best to convey to the Indian Muslims message of their father in the simplest possible manner- arranging special groups for the specific purpose of preaching, and writing many books in local languages of the general public.

This reformation movement then took another course- Shah ‘Abdul Aziz issued a fatwa, declaring India Dar al-Harb and proclaiming a jihad, against all those who occupied Muslim cities, obligatory on all Indian Muslims. He was constantly on the lookout for a man of outstanding character who could fight against the current non-Islamic customs on the one hand, and lead jihad against the occupants of the Muslim cities on the other. He found this man in the person of Syed Ahmad Shaheed.

Syed Ahmad Shaheed was born in the town of Outh in the village of Bareilly in 1786. By temperament not a scholar, he made his way to Lucknow in pursuit of employment; he succeeded in finding a post with Amir Khan, who afterwards became the Nawab of Tonk and supporter Syed Ahmad’s movement. After some time, he lost interest in this post and resigned. By now he seemed to have developed a taste for learning, so he left for Delhi, which was the centre of learning and the residence of the family of Shah Waliullah. From Delhi, Shah Abdul Aziz sent him to Akbarabad, where his brother Shah Abdul Qadir was lecturing. There he read the Qur’an and grammar, but did not make much progress with his studies. He was now inclined towards mysticism and, so, he became the pupil of Shah Abdul Aziz in the Naqshbandi tariqah of Tasawwuf.

He started a comprehensive programme of preaching throughout India. Maulana Muhammad Ismail (d. 1831) and Maulana Abdul Hay (d. 1827), the pupil and son in law of Shah Abdul Aziz,
joined him in this task. They travelled over a large part of India- Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Rampur, Bareilly, Shahjahan bad, Benares and Lucknow- and explained to the people the harmful consequences of spending recklessly on ceremonies. To show to the people that widow remarriage was not a heinous act, as it was considered to be, Syed Ahmad himself married a widow. Their insistence was mainly on such things as the unity of Allah, honesty, truthfulness and futility of showing undue respect to pirs and saints. These teachings were compiled by Muhammad Ismail Shaheed and Maulana Abdul Hay into book form under the title *Sirat-i-Mustaqim*.

During his Rampur journey, Syed Ahmad met some Afaghinah (sing. Afghan) who told him about the cruel treatment of Muslim by Sikhs, and invited him to deliver them from these brutalities. In response to this invitation, he determined to initiate jihad against the Sikhs on the North West Frontier (the Present Peshawar and Malakand Divisions).

Before starting the jihad Syed Ahmad went on a Pilgrimage to Makkah in 1822. His book *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* was circulated among the pilgrims and greatly appreciated by them. This controverts the opinion of those who say that Syed Ahmad imbibed the doctrines of Wahhabism during this journey, and his future activities in India owe their momentum to them.

After returning to India they started preparations for the jihad. He sends Muhammad Ismail and Maulana ‘Abdul Hay to various parts of India to convince the people about the legality and necessity of the jihad. This message of the jihad was so widely spread that it became a main topic and discussion throughout India. In 1826 he and his 7000 Mujahidun set out on the jihad. As he could not pass his force through the Punjab, a Sikh controlled area, he first went to Afghanistan and from there to Peshawar through the Khyber Pass.

The first battle against the Sikhs was fought at akora in 1826 and resulted in the Sikhs’ defeat. The second attack was made at Hadro a village on the east of the Indus River near attack, and the Sikh army was defeated again. These skirmishes went on till the mujahid forces were defeated at Balakot (Hazara, west Pakistan) and Syed Ahmad and Muhammad Ismail were slain by the forces of Sher Singh.

*Causes for His Failure against the Sikhs.* Why Ahmad Shaheed did not succeed in this mission is a question which can be answered only by those with a close understanding of the Pathan tribes.
Those who know the Pathans can understand now some customs and traditions become so dear to the people that in time they replace the genuine tenets. Caroe’s analysis of the factors behind Syed Ahmad Shaheed’s failure shows an acute understand did of the Pathan and his history.

Firstly, Syed Ahmad Shaheed started preaching to the Pathans that all marriageable women should at once be married and the age long, but non–Islamic, customs and traditions regarding marriage be abandoned. According to Pathan customs, the institutions of marriage and wedding have a definite procedure.

After his death, the East India Company began to take this movement seriously. Syed Ahmad’s mission was carried on by his followers. Patna, Sitana and Sadiqpur were its main centres. It was by now an organised movement and had a number of bases in all parts of India where volunteers were trained to raise funds for the jihad, and to preach to the people including the police and the soldiers.

Beside the reform movement of Shah Waliullah and Syed Ahmad Shaheed, a contemporary reform movement had also been started in Arabia under the leadership of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab al-Najdi (d. 1703) in reaction to the contemporary Muslim Society which, under Ottoman rule, was suffering from the same symptoms as those of India’s. he, therefore, placed great emphasis (as a comparison between his doctrines and those of Muhammad Siddique Hasan Khan will later show) on the unity of God, a principle that stresses the unity of action and purpose, both essential for the establishment of a dynamic social order; the absurdity of showing undue respect to saints and pirs, and tombs; return for guidance to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah alone; their rejecting the idea of accepting as a final authority the interpretations of a particular Imam (legal interpreter of the Shari’ah); the significance of ijtihad; and the evil consequence of following customary rules and regulation, he did not even hesitate to use force to achieve his reforms, in which he succeeded up to a certain extent; but, as he was rigid and tactless, imposing his ideas by the use of force, his movement did not achieve its goal.

Abdul Wahhab was followed by another Yamani Scholar, Muhammad Ibn ‘Ali al-Shawkani (d.1834), the follower of Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328), the follower of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 855). Just as Abdul Wahhab had done, he attacked Taqlid, by writing a book, al Qawal al-Mufid fi Hukum al-Taqlid, which created a great stir among contemporary scholars. His other important
contribution in this connection was *Nayl al-Awtar*, a commentary on Ibn Taymiyyah’s *al-Muntaqa al-Akhbar*, a voluminous work, which provides rules and regulations on the problems of Fiqh, based on the authentic Hadith of the Prophet. Describing the importance of *al-Muntaqa al-Akhbar*, and what prompted him to write this commentary, he pointed out, that it “has become a source-book for majority of the ‘Ulama’ when they are in need of finding a legal proof—especially in this regional and in these times; upon this sweet spring, the eyes of original thinkers collide with one another and the steps of investigators vie with one another in entering its gates. It has thus become a resort for thinkers whither they repair and a haven for those who wish to flee from the bonds of slavish and blind acceptance of authority.” However, he was rather more rational and tactful than some of the reformers, and his works achieved wide circulation and accepting among literary circles. Moreover, communication by sea by this time had improved considerably, and with it social intercourse between the ‘Ulama’ of India, Yemen and Makkah increased as well. And it was possibly because of this growing contact that in the 1860’s ‘Ulama’, full of the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah and Shawkani, were found in the courts of the Indian princely states, especially Hyderabad and Bhopal. These ‘ulama’ introduced the ideas and works of Shawkani and, indirectly, of Ibn Taymiyyah in Bhopal. They gradually spread throughout India.

This was the context into which Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan was born. His birthplace was Bareilly, the village of his maternal grandfather, a village that gave birth to Syed Ahmad Shaheed, the champion of the jihad movement. His father, Syed Awlad Hasan Khan, was a strong supporter of Syed Ahmad Shaheed, and accompanied him in his journey to Afghanistan and rendered great services to the cause of Islam.

After the death of his father in 1837, he remained under the care of his mother. When he grew up, he made several journeys to the surrounding districts and met a great number of his father’s friends there. On his return to Kanauj he went to Delhi and remained under the tutorship of Sadr al-deen Khan, the Mufti of Delhi. After sixteen months he came back to Kanauj and decided to go to Bhopal in search of employment on his arrival in Bhopal, Syed Jamal al-Deen Khan, the prime minister of Bhopal and a supporter of the jihad movement, recruited him as one of his personal bodyguard. But soon after he was relieved of his duties, owing to his alleged involvement in religious debates of an inflammatory nature.
From Bhopal he went to Tonk, where he stayed with the relatives of Syed Ahmad Shaheed and worked for eight months as an employee of the Siddique Hasan of Tonk, a strong supporter of the jihad movement. Once again Jamal al-deen Khan persuaded the begum to invite him to Bhopal. She assigned Siddique Hasan the duty of writing the history of Bhopal.

Up to this time he was under the influence of the teachings of Shah Wali Allah and Syed Ahmad Shaheed. On his arrival in Bhopal, he came into contact with ‘ulama’ from Yemen in the royal court of Bhopal and studied under their supervision the works of Ibn Taymiyyah and Shawkani. These ‘ulama’, being imbued with the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah and Shawkani, immensely impressed him and, in a few years’ time, fundamentally changed his outlook. His outlook experienced further changes when, in 1869, on his way to Makkah, he read other works of these authors in Hudaydah, Yemen, and Makkah. After his return to Bhopal, he was no more a *Muqallid*; on the contrary, he started writing books against *Taqlid* and the followers of Imam Abu Hanifa who, according to him, were chiefly responsible for the intellectual stagnation of Muslim India, he followed, with certain reservations, Ibn Taymiyyah, Shah Wali Allah and Syed Ahmad Shaheed, Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab and Shawkani in his attack on *Taqlid*, non-Islamic customs and traditions (*bid’ah*) and in his emphasis on the revival of the institution of *Ijthad* and turning for guidance to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah alone.

Islam is the final form of all previous Faiths. Islam enjoins beliefs 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 faith which went before it. Islam is also a living and potent force in the modern times. The Holy Qur’ān is the fundamental or basic source of Islamic jurisprudence. Next is the importance and authority comes Sunnah or Ahadith. Ahadith itself derives its authority and legal validity from Holy Qur’ān. Ahadith the saying conveyed to man either through hearing or revelation. Hadith the sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). Sunnah literally means a ways 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)
It is qual saying of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him), an action or practice of his or a *Taqrir* (Tacit approval), his silent approval of the action or practice of another. The Holy 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.

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 traditionist of this period where the four Caliphs that is Hazrat Abu Bakar ®, Hazrat Umar ®, Hazrat Uthman ® and Hazrat Ali ® and the following prominent companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Ahadith in this sense of the reports of the sayings and doings of Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been subjected to keen pursuit and constant study by the Muslim throughout the Muslim world since the very beginning of the history of Islam up to present times. Some of them wrote down what he said in Sahifas which were later on read by them to their student and which were preserved in their families and also by the follower (*Tabiun*). After the death Muhammad (peace be upon him), when his companions spread in various countries some of them as well as their follower undertook long arduous journeys, Courted poverty and penury in order to collect them together. Imam Malik’s great work is the *Kitab-al-Muwatta* (paved way). It is the oldest corpus jurist of the Sunnah branch of Islamic Jurisprudence that has survived from the early period of Fiqh. The Muwatta was not intended to serve as a collection of hadith but it may be said with equal justice that it is not a book of Fiqh in the same sense in which later books on Fiqh are said to be works on the subject. These books are known as *Al-kutub ul Sittah* or the “*Six Sahihs*” (the second collections). The Collections of Al-Bukhari and Muslim rank high and are known as “*Al-Sahiha*” i.e. authentic and authoritative. The best known collection on the ‘*Musnad*’ pattern is the Collection of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 855 C.E). The six collection of Ahadith are recognised by Ahl-Sunnah as the Sihah Sittah or the six reliable collections. These are the collection by Muhammad Ibn Ismail Bukhari Muslim, Abu Da’ud, Tirmizi, Ibn Maja and Nasai. Sihah Sittah the Sahih of Bukhari, holds the first place in several respects.

The earliest completion of such recorded tradition supported in each instance by a chain of authorities tracing it back to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was the first biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) by Ibn Ishaq. Then followed Imam Malik’s famous hand book on *Muwatta* based on the same Principle on *Sanad* and *Matn.*
Thereafter followed Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal’s work, *Musnad* giving all the tradition attributed to one companion and then going to another.

“The Hadith have elaborated and fixed the academic and practical meaning of the Quranic ayat from every angle. The Hadith 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 with guidance in detail for every aspect of life which will arise until the day of Qiyamah 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 as the “Ummat wast” of “balanced nation”.

Imam Malik had based his fiqh on the traditions or Ahadith 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 qula of Tabayeen (Sayings of Tabayeen).

Istihsan which means the law of preference or suitableness of an act or juristic equity was accepted by Imam Hanbal as source of law. He says that Istihsan is to abandon a rule or command to adopt another better rule.

Imam Hanbal’s method of formulating legal doctrines was of *Ashab-e-Hadith*, therefore was find very few books on principles of *Fiqh* in Hanbalite legal literature, whereas there are numerous works on Hadith. Among Ibn Hanbal’s work, the great collection of traditions known as “*Musnad Ahmad*” was actually compiled by his son Abd Allah from his lectures and was amplified by supplements (zawaid). It consists of 28,000 – 29,000 traditions. The Musnad we have Ibn Hanbal’s *Kitab al-Salat wma Yalzam Fiha*, on the discipline at prayer-Ibn Hanbal, written in prison is frequently quoted in works of Hanbalite dogmatists; *al-radd ala’l-zamadika wa’l-jahmiyya fima Shakkat fihi min mutashabih al-Qur’ān*, in which he refutes the *Tawil*—explanation introduced by the Mutazilite likewise a book entitled *Kitab Taat al-Rasul* is quoted, in it he discusses the line one must follow in those cases where the Ahadith seems to be in contradiction with the text of certain Quranic passage.
The Ahl-e-Hadith (people of the traditions) appear to have developed out of a pious reaction to the assassination of Caliph Yazid bin Walid (d.744). Prior Yazid’s assassination, scholars who emphasized Hadith (traditions of the prophet Muhammad) 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’an. Yazid’s assassination was interpreted by more conservative groups as a revolution against the predestined plan of Allah. After the Abbasid revolution (c.720-750), the Ahl-e-Hadith (salafi) developed into the main group opposed to the dominance of the rationalist theology of the Mutazilite. During the religious inquisition or Mihna (833-850) many of the Ahl-e-hadith were imprisoned for refusing to agree to the doctrine of the created Qur’an. Members of the Ahl-e-hadith, such as Ahmad Ibn Hanbal(d.855), became important religious and social leader due to their refusal to recant their beliefs in the eternal nature of the Qur’an. After the Mihna, the Ahl-e-Hadith led an anti-rationalist movement that forced advocates of rationalist thought underground. The Ahl-e-Hadith formed a school of legal thought named after Ahmad Ibn Hanbal that continued to pursue legal methods that focused less on uses of reason end more on tradition. The contemporary influence of Ahl-e-Hadith ideology continues to be important for a number of diverse groups.

The Ahl-e-hadith, literally the ‘‘people of tradition’’, is not a distinct group of thinkers, but refers variously to the Hanbali jurists, and or to those who see themselves as particularly enthusiastic about the prophetic traditions (hadith reports) in Islam. Hanbali Fuqaha’ (jurists of Islamic law) is expected to master the Hadith 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 attitude toward the hadith reports. For some time it has lost its direct link with the Hanbalis, and has become shorthand for a commitment to tradition, where this means an attempt at returning to the rules and way of life of the salaf, the original leaders of the Ummah, the Islamic community. On the other hand, the Hanbali School does embody a particularly enthusiastic commitment to the Ahadith in its definition and justification of legal validity. It sees other schools as not being appropriately committed to them and as excessively privileging the ra’y (personal opinion) of jurists. Those who emphasize the significance of tradition set themselves up as the Ahl-e-Hadith 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-Hadith for their theory that the Qurʾān was uncreated. The Caliph al-Maʾmun insisted that the community support the view that the Qurʾān was created, a view than propounded by the Muʿtazila. This view was later on reversed and the Ahl-e-Hadith (Salafi) became the new orthodoxy, a condition in which they persisted for many centuries in the Sunni world. Ibn – Nadeem in his Fihrist used the expression Ahl-e-Hadith to replace the more common Ahl-al-Sunnah, perhaps as a result of his shii sympathies on the other hand, those with in the Islamic world who argue for a new approach to longstanding issues critized the Ahl-e-Hadith as a group of reactionary thinkers, and as people often aligned with radical and violent groups.

Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah movement of India founded by Syed Ahmad Shaheed and Shah Ismail Shaheed was started as a religious reform movement about 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, Taʾāiyuni and the Ahl-e-Hadith."

Muin uddin Ahmad (the author Faraizi Movement) further 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-Hadith with three main principles: They place emphasis on the principle of Tawhid (unity of Allah); they believe in direct ijtihad (in the light of Qurʾān and the Sunnah), accepted the four main Sunni 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 Nawab in regard to his works, views and contributions, some of them called him leader of the Ahl-e-Hadith in the nineteenth century India; others gave him the name of Wahhabi; and there were some whose historical assessment can be interpreted as describing him the successor of Haji Shariat Allah’s Faraizi movement in Bengal. The real nature of the above differing remarks about the Nawab and Ahl-e-Hadith and whether it were the Ahl-e-Hadith only who enunciated the above three main principles, or there were some other people too who shared their opinions, we need 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 Muslim’s 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* Abu Hanifa, Malik Ibn Anas, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, and Imam Shafii. Many factors in various parts of the world provided opportunities for these four schools to flourish. The outcome of these tragic issue to confine religious ideas to only four schools- was a complete check on the intellectual growth of the Muslim ummah. Muslim never remained in any era without some appropriate, guidance which came through people like Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328 C.E.), Ibn Hajar al Asqalani, Suyuti, Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762 C.E.) and his son’s, Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792 C.E.); Muhammad Ibn Ali al- Shawkani, Syed Ahmad Shaheed (1786-1831 C.E.), Muhammad Abduh and many others. They attempted, in one way or another, to reform the Socio-religions, political, economic and educational systems of the Muslims and performed their duties as best as they could. In the light of this background, we can establish the fact, with ample evidence, that the reforms introduced by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab al Najdi, Haji Shari at Allah, Syed Ahmad Shaheed, Shah Ismail Shaheed, Syed Nazir Hussain Baltawi and Muhammad Siddiq Hasan Khan were not a novelty- these were part of the Tajdid-i-Deen (renovation of din) procedure which the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Islam enunciated more than 1400 years ago. Ahl-e-Hadith, Faraizi and the followers of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyyah*, were once termed as “*Wahhabi,*” “traitors” and “religious fanatics” and were executed on these bases by Ranjit Singh and the British Government.

Faraizi means one who emphasizes the practice of the five pillars of Islam, i.e. Tawhid (belief in the unity of Allah), Namaz (prayer), Roza (fasting), Zakat (poor rates/legal alms) and Pilgrimage to Makkah. Ahl-e-Hadith means those who place emphasis on the unity of Allah, fight against sinful innovations.

Ulama-e-Ahl-e-Hadith the reassertion of the unity (Tawhid) of Allah, and a denial of occult power, and knowledge of the hidden things (ilm-ul-ghayb) to any of his creatures. They
attacked on the belief in saint worship, which has been so commonly adopted throughout India. The rejected to follow blindly to the four recognized schools of canon law, 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 taqlid of the founders of these four schools are of final authority. Ulama-e-Ahl-e-Hadith accepted the four Sunni Schools in the light of Qur’ān and Hadith. It is wrong to say that Ulama-e-Ahl-e-Hadith out rightly rejected the four Sunni Schools of Thought rather they say there is no question of rejection of any fatwa or Qiyas if it is based in the light of Qur’ān and authentic Hadith. Ulama-e-Ahl-e-Hadith rejected of following any particular Imam and say our Imam is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Ibn Taymiyyah ‘s main intention was to follow the Qur’ān and Ahadith “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 Hanbalism, a doctrine of synthesis or of conciliation “the happy mean” (wasat), 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 traditionist based theirs on hadith (nakl), and the Sufis theirs on free-will (irada)”.

The Muwahhidūn (Unitarians) strongly disagreed with their opponents on the question of Tawassul (intercession). For Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahab, Ibadah (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 Muwahhidūn to denounce vehemently the widely followed practice of visitation of tombs and the building of doms near them. Initially Muhammad Abdul-Wahhab had considered visitation, if performed in the true spirit of Islam, a pious and praiseworthy act. However, Muwahhidūn 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, the consider it an obligation to destroy all such existing tombs. The Muwahhidūn 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 Qur’an and the Ahadiths 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; Ijma, however, is restricted to those who follow the Qur’an and the traditions.

When it is evident that worship is due to Allah alone, then to associate anyone in that worship is shirk. Shirk is evil, no matter what the object is, it may be ‘King of Prophet, or Sufi Saint or tree or tomb. It is also shirk to seek refuge with anyone other than Allah.¹ To call and seek help from other than Allah is defined by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab as ‘Grave Shirk’ (Shirk al-Akbar). Ibn wahab 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 Wahab 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 God but his real motive is to show piety.

In the nineteenth century there was a remarkable revival of the Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab and religion in Bengal, and several sects that owe their origin to the influence of the Muwahhidūn reformation, have sent their missionaries through the province purging out the of non-Muslim superstitions, awakening religious awareness and spreading the faith among unbelievers.

The basic book of Ahadith and Fiqh is Muwatta by Imam Malik whereas all other authentic Collection of Ahadith represents its amplification. The editors of the six authentic Collections of Hadith and Hakim have tried their level best to present Imam Malik’s Marasil as Mausal and his Mauquf as Marfu’. In other words, all these Collections are at best commentaries upon Malik’s main work. The chapters on Fiqh in Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Daud, Sunan Nasai, Sahih Bukhari and Jami Tirmizi represent an extension of the points made by Imam Malik.
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 sole 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, Suhrawrdiyah, Qadiriyah and Naqshbandiyah etc. Ahl-e-Hadith Movement is an extension for Islamic revivalism and the main Slogan is back to the Qur’ān and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him).

The Thesis contents seven chapters, excluding introduction and conclusion. Brief summary accounts of all chapters are given below.

Chapter 1, “An Introduction to the Early Phase of the Development of Islam: Ahl-e-Hadith Perspective”

This chapter highlights the following:

i) The early development of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and the teachings of Islam, and its significance;

ii) The establishment of Islamic state and early development and compilation of Hadith literature;

iii) Regarding the Sihah Sittah and Imams;
iv) Development of different Schools of Thought in Islam.

Chapter 2, “Some Prominent Ulama of the Muslim World and their Doctrines: Ahl-e-Hadith Perspective”

The chapter second deals with:

i) The ancestral particulars and background of Salafi Ulama of the Muslim world and their life, works, services as teachers, writers and preachers.

ii) Contribution of Salafi Ulama in the establishment of the Salafi movement all over the world.


iv) Some prominent Salafi Ulama are: Imam Abu Hanifa(RA) (80-150 A.H.), Imam Malik (RA) (713-795 CE); Imam Shafii (RA) (767-795 CE); Imam Ibn Hanbal (RA) (780-855 C.E); Ibn Taymiyyah (RA) (1263-1328); Ibn Qayyim (RA) (1292–1350) Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab (RA) (1703-1792) and many others.

Chapter 3, “The Advent and Spread of Islam in India”

Chapter three critically examines the following:

i) The historical background of the arrival of Muslims in India.

ii) The Arab conquest of Sind and other parts of India.

iii) The role of Muslim traders and Sufi Saints for the traders Islam in the spread of Islam in India.

Chapter 4, “Socio-Religious Conditions of the Muslims since the Advent of Islam in India”

Chapter four focuses on the Socio-Religious beliefs of some of the Muslims in India. This chapter emphasised that it is due to non-Muslim cultural assimilation and
amalgamation many Muslims adopted un-Islamic beliefs and practices. I have discussed in detail all un-Islamic beliefs and practices categorically.

**Chapter 5, “THE ORIGIN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT OF AHL-E-HADITH MOVEMENT ON CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM SOCIETY IN INDIA”**

Chapter five critically analyses the origin development and Impact of Ahl-e-Hadith movement on contemporary Muslim Society in India:

1. The origin and development of Ahl-e-Hadith movement in India
   Some important Indian Ulama, Ahl-e-Hadith prospective
2. Maulana Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi (1551-1642 CE ),
3. Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (1562-1624 CE),
4. Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762 CE),
5. Shah Abdul Aziz (1749-1824 CE),
6. Shah Ismail Shaheed (1779-1831 CE),
7. Syed Ahmad Shaheed (1786-1831 CE),
8. Haji Shariat Ullah (1781–1840 CE),
10. Syed Nazir Hussian Baltawi (1805- 1902 ),
11. Dudu Mia (1819-1862 CE),
12. Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan (1832-1890 CE),
13. Maulana Sanaullah Amritsari (1868-1948 CE),
14. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1957 CE),
15. Maulana Abdu Rauf Jhandanagri (1910-1999 CE),

According to Jamiat-e-Ahl-e-Hadith the above Indian Ulama rejected *Taqlid* and propagated the true spirit of Islam and emphasised to study Qurʾān and Hadith. The teachings and their works made Impact on Indian Muslim Society, as they tried their best reject shirk and bidʿat from the Indian Muslim Society in particular and others in general.
Chapter 6, “Establishment of Prominent Ahl-e-Hadith Madrasas in India and their Impact on the Muslim Society”

Chapter six is on the establishment of various important Ahl-e-Hadith Madrasas in India are as follows:

(i) Jamia Salafia Banaras, its infrastructure, faculty, syllabus;
(ii) Dar-ul-Hadith Rehmania (Delhi) and its curriculum;
(iii) Jamia Islamia Salafia (Assam);
(iv) Al- Jamiatul- Salafia (Mewat, UP);
(v) Jamia Dar-ul-al-Huda (Yusuf Pur);
(vi) Jamia Rehmania (Monghyr, Bihar);
(vii) Darul-Ulum Ahmadiyya Salafiyya (Laheria Sarai);
(viii) Darussalam (Oomerabad, Tamil Nadu);
(ix) Jamia Muhammadiyyah Arabiya (Raidurg, MH);
(x) Darul-ul-Ulum Ahmadia Salafi (Darbhanga, Bihar);
(xi) And many others.

This chapter also highlights in a detailed manner various rules and regulations for the admission in various courses, of residing, and curriculum etc. in these Madrasas. The above Madarsas and many others Ahl-e-Hadith Madarsas played an important role for the Islamic education and over all development of the Muslim Society in India.

Chapter 7: “THE AHL-E-HADITH AND OTHER MUSLIM SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT (Doctrinal Divisions) AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE MUSLIM SOCIETY IN INDIA”

This chapter finally examined the Ahl-e-Hadith and other Muslim schools of Thought (Doctrinal Divisions) and their Impact on the Muslim society in India.

1) Ahl-e-Hadith doctrines vs
2) Hanafi School of Thought.

3) Maliki School of Thought.

4) Shafii School of Thought.

5) Hanbali School of Thought.

6) Deobandi School of Thought.

7) Barelwi School of Thought

8) Shia School of Thought.

**Conclusion:** conclusive phase of the thesis.