

# **AHLE HADEETH MOVEMENT**

**WHAT  
& WHY?**



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## Contents

### (المحتويات)

1. Introduction to 1 <sup>st</sup> English edition	4
2. The Identity of <i>Ahle hadeeth</i>	6
3. <i>Ahle Sunnat wal-Jama'at</i>	10
4. Which one is the <i>Najji</i> group	14
5. The outward signs of <i>Ahle hadeeth</i>	20
6. <i>Ahle hadeeth</i> and <i>Ahlur Rai</i>	21
7. <i>Taqleed-i-Shakhsi</i> .	23
8. The method of inference according to the methodology of <i>Ahle hadeeth</i>	26
9. Causes for the spread of the <i>Hanafi</i> school	27
10. The Principles of Imam Abu Haneefah (Rh)	28
11. Division among <i>Mujtahids</i>	29
12. The <i>Jama'at</i> of <i>Ahle hadeeth</i> for ages	32
13. <i>Ahle hadeeth</i> against sectarianism	35
14. <i>Ahle hadeeth</i> and <i>Ahle Sunnah</i>	37
15. Are all the Muslims of the world <i>Ahle hadeeth</i> ?	39
16. Consequence of <i>Taqleed</i>	41
17. Characteristics of <i>Ahle hadeeth</i>	45
18. The movement for unity	51
19. The unadulterated Islamic movement	56
20. Why is <i>Ahle hadeeth</i> movement?	59
21. The necessity of <i>Ahle hadeeth</i> movement	60
22. <i>Ahle hadeeth</i> : In the eyes of others	61
23. Questions and Answers	62
24. <i>Ahle hadeeth</i> , at a glance	69

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نحمده ونصلي علي رسوله الكريم أما بعد :

## The identity of Ahle hadeeth

(تَعَارُفُ أَهْلِ الْحَدِيثِ)

In Persian possessive case *Ahle hadeeth* and in Arabic possessive case *Ahlul hadeeth* as per dictionary meaning is 'the follower of *Hadeeth*'. In terminology, it denotes to the unbiased follower of the holy *Quran* and *saheeh Hadeeth*. Only the person, who in every sphere of life, accepts the decision of the holy *Quran* and *saheeh hadeeth* unconditionally and tries to build up his total life according to the way of the last Prophet (sm) and the *Sahaba-i-Keram*, is identified with this name.

*Sahaba-i-Keram* are the honoured group of the 1<sup>st</sup> rank, who used to be called by this name. As (I) The famous *Sahabi* Abu Sa'eed Khudri (R.) (d. 74 A.H.) seeing any young Muslim would say delightedly,

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدِ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّهُ كَانَ إِذَا رَأَى الشَّبَابَ قَالَ: مَرَحَبًا بِوَصِيَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَمَرَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ نُوسِّعَ لَكُمْ فِي الْمَجْلِسِ وَأَنْ نُفَهِّمَكُمُ الْحَدِيثَ فَإِنَّكُمْ خُلُوفُنَا وَأَهْلُ الْحَدِيثِ بَعْدَنَا-

'I am giving you thanks (*Marhaba*) as per advice (*Wasiat*) of the Prophet (sm). The Prophet (sm) has directed us to make our meeting (*Majlis*) wider for you and to make you understand

*Hadeeth*. Because, you are our next generation and the next *Ahle hadeeth*.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The famous *Tabē'ii* Imam Sha'bi (22-104 A.H.) used to regard the Jama'at of *Sahaba-i-Keram* as *Ahle hadeeth*. As once he said, لَوْ اسْتَقْبَلْتُ مِنْ أَمْرِي مَا اسْتَدْبِرْتُ مَا حَدَّثْتُ إِلَّا مَا أَجْمَعَ عَلَيْهِ أَهْلُ الْحَدِيثِ - 'I would not narrate any *hadeeth*, if I could know earlier about what is happening now, save that *hadeeth*, on which the *Ahle hadeeth* i.e. *Sahaba-i-Keram* was unanimous in their opinion.<sup>2</sup>

(3) All the disciples of *Sahaba-i-Keram*, *Tabē'iis* and *Tabē Tabē'iis* were *Ahle hadeeth*. Ibnu Nadeem (d. 370 A.H.) in his book *Kitabul Fihrist*, Khateeb Baghdadi (392-463) in his book *Tareekhu Baghdad* in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> volume and Hebatullah Lalkae (d. 418 A.H.) in his book *Sharhu Usoolil I'tiqad* have given long list of the names of *Ahle hadeeth* scholars of the *Muslim* world up to their time. Besides these, there is a separate book also on the dignity of *Ahle hadeeth*, written by Khateeb Baghdadi entitled with *Sharfu Ashabil Hadeeth*.

(4) Imam Abu Haneefah (80-150 A.H.), Imam Malek (93-179), Imam Shafe'ii (150-204) and Imam Ahmad bin Hambal (164-241), all were *Ahle hadeeth*. Since the *hadeethes* were not so much collected during his time, Imam Abu Haneefah had to depend mostly on *Rai* and *Qias* (i.e. analogy and deduction) for which he has been called *إِمَامُ أَهْلِ الرَّأْيِ* i.e. the leader of *Ahlur*

1. Abu Bakr al-Khateeb Baghdadi, *Sharfu Ashabil Hadeeth* (Lahore: Ripon press, no date), P. 12; Hakem called it Saheeh and Zahabi supported him. *Al-Mustadrak* P.1/88; Albani, *Silsila Saheehah* H/280.

2. Shamsuddeen Zahabi, *Tazkeratul Huffaz* (Beirut: Darul Kutubil Ilmiyah, n.d.) P. 1/83.

Raī'. He did not leave behind any book written by himself. Rather he has given his *Wasiyat* (death-time advice) to his disciples with this that, إِذَا صَحَّ الْحَدِيثُ فَهُوَ مَذْهَبِي *Iza Sahhal Hadeethu Fahua Mazhabi* (when a Hadeeth will be proved as authentic that is my *Mazhab*).<sup>3</sup>

(5) Once he said to his chief disciple Abu Yousuf (113-182 A.H), لَا تَرَوْ عَنِّي شَيْئًا فَإِنِّي وَاللَّهِ مَا أَدْرِي مُخْطِئٌ أَنَا أَمْ مُصِيبٌ 'Do not narrate anything on behalf of me. By Allah I do not know whether I am incorrect in my decisions or correct.'<sup>4</sup>

(6) In another occasion he rebuked him on seeing him to write his statements as,

وَيْكَ يَا يَعْقُوبُ! لَا تَكْتُبْ كُلَّ مَا تَسْمَعُهُ مِنِّي فَإِنِّي قَدْ أَرَى الرَّأْيَ الْيَوْمَ فَأَتْرُكُهُ غَدًا، وَ أَرَى الرَّأْيَ غَدًا وَ أَتْرُكُهُ بَعْدَ غَدٍ -

'Be careful Oh yaqub (Abu yusuf)! Do not take down whatever you hear from me. Because, what I decree today, I cancel that tomorrow, and what I decree tomorrow, I take it back after tomorrow'.<sup>5</sup>

All of the four Imams directed people not to follow them blindly (*Taqleed*) in religious matters and to practise those instructions laid down in the *saheeh Hadeeth*.<sup>6</sup> For this, they were *Ahle hadeeth* undoubtedly. But their blind followers, defying the instructions of their *Imams*, in spite of getting

3. Ibnu Abedeem, Shami, Margin, Raddul Muhtar (Beirut : Darul Fikr 1399/1979) P. 1/67; Abdul Wahhab Sha'rani, Meezanul Kubra (Delhi : 1286 A.H.) P. 1/30.

4. Abu Bakr al-Khateeb Baghdadi, Tareekhu Baghdad, 13/402.

5. Op. cit. Thesis P. 179, F. N. 48.

6. Abdul Wahhab Shar'ani, Meezanul Kubra (Delhi : 1286 A.H.) P. 1/60.

*saheeh Hadeeth* later on, have kept them aside, on various pleas and followed blindly the *Rai* of their respective *Mazhabi* scholars and their writings on *Fiqh* and *Fatawas*; they, in fact, have turned into the followers of the *Rai* of numerous *Ulama*. For this, the followers may be held responsible, but not the *Imams*. For this reason, the famous Hanafee scholar Abdul Wahhab Sha'rani (898-973 A.H.) has said, *فَالْإِمَامُ مَعْدُورٌ وَاتَّبَاعُهُ غَيْرٌ* 'the *Imam* has plea, but the followers have not'.<sup>7</sup>

The *Imams* have plea because they have openly admitted that, they did not know many *hadeethes* and they have advised all to follow the *saheeh Hadeeth* whenever they would get it. But the followers have no plea because even after getting *saheeh Hadeeth* they did not accept it and did not practise it. Rather this blind faith has been imprinted in their mind that the *Imam* or *Peer* they follow, knows everything. There is no possibility of his committing any mistake. Even thinking that, he may commit any mistake is an utter disregard to him. So, by all means they keep trying to prove the validity of the *Rai* of the *Imam* or *Mazhabi Fatwa*. For this, they do not care, even if it requires rejecting the *saheeh Hadeeth*.

Nevertheless *Imam Gazzali* (450-505 A.H.) told in his book *Kitabul Mankhool* *أَنَّهُمَا خَالَفَا أَبَا حَنِيفَةَ فِي ثُلُثَيْ مَذْهَبِهِ* *Imam Abu Yusuf* and *Muhammad (Rh)* contradicted at least two-third of *Fatwas* of the *Mazhab* of their teacher *Imam Abu Haneefah*.<sup>8</sup> Besides, the *Fatwas* in vogue, in the names of four *Imams* and especially all the *Qiasi Fatwas* narrated in the *Hanafi Fiqh* or most of them are not of *Imam Abu Haneefah*, as has been opined by many

7. Op. cit. P. 1/73.

8. *Sharhu Veqayah-Muqaddamah* (Delhi : 1327 A.H.) P. 28, the last line; Do. Deobond Print. n.d. P. 8.

scholars including Shah Waliullah Dehlavi.<sup>9</sup> Not only *Fiqhi* or things of practical matters but also *Usool-i-Fiqh* i.e. the sources of canon laws accepted by Imam Abu Haneefah, have been opposed by his two grand disciples.<sup>10</sup> So, the *Mazhabs* that are in existence in the name of Imam Abu Haneefah and other Imams are virtually the creations of the *Ulama* of their respective *Mazhabs* in the latter days.

Because of following Hadeeth without being biased to any particular *Mazhab*, Imam Bukhari (194-256 A.H.), Imam Muslim (204-261), Imam Nasaii (215-303), Imam Abu Daud (202-275), Imam Tirmizi (209-279), Imam Ibnu Majah (209-273), Imam Ali Ibnul Madini (161-234), Imam Ishaq bin Rahwayih (166-238), Imam Abu Bakr Ibnu Abi Shaibah (d.235), Imam Daremi (181-255), Imam Abu Zur'a Razi (d.264), Imam Ibnu Khuzaimah (223-311), Imam Dara qutni (305-385), Imam Hakem (321-405), Imam Baihaqi (384-458), Imam Muhius Sunnah Bagavi (436-516) and such other world-famous Imams and honoured Muhadditheen and their disciples and followers were all *Ahle hadeeth*.

### **Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at (أَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ وَالْجَمَاعَةِ):**

The followers of *Sunnah* of the Prophet (sm) and of the *Jama'at* of *Sahabis* and *Tabe'is* are known as *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*. To identify the *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at*, the world-famous scholar of Spain, the 5<sup>th</sup> century's Imam Abu Muhammad Ali Ibnu Ahmad Ibnu Hazm Andalusi (d.456 A.H.) said,

9. Shah Waliullah, Hujjatullahil Balighah (Cairo : 1355 A.H.) P. 1/160; Saleh Fullani, Iqazu Himam P. 99; In the reference of Talveeh, Molla Moin Sindhi, Dirasatul Labeeb (Lahore : 1284 A.H.) P. 183, 290, 291; Abdul Hye Lucknowbi, Nafe' Kabeer P. 13 etc; See Thesis P. 180, F. N. 59,60.

10. (فِيَّئِهِمَا يُخَالِفَانِ أُصُولَ صَاحِبَيْهِمَا) Subki, Tabaqatush Shafe'iyah Kubra (Beirut : Darul Ma'rifah, n.d.) P. 1/243.

وَأَهْلُ السُّنَّةِ الَّذِينَ نَذَرْنَاهُمْ أَهْلَ الْحَقِّ وَمَنْ عَدَاهُمْ فَأَهْلُ الْبَاطِلِ فَإِنَّهُمْ الصَّحَابَةُ  
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَكُلُّ مَنْ سَلَكَ نَهَجَهُمْ مِنْ خِيَارِ التَّابِعِينَ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ  
أَهْلُ الْحَدِيثِ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ مِنَ الْفُقَهَاءِ حَيْثُ جَاءُوا فَجَيْلًا إِلَى يَوْمِنَا هَذَا وَمَنْ أَقْتَدَى  
بِهِمْ مِنَ الْعَوَامِ فِي شَرْقِ الْأَرْضِ وَغَرْبِهَا رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ-

'Ahle Sunnah, whom we called *Ahlul Haq* (righteous) and their oppositionists as *Ahlul Batil* (followers of untrue) are : (a) The Sahaba (b) Their followers of best *Tab'e'is* (c) The Ahle hadeeth (d) The followers of them among *Faqeehs* (jurists) through ages till today (e) The general people irrespective of the east and the west, who became their followers'.<sup>11</sup>

Through this it has been understood that, not only the honoured *Sahabis*, *Tab'e'is*, *Muhadditheen* and the *Faqeehs*, who follow the *Hadeeth*, were titled as *Ahle Sunnat wal Jama'at* or *Ahlul H-adeeth*; but the general mass, who follow their path, were also used to be reckoned in all ages as *Ahle hadeeth* and still today they are being called by the same name. Allah says,

‘And of those whom we have created, there is a community who guides (others) with truth and establishes justice therewith’ (*A'raf* 7/181). He says in another place, ‘قَلِيلٌ مِنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرُونَ’ ‘The few of my slaves are grateful’ (*Saba* 34/13).

Those verses of the Quran show that, there had always been a group of righteous people amongst the *Ummah* of every Prophet, and likewise they are also today; though a few in

11. Ali Ibnu Hazm, *Kitabul Fisal fil Milal wal Ahwa wan Nihal* (Beirut : Maktaba Khaiatt 1321/1903) with the book of Shaharastani '*Al-Milal*' 2/113; *Kitabul Fisal* (Beirut : Darul kutubil 'ilmiah, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 1420/1999) 1/371, Chapter 'Groups among muslims'.



Lord. Thereafter, whoever desires he may believe or whoever desires he may disbelieve. We have prepared Fire (Hell) for the infidels' (*Kahf* 18/29). In the light of the above verse, we believe that any *Isim*, *Mazhab* or *Tareeqa* which is a brain child of man, can never give the source of ultimate truth. This truth can only be found in the revelations of almighty Allah, which have been preserved in the holy Quran and *saheeh Hadeethes*. Pointing towards it, Shah Waliullah Dehlavi, the preceptor of India said, فَلَيْسَ لِلْعَقْلِ حُكْمٌ فِي حُسْنِ الْأَشْيَاءِ وَفُبْحَهَا 'Knowledge has no power to decide the ultimate goodness or badness of things'.<sup>14</sup> So, in exchange of everything, those who will follow the holy Quran and *saheeh Hadeeth* in all steps of life, will be according to the forecast of the Prophet (sm) the righteous among the *Ummah* and they are the *Naji* group i.e. who attains salvation at the Day of Judgement. As the Prophet (sm) says,

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَيَأْتِيَنَّ عَلَى أُمَّتِي مَا أَتَى عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ حَذْوَ النَّعْلِ بِالنَّعْلِ حَتَّىٰ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَتَى أُمَّهُ عِلَانِيَةً لَكَانَ فِي أُمَّتِي مَنْ يَصْنَعُ ذَلِكَ وَإِنَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ تَفَرَّقَتْ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً وَتَفْتَرِقُ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ مِلَّةً كُلُّهُمْ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا مِلَّةً وَاحِدَةً قَالُوا وَمَنْ هِيَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَصْحَابِي رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ لِلْحَاكِمِ فِي مُسْتَدْرَكِهِ: مَا أَنَا عَلَيْهِ الْيَوْمَ وَأَصْحَابِي، حَسَنَهُمَا الْأَلْبَانِيُّ-

'As was the condition of *Banu Israeel*, similar will be the condition of my *Ummah*, same as a pair of shoes. The *Banu Israeel* were divided into 72 groups and my *Ummah* will be divided into 73 groups. Each of those groups will lead to the

14. Shah Waliullah, al-Aqeedatul Hasanah (Delhi: 1304 A.H./1884 A.D.) P. 5; Thesis P. 113; F. N. 11(a).