



SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY OF ZAFAR AHMAD THANWI AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK "I'LA AL-SUNAN"

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the article is to shed light on the life and scientific activity of Zafar Ahmad Tahonavi (d. 1394/1974), a mature scholar from India, Hanafi scholar, and his books, especially the work "E'la al-Sunan".

Also, the general characteristics of the period in which he lived will be considered, and information will be given about the cultural life that prevailed in the country. In this work, it was found that he gave refutations to groups named "Ahli Hadith". In addition, it contains the positive opinions of Zafar Ahmad Tahonavi and his works from different countries of the world.

KEYWORDS: *Muhaddith, Faqih, Hadith, Asar, Musnad, Hafiz, Ahkom, Hanafi.*

MAIN PART

In order to get to know the Indian scientist Zafar Ahmad Usmani Tahanawi, we will visit with information about the author's family, education, works and scientific activities. There is not enough information about the scientist and his family. However, despite the fact that the sources give only a few sentences about the author and his family, it is possible to form a general idea about them.

Maulana Zafar Ahmad ibn Latif Usmani Tahanawi was born on 13 Rabi' al-Awwal 1310/1892 in the city of Deoband, one of the centers of knowledge in India. When he was three years old, he was separated from his mother and was taken care of by his grandmother, who was a pious woman¹. He was the nephew of Ashraf Ali Tahonaviy.

Zafar Ahmad Usmani receives his primary education in Diyoband. From the age of five, he began to learn the recitation of the Holy Qur'an with the famous hafiz of Diyoband. His uncle Ashraf Ali Tahonaviy played an important role in his education. In Thana-Bhawan, he studied the science of tajwid with his uncle, as well as some lessons from Jalaluddin Rumi².

We can list the teachers who studied Zafar Ahmad Usmani Tahanawi as follows:

a) Recitation lesson from famous teachers of Dar al-Ulum madrasa Hafiz Namdar, Hafiz Ghulam Rasulu and Maulana Nazi Ahmed,

b) A lesson in sarf, nahv and literature from Maulana Muhammad Abdullah al-Ganguhi at the Imdad al-ilm madrasa,

s) At the age of seven, he took Persian, Urdu and mathematics lessons from Sheikh Muhammad Yasin.

d) From 1905 to 1908, he read the basic books of hadith science called "Mishkot al-Masobih" and "Kutubi sitta" from Maulana Muhammad Ishaq Bardavani and Maulana Muhammad Rashid Konpuri.

In 1909, he entered Mazohir al-Ulum, located in Saharanpur, where he studied logic, geometry and mathematics. In this madrasa, Maulana Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri (d. 1346/1927-28)³ studied hadith and graduated from the madrasa in 1910 at the age of 18 with permission from the sciences of hadith and other intellectual and narrative sciences. He started working as a teacher at this madrasa when he was eighteen years old and taught jurisprudence, logic and philosophy for seven years. Later, he worked as a teacher at Imdad al-Ulum madrasa, where he was a student. He taught hadith, tafsir and fiqh in this madrasa for many years⁴.

He started working in 1917 at Madrasai Irshad al-Ulum located in Garkipuh. In 1925, he completely memorized the Qur'an. In 1930, he began working as a mudarris at Madrasayi Randiyya in Rangoon, Burma. In 1937, he taught hadith, jurisprudence and usuli jurisprudence at Dhaka University. Later, he worked as the head mudarris of Madrasat al-Olia for eight years. Zafar Ahmed Usmani Tahanawi founded al-Jomeatu al-Qur'aniyat al-arabiya (Madrasai Ashraf al-ulum) in Dhaka (Bangladesh). In 1948, he left the University of Dhaka,

¹ Tahanawi, Zafar Ahmad. *Qawaid fi ulum al-hadith. Under the investigation of Abdulfattah Abu Gudda. - Beirut: Dor al-Bashair al-Islamiya, 2018. - P. 9.*

² Baraniy, Doktor Abdurahmon. *Ulamau Devband va xodamatuhum fi ilm al-hadis. - Devband: Dor al-ulum, 2011. - B. 182.*

³ A commentary on Abu Dawud's al-Sunan is the author of Bazl al-Majhud.

⁴ Tahanawi, Zafar Ahmad. *Qawaid fi ulum al-hadith. Under the investigation of Abdulfattah Abu Gudda. - Beirut: Dor al-Bashair al-Islamiya, 2018. - P. 8.*



transferred to the Madrasa University, and in 1954 went on a pilgrimage. After returning from Hajj, he worked as a head teacher at Dar al-Ulum al-Islami in Ashrafabad. He became more involved in the teaching of hadith, thus becoming known as Shaykh al-Hadith⁵. Shaykh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghudda came to Zafar Ahmed Usmani Tahanawi and received from him the authorization of the sanad and hadith⁶.

Even at a young age, he studied religious and intellectual sciences. Due to his education in many fields, he had the opportunity to use different sciences in one way. Using the activities of scientists of his time and learning from advanced people in various fields, Zafar Ahmad Usmani Tahanawi's scope of thought expanded and his worldview grew. His works, considered the product of this, made him famous in the world of science.

Zafar Ahmed Usmanii has written works on tafsir, Sufism, hadith, fiqh written in Arabic and Urdu languages, among them "E'ala as-sunan" by Zafar Ahmad Usmanii Tahanawi is an important work that defended the Hanafi sect through hadiths. It was written between 1919 and 1938 and published in Karachi in 12 volumes⁷.

The work "Muqaddimai El'a al-sunan" consists of three parts, the first part is related to Qawaid fi ulum al-hadith. This part was published under the supervision and interpretation of Abdul Fattah Abu Gudda. The Turkish translation was done by Dr. Ibrahim Janan. The second part is related to Qawaid fi ulum al-fiqh. It was written by Maulana Habib Ahmad Qaranavi. The third part is Abu Hanifa and his companions al-Muhaddisin⁸.

The part "Abu Hanifa wa ashabuh al-muhaddisin" is also known as "Inja al-watan anil-izdiroi bi Imam az-zaman". This is a work that answers the objections about Abu Hanifa and covers the praises of Abu Hanifa by the scholars of his time and even those who came after him. This work was published at the end of Ela al-sunan.

"Ahkom al-Qur'an", "Dalil al-Qur'an ala masoil an-nu'man" is called "Dalil al-Qur'an ala mvsail an-nu'man" because many evidences from the Qur'an regarding the Hanafi sect are presented. Later, it will be changed to "Ahkom al-Qur'an", taking into account that it also covers doctrinal, jurisprudential and usul issues taken from the Qur'an. This work was written in a similar style to "Ahkom al-Qur'an" by Jassos (d. 370/981). Ashraf Ali Tahanaviy created a group consisting of four winters for the interpretation of the work. Among the

⁵ Ebubekir Sifil. *Í'lâü's Sünen / DÍA*. - İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000. - C. XLIV. - S. 67.

⁶ Tahanawi, Zafar Ahmad. *Under the investigation of Qawaid fi ulum al-hadith*. Abdulfattah Abu Gudda. - Beirut: Dor al-Bashair al-Islamiya, 2018. - P. 7.

⁷ More detailed information about this work is given in the second chapter.

⁸ Halid Zaferullah Davûdî, Ahmet Yıldırım. *Eşref Ali Tânevi Hadislerle Tasavvuf*. - İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995. - S. 227.

members of the group, Zafar Ahmad will recite from Fatiha to the end of Tawba Surah, Jamil Ahmed Tahanaviy from Yunus Surah to Furqan Surah, Muhammad Shafi' Diyubandi from Shuaro Surah to Hujarat Surah, and Muhammad Idris Kandehlavi from Qaf Surah to the last Surah of the Qur'an. Zafar Ahmad Tahanawi completed the section assigned to him up to the end of Surah Nisa and published this section independently (Karachi 1407/1986). Some time later, the parts completed by Muhammad Shafi'i and Muhammad Idris will be published together in five volumes (1413/1992). Later, Jamil Ahmad's drafts were corrected, and the parts left out by Zafar Ahmad (from Surah Ma'ida to the end of Surah Tawba) and some places left out by Muhammad Idris were filled in by Abdushakur al-Tirmizi, one of Zafar Ahmad's students. These parts were added to the previously published five volumes of Ahkom al-Qur'an as volumes VI-VIII. (VI-VIII, Lahore 1419/1998)⁹.

Al-Anwar al-Muhammadiya is an Urdu translation of al-Tarhib wat-tarhib.

"Rahmat al-Qudus Tarjumai bakhhat an-nufus" Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abu Jamra Al-Andalusi interpreted three hadiths in Bukhari from a mystical point of view, this work is an Urdu translation of the first hundred of these hadiths.

"Fatihat al-Kalam Phil-Kiraati Khalf al-Imam". This work is also written in Urdu, this work verifies that recitation is not necessary when following the imam in different prayers¹⁰.

The work "Al-Fatov al-Imdodiya" consists of fatwas issued by Ashraf Ali Tahanawi in response to questions. This seven-volume work contains fiqh and non-fiqh fatwas. Ashraf Ali Tahanaviy wrote this work called "Imdad al-ahkom fi masail al-halal wal-haram"¹¹.

"Tardidi Parviziyat". This work is a work that refutes those who deny the hadith.

In addition, "Inkishof al-haqiqat an istikhlof at-tariqat", "Al-Qawl al-madi fi nasb al-Qadi", "Kashf ad-dajo an wajh ar-riba", "Tahzir al-muslimin an muvolat al-mushrikin", "Injo al-watan an izdiroi bi imam az-zaman", "Al-Qawl al-matin fi al-ikhfa bi amin", "Shaqq al-ghayn an haqqi raf al-yadayn", "Al-Itr al-varidi fi zikr al-masih al-mahdi", "Tardidi parviziyat", "Al-Istidaq al-hasan ala Ihya as-sunan" are among the works written by Tahanawi with their own characteristics¹².

⁹ Tahanawi, Zafar Ahmad. *Qawaid fi ulum al-hadith. Under the investigation of Abdulfattah Abu Gudda*. - Bayrut: Dor al-bashair al-islamiya, 2018. - B. 9.; Ebubekir Sifil. *Í'lâü's Sünen / DÍA*. - İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000. - C. XLIV. - S. 67- 68.

¹⁰ Baraniy, Doktor Abdurahmon. *Ulamau Devband va xodamatuhum fi ilm al-hadis*. - Devband: Dor al-ulum, 2011. - B. 188.

¹¹ Kavariy, Muhammad Zohid. *Maqolatu al-Kavariy*. - Qohira: Dor as-salam, 2015. - B. 69.

¹² Tahanawi, Zafar Ahmad. *E'alo as-sunan. Under the investigation of Mohammad Azazi*. - Beirut: Dor al-kutub al-ilmia, 2018. - J. 21. - P. 30.



Along with this, there are works that he has translated into Urdu. These are: "Adab al-ubudiyya" by Sha'rani, "al-Bahr al-mavrud", "al-Burhan al-muayyad" by Said Ahmed Rufai, "an-Nizam al-khalis", "Bahjat an-nufus" by Ibn Hajar Asqalani, Munziri's "al-Targib vat-tarhib", Allama Yofi's "Rawd arayyahi" works, Ashraf Ali Tahanawi's one treatise.

Zafar Ahmed Usmani Tahanawi wrote works in many fields. It can be seen from the information given about him and the works he wrote that Zafar Ahmad Tahanawi used a lot of hadiths in presenting religious arguments, and this proves that he is a strong hadith scholar.

Zafar Ahmad Usmani Tahanawi is a person praised by many scholars. When he published the work "Ila al-Sunan", his uncle Ashraf Ali Tahanawi said: "Abu Hanifa had a 1200-year-old claim among Hanafi scholars. Praise be to God, it was fulfilled today." Zahid Kawsari praised Usmani by saying: "I was very surprised when I saw this special work of Maulana Zafar Ahmed Usmani and I envied the talent and skills of this enthusiastic scholar"¹³.

He paid great attention to the witnesses and proofs of the issues presented in his works. He carefully studied the previously written rijal, mustalah, usul, fiqh, taharij, hadith commentaries, history and many other sources from beginning to end. If he came across an irregular rule in the works he studied, he identified it and arranged it in a beautiful way. In this way, he made great contributions to science. Kawsari said about him because he discovered neglected rules in some texts: "He supposedly had a lamp in his hand. He directed its rays to the inner parts of books and volumes, and from their invisible depths he found texts that became unique in the eyes of researchers and scientists"¹⁴.

Abdulfattah Abu Ghudda says that Osmaning was very patient, had deep thoughts and wrote his works with unique skills.

Despite the age of the scientist and the fact that he suffered from several diseases, he continued to study the science of hadith. This situation continued until December 1974, that is, until the scientist's death. He became closely acquainted with current issues in the ever-changing scientific environment of the Indian subcontinent and expressed his views on the issues related to them. In all his works, Zafar Ahmad Usmani Tahanawi focused on the current problems faced by Muslims and tried to find solutions to them¹⁵. He also sent letters objecting to some of Abul A'la Mawdudi's fatwas.

Zafar Ahmed Usmani Tahanawii came to Tando Allahyor in 1954 and taught there until the end of his life. He died on 8

December 1974 in this city (Sindh/Pakistan) on the 23rd of Zulqada 1394¹⁶.

The work "E'la as-sunan" written in Arabic was written in 20 years. This precious work, the result of many years and many efforts, is studied through the introduction, the reason for its writing, its period, its purpose, its content and its significance.

Zafar Ahmed Osmani Tahanavi's work "Ila as-Sunan" written at the request of Ashraf Ali Tahanaviy is a collection of hadiths that support the views of the Hanafi sect. This work was also translated into Turkish and was published by Husayn Kayapinar and Ibrahim Tufakchi in 20 volumes under the name "Hadis bilan Hanafi fiqhi". The marriage section of the work is included in the eighth volume of this translation.

In India, in the middle of the 20th century, a group of scholars called themselves "Ahl al-Hadith" claimed that the Hanafis issued rulings that contradicted the hadiths on several issues. They also refused to imitate the imams of this sect. They begin to transfer their language to Hanafi jurisprudence and Imami Azam. According to their claims: Abu Hanifa opposed the hadiths, his views were based on comparison and opinion, and he did not know many hadiths, and he narrated weak hadiths while being the imams of the sect. Disturbed by these false claims, the great scholars of India devised measures to refute them, writing various works along the way¹⁷.

Ashraf Ali Tahanaviy took a place among those who opposed these opinions. The work "Ila al-Sunan" is a work that simultaneously compiles and interprets the hadiths taken as evidence for the views of the Hanafis. In addition, this work shows that the Hanafi imams were extremely subtle in presenting evidence with the Sunnah. The following sentences of Ashraf Ali Tahanawi to his nephew Zafar Ahmed Usman Tahanawi show the true purpose of the work: "Abu Hanifa had a claim of 1200 years in Hanafi scholars. Praise be to God, it has been fulfilled today"¹⁸.

A group called Ahl al-Hadith claimed that the Hanafi school was not based on hadiths and that they preferred qiyas over hadiths. Those who criticized Imam Abu Hanifa. Ashraf Ali Tahanawi opposed this situation and began to compile the hadiths of Abu Hanifa, which he used as evidence in various books and treatises. At first, he began to compile a work called "Ihya as-sunan" by collecting scattered hadiths. But this work was lost before publication. Ashraf Ali Tahanaviy wrote the work "Jome al-asor" for the same purpose. In the work, he gives information about hadiths and shows how they can be used as evidence. He tries to resolve the conflicting situations between the hadiths by adding a work called "Tobe al-asor" to

¹³ Halid Zaferullah Davûdî, Ahmet Yıldırım. Eşref Ali Tânevi Hadislerle Tasavvuf. – İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995. – S. 224.

¹⁴ Tahanaviy, Zafar Ahmad. Qavoid fi ulum al-hadis. Abdulfattoh Abu G'udda tahqiqi ostida. – Bayrut: Dor al-bashair al-islamiya, 2018. – B. 8.

¹⁵ Ebubekir Sifil. İ'lâû's Sünen / DİA. – İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000. – C. XLIV. – S. 67.

¹⁶ Halid Zaferullah Davûdî, Ahmet Yıldırım. Eşref Ali Tânevi Hadislerle Tasavvuf. – İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995. – S. 222.

¹⁷ Tahanaviy, Zafar Ahmad. Qavoid fi ulum al-hadis. Abdulfattoh Abu G'udda tahqiqi ostida. – Bayrut: Dor al-bashair al-islamiya, 2018. – B. 7.

¹⁸ Ebubekir Sifil. İ'lâû's Sünen / DİA. – İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000. – C. XXII. – S. 78.



this work. The manuscripts of these two works, which contain only matters of worship, are not as complete as the lost *Ihya as-sunan*. In order to study Tahanawi hadiths in detail from the point of view of sanad and text, Ahmed Hasan entrusts Sanbakhli to conduct research on this topic. Sanbakhli showed the parts he had written to Tahanawi, and Tahanawi, in turn, made corrections where he found it necessary. This situation continues until the Haj section. Later, Ahmad Hasan Sanbakhli made changes in many parts of the work and did not inform Ashraf Ali Tahanawi about this situation. As a result, both the work and the style changed in terms of content and took on a different tone than what Tahanawi thought. This situation is felt after the publication of the first volume of the work. Hakim al-umma saw unacceptable problems during the review of the work, released Sanbakhli from the job and assigned this task to Zafar Ahmed Usmani Tahanawi. Uthmani gets acquainted with the work and makes the necessary corrections and writes a work called "*al-Istidrok al-hasan ala Ihya as-sunan*"¹⁹.

Ashraf Ali Tahanawi likes the work done by Zafar Ahmed Usmani and gives his nephew the task he wants. Zafar Ahmed begins with the section of Tahanaviy namaz and ends the fiqh issues in the sixteenth chapter. Taking into account the rights of Tahanaviy Sanbakhli, Ashraf Ali does not give the title "*Ihya as-sunan*" to Zafar Ahmad's work. He names the text part of Zafar Ahmad's work as "*E'la as-sunan*" and the commentary part as "*Isda al-minan*".

At the end of the work, the work "*Istidrok al-hasan*" was published in order to eliminate the shortcomings of the work published under the name "*Ihya as-sunan*". The remaining part was published under the name "*E'alo as-sunan*". Publication of the work in the form of several books with different names causes confusion in the minds of readers. In order to correct this situation, Zafar Ahmed will publish this work under the name of "*E'la as-sunan*". The writing period of the work lasted for 20 years and it was completed after the death of Ashraf Ali Tahanawi²⁰.

The first eleven volumes of this eighteen-volume work were lithographed in Tahanabihun (1922), and the twelfth to eighteenth volumes were lithographed in Karachi (1965-1967). published in the form of The work consists of twenty-two volumes together with the introduction, index and other indexes²¹.

Since the hadiths in the work are compiled using reliable sources, this work is considered a collection of reliable hadiths. Since the hadiths in the work are studied from the

¹⁹ Halid Zaferullah Davûdî, Ahmet Yıldırım. *Eşref Ali Tânevi Hadislerle Tasavvuf*. - İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995. - S. 224.

²⁰ Tahanawi, Zafar Ahmad. *Qawaid fi ulum al-hadith. Under the investigation of Abdulfattah Abu Gudda*. - Beirut: Dor al-Bashair al-Islamiya, 2018. - P. 9.

²¹ Tahanawi, Zafar Ahmad. *E'alo as-sunan. Under the investigation of Mohammad Azazi*. - Beirut: Dor al-kutub al-ilmiya, 2018. - J. 21. - P. 31.

point of view of sanad and text, this work serves as a fundamental book for researchers in the field of hadith. Although the structure of this work looks like a hadith book, in fact it covers jurisprudential issues. Therefore, this work is considered a fiqh book. The work presents the views of the Hanafi sect as well as the views of other sects. This feature shows that the work is a book of comparative jurisprudence.

"*E'la as-sunan*" is organized according to fiqh issues. In addition to the chapter "*Kitab al-adab wat-tasawuf*", from "*Kitab at-taharat*" to the chapter "*Kitab al-hiyal*", a lot of space is given to fiqh issues. The classification of topics is given in the form of worship, treatment and punishment, just like the classification of classical fiqh books. The work has a book, chapter order.

Three prefaces were written to "*E'alo as-sunan*". The first is related to "*Qawaid fi ulum al-hadith*". This preface was written by Zafar Ahmad, and it is the first preface to comprehensively study the hadith method based on Hanafi views. This introduction was translated into Turkish by Ibrahim Janan under the title "*Yangi Usuli Hadith*". The second is related to "*Qawaid fi ulum al-hadith*", which was written by Maulana Habib Ahmad Qarani. The third preface, "*Abu Hanifa wa ashabuh al-muhaddisin*" was written by Zafar Ahmad Tahanawitomani²².

CONCLUSION

First of all, the place where Zafar Ahmed Tahanawi was born and raised, the scientific and cultural environment there played an important role in his development as such a high scholar.

Secondly, I mentioned above that the teachers of Imam Tahanaviy were also accomplished scholars of their time, that they learned every science from their own experts, and that the students who studied under him also had great scientific potential and matured as teachers. You can also learn from the above information.

Thirdly, Zafar Ahmed Tahanaviy, who devoted his whole life to scientific research, left his works as a symbol of his productive life. He published his work entitled "*Ilo as-sunan*" for twenty years. The period of publication of the work shows the patience and thoroughness of the author. All parts of the work from head to toe are made with great precision. Ashraf Ali Tahanaviy and Zafar Ahmed Usmani Tahanaviy's scientific struggle against the group known as "*Ahli Hadith*" is worthy of praise.

Fourthly, Imam Tahanawi studied in many cities of science in India and became a mature scientist of his time in both narrative and intellectual sciences.

Fifth, in the process of studying and analyzing the scientific heritage of Zafar Ahmed Tahanaviy, he was convinced that

²² Halid Zaferullah Davûdî, Ahmet Yıldırım. *Eşref Ali Tânevi Hadislerle Tasavvuf*. - İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995. - S. 226.



their rich scientific heritage serves as a very important guide for educating the younger generation today.

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