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The Critique of Abul A'la Mawdudi on the Hadith Deniers in the Indian Subcontinent

Ebu'l A'la Mevdûdî'nin Hint Altkıtası'ndaki Hadis İnkârcılarını Eleştirisi

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The Critique of Abul A'la Mawdudi on the Hadith Deniers in the Indian Subcontinent

Abstract

According to the traditionalist Muslim scholars, the history of the denial of *hadīth* in the Subcontinent goes back to the 19th century, and they considered Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the first one who challenged the provenance and authorship of *ahādīth*. It is a renowned fact that Sir Syed was highly inspired by western research about Islam and its primary sources. Hence, he followed the western approach to the Prophetic *ahādīth* in his works and put in question the codification and the authenticity of *hadīth*. Mulawī Chiragh Ali and his fellow scholars developed and supported his theories with new arguments that later reached to the denial of *hadīth*. At that time, the traditionalist Muslim scholars of the Subcontinent paid attention to this new-born temptation and countered the theories of the deniers of *hadīth*. Syed Mawdūdī was one of them that advocated the Prophetic *ahādīth* through his research journal *Tarjamānu'l-Qurān*. However, his unique methodology in criticism distinguished him from his contemporaneous scholars. Therefore, this study deals with his research and critical approach to the theories of the deniers of *hadīth*.

Summary

The dating of the western research about the second primary source of Islam could trace back to the nineteenth century which was the beginning of a new era in the west that is known for the systematical research about *ahādīth*. However, as a result of western research, the Modern Muslim literates over the globe are highly inspired by the sceptical theories of Orientalists regarding the provenance, authorship and legislative position of Prophetic *ahādīth*. The Subcontinent was one of those regions that welcomed western theories about the second source of Islamic law. *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* [d. 1316/1898] was

considered the first Muslim scholar that followed the western approach and put in question the codification and the authenticity of *ahādīth* and stated, that we do not know whether it is related to the Prophet Muhammad or the narrators. *Mūlawī Chirāgh Ali* [d. 1313/1895] was his alleged student that developed his theories and supported his thoughts with new arguments and concluded that we do not need the principles of *ahādīth* that differentiate the authentic *ahādīth* from the weak because *ahādīth* itself are not reliable.

Consequently, the theories of both teacher and student paved the way to *Ahli Qurān* movement due to their resemblance regarding the position of *ahādīth*, and finally *Abdullāh Chakrālwi* [d. 1333/1914] firmly founded the *Jamāat Ahli Qurān* and announced his position about *ahādīth* that only the Holy Qurān revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Hence, he denied the legal and authoritative position of Prophetic *ahādīth*. The ideology of *Abdullāh Chakrālwi* had a significant impact on his fellow and follower scholars which introduced a bulk of scholars that were serving his thoughts in the Subcontinent such as; *Mūlawī Ahmadu'd-Din Amritsarī* [d. 1355/1936], *Mawlānā Aslam J Rajpurī* [d. 1375/1955], *Allāma Mashriqī* [d. 1384/1964], *Niāz Fathapurī* [d. 1386/1966], *Dr. Ghulām Jilānī Barq* [d. 1406/1985] and others. They developed their ancestor's theories related to *ahādīth* and explicitly stated that the Holy Qurān is enough for us.

Ghulām Ahmad Pervīz [d. 1406/1985] was a prominent scholar in the denial of hadith school of thought, who compiled more than sixty books and articles which quenched from Sir Syed and *Abdullāh Chakrālwi* ideology and denied the historical position of *ahādīth*. Therefore, he was considered the refounder of the denial of hadith movement after *Abdullāh Chakrālwi* in the Subcontinent. It is a well-known fact that these scholars used the local Journals and Newspapers as a tool of conveying their thoughts to the public and literate class of the society at that time. On the other hand, the traditionalist Muslim scholars followed the same platform and criticised their theories about *ahādīth*.

Syed Abū'l-A'la Mawdūdī [d. 1399/1979] was one of those scholars who assessed the theories of the deniers of *ahādīth* through their research articles and countered them with intellectual and traditional arguments. Syed Mawdūdī published a bulk of articles in his research journal *Tarjamānu'l-Qurān* about the provenance, authoritative and legislative position of Prophetic *ahādīth*. Most of Syed Mawdūdī's articles are published along with others in his different books. However, the most popular group of his articles is the *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat* which comprises of two parts; the first one is a debate through articles with the renowned advocate of the deniers of *ahādīth* *Dr. Abdu'l-Wadūd* which is started from his questionnaire about the legislative position of *ahādīth* in May 1962,

while the second one is about the suspicions and objections of *Justice Muhammad Shafi High Court of West Pakistan* that he raised in a case about *ahādīth* in July 1960.

Syed Mawdūdī countered the famous theory of the deniers of hadith called *Markazi Millat*, which means that whenever Allah command to the Muslims to obey Allah and his beloved Prophet, it means the Islamic state. He concluded that it is an unreasonable interpretation of the Qurānic verses because if it accepted then, the *Imān* and *Kufr* would depend on the obeying of a government, which is antithetical with the real spirit of Islam. Furthermore, he highlighted that due to the nature of the present geographical division, Muslims could not have one governer and the same law. Therefore, how the Muslims over the globe will obey one *Markazi Millat* or might the command of obedience will consider suspended until the Muslims establish one *Markazi Millat* in the world, which is illogical.

Furthermore, Syed Mawdūdī criticised the theory about the fabrication of *ahādīth*. He concluded that it is a bassless argument that Muslim jurists agreed that fabricated *ahādīth* are the source of Islamic law because there is not any documented evidence or statement of an authoritative scholar regarding it, as well as, he argued that *Umar bn. al-Khattāb* did not ban the codification of *ahādīth* due to the fabrication, but he was worried that *ahādīth* would intermix with the Holy Qurān as *Urwa bn. Zubair* narrated. Besides, Syed Mawdūdī countered the theory about the schism of Ummah as the deniers of hadith believe that *ahādīth* could divide Muslims unity. He proved that it is the result of *ahādīth* that kept the Muslims from disrupting. Otherwise, they could be divided into unlimited sects. Similarly, Syed Mawdūdī assessed the theory regarding the *Muhaddithūn* and authentic *ahādīth*, that *Muhaddithūn* did not rely on the authenticity of *ahādīth* in their compilations. He concluded that it is against of common sense if they did not depend on it then why they graded it authentic.

Keywords: Hadīth, Hadīth Deniers, Mawdūdī's Approach, Method, Criticism.

Ebu'l A'la Mevdûdî'nin Hint Altkıtası'ndaki Hadis İnkârcılarını Eleştirisi **Öz**

Gelenekçi Müslüman âlimlere göre, Hint Altkıtası'nda hadis inkârcılığının tarihi 19. yüzyıla kadar uzanmaktadır. Onlar, Sör Seyyid Ahmad Han'ı söz konusu bölgede İslam'ın temel kaynaklarından ikincisi olan hadislerin kaynağına ve otoritesine karşı çıkan ilk düşünür olarak kabul ederler. Sör Seyyid Ahmed Han'ın İslam ve onun temel kaynakları hakkındaki

görüşlerinde, Batılı araştırmalardan büyük ölçüde etkilendiği bilinen bir gerçektir. O, çalışmalarında Batı'nın nebevî hadislere yaklaşım tarzını takip etmiş, hadislerin kökenini ve gerçekliğini sorgulamıştır. Sör Seyyid Ahmed Han'ın izinden giden Çerağ Ali ve benzeri akademisyenler bu iddiaları, hadislerin reddine götüren yeni argümanlarla geliştirmiş ve desteklemiştir. O dönemde Altkıta'nın gelenekçi Müslüman âlimleri, bu yeni doğan harekete dikkat çekmiş ve hadis inkârcılarının teorilerine karşı çıkmışlardır. Bu âlimlerden biri olan Ebu'l-A'la Mevdûdî, bir araştırma dergisi olan Tercemânü'l-Kur'an'da yazdığı yazılarla nebevî hadisleri savunmuş, bununla birlikte, özgün tenkid metodu onu çağdaşı âlimlerden ayırmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma onun, hadis inkârcılarının iddialarına yönelik araştırmasını ve eleştirel yaklaşımını incelemeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hadis, Hadis İnkârcıları, Mevdûdî'nin Yaklaşımı, Yöntem, Eleştiri.

Introduction

The history of Islam in the Subcontinent goes back to the early ages of Islam in the Arabian peninsula. The Arabs traders have regular interaction with those people who were living on the bank of the Arab Sea, and they were updating each other from what was going on in their native places. Therefore, the perpetual ingress and egress of Arabs in the Subcontinent would consider the primary source of information about Islam and Prophet Muhammad as well as embracing of Islam for the people at that time. However, it was one of those regions that did not witness the temptation of the denial of hadith until the 19th century, where the Madâris and well known Muslim traditionists [*Muhaddithün*] like *Abdu'l-Haq ad-Dehlawî* [d. 1052/1642], and *Shah Wali'ulla ad-Dehlawî* [d. 1176/1762] were busy in the serving of the Prophetic *ahādīth*.¹

The historical background of the denial of *ahādīth* in the Subcontinent revealed that first time it appeared in the 19th century with the denial of Prophecy and the roots of this temptation goes to *Sir Syed*

¹ Abdū'l-Munam al-Namar, *Tarikhū'l-Islām fī'l-Hind* (Leobnon: al-Mūasisatū'l-Jāmia, 1981/1401), 88-90, Ahmad Amin, *Fajru'l-Islām* (Leobnon: Dārū'l-Kutāb al-Arabī, 1969/1388), 1/3, Syed Sulaimān Nadvī, *Arbūn kī Jihāz Ranī* (Azamgarh: Dārū'l-Musannefin, 1435/2014), 52-53, Abdu'r-Raūf Zaffar, *Ulum al-Hadīth* (Lahore: Nashriāt, 2006/1427), 275.

Ahmad Khan [d. 1316/1898] that was the founder of Modern School of thoughts in the Subcontinent which inspired by the research of Orientalists about Islam and its sources while his established University Aligarh was considered it's center. It is a well-kenned fact that the western education system inspired Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Therefore, he struggled a lot for educational reformation in the Subcontinent to follow the education system of the west.²

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan followed western scholarship in the study of Islam and tried to introduce a new conception of Islam. However, he failed, and as a result, he put in question the codification of *ahādīth* and showed his concerns about the *Mutūn* [texts] of Prophetic *ahādīth* that it could be the words of transmitters instead of Prophet. He clearly stated that we do not know the actual meaning of the Prophet, and it possible that the narrator did not understand what the Prophet said and lost the original conception.³ Moreover, Sir Syed rejected those traditional Islamic provisions and credence, which are based on *ahādīth* only. He criticised the Muslim traditionists that they focused on the Isnād [Chain] and ignored the *Mutūn* of *ahādīth*.⁴

Mūlawī Chirāgh Ali [d. 1313/1895] was the student of Sir Syed. He put forward his all theories about the second source of Islamic law and defended it with new arguments. Furthermore, he also followed the same western method in the study of Islam. He concluded that we do not need the principles for the differentiation of the authentic *ahādīth* from the weak because the *ahādīth* itself are not reliable. Predicated on his conception of *ahādīth*, he denied a number of the proved provisions of Islam.⁵

Indeed, the theories of both teacher and student paved the way to the *Ahli Qurān* movement due to their similarities about the position of the *Qurān* and *Ahādīth*. Therefore, *Abdullāh Chakrālwi* [d. 1333/1914] was

² Khādīm Ilāhī Bakhsh, *al-Qurānī'ūn* (al-Saūdia: Maktabatū's-Saddiq, 1420/2000), 100-106, Ahmad Amin, *Zūamāū'l-Islāh fī'l-Asrīl-Hadīth* (Egypt: Hindawī Foundation for Education and Culture, 1433/2012), 121, Abdū'l-Haī, *Nūzhatu'l-Khawātīr* (Leobnon: Dār Ibn Hazm, 1419/1999), 8/1175.

³ Sir Syed, *Maqālāt* (Lahore: Majlas Taraqī Adab, 1404/1984), 1/23, 32, 49, 69, 81, 128.

⁴ Sir Syed, *Maqālāt*, 1/49. See also. Abdū'l-Munam al-Namar, *Kafāhu'l-Muslimīn fī Tahrīr al-Hīnd* (Egypt: al-Hāiatu'l-Misrīa, 1415/1995), 44-45, Ahmad Amin, *Zūamāū'l-Islāh fī'l-Asrīl-Hadīth*, 130-131.

⁵ Sir Syed, *Maqālāt*, 1/49-69. See also. Khādīm Ilāhī Bakhsh, *al-Qurānī'ūn*, 25-32.

the first one who founded the *Jamāt Ahli Qurān* under the banner that only the Holy Qurān is revealed from Allah to the Prophet Muhammad and refused the legal and authoritative position of *ahādīth*. It is also a well-known fact that he had a significant influence on his fellows and followers that produced a bulk of scholars such as *Mūlawī Ahmadu'd-Din Amritsarī* [d. 1355/1936], *Mawlānā Aslam Jairajpurī* [d. 1375/1955], *Allāma Mashriqī* [d. 1384/1964], *Niāz Fathapurī* [d. 1386/1966], *Dr. Ghulām Jilānī Barq* [d. 1406/1985] and others. They developed the theories of Sir Syed and *Abdullāh Chakrālwi* and declared their position about the Prophetic *ahādīth* that Qurān is enough for us.⁶

Ghulām Ahmad Pervīz [d. 1406/1985] was a renowned scholar in the denial of hadīth school of thought. He wrote more than sixty books and articles that quenched from the studies of Sir Syed and *Abdullāh Chakrālwi* and supported their theories with new arguments. He denied the historical position of *ahādīth*. Therefore, he considered the refounder of the denial of hadīth movement after *Abdullāh Chakrālwi* in the Subcontinent. The follow up of these scholars works reveals that they used the local Journals and Newspapers as a tool of conveying their thoughts to the public and literate class at that time.⁷

Meanwhile, the theories of *Ahli Qurān* and the deniers of hadīth were assessed by different scholars that belong to the *Deobandī*, *Salafī*, and other schools of thoughts. However, the works of *Munāzīr Ahsan Gilānī* [d. 1376/1956], *Muhammad Idrīs al-Kāndahlawī* [d. 1394/1974] and *Syed Abū'l-A'lā Mawdūdī* [d. 1399/1979] are worth reading because they followed the same platform and criticised the theories of *Ahli Qurān* and the Deniers of hadith with intellectual and traditional arguments in their books and articles. However, the methodology and approach of Syed Mawdūdī in the criticism distinguish him from other theologians in the Subcontinent.

⁶ Khādīm Ilāhī Bakhsh, *al-Qurānī'ūn*, 33-39, Salāhu'd-Din Maqbūl Ahmad, *Zawābi fi Wajhī's-Sunna* (India: Majmau'l-Bahūs al-Islāmia, 1411/1991), 94-98, Muhammad Luqmān al-Salafī, *Ihtimāmu'l-Muhaddīthīn b-Naqdī'l-Hadīth* (India: Markaz al-Allama Abdū'l-Aziz b. Baz, 1420/2000), 457-458.

⁷ Khādīm Ilāhī Bakhsh, *al-Qurānī'ūn*, 25-32, Syed Abu'l-Ala Mawdūdī, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1423/2003), 12-16.

1. Syed Mawdūdī, Works And Methodology

Syed Abu'l-Ala Mawdūdī was born on Sept. 25, 1903, in Aurangābād India. He was the youngest of three sons of *Syed Ahmad Hasan* who was a lawyer by profession and one of the initial students of the Aligarh. He was the descendant of the Chishti; in fact, his last name was derived from the first member of the Chishti Silsilah, i.e. *Khawajah Syed Qutb'ul-Din Mawdūd Chishti* [d. 527/1133]. However, he named on his grandfather Syed Abu'l-Ala Jafar [d. 935/1529].⁸

Syed Mawdūdī got his early education in his home. When he became 11 years old, he was admitted directly to eight class in the *Madrasa Fawqāniyya Awrangābād* [Oriental High School] which was founded by the prominent modernist and Islamic scholar *Shiblī Numānī* [d. 1332/1914]. In 1916, he moved to *Dāru'l-Ulūm Hyderabad* for further education, but he did not continue it due to his father's sickness. After a five year gap, he shifted to Dehlī. He studied the *Tafsir, Hadīth, Arabic literature, Mantiq, and Philosophy* under the supervision of well-known theologians such as *Abdu'l-Salām Nīzī* [d. 1385/1966], *Mawlāna Ashfāqu'r-Rahmān* [d. 1377/1958], and *Mawlāna Sharifu'llah Khan Swatī* [d. 1399/1979]. He was died on Sept. 22, 1979, in New York USA⁹

In Short, Syed Mawdūdī was an influential Islamic revivalist, thinker, author and political activist, and the founder of the *Jamāat' i-Islāmī*. His writing and political life had a significant impact on global Islamism, inspiring others across the Muslim world. He has about eighty published books on the different topics of Islam, which are translated into various languages.¹⁰

⁸ Syed Vali Reza Nasir, *Mawdūdī and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1416/1996), 10, Kate Zebiri, "Review of Maududi and the making of Islamic fundamentalism", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London 61/1 (1998), 167-168, Charles J Adams, *Mawdūdī and the Islamic State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1403/1983), 99.

⁹ Irfan Ahmed, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought (Collective)* (United State: Princeton University Press, 1434/2013), 333, Roy Jackson, *Mawlana Mawdūdī and Political Islam: Authority and the Islamic state* (United State: Routledge, 1431/2010), 19, Nasr, *Mawdudi and Islamic Revivalism*, 10, Adams, *Mawdūdī and the Islamic State*, 100-101.

¹⁰ Asim Numānī, *Tassawūf avr Tamīri Sirat* (Lahore: Islamic Publication, 1391/1972), 15, Safeer Akhtar, *Adeeb avr Adab* (Wah cantt: Dārū'l-Maārif, 1418/1998), 23, Abdur-Rahmān, *Mufakir Islām Syed Abu'l-Ala Mawdūdī* (Lahore: Islamic Publications,

1.1. Works of Syed Mawdūdī About The Denying of Hadīth

Syed Mawdūdī was a prominent critic of the 20th century who countered, directly and indirectly, the theories of the deniers of *ahādīth* in his research articles which were published in *Tarjamānu'l-Qurān*. The essential characteristic of Mawdūdī articles is that he wrote them in an amicable and debate environment. Later these articles published within other articles. However, the most famous discussion through *Tarjamānu'l-Qurān* was published in [1382/1963] called "*Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*", which comprises of two parts. The first one is the group of articles about the objections and suspicions of the deniers of *ahādīth* regarding the authorship and provenance of Prophetic *ahādīth* which were started with the well-known advocate of the deniers of hadīth Dr. *Abdu'l-Wadūd* in May 1962 from his four questions related the authorship of the Prophetic hadīth. The main aim of his questionnaire was whether the Prophetic Sunna include in the constitution of Pakistan as a source of law or not. While the second part of this book is a detailed study of the objections of the *Justice Muhammad Shafi* High Court of West Pakistan that he raised in a case about *ahādīth* in July 1960.

The profound study of these articles reveals that it is a detail critical study about the prominent theories of the deniers of *ahādīth*. Syed Mawdūdī countered them with logical and historical arguments from the classical Islamic sources as well as from the Holy Qurān and the canonical collections of *ahādīth*. Moreover, he thoroughly explained the meaning of Sunna linguistically and idiomatically as well as the history of the codification besides the legislative position of the Prophetic hadīth.

1.2. The methodology of Syed Mawdūdī in his critical works

Syed Mawdūdī wrote many books and articles on the crucial subjects of Islam, and he has a wide circle of readers in the world. The follow-up of his works reveals that what he distinguishes from his contemporaneous is his methodology in the delivering of his thoughts and domination of the opponent's theories, which are as follows.

1418/1988), 50-57, Iftikhār Ahmad, *Syed Abu'l-Ala Mawdūdī* (Faisal Abad: al-Mizān Publisher, 1421/2001), 19-21, Abū'l-Afāq, *Abu'l-Ala Mawdūdī Sawānih* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1390/1971), 45, Khurshid Ahmad - Zafar Ishaq Ansari, *Mawlānā Mawdūdī: An Introduction to His Life and Thought* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1399/1979), 7.

1.2.1. Inference From The Holy Qurān

Syed Mawdūdī often followed this method when he criticises the theories of the Ahli Qurān about the *ahādīth*. He preferred to prove their warp approach to the *ahādīth* from the agreed source among them. Even though he has excellent pieces of evidence from the Prophetic *ahādīth*, which he delivered in the different discussions regarding the authorship of hadīth in his works. For instance, he followed this approach in the study related to the status of the Prophet Muhammad that he is not only a conveyor of the Qurānic verses, but he is also a teacher and instructor. He supported his thesis on four verses of the Holy Qurān¹¹ instead of *ahādīth* that witnessed his duty of teaching. Moreover, he summarised that these verses show that he must teach the Qurān, and Hikmat to his followers, and will purify them.¹²

1.2.2. Logical Reasoning

A thorough review of Syed Mawdūdī works reveals that he targeted the typical modern educated class of the society in his work. Therefore, he prefers to logical arguments in the provenance of his theories. Furthermore, it is one of those features that distinguish him from his fellow writers on scientific research about the essential subjects of Islam and its sources. Syed Mawdūdī followed this method in conveying his thoughts as well as in the criticism of the deniers of hadith theories. Sometimes he added familiar examples for the understanding of his readers. It could notice in the discussion about the curiosity of the narrators in the life of the Prophet Muhammad. He elucidated that it is normal that people always interested in getting information about their beloved personalities as a person travelled from the north of India to Hayderābād only to meet someone who accompanied *Syed Jamālu'd-Din al-Afghānī* [d. 1315/1897], and he may able to get information about al-Afghānī from him. Consequently, if it may occur with an ordinary person in the late period, was it not possible at an early age with a great teacher and the Prophet of Allah that people were curious to know about him and benefited from his instructions.¹³

¹¹ al-Anbia 21/107, Sabā 34/28, al-Mā'idah 5/3, al-Ahzāb 33/40.

¹² Abu'l-Ala Mawdūdī, *Tafhīmāt* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1387/1968), 1/322-332, Mawdūdī, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 64-70.

¹³ Mawdūdī, *Tafhīmāt*, 1/332.

However, it may not be a scientific argument, but by giving this example, he tried to explain the curiosity of Prophet Companions, Successors and Predecessors in the early age of Islam.

1.2.3. Cross-Questioning

Syed Mawdūdī occasionally uses the cross-questioning method. He interrogates the theoretical premises of his opponents, which paves the way to the readers for the understanding of his upcoming arguments; likewise, it demolishes the basis of associated theory. The best examples of this method could be seen in his article on the Hadīth and Qurān in his compilation *Tafhīmāt*. He proved from the Quranic verses the uninterrupted relationship of the Qurān and Hadīth. Later he cross-questioned such as; Did the obedience of the Prophet Muhammad instructions was essential in his physical life? Was it not needed after him? Predicated on it, he concluded that if the obedience of the Prophet was until his life and there was no need after him. It means the meaningless of the Prophecy. Because If the duty of the Prophet was only conveying the book of Allah, it could accomplish through an Angel. However, if there was something more than that and the humans instructed for his obedience, and his instruction and practical life were declared an integral part of their guidance then it is unreasonable to consider it for twenty-three years only.¹⁴

1.2.4. Focus on Fundamental Subjects

A keen follow-up of Syed Mawdūdī criticism on Ahli Qurān and the Deniers of hadīth reveals that he focused on the fundamental subjects instead of partials, which missed in the works of his contemporaneous. Syed Mawdūdī uttered itself that he does not want to entangle in the partials. Therefore, he often discussed the value and the philosophy of the Prophecy before the provenance, authorship, and authenticity of hadīth, and supported his thesis with Qurānic verses and reasonable premises. For instance, before criticising the theory of those scholars who believe that the Prophetic *ahādīth* are not reliable, he summarised the philosophy of the Prophecy, then he countered the mentioned theory on reasonable arguments.¹⁵

¹⁴ Mawdūdī, *Tafhīmāt*, 329.

¹⁵ Mawdūdī, *Tafhīmāt*, 322-373.

2. Mawdūdî and the Theories of the Deniers of Hadith

Syed Mawdūdî was not only a Mūfassîr he was a great *Muhaddîth* too that was well-educated of the classical and modern western approach to the *ahādîth*. Therefore, he countered well the sceptical theories of the deniers of *ahādîth* in his works, which could be summarised as follows:

1. Syed Mawdūdî discussed the fundamental terms of religion in the light of the Holy Qurān, Hadīth and Historical traditions through an analytical method.
2. He followed up the works of the prominent deniers of hadīth and countered it through his research articles and books with ease and reasonable approach. Sometimes he criticised them directly in correspondence.

Consequently, his works got the attention of classical and modern and classical literates, and they benefited from his articles about the provenance and authorship of *ahādîth*. The following is a glance at some theories that took place in his works.

2.1. The Theory of "Markazi Millat"

The deniers of *ahādîth* introduced a unique term in the Subcontinent called *Markazi Millat*, and the prominent deniers of hadīth based their theories on it, which means that whenever Allah command to the Muslims to obey Allah and his Prophet (أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ), it means the Islamic state.¹⁶

Syed Mawdūdî countered this theory with details and collected all those verses of the Holy Qurān that includes this composition,¹⁷ and concluded that if the above interpretation was accepted, then the *Imān* and *Kufr* will depend on the obeying of a government, which is antithetical with the real spirit of Islam. Furthermore, he highlighted that due to the nature of the present geographical division, there are more than one Muslim ruling states, and logically its impossible that Muslims have one governor and the same law. Therefore, how the Muslims over the globe would obey one *Markazi Millat* or the command

¹⁶ Mawdūdî, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 79.

¹⁷ Ali'Imrān 3/32, an-Nisā 4/136, at-Tawbah 9/54, 80, 84, al-Ahzāb 33/24-26, Muhammad 47/33, al-Fath 48/13, al-Jinn 72/23.

of obedience will suspend until the Muslim establish one *Markazi Millat* in the world, which is absurd.¹⁸

2.1. The Theory of Fabrication *Ahādīth* in Early Ages

The deniers of *hadīth* believed that the Prophetic *ahādīth* are not reliable and they supported their thesis that the jurists agreed on it, that with time the fabricated *ahādīth* became the undoubtful source of Islamic law. Moreover, they claimed in their studies that the fabrication of *ahādīth* started at the early age of Islam and *Umar bn. al-Khattāb* was aware of it. Therefore, he restricted the narration of *ahādīth* firmly in his reign.¹⁹

Syed Mawdūdī discussed this theory with detail and proved that no doubt the fabrication of *ahādīth* started in the early ages. Still, it is not more than a claim that the jurists agreed that those *ahādīth* took the position of the source of Islamic law because there are not any supporting documents from a jurist and traditionist or an authoritative scholar regarding it. Conversely, it is a documented fact that whenever the fabrication of *ahādīth* started the Jurists and Traditionists were carefully investigating the *ahādīth*, and they were trying not to accept a *hadīth* just based on ascription to the Prophet.²⁰

Furthermore, Syed Mawdūdī concluded that the second Khalifa of the Prophet *Umar bn. al-Khattāb* did not prohibit the narration of *ahādīth* due to the fabrication at that time because the temptation of fabrication was not started in his reign as they understood. However, he disclosed the motivation behind his ban that many non-Arabs embraced Islam as it came out of Arabian peninsula in his reign. He was worried about their proper education because those companions who taught the Holy Qurān to the people were narrating the *ahādīth* as well, and it was possible, that people would intermix both sources of Islam. Syed Mawdūdī supported his finding on the narration of *Urwa bn. al-Zubair* that after one-month of reflection *Umar bn. al-Khattāb* withdrew from the decision of writing *ahādīth* and explicitly showed his concern about the approach of people towards the Holy Qurān and *ahādīth*.²¹

¹⁸ Mawdūdī, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 165-169.

¹⁹ Mawdūdī, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 317.

²⁰ Mawdūdī, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 317, al-Suyūfī, Abdūr-Rahmān, *Tadrību'r-Ravī* (al-Riyadh: Maktabtu'l-Kavsar, 1415/1995), 1/495.

²¹ Mawdūdī, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 319.

Similarly, Syed Mawdûdî countered the last argument of the deniers of *ahādīth* -that *al-Bukhārī* recorded about nine thousand *ahādīth* out of six hundred thousand *ahādīth*- and concluded that *Imām al-Bukhārī* did not collect all authentic *ahādīth* in his compilation because it was not his method, he left lots of authentic *ahādīth* which did not fulfil his criteria for recording in *Sahih al-Bukhārī*.²²

A thorough study of Syed Mawdûdî works reveals that he used the general argument of the *Muhadditūn* in the criticism of the mentioned theory that *al-Bukhārī* did not collect all authentic *ahādīth*, which might be considered logically that due to fear of prolongation he did not record all Sound *ahādīth* in his compilation.

2.2. Hadīth and Schism of Ummah

The deniers of Prophetic *ahādīth* convinced that we do not need *ahādīth* because it causes of disrupting between Muslim Ummah. Syed Mawdûdî studied this theory with detail and concluded that they are misguided or misunderstood because the Prophetic *ahādīth* united the whole Muslim nation. If there were not the Prophetic *ahādīth*, now the Muslim were divided into unlimited sects instead of limited. Moreover, he supported his thesis on some examples from the obligatory provisions mentioned in the Qurān like *al-Salāt* and *al-Zakāt*, which are prevalent between Muslims due to *ahādīth*. Otherwise; the Muslims could not understand how it would be accomplished? It was possible that everyone could explain the word *al-Salāt* and *al-Zakāt* according to his intellectual approach, but it is the Prophetic *ahādīth* that determine what does it means and how to accomplish it.²³

It is a shred of convincible evidence that Prophetic *ahādīth* regarding Islamic provisions like *al-Salāt* and *al-Zakāt* kept the Muslim community united. Otherwise, we couldn't understand the actual meaning of those obligatory provisions as well as the way of their performing. It was not far away that everyone accomplishes it as he understood. Thus, the Muslim community would be divided into abundant sects, as Syed Mawdûdî indicated.

2.3. Muhaddithūn and Authentic Ahādīth

Syed Mawdûdî had written discussion with the prominent deniers of *ahādīth* through articles in his research journal *Tarjamānu'l-Qurān*.

²² Mawdûdî, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 320.

²³ Mawdûdî, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 154-155.

They believe that the *Muhaddithūn* were not satisfied with the authentication of *ahādīth*, and they were not relying on their compiled *ahādīth*. Therefore, they never uttered to the Muslims to accept their collections authentically. However, they encourage the people to investigate it, which is clear evidence of distrust on their compilations.²⁴

Syed Mawdūdī countered this theory and declared it against common sense and logic, and explicitly stated that none of the researchers compelled the people to follow his research and accept it without any doubt. They present their works, methodologies, conclusion and leave to the readers if they agree with their research and conclusion they could accept it; otherwise, they could research in the light of their presented materials and premises. The *Muhaddithūn* followed the same method. They compiled *ahādīth* and narrated their *Isnāds* as well as compiled the biographical information of every narrator and gave the final remarks about those *ahādīth* which reached to them through the mentioned narrators in the *Isnād*. Whenever they called a hadīth authentic, it means their satisfaction if they were not as the deniers of *ahādīth* understood then why they graded it authentic.²⁵

Conclusion

In the modern period, the denial of hadīth in the Subcontinent was considered as a result of the western approach to Islam because the contemporary educated class of the society was highly impressed by the research of the west and they wished to introduced it in the Subcontinent. Therefore, they followed the western methodology in the study of Islam, which paved the way for the scepticism about the primary sources of Islam. *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* was the first Muslim scholar who put forward the western thoughts in the Subcontinent, which later developed by his students and their fellow scholars. However, the Muslim theologians paid full attention to this new-born temptation. They wrote valuable articles and books to forfend the common literates from the temptation of the denial of hadīth as well as to defend the Prophetic *ahādīth*.

Syed Mawdūdī was one of those scholars who have expertise in the different sciences of Islamic studies. He used the same platform and

²⁴ Mawdūdī, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 361.

²⁵ Mawdūdī, *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiat*, 361-362.

countered the theories of the deniers of hadīth with his unique methodology. His research journal *Tarjamānu'l-Qurān* played a significant role in the spreading of his thoughts and criticising of the deniers of *ahādīth* in the Subcontinent. Later these article published along with others. However, the most famous compilation of his article is called *Sunnat kī Ainī Haisiāt*, which comprised of two parts; the first one is the debate through articles with the prominent denier of hadīth *Dr. Abdu'l-Wadūd* and the second one devoted to the objections and suspicions of *Justice Muhammad Shafi*. Syed Mawdūdī countered their theories and supported arguments, and concluded that the theory of *Markazi Millat* is contrary to the real spirit of Islam. Because due to the nature of the geographical division of the globe, it is not possible that, Muslims would have one law and one center in the world.

Moreover, he countered the fabrication of *ahādīth* in the early ages of Islam. He concluded that it is a baseless claim that the jurists accepted the fabricated *ahādīth* as a source of Islamic law because none of the authoritative scholars stated as they claimed. He also criticised the theory that *Umar bn. al-Khattāb* was not in the fever of codification of hadīth and concluded that the fabrication of hadīth started later, and *Ibn al-Khattāb* was worried about intermix of the hadīth with the Holy Qurān. Therefore, he withdrew from his decision as narrated in the narration of *Urwa bn. al-Zūbair*. Furthermore, Syed Mawdūdī argued that *Imām al-Bukhārī* did not collect all authentic *ahādīth*. He recorded only those *ahādīth* which fulfil his criteria for *Sahih al-Bukhārī*.

Likewise, Syed Mawdūdī presented a detailed study of the theory about the schism of Ummah and the reliability of *Muhaddithūn* on authentic *ahādīth* and concluded that it might be the result of Prophetic *ahādīth* that kept the Muslims united. Otherwise, everyone would interpret the Sharia provisions according to his understanding which might cause of the division of the Ummah into unlimited sects. Besides, he concluded that the *Muhaddithūn* rely on their compilation. Whenever they stated about a hadīth that it is authentic, it means they depend on it otherwise, why they graded it authentic.

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