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Shaykh Muḥammad Bin Alī Bin Ādam Al-Ithyubī And His Remarkable Contribution To Hadith Literature

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Abstract

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The paper sheds light on a well-known Ethiopian scholar of Hadith, Shaykh Muhammad bin Alī Ādam Al-Ithyubī. He made a major contribution to Hadith literature. He was one of the few scholars who could be called a “Hadith Scholar.” Allah had bestowed upon him a comprehensive understanding of the Islamic sciences and he strived hard to revive the science of Hadith. He dedicated his life to the dawah and research so that the Muslims may practice their religion as the earliest Muslims had practiced it and may avoid the deviations that have crept into the Muslim Ummah. He reawakened the Muslim scholars to the study of the Hadith. This is a short biography and an account of his works in Islamic Sciences. Specifically, his work in Hadith Sciences is mentioned and briefly explained.

Birth, Growth and Education:

The extremely knowledgeable, majestic Hadith scholar, greatest Islamic jurist, and profound Muslim etymologist Muhammad Ibn Alī B. Ādam B. Musā was born in 1945/1366 in a house of scholarship in Ethiopia. He was a scholar in diverse Islamic sciences including Hadith, Jurisprudence, Principles of Jurisprudence, Grammer, Morphology, Arabic Rhetoric, and many others.¹ He had started to memorize the Quran from his father at an early age. Then, his father sent him to Shaykh Muhammad Qayū B. Wad'i' to complete his Quranic education. After completing the Quran, he started his education according to the system and methodology of institutes in his country.² He has opened his eyes in an educational setting and grew up in a qualified house, his father was a scholar and used to teach the Hadith and other Islamic Sciences. Once Shaykh mentioned a story of his love for Hadith. His father used to teach Sahih Bukhari, and he was not allowed to sit in the classroom due to his younger age. But he found the lesson so appealing that he would listen to that behind the wall.³ After memorizing the Quran, he also memorized the texts of Hadith. Allah has blessed him with a sharp memory, he memorized many of the summarized texts and poems dealing with different Islamic Sciences i.e., Alfiya Ibn Malik (a one thousand lines poem on Arabic grammar), Alfiya as-Suyūfī (one thousand lines poem on Hadith Sciences). He was skilled in every field of Islamic knowledge.⁴

His Mentors:

Teachers play a significant role in a student's life. His era's best and most eminent teachers taught Shaykh Muhammad B. Ali B. Ādam. His personality was a testament to his learning from the premier teachers. Below is an introduction to his teachers.

- His Father: Āli B. Ādam B. Mūsā Al-Ithyūbī: The father of Shaykh Muhammad B. Ali B. Ādam was a great scholar and noble pious man. He was a scholar of Fiqh and Hadith Sciences. He praised his father at the end of his book **Dhakhirah al-Āqabī fī Sharah al-Mujtabā**.⁵ He learned from him the Aqidah books, Hanafī Fiqh i.e., Mukhatsīr al-Quduri and its commentaries, Kanz ul Daqāiq and its explanation Sharah Al Ayni, and others. He had also taken from his father's books of Fiqh Principles: Al-Manār and its commentaries, Al Taudīh li Sadr al- Sharī'ah and its explanation, and many more. He had also learned Mathematics, Algebra, and the science of timing from him.

Then he met many eminent scholars of his country, learned knowledge from them, and took Ijazah. Some of them are mentioned here.

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- Alāmah Muḩaddith Shaykh Muhammad b. Rāfai' bin Basrī: He was a well-known scholar of Ethiopia and was called Alāmah Muḩaddith. Shaykh Muhammad learned from him Jami' Tirmidhī and listened to Sunan Abu Daud, Sunan An-Nasaī, Sunan Ibn Majah, and some parts of Ṣaḩīḩ Muslim. He also took Ijazah from him and dictated by his reference.⁶
 - Shaykh Muhammad B. Saeed b. Shaykh Alī Al-Durī: He was called Alāmah Nahwī Al-Lūghwī Al-Adīb. Shaykh Alī b. Ādam spent three years in his company and took some parts of Ṣaḩīḩayn (Bukhari and Muslim) from him. He also learned Grammar and Morphology, Arabic Rhetoric, Logic, The Ten Sayings Research and Debate etiquette, and Principles of Jurisprudence. He also took from him Alfiya B. Malik and its commentaries Sharah Ibn Aqīl and Hashiyah tul Khḩḩrī and many more in different Islamic Sciences.⁷
 - Shaykh Abdul Bāsīt b. Muhammad b. Hasan Al-Ithyubī: Shaykh Muhammad B. Alī B. Ādam learned Arabic Linguistic and Grammar from Shaykh Abdul Bāsīt b. Muhammad b. ḩasan Al-Ithyubī. He also studied from him Aar'āb ul Muqaddamah Al-Ajromiyāh, Mulhat ul Aar'ab, and its commentaries. He had also studied some books on Hadith Sciences.
 - Shaykh Muhammad Zain b. Muhammad Al-Ithyubī: He studied "Ṣaḩīḩ Muslim" with its Sharah An-Nawawī and the first part of Sunan Al-Baḩqī from Shaykh Zain b. Muhammad Al-Ithyubī. He had also listened to a huge part of Ṣaḩīḩ Al-Bukhari with its Qirat, Tafsr ul Quran Al-Karīm, books of al-Balāgah Jawahir ul Maknoon and Tadrib ul Rāwi from him.
 - Shaykh Muhammad Awal ul Warajī: Shaykh Abdul Basit b. Muhammad b. ḩasan Al-Ithyubī had attended his many lectures. He had learned Awail ul Sunabilyah and many other books of Hadith Sciences and took Ijazah from him.⁸
 - Shaykh Muhammad Thanī b. Habib Al-Ithyubī: He had studied Jami' ul Jawamaī' with its commentaries and some part of Shatibīyā from Shaykh Muhammad Ṭhanī b. Habib Al-Ithyubi. He had also taken.
 - Shaykh Abdul Jalīl b. Shaykh Ali Al-Burdī: He had studied Tafsr ul Quran ul Karim from Shaykh Abdul Jalīl b. Shaykh Ali Al-Burdī.
 - Shaykh Idrīs Qayū: He had studied some parts of Minhaj ul Tālibīn of Imām Nawawī from Shaykh Idrīs Qayū. It is a book by Fiqh Shāf'ī.
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- Shaykh Muhaddith Muhammad Al-Muntasir Al-Katanī: He had attended a few lectures of Hadith scholar Shaykh Muhammad Al-Muntasir Al-Katanī and took Ijazah from him.⁹
- Shaykh Muhammad Qayū b. Waddī: He learned the Quran from Shaykh Muhammad Qayū b—Waddī after his father.¹⁰

Al-Ithyubī mentioned more than twenty scholars in his biography from whom he took knowledge in Ethiopia. Then he migrated to Makkah from Ethiopia at the age of forty. The rest of his life, he spent in Makkah. He met over forty scholars in Makkah, attended them, and took Ijazah from them. Some of the most famous are mentioned above.

Migration and Life in Dar ul ḩadīth Khayriyah:

In 1980/1401 Shaykh migrated from Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia Makkah, due to communist rule in Ethiopia. The Communist party was running the country and was very oppressive towards the Muslims from practicing and learning Islam. In 1401, they had allowed only forty people to perform Umrah. Shaykh mentioned he was the 37th person to be allowed to perform Umrah. When he came to Makkah, he stepped back from the decision of returning to his own country and fled away. He decided to live in Makkah and spend the rest of his life in this city.¹¹ Shaykh was a great scholar of Hadith in Ethiopia. He used to teach Ṣaḩīḩ Al-Bukhari and other books of Hadith in his country. Someone suggested he begin educating at the Arab Institutes, but he did not bring his certificates. In Arab Institutes certificates were required to start teaching. So, he was admitted to a primary school in Makkah. Afterward, he was admitted to “Dar ul ḩadīth Khayriyah” for a higher-level degree. During his admission interview in “Dar ul ḩadīth Khayriyah,” the interviewer analyzed his ability and judged his knowledge. The interviewer told the administration that he (Shaykh) is not an ordinary student. The principal Alī ibn Amir was told about his journey of Knowledge and migration from Ethiopia to Makkah. The administration of “Dar ul ḩadīth Khayriyah” admired his knowledge and accepted him as a teacher and the journey started. There was a problem, Shaykh could not speak the Arabic language fluently. Languages are always based upon two types of skills: productive and receptive. Productive skills include speaking, writing, and receptive skills based on reading and listening. Shaykh had exceptional receptive skills but was not fluent in speaking and writing. He started to focus on productive skills and mastered them in six years. After completing his learning process, he began teaching higher-level classes in Dar ul Hadith Khayriyah, also in the mosque of Dar ul ḩadīth Khayriyah. Until his death, he taught in Dar ul ḩadīth Khayriyah.¹² Every year,

several students graduate under his supervision in Dar ul Ḥadīth Khayriyah and spread over the countries. They are expanding his legacy of knowledge and playing their part in elevating his ranks in Jannah. The famous methodology of giving Hadith Lectures in Saudi Arabia is: One of the students in Hadith class read the text and then Shaykh explains it according to their style. However, the methodology of Shaykh Muhammad B. Alī B. Adam was different. He used to read the text by himself and afterward describe the text in detail. He used to start the lecture from start to end by himself but in his last three years due to his illness, his student Ali al Awlaki read the Hadith text.¹³

Life Routine and consciousness for time:

He had never wasted his time on activities which never gave any benefit. He used to spend truly little time on worldly affairs. He was very swift in talking, walking, and eating. The stories told by his fellows and students depict how conscious he was in spending his time. Shaykh Shoaib Ahmed Mirpuri was a class fellow of Shaykh Muhammad B. Ali Adam. He said that all the students would go out for a picnic with food and tea after every few days for refreshments and he would drive the minibus by himself. They had also pushed the Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali Adam along themselves. But he came with them only once a week and whenever he used to go, he said: O Allah Help, Time wasted. Until he had stopped going with us.¹⁴ He used to take advantage of the times that most people consider wasted. He made useful the times of eating, resting, and the minutes between his various works. He used to arrange the text of his books, write the commentary of the text, and memorize the poetry. Despite his lectures, he used to cram the ten couplets daily. Another incident of timesaving mentioned by a student: It is one of the wonders of the events I attended, and I will not forget. Our Shaykh was sick with Alzheimer's disease. So, we went to the doctor, who advised him to walk for at least half an hour daily. Shaykh flew off the handle at this advice and told the specialist, surprisingly "Half Hour! How much knowledge can I write in half an hour?" "It is enough to walk to the mosque and climb the stairs" Shaykh had strictly occupied himself with teaching and writing. He used to stay away from social media and TV programs. Shaykh Makki said that: even he found it difficult to take even a minute of Shaykh's time.¹⁵

Illness and Death:

Shaykh - may Allah have mercy on him - was afflicted with several diseases for the last five years of his life, which made him stop writing, especially in the final four years of his life, and he confined

himself to teaching. He was grieving over this interruption, but he was patient and calculated, and once he said: “The existence of a disease that does not allow a person to sit is good and has a reward.”¹⁶

He passed away on Thursday morning, October 08, 2020/ Safar 21st 1442H. His funeral prayers were performed in Haram Al-Makki.

Introduction of the writings of Shaykh:

Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali b. Adam al-Ithyubī authored many books during his stay in Dar-ul- Ḥadīth Khariyah. Several of his books are in Hadith Science, and some are in other fields of Islamic sciences. Many of his books remained unpublished. We can divide his books into these sections.

- ◆ Books in Hadith Sciences
- ◆ Books in other Islamic Sciences

Books in Hadith Sciences:

Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali b. Adam al-Ithyubi has written in every field of Hadith Sciences.

1. Dhakhirat ul- ‘Uqaba Fi Sharah Al-Mujtabā, Dar Ibn Al Jawzi
2. Al Bahr Ul Muḥit Al- Ṭḡajaj Fi Sharah Ṣaḡīḡ Al-Imām Muslim B. Ḥajjaj
3. Māshāriq Ul Anwār Al-Wahajaah Wa Maṡālī` Al-Isrār Al-Baḡājāh Fi Sharah Sunan Al-Imām Ibn Majah
4. Ithāf Ul Ṭālib Al-Ahwdhī Bi-Sharah Jamiya Al- Imām Al-Tirmidhi
5. Ithāf Ul-Nubala
6. Qūrah Tul Aīn Mūhtaj Fi Sarah Muqaddamah Ṣaḡīḡ Al-Imām Muslim,
7. **Alfiāh i`lal Al-Ḥadīth Al-Musamātu Shāfiāh Al-Jil Bimhmāt ‘Im Al-i`lal – Ma` sharḡihā: Mazīl Al-khīlal**
8. Āljūhr Al-Nafīs Fī Nzm Asmā` Ūmrātāb Al-Mūṣūfīn Bi-tdlīs
9. Mnzūmat ‘mdat Al-Mkhtāt Fī M`rfī Asmā` Min Rmī Bilākhtlāt
10. Shrah Alfiāh Al-Syūṡī Fī Al-Ḥadīth
11. Īdāḡ Al-Sbīl Fī Sharḡ Ithāf Al-Nbīl Bmhmāt ‘Im Al-jarḡ Wālt`dīl
12. Ājlīs Al-‘amīn Shrah Ṭḡkirah Al-Ṭālbīn Fī Bīān Al-Mūḡdū‘ Wa`aṣnāf Al- Waḡā‘īn
13. Tadhkrah Al-Ṭālbīn Fī Bīān Al-Mūḡdū‘ Wa`aṣnāf Al-Waḡā‘īn
14. Ithāf Al-Nbīl Bmhmāt ‘Im Al-Jrah Wa Al-T`dīl
15. Qurat Al-‘aīn Fī Talkhīṣ Tarāḡm Rijāl Al-Ṣwaḡīḡhāīn

Books in other Islamic Sciences:

The list of his books in other Islamic sciences is:

1. Āl Amanah Al-Rḡāh Fī Shrah Al-Drah Al-Mḡīat ī Nzm Tūḡīd Al-Brīāh (Sharḡ Alfiāh Al-Tūḡīd)
2. Alfiāh Al-Tūḡīd Al-Msmāt: Al-Driah Al-Mḡīah Fī Nazm Tūḡīd Al-Brīāh

3. Ālkūkb Al-Sāṭ' Nẓm Jam'i Al-Jawām'i Lilsūṭī Ūm'h Shrh Al-Musamma Al-Jlīs Al-Şālīḡ Al-Nāf'i Bitūḡī M'ānī Al-Kūkb Al-Sāṭ'i
4. Ālmanḡiah Al-Rḡīah Fī Sharḡ Al-Thḡfiah Al-Mrḡīah Fī Nẓm Al-Msā'il Al-'aşūlīah 'li Ṭrīqiah Ahl Al-Sunnah
5. Ālsnīah Al-Thḡfiah Al-Mrḡīah Fī Nẓm Al-Msā'il Al-'aşūlīah 'li Ṭrīqiah Ahl Al-Sunnah Al-Sawnīah
6. Faḡ Al-Qrīb Al-Mḡīb Fī Shrah Mdnī Al-ḡabīb Mmn Īwālī Mughnī Al-Labīb
7. Shrah Al-Kbīr 'laī Alfīah Al-Sūṭī Fī Al-ḡadīth
8. The list of his unpublished books is given below:
9. Shrah Alfīah Al-Sūṭī Fī 'lm Al-Blāḡiah Al-Msmhīah: u'qūd Al-Jmān
10. Shrah Qṡ'h Min Kitāb Al-Shārh Min Sunan Ibn Mājah
11. Naẓm khātimatul Kitāb (Ālmişbāḡ Al-Munīr) Lilfūmī
12. Tfsīr Lil Qur'ān Al-Karīm
13. Ālṡrfīah Mukhtşr Al-Shafīah
14. Naẓm A L'qīdah Al-Wāşṡīah Lishīḡ Al-Islām Abn Ṭīmīah
15. I'rāb Al-āḡrūmīah
16. Mjm' Al-Fwā'id Ūmnb' Al-'wā'id Īf A'alsānīd Wāl'atḡāt, Ūhū Ṭbth Al-Kbīr Al-ḡī Akhtşr Mnh Mwāḡb Al-Şamad)
17. Nẓm Mkhtşr Fī 'lm Al-Frā'id, Waḡīkr -Rḡmh Mfqūd
18. Naẓm Muḡadimah Al-Tfsīr Li Ibn Ṭāīmīah
19. Naẓm Shāfīah ibn Al-ḡāḡīb
20. Nẓm Al-'aḡādīṡ Al-Mtwāṡrī
21. Rijz Fī 'lmī Al-'rūḡ Wālqwāfī
22. Iḡḡāf Dwy Al-Hamah Bimasā'il Muḡimmaḡ

Introduction of Hadith Commentaries:

A brief introduction to his books is mentioned here.

● **Dhakhirah al-'Āqabī fi Sharah al-Mujtabā:**

This is the greatest and unselfish work of Shaykh Muhammad B. Ali B. Adam al-Ithyubi. It is a forty-two-volume explanation of Sunan an-Nasai. It is a showcase of his tremendous and incredible scope of knowledge in Hadith sciences. One of the advantages of his book Dhakhirah al-'Āqabī Sharah Sunan An-Nasai is that it combines all the features of his approach and method in the introduction to his books and the explanation. It has been printed twice. Dar ul Miraaaj and Dar ul Baroom published the first printing in 1416/1996 and Dar ibn al Jawzi issued the second printing in 1432/2011. This book consists of 19797 pages in forty-two volumes.¹⁷

Shaykh, the Hadith Scholar of the lands of Yemen, **Muqbil b. Hādī al-Wādī'i** said about this book, "[This explanation] is written in the manner of Faḡ al-Bārī by al-ḡāfīz B. ḡajar.

● **Al Bahr ul Muḡit al-Ṭḡajaj fi Sharah Şaḡīḡ al-Imām Muslim b. ḡajaj:**

The book is the explanation of Ṣaḡīḡ of Imām Muslim b. Ḥajjāj named as Al Bahr ul Muḡīt al- Ṭḡajaj fi Sharah Ṣaḡīḡ al-Imām Muslim b. Ḥajjāj. It contains Twenty-four volumes and 30475 pages. Dar ibn al Jawzi published this book in 1426/2005 and edited it twice in 2014 and 2018.¹⁸

● **Qūrah tul Aīn Mūhtaj fi Sarah Muqaddamah Ṣaḡīḡ al-Imām Muslim:**

This book is the scholarly work of Shaykh Muhammad B. Ali b. Adam al-Ithyubi. It is the Muqaddamah of Al Bahr ul Muḡīt Sharah Ṣaḡīḡ al-Imām Muslim and entitled as **Qūrah tul Aīn Mūhtaj fi Sarah Muqaddamah Ṣaḡīḡ al-Imām Muslim**. It consists of two volumes and 1012 pages. Dar ibn Al Jawzī published it in 1424/2003.¹⁹

● **Māshāriq ul Anwār al-Wahajaah wa Maṡāli` al-Isrār al-Baḡājāh fi Sharah Sunan al-Imām ibn Majah:**

It is the explanation of Sunan of Imām ibn Majah. It has four volumes and 2240 pages. Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali b. Adam had planned to complete the book in twelve volumes. However, due to his illness, he couldn't write in his last long stretches of life and left the book incomplete. This book was published in 1427/2006 by Dar ibn Al Jawzī.²⁰

● **Ithāf ul Ṭālib al-Ahwdhī bi-Sharah Jamiya al- Imām Al-Tirmidhi:**

This book is the explanation of Jamiya al- Imām Al-Tirmidhi. Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali b. Adam started to draft this book on Sunday morning right after the fajr prayer. It was the year of 1432 Safar. This book was completed in 1437 and published by Dar Ibn al Jawzi. It consists of six volumes and pages are 4909²¹.

● **Ithāf ul-Nubala`:**

This book is a compilation by Shaykh's student, Abu Hammām B. Muhammad B. 'Alī Al Somai'. Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali b. Ādam had not written the explanation of Ṣaḡīḡ al-Bukhāri. He used to teach Fath-ul-Bari's explanation of Ṣaḡīḡ al-Bukhāri and praised it. Shaykh commented and corrected some parts of Fath-ul-Bari during his lectures. So, Ithāf ul-Nubala` is a compilation and traces of correction in his lectures compiled by his students. It was published in 1443 in 138 pages.²² After the death of Shaykh Muhammad B. Ali B. Ādam, many of his manuscripts appeared in print.

The Indo-Pak subcontinent suffers mainly because of language problems. An organized translation movement can make his literature popular in the academic circles of the non-Arabic world. The great scholars of Muslim Ummah not only recognized the contribution of Shaykh's work to the Hadith sciences, but some of them also acknowledged that they have benefited from Shaykh's scholarly endeavors. One of his students said:

“He was the fragrance of the early centuries in this age of famine (of knowledge) and ignorance.”

May Allah accept all his efforts and allow the students of knowledge to benefit from his writing. Ameen.

Conclusions:

Shaykh Muhammad B. Ali B. Ādam Al-Ithyubī was an Ethiopian scholar. In 1980/1401 Shaykh migrated from Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia Makkah, due to communist rule in Ethiopia. Here, he started to teach in "Dar ul Hadīth Khayriyah" Makkah. There is no question that the Shaykh worked hard and burned the lamp of his life from both ends to gain expertise in Hadith sciences. His biography tells us, how sincere he was in getting the Knowledge of Hadith. He had opened his eyes in an educational setting and grew up in an educational house. He was very conscious of spending his time. The Shaykh emerged as a blessing of Allah and revived the sweet memories of the earlier Hadith scholars. He had added the great commentaries of Hadith books and many others in Hadith literature.

Shaykh authored books in different fields of Islamic Sciences. He wrote on the topics of Jarah and Ta'dīl, Aqīdah, and Arabic Grammar. He had written summaries and explanations of many books. Many of his books are poetry-based summaries which he had written for the student of knowledge to memorize the knowledge easily. Like grammatical rules, Definition, and types of Jarah and Ta'dil, Rijal al-Şahīhayn, Maratib ul Maūsūfin bi Tadrīs, etc.

Several of his works act as the head and express the basis of Shaykh Muhammad’s research. It is a showcase of his tremendous and incredible scope of knowledge in Hadith sciences.

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