

Response of the *Ulama* to Sufi and Reshi Movements in Kashmir in 18th and 19th Centuries

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Abstract:-In this paper, I have tried to introduce the concepts of various religious scholars of Kashmir in response to Sufi and Reshi movements. All these religious scholars have emphasized the consistency in religious matters with the injunctions of *Qur'a:n* and *Hadi:th*. Among such scholars Syed Hussain Shah Batku رحمه الله عليه has played an important role in finding the *Ahl'-i- Hadi:th* movement in Kashmir. The movement forms the significant part of history of Islam in Kashmir. This is not only because of the movement's emphasis on the *Qur'a:n* and the *Hadi:th*, but also because of its prohibition against the worship of Shrines (*A:sta:n Parasti:*), worship of tombs (*Maza:r Parasti:*) and excessive veneration of Sufi and Reshi saints, in addition to the observance of a certain set of rituals and ceremonies associated with Muslim life, marriage and death. In his criticism of the socio-religious role of contemporary *darweshes* and *faqirs*, Sayyid Husain رحمه الله عليه railed that the people should not entrust their religious affairs to them. In his opinion, such men had departed from the teaching of pristine Islam. Sayyid Husain's رحمه الله عليه main purpose seems to have been to reform the behavior of the so-called Sufis.

Besides their zeal for reform, *Ahl'-i- Hadi:th* leaders like, Sayyid Hussain Batku رحمه الله عليه Moulana Anwar Shah Shopiani, رحمه الله عليه Haji Nizamuddin Nizam Furahi رحمه الله عليه Hafiz Maulana Muhammad Yahya Rafiqi رحمه الله عليه etc began to involve themselves with serious theological issues like intercession (*Shafa:'at*) mediation (*Wasa:lat*) and so on.

Key Words: *Ulama*, *Ahl'-i- Hadi:th*, Intercession, Mediation, Kashmir.

I. INTRODUCTION

Definition of `Ulama` *Ulamas* are the body of Islamic scholars who are authorities on Muslim religion and law.¹ So, we can say, *Ulamas* are the Islamic scholars who are well versed in *Qur'a:n*, *Sunnah* and *Shari:'ah*. About such people, Allah سبحانه و تعالی says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوه إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

“O Ye who believe, obey Allah سبحانه و تعالی and obey the Messenger ﷺ and those charged with authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves refer it to Allah سبحانه و تعالی and His Messenger ﷺ if you believe in Allah سبحانه و تعالی and the Last Day: that is the best and the most suitable for the final determination.”²

And Again, Allah سبحانه و تعالی says:

۞ يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

“Allah سبحانه و تعالی will raise up to (suitable) rank (and degree) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge.”³

In *Surah al-Tawbah* where *Jiha:d* was declared as an obligation, Allah سبحانه و تعالی said that even in this circumstance, there should be a group of people who should stay behind and study and teach source people and these people are the *'ulama*. The job of the *'ulama* is to help the people to be closer to Allah سبحانه و تعالی. In this context, the *Qur'a:n*, *Hadi:th* and the literature of many *awliya:'* clearly demarcate the line of innovations in Islam from *tawhi:d*, some of the excerpts of such kind are provided as under;

Response in *Qur'a:n*

The *Qur'a:n* says,

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوِلَهُ الْأَنْهَارُ سَمُومًا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارًا

The *Qur'a:n* clearly mentions that those who associate partners to Allah ﷻ have been forbidden *Jannah*. Their abode shall be Hellfire and they shall find no one to help them out.⁴ (*Al- Ma'ida-72*)

Again, Allah ﷻ says in *Qur'a:n*,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْرَمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (*Al- Ma'ida-87*)

This *A:yah* speaks about people who do *Riya:*' (show off). They proclaim permitted as forbidden and forbidden as permitted. These are people who are astray.⁵

Response in *Hadi:th*

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ states about such people of being devoid of serenity and calmness of heart. These people shall taste punishment much more than non-believers.⁶

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has clearly mentioned that there is clear cut distinction between permitted and forbidden things. The people who mix the both are ignorant and doubtful.⁷

Response of Hadhrrat Ali رضي الله عنه

Hadhrrat Ali رضي الله عنه states that a true believer worships His Lord away from the eyes of people to prevent their hearts from feeling any desire to show off. However, pseudo-believers try to show off by boasting their worship of Allah ﷻ among the people only the gain fames and worldly benefits.⁸

Response of Hadhrrat Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani رحمه الله عليه

He in his *Awra:d-i-Fat-hiyyah* clearly states that Allah ﷻ only is the giver and none except Him can take or give anything.

اللَّهُمَّ لَا مَنَعَ لِمَا أُعْطِيتَ، وَلَا مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ، وَلَا رَادَّ لِمَا قَضَيْتَ أَوْ رَادَّ فَتَحِيهِ⁹

Allah ﷻ again says in the *Qur'a:n*,

وَأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفِرْقًا بَلُورًا أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ (*Al- Imran-78*)

Response of Imam Qushayri رحمه الله عليه

He states that the above *A:yah* mentions those people who proclaim their mystic incidents in such a way that it was the condition of their hearts but in real sense they are far away from the truth. These people are pseudo mystics and are liars .They are the people who have wronged and such people will never receive path of enlightenment from their Lord.¹⁰

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ (*Al- Aira'f-45*)

Imam Qushayri رحمه الله عليه further mentions that this *A:yah* also mentions the traits of such liars and pseudo-mystics. These people have traded off *Shari:ah* with their self-interests and then proclaim they have been allowed to do so. With such tactics, they misguide people only for monetary gains and are but far away from the path of righteousness¹¹

Response of Hazrat Noor-ud-Din-Noorani رحمه الله عليه

He states that when there was nothing, Allah ﷻ existed and when the whole universe has come into existence, Allah ﷻ is still there and shall exist even after everything vanishes. Then after Sheikh رحمه الله عليه cautions his soul to be careful and be staunch worshipper of Him as He is the one from whom good or bad may happen to anyone.

“Sui oos ti suii asi sui sui karzi haa zuwoo su saarie andeeshi kaasi hata zoo paayay petooo.”¹²

He furthermore, states that if he loses Allah ﷻ then who will provide him and from whom he will ask.

“yim thawi sath zameen ti aasmaan kang i tas bi mangi ti su aid ii su yeli rosham hang ti mangi adi kas b mangi ad kas mei dii.”¹³

Response in Kashmir

In Kashmir, for centuries, Kashmiri Muslims had functioned without questioning whether or not the guidance of the traditional leaders was consistent with the injunctions of the *Qur'a:n* and *Hadi:th*. However, this age old hegemony of religious leadership was seriously challenged by the religious reformists (*ulamas*) who exhorted

Muslims not only to go back to the *Qur'a:n* and *Hadi:th* for guidance, but also emphasized the fundamental importance of *ijma*ⁱ and *qiyas*ⁱⁱ, two hitherto unutilized sources of Islam in Kashmir.¹⁴

The *Ahl-i-Hadi:th* movement

The *Ahl-i-Hadi:th* movement at the turn of the nineteenth century, was a great response to the *Sufi* and *reshi* movements in Kashmir. The *Ahl-i-Hadi:th* movement forms a significant part of the history of Islam in Kashmir. This is not only because of the movement's emphasis on the *Qur'a:n* and the *Hadi:th*, but also because of its prohibition against the *a:sta:n parasti*,ⁱⁱⁱ *maza:r parasti*,^{iv} and excessive veneration of *Sufi* and *reshi* saints, in addition to the observance of a certain set of rituals and ceremonies associated with Muslim life, marriage and death.¹⁵

It was the first reformist movement of its kind in Kashmir since the introduction of Islam to the region at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The movement's goal was unique in that it advocated purging Islam of its accretions, customs, practices, superstitions, ceremonies etc., with a view to restoring its pristine purity. It also stood for a strong affirmation of *tawhi:d*^v the rejection of *bid`ahs*^{vi} and *shirk*^{vii}.¹⁶

Sayyid Hussain Shah Batku^{رحمة الله عليه}

He founded the *Ahl-i-Hadi:th* movement in Kashmir. Born in Delhi in the second half of the nineteenth century, Sayyid Husain's^{رحمة الله عليه} ancestors are said to have migrated from Makkah and settled at Amritsar. From there, the family migrated to Kashmir and lived at Batekpora near *Madin sahib* in Srinagar. Sayyid Husain^{رحمة الله عليه} received his early education from his father, Sayyid Mohammad Shah,^{رحمة الله عليه} a *Muja:wir*,^{viii} of the shrine of Khanyar. Having an inquisitive mind and seeking Islamic knowledge, he went to Amritsar where he became a pupil of Moulana Ghulam Ali Amritsari^{رحمة الله عليه} in the beginning of 1872. This was the time when the literary fame of Moulavi Nazir Husain^{رحمة الله عليه} (1805-1902) *Muhaddith Dehlavi*, had reached far and wide. Students not only from the Indian sub-continent, but also from abroad, were attracted to his newly established *Madrassa Miyan Sahib*. In a very short period of time, the *Madrassa* produced a number of learned '*ulama* on *Aha:di:th* who were strongly influenced by Moulavi Nazir Husain's^{رحمة الله عليه} religious thought. These scholars were now on a mission to disseminate this viewpoint to a wider audience, especially in Northern India, from which many of the '*ulama* hailed. Having made up his mind, Sayyid Hussain^{رحمة الله عليه} went to Delhi and sought admission in *Madrassa Miyan Sahib*, where he learned *Tafsir*, *Hadi:th* and *Usul-i-Hadi:th*.¹⁷

The couple of years Sayyid Husain^{رحمة الله عليه} spent in Delhi provided him with an opportunity to share the literary association of front-rank *Ahl-i-Hadi:th* leaders such as Moulana Sonallah Amritsari^{رحمة الله عليه} (1868-1948 A.D.), Moulavi Mohammad Ibrahim Arvi^{رحمة الله عليه} (1264-1320 A.H.), Hafiz 'abdullah Gazipuri^{رحمة الله عليه} (1261-1338 A.D.), 'abdu Jabbar Ghaznavi^{رحمة الله عليه} (1268-1333 A.H.), 'abdu Qasim Banarasi^{رحمة الله عليه} (1307-1377 A.H.), 'abdu Minan Wazirabadi^{رحمة الله عليه} (1271-1336 A.H.) and Hafiz 'abdu Aziz Rahimabadi^{رحمة الله عليه} (1267-1334 A.H.). Exposure to these thinkers brought about a complete change in Sayyid Husain's religious thought. No sooner did Sayyid Husain^{رحمة الله عليه} enter the Kashmir valley when he found the atmosphere contaminated by the ignorance spread by the *mullahs*, *muftis*, *babaz* and *pi:rs*. He was deeply shocked to see Muslims mired in superstitious practice, ignorance and darkness.¹⁸ He was critical of local religious leaders for having given rise to a number of rituals and ceremonies at the *kha:nqah* level. Such practices had evolved to serve the vested interests of the religious elite. Sayyid Husain^{رحمة الله عليه} especially criticized Muslim funeral ceremonies, which reflected hindu influence. Like the hindus, Muslims now incurred unnecessary and exorbitant expenses on friday, *chaha:rum*^{ix} *chelum*^x at *shashma:hi*:^{xii} and on *sa:la:na*:^{xii} of mourning. All these customs appeared to him

ⁱConsensus, that is, acceptance of a matter by a specified group of people.

ⁱⁱAn Arabic term for analogy, analogical deduction. It is used in Islamic law to deal with new situations as they arise.

ⁱⁱⁱWorship of shrines.

^{iv}Worship of tombs.

^vUnity of God, belief in Oneness of God.

^{vi}Innovations, the act of starting or introducing something new in the process.

^{vii}Polytheism, belief in multiple Gods.

^{viii}Custodian, one having charge of buildings, grounds etc.

^{ix}The fourth day, the ceremony takes place on the fourth day of funeral rites.

^xThe fortieth day of mourning.

as heresies, *bid'ahs*. He was of the firm belief that no such customs had existed among the early Arabs nor was there any sanction for these in Islam. The word *bid'ah* became synonymous with the hindu folk ways retained by converts.¹⁹ This was probably the reason why the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* believed that a majority of the people in the valley, though Muslims by faith, needed to be converted afresh in view of the gap that existed between normative Islam and the Islam practiced by the Kashmiris.²⁰ Lawrence observes, "Kashmiri sunnis are Muslims only in name and in their hearts they are hindus."²¹

Against such background, the new religious ideas had greater opportunity to flourish, particularly when a small group of people had already shown their aversion to certain customs and practices. These people found expression of their ideas in the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* movement. Sayyid Husain's رحمه الله عليه emphasis was on *tawhi:d*, the quintessence of the teachings of all prophets including Prophet Muhammad ﷺ -The seal of all Prophets. Both religious leaders and also the masses who had credulously reposed their faith in *mullahs* and *mufitis* concerning religious matters became targets of Sayyid Husain's رحمه الله عليه criticism.²² The *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* movement seems to have been working on the one hand to put an end to *bid'ahs* and *shirk*²³ and, on the other, to emphasize the monotheistic or *tawhi:dic* aspect of Islam, which in the opinion of the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* leaders, had been totally forgotten by the average Kashmiri Muslim.

Behind the close ties of the people of Kashmir with the *kha:nqahs* and shrines was their inveterate belief that Islam in Kashmir was the gift of the *Sufis* and the *reshis*; hence from their viewpoint, the two deserved veneration of the highest degree. This is why the literature produced by the *Sufis* and the *reshis*, especially the mystical poetry of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din رحمه الله عليه (1379-1442) has for centuries influenced the minds of Kashmiris. So profound has been its impact that a modern historian ascribes the spread of Islam in the valley during the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries to a missionary and creative relationship between mystic literature and society.²⁴ It is no surprise, therefore, that the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* acknowledged Sheikh Noor-ud-Din *Reshi* رحمه الله عليه as the greatest exponent of *tawhi:d*.

When Sheikh Sayyid 'Abd al- Qadir Jilani رحمه الله عليه contracted the illness in the course of which he passed away, his eldest son Sheikh 'Abd al- Wahhab رحمه الله عليه requested him for words of advice (as his will and last testament) so that he may act up to them after his (the Sheikh's) demise.

The Sheikh رحمه الله عليه said:

- Obligatory on you is *taqwa*: to remain ever- conscious of Allah سبحانه و تعالى and live life in this state of mind;
- Fear none except Allah سبحانه و تعالى;
- Turn not to any one in hope and aspiration except to Allah سبحانه و تعالى ;
- Entrust all your needs to Allah سبحانه و تعالى ;
- Trust none but Him;
- Ask everything of none but Him;
- Bind not yourself in confidence and trust to anyone but Him;
- Only *tawhi:d*- stick only to *tawhi:d*;
- On *tawhi:d* there is complete unanimity of all [The Prophets (Peace and Blessings of Allah Be Upon them) and their Teachings].²⁵

Keep the *Qur'a:n* and the *Sunnah* before you. Reflect on them with proper contemplation and meditation. Act upon them and don't be deceived by gossip and desires. Allah سبحانه و تعالى has said, "So take what the Messenger ﷺ gives you, and refrain from what he prohibits you."²⁶

In his criticism of the socio-religious role of contemporary *darweshes* and *faqirs*, Sayyid Husain رحمه الله عليه railed that the people should not entrust their religious affairs to them. In his opinion, such men had departed from the teaching of pristine Islam. Sayyid Husain's رحمه الله عليه main purpose seems to have been to reform the behavior of the so-called Sufis.²⁷

Moulavi Hasan Shah رحمه الله عليه (d.1940)^{xiii} had already expressed his solidarity with the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* when he came under the influence of Sayyid Husain رحمه الله عليه. Going against the teaching of his ancestors Moulavi Hasan Shah رحمه الله عليه attacked the cult of saints and pilgrimage to Sufi tombs. He urged Muslims to return to the *Qur'a:n*

^{xi}Ceremony which takes place after six months of death.

^{xii}Mourning at annual days.

^{xiii}He was the son of Mir Waiz Maulana Rasul Shah and the elder brother of Mir Waiz Mohammad Yousuf Shah, the first Kashmiri who wrote a commentary on the *Qur'a:n* in his mother tongue.

and the *Sunnah* and stressed the importance of *Ijtihad*.^{xiv} His teachings were incompatible with the religious atmosphere prevailing at his home. Consequently, he had to leave his home and found refuge in a thickly populated area in the vicinity of *Zaina Kadal*, where he continued to preach in *Gagar Masjid* until his death in 1940. The impact of *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* ideology even upon elitists from different religious background was so profound that these elitists became staunch supporters of this socio-religious reform movement.

So great was the propaganda of the *mullahs* against the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* that they succeeded in convincing the Maharaja of the threat *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* posed to the existing social order. The government expelled Sayyid Husain Batku رحمة الله عليه from Srinagar for spreading “seditious doctrines.”²⁸

Moulana Anwar Shah Shopiani رحمة الله عليه^{xvi}

Having been expelled, Sayyid Husain رحمة الله عليه proceeded to Shopian, where he found the fertile ground for preaching the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* tenets, mainly on account of the pioneering role played by Moulana Anwar Shah Shopiani رحمة الله عليه (1269-1359 A.H.) and Atta Mohammad Khan رحمة الله عليه, ^{xvi} *ra'is* of the time. The vast learning of Sayyid Husain رحمة الله عليه not only made the task of Anwar Shah رحمة الله عليه easier but even proved to be an important factor in giving a fillip to the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* movement.²⁹

The inimical attitude adopted against Sayyid Husain رحمة الله عليه in Srinagar on the part of the masses in general and the *mullahs* and *muftis* in particular did not dishearten Anwar Shah رحمة الله عليه. Instead, his difficulties made him bold enough to criticize the un-Islamic practices of *juma-chaе*,^{xvii} *Khatm-i-Shari:f*,^{xviii} and *giya:rhwi(n)* of Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani رحمة الله عليه 1078-1116. His vehement criticism of the practice of visiting Sufi shrines earned him, like his predecessor, the epithet of ‘disbeliever of saints, *munkir-i-awliya*’.

Meanwhile, Moulana Anwar رحمة الله عليه toured extensively, visiting various parts of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh with the missionary zeal of a socio-religious reformer. In the Jammu region, he went to Doda, Baderwah and Kishtwar, where he emphasized the importance of *tawhīd* for the recognition of self vis-à-vis the Oneness of God. His tour to various parts of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh regions brought him very close to the un-Islamic behavior of contemporary Muslims, whom he found had deviated from the teaching of the Holy *Qur'a:n* and *Sunnah*. He therefore made a tireless effort to rid Muslim society of un-Islamic practices with a view to restoring it to what it had been in pristine Islam.³⁰

Besides their zeal for reform, *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* leaders began to involve themselves with serious theological issues like (*shafa:at*)^{xix}, (*wasa:lat*)^{xx} and so on. To them, *wasa:lat* was permissible only by two ways: by worshipping God directly and acting upon *Hadi:th*. This form of worship was considered the highest form of *wasalat* and the only way to come nearer to God. On the question of *shafa:at*, however, both *Hanafi:s* and *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* were in complete agreement that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would be the real intercessor on the Day of Judgement. Unlike *Hanafi:s*, *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* believed that *shafa:at* could not be done by dead persons, be it a *wali*, nor by those sunk in *shirk*. Such pronouncements did not find favour with the majority of the

^{xiv}The endeavour of a Muslim scholar to derive a rule of divine law from the *Qur'a:n* and *Hadi:th* without relying on the views of other scholars.

^{xv}Mohammad Anwar is said to have received an education in Islamic Theology at various Literary Centres of Punjab.

^{xvi}Atta Mohammad Khan son of Bashir Khan was a *Jagidar* in the Dogra regime. His ancestors are said to have been the rulers of *Karna (Darada)*. When Kashmir came under the control of the Sikh, Atta Mohammad Khan's ancestors were dispossessed of their *Jagir*. However, the Sikh rulers used to give a certain portion of the revenue of *Karana* Principality to Sher Khans descendants. See Hasan Shah, p.442.

^{xvii}This is the light refreshment which is served to those who offer *fathiya* collectively at the graveyard on either friday or the fourth day of the death of a Muslim. It is generally believed that peace is granted to the departed soul through this practice.

^{xviii}This is usually organized by the bereaved families for the benefit of the departed soul. On this occasion, not only *mullahs* but close relatives are called to recite the verses of the *Qur'an* and also prayers of saints. In return, they are treated not only to a sumptuous lunch or dinner, but also offered some amount of money for their services.

^{xix}Intercession, a prayer to God on behalf of another person.

^{xx}Mediation, the act of intervening for the purpose of bringing about a settlement.

Muslims, largely because of their veneration of *Sufis* and *reshis*, whom they also considered substitutes for seeking *shafa:at*.³¹

Sabzar Shah رحمة الله عليه ^{xxi}

The another response to *Sufi* and *reshi* movement was Sabzar Shah رحمة الله عليه, (although he was an ordinary literate person, but his contribution to the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* movement cannot be ignored), he was one of the major figures of the *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* movement in Kashmir.³² Sabzar Shah's رحمة الله عليه father Siddiq Shah رحمة الله عليه was a resident of Dangharpura, Srinagar. Sabzar Shah رحمة الله عليه left his home one day and never returned. Several years after he had left, his news arrived at the hands of a pilgrim who had returned from Madinah carrying Sabzar Shah's رحمة الله عليه greetings. It is thought that he died there in Madinah. In Srinagar, Syed (Husain Shah) رحمة الله عليه and Sabzar Shah رحمة الله عليه were the founders of the (*Ahl-i- Hadi:th*) movement. They were certainly two different personalities though. The former was a traditional scholar who was well versed in the various fields of religion and had received training from eminent scholars. The latter was just an ordinary literate person but he certainly was very much attached to *tawhi:d*. His love for the Prophet's *Sunnah* had made his heart and mind blossom.³³ After Syed Shah رحمة الله عليه was exiled Sabzar Shah رحمة الله عليه continued to advance the movement. Like Syed Shah رحمة الله عليه, Sabzar Shah رحمة الله عليه was always eager for an opportunity to preach *tawhi:d* to the masses. However, he also employed a unique way of doing so. He began working as a hawker, selling things such as kohl, soap, needles, earrings, bangles, combs, toys and other such things of women's interest. Women who would approach him to buy merchandise would also receive advice from him against *shirk and bid'ah*.³⁴

Haji Mulla Nizamuddin Nizam Furahi رحمة الله عليه

Another response to *Sufi* and *reshi* movement in Kashmir was Haji Mulla Nizamuddin Nizam Furahi رحمة الله عليه who was one of the famous scholars who promoted *tawhi:d* and *sunnah* and sought to cripple *shirk and bid'ah*.

Historian Mawlana 'abdu Hayy bin Fakhruddin al-Hasni رحمة الله عليه -the father of the historian and thinker Mawlana Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi رحمة الله عليه -writes in his famous book *Nuzhatul Khawatir*:

“The Noble Sheikh Nizamuddin al-Furahi رحمة الله عليه al-Kashmiri was among the pious scholars. He traveled to *Hijaz* and after having made the pilgrimage and the visiting he met with scholars and studied under them. He then returned to India and stayed in Delhi. Afterwards, he returned to Kashmir and secluded himself in his house and wouldn't socialize. He didn't even come out of the house for his son's burial. He would make copies of the Qur'an and donate them for people to read from.”³⁵ Nizamuddin al-Furahi رحمة الله عليه died on the 29th of *Dhul Hijjah* in the year 1261 AH.³⁶

Mulla Nizamuddin Nizam Furahi رحمة الله عليه is also the author of the book *Mulhima:t* comprises Persian poetry advocating *tawhi:d* and condemning *bid'ah*.

Some of the verses from *Mulhima:t*, are as under;

And do not consider anyone your lord except God.
 Whatever good or bad happens in the World,
 Consider it all to be by God's Command.
 Everyone except us is harmful.
 It is God who bestows all might and energy.
 My only proof for the people of *Safa*
 Is *Hasbunallaahu wa Kafa*(God is enough for us and He is sufficient).
 It is well known that *Hasbunallaah*
 Is mentioned fifteen times in it.
 Which means that at times of difficulty
 And calamity it is only God who helps.
Ami:r Kabi:r has mentioned
 No friend or Saint by name in it.
 O traitor, just say *SubhaanAllaah*.
 Saints and friends are of no use to you.
 Just say *Yaf'lullaah ma Yashaa'*(God does as He likes)
 Because they don't even know its true value.³⁷

^{xxi}His original name was Mahmud. He used to wear green clothes and a green turban, this is why he was named, Sabzar Shah. As a resident of *Saied Makkar Mohalla* in the vicinity of *Narwara*, he made it a center of his activities in the Nineteenth Century.

During those times people had taken saints (*pi:r*) and *derveshs* as their helpers and aides. Allamah Furahi رحمة الله عليه has castigated them in his poetry. He states in *Mulhima:t*,:-
These pseudo-saints (*pi:r*) are worried about their own selves
And travel from place to place seeking to fill their bellies.

Had the pseudo-saint been capable of helping other people then he wouldn't be facing such difficulty with his own affairs. If he can't help his own self he certainly can't help others.³⁸
If the pseudo-saint was capable of getting whatever he wished then he would sit at his place and not worry about good people and bad people. However, such is not the case because the saint associates with the good and the bad to meet his own needs.
Had this pseudo-saint possessed enough fresh bread he wouldn't be going from one house to the other asking for food. It is God who gives provision and this pseudo-saint is in need of God and is incapable of helping others out.³⁹

Nasi:hat al-Muslimi:n

It is worthwhile to briefly mention, Mawlana Khurram Ali Bilhawri's رحمة الله عليه mighty *Nasi:hat al-Muslimi:n*. Islamic Thinker Mawlana Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi رحمة الله عليه writes about him:
“Mawlana Khurram Ali رحمة الله عليه is among the famous scholars of India. He was a student of the family of Mawlana Shah 'abdu'l Aziz *Muhaddith Dehlawi*: رحمة الله عليه and a close friend and associate of Mawlana Muhammad Isma'el Shaheed رحمة الله عليه.”

He was always busy countering the *bid'ah* and reviving the *Sunnah*. In 1238 A.H, he wrote a booklet on the subject of *tawhi:d* and Creed which he called *Nasi:hat al-Muslimi:n*. This booklet is crisp in style, very effective and terse. He died in almost 1273A.H.⁴⁰

It is worthwhile to mention here that Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad was also influenced by this book in his early life. This book played a considerable part in ridding him of his old ways of *bid'ah* and distorted beliefs (*'aqa:'id*). This he has confessed to himself.⁴¹

At the last pages of *Nasi:hat al-Muslimi:n* there is an influential *nazm* which is based on *tawhi:d* and is as under;
“God has stated in the *Qur'a:n*

Saints and Messengers are all in need of Me
No one has might except for Me
No one can rid you of adversity.
The one who is himself destitute
Why ask him for Help!
Asking of saints along with God
Is *shirk* my friends so refrain from it
What is established in the *Qur'a:n* is that
God will never forgive the *mushrik* whatsoever
God's refuge is sought, whoever He doesn't forgive
Is certain to end up in Hellfire
If you really believe in the *Qur'a:n*
Then, why do you ask of the saints?
Who has taught you this vile way?
When did Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم say such a thing!
The devil is an enemy of Adam's progeny
It is he who leads to the way of Hell
He teaches idol worship to some
To others he teaches worshipping the graves
Thus, turning both the groups away from God
Misguiding them, he forced them into a gorge
O Muslims, just ponder over it with your hearts
How badly you have been trapped in *Aab-o-Gil!*
You have long been in slumber, awake now!
You ask of His slaves even when you be long to Him!
He is the king, all are helpless before Him
No one is in charge of His house
There is nothing that God can't do
Of the things that you seek from the *Awliya'*
When they hear (me speaking) about *shirk*

They accuse me of discrediting the scholars/saints
 O people, stop saying that
 We donot discredit the scholars
 May God curse the unfortunate person
 Whose heart bears hatred towards the Messenger ﷺ⁴²

Hafiz Mawlana Muhammad Yahya Rafiqi رحمه الله عليه

The Rafiqi household has always been at the forefront of opposition to *shirk and bid'ah*. Due to it being famous for knowledge and also being active in *da'wah*, this household has always been very close to the scholars of the *Ahl-e-Hadi:th*. "Khawaja Tahir Rafiq 'Asha'e *Suharwardi* رحمه الله عليه with whom all of the Rafiqi household is related- was the great-grandson of Khawaja Sangeen رحمه الله عليه. In his *Asrar- ul-Abrar*, J Baba Dawud Mashkwani رحمه الله عليه states his title as *Sheikh* and that of his father Ibrahim' Asha'e as *Khawaja* رحمه الله عليه. Khawaja Tahir Rafiqi رحمه الله عليه was an eminent saint. He is also said to have been a person of *kashf* and *kara:mah*. Despite that he worked as a businessman.⁴³

The famous *Muhaddith* Tayyib bin Ahmad Rafiqi رحمه الله عليه (1288 A.H.) and the uprooter of *shirk and bid'ah* Sheikh *Muhaddith* Raza bin Muhammad Mustafa Rafiqi رحمه الله عليه (1276A.H.) was also from this knowledgeable household. It is this household that also produced Hafiz Mawlana Muhammad Yahya Rafiqi رحمه الله عليه who was also the *Imam* of the *Jami'* mosque of Dalhousie (Punjab Hall, Himachal Pradesh) and a preacher. His father was Pi:r Habibullah Rafiqi رحمه الله عليه. Muhammad Yahya رحمه الله عليه was a *Muhaddith*, a follower of the *Sunnah* and a destroyer of *bid'ah*. He had been certified by Mawlana Nazir Husain Dehlawi رحمه الله عليه. He also had connections with Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan رحمه الله عليه (Bhopal). He was also a poet and a writer.⁴⁴ Having been trained at the hands of eminent *Ahl-i- Hadi:th* scholars, he started his mission of spreading the message of Islam in Kashmir and was successful in his endeavour. His famous poetical work *Hablulla:h* (1303 AH) was very instrumental in countering *shirk and bid'ah*.⁵¹ *Hablulla:h* is in the form of a book and is in Kashmiri language which he composed in 1303 A.H. It was given a book form in the year 1317 AH. In this work of his, the author has extensively discussed various aspects of social life. Moreover, at several places in this book, there is found a good volume of eulogy (*na`at*) and *manqaba:t* which the author has presented in his characteristic style.⁴⁵

Throughout his poetry *tawhi:d* is a recurring theme which points to the fact that he was well aware of the concepts of *tawhi:d* and *risa:lah*. Most of the topics discussed in his book indicate that he was well aware of the ills of his society. He has also made mention of the selfish and materialistic elements of the society who took advantage of the weak and the poor. By choosing the topics that he did, Mawlana has made open his contempt for pseudo *faqeers*, *mullahs* and preachers. He has in his work exposed all such preachers and religious heads of his time who would deceive unsuspecting Kashmiri masses to fill their own pockets.⁴⁶ Some Couplets of *Hablulla:h* are;

Lend me an ear O my kashmiri brethren
 Forget all the past ravings.
 O *Faqeers*, O Preachers, O *Pi:r zadas*
 O Rich people, O *Khawajas* and *Mirs*
 Repent to God and fear Him
 Do not be attached with filthy trade
 Follow the way of the established *Sunnah*
 Sever the rope of *bid'ah* and embrace faith
 Ask God for help and mercy
 To ask of others only brings disgrace
 Those Muslims who ask of *pi:rs* and *faqeers*
 Are unaware of the message of the *Qur'a:n*
 Read the *Qur'a:n* and die on the religion of the Prophet ﷺ
 Spread the way of *tawhi:d* and shun ignorance
 Leave worshipping graves and shrines
 And take the way of happiness
 Ask God for all of your needs
 Always seek God's help and His mercy.
 Be aware of His majesty

Praise Him in all your gatherings.
Know that all the Prophets are His slaves
All the great *walis* and *pirs* are overwhelmed by Him.
Remember His majesty
And smash the foundations of *shirk* and false tradition (*rasm*)
True religion has been defamed by evil tradition
So, light the candle of Islam everywhere.
The waters of *bid'ah* have seeped into the ship of Islam
Muslims have been struck by adversity and misery
The winds of *shirk* and *bid'ah* are blowing everywhere
Is it befitting to be ignorant at such times of calamity!?
Nurture the crop of Islamic *shari'ah*
That would in turn soothe the heart of the Prophet ﷺ
Help the truth, for The Merciful is the ally of the truthful.
Leave falsehood for Satan is its aide
Know that God is one if you truly believe.
To know that He is unique is integral to faith.
He is the owner of all things and in command of everything
He has no kin and nor has He a helper.
None is like Him and none is His equal
He is free from all similitude.⁴⁷

From the above given couplets, it is clearly mentioned by Yahya Rafiqi رحمه الله عليه that people of Kashmir need to repent from *bid'ahs* / innovations and should adhere to the *Qur'a:n* and *Sunnah*, that none other than Allah سبحانه و تعالی can relieve a man of any pain or sufferings. He emphasizes strict adherence to *shari'ah*, which as per him is the only act that would soothen the heart of Prophet ﷺ of Islam.

II. CONCLUSION

No doubt Sufism played an important role in rejuvenating the spirit of Islam however, in due course of time the essence of Sufism got diluted with the innovations like, *qabr parasti*., *a:sta:n parasti*: etc. which never formed the part of the Sufi culture. In Kashmir, for centuries, Kashmiri Muslims had functioned without questioning whether or not the guidance of the traditional leaders was consistent with the injunctions of the *Qur'a:n* and *Hadi:th*. However, this age old hegemony of religious leadership was seriously challenged by the religious reformists (*ulamas*) who exhorted Muslims not only to go back to the *Qur'a:n* and *Hadi:th* for guidance, but also emphasized the fundamental importance of *ijma* and *qiyas*, two hitherto unutilized sources of Islam in Kashmir. To counter the innovations in Sufism, religious scholars like, Sayyid Hussain Batku رحمه الله عليه, Moulana Anwar Shah Shopiani رحمه الله عليه, Haji Nizamuddin Nizam Furahi رحمه الله عليه, Hafiz Maulana Muhammad Yahya Rafiqi رحمه الله عليه etc. had played a pivotal role in balancing the Islamic ethos in the valley by demarcating the innovations in Sufism from Islam. They played an important role while helping the followers to live as per *Qur'a:n* and *Sunnah*.

END NOTES

[1] ¹The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary, Lexican Publications, INC, New York, 1988.

[2] ²*Al-Qur'a:n*- 4:59.

[3] ³*Al-Qur'a:n*- 58:11.

[4] ⁴Diddamari, Khwaja Mohammad Azam, *Tarikh-i-Azami, (Waqiat-i-Kashmir)*, (Urdu tr.), Dr. Shams-ud-din Ahmad, Srinagar, 2001, p. li.

- [5] ⁵ Khaki, Dawud, *Dasturu's-Salikin*, (Urdu tr.), Saif-ud-Din Qari, Ashraf Book Centre, Srinagar, 2014, p. 234.
- [6] ⁶Ibid.
- [7] ⁷Ibid., p. 233.
- [8] ⁸Ibid., pp. 234-235.
- [9] ⁹*Waqiat-i-Kashmir*, Op.cit., p. lii.
- [10] ¹⁰*Dastu:r al-Sa:liki:n*, Op.cit., pp. 222-23.
- [11] ¹¹Ibid., 223.
- [12] ¹²*Waqiat-i-Kashmir*, Op.cit., p. lii.
- [13] ¹³Ibid.
- [14] ¹⁴*The Ahl-i- Hadi:th: A Socio-Religious Reform Movement in Kashmir*, Bashir Ahmad Khan, Muslim World, The Duncan Black Macdonald Centre, 77 Shermon Street, Hartford Seminary, U.S.A., 2000.
- [15] ¹⁵Ibid., p.1.
- [16] ¹⁶Ibid., pp.1-2.
- [17] ¹⁷Ibid., pp.5-6.
- [18] ¹⁸Ibid., p.6. See Also, *Perspectives on Kashmir*, Mohammad Ishaq Khan, Gulshan Publishers, Srinagar, 1983, p.140.
- [19] ¹⁹Ibid.
- [20] ²⁰Ibid., See Also, Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir Transition to Islam*, p.129.
- [21] ²¹Ibid., See Also, Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Chinar Publishing House. Reprint 1992, pp. 285-286.
- [22] ²²Ibid., p.7.
- [23] ²³Ibid., See Also, Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir Transition to Islam*, pp. 29-31.
- [24] ²⁴Ibid., p.8. See Also, Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir Transition to Islam*, Preface.
- [25] ²⁵Jilani رضي الله عنه, Sheikh Sayyid 'Abd al- Qa:dir, *Futuh-ul -Gayb*, , Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Research Centre, Noor Nagar, Zoonimar, Srinagar, *Maqala*: 36.(Poster)
- [26] ²⁶Ibid.
- [27] ²⁷*The Ahl-i- Hadi:th: A Socio-Religious Reform Movement in Kashmir*, Op.cit., p. 8.

- [28] ²⁸Ibid., p.9.
- [29] ²⁹Ibid., See Also, Maulana Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar*, p. 107.
- [30] ³⁰Ibid., p.10.
- [31] ³¹Ibid.
- [32] ³²Peer Gulam Hasan Shah Khoyahami, *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, Vol. I, (Udu tr.), Prof. Dr. Sharief Hasan Qasmi, Ali Mohammad and Sons, Srinagar. See Also, *Tarikh-i- Ahl-i- Hadi:th*, J&K, p. 89.
- [33] ³³*Tarikh-i- Ahl-i- Hadi:th*, J&K, Sofi Ahmad Muslim, P. 277.
- [34] ³⁴*Tarikh-i- Ahl-i- Hadi:th*, Op.cit., p. 98.
- [35] ³⁵*Tarikh-i-Hasan*,Vol. I, Op.cit., p. 285.
- [36] ³⁶Ibid., p. 286.
- [37] ³⁷Ibid., pp. 166-167.
- [38] ³⁸*Tarikh-i- Hasan* ,Vol. I, Op.cit., p. 286.
- [39] ³⁹Ibid., p. 287.
- [40] ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 282.
- [41] ⁴¹Ibid., pp. 282-283.
- [42] ⁴²Bilhawri, Mawlana Khurram Ali, *Nasi:hat al-Muslimi:n*,Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Research Centre, Noor Nagar, Zoonimar, Srinagar, p.45.
- [43] ⁴³*Tarikh-i Hasan*, Vol. I, Op.cit., p. 287.
- [44] ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 288.
- [45] ⁴⁵Rafiqi, Hafiz Mawlana Muhammad Yahya, *Hablulla:h*, Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Research Centre, Noor Nagar, Zoonimar, Srinagar.
- [46] ⁴⁶Ibid.
- [47] ⁴⁷*Tarikh-i Hasan*, Vol. I, Op.cit., pp. 288-289.