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 Hadith. Among such scholars Syed Hussain Shah Batku 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’anic and the Hadith, but also because of its prohibition against the worship of Shrines (A:stan Parastic), worship of tombs (Maza:r Parastic:) 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 called Sufis and reshi movement to Sufi and Reshi Movements in Kashmir. All these religious scholars have emphasized the consistency in religious matters with the injunctions of Qur’a:n and Hadi:th, and so on.

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

I. INTRODUCTION

Defining the Ulama: Ulamas are the body of Islamic scholars who are authorized and who are versed in Quran, Sunnah and Shari:`ah. About such people, Allah says:

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

And Again, Allah says:

("Allah will raise up to (suitable) rank (and degree) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge.")

In Surah al-Tawbah where Jiha:d was declared as an obligation, Allah 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. In this context, the Qur’a:n, Hadi:th and the literature of many awliya:’ clearly demarcate the line of innovations in Islam from tawbi:h, some of the excerpts of such kind are provided as under;

Response in Qur’a:n

The Qur’a:n says,

إِلَىٰ ذٌٰلٌٰكُمْ بُيُّرًا وَفَيْلَ ذٌٰلٌٰكُمْ حَرَّمَ أَنْ تُعْبِدُوا مَا لَمْ يَعْبِدُهُمِ الَّذِينَ كُتَبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْكِتَابُ وَأَنْ تُخْرِجُوا مِنْ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ مِنْ أَنفُسٍكُمْ َقُلُوهَا.
The Qur’an clearly mentions that those who associate partners to Allah, 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 says in Qur’a:n.

This Ayah 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 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 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 Hadhrat Ali

Hadhrat Ali 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 among the people only the gain names and worldly benefits.\(^8\)

Response of Hadhrat Amir Kabir Syed Ali Hamadani

He in his Awra:d-i-Fat-hiyyah clearly states that Allah only is the giver and none except Him can take or give anything.\(^9\) (Al- Imran-78)

Response of Imam Qushayri

He states that the above Ayah mentions those people who proclaim their mystic incidents in such a way that if 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.\(^10\)

Response of Hazrat Noor-ud-Din-Noorani

He states that when there was nothing, Allah existed and when the whole universe has come into existence, Allah is still there and shall exist even after everything vanishes. Then after Sheikh warns 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 karzi haa zuwoo su saarie andeeshi kaasi hata zoo puayaa petooo.”\(^11\)

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

“yim thawi sath zameen ti aasmaan kangi tas bi mangi ti su aid ii su yeli rosham hang ti mangi adi kas b mangi ad kas mei dii.”\(^12\)

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 Hadiths for guidance, but also emphasized the fundamental importance of *ijma* and *qiyyas*, two hitherto unutilized sources of Islam in Kashmir.\(^4\)

**The Ahl-i-Hadith movement**

The Ahl-i-Hadith movement at the turn of the nineteenth century, was a great response to the Sufi and reshi movements in Kashmir. The Ahl-i-Hadith 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 Hadiths, but also because of its prohibition against the *a:st:an parasti:*\(^5\) 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.\(^6\)

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 acrations, customs, practices, superstitions, ceremonies etc., with a view to restoring its pristine purity. It also stood for a strong affirmation of *tawhid:* the rejection of *bid:a*\(^6\) and *shirk.*\(^7\)

**Sayyid Hussain Shah Batku**

He founded the Ahl-i-Hadith movement in Kashmir. Born in Delhi in the second half of the nineteenth century, Sayyid Husain’s 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 received his early education from his father, Sayyid Mohammad Shah, \(^8\) 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 in the beginning of 1872. This was the time when the literary fame of Moulavi Nazir Husain (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 Madrasa Miyan Sahib. In a very short period of time, the Madrasa produced a number of learned *`ulama* on *Aha:di:th* who were strongly influenced by Moulavi Nazir Husain’s 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 Husain went to Delhi and sought admission in Madrasa Miyan Sahib, where he learned Tafsir, Hadith and Usul-i-Hadith.\(^9\)

The couple of years Sayyid Husain spent in Delhi provided him with an opportunity to share the literary association of front-rank Ahl-i-Hadith leaders such as Moulana Sonaullah Amritsari (1868-1948 A.D.), Moulavi Mohammad Ibrahim Arvi (1264-1320 A.H.), Hafiz ‘abdullah Gazipuri (1261-1338 A.D.), ‘abdul Qasim Banarasi (1307-1377 A.H.), ‘abdul Minan Wazirabadi (1271-1336 A.H.) and Hafiz ‘abdul Aziz Rahimabadi (1267-1334 A.H.). Exposure to these thinkers brought about a complete change in Sayyid Husain’s religious thought. No sooner did Sayyid Husain enter the Kashmir valley when he found the atmosphere contaminated by the mullahs, muftis, babaz and pi:rs. He was deeply shocked to see Muslims mired in superstitious practice, ignorance and darkness.\(^10\) 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 especially criticized Muslim funeral ceremonies, which reflected Hindu influence. Like the Hindus, Muslims now incurred unnecessary and exorbitant expenses on friday, *chaha:rum:* *chelum* at shashma:hi;\(^11\) and on *sa:la:na:*\(^12\) of mourning. All these customs appeared to him

\(^{\text{Consensus, that is, acceptance of a matter by a specified group of people.}}\)
\(^{\text{An Arabic term for analogy, analogical deduction. It is used in Islamic law to deal with new situations as they arise.}}\)
\(^{\text{Worship of shrines.}}\)
\(^{\text{Worship of tombs.}}\)
\(^{\text{Unity of God, belief in Oneness of God.}}\)
\(^{\text{Innovations, the act of starting or introducing something new in the process.}}\)
\(^{\text{Polytheism, belief in multiple Gods.}}\)
\(^{\text{Custodian, one having charge of buildings, grounds etc.}}\)

\(^{\text{The fourth day, the ceremony takes place on the fourth day of funeral rites.}}\)
\(^{\text{The fortieth day of mourning.}}\)

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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. This was probably the reason why the Ahl-i- Ḥadīth 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. Lawrence observes, “Kashmiri sunnis are Muslims only in name and in their hearts they are hindus.”

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- Ḥadīth movement. Sayyid Husain’s emphasis was on tawḥīd, 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 maftis concerning religious matters became targets of Sayyid Husain’s criticism. The Ahl-i- Ḥadīth movement seems to have been working on the one hand to put an end to bid’ahs and shirk and, on the other, to emphasize the monotheistic or tawḥīd asp ect of Islam, which in the opinion of the Ahl-i- Ḥadīth leaders, had been totally forgotten by the average Kashmiri Muslim.

Behind the close ties of the people of Kashmir with the khaːʾnqahs and shrines was their inveterate belief that Islam in Kashmir was the gift of the Sufis and the reshmis; hence from their viewpoint, the two deserved veneration of the highest degree. This is why the literature produced by the Sufis and the reshmis, especially the mystical poetry of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din (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. It is no surprise, therefore, that the Ahl-i- Ḥadīth acknowledged Sheikh Noor-ud-Din through Ḥadīth as the greatest exponent of tawḥīd.

When Sheikh Sayyid ‘Abd al- Qadir Jilani Ḥasan Shah (d.1940) contracted the illness in the course of which he passed away, his eldest son Sheikh ‘Abd al- Wahhab Ḥasan Shah 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 Ḥasan Shah had said:

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

Keep the Qurʾān 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 has said, “So take what the Messenger gives you, and refrain from what he prohibits you.”

In his criticism of the socio-religious role of contemporary darweshes and faqirs, Sayyid Husain Ḥasan Shah (d.1940) had already expressed his solidarity with the Ahl-i- Ḥadīth when he came under the influence of Sayyid Husain. Going against the teaching of his ancestors Moulavi Hasan Shah attacked the cult of saints and pilgrimage to Sufi tombs. He urged Muslims to return to the Qurʾān.

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xiCeremony which takes place after six months of death.

xiiMourning at annual days.

xiiiHe 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 Qurʾān in his mother tongue.
and the Sunnah and stressed the importance of Ijtiha:d.\textsuperscript{xv} 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\textsuperscript{ia} from Srinagar for spreading “seditious doctrines.”\textsuperscript{xxviii}

Moulana Anwar Shah Shopian\textsuperscript{ia} Having been expelled, Sayyid Husain\textsuperscript{ia} 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\textsuperscript{xvi} (1269-1359 A.H.) and Atta Mohammad Khan\textsuperscript{xvi} \textsuperscript{xvii} of the time. The vast learning of Sayyid Husain\textsuperscript{ia} not only made the task of Anwar Shah\textsuperscript{ia} easier but even proved to be an important factor in giving a fillip to the Ahl-i- Hadi:th movement.\textsuperscript{xxix}

The inimical attitude adopted against Sayyid Husain\textsuperscript{ia} in Srinagar on the part of the masses in general and the mullahs and muftis in particular did not dishearten Anwar Shah\textsuperscript{ia}. Instead, his difficulties made him bold enough to criticize the un-Islamic practices of juma-chaa,\textsuperscript{xvii} Khatm-i-Shari:f,\textsuperscript{xviii} and giya:rhwi:in of Sheikh 'Abdul Qadir Jilani.\textsuperscript{ia} 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\textsuperscript{ia} 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 tawh: i:d 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.\textsuperscript{xv}

Besides their zeal for reform, Ahl-i-Hadi:th leaders began to involve themselves with serious theological issues like (sha:f:a: at)\textsuperscript{xix}, (wasa:lat)\textsuperscript{xix} 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 wasa:lat and the only way to come nearer to God. On the question of sha:f:a: at, however, both Hanafi:s and Abl-i-Hadi:th were in complete agreement that Prophet Muhammad \textsuperscript{a} would be the real intercessor on the Day of Judgement. Unlike Hanafi:s, Abl-i- Hadi:th believed that sha:f:a: 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

\textsuperscript{xv} 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.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{xvii} 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’a:n 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.

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

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Muslims, largely because of their veneration of Sufis and reshis, whom they also considered substitutes for seeking shafa'at.\textsuperscript{31}

**Sabzar Shah**\textsuperscript{xxi}

The another response to Sufi and reshi movement was Sabzar Shah, who was an ordinary literate person, but his contribution to the Ahl-i-Hadith movement cannot be ignored, he was one of the major figures of the Ahl-i-Hadith movement in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{32} Sabzar Shah’s father Siddiq Shah was a resident of Dangharpura, Srinagar. Sabzar Shah 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 greetings. It is thought that he died there in Madinah. In Srinagar, Syed (Husain Shah) and Sabzar Shah were the founders of the (Ahl-i-Hadith) 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 tawhidi. His love for the Prophet’s Sunnah had made his heart and mind blossom.\textsuperscript{33} After Syed Shah was exiled Sabzar Shah continued to advance the movement. Like Syed Shah, Sabzar Shah was always eager for an opportunity to preach tawhidi 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.\textsuperscript{34}

**Haji Mulla Nizamuddin Nizam Furahi**

Another response to Sufi and reshi movement in Kashmir was Haji Mulla Nizamuddin Nizam Furahi, who was one of the famous scholars who promoted tawhidi and sunnah and sought to cripple shirk and bid’ah.

Historian Mawlana M. Ahmad bin Fakhruddin al-Hasni, the father of the historian and thinker Mawlana Syed Abul Hasan Nadvi, writes in his famous book *Nuzhatul Khawatir*:

“The Noble Sheikh Nizamuddin al-Furahi of Kashmi, 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.”\textsuperscript{35} Nizamuddin al-Furahi died on the 29th of Dhul Hijjah in the year 1261 AH.\textsuperscript{36}

Mulla Nizamuddin Nizam Furahi is also the author of the book *Mulhima:t* comprises Persian poetry advocating tawhidi 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 Saja  
> Is HasbanaAllah wajAllah (God is enough for us and He is sufficient).  
> It is well known that HashbanaAllah  
> 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 SabhaanAllah.  
> Saints and friends are of no use to you.  
> Just say Yaf'Ilaaah ma Yashar’ (God does as He likes)  
> Because they don't even know its true value.”\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{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 Furanah has castigated them in his poetry. He states in Mulhima:n:

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

Nasihat al-Muslimin:

It is worthwhile to briefly mention, Mawlana Khurram Ali Bilhawri's mighty Nasihat al-Muslimin. Islamic Thinker Mawlana Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi* writes about him:

"Mawlana Khurram Ali‖ is among the famous scholars of India. He was a student of the family of Mawlana Shah 'abdul Aziz Muhaaddith Dehlawi. and a close friend and associate of Mawlana Muhammad Isma'el Shaheed*.

He was always busy countering the bid'a h and reviving the Sunnah. In 1238 A.H. he wrote a booklet on the subject of tawhidi and Creed which he called Nasihat al-Muslimin. This booklet is crisp in style, very effective and terse. He died in almost 1273 A.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 hindering him of his old ways of bid'a h and distorted beliefs ('aqi'a'id). This he has confessed to himself. 41

At the last pages of Nasihat al-Muslimin there is an influential naziim which is based on tawhidi 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 (s.a.w) 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 worshiping 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
Hafiz Mawlana Muhammad Yahya Rafiq

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-Hadith. “Khawaja Tahir Rafiq ’Asha’e Suharwardi insky, whom all of the Rafiqi household is related- was the great-grandson of Khawaja Sangeen. In his Asrar- al-Abrar, J Baba Dawud Mashkwani states his title as Sheikh and that of his father Ibrahim’ Asha’e as Khawaja Tahir Rafiqi insky, 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.”

The famous Muḥaddith Tayyib bin Ahmad Rafiq insky(1288 A.H.) and the uprooter of shirk and bid’ah Sheikh Muḥaddith Raza bin Muhammad Mustafa Rafiqi insky(1276A.H.) was also from this knowledgeable household. It is this household that also produced Hafiz Mawlana Muhammad Yahya Rafiqi insky, who was also the Imam of the Jom’ mosque of Dalhousie (Punjab Hall, Himachal Pradesh) and a preacher. His father was Pir Habibullah Rafiqi insky, who was a Muḥaddith, a follower of the Sunnah and a destroyer of bid’ah. He had been certified by Mawlana Nazir Husain Dehlawi insky. He also had connections with Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan insky(Bhopal). He was also a poet and a writer.

Having been trained at the hands of eminent Ahl-ı- Hadith scholars, he started his mission of spreading the message of Islam in Kashmir and was successful in his endeavour. His famous poetical work Hablullaha: 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 (ma’at) and manguba: which the author has presented in his characteristic style.

Throughout his poetry tawhīd is a recurring theme which points to the fact that he was well aware of the concepts of tawhīd and risālah. 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, Mawla has made open his contempt for pseudo faqeers, mullaḥs 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.

Some Couplets of Hablulla:h are:

Lend me an ear O my kashmiri brethren
Forget all the past ravings.
O Faqeers, O Preachers, O Pir’zadas
O Rich people, O Khawajas and Mirds
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 pir:ri and faqeers
Are unaware of the message of the Qur’an
Read the Qur’an and die on the religion of the Prophet.
Spread the way of tawhīd 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
From the above given couplets, it is clearly mentioned by Yahya Rafiqi Ḥājī  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’s prophet muhammad ﷺ 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 Muhammed Ḥusayn.  

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 Ḥadith. However, this age old hegemony of religious leadership was seriously challenged by the religious reformists (`ulamas) who exorted Muslims not only to go back to the Qur’a:n and Ḥadith for guidance, but also emphasized the fundamental importance of ijma and qiya:s, two hitherto unutilized sources of Islam in Kashmir. To counter the innovations in Sufism, religious scholars like, Sayyid Hussain Bathu: Ḥājī, Moulana Anwar Shah Shopiani Ḥājī, Haji Nizamuddin Nizam Furahi Ḥājī and many more 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

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


[28] Ibid., p.9.
[29] Ibid., See Also, Maulana Ishaq Khan, History of Srinagar, p. 107.
[31] Ibid.
[33] Tarikh-i- Ahl-i- Hadith, J&K, Sofi Ahmad Muslim, P. 277.
[36] Ibid., p. 286.
[37] Ibid., pp. 166-167.
[39] Ibid., p. 287.
[40] Ibid., p. 282.
[41] Ibid., pp. 282-283.
[44] Ibid., p. 288.
[46] Ibid.