Islam in Central Asia

*Muhammad Ashraf**

Central Asia, topographically, is the land that lies between China and Tien Shan ranges on the east and Ural mountains on the west; Siberean forest on the north and Afghan-Iran plateau on the south. It is a land of contrasts -- geographically, ethnically and linguistically. Its eastern part is hilly, marked by Tien Shan and Alatau ranges, whence the two mightiest rivers of Central Asia -- Amu Darya (Oxus) and Syr Darya (Jaxartes) originate and, creating between themselves the historic Mawara-an-Nahr, vanish into the deserts. North and western part is covered by extensive planes. North of Syr Daya lies the vast grassy Steppe land and west of Amu Darya is the Karakum desert which borders on the north piedmont region of Kopet Dagh. Mawara-an-Nahr encloses "The Golden Land" of the valley of Zaravshan with the fabulous cities of Bukhara and Samarkand. In the mouth of Amu Darya is Khwarizm with its famous city of Khiva. On the north is the landscape region of Farghana -- the source of Syr Darya. In the south, between the Pamir and Hissar ranges, stands the city of Tirmiz as the gateway to Central Asia from the south. On the west is the Turkmen land (Turkmenistan) with its capital at Ashkabad. On the south from Trimiz to Farghana and to Khwarizm is Uzbekistan with its capital at Tashkent. On the grassy Steppe land, north of Syr Darya, is Kazakhistan with its capital at Alma Ata. Tajkistan with its capital at Dushanbe and Kirghistan with capital at Biskek share the southern and north-eastern part of the eastern hilly land respectively.

History of Central Asia is the story of perennial conflict between the nomad and the settled which ushered in the formation of a civilisation, typical of Central Asia. This civilisation is a confluence of Iranian Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, Post Alexanderian Hellenism, Gandharan Buddhism and Chinese cultural trends, manifesting in the solar cults and fire worship.

In Central Asia, the states of Bakhter, Sogdiana and Khwarizm appeared on the scene during different phases of history from 800 B.C. to 500 A.D. Alexander the Great occupied the area, defeating Iranians, in 329 B.C. During the first century A.D Kushan empire came into existence which was overrun by the Hun tribes in 425 A.D. Turks built a vast empire in the area from 500 A.D. to 600 A.D which organised the Turkish speaking nomadic tribes and they settled in the planes and oases. It was the time when Islam, coming out of Arabian deserts, was disseminating its light everywhere.

During Walid bin Abdul Malik's era, famous for conquests and unmatched victories, Qutaiba, Walid's commander, conquered Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva and Kashgaria and extended the frontiers of Muslim empire up to China thus opening a gateway to Central Asia for Islam and, within a couple of

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Abbreviations and Bibliography

Akhlaq	Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *al-Jami' li Akhlaq al-Rawi wa Adab al-Sami'*, ed. Mahmud al-Tahhan, al-Riyad, 1983.
Dalil	Al-Suyuti, *Dalil Makhtutat al-Suyuti wa Amakin Wujudiha*, Kuwait, 1983.
I'llal A	Ibn Hanbal, *K. al-'Ilal wa-Ma'rifah al-Rijal*, ed. T. Kocygt and I. Cerrahoglu, Ankara, 1963.
Jami'	Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm*, Madinah.
Kashf	Hajji Khalifah, *Kashf al-Zunun 'an Asmi al-Kutub wa'l - Funun*, Istanbul, 1360 1362/1941-43
Lisan	Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, Beirut, 1374-1376/1955-1956.
Majruhin	Ibn Hibban al-Busti, *K. al-Majruhin*, ed. Muhammad Ibrahim Za'id, Aleppo, 1396.
K. Ma'rifah	Al-Fasawi, ya'qub b. Sufyan, *K. al-Ma'rifah wa'l- Ta'rikh*, Baghdad, 1974-1976.
Risalah	Al-Kattani, Muhammad b. Ja'far *al-Risalah al-Mustatrafah*, Karachi, 1360/1940
Siyar	Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* ed. al-Munajjaid et alii, Cairo
Tah	Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, Hyderabad, 1325-1327
Taqdimah	Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi, *Taqdimah al-Ma'rifah li K. al- Jarh*, Hyderabad 1371/1952
Ta'rikh	Al Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Ta'rikh Baghdad*, Cairo, 1931.

He collected the *atraf* of almost 20 books in his *al-Jami' al-Kabir* and *al-Jami' al-Saghir* in alphabetical order. Al-Suyuti mentions, with the *taraf* of *hadith*, the last narrator and the authenticity or otherwise of the hadith.[29] He also compiled another *atraf* entitled *Atraf al-Ashraf*. [30]

We find some compilations, though not named *atraf* but they serve the same purpose. In this connection can be mentioned the works of a veteran scholar of *hadith* and editor of hundreds of books, al-Suyuti (d. 911). He collected the *atraf* of almost 20 books in his *al-Jami' al-Kabir* and *al-Jami' al-Saghir* in alphabetical order. Al-Suyuti mentions, with the *taraf* of *hadith*, the last narrator and the authenticity or otherwise of the *hadith*.[29] He also compiled another *atraf* entitled *Atraf al-Ashraf*. [30]

Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, a renowned traditionist of Damascus and compiler of many *hadith* works, prepared a *fihiris* of *Mishkat al-Masabih*.[31] Albani, in this index, with the *taraf* of *hadith*, has mentioned the number of *hadith* instead of the name of the chapter and section.

In recent times some *hadith* scholars have also paid attention to the compilation of such indices. In fourth decade of the current century, a renowned orientalist, W. Wensinck, edited an index of six Canonical works, *Musnad* Ibn Hanbal and *Musnad Darimi* entitled *al Mu'jam al Mufahras li Alfaz al Hadith al Nabawi* .[32] An Egyptian scholar, Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi, translated it into Arabic .

Hamdi 'Abd al-Majid al-Salafi edited an index of *Musnad* Ahmad b. Hanbal in three volumes entitled *Murshid al Mukhtar ila ma fi Musnad Ahmad b. Hanbal*.[33]

An Egyptian scholar, Abu Hajar Muhammad al-Sa'id b. Basuni Zaghlul, edited *atraf*, entitled *Mausu'ah Atraf al-Hadith al-Nabawi*, in eleven big volumes. In the beginning there is a useful *muqaddimah* (preface) from page 5 to 70. This work contains the *atraf* of *ahadith* found in 150 books on different subjects such as *hadith, tafsir, fiqh, rijal* etc.[34] A useful index of al-Mustadrak, arranged in alphabetical order, is prepared by Dr. Yusuf 'Abd al-Rahman.[35]

May God bless all these scholars who facilitated the access to the *ahadith* found in big volumes. Had the *atraf* books not appeared it would have been very difficult for a student of *hadith* to know where a *hadith* is and in which book can it be found.

29- Both these *Jami's* are published for several times from different places.

30-*Kashf*, 1/103,116; *Hadyah al-'Arifin*, 1, 535; *Dalil Makhtutat al-Suyuti*, 52

31- *Mishkat al-Masabih* is published for several times and has been translated into different languages. The edition, in our hands, is published from Damascus, 1962. This edition also contains *Ajwibah an Ahadith waqa'at fi Masabih al-Sunnah* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani and *al-Ikmal fi Asma' al-Rijal* by Khatib Tabrizi.

32- This index is published several times from different places.

33- First volume of this index is published from Matba'ah al-Irshad, Baghdad in 1981 while second volume is published from Maktabah al-Taymiyyah al-Kuwait in 1984 and most probably (as the writer could not avail of the third volume) the third volume from Kuwait as well.

34- It is published from Matbah 'Alam al-Turath, Beirut.

35- Published from Dar al Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1986.

These compilers simply mentioned short tracts from the tradi.ons or their titles and *isnad*, and gave a reference to the *kitab* (chapter) and *bab* (section) in which they were found in particular collections.

A cursory look at the sources reveals that voluminous compilations appeared on *atraf*. It is also evident from the sources that these *atraf* books usually dealt with six Canonical books or *Masanid*.

Abu Mas'ud Ibrahim b. Muhammad al Dimashqi (d. 401), a keen student of *hadith* who travelled extensively to attend the *majalis al-'Ilm*,[15] edited index (*atraf*) of *Sahihayn* (*Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*) and named it *Atraf-al-Sahihayn*[16]

Abu Muhammad Khalaf b. Muhammed b. 'Ali b. Hamdan al-Wasiti (d. 401) visited a number of cities in pursuit of knowledge. He had a retentive memory[17] and compiled many works including *atraf* of *Sahihayn*. [18] It is mentioned in the sources that the *Atraf* of al-Wasiti were well-arranged and free from mistakes.[19]

Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. Thabit b. Muhammad al-Tarqi edited an *atraf* of all the Canonical books save *Sunan* Ibn Majah.[20]

Abu al-Fadl Muhammad b. Tahir al Maqdisi (d. 507) edited *atraf* of six books including Ibn Majah. It is said that he committed many mistakes in his compilation.[21]

Ibn 'Asakir 'Ali b. Hasan (d. 571) edited an *atraf* entitled *al-Ishraf 'ala Ma'rifah al-Atraf* . This index comprised four *Sunan* works.[22]

Al-Mizzi Yusuf b. 'Abd al Rahman (d. 742), a veteran scholar of *hadith* and compiler of many works, compiled an *atraf* entitled *Tuhfah/Minhah al-Ashraf li Ma'rifah al-Atraf*. [23]

A famous *hadith* scholar of eighth century Hijrah, Muhammad b. 'Ali b. al-Hasan Hamzah al-Husayni al-Dimashqi (d. 765) edited an index and named it *al-Kashshaf fi Ma'rifah al-Atraf*.[24]

Abu Hafs 'Umar b. al-Nur al-Din al Andulusi (d. 804) better known Ibn al-Mulaqqin edited an index and named it *al-Ishraf 'ala al-Atraf*. [25]

Another renowned scholar of eighth century Hijrah, Ibn Hajar Ahmad b. 'Ali al-'Asqalani (d. 852), edited a number of *atraf* books. Hajji Khalifah has mentioned two of his *atraf* works namely *Ittehaf-al-Maharah-li-Atraf-al-'Asharah* comprising eight volumes and *Atraf-al-Musnad-al-Hanbali*.[26] He also edited an index entitled *al-Nukat al- Ziraf 'ala al-Atraf*. [27]

Abu al-Fadl 'Iraqi is mentioned to edit *atraf* of *Sahih Ibn Hibban*.[28]

We find some compilations, though not named *atraf* but they serve the same purpose. In this connection can be mentioned the works of a veteran scholar of *hadith* and editor of hundreds of books, al-Suyuti (d. 911).

15- *Ta'rikh*, vi, 172-173

16- *Ta'rikh*, vi, 173, *Kashf*, I/116; *Risalah*, 137

17- *Ta'rikh*, viii, 334

18- *Ta'rikh*, viii, 334; *Kashf*, I/116; *Risalah*, 137;

19- *Kashf*, I/116; *Risalah*/137

20- *Risalah*, 137

21- Ibid ; *Kashf*, I/116

22- *Risalah* 138 ; *Kashf*, I/103,116

23- This work is edited by Zuhayr al-Shawish and published from Beirut. *Risalah*, 138; *Kashf*, I/116

24- *Risalah*, 138

25- *Kashf*, I/117; *Risalah*, 137

26- *Kashf*, I/117; *Risalah*, 138, 139

27- This is published at the margin of *Minhah / Tuhfah al-Ashraf* from Beirut;

28- *Risalah*, 139

Atraf al-Hadith

*Dr. Jamila Shaukat**

Taraf (pl.*atraf*), literally means 'a part' or a 'fringe'[1] and when applied to a collection of *hadith* it denotes a collection that contains only a part of *hadith*.[2] It means copying only a part of *hadith* to serve as an aide to memory. A study of *hadith* material reveals that in the third quarter of the first century A.H., a new technique, *atraf*, was introduced for the learning and recording of *ahadith*. The earliest recorded employment of this method seems to be that of Ibn Sirin (d. 110/728), in the lecture room of his teacher 'Abidah b. 'Amr al-Salmani (d. 72/691),[3] and appears to have been continued by the traditionists.

A student of *hadith* is aware of the fact that especially in the first two centuries of Hijrah, the majority of traditonists did not approve of writing down of *ahadith* while some of them allowed their students to write down only *atraf*. Ibrahim al-Nakha'i (d. 96), who belonged to this group, allowed his students to write down only *atraf*.[4] 'Abd Allah b. 'Awn is reported to have said that once Ibrahim al-Nakha'i scolded his student Hammad b. Abi Sulayman (d. 119) for holding some written material in his hands mistaking it for *ahadith*. But when Hammad clarified that he was holding nothing but *atraf* he was pacified.[5] Sufyan al Thawri (d.161) who was given the sobriquet of *amir-al-momineen-fil-hadith*,[6] used to keep *atraf* with him[7] and was justly proud of his memory.[8] 'Awf b. Abi Jamilah al-'Abdi (d. 146) noted down the *atraf* in Hasan al Basri's sessions,[9] which were inherited by Yahya b. Sa'id al Qattan (d. 198). We also come across the *atraf* of Ibn Abi Najih (d. 131)[10], given to 'Abd-al-Rahman (d.198) by Ibn Ulayyah (d. 198)[11] ; Yahya b. Sa'id (d.194) and 'Ali-al-Madini (d.234) are also credited as having the *atraf* from Hammad b. Salamah (d.167)[12] ; Yazid b. Zuray' (d. 182) and Ibn 'Ulayyah noted down the *atraf* in the sessions of Hisham b. Hassan (d. 148)[13] ; Waki' (d.197) had the *atraf* from Isma'il b. Abi Khalid (d. 146), which he gave to Isma'il b. 'Ayyash (d. 182).[14]

Later many books were compiled according to this technique and were used as an index or concordance of *hadith* literature. The compilers of *atraf* books were concerned neither with the subject matter like the *musannaf* compilers, nor with informants like the *musnad* compilers.

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1- *Lisan* , ix / 216, 217
2- *Risalah*, 137 f
3- *'Ilal* A, I/387; *Jami'*, 1/72
4- *Akhlaq*, I/227
5- *Akhlaq*, I/227; *Siyar*, v/232
6- *Siyar*, vii/238
7- *Akhlaq*, I/227
8- *Siyar*, vii/238
9- *Tah*, viii/ 167 *Taqdimah*, 236
10- *Taqdimah*, 236
11- *K. Ma'rifah*, II, 134
12- *K. Ma'rifah*, II, 133
13- *Majruhin*, I/341
14- *Tah*, I/324

Foreword

The war of civilisations has got a new impetus after the demise of socialism in Soviet Union. Islam, undoubtedly, is the answer to the problems of modern man. Cloyed of materialism, where man has become a saleable commodity, the modern man has realised the necessity of revealed religions. The newly emerging politico-religious scenario on the globe is demanding the Islamic scholars to be more research oriented.

His majesty, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan al Nahyan, of United Arab Emirates, realising the necessity of the modern challenges set-up the Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centres to provide academically salubrious surroundings to the Islamic scholars.

Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre, University of the punjab, Lahore initiated the research journal in the very first year of its inception with the name of *The Journal of Research* Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre. The second issue is in your hands with a new nomenclature. The very fact of its being a bilingual stands testimony to our belief in determination, development and devotion.

The issue contains a diverse variety of research articles ranging from regional Islamic movemnts to the studies in computer science.

We are grateful to our worthy contributors and hope that they will continue their cooperation in future as well.

The next issue is proposed to be published in September 1993. We request our learned contributors to send their articles by June 1993.

We cannot help expressing our thanks to Dr. Munir-ud-Din Chughtai, Vice Chancellor, University of the Punjab, Lahore, for not only encouraging us but extending practical cooperation in bringing out *Al-Adwa* as well as establishing the centre as a great seat of Islamic learning.

We will be anxiously awaiting your comments and suggestions.

Chief Editor

Vice Chancellor's Message

Modern man, despite making great strides in the fields of science and technology, has begun to realise the problems created by the increasing impacts of materialism on his life and is now reverting to religion for mental peace and spiritual satisfaction. Communism and capitalism have crumbled like the house of cards and from their ashes the movements of Islamic resurgence are blazing across the globe.

Despite the desperate efforts of the opponents of Islam to paint Islam as a religion of fanaticism, impeding the onward march of civilisation, Islam is emerging as the only solution to the problems besetting the world these days. Under these circumstances Islamic scholars have an onerous responsibility to shoulder.

Research through intensive and extensive effort is what a university — the highest seat of learning in an educational setup — must encourage and patronise. The launching of a research journal during the very first year of its establishment was a commendable effort on the part of Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre. It provides a forum to research scholars to project results of their works. This matter of great satisfaction to me that second issue is bilingual. I am hopeful that this centre will develop into a prestigious institution for advanced research on Islamic ideology and learning.

Dr. Munir-ud-Din Chughtai.

In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful.

Behold! In the creation of
the heavens and the earth
And the alternation of
Night and Day, -
There are indeed signs
for men of understanding,-.

(Al-Quran: S. III-190)

Contents

Note:
The views expressed in these articles are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board.