

Imam Malik – His Dedication in Compilation of Hadith Book *Moatta* an Outlook from Historical Review

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Abstract

Imam Malik Bin Anas is one of the scholars in recording *Hadith* books. His greatness is a preview of his work. *Moatta* is one of His work ‘‘Book of Hadith’’, is well known and popular in the Islamic world. It is taken as very authentic book amongst the scholars of Islam, but generally Muslims do not consider its legitimacy feasible after other *Hadith* books. In this article it has been tried to present the life sketch of this great scholar along with importance of his work in regard to the Prophet Muhammad’s services. Purposely this work will explore the dedication of Imam Malik from historical grounds; and further will reduce the humiliation in perceptive of some facetious tempering Muslims, who do not consider this book important to follow. Finally it has been uttered that this book meets the criterion leading to possible learning and practicing *Hadith* for us.

Key words: Imam Malik, Malik bin Anas, Hadith Book, Most Authentic Hadith Book, Moattaa Imam Malik, Moatta.

Introduction:

It is a belief of the Muslim Ummah that the traditions of the Holy Prophet are the explanations of the Quran. The Prophet has explained the Quran through his traditions hence; due to this reason the status of the traditions of the Prophet have a very high status in Islamic Jurisprudence. They are second to the Quran in status. The people who have the knowledge of science of the traditions are known as the scholars of the traditions. The top most is the science of Quran in the list of Islam science. The greatest importance is given to the laws and orders of the Quran by Muslims for orders which God has revealed through the Quran. The second status is of the traditions of the prophet the details and explanation of the value status and the time and reasons of the revelation of the verses of the Quran are determined through the traditions of the Prophet. The complete details of the life of the holy Prophet his saying his acts and habits are known to the Muslims through the science of the traditions of the Prophet.

Acknowledgment of Prophetic Traditions:

In the terminology of the scholars of the traditions of the Prophet the sayings of the Prophet (means the talks which the Prophet made to his fellows), acts and works done in the lifetime of the Prophet, and he had not prohibited to issue for others, but prompted to convey it to the upcoming nations till the day of end, are all called *Hadith*. (Allama Balazari, 1987) One who has completed knowledge of the science of the traditions of the Prophet is called Scholar of the traditions (*Aa'lim*) in the Islamic *Sharia*. He must have the complete knowledge of the science of proofs. He must be having knowledge of the proof of highest order and proof of revelation. He must also know the chain of Narrators and must know the traditions by heart. (Jalaluddin Suyuti, 1995) The Islamic history has mentioned some great names of the scholars of the tradition, and Imam Malik Bin Anas is one of the greatest name. His full name was *Malik* and his father's name was *Anas*. The pedigree of his is as follows Malik Bin Annas Bin Malik Bin Abi Amir Bin Omer Bin Harris Bin Ghaiman Bin Jaseel Bin Omer Bin Harris. (Hafiz Zahbi 1978) His native land was *Yemen* where his family was residing belonging to a king of Yemen family off branch. When Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) was bestowed with Prophet-hood and started preaching Islam to the people Imam Malik's grandfather Abu Amir, was the first who from his family embraced Islam. He migrated to Madina abandoning his residence in Yemen. Qazi Abu Bakr (1988) has included his grandfather's name in the list of the *Companions* of the Prophet. But in view of Hafiz Zahbi his grandfather was not the companion. He was the companion of the companions of the Prophet. There is no proof in the history that his grandfather met with the Prophet. (Ibne Hajar Asqalani, 1988) Hence, Abu Amir had three sons; *Rabee*, *Abu Sohail*, and *Annas*, the father of Imam *Malik*. The birth date of Imam Malik is 93 A.H. (Allama Zarqafi 1995) Imam Malik had white color of skin, full height-tall, and broad forehead. He was well dressed. Most often he used to dress up in costly cloths of Aden. He liked to have white dress with perfume on it most often pursuit of knowledge. Medina was remained center of the Islamic world from the era of the Prophet up to the caliphate of Ali. After the Shifting of the capital from Medina it did not have that importance but the family of Imam Malik had a prestigious status in the field of knowledge in Medina. These people were counted in the learned people of Medina. In Medina, Imam Nafay Bin Abdul Rehman was a famous phonetically recitation-being of the Quran. The Muslims of the world today follow the same phonetic recitation of the Quran which is known as Imam Nafay phonetic recitation of the Quran. Imam Malik sought the learning and education of the Quran from Imam Nafay. He had strong memory power anything while he used to remember once remained preserved into his breasts. As long as Imam Nafay remained alive Imam Malik remained his pupil for his education from him. Imam Malik did not leave Medina to seek knowledge because Medina was center of Islamic sciences. Muslim scholars from all over the world used to come to Medina, the city of the Prophet by themselves. (Hafiz Zahbi, 1978).

Scholarly status and position:

Imam Malik was an expert purist and great scholar of the Traditions of the Prophet. In acknowledgement of his knowledge is confined to three persons: Malik Bin Annas, Sufyan Bin Aima, and Laith Bin Saad. Yahya Bin Mo'in who was the great expert of the science of names in the early period of Islam, is of the view that Imam Malik has the status of the leader of the believers in the science of the Traditions of the Prophet. Abdul Rehman Bin Mehdi used to say that the status Imam Malik had in preserving the Traditions of the Prophet that nobody could attain it. (Imam Razi 1982). Someone asked Imam *Hambal* whose Tradition should be preferred while remembering it. He answered that the Tradition narrated by Imam Malik. Imam Nasai said about Imam Malik; 'The most authentic person to me in narration of the Traditions of the Prophet after the companions of the companions of the Prophet is Imam Malik, and he is that scholar who takes narrations from weak narrator very rarely'. Malik-an-Nafay-an-Ibn-e-Omer's authenticity is called chain of gold. Imam *Bukhari* says that in narration of the Traditions of the Prophet this gold chain of Imam Malik is the most authentic in which Imam Malik narrated the Traditions with

reference to his teacher Nafay and Nafay Ibne Omer and he narrates them with reference of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.). (Hafiz Ibne Kathir,1997) Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal and Imam Termizi have copied this narration from Hadrat Abu Huraira that the Prophet said: "Soon the time will come when people will come to seek education and knowledge by riding on camels" Sufyan Bin Aima says that the reality of this Prophecy is Imam Malik. The founder of the *Hanifite* sect Imam Abu Hanifa says that he did not see anyone so apt in response and comprehension as Imam Malik was. (Muhmmad Bin Issa Surah Termizi 1403HE)

Characteristics and habits of Imam Malik:

Imam Malik had high moral values and up righteousness. He used to live in a hired rented house; he always used to select the place to sit in the mosque of the Prophet where Caliph Umer used to sit. It was the same place where bed of the Prophet used to be set at the time of *Aitikaf* an obligatory sitting in a mosque shunning off other activities of worldly nature in the time of the last ten days of fasting month – Ramadan. The Prophet used to rest there. (Imam Suyuti 1980) Hafiz Zahbi said about the Imam that in his knowledge the following five things, which no one could have except Imam Malik.

- 1- The honesty of him and agreement of the scholars of the Traditions of the Prophet to be followed,
- 2- Agreement of the Imams – Leaders in religious knowledge on his narration,
- 3- Longevity of age and so high status of authenticity of the Traditions.
- 4- Proven skills in Jurisprudence and relicts;
- 5- Better understanding and intensive knowledge.(Hafiz Zahbi 1978)

Haroon Rasheed had a desire to fix the universally famous book of Imam Malik 'Moatta in the Kaaba the house of Allah', and Muslims should be forced to follow the directions and rules of the jurisprudence rules as the books had mentioned. When he came to know about it he refused to do so saying that in jurisprudence rules different narrations were given. All orders taken from those narrations were for all times. So no one should be forced that he should only follow the Maliki jurisprudence. Caliph Mansoor also expressed that same desire but Imam Malik refused him, as well. (Imam Suyuti 1980) Hafiz Ibn Abdul Bar says in regard of the incident, that this is better example of comprehension and understanding. The Muslims, who are fighting nowadays on the set issues must learn lesson from this Imam Malik used to pay very high respect to the act and practice of the Prophet. Despite of grow in age he never went around in Medina riding on something. He used to say that it was against the noble norms to ride on something while going around on the peace of earth where the body of the Prophet was buried. Imam Shafei says that once he set some horses standing at the door of Imam Malik. He said that he praised the horse saying to Imam Malik; "They are beautiful horses". He gave all of them to me and did not have any one seen for him, and said: I feel shame to go around and mock that sacred land with the hooves of animals that piece of land where the body of the Prophet is buried".

Teachers and pupils of Imam Malik:

Teachers and pupils of Imam Malik are included with famous Ibrahim Bin Abi Abila Muqadasi, Hamid Taveel, Hasham Bin Urwah, Zaid Bin Aslam, Abdul Rehman Bin Abi al Qasim, Ayub Sakhtiani, Ayesha Bint Saad Bin Abi Waqas, Zehri, Saeed Ansari and Abu-al-Zanad. They were the elders of Medina who were famous and distinguish in truth and memory and they were included in great scholars.

The list of the pupils of Imam Malik is very long. The famous Traditions scholars Dar Qatmi has narrated the member of his pupils into thousand who relate from you. Hafiz Ibne Kathir writes that a bit number of people sought knowledge from him and it is difficult to count the numbers to tell exact number of his pupils. (Hafiz Ibne Kathir,1997) The famous pupils of him include Imam Shai, Sufyan Suri, Abdullah Bin Mubarik, Imam Muhammad and Lais Bin Saad.

The Alma-meter of Imam Malik:

Imam Malik started teaching at the age of seventeen and kept on doing teaching up to the age of sixty two. The teaching of Imam Malik was famous all over the Muslim world. People from far off places used to come to attend his teaching. The respectful crowd of students and the crowd of scholars were impressive to the observant. Nobody was done enough, in the attendance of him to ask something in a loud voice and noise did not exist in his gathering. He himself used to have bath and ablution before coming to the gathering. He used to dress up well and combed his hair. He used to apply perfume before coming to the gathering. (Abdul Qader Qureshi, 1984)

Forgiveness and pardon:

Someone complained about Imam Malik to Jafar Bin Sulaiman who was the governor of Madina in the time of Imam Malik that Imam Malik did not think it right to accept you as the leader. Jafar Bin Sulaiman got angry on that and sentenced him for lashes after calling him. His both shoulders were made to dislocate by for turning his hands. When Caliph Jafar Bin Mansoor came to know about it he wanted to take revenge of Imam Malik with Jafar Bin Sulaiman. But Imam Malik stopped him to do so saying that he had forgiven him (Ibne Khalkan 1977)

Death:

After getting old of the age of eighty six years he was weak and old but he kept teaching and imparting knowledge. One Sunday he got sick all of a sudden. Three four weeks went on in this sickness and he could not recover. He died on 11 Rabi-al-Awal, 179 A.H. he died. (Muhammad Zakiria, 1990)

Writings:

Imam Malik wrote many small books but the most famous book and which was highly praised by the scholars is the world renowned 'Moatta'. Today after many hundred years the importance of 'Moatta' has not lessen a bit. 'Moatta' in Arabic means crush soften and made easy. Abu Abdullah Asfahani says "I asked Abu Hatim why did Imam Malik named the 'Moatta'. He replied "Because editing the Traditions of the Prophet Imam Malik made them easy for people. Imam Malik says himself: "After writing book, I presented it to seventy jurists of Medina, everyone agreed to give it the name 'Moatta'. So I give it a name 'Moatta'. (Ojaza-al-Masalik:1990). Most of the life time of Imam Malik was spent in Medina so the place of writing this book is also Medina. Qazi Fayyaz writes that writing of 'Moatta', on the wish of Caliph Mansoor, was started in his rule time. But Mansoor died on 06 Zil Hajj 158 A.H. before the completion of the book. The completion of the book was then done in the rule of his son Mehdi (Tojeeh-al-Nazar:2001)

This was the first Islamic book after the Quran which came up in a Proper way of jurisprudence order. Hafiz Zahbi writes while introducing 'Moatta' that it is beyond doubts that the effects and impressions which 'Moatta' could have on hearts one other book could have the scholars of the people have divided books on the Traditions of the Prophet in five categories, and 'Moatta' has the first rank in them. Shah Wali ullah Dehlvi, the scholar of the Traditions of the Prophet used to take 'Moatta' the most high and sacred in all books. The importance and its status among of the books on Traditions can be determined from the sayings of Imam Shafai. He says: The most reliable book after the Quran is the book of Imam Malik 'Moatta'. But scholars who followed Imam Shafai say that this remark of Imam Shafai on 'Moatta' is given before Bukhari and Muslim were written. (Tazeen-al-Mumalik: 1980) Shah Waliullah says that this book became famous and distinguishes in the Islamic world in the life time of Imam Malik, and after him the passing time increased its importance. The book has this peculiarity that Caliph of their times: Mehdi, Rasheed and Mamoon played an important role in propagating this work to the nook and corner of the Muslim countries. (Nawab Siddiq Khan, 1995) Imam Malik narrated one hundred thousand Traditions of the Prophet. He then selected the thousand Traditions while writing 'Moatta'. But later on he left only

one thousand seven hundred twenty five (1725) Traditions in 'Moatta'. Out of them (600) are Musnad and Marfuu, (222) are Mursil, (613) are Mauqoof, and (225) are sayings and edicts of the companions of the companions of the Prophet.

Conclusion:

When Imam Malik wrote 'Moatta' the other scholars following the suit and pattern prepared collections of the Traditions. People informed Imam Malik about them that those people had collected and written collection of Traditions. Imam Malik said: 'Only that collection will remain intact which has honesty and good intention. This prophecy of Imam Malik was prove correctly. 'Moata' of Imam Malik after so many hundred years is still as popular in the Muslim world. The copies made in his time do not exist anywhere. In this way the sayings of Imam Malik that honesty and good intention do exist.

It was the popularity of 'Moatta' of Imam Malik that forced a good member of scholars to write commentary on it. Following are the famous commentaries on Imam Malik's 'Moatta':

- i. Al-Muntaqi: Abu wahid Al-Baji
- ii. Kitab Tahmeed Limafi Al Moata Munal Maani wal Asaneed: Ibn Abd al Bar
- iii. Al-Istizkr :Ibn Abd-al-bar
- iv. Al-Muqtabis fi Sharaa Moata
- v. Kashf-al-Hawalik: Jalaluddin Suyuti
- vi. Tanweer -al-Hawalik: Jalaluddin Suyuti
- vii. Tajreed Ahadith Moata: Jalaluddin Suyuti
- viii. Asaaf-al-Moata: Jalaluddin Suyuti
- ix. Sharah Zarqafi: Abdul Baqi al-Maliki
- x. Al-Musfi: Shah wali ulla

In the end it is suggested that there has come a tradition of organizing the ending ceremony of Bukhari Shareef around the world but no other *Ahadith* books are conferred there. No doubt this celebration has played a beneficiary role in the awareness of Prophetic traditions in public but if the circle can be elevated in the meetings that will also enhance dedicative works like Moatta by Imam Malik and will have an acknowledgement by Muslim community the importance of this book being the first book was written after the Quran – this will lead the people to approach upon an easy routine way of commandments of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) as well.

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