**Maulana Habib ur Rahman A l-Aazmi: Life and works (Biography)**

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**Abstract**

Qur’an and prophetic traditions (Hadith) are the fundamental sources of Islam. Muslims believe that Qur’an is the word of God (Allah). Hadith (Prophet’s Sayings, actions and silent approval and disapproval for something) likewise is based on divine revelation. Qur’an affirms also this view: (God says) Your Companion (Muhammad) has neither gone astray nor has erred. Nor does He speak of (his own) desire. It is only a Revelation revealed. Al-Qur’an (53:2-4). Allah Almighty Himself took the responsibility to guard His word (the Qur’an): (He says :) verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (i.e. the Qur’an) and surely, We will got it (from corruption). (Al-Qur’an:15:9) on the contrary the responsibility to guard the prophetic traditions (Hadith) was put on the shoulders on the Muslim Ummah. The scholars of Islam (Ulamas) try their utmost to collect and save the Prophetic traditions and guard it from any alteration. To achieve this purpose, they introduced different hadith sciences to distinguish between the true and the fabricated hadith. The authentic Sunnah is contained within the vast body of Hadith literature. Different scholars have edited and compiled the books which contain a large numbers of authentic Ahadith (Ahadith Sahiha), one of them is Maulana Habib Ur Rahman Aazmi who have edited a large number of Hadith books. This article will briefly introduce the life and work of Maulana Habib Ur Rahman Aazmi.

**Keywords:** Habib Ur Rehman Al Aazmi, Political Services, Research work.

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Introduction:

There is scarcity of the persons in the world whose hobbies are knowledge and research, whose political and educational services are immense, and whose second nature is nothing but writing and research. Such persons play vital role in portraying the characters in the society. The persons they select know well how to move the society according to their wishes and desires. One name among such type of literary and scholarly figures is that of Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi who, besides politics, writings and teachings, left such literary memorials that will play the role of a lighthouse in this field.

Preface:

God created man the highest of all creatures and to keep him on track He sent to them prophets from time to time who performed their assigned tasks better. Muhammad ﷺ was the last Prophet of all the prophets and the door of prophethood closed forever after him. But to save humans from satanic deception, Allah chose such people for His work who will continue their struggles till the world comes to an end and who have been called inheritors of the Muhammad ﷺ. There is a saying; “Scholars are the inheritors of prophets.” A well-known personality among such inheritors of the prophets is that of the great Shaikh Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Azmi whose glory and reputation had been witnessed by the age he was living in.

Introduction: Shaikh Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Azmi

Maulana Shaikh Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Azmi was born in Mao, a small village of district Azam Garh, in 1901 AD (1319 AH). He and his forefathers were called Aghzami due to district Azam Garh. District Azam Garh is located near district Banaras in northern state of India. His father’s name was Al-Shaikh Maulana Muhammad Sabir Inayatullah who was a renowned Islamic theologian and an intellectual of his time. He died in 1365 AH. His contribution was enormous in the upbringing and character building of Maulana Shaikh Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Azmi.

Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami had shown his invaluable unique talent from his early age. He was a man of great many qualities from his early age having traits of piety and worship in his personality. That was the reason that his father focused on his upbringing immensely.
Early Education:

Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami got his early education including basics (Mabadi), *Tajweed (reading the Holy Quran in proper accents)* and writing from his native village. He got the services of Abdul Ghafar Bin Abdullah (1341 AH) here who was one of the genius student of Shaikh Rasheed Ahmed Gangohi (AH 1323). He got his early education from him for about five years and was in his company during teaching short course. Teaching short course of Banaras and Gorakpur are the two famous short course among it. Afterwards Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi took admission in Deoband but said goodbye to education here due to his illness. After getting recovered he continued his education in Mazhar-Ul-Uloom but due to his intense quest of Knowledge, he came back to Deoband where he got the opportunity of learning from Maulana Abid Shah Kashmiri, Allama Shabeer Ahmed Usmani (1396 AH) and Maulana Asghar Hussain (1364 AH). But due to national and independence movements, he could not complete his education and came back to his own village and started regular education from there in 1922 AD.

Educational Services:

After completing education, he started teaching in *Dar-Ul-Uloom* Mao and started teaching Islamic Literature and Jurisprudence there. He got an offer of teaching from Mazhar-Ul-Uloom Banaras in 1343 AH which he accepted and remained there for a number of years giving literary services. He came back to his native village Mao in 1337 AH and got the designation of Shaikh-Ul-Hadith in Maftah-Ul-Uloom and taught *Sahih Bukhari (Book of traditions)* and *Tarmezi (Book of traditions)* for about 20 years. His teaching span here expanded up to thirty years and he made thousands of students belonging to Hindu, Arabic, South African and European countries. In 1369 AH, he said farewell to teaching and started research which will be discussed in the pages ahead.

Political Services:

Considering the established politics unmerited and unfair, Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami kept himself at a distance from it but in 1952 the then Prime Minister of India invited him for a fair and transparent politics. He took part in the state assembly elections in 1952 and got an easy victory with heavy mandate. He had to change his accommodation to *Laknawo* after being made member of the assembly. To utilize his invaluable knowledge, Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi
gave him an offer of teaching in *Dar-Ul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama* which he accepted happily and continued teaching there for a year without any remuneration. Afterward when his membership expired and he was faced with financial stresses, Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi offered him remuneration but he rejected that by saying that he was bound to abide by his agreement. His political life continued for five years as he didn’t take part in politics anymore. Similarly he came straight to his native village from Lakhnawo after the expiration of his assembly membership.  

This great Islamic scholar theologian departed from this mortal world on 16th March, 1992 (1412 AH, 11th Ramadan) but left a vacuum which couldn’t be filled after him.  

**Authoring Services:**

The prime reason of Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami’s fame and refutation was his authoring services which were instrumental in his popularity not only in Arab countries but in African and European countries as well. His teaching period lasted for about thirty years where he prepared great many scholarly personalities who earned a good name in the teaching of Islam. 

The following are some of the names of such personalities.

**Pupils:**

1. Maulana Manzoor Ahmed Numani
2. Dr Mustafa Aghzami
3. Mufti Zubair-Ud-Din Muftahi

He earned the name of *Ustad-Ul-Hadith* (Teacher of Hadith) by Islamic theologians of the whole world including Afghanistan, Sub-continent; Arabic, South African and European countries. Though these scholars didn’t learn Hadith (traditions of the prophet) from him directly but they got permission from him to teach Hadi46th.

The following are some of the names.

1. Abul Fatah Abu Ghada of Syria32
2. Shaikh Ismael Ansari of Riyad
3. Shaikh Hamdul Ansari of Madina
4. Shaikh Sabhi Samrayi of Baghdad
5. Al-Shaikh Abdul Haleem Mehmoood, Ex-Chief Nazim of Jamiat ul Azhar
6. Dr Abdul Sattar Abu Ghada of Kuwait
7. Dr Basharul ul Magharif of Baghdad
8. Shaikh Behjat ul Betar
9. Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Baz of Saudi Arabia
10. Muhammad Ameen ul Qutbi
11. Ameen ul Hussani of Palestine
12. Shaikh Saadi Al-Hashmi of Madina
13. Shaikh Abdul Aziz Abu Ghoyon of Hams
14. Shaikh Zahir ul Shadaish of Beroor
15. Shaikh Abdul Rehman of Yeman+
16. Allama Khairddin Al-Zarkali
17. Saeed Ul-Afghani of Afghanistan
18. Shaikh Muhammad Zahid Harqan
19. Shaikh Hassan Khalid (Mufti Azam of Lebanon)

Though Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami got enough expertise in all Islamic knowledge but he took wholehearted interest in teaching of Hadith and sacrificed his whole life for its service and teaching.

As discussed earlier that his tastes in Hadith was accelerated by his first teacher, Abdul Ghafar Sahib. Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami learnt Hadith from him and got its certificate which traces back to Maulana Shah Muhammad Ishaq Dehlawi. More acceleration was done by his eminent teacher Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmeri who was famous for his sharp memory. Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami took added interest in those books of Hadith which were in the form of manuscripts. Actually Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami wanted to make the pluses of those manuscripts common. To achieve the said end, he searched for different books of Hadith which were in the form of manuscripts. Different nuskhe (pieces) of the said manuscripts were present in the libraries of different countries which he visited and made a comparison of different scripts. He visited museums, book stores of different countries to get to manuscripts and got material from there and presented it in a new shape.

The following are some of his compilations and Researches which clearly speak about his greatness, hard work and intelligence.

المطالب العالیۃ بزوائد المسانید الثمانیۃ للحافظ ابن حجر العسقلانی
1. Al-Matalib-Ul-A`alia Bazwaid-Ul-Masaneed-Ul-Thamania Lilhaaffaz Ibne Hajar Al-Ghasqalani

This book of the renowned Islamic scholar, Hafiz Ibne Hajar Al-Ghasqalani, was present in the form of manuscript which had only three nuskhe (pieces) throughout the world and those were in different countries too. One of the nuskhe (pieces) was present in Madina, other in Turkey, Istanbul while the third one in Hyderabad, India. For this purpose Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami visited all these countries and made a comparison of these after getting it. He gave it a proper sequence after thorough research. He wrote notes on it and replaced a number of inappropriate words of different pieces with appropriate ones and wrote full detail on margins and explained why that word was replaced. This comparison was made either among these pieces and the appropriate word was used or with other relevant books present on the topic.

In reality, the said book of Hafiz Ibne Hajar consists of eight appendages obtained from eight predicates. Those eight predicates are,

I. Masnad-e-Abu Dawood Al-Tayalesi (AH 204)
II. Masnad Al-Hameedi
III. Masnad Ibne-Umer Al-Ghadani
IV. Masnad-e-Musaddad
V. Masnad-e-Ibne Maneegh
VI. Masnad-e-Ibne Abi Sheba
VII. Masnad-e-Abad Bin Hameed
VIII. Masnad-e-Ibne Abi Osama

Maulana Habib Ur Rehman Al-Azami wrote this book by adopting the style of Islamic Jurisprudence chapters and added Masnad-e-Abi Yaghli and Masnad-e-Ishaq Bin Rahoya to it. This edition of Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi was published in four volumes from Ministry of Awqaf-Ul-Shayawon-Ul-Deniyah Kuwait.

2. Masnad-Ul-Imam-Ul-Hameedi (219 AH) مسند الإمام الحمدي

Predicate is that book of traditions (Hadith) in which traditions (Hadith) have been narrated on the style of companions of the Holy Prophet which is in alphabetical order or in the order of early embracement of Islam or Sharafat-e-Nasab like
**Masnad Abu Dowood Al-Tayalsi (204 AH) and Masnad-e-Imam Bin Hambal (233 AH).**

One such old predicate is also that of Imam Abu Bakar Abdullah Bin Zubair Al-Hameedi. Imam Hameedi is among the teachers of Imam Bukhari and is a student of Sufyan Bin Ghayena.

The said predicate has four manuscripts. One piece was present in the city of Damascus, Syria while the other was present in Hyderabad India. Third and Forth pieces were present in Dewband. Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi researched on these manuscripts. He wrote invaluable notes and a comprehensive introduction on it. He published it from Hyderabad India in 1962 (AD 1383).

**3. Kitab-Ul-Zuhad War’rqaq labinal Mubarak:**

Abdullah Bin Mubarak is among one of the renowned narrators of second century. This was the first and important book on the topic of asceticism. The manuscripts of this book were present in Qahira, Egypt and Istanbul, Turkey. Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman researched this book, wrote notes, and made a comparison among different pieces. A comprehensive and beneficial introduction is present in its start. Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi wrote life conditions of Abdullah Bin Mubarak together with conditions of its narrators, did critical discussion on it, and gave detail of difficult words together with detail of criticism among different pieces. This book contains eleven chapters and 1637 traditions (Hadith). This book has a distinctive place among Islamic theologians. Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi published this book in 1965 AD from Maktaba-e-Elmi.

**4. Sanan-e-Saeed Bin Mansoor:**

One of the early-aged written sunan is also that of Abu Usman Bin Mansoor (277AH). Imam Malik, Hamaad and Abu Ghawana were among the teachers of Saeed Bin Mansoor while Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal, Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim and Imam Abu Dawood were among his pupils. Professor Muhammad Hameedullah explored the oldest manuscript of this book in a famous library, Copreelo in Turkey. Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi had research on it, did critical discussion on it together with notes and comments. Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi published this book from Bharat in two volumes in 1967 AD (1388 AH).

**5. Musannif Abdul Razaq:**

Mصنف عبدالرزاق:
Abdul Razaq Bin Hamam Al-Hameeri was a famous tabighee (a person who has met with companions of the prophets). He was the student of Mughmir Bin Rashid (153 AH) and Ibne Jareej (149 AH). Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal and Imam Yahya Bin Maeen were among his pupils. Masnaf Abdul Razaq is among the early workbooks. The manuscripts of this book were present in different corners of the world. The book contains 21000 traditions (Hadith). The manuscripts Edian of this unique book were present in Istanbul, Turkey; Madina Munawara, Saudi Arabia; Sangha, Yamen; Tank, Pakistan; and Hyderabad and Rabat, Bharat.

Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi researched this book in a way to compare its different pieces, gave detail of its difficult words, and wrote comments and notes together with explanation of narrators and places. This was his great literary achievement which he published in eleven volumes in Matbagha Darul Qalam Beerot.¹⁷

6. **Masnaf Ibne Abi Sheeba**

*Masnaf Ibne Abi Sheeba* is one of the early collections of Imam Abu Bakar Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Sheeba. The manuscripts of this book were present in Istanbul, Turkey and Qahira, Egypt. Maulana Abdul Khaliq Al-Afghani published five volumes of this book from Hyderabad. After this the remaining six volumes were published from Karachi and Mumbai but it contained a number of mistakes and mildness. The king of Qatar sent a micro film to Mualana Habib Ur Rehman containing manuscript of *Masnaf Ibne Abi Sheeba*. Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi took many years researching it. At last due to his tiresome struggles, five volumes of this book were published in *Maktaba Imadadia Makka Mukarrama*. He took pains to write this book but couldn’t complete it and died and the remaining six volumes came to the screen due to the struggles of *Muhaqiqul Shaikh Muhammad Awaama*.¹⁸

7. **Intefa Al-Targhib wal-Taraheeb La Bin Hajar Al-Asqalani**

Allama Manzari wrote a book named *Al-Taraghib Wal-Taraheeb* containing a number of volumes. The writer used the tool of mildness and relaxation in writing the book and didn’t focus on *sanad* (certificate) of Hadith. Hafiz Ibne Hajar made a summary of the said book and gave detail of its weak points. The print of the summary of Hafiz Ibne Hajar was present in Laknawo and Deoband. Maulana
Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi compared both the pieces, did a critical discussion on it, and wrote notes on it and lastly published it in 1380 AD.\(^\text{19}\)

8. *Talkhees Khawatem Jamia La osool*.

This book of Allama Tahir Patni was published in India in 1395 AD and it came to the front due to the struggles of Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi.\(^\text{20}\)


This book of Maulana Tahir Patni was also published in India after his tiresome struggles and hard work.\(^\text{21}\)


Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi published this book of Noorduddin Al-Haseemi from Damashq Syeria in 1399 AD in four volumes.\(^\text{22}\)

11. *Kitab-Ul-Thaqat La Bin Shaheen*.

Maulana Habib Ur Rehman also set Kitab-Ul-Thaqat of Ibne Shaheen.\(^\text{23}\)

12. *Al-Havi La-Rejal Al-Tahavi*.

This book contains narrators of famous book of Imam Tahavi named *Sharha Maani Asaar* and *Sharha Mushkil Asaar* but this book of Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi remained unpublished so far, though most of its research is complete.\(^\text{24}\)

**Urdu Books:**


This book contains detailed discussion on criticism on position of Hadith and Munkare Hadith. This book has been translated in Arabic Language by Egyptian Mahad’ith Muhammad Awama.\(^\text{25}\)

2. *Aghyan-Ul-Hujaj*.

This book has two volumes in which proper guidelines are present for pilgrims together with relevant maps.

Besides the above mentioned, he wrote the following books:

1. *Akhamu Nazar Li-Awaliyaullah*.
2. Al-Sharighul Haqiqi,
3. Rakat Al-Taraveh Mazel Barda Anwar Al-Masabeeh,
4. Al-Aghlamul Majmogha Fi Hukme Talaqat Al-Majmogha,
5. Tahqiq Akhle-Hadith,
6. Dafagha Al-Majadila Ghan Ayate Al-Mubahela,
7. Irshad Al-Thaqlain Bajawab Itikhad Al-Fariqain,
8. Al-Taqayeed Al-Sadeed Ala Al-Tafseer Al-Jadeed,
9. Abdal Azadari, Taghzia Dari, Rahbar-E-Hajj,
10. Rad-E-Tahqeequl Kalam: this book has not been published yet
11. Ahle Dil ki Dilawaiz Bathen,
12. Rijal-Ul-Bukhari : Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmiwrote this book on Rawat of Bukhari on the suggestion of Allama Syed Suleman Nadvi,
13. Dastakar-E-Ahle Sharf: This is the last Urdu book of Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi which was published in 1406 AH. He wrote on the need and significance of fair earnings (Kasab-E-Halal) containing life stories of such persons who were considered worthless regarding their professions.26

Views of contemporary theologians regarding Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aghzami:

Former Sheikh of Jamiat-Ul-Azhar, Dr Abdul Haleen says, “If Muhadiithe Azam(top expert in traditions) name would have been planned to be given to a person in the whole world, it would be undoubtedly Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aghzami”.27

Sheikh of Egypt, Muhammad Awwama, has written in his introduction when Al-Sheikh Shoaib Al-Arnooth saw explanation of Kalma of Bukhari regarding, “Fehe Nazar” he said, “This is a nice beneficial work which clearly tells about his expertise in the art of technicality and narration”.28

Once Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi was with Maulana Asad Madani in Makkah and it was the later who was keenly interested to make him meet with a famous Saudi Islamic theologian, Abdullah Bin Baz. As Abdullah Bin Baz was a blind person so everyone had to introduce himself first. When Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi was introduced, Abdullah Bin Baz stood up and requested to be excused saying that his arrival had already been shared with him and he should have come to receive him and then offered his seat to him.29

A famous Egyptian theologian, Al-Sheikh Ahmed Muhammad Shakir once started the project of prints of Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal. He collected material from
different manuscripts, freed it from mistakes, and gave numbers to Hadith. He made a comprehensive list of narrators together with explanation of difficult words. Its first volume was published in 1365 AH and then the world saw its remaining fourteen volumes as well and the work of Maulana Ahmed Muhammad Shakir was appreciated globally. Sheikh Muhammad Shakir requested Islamic theologians of the whole world to give their feedback to make his work more fitting and good but he didn’t get any feedback from any theologian in ten years’ time. Maulana Habib-Ur-Rehman Al-Aazmi studied this predicate after many years. He highlighted mildness and mistakes in it and informed the writer about his detailed suggestions. Sheikh Muhammad Shakir got surprised when he noticed his work. He was overjoyed and he removed all the mistakes in publishing the new edition and sent a reply to Maulana Sb, “I found your views and suggestions of high category. I am very grateful to you from the core of my heart for your favour and I am hopeful that you will continue the same process for the sake of service to traditions of the prophet (Ahadith-E-Nabawi) and I came to the conclusion after seeing your work that you are one of the greatest Islamic theologians among the theologians of the world”.30

He can be undoubtedly called the greatest Muhad’dith (Expert in Hadith) and Islamic theologian after reading the comments of the above-mentioned Islamic theologians.

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