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THE LIFE AND SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY OF SHAYKH MUḤAMMAD ŞĀDIQ MUḤAMMAD YŪSUF

Abstract: One of the prominent Uzbek scholars who was active in the late 20th and early 21st centuries is Shaykh Muḥammad Şādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf. He was not only a distinguished Islamic scholar but also played an influential role as a political figure. Shaykh Muḥammad Şādiq authored more than twenty important works in the fields of tafsīr, ḥadīth, 'aqīdah, ethics, and şūfism. Moreover, he successfully translated several Arabic scholarly sources into Uzbek and presented them to a wide readership.

Shaykh Muḥammad Şādiq also paid special attention to educational and spiritual upbringing, training numerous students. As a result, he established his scholarly school and left a lasting intellectual legacy. Due to their academic rigor, relevance, and accessible style, his works are widely studied and appreciated by the public.

Key words: Shaykh Muḥammad Şādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf, Ḥadīth wa-ḥayāt, Kifāya, Tafsīr-i hilāl, scholar, Mā warā' al-Nahr, muftī.

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Introduction

Throughout history, prominent scholars have emerged in every era, making significant contributions to the development of society and the spiritual and intellectual advancement of its people. The scientific legacy they left behind serves not only their own time but also provides a valuable path for future generations. Particularly, the contributions of scholars who deeply studied Islām – its theological ('aqīda), jurisprudential (fiqh), and ethical (akhlāq) dimensions – and guided people toward the right path are of immeasurable value.

The history of Islām demonstrates that in every period, there have been prominent individuals endowed with profound knowledge who deeply understood the religion and made remarkable efforts to convey it to the people. Their works, scholarly endeavors, and influence on society retain their

significance across the centuries. Especially in the modern era, conveying Islāmīc knowledge to the public, explaining it by its primary sources, and guiding the younger generation toward the right path has become a crucial responsibility for scholars.

The land of Māwarā' al-Nahr has long been known for producing scholars of great renown in the Islāmīc world – a tradition that continues to this day. Among the scholars who made significant contributions to the study and dissemination of Islāmīc knowledge during the second half of the 20th century and the early 21st century is Shaykh Muḥammad Şādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf. Through his extensive scholarly expertise, intellectual lineage (silsila), and religious-educational activities, he gained considerable respect in the Islāmīc world. In light of these aspects, studying and presenting the

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scholarly contributions of this scholar to the wider public holds great academic importance.

Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf was born in 1952 in the village of Niyozbotir, Asaka District, Andijan Region, Uzbekistan. Despite the economic difficulties and political unrest of that time, the family tried to raise their child in the spirit of Islām. His father, Muḥammad Yūsuf, worked as a shepherd in his youth, tending to the sheep of the collective farm. However, his heart was filled with a desire to acquire Islamic knowledge [4:11].

The scholar was regarded as one of the great and eminent scholars of the Islāmic world in his time. Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf created a scientific renaissance in Central Asia with his works. His work and lectures inspired a new generation of scholars. The Shaykh established a new school for studying and teaching Islām and mentored hundreds of students.

After completing secondary education in the village of Buloqboshi in 1969, Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf was admitted to the Mīr ‘Arab Madrasa in Bukhara in 1970. At that period, the madrasa’s educational program spanned seven years. However, owing to his prior knowledge and demonstrated academic proficiency, he was granted direct admission to the fifth year, enabling him to complete the full course of study within three years. The students at the madrasa called him “the leader” due to his excellence in studies and knowledge.

Muḥammad Yūsuf, the father of Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq, dedicated himself fully to ensuring his son received a comprehensive and high-quality education. He even arranged for additional supervision and mentorship for his son through trusted individuals.

Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq graduated from the madrasa in 1973 and entered the Tashkent Islamic Institute (al-Ma’had al-‘Ālī) named after Imām al-Bukhārī. Demonstrating exceptional academic ability, he successfully passed the entrance examinations with distinction and was granted direct admission to the third year of the program, completing his studies with honors within two years.

In 1975, he started working in the editorial office of the magazine “Muslims of the Soviet East” (Sovet sharqī musulmānlari). In 1976, by the recommendation of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, he enrolled at the Faculty of Islāmic Da’wah in Tripoli, Libya.

Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq stood out among students from around the world in Libya as the most diligent and talented. He regularly attended university lectures, which were key to his high performance in exams and lesson preparation. Beyond the university curriculum, he also took private lessons from local teachers and engaged in independent study. At that time, in addition to his academic duties, he set a

personal goal to read 100 pages daily from books related to his field.

He graduated from the Libyan university in 1980 with the highest score, excelling among students, and was also awarded a monetary prize by the university [3]. After completing his studies in 1980, Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf returned to Uzbekistan from Libya and worked in the following positions:

In 1981, he began working as a lecturer at the Islamic Institute named after Imām al-Bukhārī in Tashkent. In 1982, he was appointed the Deputy Rector of the same institute. In 1984, he was appointed as the Rector of the Tashkent Islamic Institute named after Imām al-Bukhārī. During this period (1981–1989), he taught subjects such as tafsīr, ḥadīth, ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān, and ‘aqīdah at the institute.

On February 6, 1989, during a very difficult and complicated period, he became the chairman and mufti of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. This period holds a special place in history as a time of revival of Islamic sciences, religious values, and traditions.

He commented on well-known and famous books in the Islamic world, such as *Mukhtaṣar al-Wiqāyah*, *Kifāyah*, *Madhhablar birlik ramzi*, and *Madhhabsizlik Islom shari’atiga tahdid soluvchi eng xatarli bid’at* in Uzbek, contributing greatly to preventing many unnecessary disputes during those difficult years.

During that period, the availability of copies of the Qur’ān within the country was extremely limited. Thanks to his initiatives, nearly one million copies of the Qur’ān were brought from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In 1990, about 500 Muslims from Central Asian republics were able to perform Ḥajj through the city of Tashkent. Considering that only about 20–30 people from the entire former Soviet Union went on Ḥajj annually during that period, this was a very courageous achievement.

In December 1989, he was elected as a People’s deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the SSSR. In June 1993, he resigned from the position of mufti.

Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf’s first articles began to be published in 1975 while working at the “Sovet sharqī musulmonlari” publishing house.

In 1991–1993, the scholar published chapters 28–30 of a commentary on the Holy Quran titled *Tafsīri Hilāl* and the book *Poklik imōndandir* (Purity is from Faith), in 1992, he published *Imōn* (Faith) and *Shoyadki taqwādor bo’lsak* (Maybe We will be pious), and in 1997, he published *Islām musaffoligi yo’lida* (On the Path of Islamic Purity).

Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf conducted scientific activities abroad between 1993 and 2001. In particular, during the first year and a half of this period, he lived in Mecca, and from November

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1994 to 2001, in Libya. During these years, the scholar achieved great creative accomplishments. He authored the large six-volume *Tafsīri Hilāl*, dedicated to the interpretation of the Qur'ān, as well as the thirty-nine-volume *Ḥadīth wa ḥayāt*, devoted to the commentary on ḥadīth, during that period. The scholar himself says about this: "A large number of primary sources were used in the coverage of each topic, as well as many sources that were written separately for the coverage of this topic. Finally, the work that began on 06.26.1996, with the grace and help of Allah, was completed on 07.10.2002, Wednesday, at 09:00 to 09 minutes" [5:5].

The scientist was engaged in writing since his youth. His first creative activity dates back to his school days. At that time, small articles and reports written by him were published in the class wall newspapers [4:163]. From 1994 to 2000, Muḥammad Ṣādiq published nearly thirty well-known articles and twenty-five books and treatises.

Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf was not only a great Islamic scholar but also a versatile thinker, accomplished mufasssīr (Qur'ān commentator), muḥaddīth (ḥadīth scholar), faqīh (Islamic jurist), and skilled translator who rendered immense service to the Muslim community. He dedicated the major part of his life to studying 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān, 'Ulūm al-ḥadīth, fiqh, 'aqīdah (creed), moral education, and various religious and spiritual fields, writing works on these subjects and spreading Islamic knowledge widely among the people.

Thanks to his profound scholarly capability, deep thinking, and analytical approach, Shaykh produced numerous beneficial works. These have been studied with great interest not only by Muslims in Uzbekistan but throughout the entire Islamic world and have become widely disseminated. His books are one of the main sources widely used today in religious educational institutions, mosques, religious and educational events, and scientific research.

Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf wrote works on the fields of Quranic interpretation, hadith, jurisprudence, 'aqīdah, ethics, history, and religious enlightenment, which cover the most important issues related to the daily lives of Muslims in a broad and detailed manner. His legacy is not limited to theoretical knowledge alone but also holds great practical significance. Indeed, in his works, the Sheikh sought to explain religious sciences in a way that was understandable to ordinary people, and he covered topics in a way that was appropriate to the worldview and needs of modern people. His books are recognized as invaluable resources for thoroughly studying Islamic sciences and applying them in everyday life.

When assessing the significance of his works, special attention should be paid to their scientific and methodological qualities. In his books, he relied on scholarly evidence, cited reliable sources, conducted

in-depth analysis of āyāt al-Qur'ān and a ḥadīth, and presented issues of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and creed ('aqīdah) clearly and concisely. In particular, his views on fiqh and 'aqīdah were presented relying on traditional sources while responding to the problems of the modern world. This has been the foundation for his works being widely recognized by the public and continuously studied.

Among the books written by Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf, one of the most famous is *Tafsīri Hilāl*, which contains the complete interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān. *Tafsīri Hilāl* is written in Uzbek, and it explains, interprets, and presents the verses of the Quran in an easy-to-understand manner for people.

The scholar's work *Ḥadīth wa ḥayāt* is considered one of the most comprehensive works in the field of 'ilm al-ḥadīth. This work, consisting of thirty-nine volumes, is a translation and commentary of a large five-volume book titled *al-Tāj al-jāmi' li-l-uṣūl fī aḥādīth al-rasūl*, authored by Shaykh 'Alī Maṣṣūr Nāṣif, a prominent scholar from the famous al-Azhar University [6:32].

Additionally, Shaykh's works related to 'aqīdah and fiqh sciences, such as *Iymon (creed)*, *Islom tarixi (the History of Islam)*, *Mo'minning me'roji (The Ascent of mumin)*, and *Odob-axloq qoidalari (The rules of etiquette)* include important information about various aspects of Muslim life. These books provide detailed explanations on Islamic creed, moral standards, the meaning and essence of worship, fiqh issues, and historical events. These works currently contribute to the spiritual and educational development of the Muslim community.

Moreover, the scholarly contributions of Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf have been recognized with numerous awards. In 2015, his book in the Uzbek language, *Ochiq xat (Open letter)* and its Russian translation *Открытое послание* were both named "Best Book of the Year" and rapidly gained wide readership across the CIS (The Commonwealth of Independent States) countries [2:74].

Another important feature of Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq's works is that, in addition to being rich in religious and educational aspects, they are also written in accordance with modern human thinking. In his works, the sheikh sheds light on Islamic knowledge not only from a historical perspective, but also in relation to the social and spiritual problems that are emerging today. The scholar's books serve as a practical guide for modern Muslims, increasing their religious knowledge and providing them with the right path.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the life and legacy of Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf constitute an invaluable spiritual and intellectual heritage for the global Muslim community. He earned great respect

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and attention not only among Muslims in Uzbekistan but also around the world for his deep knowledge, breadth of thought, and selfless service in promoting Islamic sciences. His invaluable scientific legacy includes Qur'anic exegesis (tafsīr), ḥadīth studies, fiqh, 'aqidah, moral education, Islamic history, and various religious-educational disciplines. These works serve not only theoretically, but also in practical life as a guiding source for the daily activities of Muslims.

Shaykh Muḥammad Ṣādiq Muḥammad Yūsuf had a unique method in conveying Islamic knowledge to the public, and his works and propaganda were based on clear evidence, the sources of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth. In his works, he sought to deeply analyze religious concepts and explain them in a way that was understandable to ordinary people. His scholarly

research, especially on Islamic doctrine, jurisprudential issues, and ethical standards, serves as a solid foundation for Muslims today. As a result of the books written by the scholar, many people have achieved great success in improving their knowledge of Islam, understanding the religion correctly, and practicing it in their lives.

The scholar not only covered religious and educational issues, but also deeply analyzed how they affect the life of society. In his works, the human values of Islam, such as tolerance, justice, honesty, hard work, and moral purity, are of paramount importance. Especially today, in a time when various religious errors and misconceptions are on the rise, the scholar's books are important for Muslims in knowing the truth and finding the right path.

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