

# A Critical Study of the Historiography of Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad Al-Hakim Neshapuri

**Sohail Akhtar**

Lecturer

Department of History

Ghazi University Dera Ghazi Khan

## **Abstract**

*Historiography considered and important intellectual work since the ancient Greek era. Herodotus is to be called as the father of historiography.<sup>1</sup> Muslim started historiography with the writing of Quran and Hadeith. Among them one is Imam Hakim Neshapuri who is considered the marvelous intellectual and in the field of Historiography Imam Muhammad Hakim Neshapuri consider one of the most relay able Muslim Historians of the 4th century A.H. After the advent of Islam Muslims attracted to the field of historiography and gave Quran great attention to promote historical knowledge. Therefore, historiography became one the popular discipline of knowledge among the Muslims intellectuals in medieval period. Muslim Scholars worked Quran, Hadeith, Fiqah and historiography in all its aspect. Imam Muhammad Hakim Neshapuri is one of the Muslim's intellectual who worked in the promotion of knowledge. Imam Neshapuri considered one of the authentic Muslims historians of fourth century A.H and all the later historians used his books as reference to the events of this age. This paper is an attempt to explore historical work of Imam Hakim Neshapuri and this paper highlights the life and work of Imam Hakim Neshapuri.*

**Keywords:** Muslims, Medieval, Historiography, Al-Hakim, Neshapuri

Imam Hakim was born at Neshapur in 321 AH. His full name was Muhammad Bin Abdullah Bin Muhammad Bin *Hamdawayah* Bin Naeem Bin Hakim. His title was Al-Hakim. He belonged to a very learned family and he was also a judge due to his knowledge and grace.<sup>2</sup> It has been a feature of history that it preserves the lives of famous people and remembers their social accomplishments that they have done. As Carlyle, History is the biography of great men.<sup>3</sup> If we look at the pages of history, you will see countless people who have served Islam with pen and book, and in order to authenticate it, he did historical work as well as scrutinized the corners of the world in the scrutiny of facts and events. One of these people is also the name of Imam Hakim Neshapuri. He gained lasting fame as Hakim Neshapuri. His real name was Muhammad, his surname was Abu Abdullah while his title was Hakim. Born in the famous city of Neshapur, everyone is called Neshapuri. Imam Hakim has compiled hundreds of books in his life including a long list of books such as Tafsir Quran, Hadeith, Sirah, Biography and History of Neshapur.<sup>4</sup> All such works written by Imam Hakim are unparalleled in any other historian. Due to the historiography and erudition of Imam Hakim Neshapuri, it is not possible to cover his scholarly services. There is a great effort to know the scholarly services. Through which a lively discussion has been held on his life and scholarly services which is definitely an important topic for the students of history.

A Critical Study of the Historiography of Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad Al-Hakim Neshapuri” is an Analytical Study. It is an attempt to analyze the life and work of Imam Hakim who was a great scholar of his time. The primary aim of this study is to understand how Imam Hakim worked on historiography, biographies and Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH). For the paper use of qualitative data has been used to understand the point of discussions, where ever was necessary. However, the method is combined with qualitative and historical method and an attempt has been made to find the answers such as questions through sources. The sources are consists on primary and secondary sources with the help of his own books, articles and available data.

Historiography as a world-wide subject and the basic question is to find out the basic question how he worked during his historiography and became a remarkable scholar. The life and work of Imam Hakim is primarily based on Hadith and Quran. After Shaikheen his work

of Al-Mustadrak received acceptances among the scholars and to interpret the knowledge of Hadeth with a command greatly forced the intellectual too find out the critical authorship of his work. Literature has been consulted to compile this research paper including Mustadrak which presents such Ahdith which left from Sahiheen due to any reason. Imam Hakim included all these Ahadees with complete inquiry and wrote Al-Mustadrak<sup>5</sup> while Tareekh-e-Neshapur also provides the information about the scholars and intellectuals of the region of Neshapur especially their literary contribution. Other important book in review is included Marfat-ul-Aloom, Al-Badaya-wl-Nihaya also explores the historical work of Imam Hakim and mentioned that Imam Hakim was on the highest standard of knowledge. Muqadima Ibn-e-Khaldon as Allama Ibn-e- Khaldoon considered him the most authentic scholar of the era, Shah Wali Ullah book Hujatullah-Al-Baligha are the most important which provide information about the life and work of Imam Hakim Neshapuri. This paper will be proved an important work on the life and work of Imam Hakim Neshapuri as a great Historian and *Mohadis* as mentioned by different scholars through their research.

### **Discussion**

Imam Hakim Neshapuri is considered an important scholar of his time (321-405 AH).<sup>6</sup> There is a general consensus among historians and historians that Imam Hakim was the most authoritative scholar of his time whose memory was unparalleled. For this reason he was called Al-Hafiz Al-Kabeer. Imam Dar Qatani states that Imam Hakim is the most trustworthy and authoritative historian of his time.<sup>7</sup> But it is also said that his name is Muhammad, his surname is Abu Abdullah and his title is Hakim. According to historians, in the ancestors of Imam Hakim, some elders used to be called "Ba,iya" (merchants) because of their business. From this lineage, you are called "Ibn-e-Ba, iya".<sup>8</sup> But Hafiz Ibn-e-Kaseer said he became and known as "Hakim" because of his position of Qazi, has described his nickname as "Ibn-e-Al-Hakim". This is probably because your ancestor's name was Hakim. Imam Hakim, in order to satisfy his intellectual taste, first turned to the scholars, jurists and narrators of his homeland Neshapur. Historians write about this because of the

"طاف الأفاق رحل" abundance of visits to Hamdan and Isfahan as, الكثير<sup>9</sup>

Imam Hakim is remembered by the titles of "Imam Al-Muhaddithin, Al-Hafiz Al-Kabeer, Shaykh Al-Muhaddithin and Sayyid Al-Muhaddithin" due to his extraordinary perfection and distinction in Hadith. Allama Ibn Al-Imad says, "The crowning of the region of Hadith, not only in Khurasan but in the whole world, has ended on you." Allama Ibn Salah and Hafiz Nawawi have mentioned Hakim as the second name after Imam Dar Qatani among the seven narrators after the authors of Sahih Sittah. As,

قال عنه الحافظ ابن كثير في البداية والنهاية: وكان من أهل العلم والحفظ والحديث... وقد كان من أهل الدين والأمانة والصيانة والضبط والتجرد والورع

Al-Hafiz Ibn Katheer said to him in the beginning and in the end: He was one of the people of knowledge, memorization and hadith.) قال الحافظ الذهبي: قرأت على أبي علي بن الخلال: أخبركم جعفر بن علي، أخبرنا السلفي، أخبرنا إسماعيل بن عبد الجبار، سمعت الخليل بن عبد الله الحافظ ذكر الحاكم وعظمه، وقال: له رحلتان إلى العراق والحجاز، الثانية في سنة ثمان وستين، وناظر الدارقطني، فرضيه، وهو ثقة واسع العلم، بلغت تصانيفه قريبا من خمس مئة جزء، يستقصي في ذلك، يؤلف الغث والسمين - وقال أبو حازم عمر بن أحمد العبدي الحافظ: سمعت الحاكم أبا عبد الله إمام أهل الحديث في عصره يقول: شربت ماء وقال الذهبي رحمه الله في زمزم، وسألت الله أن يرزقني حسن التصنيف. "العبر في خبر من غبر" (ج:1، ص:180): النيسابوري، الحافظ الكبير قرأ القراءات على جماعة، وبرع في معرفة الحديث وفنونه، وصنّف التصانيف الكثيرة، وانتهت إليه رئاسة الفن بخراسان، لا بل في الدنيا

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As Allama Zahabi writes that one day Imam Hakim was reciting a hadith with his teacher Dar-Qatani and great scholars were also present in the meeting. When a student objected to Hakim, Imam Dar Qatani stopped him and said: Has never seen a man rise to such a high position at such a young age. On the contrary, I would say that being a contemporary of Hakim is like being a contemporary of a thousand narrators..Imam Hakim was trustworthy, had extensive knowledge and was a prolific writer, Imam Hakim started listening to Hadith at the age of 9 and he listened to Abi Hatim Ibn Habban

at the age of 13. Imam listened to about 1000 teachers only in Neshapur. He then listened to the great narrators from Khurasan, Iraq and Transoxiana, numbering close to 2,000, who arrived in Iraq at the age of 20.<sup>11</sup>

Due to his extraordinary perfection and distinction in the science of hadith, he is remembered by the titles of Imam Hakim Al-Hafiz Al-Kabeer and Imam Al-Muhaddithin, etc. Abdul Ghafir says: Imam Hakim in his time was well acquainted with the Imam of Hadith scholars and the art of Hadith. While Yafi writes that Imam Hakim was well versed in the knowledge of hadith and related sciences. Hafiz Zahabi says that not only in Khurasan but also in the whole world, the crown of *Iqlim* Hadith has ended on Imam Hakim. Hafiz Ibn-e-Al-Salah and Imam Nodi, after the authors of *Sahih Sittah*, have named Imam Hakim as the second name after Imam Dar Qatni. Arrival was considered a job. One of them was Imam Hakim.<sup>12</sup>

Imam Hakim is called "Hakim" because of his ability to hold the office of Qazi. Some historians have called him "*Nisa*" but most of them have called him Qazi of Neshapur. Abul Nasr Muhammad Bin Abdul Jabbar's guardianship was established. Imam Sahib was relieved of his duties of the Judiciary Department with such good manners that he was again offered the post of "Jurjan" but he did not accept it. But some historians has specified the appointment of a judge of Jurjan.

Imam Hakim was highly trusted by the wealthy and his nobles and rulers. Amir al-Hasan used to seek advice from them and send them to the Bani Buwayh for embassy, but the ruler performed the diplomatic duties between the Bani Buwayh and the Samanid government very well. Imam Hakim was highly trusted by the wealthy and his nobles and rulers. Amir al-Hasan used to seek advice from them and send them to the Bani Buwayh for embassy, but the ruler performed the diplomatic duties between the Bani Buwayh and the Samanid government very well. Imam Hakim also had a vested interest in social affairs and affairs. At one time, he was entrusted with the management and administration of the Madrasa Dar-ul-Sunnah. And he bequeathed it to you. Imam Hakim, due to his many accomplishments, became the center of attention and devotion of the Muslims and his qualities and people were equally popular and dear to all hearts. Allama Ibn Sabki states that his greatness, everyone agrees on the glory of Qadar and Imamate of

art. He was one of the Imams through whom Allah Almighty protected his religion. Anyone who looks at his writings, his knowledge and views on the method of hadith, his scholarly discourses, etc., will surely acknowledge his bounty and perfection, and he will realize that he is his own. He had faith in the earlier scholars. Imam Hakim, due to his accomplishments, was at a high place which could not be reached by two heads. He was unique in his time. The void created by his death could not be filled. The splendor of the Majlis and Bazm in which you would have reached would have increased. People would have taken you by the hand and greeted you with great pomp. Hafiz Abdul Ghafar used to be very eloquent in his praise of Imam Hakim. He considered them as superior, superior and advanced and took full care of their memorization and respect.<sup>13</sup>

Imam Hakim passed away suddenly in his hometown Neshapur on 2 Safar 3 AH. Bakar al-Hariri led the funeral prayers. Hasan ibne-Ash'at al-Qurashi dreamed that Imam al-Hakim was riding on a hut in a very good and artificial way, saying that he had been saved. When I asked the reason, he said: "Allah has saved me because of the writing of the hadith."<sup>14</sup>

It is impossible to gauge the knowledge and ability of Imam Hakim Neshapuri. He wrote numerous books and magazines in which scholarly and research work including commentary, Hadeith, biography, biography and historiography is a special achievement of his life. He declared Al-Sahihien as authentic and also mentioned it in Risala Al-Mudakhl and said that the knowledge and art of Shaykheen is one in Hadeith and Traditions and in their expertise. That is why the ruler wrote a book on them and the reason for paying homage to these elders is their service which has been done for Islam in the form of compilation of Hadeith. The book details the terms of agreement and disagreement on the compilation and status of the Hadeith by the Shaykheen (Al-Bukhari & Muslim).<sup>15</sup>

In addition, Imam Hakim, whose number of books is in the hundreds, is one of the books Mazki-ul-Akhbar. This book mentions the narrators of Hadeith and includes forty people. The first part contains the Rightly Guided Caliphs, as well as Zaid Bin Sabit. In the same way, he wrote the book Al-Aklail and compiled the principles of Hadeith in it. Asakar states that Imam Hakim earned a unique name by writing hundreds of books, including another book,

Al-Akalil fi Dalail al-Nabwa, which is unparalleled. It was written with your pen. Imam Hakim worked on Quran and Hadeith as well as on the science of history and historiography. This book of Imam Hakim is basically written in the style of the history of Baghdad and it is considered as the most important book regarding Neshapur. The main feature of this book is that in this book the scholarly and religious services of the scholars and celebrities of Neshapur have been discussed in detail and their conditions have been mentioned. Remember and declare that the status of Imam Hakim is second to none. Most historians agree that Imam Hakim Neshapuri was the most distinguished of all his contemporaries, intellectuals and scholars. And none of his contemporaries, being a scholar and historian, could reach the scholarly insight, position and status of Imam Hakim Neshapuri. People say about the history of Neshapur that it was an important work. A study of the book Nishapur makes it clear that Imam Hakim not only excelled in the science of history, but the style of this book shows the bright side of his erudition and ability.<sup>16</sup>

Abu al-Fazl Hamdani, a well-known scholar of the time, quotes Imam Hakim as saying that he was a very capable and fact-finding historian. I have written a book on the situation in Nishapur, History of Nishapur, so I became interested in reading this book. So I traveled to Neshapur to read this book. Then when I reached Neshapur, I stayed there for many days in search of this book. And during my stay of many days, I kept looking at this history of Neshapur till I came back after reading this book. Found this book a wonderful scholarly masterpiece. Historians believe that this book mentions the scholars who died around 520 AH and their living conditions. Most of them are famous people. Later, a summary of this book was also written which Hafiz Zahabi called the history ruler. Thus the famous historian and pillar of Islamic historiography, Allama Ibn Khaldun, while expressing his views on Imam Hakim Neshapuri, said that many people made history and Hadeith the subject of discussion and wrote books. One of them is Imam Hakim Neshapuri. Which are the only occupations of this art. Not only did he use this art in his writings, but he also elaborated on its merits by regularly arranging and polishing this art.<sup>17</sup>

Imam Hakim's style of writing also suggests that he recorded the events very carefully and as a result the suspicion of carelessness

and suspicion vanished. Imam Hakim wrote a book on the science of Hadeith, *Marifat-ul-Uloom*, which is a very comprehensive book. In this book, he explained the principles, hierarchies and classes of narration, their nature and importance. After an overview of the work of the plaintiffs, facts and conclusions were drawn. And the narration of the Companions along with the Hadeith, their circumstances and various kinds of information also recorded the events.

Similarly, in many other books of Imam Hakim, his city is the source of the book of Hadeith. *Mustadrak* consists of those Hadeith which are completely *Saheeh Ahadeith* and if all the attributes and conditions of the Hadeith have been fulfilled but they have not been narrated, then they have been narrated by the Imam. As Imam Hakim himself writes, the Imams of Hadeith have never in their entire lives said that any Hadeith other than the Hadeith narrated by them cannot be correct or not. But some other people objected to the authenticity of the Hadeith and said the correct narrations of the Hadeith up to ten thousand and opposed the rest and killed all the objections. But I strongly reject these people and say that their attitude is wrong, so I compiled this book. It is clear from his statement that Imam Hakim, while compiling the *Mustadrak*, while examining the style and facts of narration, not only refuted the objections of the people with reasoned evidence but also remained authentic on the basis of evidence. In his book *Fazail-e-Sahaba*, Imam Hakim discussed the virtues and virtues of the Companions as well as briefly described the life of the Companions, which was a unique work of its kind. Similarly, this work was one of the names of Imam Hakim's famous book "*Al-Mustadrak Ali Al-Sahihin*" comes in the list of books of hadith written on authentic traditions. Imam Hakim Nishapuri's most prominent work is *Mustadark* a five volume hadith collection. While Imam Hakim has named the book "*Al-Mustadrak Ali Al-Sahihin*" because he had many traditions that Imam Bukhari and Muslim should have mentioned in their books, but they did not mention them.<sup>18</sup>

Imam Hakim has described the situation at that time in the beginning of the book that many people today think that the authentic hadiths are the same as the ones mentioned by Bukhari and Muslim in their books, other than them, the hadiths are not valid, therefore I am writing this book and I will mention in it the hadiths which are not



in the Sahih but are Sahih. In order to dispel the misconception that all are weak except the hadiths mentioned in the Sahih.

Imam Hakim was not an ordinary writer as few one generally thought about him. He worked on the different aspects of Islamic issues.. He worked on Quran, Hadith, Fiqah, History and all was marvelous which he done and no one can be compared to him in his contemporary age. Ibne Khilkan, Saad Bin Zaghlol Zanjani, Samaani and all major historians considered Imam Hakim the most intellectual and authentic author of the time. There is a difference of opinion about the writings of Imam Hakim. Some people have stated the number as five hundred, some as one thousand and some as one and a half thousand components. The names of the known are as, 1-Tareekh-e-Neshapur 2- *fazail-e-Hazrat Fatima* (R. A)3- *Kitab-ul-Arbaeen* 3- *Fawa'id-ul- Shayyukh* 4-Tafseer-uul-Quraan 5- *Manaqib Imam Shafiee*, 6- *Manaqib Siddque* 7-*Fawa'id Ul Shayukh*, 8-*Fazail-e- Ashra Mubasharah*, 9-*AL-Mustadrak*.<sup>19</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Imam Hakim is considered one of the great Muhaddith, Scholar and historian of the time. his services in history and the science of hadith are very clear and the accusation of rafidiyat against him has been rejected by the scholars, although it can be said that the love of the Ahl al-Bayt was predominant. His book *Al-Mustadrak* is a great collection of hadiths, but it also contains weak narrations, so it is not appropriate to rule on any narration without research. He is also placed in a high position in memorization and is called memorizer per hadith. The Imam was also distinguished in asceticism and piety. Ibn Katheer says that the scholars were the ones who memorized and narrated hadith, the ones who had religion, piety, trust and faith.

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