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AKMAL AL-DIN AL-BABARTI'S METHODOLOGY IN COMMENTING ON AL-HIDAYAH THROUGH HIS WORK AL-'INAYAH

Abstract. *The present study examines the methodology employed by Akmal al-Din al-Babarti in his renowned commentary al-'Inayah Sharh al-Hidayah. As one of the most significant commentaries on Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani's al-Hidayah, the work demonstrates a systematic approach to explaining legal issues, analyzing evidences, comparing juristic opinions, and strengthening the Hanafi legal tradition. The study highlights Babarti's scholarly background and his contribution to the development of Islamic jurisprudence through his interpretative methodology.*

Keywords: *Hanafi school, Islamic jurisprudence, Fiqh, al-Hidayah, al-'Inayah, Akmal al-Din al-Babarti, al-Marghinani, legal methodology, commentary tradition, Sharh literature, Islamic legal theory.*

INTRODUCTION

In studying the jurisprudence of the Hanafi school within the tradition of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani's al-Hidayah occupies a central position. Although its complete title is Kitab al-Hidayah fi Sharh Bidayat al-Mubtadi, it became widely known simply as al-Hidayah. Written in Samarqand in 1178 CE, this work is regarded as one of the most authoritative sources in the field of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh).

Al-Hidayah is a comprehensive juristic text that systematically and clearly presents the complex issues of Hanafi jurisprudence. The work consists of four volumes. The first volume is devoted to ritual matters such as purification, prayer, fasting, zakat, and pilgrimage. The second volume discusses family law, marriage, divorce, inheritance,

manumission of slaves, found property, and market regulations. The third volume addresses commercial transactions, loans, testimony, judicial matters, property rights, and contractual issues. The fourth volume covers pre-emption, inheritance distribution, agricultural and horticultural contracts, sacrifice, reclamation of uncultivated lands, hunting, pledges, criminal law, wills, and other legal matters.

The significance of al-Hidayah extends far beyond its own period, remaining a focal point of scholarly activity for centuries. Its exceptional status within Islamic legal studies led to the production of numerous commentaries (shuruh), marginal notes (hawashi), annotations (ta'liqat), and abridgements (mukhtasarat). These scholarly works not only clarified the complex legal discussions found in al-Hidayah but also contributed significantly to the further development of Hanafi legal methodology.

The tradition of writing commentaries has long been a prominent feature of Islamic scholarship. This practice emerged largely because many classical texts were composed in a concise and highly condensed style. Al-Hidayah is a prime example of such a work, presenting profound legal discussions in a brief yet sophisticated manner. Consequently, scholars found it necessary to provide detailed explanations, elaborate upon legal evidences, compare various juristic opinions, and demonstrate the practical application of legal rulings. These commentaries served both as educational tools for students in madrasahs and as practical references for judges and muftis.

Among the most celebrated commentaries on al-Hidayah are al-Kifayah fi Sharh al-Hidayah by Jalal al-Din al-Ghurlani (d. 1366), Fath al-Qadir by Kamal al-Din Ibn al-Humam (d. 1457), al-'Inayah Sharh al-Hidayah by Akmal al-Din Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Babarti (d. 1384), and al-Binayah Sharh al-Hidayah by Badr al-Din al-'Ayni (d. 1451). This article focuses on one of these distinguished commentators, Akmal al-Din al-Babarti, and examines the characteristics of his work al-'Inayah.

MAIN PART

Akmal al-Din al-Babarti: life and scholarly formation

Akmal al-Din al-Babarti, whose full name was Akmal al-Din Abu 'Abd Allah ibn Mahmud ibn Ahmad al-Babarti al-Rumi al-Hanafi, was a distinguished scholar and researcher in the fields of *usul al-fiqh*, *furu' al-fiqh*, *hadith*, and *kalam*. Historical sources provide two explanations regarding his nisbah "al-Babarti." According to one view, it derives from the village of Babart near Dujayl in the vicinity of Baghdad. Another view

associates it with a locality named Babart in present-day Turkey, which historically belonged to the region of Rum.

From an early age, al-Babarti demonstrated a strong interest in learning and acquired the foundations of Islamic sciences from scholars in his homeland. He studied theology (‘aqidah) and jurisprudence under Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Kaki. Subsequently, he traveled to Aleppo, where Qadi Nasir al-Din Ibn al-‘Adim directed him to the Sadiyyah Madrasah. Al-Babarti resided there for a period and continued his studies under prominent scholars. After 1339 CE, he traveled to Cairo, where he studied with Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi and Abu al-Thana’ Shams al-Din al-Isfahani, the commentator on Ibn al-Hajib’s *Mukhtasar*.

The scholar was a man of profound intellect and strong determination. Despite being offered the position of judge (qadi) on several occasions, Akmal al-Din al-Babarti consistently declined such appointments. The large number of his teachers and spiritual mentors from various fields demonstrates the breadth of his scholarly training and mastery of numerous sciences. This extensive education is clearly reflected in his academic works. Historians report that al-Babarti studied under many distinguished scholars. Likewise, Hafiz Shams al-Din al-Dawudi, in *Tabaqat al-Mufasssirin*, states:

“He acquired knowledge from Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi and al-Isfahani. He studied hadith under al-Dalusi and Ibn Abi al-Hadid. He was highly respected by the rulers of his time. It is even reported that Sultan al-Zahir Barquq would converse with Imam al-Babarti whenever he passed by on his mount and would remain standing until the Imam entered the *khanqah*.”

Akmal al-Din al-Babarti authored numerous scholarly works. Among them are al-‘Inayah Sharh al-Hidayah, Sharh Wasiyyat al-Imam Abi Hanifah, al-Irshad fi Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar, Sharh al-‘Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah, Sharh ‘Umdat al-‘Aqa’id, Sharh al-Fara’id al-Sirajiyyah, Sharh Tajrid al-Kalam by Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, al-Maqсад fi al-Kalam, al-Kasha’if al-Burhaniyyah Sharh al-Mawaqif by al-Iji, Muqaddimah fi al-Fara’id, and several other works.

The methodology of al-‘Inayah

Al-Babarti’s al-‘Inayah was composed as a commentary on Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani’s al-Hidayah. The author prepared this work as an abridged adaptation of his teacher Hisam al-Din al-Sighnaqi’s (d. 1310) al-Nihayah Sharh al-Hidayah. The book systematically organizes juridical chapters and subchapters while presenting the

evidences supporting legal rulings. It records the opinions of Hanafi jurists and identifies the preferred (rajih) position among them. In certain instances, the views of scholars from other legal schools are also mentioned. Furthermore, some technical terms and expressions are explained from a linguistic perspective in order to clarify their intended meanings.

In most legal discussions, Akmal al-Din al-Babarti begins by citing Qur'anic verses as primary evidence, followed by Prophetic hadiths. When a hadith is recorded in the Sahihayn (the collections of al-Bukhari and Muslim), he often limits himself to mentioning those sources. However, when the hadith is found in other collections of Sunan or Musnad, he usually cites it through multiple sources. In each legal issue, he presents the opinions of the four Sunni schools of law as well as other juristic traditions. Whenever available, he also cites the views of the Companions (Sahabah) and the Successors (Tabi'un).

An illustrative case: sleep and ritual purity

One example is the legal ruling concerning sleep and its effect on ritual purity (wudu'). Jurists differed regarding whether sleep during standing (qiyam), bowing (ruku'), or prostration (sujud) in prayer invalidates ablution.

According to the first opinion, sleep while standing or bowing does not invalidate ablution, and no renewal of wudu' is required. This is the view preferred by al-Babarti. He explicitly states:

“That is, if a person falls asleep while in prostration during prayer, with the abdomen not resting upon the thighs and the elbows not touching the ground, his ablution is not invalidated. However, if the opposite occurs, the ablution is invalidated. If such sleep occurs outside prayer, it is considered a cause of invalidation. The preferred opinion is the one transmitted in the authoritative narration (zahir al-riwayah), because a degree of bodily control remains, and complete relaxation does not occur.”

This opinion was supported by the Hanafis, the Shafi'is, a group of Malikis, the Hanbalis, and the Zahiris.

Al-Kasani reports from Abu Yusuf that he said:

“I asked Abu Hanifah about sleeping during prayer, and he replied: ‘The ablution is not invalidated.’ However, I do not recall whether I asked him regarding intentional sleep or unintentional drowsiness. In my view, if a person deliberately lies down and sleeps, his ablution is invalidated.”

According to the second opinion, renewing ablution is recommended (mustahabb), but sleep while standing, bowing, or prostrating does not invalidate wudu'. This view is attributed to some Maliki and Hanbali jurists.

According to the third opinion, if the sleep is intentional, ablution is invalidated. However, if a person is seated and sleep overtakes him involuntarily, his ablution remains valid. This opinion is attributed to Abu Yusuf among the Hanafi jurists.

According to the fourth opinion, sleep that completely overcomes a person's faculties of hearing and sight invalidates ablution. This is the position adopted by the Imami (Ja'fari) school of law.

Evidence for the First Opinion

The proponents of the first opinion rely on a narration reported by Abdullah ibn Abbas. He stated:

"I spent a night in the house of my maternal aunt Maymunah bint al-Harith and said to her: 'Wake me when the Messenger of Allah rises for prayer.' When the Messenger of Allah awoke, I also stood up and moved to his left side. He then positioned me on his right side. Whenever drowsiness overtook me, he would gently hold me by the soft part of my ear."

The jurists infer from this narration that sleep occurring during prayer does not invalidate ablution.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, al-Hidayah, authored by Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani, occupies a central position among the most authoritative sources of Hanafi jurisprudence. Equally significant is one of its most celebrated commentaries, al-'Inayah Sharh al-Hidayah by Akmal al-Din al-Babarti, whose methodological approach to legal interpretation represents an important contribution to Islamic legal scholarship. This study has demonstrated the prominent status of al-Hidayah within the discipline of fiqh and has highlighted how its systematic structure, concise style, and profound legal content created a need for extensive scholarly commentaries.

As in the broader Islamic scholarly tradition, the composition of commentaries served as an essential means of clarifying complex legal discussions. Al-Babarti's al-'Inayah emerged within this intellectual context and was prepared as a concise yet

comprehensive adaptation of his teacher Hisam al-Din al-Sighnaqi's al-Nihayah Sharh al-Hidayah. The work presents legal issues in a systematic arrangement of books and chapters, while its methodology of legal argumentation is both clear and methodical. Al-Babarti consistently begins with evidence from the Qur'an, followed by authentic Prophetic traditions, carefully distinguishing hadith sources and comparing multiple narrations whenever necessary.

One of the most distinctive features of al-Babarti's commentary is its comparative juristic approach. Rather than limiting himself to the Hanafi position, he frequently presents the views of the other Sunni legal schools and, where relevant, the opinions of the Companions and the Successors. Through this method, he provides a broader scholarly perspective on legal questions and substantiates his preferred conclusions with carefully reasoned evidence. Such an approach elevates al-'Inayah beyond a mere commentary and establishes it as a work of critical and investigative legal scholarship.

The article also demonstrated al-Babarti's methodology through the example of sleep as a factor affecting ritual purity. In this discussion, he supports the opinion that sleep occurring in the standing (qiyam) and bowing (ruku') positions during prayer does not invalidate ablution. He substantiates this position through textual evidence from hadith and established juristic principles. Furthermore, it was shown that this view corresponds not only to the Hanafi school but also to the positions of the Shafi'i school, a group of Maliki scholars, the Hanbali school, and the Zahiri tradition. At the same time, alternative opinions are presented objectively, thereby preserving scholarly balance and methodological impartiality.

Therefore, Akmal al-Din al-Babarti's al-'Inayah Sharh al-Hidayah represents a significant contribution to the intellectual heritage of Hanafi jurisprudence. Its evidence-based methodology, comparative legal analysis, and critical scholarly approach make it an indispensable source for understanding both classical Islamic law and the continued development of contemporary juristic thought.

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