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Contribution of Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan to Arabic Language and Linguistics: A Study

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Abstract

Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan was one of the eminent scholars, writers, and reformists in the domain of Indo-Arabic literature. He had mastery over three languages namely Arabic, Urdu and Persian. He wrote about three hundred books in these trio-languages; among them fifty six books were written in Arabic and the rest of them in Urdu and Persian languages. He has contributed a lot to the various Islamic Sciences, especially the Holy Qur'ân, Hadith (Prophetic tradition), Tafsîr (commentary on the Qur'ân), al-'Aqaid (beliefs), al-Akhlaq (ethics), al-Tasawwuf (Sufism) etc. In addition to all these compilations, he wrote on History, Arabic language, literature and Linguistics. Apart from all these he wrote many other books on linguistics. They are well accepted by the scholars in India and abroad. His best known linguistic books are namely Laffu al-Qimât 'ala Tashîh ba'di mâ Isti'malathu al-'Aamma min al-Mu'rab wa al-Dakhil wa al-Maulid wa al-Aghlat, Al-Bulagha fî Usûl al-Lugha, Al-'Alamul Khafaq min 'Ilm al-Ishtiqaq, Ghusn al-Bân al-Muarraq bi-Muhsinat al-Bayân and Abjad al-'Ulûm. In this paper, an attempt has been made to focus on his aforementioned Arabic books, in which he has shown many linguistic observations on Arabic words and their derivations as well.

Key words: *Arabic language, linguistics, Arabized, prowess, Sind.*

Background: The existence of 'Arabic language' and its functional manifestation in Indian subcontinent has great historical significance. Since the first Islamic Hegira era Arab-Muslims, basically merchants started arriving western and southern coastal regions of undivided India and they took an initiative to propagate Islam in the Indian subcontinents. In matters of political affairs, they also occupied 'Sind', and established the political administration there. In this connection, it may be noted that a ship full of Muslim women along with some merchants travelling to Iraq was attacked by the pirates of 'Debal', and they robbed the property of those merchants and made them captivated. Under such circumstances, women shouted repeatedly 'Oh Hajjaj!' 'Oh Hajjaj!'. Finally the complaint reached to Hajjaj b. Yusuf who at first tried to solve this issue diplomatically and asked the then ruler of Sind "King Dahir" to escape those women from the oppression of pirates but the king replied that he could not interfere in that matter since it is beyond his jurisdiction".¹ Finally, in 711 A.D., Hajjaj bin Yusuf al-Thaqafi sent a military expedition under the banner of Muhammad b. al-Qasim al-Thaqafi who defeated the king Dahir severely. Thereafter many

Arab- Muslims came and settled there, and their colonization in Sind made the first substantial and sustained Indo-Arab relations in respect of Islamic religion and the Arabic language as well.² This is the time, Islam started making its impact on Indian cultures and many Indians began to convert to Islam. Since then 'Arab Age' (from 92-933 A.H) started in Sind and it became cultural hub as well as Islamic Centre, many great scholars of Arab came to those areas and spread Islamic sciences.³ Arabic language and its literature started spreading along with other Islamic religious sciences and in this connection we find a good number of Arabic scholars of India and among them Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan is considered as one of the celebrated scholars of the 19th century.

Introduction: Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan: (October 14, 1832- February 10, 1890), a prominent scholar, writer, and reformist in India, was born in the town of "Bas Bareilly" in Uttar Pradesh. His father Syed Aoulad Hasan was a resident of Qannawj and received education from great personalities like Shykh Abdul Aziz al-Dehlovi.⁴ He got married to a honorable Nawab family lady of Bhopal whose name was Amira Shahjahan Begum. As result of which he was surnamed by the title of 'Amir of Bhopal', and it was a turning point of his life and his educational activities as well. As far as his great literary works are concerned, it is known that he instructed to publish '*Tafsir ibn Kathir*' with '*Fathu al-Bayan*' in one volume. Moreover, he purchased a copy of '*Fathu al- Bari*' of Allama Ibn Hajr Asqlani and published it in the Bulaq Press of Egypt, and for this purpose he spent fifty thousand rupees which he dedicated later on to the religious scholars of *Hadith* in India and other foreign countries also. His books were well accepted by the students, teachers, and also great writers all over Arab and Islamic countries. He was an author of great excellence that drew attention of many Arab scholars towards his scholastic writings. As such, his courtyard was always assembled by distinguished personalities, educationists, scholars, and teachers.

It is worth mentioning that during his life time superstition prevailed extensively among the Muslims. They did not give importance to Arabic language and its Islamic sciences. Especially, during the British rule Arabic language and its other Islamic sciences were neglected and ignored in a way that people of India started forgetting Arabic language and its various uses. While Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan observed this decadence, he tried his level best to revive all the Arabic and Islamic sciences in India and facilitated to the common people as well. Regarding the importance of Arabic linguistics he says:

"Arabic linguistics has great position in the realm of Islamic sciences, because, it helps to understand the subject matter of the Holy Qur'an along with its various meanings and structures as well ..., and linguistics is a medium to show pronouns, a guarantor of displaying secrets (secret meanings), and also to explain Islam and its Shari'a Law in complete ..."⁵

In short, he was a great scholar who tried his level best to the enrichment of Arabic Linguistics in India. In the 19th century, his fame and reputation spread far and wide particularly in the field of Arabic Linguistics. He compiled four books in Arabic linguistics they are as follows:

Laffu al-Qimat 'ala Tashih ba'd ma Ista'malatuhu al- 'Aammah min al- Mu'rab, wa al-Dakhil, wa al-Maulid, wa al- Aghlat: This book was written in Arabic on linguistics which was published in Siddiquia Press of Bhopal. It consists of 268 pages; and has been divided into eight chapters along with a preface in the beginning and a conclusion at the end. In fact, this book denotes to the expansion of knowledge of Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan in the subject concerned. In this book he has collected many words, terms, expressions, and proverbs which were used by the common people and the learned sections of people as well. In this connection, Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan considered both the sections to use wrong expressions in Arabic original. He made an attempt to rectify linguistic mistakes by this book

for those who committed wrong in the usage of Arabicized words, post classical words and foreign words. Therefore, the writer, in this book, tried his level best to identify the errors and getting an adjustment to come up with correct words and expressions.

In the preface of the book he mentions that there are many contemporary religious scholars of his age who committed grammatical and linguistic mistakes in their own Arabic writing. Observing that critical situation, he compiled a book illustrating the correct usage of words. The main focus of Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan's book is his linguistic observation that supported by the celebrated Arab linguists. For example he has mentioned authentic books of great linguists and they are: *Shifa al-Galil* of Allama Khifaji, *Takmilat al-Durra* of Zawaliqi, *Jalil al-Fasih* of Muaffaq al-Din al-Baghdadi, "*Al-Majhar*" of Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, "*Durratu al-Ghawas fi Auham al-Khawas*" of al-Hariri, "*Taj al-Urus fi Takmilat al-Qamus*" of Sayyid Murtaḍa al-Bilgharami, etc.

In addition, it has been observed that in this book, the author has exemplified a lot of terms, expressions and various words explained in a detail. In this connection, an attempt has been made to focus on them with following examples:

Tufaili (طفيلي): This is a term means a person arrives a (function) without invitation. Famous Abbasid poet Mutanabbi as well as some other poets mentioned in their poems also. According to famous Arab Linguist al-Laithi, this term derives from Iraqi language which means: he is arriving to a wedding feast. On the other hand, Murtaja says: it is a post-classical (new) word which was not available in Ancient Arabs usages and it basically indicates to a man from 'Kufa' called 'Tufail' who did not abstain from any wedding ceremony wherever it held.⁶

Askar (عسكر): Imam Shihabuddin Ahmad al-khafaji in his book 'Shifa al-Ghalil' says: "عسكر is an Arabicized term of 'Lashkar' means a military troop and it denotes the same meaning as in the word جيش (military) itself."⁷ But, Nawab Suddique Hasan Khan did not accept it, rather he told that it is not correct, because the word العسكر gives the only meaning of جيش (military) and it is not derived from the Persian word لشكر (Lashkar) as cited by Imam Shihabuddin Ahmad al-khafaji . On the other hand, al-Harawi says in his book شرح الفصيح that the word المعسكر comes with (fatha) vowel marks on kaf (ك) letter which indicates a place where a military force encamp and the word العسكر (military) is equal to الجيش (army), a Persian word using as Arabic word.⁸

In response to an another linguistic term Nawab Suddique Hasan Khan says: "People used to say ذهبت إلى عنده, this is a wrong term, as because, before عِنْدَ no preposition comes except 'مِنْ', and to make genitive case in this sentence the preposition 'مِنْ' is more suitable, because it is the root of all the prepositions. Moreover, the particle عِنْدُ gives different meanings, they are as follows:

- For presence, الحضرة e.g. عندي زيد (Zaid is beside me or Zaid is present)
- Owner hood, الملكية e.g. عندي مال (I have wealth)
- Opinion, judgment, الحكم: e.g. زيد عندي أفضل من عمرو (In my opinion , Zaid is better than Amar)
- Grace or favor, الفضل والإحسان: e.g. فَإِنْ أَتَمَمْتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ (If you would complete ten (years) then it would be a grace on your part)⁹

Al-'Alamul Khafaq min 'Ilm al- Ishteqaq: This is a linguistic book written in Arabic language, published at Dar al-Basair in Beirut, Lebanon. It bears 215 pages and it is written about the ancient and later grammarians, linguists, logicians, and interpreters and their compilations. He prepared this book with the help of many valuable books of great writers, e.g. "*Nujhatu al-Ahdaq*" of Qazi Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Shawqani, "*Marah al-Arwah*" of Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Masu'd, "*Sirru al-Layali*" of Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, "*Kitab al-Ta'rifat*" of Sharif Ali b. Muhammad al-Jurjani, "*KashafIstalahatu al-Funun*" of Muhammad b. A'ala Volume-III, Issue-II

al-Hanafi, “*Tabaqat al-Nahwiyyin*” of Abu Bakr al-Jubaidi, “*al-Mazhar fi Uloomi al-Lugha*” of Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, “*Taj al-Urus fi Takmilati al-Qamus*” of Syed Murtaja al-Bilgharami etc.

In this book, Nawab Suddique Hasan Khan differentiated ‘ilmu al-Lugha’ (linguistics) from ‘ilmu al-Ishteqaq’ (etymology), and ‘ilmu al-Sarf’ (Morphology). Moreover, he mentioned that ‘ilmu al- Ishteqaq’ is an agent of the two and verily the aim of this science is to inform students or investigators to complete knowledge on Arabic words and their derivations, as he says:

“The investigator, who intends to look into Arabic language, is of two types: either he has to observe the meaning of words used in Arabic sentences or to observe all the words of a sentence from which root they come from, the first part is related to ‘linguistics’ (علم اللغة) while the latter one is associated with ‘derivation’ (علم الاشتقاق).”

The author has mentioned various Arabic terms along with their examples which are related to the Arabic linguistics, for example, he mentions:

Combination of ‘al-hamja’ (الهمزة) and ‘al-ba’ (الباء): “Union of these two letters denotes various meanings like: distance, alienation and distinction between two. For example, look at these words like: ‘abba أب, ‘abata أبت, ‘abada أبد, ‘abara أبر, ‘abaja أبز, ‘abaqa أبق, ‘abila أبل, ‘abana أبن, ‘abaha أبه, and ‘aba أبا. You will definitely find those indications from all of these words. For example, (abba li al-sairi) أب للسير and أبت اليوم means اشتد حره (scorching heat of a day), that caused people keeping away from their working, أبق العبد the slave ran away, i.e. he has escaped from his master and so on. All of these forms i.e. combination of al- hamja (الهمزة) and al-ba (الباء) letter give the above mentioned meaning, wherein you will find the same rule applied if you ponder over them.”¹⁰

Al-Bulgha fi Usul al-Lugha: This is another precious book on linguistics, written by Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan, published in al-Jawā’ib Press of Constantinople in 1296 A.H. It is comprising of 188 pages, and has become famous all over the Muslim World. This book consists of a preface, two parts and a conclusion. As far as theme is concerned this book is compiled on Arabic linguistics, *Ijaz al-Qur’an* (Miracle of Qur’ān) and the sciences derived from it.

In its “preface” he discussed about description of language and some of its elements. In its introduction the author mentioned the advantage of linguistics, as he says: “As far as the position of linguistics is concerned verily the linguistics is one of the best sciences as well as literary arts which needs a good discussion ..., as it gives various meaning of the Holy Qur’ān and its structures. Moreover it highlights the pronouns and the secrets behind it...”¹¹

The first part of this book is based on summary of the book “al-Mazhar fi Uloom al-Lugha” of Allama Jalaluddin Suyuti (R.A). According to Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan it is the first inclusive book on Principle of Arabic language. He has mentioned in this book a list of books written on linguistics. The second part of this book is on bibliographies of dictionaries and the books written in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Indian languages. It bears many characteristics, first of all, it is compiled in detailed and before its publication no other books discussed in such a manner. Secondly, it is written in a good order. In addition to this, it uses as a tool to assist researchers in comparative physiology.¹²

Abjad al-‘Uloom: This is one of the famous books written by Amir Siddique Hasan Khan. This book published from different places. At first it was published at Siddiqui Press of Bhopal in 1295-1296 A.H. Thereafter, it was published at ‘Dar al- Kutub al-Ilmi‘a’ Beirut, Lebanon in 1999 A.D. and also published from Egypt. This book also famous as “al-Washi‘u al-Marqum, wa al-Sahab al-Markum, wa al-Rahiq al-Makhtum”, it is divided into three sections. The first part contains 302 pages, second part 486 pages and the part 368 pages. The

first section relates to the knowledge and its kinds, subjects, basics, objectives etc. Moreover, he discusses the basic of Islamic sciences, books, scripts, writings, and in this regard, he showed Islamic scholars and their contributions to its various fields and also wrote about the early writers. The second section is about various kinds of arts and sciences, written in systematically. He mentioned some issues which previous writer did not touch. In the third section, he discusses the biographies of all linguists according to the class and category and their specialization: linguists, morphologists, grammarians, etc.¹³

Ghusn al-Ban al-Muarraq bi –Muhsinat al-Bayan: This is a rare book on improvement in the science of conversation. Here, he collected sixty different metaphorical languages which mentioned by Syed Ghulam A‘li Azad al-Bilgrami in his book “Subhat al-Marjan” and forty-three other metaphors mentioned by al-Allama Muhammad b. A‘li al-Showqani in his treatise ‘*al-Raud al-Wasi‘fi al-Dalil al-Muni‘‘ala ‘Adm Inhisar al-Badi‘*’. Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan gives opinion that ‘*Ilmu al-Badi*’ (the art or science of metaphors or of good style) a branch of ‘*Ilmu al-Bayan*’ (Rhetoric) and one of the linguistic sciences as it discusses on various words, expressions and their meanings.¹⁴

His style in writing: Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan was an Indian writer, Arabic was not his mother tongue but he showed a great skill in Arabic as well as its various fields. He was very brilliant in explaining scientific expressions and solving complex Arabic words in a very simple and easy manner. His writing style was quite good with easy expression and minute investigation. His Arabic writing is distinguished by its distinctive features which can be observed in scores of his books especially those written in linguistic sciences like *al-Bulgha fi Usul al-Lugha*, *Abjad al-Uloom* etc. These books are a bright example of an articulate writing style in both the content and context. Allama Salim al-Bustami says about his Arabic writing style:

“Among the distinguished features in his Arabic language is his rhetorical expression which is not found in most of the post-classical and other writers. If you listen to his Arabic words, you will perceive that as if he was brought up in Yemen or educated by a woman of upper Hawazin. He chooses familiar words and avoids complexity by using expressions that are very heart touching and free from traditional color. He was enjoying full expertise and exemplary prowess in Arabic language having a remarkable talent in innovative literature.”¹⁵

Conclusion: In fine, we may come to the conclusion that Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan was an outstanding Indian scholar who contributed a lot in the field of Arabic language and linguistics. His linguistic books have benefitted not only for the Indians but also for other people of the world. We may compare him to the great scholars of the Arab world, for instance, Rifa‘a al-Tahtawi, Ahmad Faris Shidyaq, al-Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Showkani and others who endeavored greatly to evolve and develop modern standard form of Arabic language in their respective countries. In the same way Nawab Siddique Hasan Khan made an inestimable contribution to the field of Arabic language and linguistics in India.

Notes:

¹AL-DAIE Arabic Monthly, Vol. No.11. Issue No. 34, October-November 2010. Mohd. Sazid Qasimi on: Muhammad Bin Qasim al-Thaqafi Haamilu Liwae al-Islam Ila Shibhi al-Qarrah al-Hindhiah.

² Journal of the American oriental society 127.3 (2007), Tahera Qutbuddin, Arabic in India: A survey and Classification of its Uses, Compared with Persian. p.315

- ³ Prof. Asfaq Ahmad, *Tatawwur al-Adab al-Arabiya wa Marakizuha fi al-Hind*, Dar Umar, New Delhi, 1ST Published.2013, p. 5.
- ⁴ Prof. Jamaluddin Farooki, Prof. Abdur Rahman Adressery and Abdurahman Mangad: *Eminent writers in Indo-Arab literature*, al-Huda Book Stall –Calicut1, 1st pub.2008, p.84.
- ⁵ *Al-Bulagha fi Usul al-Lugha*, p.3
- ⁶ *Laffu al-Qimat...*, p.30.
- ⁷ *Shifa al-Ghalil*, Imam Shihabuddin Ahmad al-khafaj , al-Matb‘atu al-Wahabiya, 1282 A.H.,p.153.
- ⁸ *Laffu al-Qimat...*, P.31
- ⁹ *Ibid.* Page. 78
- ¹⁰ *Al-‘Alamul Khafaq min ‘Ilm al- Ishteqaq*, p .24-25.
- ¹¹ *Al-Bulagha fi Usul al-Lugha*, p.4
- ¹² *Arabic language and literature in India (Reality and Prospects)*, p.114- 115
- ¹³ *Abjad al-Uloom*, vol.1, p.14-15
- ¹⁴ *Arabic language and literature in India (Reality and Prospects)*, p.115
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 119.

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