Exploiting Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan’s Quranic Contributions: An Examination of His Works on Quranic Studies

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EXPLORING NAWAB SIDDIQUE HASSAN KHAN'S QURANIC CONTRIBUTIONS: AN EXAMINATION OF HIS WORKS ON QURANIC STUDIES

Abdul Raziq¹, Hafiz Amjad Hussain²

Abstract: The Quran, revered as the divine constitution revealed by Allah Almighty, serves as a guiding light for humanity. Throughout history, scholars from various regions and epochs have dedicated themselves to unravelling its profound essence through diligent research. The Tehreek-e-Fehm-e-Quran, initiated by Hazrat Shah Wali Ullah, catalysed interpretative and pedagogical efforts among contemporary writers in the Indian subcontinent. Among the stalwarts devoted to the Quranic cause, Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan stands out, having authored over 222 books, including seven seminal works on Quranic studies in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu languages. This thesis embarks on a comprehensive research and analytical exploration of Nawab Siddique Hassan's Quranic literature, encompassing his edited compilations of tafsir (exegesis), such as 'Fatah-ul-Bayan-fi-Magasid-il-Quran' 'Tarjuman-ul-Quran-bi-Lataif-il-Bayan,' and 'Nail-ul-Maram-min-Tafseer-e-Ayat-il-Ahkam.' Additionally, it delves into his works on sciences of Quran, including ‘Afadat-ul-Shuyukh be Miqdar al Nasikh wal Mansukh' and ‘Akseer-fi-Usool-e-Tafseer,' as well as his partial exegeses like ‘Tazkeer-ul Kul be Tafseer-il-Fateha wa Arba-e-Qul’. Furthermore, it examines his discourse on the Dignity of Surahs of the Quran, as articulated in 'Fasl-il-Khitab fi Fazl-il-Kitab'.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Holy Quran, revealed upon the seal of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for the guidance of humanity, is a source of enlightenment and guidance. Every word of it contains a rich treasure of meanings and facts. Muslim scholars from all over the world, since the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), have been rendering great services in the field of perception and explanation of the Holy Quran. Like other parts of the world, the analytical Quranic literature produced in the sub-continent has been of the highest rank. The descendants of Shah Wali Allah (1176H/1726AD) submitted their valued contribution in this regard.¹

A renowned personality of the sub-continent, with 222 books to his credit, chose it as a pride for himself to serve the Holy Quran. His name is Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan (1890AD/1307H). This research paper studies the Quranic services especially in the field of Quranic commentary rendered by him, basing the research on his books.²

The Holy Quran is the ultimate solution for the individual as well as social problems facing humanity. That’s why the focus of attention for Muslim scholars everywhere and in all eras has been the Quranic literature. A modest portion of the Quranic commentary and explanations has come from the scholars of the sub-continent. The pioneer in this field is Abd bin Hameed Al-Sindhi (863AD/249H), followed by Shaikh Ashraf Jahangir Al-Sammani (1406AD/808H). The list follows as such:

- Shaikh Muhammad bin Hassan Yousuf Hasni Dehlvi (1424AD/828H)
- Shaikh Alaud-Din Ali bin Ahmad Al-Mahaemi (1432AD/835H)
- Qazi Shahab ud Din Dolat Abadi (1445AD/848H)
- Shaikh Hussain bin Khalid Nagori (1496AD/901H)
- Haji Abdulwahab Bukhari (1527AD/933H)

Shaikh Mubarak bin Khazram (1593AD/1001H)
Author of ‘Swateul Ilhaam’ Abuul Faiz Faizi (1595AD/1004H)
Shaikh Tahir bin Yousuf Sindhi (1595AD/1004H)
Shaikh Munawwar bin al-Humeed (1603AD/1011H)
Shaikh Nizam ud Din Thanesri (1615AD/1024H)
Shaikh Isa bin Qasim Sindhi (1622AD/1031H)
Shaikh Nemat bin Ataullah Firozpuri (1662AD/1072H)
Shaikh Yahya bin Muhammad Hussain Gijrati (1690AD/1101H)
Shaikh Jamal ud Din Gujrat (1712AD/1124H)
Shaikh Ali Asghar Qanoji (1727AD/1140H)
Shaikh Kaleemullah Jahan Abadi (1728AD/1141H)
Shaikh Fateh Muhammad Saidaani (1734AD/1143H)

Muhammad Hakam Barelvi (1737AD/1150H) rendered meritorious services regarding the Commentary of the Holy Quran.

Afterwards, the great scholar of Islam, Hazrat Shah Wali Allah (RA), popularly known as Muhaddith Dehlvi, started translating the Holy Quran into the local language. After him, his sons Shah Abdul Qadir and Shah Rafee ud Din paved the way for understanding the Holy Quran in the Urdu language. About 105 years after Shah Abdul Qadir Dehlvi (1817AD/1205H), was born a personality who nourished the sapling of the understanding of the Holy Quran planted by his predecessors and turned it into a strong tree that provides fruit and shade to humanity even today.¹

The great commentator of the Holy Quran, Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan, is the leading commentator and interpreter of the Holy Quran from the sub-continent. He was born on Sunday, 14th of October 1832 AD/19th of Jamadiul Awwal 1248H, in his maternal household located in Bareli.

He travelled long and wide from Bhopal, Balgram, Tonec, Farrukh Abad, and Kanpur to Delhi to receive education from some renowned scholars of the day. Having had his share of knowledge from his teacher, Mufti of Delhi, Sadr ud Din Khan, he returned to his hometown.

¹ Ernst and Baljon.
“He got a high-status job after completing his education in the court of the Queen of Bhopal, Nawab Shah Jahan Begum. She was so inspired by his academic as well as administrative qualities that she became his wife.”

He lived only 59 years, but he continued his academic and writing activities alongside being the ruler of Bhopal. He wrote books on a variety of subjects like Tarikhul Uloom; Hadith; Beliefs; Tabqat; Etymology; Fiqah; Usool e Fiqah; History; Fiqah ul Hadith; Badee; Kalam; Muwaiz; Daawaat; Usool ud Din; Manihaat; Ilm ul Akhirah; Sufism; Tauheed; Muhlikaat; Hilal o Nahl; Fiqhu Sunnah; Moizt o Wasaya; Kashkol; Poetry; Usool e Hadith; Literature; Seerah; Biography; Manaqib; Sarf; Mantaq; Politics; Morality and a lot on the commentary and explanation of the Holy Quran. The number of his books exceeds 222.

Mark his prolific authorship! However, his main interest was in Quranic studies. His services have been recognized by various universities around the world registering research papers on him for M.Phil. and Ph.D. scholars. Some of the research articles which have been published are as follows:

Life and Works of Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan by Saeed Ullah Khan, PhD from Cambridge.

Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan by Razia Hamid, PhD from Muslim University, Aligarh.

Syed Siddique Hassan Khan Qanoji by Dr. Jamal Luqman from Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, Ijtiba Nadvi did a PhD in Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan from Muslim University, Aligarh. Adeel ur Rahman did his M.Phil from Punjab University by producing an article entitled “Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan and Etymology.” A seminar was held in Jamea Salfia, Banaras, India, to commemorate the meritorious services of Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan in 2005, where his intellectual services and

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2 Usman Ali and Dr. Muhammad Munir Azhar, “Features of Al Shmamat Ul Anbriyah Min Maulid e Khair Ul Briyah by Nawab Siddique Hassan, and Critical Study of Unique Subjects.,” İQĀN 1, no. 02 (2019), https://doi.org/10.36755/iqan.v1i02.67.
authorship were deeply appreciated. I chose for my PhD thesis the topic “Tarjuman ul Quran bil Latef il Bayan”, the Commentary on the Holy Quran by Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan Sahib.1

The aforementioned research work done on him is ample proof of his intellectual grandeur. The embodiment of knowledge and practice, the renowned king of authorship and compilations, the great example of morals and morality, the chief of thinkers, the servant of Muhaddiseen, one of the best poets, a matchless preacher, and the just and knowledgeable ruler of Bhopal died of ISTISQA on 29th of Jamadi ul Ukhra 1307/20th of Feb 1890. The canvas of his authorship is very wide and variegated in the field of Quranic Commentary and Literature. Very few are such persons like him, not only in the sub-continent but elsewhere in the entire world, who left behind them such a rich treasure of Quranic services.2

His teacher, Hussain bin Mohsin Yamani, lauds Nawab Sahib, stating, "When Nawab Sahib embarked on the journey of knowledge and insight, he committed his life wholeheartedly to this pursuit, exploring every facet of knowledge without exception". Syed Noman bin Mahmood Aloosi, the esteemed author of Rooh ul Maani and a contemporary of Nawab Sahib, regards him as a luminary figure, stating, "One of his contemporaries and a great Scholar Allama Abu Al-Tayyab Shams ul Haq Azeem Abadi considers Nawab Sahib as the Mujaddad e Islam of the 14th century". Molana Hakeem Syed Abdul Abdul Hayye Hasni, in his work Nuzhatul Khawatir, further illustrates Nawab Sahib’s dedication to scholarship, noting, "He held profound respect for scholarly individuals and cherished rare books, both contemporary and from the past. He invested considerable wealth in acquiring these treasures, including the printing of Tafseer Ibn-e-Kaseer, Fatahul Bayan, and Ibn-e-Hjr Asqalani, as well as the purchase of the manuscript of Ibn-e-Ilaan, which he published through Bolan Publisher, Egypt, at 50 thousand rupees. He insisted on distributing these works among scholars of Hadith,

2 Ali and Azhar, “Features of Al Shmamat Ul Anbriyah Min Maulid e Khair Ul Briyah by Nawab Siddique Hassan, and Critical Study of Unique Subjects.”
both in India and beyond. During a tempestuous journey back from Hajj, he began dictating Sunan Darmi.¹

Nawab Sahib's contributions to the understanding and interpretation of the Holy Quran were monumental, as evidenced by his meticulous commentaries such as Fathul Bayan fi Maqasid il Quran, Tarjuman ul Quran bi Lataef il Bayan, and Nail ul Maram min Tafseer Ayaat il Ahkaam. Additionally, his significant works, including Akseer fi Usool il Tafseer, Afadatul Shuyookh be Miqdar n Nasikh wal Mansookh, and Fasl ul Khitab fi Fazl il Kitab, underscore his deep commitment to scholarly excellence. Throughout his endeavours, Nawab Sahib ensured the integrity of his research, free from any impurities that might compromise the authenticity of his work. Each of his books serves as a testament to his erudition and profound reverence for the Holy Quran. Below is a brief overview of his notable works on the Holy Quran and its commentary.

AFADAHTUL SHUYOOKH BEMIQDAR N NASIKH WAL MANSOOKH:

It was published by Muhammadi Press Lahore in 1900/1318. Nawab Sahib provides an introduction at the outset of this book, stating that "This pamphlet, compiled in 1870/1286, consists of a preface, two chapters, and a concluding section. In the preface, matters about Nasakh (abrogation) are addressed, while the first chapter delves into the annulment of certain verses and the varying opinions among scholars on this matter. The second chapter explores the roles of the abrogator and the abrogated about Traditions."

AKSEER FI USOOL IL TAFSEER

It was published by Nizami Publishers, Kanpur in 1875/1291. It consists of 130 pages and is written in Persian, divided into two parts.

In the first part, Nawab Sahib outlines the purpose of the book in the preface, followed by a discussion on the principles of Quranic interpretation (Usool Ul Tafseer) and the rationale behind certain meanings of the Quran. Additionally, the book delves into the reasons for the obscure passages of the Quran, interpretations and resolutions of

¹ Ali and Azhar.
disagreements, the compilation and organization of Quranic material, the objectives of the Quran, and the blessings of recitation and the importance of Quranic education.¹

The second part provides a comprehensive account of 1300 commentators of the Holy Quran, arranged alphabetically.

Renowned historian Ishaq Bhatti remarked on this book, stating: "This scholarly work, authored by a luminary from the subcontinent, is meticulously arranged alphabetically by Nawab Sahib".

**FASLUL KHITAB FI FAZL IL KITAB:**

It was authored by Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan in 1887/1305 and published by the Farooqi Press, Delhi in 1896/1314. This Urdu book spans 32 substantial pages, serving as a comprehensive exploration of the glories of the Holy Quran.

In this work, Nawab Sahib elucidates, "This book encapsulates the myriad benefits and blessings of the Holy Quran, drawing from authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the esteemed scholars of Islam. The superiority of the Holy Quran over all other books mirrors Allah's excellence and supremacy over His creation. Allah's challenge remains unmet until the Day of Judgment, as neither Jinn nor mankind, collectively or individually, can produce anything comparable to the Quran. Allah employs numerous examples in the Quran to illustrate certain concepts. Only certified Muslim scholars possess the blessed knowledge that Allah's words cannot be quantified or equalled, even if all the trees on Earth were transformed into pens and all the seas into ink. Therefore, the recitation of any man-made words or adherence to the teachings of so-called scholars pales in comparison to the enlightenment offered by the Holy Quran. Hence, I have exclusively focused on Quranic verses in this book.

"TAZKEER UL KUL BETAFASEER IL FATIHA WA ARBAE QULL"

It is a publication from Aligarh consisting of 62 pages, published in 1887AD/1304H. Nawab Sahib elaborates, "This commentary focuses on five Surahs of the Holy Quran,

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namely Surah Fatiha and the four Qu’l (four Surahs beginning with the word ق). These surahs are recited by all Muslims in prayers, emphasizing Allah's Oneness throughout. Understanding the meanings of these surahs strengthens one's faith and ensures correct worship, guarding against any form of polytheism.

He further explains the rationale behind discussing these five Surahs separately in five distinct books: "Although the meanings of these surahs are explained in the commentary Tarjaman ul Quran and Fathul Bayan, it might be challenging for readers to grasp them in their entirety.

Nawab Sahib meticulously examined approximately 10,000 aspects related to Surah Fatiha in Tafseer Kabeer. While scholars like Shaikh ul Islam Ibn e Taimiyyah and Ibn e Qayyim RA provided commentary on the last two Surahs of the Holy Quran, Nawab Sahib aimed to make this specialized knowledge accessible to the general public, stating, "The proper understanding of this knowledge is primarily intended for Islamic scholars, but here, we target laymen for clearer comprehension."

TARJUMAN UL QURAN BELATAEFIL BAYAN

Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan embarked on a monumental task in 1885AD/1302H: the compilation of a comprehensive Tafseer titled "Tarjuman Ul Quran Belataefil-Bayan." Although he diligently penned down the commentary from Surah Al-Fatiha to Surah Al-Kahf and concluded with the final two chapters, encompassing a total of seven volumes, fate did not permit him to see the completion of this ambitious project. The responsibility of finishing the remaining eight volumes fell upon his devoted disciple, Zulfiqar Ahmad Naqvi Bhopali, following Nawab Sahib's passing.

Reflecting on his journey in the foreword of "Tarjuman Ul Quran Belataefil-Bayan," Nawab Sahib recalled commencing the commentary during the auspicious month of Ramadan in 1302 H/1885AD, a homage to the Quran's revelation in this sacred period. Despite encountering interruptions and challenges, he managed to accomplish the

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monumental task of composing seven volumes within four years, concluding in May 1889AD.

Zulfiqar Ali Naqvi Bhopali undertook the mantle of completing the remaining volumes, initiating his efforts in Safar 1308H/1891AD. With divine providence guiding his hand, he diligently laboured until all eight volumes were meticulously crafted and finalized. The inaugural edition of this comprehensive commentary, comprising 15 volumes, was published by Mufeed e Aam Alkaen, Agra, India, spanning the years from 1302H/1889AD to 1314H/1897AD, with the final volume seeing publication in 1323/1905AD.¹

However, the journey toward completing this scholarly work was not without its share of challenges and transitions. Following the conclusion of the initial two volumes, the task of completing the 7th and 8th volumes fell to Molana Muhammad bin Hashim Khadiyian Wala. Despite the hurdles encountered and the technical intricacies involved, each manuscript bore the mark of meticulousness, with proper documentation ensuring the integrity and authenticity of the commentary.²

Nawab Sahib's approach to Quranic interpretation was characterized by a steadfast commitment to authentic traditions, a critical appraisal of questionable narratives, and an unwavering adherence to the tenets of Ahlu-Sunnah. His scholarly endeavours transcended sectarian boundaries, advocating for a moderate and inclusive approach that appealed to readers from diverse backgrounds.

Recognizing the need for accessibility and dissemination of knowledge, scholars like Prof. Israel Farooqi, Prof. Hafiz Muhammad Ayyub, and Prof. Abdul Hafeez Chaudhary embarked on the task of simplifying Nawab Sahib's work. Their efforts, published in the esteemed journal 'Muhaddis' Model Town, Lahore, aimed to make the profound insights of the Tafseer accessible to a wider audience.

Moreover, Dr. Muhammad Yousuf Farooq, in collaboration with Muhammad Yahya Qureshi, endeavoured to further facilitate understanding by presenting a user-friendly

² Ali and Azhar, “Features of Al Shmamat Ul Anbriyah Min Maulid e Khair Ul Briyah by Nawab Siddique Hassan, and Critical Study of Unique Subjects.”
rendition of the Tafseer. Their collaborative efforts sought to bridge the gap between scholarly discourse and lay comprehension, ensuring that the wisdom encapsulated within Nawab Sahib's commentary resonated with readers across diverse spectrums of society.¹

"Fathul Bayan Fi Maqasidil Quran" stands as a monumental commentary on the Holy Quran, spanning ten volumes. Its inaugural publication in four volumes by the Siddiqi Press, Bhopal, in 1289H/1872 marked the inception of its profound scholarly journey. Subsequently, an enhanced second edition was unveiled in 1300H/1872AD by Al-Matbaat ul Kubra Al-Muneeriyyah, Bolaq, now expanded to encompass all ten volumes. The enduring legacy of this work continued with a third publication, orchestrated by Maktabah Al-Misriyya, Al Beirut, in 15 meticulously crafted volumes in 1412H/1991AD.

Accessible in esteemed libraries worldwide, "Fathul Bayan Fi Maqasidil Quran" captivates readers with its depth and elegance. A closer examination reveals its unique blend of authentic traditions and a nuanced understanding of Quranic verses, presented lucidly and maturely. Nawab Sahib himself extols the virtues of this commentary in its introduction, highlighting its comprehensive coverage of Quranic exegesis. He underscores its role as a compendium of scholarly insights, meticulously curated to encompass the breadth of academic discourse present in other commentaries.

Distinctive in its approach, "Fathul Bayan Fi Maqasidil Quran" surpasses mere reliance on authentic traditions, delving deeper into the nuances of their interpretation. Its richness lies not only in the selection of traditions but also in its profound understanding and synthesis of diverse scholarly perspectives. As Nawab Sahib aptly notes, this commentary serves as a repository of knowledge for students, a trove of wisdom for researchers, and a guiding light for experts in the field of Quranic interpretation.²

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¹ Metcalf, “A Way with Words: Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan (1832-1890) and the Unexpected Power of Print.”
Dr. Salim Qudwaee, in his reflections on the magnificence of this Tafseer, commends its author for his meticulous approach. Drawing from Imam Jalaud Din Sayuti's "Durr-e-Mansoor," the author seamlessly integrates his insights with those of his predecessors, offering a comprehensive exposition of the Quran. Notably, he addresses weak traditions and navigates conflicting interpretations with scholarly discernment, while also addressing nuances in recitation and resolving issues of punctuation. Dr. Qudwaee asserts that this Tafseer stands as a pinnacle of Quranic exegesis, encompassing the finest elements of commentary.¹

In Nawab Sahib's elucidation of the virtues of the Holy Quran, he begins with a detailed commentary on Surah Al-Fatiha, meticulously analyzing its words, statements, and historical context. He delves into the intricacies of Arabic grammar and the interpretations of jurists, emphasizing that the divine wisdom of the Quran transcends human understanding. Notably, he distinguishes mystic literature from Quranic commentary, asserting the need for rigorous scholarly analysis.

The reception of this Tafseer among contemporary scholars attests to its exceptional quality. Mufti Shaikh Yahya bin Muhammad, a renowned Quranic commentator, lauds its excellence, praising its comprehensive coverage, logical arrangement, and accessible style. He marvels at the author's ability to unveil the profound truths of the Quran with clarity and eloquence, affirming its status as a masterpiece of Quranic scholarship.

The book was received warmly by the scholars of the day. They studied and appreciated it on merit. What Mufti Shaikh Yahya bin Muhammad, the expert commentator of the holy Quran, said in praise of this Tafseer speaks volumes for the excellence of Nawab Sahib. He says “I have studied only one-fourth of it so far and have found it the best of its kind. It is quite firm in its composition and arrangement of facts, comprehensive in all intellectual discussions and easy to interpret for the people with vision. The author has adopted a very strange and meaningful style in it. The reader reaches the depth of the matter in the first reading and he does not have to think deeply to understand things there as is the case with the commentaries of the bygones. Everything is presented in an easy-to-understand way and

¹ Metcalf, “A Way with Words: Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan (1832-1890) and the Unexpected Power of Print.”
there is no problem in comprehending all issues. By his beautiful writing style, he has expressed the secrets of Allah’s book and has manifested the wonders of the Holy Quran”.

**NAIL UL MARAM MIN TAFSEER AYAT IL AHKAM:**

An interpretation of *Fiqhi ayat* of the Holy Quran¹, Originally published by the Alvi Press, Lucknow, in 1292H/1875AD, comprising 196 pages, "*Nail ul Maram Min Tafseer Ayat il Ahkam*" later saw a reissue by Maktabah Al-Salifiyyah, Lahore. The edition by Jamia Taleem ul Islam Mamu Kanjaan in 1421H/2001AD expanded the work to 391 pages. Considered one of Nawab Sahib's most significant works, it focuses on verses relating to commandments, providing clarity and guidance to believers without the need for extensive Quranic references.

In this scholarly exploration of Fiqh al-Quran², Nawab Sahib meticulously extracts commandments from 348 Quranic verses, drawing extensively from the verdicts of Muhaddithin and traditions found in Sihah Sitta and other reputable sources. His insightful analysis reflects a profound understanding of Islamic jurisprudence, establishing him as a respected Mujtahid with a keen ability to interpret religious matters. Moreover, Nawab Sahib acknowledges the diversity of opinions among Muslim scholars regarding commandment verses, adding depth and nuance to his discourse.

Following the success of "Nail ul Maram," Nawab Sahib further expanded upon its themes in "Maqasd ul Quran," cementing his legacy as a prominent commentator on Quranic jurisprudence. Indeed, Nawab Siddique Hassan Khan's contributions to Quranic commentary have enriched the intellectual landscape of the subcontinent, offering a balanced and accessible approach to understanding Islam. His work was widely disseminated among Muslim communities to foster greater understanding and enlightenment in contemporary times.

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¹ Yasir Farooq and Zahid Farooq, “Methodology of Interpretation in Ahkam Ul Qur’an and Criticism on Imam Al-Jassas- an Analytical Study.”

² Farooq and Farooq.
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