Ahmad Raza Khan as an Arabic Poet

in the light of his Dewan "Basateen ul Ghufraan" بساتين الغفران

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Abstract:

The soil of the Subcontinent is quite rich in producing scholars and great men in every field. We possess a huge treasure of literature by famous scholars of this land. Ahmad Raza Khan, religious scholar, writer, and poet, is one of the great contributors to this treasure. This research contains a brief description of his life, his poetry and his Arabic Dewan (collection of poetry) ("بساتين الغفران") Orchards of Forgiveness) along with some examples with translation and explanation of verses from dewan. The poet has plenty of literary work and his qualifications and educational excellence is well known in the subcontinent in particular and in the Arab World in general. This Dewan is a fine example from the vast sea of his writings. This research also shows the marvelous Arabic Poetry by Ahmad Raza Khan. We only focused, in this article, Ahmad Raza Khan and his Arabic poetry which was collected by Prof. Hazim Muhammad Ahmad and in addition to that, also presented a brief background and struggle for this collection.

Keyword:

Ahmad Raza Khan, Arabic Poetry, Literary Work, Subcontinent, Writings

Sheikh Ahmad Reza Khan Al-Barailawi, was born a year before the Indian revolution in the turbulent circumstances and terrible events, and he witnessed the political movements. India at that time was boiling like a cauldron from the oppression of the brutal British colonialism, and this had a strong impact on the life of Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan in terms of his love for Islam and Muslims and his hatred for British colonialism, in fact every denomination that contradicts the religion of Islam. He is Ahmad Raza Khan bin Muhammad Naqi Ali Khan bin Muhammad Raza Ali Khan bin Muhammad Kazim Ali Khan bin Shah Muhammad Azam Ali Khan bin Muhammad Saadat Yar Khan bin Muhammad Saeed Allah Khan; may God have mercy on them. ⁽¹⁾

Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan is the descendant of an Afghani tribe called Barech, who lives in the outskirts of Kandahar, Afghanistan. His father came from Afghanistan to India. His father, Sheikh Naqi Ali Khan (who died in 1297 AH/1880 AD) and his grandfather, Sheikh Raza Ali Khan (who died in 1282 AH), were prominent and well-known scholars. ⁽²⁾

At the time of his birth he was called "Muhammad", and his grandfather called him "Ahmad Raza", the name by which he became famous.

Ahmad Raza was given several titles due to the rare qualities of his strong and unique personality, including: "اعلى حضرت" "The Most High", and this is the title that he was known for in the Indian subcontinent of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Likewise, in other countries where the Indian communities are concentrated in the Indian culture.⁽³⁾

He was born in Bareilly, one of the cities of the northern Indian state, on the 10th of Shawwal al-Mukarram in the year 1272 AH / 1856 AD, in a lineage known for virtue, honor, knowledge and piety. Muhammad Saeed Allah Khan came to "Lahore" during the era of the Islamic Mughal state, and assumed important positions in the state, and as for his grandson, Maulana Muhammad Azam Ali Khan, he chose the city of "Bareilly" as his home, where the imam was born and buried, and thus some of the owners of this family had assumed positions His father, Maulana Taqi Ali Khan (d.: 1297 AH), may God Almighty have mercy on him, was a virtuous scholar, just as his grandfather, Maulana Raza Ali Khan (d.: 1286 AH), may God have mercy on him, was a virtuous and pious scholar. (4)

Ahmad Raza Khan began his primary education in the neighborhood school, then he began studying under Maulana Ghulam Qadir Baig and completed the study under his supervision in the year 1286 AH. (5) Imam Ahmad Raza Khan, on the authority of Sheikh Abu Al-Abbas Ahmad bin Zaini Dahlan Al-Shafi'i Al-Makki, took the certification of Hadith and memorized the Holy Qur'an in just one month. This indicates the strength of his mind and memory. (6)

He once went to the city of Rampur to visit some of his relatives, and during his stay there he studied "Sharh Jagmini" for several days from Maulana Abd al-Ali al-Rampuri, who was one of the great scholars of Astronomy. (7)

The imam himself says at the time of his graduation from the study that it was in the middle of Sha'ban 1286 AH, and at that time I was thirteen years, ten months and five days old, and on this date prayer was obligatory for me, and I focused the orders given by Allah Almighty." After completing his education, he started research and writing. He acquired more knowledge and mastered various subjects of science and arts, obtaining a license to issue fatwas on behalf of his father. The imam, may God have mercy on him, says in his letter to the student of Sheikh Zafar al-Din al-Bihari, praise be to God, I issued the first fatwa when I was thirteen years old, on the fourteenth of Sha'ban in the year 1286 AH.

A person is not unique in building his personality, but many motives contribute to building it from his environment, parents, teachers, sheikhs, friends, observations, studies, movements and events of his time, and others that require detail.

Those of the sheikhs and scholars who influenced his life, I will mention them as follows: (8)

- 1 -Shah Al-Rasoul Al-Marhrawi. (9)
- 2 -Maulana Abd ul Ala Rampuri. (10)
- 3 -Shah Abu Al-Hussein Ahmad Al-Nouri. (11)
- 4 -Maulana Ghulam Qadir Baig Lakhnawi. (12)
- 5 -Sheikh Ahmad bin Zaini Dahlan Makki. (13)
- 6 -Sheikh Abdur Rehman Siraj. (14)
- 7 -Sheikh Hussain Jamal ul Lail. (15)
- 8 Maulana Wasi Ahmad Al-Muhaddith Al-Surati. (16)

May God have mercy on him, he was very prolific and profound writer. It has been said that he wrote more than a thousand books, between huge works and small treatises. This saying may be a kind of exaggeration, but what is wrong with his assertion is that he is known for a lot of authorship and more than three hundred books. His writings are being studied and taught in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and for this reason it is true that he is called "The Second Suyuti" in the Indian subcontinent.

Among his most famous books: (17)

It twelve volumes. العطايا النبوية في الفتاوى الرضوية،

- الدولة المكية بالمادة الغيبية.
- حسام الحرمين على منحر الكفر والمين.
 - 4. المعتمد المستند بناء نجاة الأبد.
 - 5. تمهيد إيمان بآيات قرآن.
- .6 إقامة القيامة على طاعن القيام لنبي تمامة.
- 7. سبحان السبوح عن عيب كذب مقبوح.
- 8. أنوار الانتباه في حل نداء يا رسول الله.
 - 9. بركات الإمداد لأهل الاستمداد.
- 10. سلطنة المصطفى في ملكوت كل الورى.

In the city of Bareilly, where his resting place is, he died - may God Almighty have mercy on him - on the 25th of Safar al-Muzaffar in the year 1340 AH / 28th of October 1921 AD after a tremendous life of sixty-five years, in which there are great services for mankind in many fields of knowledge that enjoy vitality and activity. His literary work pleases the readers, so may God Almighty multiply his good deeds, perpetuate his memory, and make Paradise his resting place.(18)

Introducing the Diwan " بساتين الغفران " The Gardens of Forgiveness" And for this collection that we have now, the researcher of the collection, Ustad Hazim, chose a title for it, Basatin al-Ghufran, and about this he says: "When I decided to choose a title for this collection - after completing its collection, arrangement and verification - I thought it necessary to take into account what Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan chose as a title for his Urdu collection - حدائق بخشش" Hadayek Bakhshish", so I decided to name it

The Gardens of Forgiveness". (19) الغفران

This diwan consits of three hundred and fifty pages measuring 20 x 30 cm. This diwan begins with a preface in eight pages under the title of introducing Imam Muhammad Ahmad Raza Khan his life, works and creed. After that there is a presentation by Sheikh Muhammad Abdul Hakim Sharaf Al-Qadri, a professor at the Jamia Nizamiyya Rizvia in Lahore and reviewer of this Diwan - this presentation took twelve pages in which he talked about Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan and his literary talent in Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages. He also talked about the Diwan and the effort that the researcher made in order to complete it, and he also wrote about the life, education and literary biography of the researcher of this Dewan. (20)

Then there is the history of the printing of this Dewan with the calculation of the sentence or title, which was organized by Sheikh Al Qazi Abd al-Daa'im Daim, and its number is twenty-nine, including the title that he set for this Dewan with the calculation of the Sentences, which is " إشعار الفهام

بأشعار الإمام (1416 AH). (21) After that, a poem in Arabic in praise of Sheikh

Ahmad Raza Khan, composed by the poet Dr. Muhammad Hussain Iqbal Al-Qadri, in forty-five verses,(22) and attached it with an appendix. As for this Dewan, the collector and the researcher says(23), "and I divided this Dewan, Basateen al-Ghufran, into:

First: the poems(sonnets).

There are 3 Sonnets:

(ه. ۱۳۰۰ حمائد فضل رسول) (i)

Number of verses: 72

(ه. ۱۳۰۰مدائح فضل رسول) (ii)

Number of verses: 143

(ه ١٣١٨ آمال الابرار وآلام الاشرار) (iii)

Number of verses: 174

Second: Elegies and smithereens.

Number of Verses: 247

Third: Quartets.

Number of Verses: 8

Fourth: Individual verses.

Number of verses: 4

Fifth: Arabic verses within Urdu or Persian poems.

Number of verses: 35

Sixth: Arabic verses interspersed with foreign words or letters.

Number of Verses: 12

Seventh: Dates according to the sentences.

Number of Verses: 92(24)

After that, he added this text with an appendix about which the researcher says (25): "Then I added this text with an appendix marked with "The

Impact of the Arabic Language in the Diwan of Hadayek Bakhshish", and it includes the following:

First: Samples of his poems, the first part of which are in Arabic.

Second: Samples of his poems, the second part of which is in Arabic.

Third: Samples of his poems interspersed with phrases in the Arabic language (what is known in Al-Badi' by quotation) from the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the noble hadith of the Prophet.

Fourth: Examples of his poems interspersed with phrases in Arabic.

After that, samples of manuscripts are followed by a list of sources and references, and then the index that includes the topics of the Diwan.

The story of collecting this Dewan is when Professor Hazem Muhammad Ahmad Abd al-Rahim al-Mahfouz – one of the Scholars of Al-Azhar University, Cairo– came to Pakistan, and after he came to know that none of the writers and scholars had dared to collect, arrange, verify and issue the Arabic Poetry of our poet, he decided to complete this work, and about the beginning of his reading of the compositions of our poet he says:⁽²⁶⁾

"My acquaintance with Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan began in the Faculty of Languages and Translation of Al-Azhar University, when Professor Dr. Muhammad Mubariz Malik, a visiting professor at the Department of Urdu Language and Literature, came to me in 1989 AD. About the life and works of Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan, and his first poems were in Arabic, which I read some verses from his famous poem "Hamayed Fazall Rasool."" And about the beginning of his efforts to accomplish this work, he says :⁽²⁷⁾

"It was destined for me to come to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as a visiting professor at the Department of Arabic Language and Literature, University of the Punjab, in the city of Lahore - the heart of Pakistan - on the fifth of January in 1995 AD, and after I knew that no one had compiled the Arabic Verses by Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan until that time, so I decided to come forth for this work. In Pakistan I had availability, where most of the works of Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan are located, which he wrote in Arabic. I have seen the extent of the desire of the scholars of the Sunnis and the community here in the city of Lahore (in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) and they encouraged me to do this work, so I set out to collect the poetry of Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan."

Regarding the printed works and manuscripts of our poet, which he relied on in collecting and arranging this Arabic collection, he says: (28)

"I relied in arranging this Diwan on the works of Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan, which my hand reached (and the speech is by Professor Hazim Muhammad Ahmad Al-Mahfouz). He is Maulana Muhammad Zafar al-Din al-Bahari and other reliable books whose authors are among the best who chronicled the life of Sheikh Ahmad Raza Khan. I also found some of his poems from some of the writings of his senior contemporaries, such as the book Siraj al-A'arif fi al-Wassayat wa'l-Ma'arif by His Eminence Sheikh Abi al-Husayn Ahmad al-Nuri, and also from some The magazines that published some of his virtue's poems, such as the monthly magazine Al-Ridha (Barili), as well as some writers that recently chronicled the life of our poet, such as the works written by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Masoud Ahmad, and also some scientific articles that were written about the Arabic poems of Virtue, and so on." (29)

As for methodology followed by the collector of the Diwan, he says: (30) "My approach in collecting and verifying the poetry of this Diwan was that I did not suffice with reading and collecting what I found of poems from a manuscript, source or reference, but when I found the same poems in another source I used to match them with what I collected and When I find a delay, I mention that in the footnote for accuracy, and I also comment on every poem, elegy, piece, quatrain, and individual that I mentioned in the body of this diwan, and I put titles for all poems, elegies, pieces, and individuals (what is meant by the individual is the single verse, as well as individuals, which are intended for several verses, each in its field) And dates and others to facilitate knowledge and understanding of its content, as well as the appropriate margins, and the year in which it was organized, if I find.

The Arabic poetry of Ahmad Raza Khan is no doubt a masterpiece among the literary works of scholars from subcontinent. It contains all the ingredients that can be counted for a standard literary work. Here are some examples from his Dewan with translation and explanation as a proof and interest for the readers:

These lines are taken from the Dewan. ⁽³¹⁾ The title given to these lines is "في حمد الله" Praising Allah. The Poet is expressing his gratitude by saying that Praise be to Allah, Lord of the universe and humans Praise lasts an unlimited time, now and forever.

Then after praising Allah Ahmad Raza Khan narrates the Greatness of our Holy Prophet Muhammad PBUH and says that the best and the purest of prayers are for the best human of the world who is Saviour of people from the Hellfire.

With you, the servants, the predisposed, I will judge Except you, O Lord, O house of vow

Do come to The Chosen One from Mudar May God bless The Chosen One from Mudar

If you like, get up to Al-Farooq, ask him

The truth appears from the words of his sparkling forehead.

Another selection which we took from the smithereens section is, some verses with a title "ی مدح الرسول "In The Praise of The Holy Prophet PBUH.⁽³²⁾

So these are sixty prominent researches All Thanks be to Allah, first and last

Many others have passed before Him, Their good and bad are not hidden,

And all the best is from the blessing of the Mustafa May Allah's blessings be upon Him with whomever he chooses

God gives and beloved Qasim (distributor)

The honorable leaders prayed for Him

No one gets better things from anyone but Him

Never, and it is not even expected from anyone else except Him

" في الاستعانة والتوكل على الله تعالى" These verses are written in Dewan with the title

About Believing Allah and asking help from Him. (33)

In these lines the Poet expresses his firm belief by asking from Allah His matchless help and says that non-believers run away from Allah and disobey His orders by being cruel to His mankind. While on the contrary, I seek refuge from Allah the only hope for me.

And Allah is enough (for me) as a Guardian And Allah is sufficient (for me) as a Helper

Findings:

This research shows that:

- Ahmad Raza Khan was an eminent scholar of the subcontinent.
- He was proficient in many fields of Arabic language and literature like rhetoric and prosody, linguistics and grammar. The proof is his poems which consist of more than 100 verses.

- Some of his arabic poetic verse is influenced by the Arabic poetry of pre-Islamic period. Which shows his vast knowledge and deep love for Arabic language and literature.
- This research shows that despite the fact that Arabic was a secondary language for him, he had complete command over Arabic language and its different fields.

Suggestions:

- After this research, we suggest the readers and the researchers, to translate poetry of Ahmad Raza Khan into English. As we saw no major example of it.
- Another research work can be done by comparing Arabic poetic verses of Ahmad Raza Khan with pre-Islamic poetry.
- Researchers can also work on his enormous literary work in different languages such as Arabic, Urdu and English.

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(2) القدوسي، إعجاز الحق، إقبال اور علماء پاک وهند، ص205.

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(Al-Behari, Zafar al-Din, Hayat-e Ala Hazrat, Karachi: Al-Maktaba al-Rizvia, vol1,p33) (6) محمد مدثر حسين، عبقرية الإمام أحمد رضا خان في الفقه الإسلامي، كيرلا، الهند، جامعة دار الهدى الإسلامية، 2018م، ص58.

(Muhammad Muddassir Husain, Abqaria al-Imam Ahmad Raza Khan fi al-Fiqh al-Islami, Kerla: India, Jamia Dar al- Huda al-Islamia.

(7) البيهاري، ظفر الدين، حيات أعلى حضرت، ج1، ص36.

(Al-Behari, Zafar al-Din, Hayat-e Ala Hazrat, vol1,p36)

(8) رحمان على، تذكره علماء هند، كراتشي، ص530.

23-34

(Rahman Ali, Tazkah al- Ulama-e Hind, Karachi, p530)

(9) Maulana Aal e Rasool Marhawi was born in 1209 AH and died in 1296 AH. He was a student of Maulana Abdul Majid Badaewani. He devoted his life in the service of Islam and Muslims. (تذكرة علماء الهلسنت by Maulana Mahmood Ahmad Alqadri. Page no. 21-22) Also see: رسائل رضوية by Ahmad Raza Khan Volume. 02, page no. 309

(10) Maulana Abdul Ali Rampuri was a student of Maulana Fazal e Haq Khair Abadi, an eminent scholar of the subcontinent. Rampuri was one of the finest scholars of Logic and Wisdom in subcontinent. He taught at Madrasa Al Aalia in Rampur city and died in 1303 AH. (.by Maulana Mahmood Ahmad Alqadri. Page no تنكرة علماء اهلسنت 28)

Also see: ننكرة كاملان رامبور by Hafiz Ahmed Ali Shouq, Page no. 228, published in Dehli, India, 1929 AD.

(11) Maulana Al Sharif Abu ul Hussain Ahmad Al Noori was grandson of Maulana Aal e Rasool Marhawi. He was born in 1257AH and died in 1324AH after a life full of services and reforms for Muslims. (by Maulana Mahmood Ahmad Alqadri. Page نكرة علماء الهلسنت no. 28)

Also see: Sheikh Ahmed Raza Khan by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Masood Ahmad, Page no. 26

Also see: نزهة الخواطر by Sharif Abdul Haye Lakhnawi, Vol. 08, page no. 8,9.

(12) Ghulam Qadir Baig son of Hassan Jan Baig Lakhnawi was born in 1232AH and died 1336AH. His family migrated from Iran to India. His forefathers served the Mughal Army and earned title of "Mirza" and "Baig" in honor of their services. Ghulam Qadir Baig was a friend of Muhammad Naqi Ali Khan, father of Ahmad Raza Khan.

(13) Sheikh Ahmad bin Zaini Dahlan is one of the scholars of Makkah. He was born in 1231AH and died in 1304AH. Ahmad Raza Khan learned Hadith and Fiqh from him during his visit to Makkah. (ل فهرس الفهارس by Abu Jafer Al Katani, published from Dar ul Arab Al Islami, no publishing date, vol. 01, page. 390.

Also see: المولفين Umer Raza Kahala, published from Dar e Ahya Al Turas Al Arabi, vol. 01, page no. 229

Also see: الأعلام by Khair ud Din Al Zarkali, published from Dar ul Ilm, Beirut 1986AD, vol. 01, page no. 129.

(14) Sheikh Abdur Rehman Siraj was born in 1249AH and died 1314AH after a devoted life for spreading knowledge. (أعلام الحجاز في القرن الرابع عشر الهجري و بعض القرون الماضية by Prof. Muhammad Ali Al Maghribi, published from Almadni Publishers, Cairo 1401AH, vol. 03, page no. 339,340.

Also see: ,by Umer Raza Kahala معجم المؤلفين vol. 05, page no. 149,150.

(Rahman Ali, Tazkah al- Ulama-e Hind, p530)

(15) Sheikh Hussain bin Saleh bin Salim Al Shafi Al Makki was honourable Imam and Khateeb(speaker) of the Sacred Masjid Al Haram. He died in 1305AH. (المختصر من كتاب by Sheikh Abdullah bardad Abu Alkhair, published from Aalim Al Maarfa, Jeddah 1406 AH, page no. 177

(16) رحمان على، تذكره علماء هند، ص533.

(17) محمد مسعود أحمد، الشيخ أحمد رضا خان البريلوي من حياته وأفكاره وخدماته

(Muhammad Masood Ahmad, Al-Shaikh Ahmad Raza Khan al-Barelvi Min Hayatehi va Afkarehi va Khidmatehi)

(18) سوانح أعلى حضرت، ص388.

(Al-Qadri, Badar Al-Din: Sawaneh Alah Hazrat, p.388)

(19) Dewan Basateen ul Ghufraan, by Ahmad Raza Khan, (preface) page no. 52

(20) ibid. 53

(21) ibid. 23-26
(22) ibid. 37-40
(23) ibid. 41
(24) ibid. 46
(25) ibid. 46
(26) ibid. 42
(27) ibid. 42-43
(28) ibid. 43
(29) ibid. 45-46
(30) ibid.182
(31) ibid. 154

(32) ibid. 156 (33) ibid. 53