

A Study of Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami & his Contribution to the History of Medieval India

Abstract:

History is a subject that gives the facts and perspectives of past events. In its given premises, it includes a wide range of topics such as geographical conditions and human settlements, society and cultures; type of governance and administrative systems; trade and economic policy; interstate relationships; wars and battles, etc. in the time frame of Ancient, Medieval, and Modern. So, History is one of the essential disciplines of Social Science to know the past and design the future accordingly.

Medieval period is an important period in the history of India because of the developments in the field of art and languages, culture and religion. Also the period has witnessed the impact of other religions on the Indian culture. This period has also referred to as postclassical era. The Medieval Period of Indian History comprises a long period, spanning from 6th century i.e. after the fall of the Gupta Empire to the 18th century, i.e. the beginning of colonial domination. Modern historians, for the convenience of studying the state and society of medieval India, usually divide the period into Early Medieval Period and Late Medieval Period. However, a number of historians have contributed well in penning down the records of this History. Among those important Historians Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami is also one of the shining star, who derived the history of medieval India by his outstanding contribution? He had worked hard to supply the historical material for the growth and development of historiography in its national and international context.

Key words: History, Medieval History of India, Contribution, Historiography, Religion, Culture.

Introduction:

Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami was born in the town of Amroha in the United Provinces of British India on December 5, 1925. He was son of Aziz Ahmad and Sayyidah Nizami. His other siblings were Swaleha Nizami, Laiqat Ahmad Nizami, Zilley Ahmad Nizami, Taufiq Ahmad Nizami and Jamal Ara Nizami. One of his younger siblings, Er. Zilliey Ahmad Nizami moved to Pakistan after completing his graduation in Civil Engineering from Aligarh Muslim University in 1951. His other sibling Dr. Taufiq Nizami also served as a faculty of Department of Political Science in Aligarh Muslim University. He was married to Raziyah Nizami, sister of noted Urdu scholar Khwaja Ahmad Farooqui. The couple had five children, Ahtesham Nizami, Azra Nizami, Wajih Nizami, Mujib Nizami and Farhan Nizami. Dr. Farhan Nizami is the Prince of Wales Fellow in the Study of the Islamic World, Magdalen

College, Oxford and the Founder Director of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. Professor Muhammad Habib was his mentor. In fact, Khaliq Ahmad Nizami in the Department of History by Muhammad Habib who took a keen interest in his academic growth and to whom he owed career progression which was a record those days. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami received his education in India and though he travelled extensively and gained much recognition abroad. He attended Meerut College, which was attached to University of Agra, where he completed his M.A. in History in 1945. In the following year he was awarded the LL.B degree by the same institution. Historian Khaliq Ahmad Nizami was also a religious scholar and diplomat. A part from his academic engagements, Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami was also part of the University administration and played an important role in the ruling of Aligarh Muslim University. Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami was one of the very well known historians of Medieval India. He wrote extensively on Sufism and the political history of the Delhi Sultanate. He was a prolific writer and has many books, edited works and research papers to his credit. However his most popular contribution is *The Comprehensive History of India, volume 5* which he co-edited with Professor Mohammad Habib, his mentor who had brought him from Meerut to Aligarh. He was the last Head of the Department. Before his retirement he also served as Indian Ambassador to Syria. Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami's rise in position at Aligarh was both steady and swift. He joined the University in 1947 and held the offices of Professor and Chairman of the Department of History; Provost of Sir Sayyed hall; Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences; Pro-Vice Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor.

In addition to his formal duties to the University, Khaliq Ahmad Nizami was an active member of extra-curricular and professional organizations, especially those designed to promote the study of Indian history. During his Provost, Khaliq Ahmad Nizami made arrangements to print the book, "History of M.A.O. College, Aligarh" written by Mr. Shyam Krishna Bhatnagar and distributed to every resident member of the Hall. He also organized several unique shadow plays to tell the life story of Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan. Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami's contribution to the discovery and utilization of new source material in unique and unequalled. Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami's literary contributions, as Sir Hamilton Gibb, Dr. Burton Stein and others have pointed out established the reputation of the Department of History as a Centre for medieval Indian Studies, and as Professor Humayun Kabir has said, brought glory to the University and the country.

Contribution:

As per the Khaliq Ahmad Nizami's contribution to the study of Medieval Indian history and culture is concerned, Dr. C.C. Davies of Oxford is saying, "... his publications form a solid contribution to the history of Sultanate of Delhi, a period of vital importance in Indian's long history". Dr. Zakir Hussain told, "... Mr. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami is a scholar of eminence and his works marks him out as an outstanding person in field of Medieval Indian History".

Citation Ghalib Award for Research 1982 enlightened Khaliq Ahmad Nizami as, “A man of letters Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami... is one of the most distinguished writers, historians and critics in our country. His writings are considered contributions of inestimable value to Urdu and English studies in medieval Indian history and culture”. Professor Mohammad Habib in this regard, quoted in 22 December 1958, “during my thirty six years service in the University, I have not found anyone in the Arts Faculty so intensely devoted to his academic work, research and writing as Mr. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami... Taken as a completely no member of Arts Faculty has a better literary output to his credit than Mr. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami... I... have no hesitation in paying my tribute to their (his works) extraordinary excellence, due to a careful and critical study of the originals and a scientific attitude of mind... I have been closely connected with all scholars of Medieval India during my lifetime. Mr. Khaliq is the very best...” Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami’s contribution to the study of Sir Syed and the Aligarh movement is the best. His biography of Sir Syed in Builder of Modern India series was hailed as a mode. He arranged publication of the English translation of Hayat-i-Javid and History of the MAO College. His ‘Sir Syed Speaks to You’ opened fresh perspective for the assessment of Sir Syed’s role in modern Indian history. His ‘Sir Syed aur Aligarh Tarikh’ brought many important aspects of the Aligarh movement into focus. His establishment of Sir Syed Academy and introduction of the Sir Syed Movement Lectures paved the way for a continuous assessment of Sir Syed’s work. Emphasizing the need for an extended perspective on an assessment of Sir Syed’s Movement, he brought to light Sir Syed Sir Syed’s interest in the Indian village community which had not been so well appreciated earlier. “Tarikh-i-Mashaikh-I Chisti” defined about the works and activities of the history of Chisti. In Islam there is going on work on individual (infiradi) and group (ijtimayi) basis. On individual basis it is must for a person to provide an outlook towards him and to take Islamic care for his family. He is in need to assist his society where it is in any problem.

On the bases of group a person has to support his people and to join the group. It is expressed by Nizami that the individual may be wrong but as per the group is concerned it does not have any mistake. According to the writing of Nizami, the Sufis did their best to hold the Islamic conditions and ignoring few who are claiming their offerings as the Islamic tops. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami throws an amazing light and provides a well step for researchers to work on Saint Ganj-i-Shakar. In his writing K.A.Nizami mentioned about the religious spirituality during medieval times of India. He wrote, “The study of Medieval Indian History has a long centered monopoly of the courts and camps of the kings and we have got in the habit of surveying the historical landscape from the front of the royal throne”. But now the historical studies reached at a stage where a historian should turn to humble dwellings of saints and sages who avoid wealth and uncorrupted by court-life, dedicated their pious lives for the spiritual uplift of a man. In raising political concept they remained men of their moral and spiritual obligations and in the world of suffering they

encouraged harmony. Nizami is saying that ninety percent of people in middle ages were absorbed by their spiritual and moral efforts. In their life stories one can get glimpses of medieval society. Taking the best line of his writing that the Medieval Khanqahs were the places where high and low, rich and poor, the learned and the illiterate, men and women, villagers and town folk were very cooperative and shouldered together. There was not any system of classes and creeds. To come on the title, K.A.Nizami draws a nice life sketch of Shaikh Farid-u'd-n Ganj-i-Shakar is one of the series of monographs which he had designed on medieval mystics. While preparing this biography of a great medieval saint, he used critical and logical sources. An attempt has been made by author to remove the coating which legend and superstition have woven round the real figures of these saints. In his writing, Khaliq Ahmad Nizami estimated a good concept about saint from his birth to death with the faces of his family, works and contributions to the religion.

“State and Culture in Medieval India”, It enlightens the polity, culture and religion in Medieval Indian period. It is an effort to identify new sources of investigation underlines the studies presented inside. Besides emphasizing the value of geo-politics in the study of medieval Indian history, attempt has been made to evaluate the application of new tools of historical analysis—like quantification of data and psycho-historical method—to the study of the main political and cultural developments of the period. It is felt that fresh perspectives may be added to the study of medieval India if developments in the contemporary Asiatic world are not lost sight of. A synoptic overview of the non-chalant attitude of the Chishti saints towards rulers, an analysis of the role of the Naqshbandi order in Indian politics, an assessment of Shah Waliullah's contribution to the dynamic elements of Muslim thought in India, provide background for the study of many an aspect of the political and cultural history of medieval India.

“On Source and Source Material”, is a combination of articles in Islamic culture and published in a book form. The volume is planned in two parts. In its beginning, Nizami is adding in his book about the mystic teachers, their ideology and institutions they belong from. As an Aligarh historian he portrays a clear shape of religion, social life and culture in Medieval India and mixed it with the political and institutional history in his book. In this book, Nizami suggested the Islam in its beginning is a religion then politic and further grows into a civilization. The society based on upper and lower, criminal and dishonest, replaced by the teachings of Prophet Mohammad PBUH. He replaced and displaced and placed only the Supreme Allah on throne for the universe. Nizami wrote about the last speech of Prophet Mohammad PBUH that “An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab” eradicating the status, wealth, race or nationality. So we can say that where there is not nationality there is International and this international is linked with universe. It is then better to go towards the K.A.Nizami and see the glory of Islam, as a Universal Religion. In the list of most famous

writings of Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami on the contribution of medieval India also includes

1). *On History and Historians of Medieval India*, 2). *Royalty in Medieval India*, 3). *The life and times of Sheikh Nizam-u'd-din- Auliya*, 4). *The life and times of Sheikh Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar*, 5). *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the 13th Century*, 6). *Medieval India: A Miscellany*.

Conclusion:

It became known now that Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami contributed a lot to the Medieval Historiography which required to work by future historians. He created a taste in the writings in a way to get attracted by readers and to get evaluated by historians. Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami supplied his best work, is by today too, of worth and valued. Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami died on Thursday, December 4, 1977 and was laid to rest in University graveyard "Mintoyee" and the world lost one of the most outstanding historians of Medieval India.

References:

1. Elliot, H.M. & Dowson, J., *History of India as told by its own Historians*, vols. I, II & III, London, 1867-77
2. Nizami, K. A., *Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-ud-Din Ganj-i-Shakar*, Aligarh, 1955
3. Nizami, K. A., *Khair-ul-Majalis*, Aligarh, 1959
4. Nizami, K. A., *Sayyed Ahmad Khan*, Delhi, 1966
5. Nizami, K. A., *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, Second Edition, Delhi, 1974
6. Elphinstone, Mountstuart. *Muslim India*, vol. II, London, 1889.
7. Nizami, K. A., *Medival India: A Miscellany*, New York , 1977.
8. Ahmad Mohammad Nizami, K.A., *Historian and Scholar of Medieval India*, Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli,
9. Sarkar, J.N., *A Survey of Medieval Indian Historiography*, Cal. 1964.