

STYLISTIC CUM HERMENEUTIC TRENDS IN MODERN QURANIC EXEGESIS: AN ANALYSIS OF ALLAMA HAMEED AL-DIN FARAHİ'S (1862-1930 A.D) APPROACH AND ITS EXPLANATION ^o

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ABSTRACT

The eloquence and structure of the Quranic text exhibits cogent proofs indicating an extremely profound level of coherence (*al-Nazm*) which makes it a living miracle. The plan, format and thematic expression adds glamour to its linguistic style which also involve illuminating debates in interpretation of the text (*Matan*). The construction of the sentences in Quran, as such, is directly related to coherence, which is more difficult to achieve in oral, as opposed to written communication. The companions (*Suhabah*) knew as how and when the verses have been revealed and how they are to be related in its general particular context. The *Surahs* and *Ayats* in the book were arranged according to Prophetic instructions, maintaining the highest levels of revealed, linguistic as well as stylistic expressions. Consequently, the compilation of Quran (*al-Jamawa al-Tadwin*) followed a very exotic route based on the contextual, chronological and hermeneutic levels. And yet, not only does the Quran have coherence, but it exhibits a unique, sophisticated structure called the Semitic coherence that adds to its oral pedagogy and diction. Allama Hameed al-Din Farahi (1862-1930), a reputed exegete (*Mufasir*) from the subcontinent reflected over these stylistic aspects of Quran and explored linguistic and thematic components through his superb research. The present paper is an attempt to envision the stylistic and hermeneutic trends in the modern Quranic exegesis, with an objective of exploring Allama Farahi's approach, his contribution to Quranic Studies and structural dimensions of his sensitive research.

Keywords: *Coherence, Muqata'at, Hermeneutic, Semitic, Discrete groups, Symbolic, Thematic*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Exploring the Quranic text by way of the hermeneutic style is a critical debate in the modern Quranic exegesis.² As the methodology involves delicate, dialectical, critical and structural hermeneutical methods in the interpretation of the text, some Muslim scholars have reservations while its application to the Quranic exegesis and interpretation.³ It is by virtue this methodology that a fresh orientation of the Quranic exegesis involved the scholars worldwide.⁴ Although, the debates over textual and symbolic expressions trace its origin in the classical era with ‘Allama Sayyuti (d.1505A.D), ‘Alama Baqilani (d.1013A.D), ‘Allama Zamakhsheri (d.1144A.D) and ‘Allama Abdal-Qahir Jurjani (d.1078A.D), however, advance research with a stylistic methodology took a fresh momentum during beginning of the 21st century.⁵ In the given context, the contemporary Muslim intellectuals including Amin al-Khuli (Egypt), Harun Nasution (Indonesia), Fazlur Rehman (Pakistan), M. Arkoun (Algeria) and others favour this concept for a neo-rational interpretation of the Quranic text.⁶ The Quranic themes that has been consistently explored for formulation of ‘the idea of an arrangement’, (*al-Nazm*) is, indeed the basis for the theory of coherence or connectivity in the Quran.⁷ The concept implies as to how the different verses, passages and Surahs in the Quran connect to each other in terms of their themes, meaning and interpretation.⁸ This is not surprising, since one of the things about the Quran that many people find baffling is its apparent lack of shape. Topics in the book are introduced randomly without any context; the relation between passages is often hard to understand, as is the rationale behind the way the Surahs are arranged.⁹ The modern exegesis not only introduces the *Shan-i-Nuzul* (Context) but also debates all the possible stylistic and hermeneutic aspects of the

² Galadari, A, (2018), *Quranic Hermeneutics: Between Science History and Bible*, Blooms Bury, Oxford, p. 9-11

³ Nadvi, Razi al-Islam, (2010), *Naqd-i-Farabi : Maulana Farabi Ke Tafsiri Nazriyat ka Tehqiqi Mutalia*, Maktaba Islam, Aligrah, pp.9-23 & 45-67

⁴ Ibid, p.22, Also See: Andrew Rippin, (2001) *The Quran: Style and Contents* (ed), Aldershot, Ashgate, p.205

⁵ Ibid, p.33

⁶ Robinson, Neal, (1996), *Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text*, SCM Press, London, p.122

⁷ Pink, Johana, (2020), *Classical Quranic Hermeneutics*, Oxford Book of Quranic Studies, ed. by Mustafa Shah & H. Abdul Haleem, p.45

⁸ Rippen, Andrew, (1988), *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān.*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, p.109-125

⁹ Ibid, p.118

Quranic text. Keeping this idea in mind, the works of Allama Farahi on Quranic studies can be better understood and explored in an intellectual atmosphere.

1.1 Objective of the Research

The main objective of this paper is to introduce a methodological perspective of Allama Farahi's approach in explaining linguistic, stylistic and hermeneutic trends in Quran. Being expert in Semitic culture and languages his approach of dealing with the Quranic text is much wider and different than the traditional one. Allama Farahi's exploration of the Quranic text, its connotation and expression is purely in tune with the coherent, rational and consistent dimensions of the stylistic and hermeneutic aspects, which this paper is expected to explore.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology involved in this research paper is descriptive, systematic as well as analytical. Primarily, the works authored by Allama Farahi on various aspects of Quran, including his *Tafsir Nizam al-Quran* has been consulted. The description, regarding the main themes in the modern Quranic exegesis, Farahi's understanding and his interpretation has also been debated with a thorough study. Moreover, available and updated material on the proposed subject from various sources, intellectuals and institutions has been assessed to explore Allama Farahi's view point and its imperative traits.

2. Explanation of the Concept

On backdrop of what is stated above, Allama Hameed –u- Din Farahi (1862-1930), a renowned exegetist (*Mufasir*) reflected over the Qur'anic text and focused over the interconnectivity (*al-Rabi*) of the themes and passages to formulate an idea of the coherence.¹⁰ The gravity of the thought became one of the significant debates in the scholarly circles during the 20th century.¹¹ His greatest contribution is his study and discovery of the coherence in the Qur'an, which was much beyond the juristic and political expressions often depicted in 20th Century Urdu Tafasir in the subcontinent.¹² 'He (Farahi) has achieved the impossible', remarked

¹⁰ Nadvi, S.Sulaiman,(2006), *Hayat-i- Shibli*, Dar al-Musannefin Shibli Academy, Azamgarh, p.109

¹¹ Farahi, Hamidudin, (2009), *Muqadimah Nizam al-Quran*, Part-1, Aug, pp,12-34

¹² *Ibid*,15

‘Allama Shibli Nu’mani (1857-1914) while praising his student’s grand achievement in the field of Quranic Studies.¹³ It was no doubt, as it is often expressed, ‘a superhuman accomplishment’. By which Quranic Exegesis posed new challenges and dimensions for researchers.¹⁴ Farahi, demonstrated to all the Western critics that with a sound understanding of the Arabic language one can appreciate the coherence in Qur’an which is certainly not a haphazard collection of the injunctions and theology.¹⁵

Allama Farahi, while delving much deeper into the three constituents of *al-Nazm* (Coherence): Order (*al-Rabt*), proportion (*al-Tanasub*) and unity (*al-Wahdah*), proved that a single interpretation of the Qur’an was possible both in allegories as well as in the phrasal expressions.¹⁶ This alone was a far-reaching consequence of the principle of Qur’anic *Nazm* or what we call as the Semitic coherence.¹⁷ Farahi argues, that the differences in the interpretation of the Qur’anic allegories which have given rise to the menace of religious sectarianism, are, the result of disregarding thematic and structural coherence in the arrangement and mutual relationship of various Qur’anic verses.¹⁸ Setting an unrealistic approach, each sect has adopted its interpretation isolating a verse from its context (*Tanazur*).¹⁹ Farahi is of the opinion that interpretations associate multiple meanings which can sometimes be confusing or converging. It is only the coherence of the Qur’an, which if properly understood, can lead to a definite and integrated understanding of the Quranic style of expression.²⁰ It is only then that the Qur’an can be truly regarded as *al-Mizan* (Balance of Justice) and *al-Furqan* (Distinguisher of Good and Evil). It is only then that the Qur’anic verse: ‘*Hold fast to the Cable of Allah and be not divided*’ (3:103), can become a manifest reality to present Quran in the modern times both as the miracle as well as the challenge. Imam Farahi went on to pronounce certain hermeneutic principles necessary to understand and interpret the message of Qur’an. He was able to illustrate that unless the Qur’an is understood through a holistic and all-

¹³ Ibid, p.29

¹⁴ "Ma`arif", Vol. IV, Dec.1930, p.45

¹⁵ Bhatnagar, S.K, (1969), History of M.A.O. College, Asia Publishing House, Sir Syed Hall, A.M.U. Aligarh, p.233

¹⁶ Ibid, p.124

¹⁷ Ghamidi, J, (2018), *Maulana Farahi ke Qurani Usloob ki Ahmiyat o Ifadiyat*, Lecture on , Al-Islah T.V, April

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Farahi, Hamidudin, (2012), *Mufradat al-Quran*, Al-Mawrid, Lahore, Pakistan, p.17

inclusive approach, a lot of its treasure of wisdom remains hidden to the learners.²¹

3. Hermeneutic Insights

The style of the communication in Quran is often categorical, sometimes allegoric and occasionally symbolic.²² The methodological principles of interpretation and exegesis are to be seen in this perspective. The development of thought and sequence is the basic element in any communication, which the Quran has strictly maintained. This can also be comprehended by way of thematic and hermeneutic methods throughout the text.²³ As such, each part of the literature being linked to its proximate parts has a lexicographical as well as holistic mechanism.²⁴ In fact, advance research in Quranic text indicates that the Quran exhibits an extremely deep and complex level of coherence when looked and debated through hermeneutic tools. It is safe to say that the experts, regardless of their religious persuasion, acknowledge the fact that the Quran is much beyond the intensive literary expressions.²⁵ The mechanism of the coherence is more difficult to achieve in oral, as opposed to the written communication. To maintain coherence in an oral communication, one must have some sort of a plan about how the speech is laid out. The Quran was primarily oral a communication, but it wasn't continuous speech. It was revealed piecemeal over the course of 23 years at several occasions indifferent contexts.²⁶ The Quranic revelations started in 610 A.D, although it wasn't arranged chronologically up to 632 A.D. The *Surahs* and *Ayats* in the book were arranged according to special Prophetic instructions by an expert committee authorized by the Caliph Abu Bakr (In office 632-34 A.D) under the leadership of the learned companion Zaid bin Thabit (d.660 A.D).²⁷ The Chronological arrangement and prophetic plan of the recitation was kept in mind which eased the task for the compilation (*al-Jamawa al-Tadwin al-Mushaff*).²⁸ The committee in consensus

²¹ Ibid, p.18

²² Ibid, p18

²³ Sharfuddin , Islahi, Dr. (2001), *Zikr-i-Farahi* , Dairah Hamidiyah, Madrasah al- Islah, Sarai Mir, Azamgarh, p.162

²⁴ Ibid, p163

²⁵ Ibid, p.144

²⁶ Farahi, Hamidudin, (2009), *Muqadimah Nizam al-Quran*, Part-1, Aug. 2009,pp, 12-34

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Al-A'zami, M. Mustafa, (2013), *History of the Quranic Text: From Revelation to Compilation*, U.K., Islamic Academy, (England & Leicester) , pp.41-77

with learned and senior companions extensively debated the location and time of the revelation of the Quranic verses. The task of the compilation was again looked into during the reign of the third Caliph 'Uthman (644-656 A.D) by consulting almost all the learned in the Quranic historicity.²⁹ Hereby, the idea elucidates why the *Surah al-Alaq* although revealed first, ended up occupying the 96th position in the *Mushaf*.³⁰ Additionally, unlike in written literature, there was no scope of 'editing' the Quran after the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) recited new verses. Once he recited new verses, the audience heard them immediately and recorded their location and placement. The Prophet couldn't change the way it was said or change the order of the *Ayat* after specifying its location except in case of *al-Naskh* (abrogation).³¹ Consequently, the rhythm, order and placement of the verses remained as such, and the expert committee followed it without any moderation.³² Hence, the Quranic revelations and its compilation followed a very exotic route along with the sequence as well as subsistence. And yet, not only does the Quran have coherence, but it exhibits a unique, sophisticated structure called Semitic coherence that adds to its oral pedagogy, inclusive plan and linguistic narrative.³³

4. Allama Hameed al-Din Farahi

The concept of hermeneutic study in the Quranic text and exegesis can be better understood by Allama Farahi's approach. The scholarship of Farahi particularly in Quranic studies has been incredible as well as inclusive.³⁴ He was born in Farah, a village in Azamgarh, (U.P), India in 1862. He was cousin of the famous renowned theologian and historian Allama Shibli Naumani (d.1914), from whom he learnt Arabic and Islamic sciences. He studied Persian from Maulvi Mehdi Husain of Chitara, Azamgarh (U.P),³⁵ and afterwards traveled to Lahore to study advanced Arabic literature from Maulana Faiz al-Hasan Saharaupuri (d.1926 A.D), an excellent figure in this field.³⁶ At the age of twenty-one he took admission in the MAO College, Alighrah to study the modern disciplines of

²⁹ Ibid, p.87

³⁰ Ibid, p.83

³¹ Ibid, p.204

³² Ibid, p.223

³³ Ibid, p.188

³⁴ Farahi, Hamidudin, (2009), *Muqadimah Nizam al-Quran*, Part-1, Preface, pp,09-22

³⁵ Ibid, p.45

³⁶ Allama Hamiduddin Farahi – *Hayat-o-Afkaar* (Oct.1991), (Proceedings of Seminar organised by Alumni of Madarsah al-Ilslah, Sarai Mir Azamgarh (U.P), India, (selected articles)

knowledge. He was recommended as teaching fellow by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1899 AD) the founder of the College for Arabic and Persian.³⁷ In his letter of recommendation addressed to the principal of the college, Sir Syed wrote that he was sending 'someone who knew more Arabic and Persian than the recruited teachers of the college'.³⁸ While studying in the college, Farahi rendered parts of '*Al-Tabaqat-ul-Kubra*' of Abu Abdullah Ibn Sa'ad Al-Zuhri (784-845 AD) into Persian.³⁹ The translation was found to be so good that Sir Syed included it in the graduate syllabus of the M.A.O.college.⁴⁰ Allama Farahi's ultimate inspiration was his reputed teachers including Shaikh Ahmed 'Ali, the first teacher who taught him the recitation (*al-Qirah*) of the Quran and he memorized it at the age of ten years. Afterwards, he studied Persian from Shaikh Mahdi, who was master of Persian language and literature.⁴¹ Within a short time, he attained admirable knowledge of Persian as he was able to compose poems at this early age as well as to see the Persian legacy of the Islamic '*Ulum*'.⁴²

In M.A.O College, Aligarh, Allama Farahi studied the modern philosophy under Thomas Arnold (1864-1930), a renowned Orientalist (Author the famous book, *Preaching of Islam*).⁴³ Even though this work was highly appreciated by the Muslim scholars, Imam Farahi criticized it, because according to him, "*it basically aims to detach Muslim from the spirit of Jihad and presented Islam as a 'missionary' faith*".⁴⁴ It was Farahi's stay in Aligarh, that he accomplished his famous work, "*Al-Aiman fi Aqşam al- Quran*" – a study regarding classification and expression of oaths in Quran.⁴⁵ He also published the Tafsir of Surah *al-Qiyamah* and Surah *al-Lahab* with a novel thematic and contextual explanation.⁴⁶ Considering Farahi's outstanding knowledge of Arabic, Sir Syed requested him to translate his (Sir Syed's) Tafsir into Arabic, but he declined this offer due to some theological reasons saying: "*I will not participate in spreading*

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ "*Ma'arif*", Dar al-Musanifin, Shibli Academy, Azamgrah (U.P) India, Dec.1930, p.57

⁴¹ Nadvi, S.Sulaiman,(1986), *Yaad-i- Raftgaan*, Matba Ma'arif,Azamgrah (U.P), India, p.104

⁴² Ibid, p.105

⁴³ Arnold,T.W, (1913), *The Preaching of Islam*, London, 1913, Preface-p.viii

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Sharfuddin. Islahi,op.cit, p.132

out *this sin.*” as its ‘*Naturalistic*’ interpretations could create much confusion and contradiction to the learners.⁴⁷

With his graduation from Allahabad University, Farahi taught at various institutions including MAO, Aligarh and Dar-ul-‘Ulum, Hyderabad from 1895-1903.⁴⁸ In Aligarh, he had some magnificent experiences of learning the European languages including Hebrew, which he learnt from the German Orientalist, Joseph Horovitz (1874-1931 AD), a professor of Arabic at the Aligarh College.⁴⁹ In its learned progression, Joseph Horovitz, too, studied Arabic with Farahi and envisioned a renowned scholar and linguist in him.⁵⁰ In Hyderabad, he thought of the exposition of the Islamic and Oriental legacies to accomplish standard scholarship in the field. During his stay at Hyderabad, Farahi conceived the idea of establishing a University where all religious and modern sciences would be taught in Urdu.⁵¹ His scheme materialized in 1919 in the form of *Jami'ah al-'Uthmania*, Hyderabad.⁵² Farahi remained associated with the University till 1925 and subsequently returned to Sarai Meer (Town) in 1925, near Azamgarh (U.P) and took charge of the *Madrasah al-Islah*.⁵³ Here, besides managing the affairs of the Madrasah, Farahi devoted most of his time in training a few students for extensive research in Quranic Studies.⁵⁴ Among his notable students was Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904-1997), the author of *Tadabur al-Quran*, who was destined to become the greatest exponent of his thought with a good number of students trained in the Farahi tradition.⁵⁵ Allama Farahi had a deep involvement in academic and administrative works of the Madrasah Sarai Meer that resulted in a variety of physical ailments. Even these ailments couldn't stop him writing passionately on Quranic Studies to propose a rational, stylistic and hermeneutic understanding and interpretation of the Quranic text.⁵⁶

⁴⁷ Islahi, Zafar al-Islam, Dr.(2001), “*Sir Syed Ke Fiqhi Rujhant*,” in edt Book.by Prof. Abdul Ali & Syed Ahsan, Aligrah, p.67.

⁴⁸ Sharfuddin, Islahi,op.cit, p.122

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.121

⁵⁰ Subhani, M. Inayatullah, Asad, (2004), *Allama Hameed-u- Din Farahi: EkAzeem Mufasir Ek Maya Naz Muhaqiq*, DairaHamidiyah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah (U.P), India, p.29

⁵¹ Ibid, p.12

⁵² Ibid, p.37

⁵³ Ibid, p.42

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.56

⁵⁵ Sharfuddin Islahi, Dr, (2001), *Zikr-i-Farahi*, Dairah Hamidiyah, Madrasah al- Islah, Sarai Mir, Azamgarh, p.43

⁵⁶ Ibid,p.44

Prior to 1925, Allama Farahi undertook various academic and administrative assignments. In 1324 A.H, he was appointed as lecturer of Arabic and Persian at Madrasah al- Islam in Karachi.⁵⁷ In 1326 A.H, he was appointed as professor of Arabic at Allahabad University where he spent 6 years of full academic activities and published Tafsir of Surah *Al-Tahrim*⁵⁸ Due to his excellent knowledge, he was selected as one of the members of Arabic Committee for Oriental sciences.⁵⁹ It is worth mentioning that when in 1331 H foundation of International Islamic University in Madina was proposed, Allama Farahi and Allama Shibli were amongst the scholars who were selected to teach there being genius in their respective fields and over all understanding of the Islamic Ulum and its reorientation.⁶⁰ Honouring Allama Farahi, the government of Hyderabad State appointed him as Dean of Darul ‘Ulum in 1332, where he also used to teach the students advance research.⁶¹ Apart from teaching at the College, he used to deliver lectures on Quranic sciences that were attended by students as well as the researchers and scholars. He also accomplished the preface of his Tafsir “*Nizam al- Quran Wa Tawil-al-Furqan bi al- Furqan – Coherence and Orders in Quran and Interpretation of Quran by Quran*”.⁶²

With Allama Shibli’s death in 1332/1914, his disciples got together in order to materialize the idea of their master to set up *Dar al-Musannifeen* (Shibli Academy Azamgrah,U.P) and resolved to select Farahi as the president and Allama Syed Sulaiman Nadwi (1884-1953) as the Director of the newly formed Institute.⁶³ This institute, since its inception, is tremendously contributing to enrich the Islamic library by producing literature on the Islamic history and Civilization.⁶⁴ It particularly focused on bringing out celebrated books on history

⁵⁷ Subhani, M. Inayatullah, Asad, op.cit. p.56

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.57

⁵⁹ AllamaHamiduddinFarahi – *Hayat-o-Afkaar* (Oct.1991), (Proceedings of Seminar organised by Alumni of Madrasah al-Ilslah, Sarai Mir Azamgarh (U.P),India, (selected articles)

⁶⁰ Nadvi, S. Sulaiman, (1986), *Yaad-i- Raftigaan*, Matba, Ma‘arif, Azamgrah (U.P), India, p. 92

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 96

⁶² Farahi, Hameed-u-Din, (2002), *Tafsir Nizam al-Quran*, Dairah, Hameediyah, Madrasah al-Islah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah (U.P), India

⁶³ Nadvi, S. Sulaiman, (1988), *Hayat-i- Shibli*,op.cit, p. 88

⁶⁴ Established in 1914 at Azamgrah (U.P), India for research and publication in Islamic literature and culture with AllamaHameed-u-Din Farahi as President and Syed Sulaiman Nadvi as Director.

of the Islamic tradition, Society and Culture that flourished in the Indian subcontinent.⁶⁵ The most celebrated works of this prestigious academy include *Sirah al- Nabi* (Biography of the Prophet (S.A.W) written jointly by Allama Shibli Numani and his noble disciple Syed Sulayman Nadwi (1884-1953) and *Al-Farooq* (Biography of second caliph of Islam, Umar bin Khattab), which has been translated into Arabic, English, Turkish and many other languages.⁶⁶ Allama Shibli used to say: “Whoever sat with Hameed-u-Din, his heart would turn away from worldly life.⁶⁷” Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (1884-1953) considers him as a symbol of learning and piety.⁶⁸ Another noted scholar, Abdul Majid Daryabadi (1892-1977) outlines: “My eyes never saw a person like him in terms of patience, gratitude, contentment, trust in Allah and self-satisfaction.⁶⁹ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) and Maulana Abul A'la Maududi (1903-1979) vehemently expressed the activist character of the Qur'an, whereas Allama Farahi and Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi (1904-1997) brought to light the beauty of the structural, thematic and stylistic character of Qur'an.

‘Allama Farahi had a deep insight and life-long engagement with Quran. To him Quran is the source of Faith, argument as well as the utmost miracle of the eloquence (*al-Balaghah*) that inspires human intellect and connects him with the Creator. During the last days of his physical ailments, he went to Mathura (U.P) for medical consultation, his condition weakened by acute illness due to multiple health issues and ultimately, died there on 11th November 1930.⁷⁰ His legacy includes a series of works on Tafsir Methodology, Quranic Interpretations (Hermeneutic, allegoric and symbolic), Hadith and Arabic Literature that establishes his profound scholarship on Islamic Studies, literary criticism and Arabic literature.⁷¹

5. Interaction with Quran

⁶⁵ Record of Publications & Catalogue : *Dar al-Mussanifin*, Shibli Academy, Azamgrah, (U.P), India, 2018

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Nadvi, S. Sulaiman, (1986), *Yaad-i- Rafiqaan*, Matba Ma'arif, Azamgrah (U.P), India, p.115

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.112

⁷⁰ For Structural cum Thematic explanations of the Quran See: Allama Farahi's *Asalib al-Quran, Dalail al-Nizamand Minhaj al-Tafsir*, Published by Dairah Hamidiyah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah, (U.P) India & Al-Mawrid, Publications, Lahore, Pakistan & U.K

⁷¹ Sharfuddin Islahi, Dr, (2001), *Zikr-i-Farahi*, Dairah Hamidiyah, Madrasah al- Islah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah, p.71

Allama Farahi's major works are in Arabic language. Being an expert in Arabic, he adopted a direct method of approaching and interpreting Qur'an.⁷² Consequently, in this endeavor, his findings were as original as his approach. He also made significant contribution by rewriting and reconstructing all the sub-disciplines (*Muta'aliqat*) needed to study the Qur'an. A variety of Farahi's works are also in the form of notes and scripts as well as unfinished books that affirm his undisputed authority in Quranic studies.⁷³ Farahi could only complete a few of them including a collection of his interpretation of fourteen Surahs of the Qur'an by the name '*Majmu'ah-i-Tafasir-i-Farahi*'.⁷⁴ His renowned work, '*Mufradat-ul-Qur'an*' explains some 121 terms and phrases of the Qur'an. This book has been published by *Dar al-Gharb*, Beirut, Lebanon with valuable preface and notes by Dr. Mohammad Ajmal Islahi which also includes biography of Farahi.⁷⁵ He explained the nature of oaths and adjurations in the Qur'an in his book entitled '*Al-Im'an fi Aqşam-al-Qur'an*'.⁷⁶ In his book '*Al-Rai al-Sahih fi Man hua al-Zabih*' he elaborated upon the philosophy of sacrifice and by furnishing evidences from the Qur'an and the Torah established Prophet Isma'il as *Zabih*.⁷⁷ This extraordinary competence authorized his insight of the biblical tradition and the Semitic legacy. He re-laid the principles of rhetoric needed to study the Qur'an in '*Jamhurat al-Balaaghah*',⁷⁸ and outlined some special Qur'anic styles and constructions in '*Asalib-al-Qur'an*'.⁷⁹ The arguments he presented to verify the principle of coherence and lucidity is soundly enlisted in his reputed work, '*Dala'il al-Nizam*'.⁸⁰

⁷² The Oxford Dictionary of Islam. "Profile of Hameed-u-Din Farahi, Oxford Reference website, 18 April, 2020

⁷³ Ghamidi, J, (2018), *Maulana Farahi ke Qurani Usloob ki Ahmiyat o Ifadiyat*, Lecture on ,Al-Islah T.V, April, 03, 2018

⁷⁴ *Majmu Tafsir Farahi*, (2001), Dairah Hamidiyah, Sarai Mir , Azamgrah, (U.P), India,

⁷⁵ Farahi, Hameed-u-Din, (1989), *Mufradat al-Quran*, Dar al-Gharib, Beirut, Lebanon, with explanatory notes by Dr. Ajmal Islahi, pp.09-15

⁷⁶ Farahi, Hameed-u-Din, (2007), *Al-Im'aan fi Aqşam al-Quran*, Eng.Tr. Tariq Mehmood Hashmi, Al-Mawrid, Model Town Lahore, pp.12-77

⁷⁷ Farahi, Hameed-u-Din, (2018), *Al-Rai Sahih fi man Hua Zabih*, Urdu Tr. *Zabih Kon Hai*, by Amin Ahsan Islahi, Dairah Hamidiyah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah , (U.P), India

⁷⁸ Farahi, Hameed-u-Din, (2018), *Jamhurat al-Bhalaghah*, Dairah Hamidiyah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah, (U.P), India,

⁷⁹ Farahi, Hameed-u-Din, (2002), *Asalibal-Quran*, Dairah Hamidiyah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah, (U.P) India & Al-Mawrid, Publications, Lahore, Pakistan & U.K

⁸⁰ Ibid

Besides his involvement in Quranic Studies, Allama Farahi's competence in the Arabic and the Persian can be seen from his essays, expressions and poetry in both the languages.⁸¹ In addition to above mentioned treatises, there are at least twenty other unfinished works which need to be completed and developed further. Fortunately, Most of these writings have been published by *Da'irah-i-Hamidiyah* in Sarai Meer,U.P India.⁸² Allama Farahi, no doubt, laid the foundation for an intellectual reorientation of the Quranic Studies,yet, it was left to his successors to build upon this heritage of the intellectual revival. Continuing the tradition, Amin Ahsan Islahi, (1904-1997) can be cited as his most distinguished student set about to accomplish this task. In the Quranic exegesis, *Tadabbur-i- Qur'an*, he produced a masterpiece of *Tafsir* which does not simply reflect the principles of his illustrious guide, but also bears the mark of originality and solid methodology propounded by Farahi.⁸³ It is a unique work that has ushered in a new era in the field of Quranic interpretation.⁸⁴ Indeed, it was through this work that the Tafsir methodology and cohesive thoughts of Allama Farahi became accessible.⁸⁵ To a historian, Farahi and Islahi are like a flower and its fragrance – two names inseparable from one another.⁸⁶

6. Stylistic Approach in Quranic Studies

Allama Farahi's significant contribution is his discovery of coherence (*Nazm*) in the Quran.⁸⁷ Despite being advised by his master, Allama Shibli, to express his ideas in the regional language i.e., Urdu, Farahi, rather opted for Arabic to disseminate his content regarding hermeneutic methods in Arabic for advance research.⁸⁸ Farahi adopted a very direct method in his study and analysis of Quranic text using linguistic tools and phrasal expressions in a lucid manner.⁸⁹ He also made another significant contribution by rewriting and reconstructing

⁸¹Farahi, Hameed-u-Din, (2018), *Jamburat al-Bhalagah*,op.cit.

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Islahi, A. Ahsan, (1986), *Tadabur -i-Quran*,10 Vols, Dairah Hamidiyah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah,(U.P) India & Tadabbur-i-Qur'an, 2nd ed., 8 vols. Faran Foundation, Lahore

⁸⁴ Mir, Mustansir, (1986), *Coherence in the Qur'an: A Study of Islahi's Concept of Nazm in Tadabbur-i Qur'an*, American Trust Publications, p.39

⁸⁵ Ibid, p.43

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.44, Also see: Khalid Masud, (2010), *Quran e Hakim*, An Abridged version of *Tadabbur e Quran*, al-Mawrid,

⁸⁷ Robinson, Neal. (1996), *Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text*, SCM Press, London, p.122

⁸⁸ Ibid, p.119

⁸⁹ Rippin, Andrew (1988), op.cit. p.143

all the sub-disciplines of the Arabic language needed to study the Quran.⁹⁰ This method not only broadened the horizon of Quranic exegesis but also took it much advance than the traditional narrative. In the same way, this method provided an opportunity to the Muslim intellectuals for a better understanding of the Semitic styles and biblical tradition. Allama Farahi opines that the symbolic expressions of Quran can be simplified through this method. With regards to the theory of *Huruf al-Muqatta'at*, Allama Farahi is of the view that the letters of this parent alphabet as English and Hindi do not represent phonetic sounds only, but as the Chinese alphabet symbolize certain meanings and objects and usually assume the shape of the objects and meanings they convey.⁹¹ He goes on to assert that it was these letters which the early Egyptians adopted and after adapting them according to their own concepts founded the hieroglyphic script from them. The remnants of this script can be seen in the tables of the Egyptian Pyramids; a symbol of the gradual development of the Egyptian linguistic expressions.⁹²

When Allama Farahi thought of the Muslim education in the Subcontinent, the models of MAO, Aligrah and *Dar al-Ulum* Deoband could not satisfy him. This he envisioned while going through the curricula, approaches of the study and less involvement in advance research. After a close analysis of Islamic history, he seems to have concluded the reason of the suffering of the Muslims was their indifference towards the Quran and the situation could be redressed only through return to the Quran.⁹³ This could be possible only when there is unanimity in the interpretation of the Quran.⁹⁴ This needed a new methodology for the interpretation of the Quran, which could eliminate the possibility of vague interpretations and similitude (*Tashbih*).⁹⁵ This objective he wanted to achieve through the methodology of the interpretation of the Quran that was developed by him and that is now widely consulted in contemporary

⁹⁰ Ibid, p.147

⁹¹ Farahi, Hameed-u-Din, (2002), *Asalib al-Quran*, op.cit.

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ For Details see: AllamaHamiduddinFarahi – Hayat-o-Afkaar (Oct.1991), (Proceedings of Seminar organised by Alumni of Madarsah al-Ilslah, Sarai Mir Azamgarh (U.P), India , (selected articles)

⁹⁴ “There is no possibility of more than one interpretation in the Qur’an.” *Farahi, Rasa’il fi ‘Ulum al-Qur’an*, 2nd ed. Azamgarh, (U.P),India, Da’irah Hamidiyyah, 1991, p.230

⁹⁵ Ibid

Quranic exegesis.⁹⁶ The need to return to Quran and to develop a new methodology for the interpretation of the Quran was felt while Farahi was still a student at M.A.O. Aligarh. The style and the nobility of Quran, says Farahi, will lead to the salvation and guidance for humanity (*Huda li-al-Naas*).

Allama Farahi's in-depth understanding of the Quran and prevailing sectarian approach in exegesis made him to feel the need of a futuristic vision of reforms broadly classified to three main components:

1. An authoritative Commentary of Quran based on the principles of the Coherency.⁹⁷
2. Purification and Modernization of Islamic Literature based on the Quranic Principles.⁹⁸
3. Reformation of the Educational System based on the Quran.⁹⁹

Allama Farahi maintains, indeed, this should be the main focus of the Muslim Intellectuals in the modern times for Islamization of the disciplines. His identification of the central themes of the Quran (*Umud*) was also an achievement in this direction. The approach of looking in to the central themes of Quran signifies the lucidity and connectivity in *Surahs* (Chapters) of Quran.¹⁰⁰

7. Exploring Allama Farahi's Approach

Allama Farahi founded the view that the Quran possessed both, the structural and the thematic *Nazm* (coherence and arrangement), which he summarized as:

1. The Surahs of the Quran are divided into seven discrete groups. Each group has a distinct theme. Every group begins with one or more

⁹⁶ Among the forerunners of this methodology, Madrasah al-Islah, Dairah Hamidiyah Sarai Mir Azamgrah, (U.P), India and al-Mawrid Institute, Lahore, Pakistan and its allied seminaries and Institutions in England and Canada can be included.

⁹⁷ For Structural cum Thematic explanations of the Quran See Allama Farahi see: *Asalib al-Quran, Dalail al-Nizam and Minhaj al-Tafsir*, Published by Dairah Hamidiyah Sarai Mir, Azamgrah, (U.P) India & Al-Mawrid, Publications, (2010), Lahore, Pakistan & U.K

⁹⁸ Gilani, S. Manazir Ahsan, (1987), *Hindustan Mein Musalmanu ka Nizam -i-Taleem -o-Tarbiyat*, Nadwah al-Musanifin, Delhi, vol.2 , p.280

⁹⁹ Ibid, p.283

¹⁰⁰ Ghamidi, J, (2018), *Maulana Farahi ke Qurani Usloob ki Ahmiyat o Ifadiyat*, op.cit. Sd

- Makkan Surah and ends with one or more Madinan Surah. In each group, the Makkan Surahs always precede the Madinan ones. The relationship between the Makkan Surahs and Madinan Surahs of each group is that of the root of a tree and its branches.¹⁰¹
2. In every discrete group, the various phases of the Prophet Muhammad's mission are depicted which gives a perfect inference of the socio-religious tie up plan.¹⁰²
 3. Two Surahs of each group form a pair such that each member of the pair complements the other in various ways. Surah *al-Fatihah*, however, is an exception to this pattern: it is an introduction to the whole of the Quran as well as to the first group which begins with it. There are also some Surahs which have a specific purpose and fall in this paired-surah scheme in a particular way.¹⁰³
 4. Each surah has a specific addressee and a central theme (*Umud*) around which the contents of the Surah revolve. Every Surah has distinct subsections to mark thematic shifts, and every subsection is paragraphed to mark smaller shifts.¹⁰⁴

Allama Farahi, laid down the guiding principles on the above mentioned style and left behind Tafsir of few Surahs to elaborate his principle of coherence. But, unfortunately, a complete Tafsir of Quran based on these principles could not materialize during his lifetime. Luckily, it was his able student and heir Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi (d.1997) who presented these principles in a more structural way in his exegesis *Tadabbur al-Quran*.¹⁰⁵

8. CONCLUSION

The Quranic exegesis witnessed a series of the stylistic, hermeneutic and linguistic explorations since 20th century. The Muslim intellectuals trained in the Quranic studies advanced over, and discovered the potential of the Quranic text, its

¹⁰¹ Farahi, Hamid al-Din, (1986), *Majmu'ah Tafasir*, 2nd Ed. Faran Foundation, Lahore, p.67

¹⁰² Ibid, p.69

¹⁰³ Ibid, p.69

¹⁰⁴ Subhani, M.Inayatullah, Asad, (2004), *Allama Hameed-u- Din Farahi:Ek Azeem Mufasir Ek Maya Naz Muhaqiq*, Dairh Hamidiah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah (U.P), India, p.32

¹⁰⁵ Islahi, A. Ahsan, (1986), *Tadabur -i-Quran*, 10 Vols, Dairah Hamidiyah, Sarai Mir, Azamgrah, (U.P) India & *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an*, 2nd ed., 8 vols. Faran Foundation, Lahore

scheme of coherence and profound linguistic style. The discoveries proved to be different from the traditional way highlighting the structural, thematic and eloquent aspects of Quran. Allama Farahi's in-depth study of the Quranic text, context and style of narration exhibits rational, linguistic and artistic approach simplifying the idea of coherence both in text as well as in the thematic interpolation. These linguistic and thematic expressions make Quranic exegesis inclusive, efficient and relevant in the contemporary textual and scriptural discourse. The debate over the difficult and discrete groups of words, construction of the sentences and syntax is directly related to the coherence to which Allama Farahi showed a special concern. The compilation of Quran not only followed historicity but also a very exotic route on chronological and hermeneutic levels. And yet, not only does the Quran possess coherence, but also exhibits a unique, sophisticated structure called the Semitic coherence. In the given context, Allama Farahi reflected over the hermeneutic tendencies by way of linguistic idiom and explored the significant illustrations of *al-Bhalagah wa al-Nazm* throughout his involvement and research in the Quranic exegesis.

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