



THE LITERARY LEGACY OF SA'ĪD AHMAD PALANPURI: A STUDY OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARABIC LITERATURE IN 21ST CENTURY INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In this paper an attempt has been made to highlight on Sa'īd Ahmad Palanpuri's life, and his scholarly contributions, with particular emphasis on his role in the development of Arabic literature and Islamic studies in the 21st century. Sa'īd Ahmad Palanpuri was a distinguished Indian Islamic scholar whose contributions to Arabic language and Islamic scholarship have earned him recognition as one of the leading Arabic authors of contemporary India. He was a prolific writer who produced numerous works such as: Hadith, Tafsīr, Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), 'Uṣūl al-Fiqh', Islamic philosophy, and Arabic grammar. His major works, including 'Tuhfat al-Qārī' and 'Mabādi' al-Uṣūl', have been incorporated into the curricula of leading Islamic seminaries, reflecting their enduring academic significance and pedagogical value. Through his original writings, translations, commentaries, and annotations, he made a significant contribution to the preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of the Arabic language and the classical Islamic intellectual tradition in modern India. Palanpuri's works continue to serve as valuable resources for students, researchers, and scholars, securing his place among the most influential Arabic scholars of modern India. This study critically examines his scholarly legacy to the contemporary Arabic literature and Islamic thought.

KEYWORDS: Sa'īd Ahmad Palanpuri, Islamic scholarship, Arabic literature, Hadith, Jurisprudence.

INTRODUCTION

India has been one of the most prominent non-Arab regions where the Arabic language and literature have developed and flourished on a large scale. A vast number of Arabic writings produced by Indian scholars have been widely received and appreciated throughout the Arab and Islamic world. Over its long history of Arabic literary tradition, India has produced a large number of reputed writers, poets, and thinkers. Many works authored by Indian scholars have become an integral part of Arabic and Islamic curricula across the world.

Sa'īd Ahmad Palanpuri was a multifaceted scholar whose contributions extended across diverse fields of Islamic learning. He was internationally recognized as a thinker, preacher, religious teacher, orator, and socio-religious reformer. Alongside these accomplishments, he earned distinction as an accomplished Arabic writer and became a prominent figure in Islamic-Arabic literary circles worldwide. In India, he was widely known by the honorific title Mufti Sá'īd.

Life Sketch of Mufti Sá'īd Ahmad Palanpuri:

Mufti Sá'īd Ahmad Palanpuri (1942–2020) was born on 9 August 1942 in Kaleda, a village near Palanpur in the Banaskantha district of Gujarat, India. He received his elementary education in Palanpur before pursuing advanced Arabic and Islamic studies at Mazahir Uloom, Saharanpur. He subsequently

enrolled at Darul Uloom Deoband, Uttar Pradesh, where he completed the Dawrah al-Ḥadīth (final course in Islamic studies) and graduated in 1962. During his student life Mufti Sá'īd received rigorous training in the traditional Islamic sciences, including Fiqh, Uṣūl al-Fiqh, Hadith, Tafsīr, Arabic grammar, and philosophy. His early dedication to the study of classical Islamic texts laid the foundation for his distinguished scholarly career. It was during this formative period that he developed his ability for research and writing, laying the foundation for his later scholarly career. Mufti Sá'īd began his literary career by writing commentaries on the major works of Hadith literature. His scholarly efforts eventually resulted in the publication of several authoritative commentaries, the most notable of which is *Tuhfat al-Qārī*, his comprehensive commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. This work established him as one of the leading contemporary scholars of Hadith.

Alongside his formal studies, Mufti Sá'īd maintained a deep interest in the Arabic language and its literature. From his early years, he regularly studied Arabic books, journals, and literary works imported from the Arab world. His continuous engagement with contemporary Arabic scholarship enabled him to remain informed about modern intellectual developments while strengthening his command of the Arabic language. As a result, he cultivated a lucid, elegant, and modern literary style



without departing from the classical traditions of Arabic scholarship.

Driven by a lifelong commitment to intellectual and scholarly excellence, Mufti Sá'īd continually expanded his academic horizons through extensive reading, teaching, and research. His sustained engagement with classical and contemporary scholarship established him as a distinguished authority in Islamic studies and Arabic literature. Through his prolific writings, dedicated teaching, and enduring contributions to Islamic scholarship, he has continued to inspire students, researchers, and scholars across the Indian subcontinent and beyond.

Specializing in Islamic jurisprudence, Mufti Sá'īd began his academic career as a professor of Arabic at Jāmi'ah Ashrafiyyah, Rander, Gujarat, where he taught for nine years. He subsequently joined Darul Uloom Deoband, serving as a professor of Arabic and Head of the Department of Arabic. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he actively participated in national and international academic conferences and delivered numerous lectures during his visits to the Hijāz for pilgrimage and other scholarly engagements. He delivered his speeches in many gatherings in Europe, Africa, America continent which were collected and published by distinguished writers and publishers in book forms. More than 50 published works in almost all the genres like Hadith, Tafsīr, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic Philosophy, Logic, Grammar, Biography etc. are to his credit.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to Arabic language and literature in India, Mufti Sá'īd received several prestigious honours. Among them, the most notable was the Presidential Award, conferred in 2010 by Pratibha Devi Singh Patil, the President of India, in recognition of his distinguished services to the promotion and advancement of the Arabic language and its literary tradition.

Valuable works of Sá'īd Ahmad Palanpuri:

Sá'īd Ahmad Palanpuri was one of the leading Arabic writers of the 21st century. He possessed a deep love for the Arabic language and devoted himself to its promotion and development in India. His writings are characterized by a modern style and clear, lucid language. Most of his works deal with the Islamic sciences and continue the classical scholarly tradition, including commentaries on the Holy Qur'ān, Hadith, and explanatory notes on classical Islamic texts.

In the field of Tafsīr, Mufti Sá'īd made a significant contribution by translating Al-Fawz al-Kabīr of Shah Waliullah Dehlavi from Persian into Arabic. He further enriched Qur'ānic studies through his Arabic commentary on the same work, entitled Al-'Awn al-Kabīr. In addition, he authored Hidāyat al-Qur'ān, a work on Tafsīr written in the Urdu language. These works reflect his scholarly engagement with Qur'ānic exegesis and his commitment to making classical Islamic scholarship accessible to a wider readership.

In the field of Hadith literature, Mufti Sá'īd earned distinction as a renowned Shaykh al-Ḥadīth and served as a teacher of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* at Darul Uloom Deoband. His

scholarly contributions include numerous original works and commentaries on major Hadith texts. Among his most notable works are *Tuḥfat al-Qārī*, a ten-volume commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*; *Tuḥfat al-Ma'ī*, an eight-volume commentary on Sunan al-Tirmidhī; *Fayḍ al-Mun'im*, a commentary on the *Muqaddimah* of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim; *Zubdat al-Taḥāwī*; *Kitāb al-'Ilal*; *Tuḥfat al-Durar*, a commentary on *Nukhbat al-Fikar fī Muṣṭalah Ahl al-Athar*; and *Mahfūzāt*. These works demonstrate his profound scholarship and lasting contribution to the study and teaching of Hadith.

Mufti Sá'īd made significant contributions to the field of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh). As a distinguished scholar and teacher, he specialized in the subject and taught numerous classical works of jurisprudence. In addition to his teaching, he authored several books, commentaries, and annotations on important juristic texts. Among his notable works is *Mubādi al-Uṣūl*, a treatise on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*), in which he discusses the four primary sources of Islamic law—the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, Ijmā' (consensus), and Qiyās (analogy)—in a comprehensive manner. His other important contributions include *Mu'in al-Uṣūl*, as well as annotations on *Imdād al-Fatāwā* and *Fatāwā Dārul 'Ulūm* Deoband, covering volumes thirteen through seventeen. These works reflect his profound mastery of Islamic jurisprudence and his commitment to preserving and elucidating the classical legal tradition.

Mufti Sá'īd made noteworthy contributions to the field of Islamic philosophy through his teaching and scholarly writings. His works in this discipline reflect his profound understanding of both classical Greek philosophy and the Islamic philosophical tradition. Among his most significant contributions is *Mubādi al-Falsafah*, an important introductory work on Islamic philosophy in which he explains the fundamental concepts and terminologies of philosophy. The book discusses the principal ideas of Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism within the Greek philosophical tradition, as well as Avicennism and Averroism in Islamic philosophy. Owing to its systematic presentation and scholarly value, *Mubādi al-Falsafah* is prescribed as a textbook at *Darul Uloom* Deoband and numerous other madrasas across India.

Another notable work is *Mu'in al-Falsafah*, a commentary on *Mubādi al-Falsafah*, in which Mufti Sá'īd further elucidates the fundamental concepts and issues of philosophy. He also prepared an annotated Arabic edition of 'Hujjat Allāh al-Bālighah', the celebrated two-volume work of Shah Waliullah Dehlavi that expounds the wisdom, objectives, and underlying rationale of the injunctions of the Sharī'ah. In this edition, Mufti Sá'īd provided extensive Arabic annotations and introduced appropriate headings throughout the text, thereby enhancing its clarity and making it more accessible to students and scholars alike.

In the field of Arabic grammar, Mufti Sá'īd authored several important works on 'Ilm al-Naḥw (Arabic syntax) and 'Ilm al-Ṣarf (Arabic morphology), in addition to *Al-Wāfiyah bi-Maqāṣid al-Kāfiyah*. The latter is a comprehensive commentary



on *Al-Kāfiyah*, the celebrated grammatical treatise of *Ibn al-Ḥāḥib*, which forms an integral part of the curriculum at Darul Uloom Deoband and numerous other madrasas across the Indian subcontinent. Through *Al-Wāfiyah bi-Maqāṣid al-Kāfiyah*, Mufti Sā'id elucidates the intricate grammatical discussions of the original text, thereby facilitating its understanding for students and scholars of Arabic grammar.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Mufti Sā'id Ahmad Palanpuri occupies a distinguished position among the leading Islamic scholars and Arabic writers of 21st century India. As a scholar, teacher, preacher, and reformer, he made remarkable contributions to the advancement of Islamic learning and Arabic literature. Mufti Sā'id's literary legacy comprises more than fifty scholarly works, including original treatises, commentaries, translations, and annotations. His scholarly achievements received national recognition when he was honoured with the Presidential Award in 2010 by the Government of India for his outstanding contribution to the promotion of the Arabic language and literature.

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