

The Religio-intellectual dynamism of Shibli Nu'mani

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Muhammad Shibli Nu'mani [1857-1914] was a scholar of the traditional Islamic disciplines in the middle half of the nineteenth century who became famous for his well-researched works dealing with biography, literary criticism and religion thereby pioneering a neo-modern and source-critical study of these traditional sciences. Being a versatile personality in his own right, he was also associated with widespread educational reform and dissemination to meet the vacuum created by the elimination of Muslim political authority by British colonialism. Shibli was also concerned with pan-Islamic issues and the threat to the Muslim countries elsewhere. His concern was also to provide and support indigenous political revival and leadership among the Muslims. In short, his approach to all these issues was that of a traditional Muslim who sought to seek the revival of Islam on all fronts and restore its previous power, status and respect. To this end, he devoted most of his life [dying at the comparatively short age of 57]. His zeal for Islamic reassertion is marked by a strong and deep study of the original sources of Islam and the remarkable figures that determined the course of its glorious history. His poetry, as well as his prose, is marked by these traits. In this essay, we will focus on those of Shibli's works that manifest this tendency.

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Shibli's *magnum opus* was his *Sirat al-Nabi*, a massive and extremely detailed life of the Holy Prophet [PBUH] based on original source material in several languages and presenting a fully rounded picture of the life of the Holy Prophet from birth till his departure from this life. Nothing on this large scale had earlier appeared in Urdu and this work blazed a trail for subsequent authoritative Prophetic biographies. The time of Shibli was one of increased missionary activity by Christians [imported from Britain and financed by Indian funds] in the subcontinent intending to convert the population of India to Christianity. In this endeavour, these missionaries took an aggressive approach and targeted the life of the Holy Prophet in an attempt to demean his status and his teachings, to expose his so-called 'imposture' and thereby assert the all-round superiority of Christianity. Allied to this was the vituperative propaganda by the Hindus who, encouraged and protected by the Christian authorities, launched a multi-pronged defamation drive against Islam, the Holy Prophet and his followers. Shibli was aghast at this massive campaign and resolved to counter it by writing an authentic biography of the Holy Prophet refuting all the scurrilous lies given currency to and masquerading as 'truth'. For this purpose, Shibli [following the path of the early Muslim scholars] travelled in search of material to the Middle East [to the Ottoman Empire and its territories such as Egypt and Syria-Lebanon] – as detailed in his travelogue ^[1]. After his return laden with rich and untapped material, Shibli devoted all his time to the composition of this remarkable research document mining all the original Arabic sources. Unfortunately, Shibli died before he could complete this momentous undertaking. It was his desire to create a centre exclusively for

research which he carried out and worked there till the end. This was the *Dār al-musannifīn* [House of writers] in Azamgarh, his native place [which is the site of the present Shibli Academy]. Feeling the approach of death, Shibli groomed his premier pupil, the multi-talented Syed Suleiman Nadvi [d. 1953] to continue the task to its conclusion on the pattern of its original design. This was done and the remaining volumes were meticulously written and arduously produced by Nadvi who also wrote a life of his teacher and collected his essays and poetry [2].

The *Sīrat al-Nabi* begins with an extensive survey of the sources – which is the most vital component in a work of this nature. The author makes a comprehensive critique of the *sīrah* literature viz. the Hadith, *maghāzi*, documents, traditions and the previous authoritative writings on this subject. The important role of al-Zuhri, Muhammad b. Ishaq, Ibn Sa'd, al-Tabari and others has been highlighted. An interesting part of this evaluation is the critique of the books in European languages [English, French, German, Italian and Dutch]. Shibli uniquely advocated the teaching of English at the traditional madressah of *Nadvatul 'Ulemā* and also learnt French from T.W. Arnold, author of the sympathetic *Preaching of Islam*. Common prejudices repeated by Western writers *ad nauseum* are answered. The plan of the book's investigative parameters is determined. The outline is indicated thus:

1. facts recorded in the Quran;
2. facts recorded in the Hadith;

3. facts recorded in histories, books of Hadith criticism, names of Hadith narrators [*asmā al-rijāl*] *et al.*;
4. accounts contained in European books.

The various areas covered are:

- pre-Islamic history of Arabia;
- the life of the Prophet from his birth up to his passing away;
- the various battles fought by the Muslims;
- the superlative qualities of the Holy Prophet;
- his unique characteristics;
- a philosophico-religious discussion of the religious system of Islam.

In short, no work on *sīrah* in Urdu, either before or after, had encompassed such a vast area with consummate skill and painstaking effort. All subsequently-written books in Urdu have inevitably to consult this work. There is no need to quote the appreciative remarks of critics on this extraordinary work as it needs no attestation to its greatness. However, the differing perceptions of the critics will not be without interest. As Sheila McDonough writes in her essay titled: "*Shibli Nu'mani: a conservative vision of revitalized Islam*":

'A comparison of the two volumes [Ibn Ishaq and Shibli] suggests that Shibli has, in many ways, repeated the original feat of Ibn Ishaq, namely, to recreate in the minds of his readers a powerful

sense of the reality of Muhammad's life, struggles, and victories' [3].

The noted scholar, S.M. Ikram, states:

'The [true] importance of the *Sirat al-Nabi* is that it is the masterpiece of our biggest scholar and litterateur writing in the full prime of his age, thought and feeling'. [4]

A similar statement is given by Zafar Ahmad Siddiqui thus:

'It can be said that because of its various merits, the book will take precedence [like a full moon] over all the Arabic and Urdu books of *sirah* written during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth'. [5]

Although the *Sirat al-Nabi* was the last of his biographical works, the desire to write biography-cum-critical works was ingrained in Shibli at an early age. Thus the years 1883-98 are extremely productive of such work. We find *Al-Māmūn* [1887], *Sirat al-Nu'mān* [1889], and *Al-Fārūq* [1898] among the more remarkable works of this period. This is interspersed with his travelogue *Safarnāma Roum wa Shām wa Misr* [1894] and a host of essays.

Taking *Al-Māmūn* [6] first, it is stated in the preface that this is one of a projected series of Islamic heroes who were also rulers. Of the ten originally included in the collection, Shibli

could only write on two viz. Mamun and Omar ibn al-Khattab. The others chosen were Caliph Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik [from the Omayyad dynasty], 'Abd al-Rahman [Omayyads of Spain], Saif al-Dawla [Bany Hamdan], Malik Shah [Seljuq], Nur al-Din Zangi and Salah al-Din [of Egypt], Yaqub b. Yusuf [of Spain] and Suleyman the Magnificent [Ottoman]. Why these persons were chosen and what was the criterion for their selection is not given or revealed. Shibli very methodically lists the sources for *al-Māmūn* and examines them before beginning the account. The choice of al-Mamun being the subject of a study was unfortunate as Mamun had neither the wisdom and courage nor the administrative acumen of his father, Harun al-Rashid. He neither respected the *'ulemā* or sufis nor was he able to defeat the aggressive Byzantines. A study of Saladin would be more preferable as the subject was so attractive. Shibli, as is his usual practice, gives first a biography which is then followed by an assessment of his subject in the full perspective of history. According to S. M. Ikram, the status of *Al-Māmūn* was overshadowed by that of *Al-Fārūq* ^[7].

The next book by Shibli was *Al-Nu'mān* [1890] – a life of Abu Hanifa, the founder of the earliest and largest school of Islamic jurisprudence. This was a change effected to the original plan of preparing a study of 'royal heroes' of Islam by broadening it to include Muslim 'notables' of whom Abu Hanifa seemed an obvious choice. The first part is biographical while the second is an overall study of Abu Hanifa's especial achievements in the formalization of Islamic law. In his preface to the book, Shibli writes: 'The position of Abu Hanifa in Islam can be understood

by the fact that the number of his biographies has exceeded that of anyone else' ^[8]. Shibli exhibits an easy familiarity with the intricate sciences pertaining to Islamic law and its sources. In the second part, Shibli proves, on the basis of cited evidence, that the greatest achievement of Abu Hanifa was the preparation of a vast system of Islamic law based on the Quran and Hadith. Shibli then calls for 'a return to the original dynamism of Hanafi law' on the part of the ulema who should blaze the trail for ordinary Muslims in this regard, as Sheila McDonough writes ^[9].

In order to gain access to the untapped resources present in the Middle East, Shibli proceeded on an educational tour of Turkey [*Roum*], Syria [*Shām*], and Egypt [*Misr*]. Shibli interacted with scholars of these important centres of Islamic culture and learning and visited libraries, museums and educational institutions devoted to learning. His travel account is contained in his *Safarnāma* [travelogue – see above]. This is a unique account of the life in Muslim countries at the end of the nineteenth century. It is a veritable treasure-trove for students of socio-cultural and politico-religious history. The author, being a person learned in the Islamic sciences and an academic to boot, is enthusiastic about learning how Muslims outside South Asia lead their lives and practise the tenets of Islam. Shibli expresses great love for the Turks and their Caliph who represented the power of Islam despite Western encroachment into their territories. The ceremonial procession of the Turkish Caliph leaving for the mosque on Friday thrills Shibli. The glory of Islam, although much reduced, fills his heart with pride and

the mention of the name of the Caliph, Abd al-Hamid II, in the *khutba* causes his tears to flow. In Egypt, Shibli has a memorable meeting with Mufti Muhammad Abduh, the Grand Shaykh of the El-Azhar University and Mufti of all Egypt.^[10]

The book has 'an eminent academic status', writes S. M. Ikram, 'and because of Shibli's style has a special place among his writings' ^[11]. Shibli remained an ardent admirer and champion of Turkey till his death in 1914 – as Sakhi Ahmad Hashmi writes ^[12].

To Shibli, Caliph 'Umar represented all the qualities of an ideal Muslim ruler – strict observance of Islam and its application in all walks of life, a keen and active intelligence and great personal courage. According to 'Aziz Ahmad, 'Umar constitutes the basis of Islamic polity, economic organization, and principles of co-existence with non-Islamic peoples ... [In Shibli] the central emphasis is focused on 'Umar as the idealized symbol of Islamic justice and egalitarianism' ^[14]. According to S. M. Ikram ^[15], Shibli wished to refute the irresponsible and false statements of Orientalists regarding the Islamic system of government The topic was such that it encompassed all of Shibli's intellectual interests.' As Sheila McDonough writes, 'One can see that Shibli's Muslim readers could easily be moved by this presentation of their Caliph as a great exemplar of justice and fair treatment'. ^[16]

Shibli's next intellectual essay was into the field of Islamic philosophy and he chose as his subject the most renowned name in this field viz. Muhammad al-Ghazali ^[17]. The first part, as usual, gives the biographical details; the second deals with

Ghazali's works. A separate heading is given to *kalām* [scholastic theology] – a subject that Shibli was later to treat in two books. Ghazali's efforts to save Islam from the inroads of foreign accretions, his involvement in the burning issues of the day, his vindication of the supremacy of Islam on all fronts are accomplished by Shibli with the practised ease of a scholar well-versed in the intricacies of *kalām*. Shibli expounds Ghazali's favourable attitude towards Islamic *tasawwuf* [mysticism] and concludes with an overall survey of his services to Islam.

According to 'Aziz Ahmad, 'Shibli is principally concerned to establish al-Ghazali's position as a scholar of *kalām* rather than a theologian' ^[18]. According to S.M. Ikram, the three points highlighted by Shibli regarding Ghazali were:

1. the refutation of materialistic philosophy;
2. the establishment of the proof of Islam;
3. the refutation of heresies such as those of the Bātiniyya ^[19].

'With these men [Ghazali, Razi, Shah Wali Allah] and their ideas at his command, Shibli turned to writing his theology ... acting under modern influences,' writes Mehr Afroze Murad ^[20].

Shibli's two books on *kalām* – '*Ilm al-kalām* and *al-Kalām* were written in the early years of the twentieth century ^[21]. The interaction with the British led to a great deal of soul-searching among educated Muslims regarding the fundamentals of their belief. The best example of this is Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who was a known apologist and always on the defensive about Islam. In

doing so, he was willing to deny some of the primary aspects of Islam or to reinterpret them according to modern rationalistic thought – such as *wahy* and the *I'jāz al-Qurān*. Shibli's approach was different. Rather than redefine the basics of Islam to bring them in conformity with modern thought, Shibli directed his attack on the weaknesses of the protagonists of the 'new theology'. He was thus able to clarify what was basic to Islam and what had infiltrated it undetected. He was not in favour of a new *'ilm al-kalām* but advocated a return to the pristine faith divested of alien elements. Shibli's study is a historical survey of the rise and development of the *'ilm al-kalām* and the *mutakallimūn*. He takes the survey down to Shah Wali Allah and his school. This was a great achievement compressing twelve centuries into a couple of hundred pages.

The sequel, *Al-Kalām*, deals with *kalām* in the contemporary context. This had to be done by an exposition of Islam's legal and ethical teachings rather than by reopening a debate on the fundamentals. Shibli's 'grand design' remained unfulfilled, according to S. M. Ikram, for want of the critico-hermeneutic tools to deal with modern philosophic trends that themselves were not yet crystallized ^[22].

The transition from Ghazali to Rumi was not problematic at all. Ghazali was a mystic *par excellence* who had made his pilgrim's progress to the Celestial City. Rumi, coming in the next century, took advantage of the trail blazed by Ghazali in this direction and, with reed-like pain, told the story of his own perilous path. In the first part of the *Savānih Moulānā Rum* ^[23],

Shibli gives the life-sketch of Rumi and the fascinating encounter with Shams-i-Tabriz. In the second part, there is an examination of the writings and teachings of Rumi – such as the immortal *Mathnavī*, the *Divān Shams-i-Tabrīz* and the table-talk called *Fīhi mā fīhi*. In this the perfection of Islam in its mystic teaching is brought out and insights are given in matters of mystic interpretation.

Aurengzeb 'Ālamgīr par aik nazar ^[24] was the sole bio-critical study of a South Asian Muslim ruler. It examines and refutes the various charges levelled against Emperor Aurengzeb [r. 1657–1707] by fanatic Hindus and biased Englishmen. Shibli proves, with massive evidence, the position of Aurengzeb as a capable, brave and devoted ruler who raised the Mughul dynasty to its greatest heights. Separately, a brief bio-critical sketch of Aurengzeb's talented daughter, Zebunnisa, was issued separately ^[25]. This was included in vol. 5 of his historical essays [see below]. Zebunnisa was a talented and attractive personality in her own right and author of a *Divān* using the *nom de plume* of 'Makhfī' [= 'the concealed one'].

A large part of the Shibli corpus consists of the various essays written by him over the years – which have been collected in eight volumes by his premier pupil, Syed Suleiman Nadvi ^[26].

Volume One is a collection of 16 essays of which 6 deal with various aspects of the Quran – such as the order of surahs, the *I'jāz al-Qurān*, Quranic oaths and predestination, and the

various Orientalist attacks on the Quran. The other 10 essays deal with various other attacks on Islam by foreign foes.

Volume Two comprises 10 essays that cover literary aspects of Arabic such as its rhetoric and poetry and the coherence [*nazm*] in the Quran. Other essays deal with Urdu in its relation to Hindi.

Volume Three has as its subtitle '*ta'limī*' [educational] and has 11 essays on this subject. They deal, *inter alia*, with the *Dars-i-Nizāmī* and its founder, old and new systems of education, the revival of Arabic sciences and books on Arabic grammar.

Volume Four – subtitled '*tanqīdī*' [critical] is a study of various books and their authors including:

1. *Tabaqāt* by Ibn Sa'd
2. *Manāqib 'Omar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz* by Ibn Jawzi
3. *Al-jabr wa al-muqābala* by 'Omar Khayyam
4. *Tajārib al-umam* by Ibn Miskawaiyh
5. *Al-milal wa al-nihal* by Ibn Hazm
6. *Tafsīr al-Kabīr* by Imam Razi
7. *Humāyun nāma* by Gulbadan Begum
8. *Tuzuk* by Jahangir.

There are 2 books by Christian Arabs – Jurji Zaydan and Butros Bustani – that are examined.

Volume Five [Part One] is a collection of nine essays on historical personages – ancient and modern – who have influenced the flow of history in their time. Among them are:

1. Asma – mother of Amir Mu'awiya
2. Ibn Rushd
3. Ibn Taymi'ah
4. Al-Mutanabbi
5. Zeybunnisa
6. Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami
7. Farid Wajdi Bey.

Volume Six [Part Two] is *tārīkhi* [historical] edited by Masud Ali Nadvi. It has 7 essays dealing with Islamic books and libraries, the promotion of knowledge by Muslim rulers of South Asia, and lack of prejudice among Muslim writers.

Volume Seven covers the vast gamut of philosophy with 12 essays. . The first four deal with Greek philosophy and Islam. The others survey modern philosophy in an Islamic context and even treat Darwin's theory of evolution.

Volume Eight has five rubrics – religious, historical, educational, political and miscellaneous – that cover 47 essays and brief notes. The first rubric covers certain aspects of Islamic missionary activity and Islamic law. The second contains an early hint of composing the *Sīrat al-Nabi*. Other essays deal with Ibn Rushd and Al Mamun. There is an elegaic essay on Shibli's

teacher of Arabic and Persian, Muhammad Faruq Chiryakoti [d. 1909]. The third rubric investigates certain aspects of educational life at the *Nadvatul 'Ulemā* seminary at Lucknow. The fourth rubric covers political matters including an inquiry into the Armenian question. The fifth rubric covers a visit to the NWFP [now in Pakistan] and ends with a memorial essay on Nawab Mohsinul Mulk [d. 1906].

The religio-intellectual heritage of Shibli has also been preserved in the form of his speeches or *khutbāt* ^[27]. These indicate his involvement with the Muslim public and his desire for their improvement. Some of his speeches are purely scholarly. The Muslim welfare institutions Shibli addressed were:

- the Muhammadan Educational Conference;
- the *Nadvatul 'Ulemā*;
- Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh

The topics Shibli touched upon in his addresses are:

- the responsibilities of the ulema
- the provision of religious education in schools
- education – old and new
- the defects of the old Arabic syllabus.

The purely scholarly addresses dealt with topics such as: the preservation of Islam; the preservation of religion; Islam and intolerance; Islam and philosophy in historical context.

Syed Suleiman Nadvi has also collected the letters of Shibli [28] in 2 volumes [*Makātīb-i-Shiblī*]. Volume 1 contains 43 letters written mostly to scholars, associates and inquirers. Volume 2 contains 25 letters written mostly to students and friends among which are 10 Persian letters and 3 Arabic letters. The letters of Shibli provide an invaluable insight into the religio-cultural ethos of his times and his treatment of the many persons who thus wrote to him. An interesting sidelight to Shibli's personality and interest are his many letters to Atiya Fyzee and her sister, Zehra Fyzee. The relationship of Shibli with the Fyzee family does not fall within the purview of our study. The letters of Shibli to Atiya and Zehra were collected by Mohammad Amin Zuberi [29]. All these letters bear testimony to the writer's desire to promote the education of Muslim women and their participation in the affairs of their community.

There is a subsequent volume entitled *Bāqiyāt-i-Shiblī* [30] containing material not included in the earlier collection of letters and essays. The letters can be mined for relevant biographical information. Studies of Shibli based on his letters have been made by Moinuddin Ahmad Ansari [31], Shah Moinuddin Nadvi [32] and Khalid Bazmi [33].

Shibli has also an important place in the poetic heritage of Urdu. His inspiring poems have been collected in a *Kulliyāt* by Syed Suleiman Nadvi. These deal with episodes from Islamic history, political issues, current events, matters of concern to Muslims as well as ethical and moral topics. According to Syed

Suleiman Nadvi in his introduction to the Urdu divan, Shibli used to recite his poems at the various conferences he attended and his audience shed tears on hearing them ^[34]. The poems effectively convey the message of the poet to his public and urge them to a programme of action for the sake of Islam. For example, in his long poem '*Subh-i-ummīd*' [the dawn of hope], Shibli writes:

Ay mudda'iyān-i-Hubb-i-Islām
Hujron mein to ab karo na ārām.

Translation:

O claimants to the love of Islam!
Do not rest now in solitary cells.

Among his notable Urdu poems is a *qasīda* [ode] to Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II written in 1889 before Shibli visited Turkey. There are poems on the *hijrah* of the Holy Prophet, the building of the Prophet's mosque, the simple life of the Prophet's family, an event of the caliphate of 'Omar, the justice of 'Omar, the justice of Jahangir, the cause of Muslim decline, the justice of 'Omar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, the sacrifice of Asma [mother of 'Abdallah b. Zubayr], the Tripoli and Balkan wars, the welcome to the medical mission led by Dr. Ansari during the Balkan wars, six poems on the Muslim League, the desecration of the Kanpur mosque [by the British], the *Nadvatul 'Ulemā* and Aligarh College. In short, the poems are saturated with a powerful ardour for Islam, a desire for its revival and pride in its glorious past. According to Mirza Muhammad Bashir, 'the pen of Shibli

presents, both in prose and in poetry, the picture of the glory of Islam. His moral, historical, religious and political poems are an invaluable addition to Urdu literature' [35].

Shibli's Persian poetry [36] is a tribute to his teacher's ability to inculcate a love of the Persian language and develop an ability to be creative in it after assessing the potential of his pupil. The teacher was Muhammad Faruq Chiryakoti. The pupil was Muhammad Shibli who was advised by the same teacher to take 'Nu'mani' as a surname in deference to Imam Abu Hanifa. On one occasion, Faruq addressed him thus in Arabic: *Anā asadun wa anta shiblī* [= 'I am a lion and you are a lion-cub (shibli in Arabic)']. To have a scholar for a teacher is a unique honour indeed. Shibli imbibed from Faruq an extraordinary ability to use both Arabic and Persian for his intellectual activities. According to Ustad Abbas Mahrin Shusteri, in his authoritative work, *Edabiyāt-i-Īrān khārij az Īrān* [Iranian literature outside Iran], 'Shibli never visited Iran. But his Persian poetry is closer to the Persian of Iran far more than any of his contemporaries' [37]. In Shibli's *dīvān* of Persian poetry, we find the following poems relevant to our study: on the past glories of Muslims recalled on the occasion of 'Id in 1883. In this poem, there are references to Muslim presence in Salonika, Italy, Shiraz, Iraq, Hijaz, Yemen, Cordova and other places. There is a long ode in praise of the Caliph 'Abd al-Hamid II written on the occasion of 'Id 1892 in Istanbul.

Three verses written before the tomb of the Holy Prophet in Medina are:

*Ay ba karam kār-i-jahān karda sāz
 Huma rā peesh-i-tu rū-i-niyāz
 Chu ba dar-at āmada-am bā umīd
 Az karam khweesh ma-kun nā-umīd
 Chu ba dar-at āmada am umīd-wār
 Saya-i-lutf-i za-saram bar madār*

Translation:

[O you whose] favour works in the whole world!
 All come to thee seeking thy blessing
 So have I come to your Door with hope
 Of thy bounty – do not make me lose hope
 As I have come to your Door a supplicant.
 Place the shade of your favour on my head!

There is a poem mocking the Aga Khan's suggestion that Turkey should withdraw from Thrace during the Balkan wars.

According to Mirza Bashir Ahmad, the Persian poetry of Shibli exhibits amply his poetic prowess ^[38]. Of late there has been a decline in Persian scholarship in Pakistan. The consequence of this is that most books on Shibli neglect his position as an important Persian poet. The chapter on Shibli's Persian poetry in S. M. Ikram's *Yādgār-i-Shibli* has almost nothing to do with an assessment of Shibli's attainments in that language. The premier critic, Qazi Ahmad Akhtar Junagarhi, writes: 'The chief characteristic of [Shibli's] Persian poetry is its

"Persian-ness" [*Fārsiyyat*}'. This is an independent corroboration of the earlier-mentioned opinion of Ustad Shusteri ^[39].

In conclusion, Shibli's manifold scholarly achievements and his erudite compositions remind one of the polymaths of early Islam. Lately, Shibli has been regarded solely as an historian to the neglect of his other areas of expertise. These are manifest in his erudite literary history of Persia [*Shi'r al-'ajam* – 6 volumes] used by E.G. Browne when writing his *Literary history of Persia* [4 vols.]; in his Urdu criticism [*Mawāzana Anīs-o-Dabīr*], in his poetry [Urdu/Persian], in his advocacy of Pan-Islamism, in his championing of the Turkish cause, in his services to the Quran, in his establishment of various schools, in his educational reforms and in his expertise in philosophy and *kalām* ^[40]. All these attainments testify to his eminent status as an academic fired by a sense of mission striving relentlessly for the religio-educational and ethico-moral improvement of his people to make them regain their previous status as major contributors to world civilization. In pursuit of this daunting goal, he led a simple and austere life focusing on the renaissance of Islam – a goal which he never lost sight of. According to William Cantwell Smith, 'Shibli accepted the whole of Islam, knew it and loved it' ^[41]. It was this goal that became the axis of his life and in pursuing it he died in harness on 18 November 1914. With the Elect in the heavens!

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NOTES:

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38. *Ibid.*, p. 62
39. Qazi Ahmad Akhtar Junagadhi, *Maqālāt-i Akhtar*, Karachi, 1972, p. 79

40. See details in Khan, *op. cit.*; Ikram, *op. cit.* Additional information in Aftab Ahmad Siddiqui, *Shibli: aik dabistān*, Dhaka, n.d.; Sakhi Ahmad Hashmi, *Shibli kā zehni irtiqā'*, Karachi, n.d.; Akhtar Waqar 'Azeem, *Shibli ba-haysiyyat muwarrikkh*, New Delhi, 1997; Syed Suleiman Nadvi, *Hayāt-i-Shibli*, Lahore, 1980; Muhammad Aslam Syed, *Muslim response to the west: Muslim historiography in India 1857-1914*, Islamabad, 1988; 'Abdul Latif Azami, *Shibli kā martaba Urdu adab mein*, Karachi, 1967 [1st ed. 1945]; Zafar Iqbal, *Urdu mein tārikkh nawāsi*, Karachi, n.d.; Hamid Hasan Qadri, *Dāstān tārikkh-i-Urdu*, Karachi, 1988; Ram Babu Saxena, *A History of Urdu literature*, Lahore, 1975 [1st ed. 1927]; Muhammad Sadiq, *A History of Urdu literature*, Karachi, 1985; 'Ali Jawwad Zaidi, *A History of Urdu literature*, New Delhi, n.d.; Jamil Jalibi, *Tārikkh-i-Adab-i-Urdu*, vol. 4, Lahore, 2012.

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Bibliographical details are given in Akhtar Rahi, *Kitāb-nāma-i-Shibli*, Lahore, 1981.

There is a detailed account of Shibli's historical works seen in the context of the association he founded viz. the *Dār al-musannifīn* in *Dār al Musannifīn ki tārikhi khidmāt* by Dr. Muhammad Ilyas alA'zami, Patna, 2002. Shibli's contribution to the development of Urdu historiography has been highlighted in *Early Urdu Historiography* by Dr. Javed Ali Khan, Patna, 2005.

A recent well-researched book titled *Kitābiyāt-i-Shibli* [271 pp., 2011] by Dr. M. Ilyas A'zami has been issued by the Shibli Academy, Azamgarh. This contains much information on Shibli's writings. It has a four-fold division: (1) an index of Shibli's writings, translations, editions and essays; (2) an index of books written on Shibli by others including theses; (3) books written on Shibli's works [essays and periodical pieces] in both English and Urdu; (4) an index of the names of persons [authors, reviewers and others] included in the book. This book is yet unavailable in Pakistan. [This information has been obtained from the review of the book by Safir Akhtar in *Fikr-o-Nazar*, vol. 49, No. 4, April-June 2012, Islamabad.]

41. William Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, Delhi, 1985 [1st edition 1946], p. 42.

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