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## Important Prose Works of Altaf Hussain Hali

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**Abstract:** Hali's real name was Khwaja Altaf Hussain and his pen name was Hali. He was born in 1837 in Panipat (District Karnal). Hali was basically a poet but he displayed his concern and the brilliance of his pen in the field of prose as well and proved that a good poet is also a good prose writer and a good prose writer can also be a good poet. When Hali entered in the field of Nasr, writers like Mohammad Hussain Azad, Deputy Nazir Ahmed, Shibli Nomani and Ratan Nath Sarshar were already well known in the world of Urdu Nasr. Hali entered the world of Urdu prose with his unique style and apart from his articles, magazines, books, he reached the heights of fame with his masterpieces Hayat-e-Saadi, Yadgar-e-Ghalib, Moqadma-e-Sher-o-Shayri and Hayat-e-Javed. Before Hali, Urdu prose was dominated by colourful expressions, eloquence, tyranny and formality. Nasr was also displaying poetic

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mastery. At such a time, Hali gave a special style to Urdu Nasr, which became known for its special clarity, appreciation, wisdom, as well as moderation and balance.

Hali started his literary career in 1867 and wrote his first book on a religious theme. Let us review the important Nasri achievements of Hali.

#### TIRYAAQ MASMOOM

This is an important book of Hali which was published in the year 1868. During this period, Christian preachers were spending all their efforts in preaching and promoting their religion. Christian missionaries in small and large towns were working rapidly under the auspices of the British government. These missionaries, with the help of speech, writing, literature and the greed of post, were spending a lot of effort to convert the common Indians whether their religion was Hindu or Islam. Even Panipat could not escape from this. Khair Uddeen and Aimad Uddeen were the sons of Mullah Siraj Uddeen of Panipat. Aimad Uddeen went to Agra and accepted Christianity and became a priest. This person was greedy to the extreme. He had mastery over the Arabic language. He wrote a book named Hidayat ul Muslameen. The name of this book in Tazkira e Hali is Tahqeeq ul Imaan. In this book, the religions of Islam and Christianity were compared and compared and very harsh sentences were made on Islamic teachings.

In which Pastor Aimad Uddeen used very controversial phrases. Hali was a great scholar and he tried to answer this book

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with immense logic written under the name of Tiryaq Masmoom, which was published serially in Delhi's monthly magazine Khair ul Mawaez. Hali discussed the teachings of the religion of Islam, its virtues and all Why is this religion better than religion? It has been highlighted in this book that it is a very good example of the logical reasoning of this type.

#### MAJALIS UN NISA

The first name in the important literary text of Hali is Majalis Un Nisa (1874). It was during this period that the fame of Diputy Nazeer Ahmed was at its peak. Apart from him, Shad Azimabadi and Mirza Abbas Hussain also presented their views in stories based on the improvement of society and development of education.

In Majalis Un Nisa, Hali has stressed on the reform of women and education and training of girls. This book is in two parts. Besides being interesting and useful, this book is an excellent example of easy and serious Urdu writing. This book was included in the curriculum of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh for a long time. Hali received a reward of Rs. 400 from the government for this book. Some writers believe that Hali wrote this book to please the English rulers and has praised Queen Victoria and the English language at many places. As far as I think, this seems to be acceptable because the same Hali who never came forward to acquire English education, what were the reasons later that he praised the English language along with Queen Victoria.

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Secondly, it is difficult to call this book a novel because this book does not fully qualify the art of novel. This book is based on 236 pages in which the word Majlis has been used instead of Bab. There are nine Babs i.e. nine Majlises in this book. In every Majlis, emphasis has been given on the reform of women. Specially, what is the importance of knowledge? How can mutual social relations be kept pleasant? Etc. Along with this, the thoughts and ideas of Sir Syed and the blessings of British rule and the light of knowledge spread by them have also been supported and praised.

The basic quality of this book is that it describes the social life of Delhi in a simple and easy language. The language, idioms, proverbs, examples and special style of conversation of the women of Delhi have been presented. Purpose is also the central element of this book of Hali, but by studying the dialogues in this book, a clear picture of the culture and society of that period emerges. In this book, Hali's simplicity, sincerity and innocence can be clearly felt. Hali's Majalis un Nisa is a living picture of the life of his times. Hali has expressed all the thoughts and ideas that were present in his heart and mind regarding Sir Syed, the British and the Muslim society without any formality or pretense. Hali's entire focus was on the reform of his society, in which he was also successful.

#### HAYAT E SAADI

This is the complete biography of Sheikh Saadi. This is the complete Sawaneh Umari of Sheikh Saadi. Hayat e Saadi is the first

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proper prose book of Khawaja Altaf Hussain Hali which added to Hali's fame and added a new chapter in Urdu Sawaneh Nigari. Saadi Shirazi was a famous Persian poet and philosopher. He is considered the Prophet of Ghazal in Persian literature. His two Persian books Gulistan and Bostan have received the fame that very few books have received. Saadi also gave importance to advice, simplicity and reality. Saadi refrained from excessive flattery, love and romance and flattery. Hali also had the same mental attitude. These are the points which forced Hali to write Sawaneh Hayat of this great Persian philosopher, poet and expert of morality Sheikh Saadi Shirazi. Which Hali completed in the year 1886. When Hali was writing these Sawanehs, at that time there was a large section of people who knew Persian and Urdu, so Hali has taken full care of this in this book. Apart from this, he has avoided the words of Hindi and English language. There is neither any confusion nor any complexity in this Sawaneh composition of Hali. It has been the prominent specialty of Hali's style that he reaches the depth of meaning and meaning while maintaining balance. For example, consider this quote from the Hayat E Saadi, \_\_

"Sheikh made the ghazal so colourful and explosive that people left qasidas and masnavi and started singing ghazals. The names of ghazal singers could be counted on fingers but now they are more than lakhs. That is why some poets have called Sheikh the Prophet of Ghazal."<sup>1</sup> This book has two parts. In the first part, the circumstances of Sheikh Saadi have been described with research,

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while in the second part, there is a commentary on his poetry. Maulana Shibli liked this book whole heartedly and he expressed his opinion that, "This is the very interesting and fascinating Sawaneh Umri of Sheikh Saadi." Hali has presented the great qualities and virtues of Sheikh Saadi's writings in an effective manner. In the end, other poets of that era are also mentioned.

#### MOQADMA E SHER O SHAYRI

A very important book of Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali is Moqadma E-Sher-O-Shayari. When Diwan of HALI was published in 1893, moqadma was also included in this book. This moqadma created a revolution in Urdu literature and Urdu Tanqeed. Actually, this is the first book in Urdu in which the basic principles and answers of Tanqeed have been discussed. Undoubtedly this is the first book of Urdu Tanqeed in which the basic principles of Tanqeed are discussed in detail from the perspective of poetry and life. Like...how should be the poetry? What are the principles of poetry? By what means and how can one achieve amazing results in poetry? What qualities are necessary to write poetry? What is the relation between words and meanings? What and how much importance do words and meaning have? What is the foundation of good couplet? What are the special features and disadvantages of Marsiya, Qaseeda, Ghazal and Masnavi?

In this book, Hali has mentioned three conditions necessary for a poetry, (1) Takhaiyul (Imagination), (2) Motala E Kaynaat

(Understanding of the Universe) and (3) Tafahhus e Alfaaz (Understanding of Words) and has also explained them. Not only this, Hali has for the first time praised three important things in the context of the qualities of a couplet: (1) Saadgi (Simplicity), (2) Asliyat (Reality) and (3) Josh (Passion), and made it clear that these enhance the beauty of the couplet. Hali writes about simplicity, "According to us, the criterion for simplicity of poetry should be that no matter how lofty and profound the thought is, it should not be complicated or boring and the words should be as close as possible to modern and everyday speech. To the extent that the style of poetry is different from ordinary speech, to that extent it will be considered to be free from the ornaments of simplicity."<sup>2</sup>

Apart from this, Hali writes in his Kalaam, explaining the concept of reality and its various forms. "By being based on reality it is not meant that the content of every couplet should be based on the reality of self-realization, rather it is meant that the thing on which the foundation of the couplet has been laid is currently present in self-realization or in the beliefs of the people or merely in the mind of the poet. By being based on reality it is also not meant that the statement should not be completely based on reality, rather it means that most of the reality is necessary, and if the poet on his part makes some deficiency or excess in the sentence then there is no fun in it."<sup>3</sup> Hali writes about the third quality of poetry, passion, in this book, "The subject matter should be expressed in such unpretentious words and effective paragraphs that it should be

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known that the poet has not composed the subject matter with his own intention, rather the subject matter itself has forced the poet to bind himself to it."<sup>4</sup> Along with this, he explained the Aamad (Arrival) and the Aawurd (Rise) and many other things. When this book was published and came into the public view, it was also strongly opposed because the poetry of most of the Urdu literary poets was found to be lacking in terms of the principles of criticism and answers given for poetry and shayri in this book. That is why those poets strongly opposed this book.

This book has also been divided into two parts. In the first part, principles of Shayari have been explained and in the second part, Ghazal, Qasida, Masnavi and Marsiya have been mentioned. Before Hali, there was a tradition of Tazkira in Urdu and in those Tazkiras, poets and literature used to write about their era and the writings of poets before them but there was lack of details in the Tazkiras. Likes and dislikes were given special attention. Till that time, there were no proper principles and answers for Urdu criticism. This work was done for the first time in Urdu literature by Hali. This paper is itself an independent work on criticism of poetry and literature. Its importance and greatness cannot be ignored.

#### YADGAR E GHALIB

This book was published in the year 1897. It is the memorable work of Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali which gave glory to both Hali and Ghalib. He was also a disciple of Ghalib. He spent a

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lot of time with Mirza and met him again and again. Hali was deeply impressed by Ghalib's personality and his poetry and was deeply appreciative of him.

Yadgar e Ghalib is also in two parts. The first part contains the Sawaneh of Ghalib and on other side his morals, habits, traditions, personal life and relations. The second part contains a review on Mirza Ghalib's Kalaam. In the end, there are Qata'at and Rubaiyat and samples of Mirza Ghalib's prose and commentary on them. In the second part, Mirza Ghalib's poetry has been divided into four types - Nazm Urdu, Prose Urdu, Nazm Persian and then detailed commentary on Prose Persian. Mirza Ghalib's Persian poetry has been compared with the poetry of Iran's Asaatza and an attempt has been made to determine Mirza Ghalib's status. Hali writes in his book, "Late Nawab Mustafa Khan always used to call Mirza (Ghalib) the companion of Zahuri and Urfi and considered him superior and better than Saeb and Kaleem etc. Nawab Zia Uddeen Khan's statement regarding Mirza (Ghalib) was that Persian poetry in India started with one Turk Lachin (i.e. Ameer Khusro) and ended with one Turk Aibak (i.e. Mirza Ghalib)."<sup>5</sup> Various different views are scattered in this book with reference to personality and intelligence. Along with this, explanations of Mirza Ghalib's poetry have also been presented. The reality is that from Yadgar e Ghalib to Ghalib, many books have been written criticizing him, but the basic status is still of Yadgar e Ghalib. That

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is why it is said that without Yadgar e Ghalib, all the lamps of Ghalib's greatness appear dim.

#### HAYAT E JAVED

Hayat e Javed is the personal achievement of Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali on which every scholar can be proud without any doubt. Hali had a close relationship with Sir Syed. He was a supporter of Sir Syed's thoughts, ideas and deeds. Maulana Hali started writing about Sir Syed's life in 1894. Before this, he had gathered all the information related to Sir Syed. Hali had decided that he will definitely write Sir Syed's personal achievement while Sir Syed was alive. Hali himself went to Aligarh in connection with this work. Hali wanted to complete this book and bring it to the public during the lifetime of Sir Syed, but was not in any hurry because he wanted to do his work not better but of the best quality, but little did he know that before the book could be completed, Sir Syed would die in 1898. Thus, despite all the efforts of Hali, this book came to the public in the year 1901 after the death of Sir Syed.

This book of Hali also has two parts. The first part has six chapters which mention Sir Syed's birth, family, childhood, education and youth. This book throws light on every aspect of Sir Syed's life and also describes his literary achievements in detail. The second part includes a review of Sir Syed's life, his writings and his achievements. There is also a mention of his habits and characteristics which made Sir Syed unique, such as hard work,

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love and honesty, honesty, physical health, hospitality, generosity, monotheism, faith in prophethood and the reality of Islam, immediacy, Islamic solidarity, detachment from religious matters etc. which are important. Hali has mentioned them in details in this book. Not only this, in this book, the entire picture of the mental life of the community with Sir Syed comes before the eyes. Syed Abdullah has written in *Moqadma e Hayat e Javed*, "This is not only the life of Sir Syed but also the date of a tumultuous century of India. From the initial family situation till the day of death, our Mosanniff is seen roaming with his hero everywhere and at every place. He does not leave Sir Syed at any important moment of his life, which is busy with his status."<sup>6</sup>

After *Hayat e Javed* came into public view, the first criticism of this book was done by Shibli Numani and calling *Hayat e Javed* a direct picture of Sir Syed, he declared *Hayat e Javed* as a *Modallal Maddahi*. A big speciality of this book is the narration of Hali which sometimes seems like a trivial thing because there is neither any enthusiasm nor any emotion in it. What is there is an explanation and appreciation. In this way it can be said that this book is also a masterpiece. It is true that there is no dearth of people who have respect for Sir Syed but the work done in the form of *Hayat e Javed* on the life and exploits of Sir Syed is still unforgettable.

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