

Shams ul Ulema Baleeghul Mulk Allama Tajwar Najibabadi

By Sumaya Durrani

Introduction Part 1

Shams ul Ulema, Baleeghul Mulk, Professor Allama Ehsanullah Khan Tajwar Najibabadi (1894 -1951) was a distinguished Urdu poet, scholar, lexicographer, decolonial theorist and critical pedagogue. He was the recipient of the titles of *Shams ul Ulema* - Resplendent Sun Among Scholars conferred by the British Empire in 1940 and *Baleegh ul Mulk* - Sovereignty in Literary Prowess bestowed by Anjuman Arbab e Ilm Punjab in 1920. In British India's literary history Allama Tajwar is considered the last bearer of the distinguished title of *Shams ul Ulema* with no further individuals bestowed with this honour.

Allama Tajwar was born on the 2nd of May 1894 in Nanitaal, formerly a British hill station known as the door to the Himalayas, located in the district of Bijnaur in the region established by Ali Muhammad Khan (1707-1748) previously known as the Kingdom of Rohailkhand (1721-1774) that later federated into Rampur, Moradabad, Najibabad and Bareilly amongst others. Allama Tajwar died in Lahore on January 30th, 1951.

Allama Tajwar was of Afghan descent originating in the fifth generational tier of the Durrani settler tribes of Rohailkhand. He was a descendant of Hafiz Saadullah Khan Durrani, a reputed scholar, military commander and relative of Ahmed Shah Durrani - Abdali (1722-1773) the founder of the Durrani Empire in 1747. Hafiz Saadullah Khan was commissioned in Ahmed Shah's entourage to India at the behest of Shah Waliullah after the fall of the Mughal Empire. Following the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 Hafiz Saadullah Khan settled in India. There he was bestowed the role of tutor to Zabta Khan (d.1785) the son of Nawab Najib ud Daula (d. 1770), who was the founder of the city of Najibabad (1740 /1750) in Bijnaur.

The inception of Allama Tajwar's scholarship can be traced to Dar ul Uloom Deoband comprising eleven years of acquisition in Persian, Arabic literature and poetry in addition to the study of logic and philosophy. A two-year teaching stint at Deoband was followed by Tajwar's departure from Najibabad in Northern India to Lahore in 1914 where he earned Munshi Fazil and Moulvi Fazil. In 1921 Allama Tajwar was appointed Professor at Dyal Singh College Lahore and subsequently honoured as a Fellow of the Punjab University.

As the chief editor of the defining Urdu literary journals in the first half of the 20th Century such as *Humayun, Adabi Duniya, Makhzan, Ittehad, Prem and Shahkaar*, Tajwar invested in the cultivation of linguistic plurality and diachronic variation, extending to domains beyond non -Western literature. Hence Tajwar is considered the proponent of the blank verse and its inception in 'changing the contours of Urdu poetry'.

Allama Tajwar's major work in the domain of sociolinguistics informed his predisposition to social action. His formative influence extended to the dismantling of systemic barriers, reframing of public discourse, and formation of a constructivist approach to institution building and public policy enabling societal structures in promoting equity and social justice. Tajwar realized his vision by establishing the Urdu Markaz in 1925 in Lahore with Sir Sheikh Adul Qadir (1874 -1950). It was at the Urdu Markaz that Tajwar initiated the seminal research on literature and sociolinguistics, an endeavour that was both historicist, hermeneutic and revisionist in scope. At the Urdu Markaz Tajwar was invested in the documentation of 500 years of Urdu literature and poetry. The extraordinary initiatives at the Urdu Markaz and its network of institutions in the various districts of Punjab examined the intersections between indigenous narratives and modernities. Tajwar contributed over 200 academic papers on pedagogy in addition to his administrative obligations at the Dyal Singh Trust Library, his scholarly commitments at the University of London and his undertakings at the BBC. Tajwar authored *Ruh e Nazm* the syllabus of Urdu Poetry prescribed at the University of London. Allama Tajwar's oeuvre signifies multiple border crossings and intra-cultural knowledge flows, indicative of his conception of an interpretative horizon that was syncretic, unequivocally plural, and permeable.



Sumaya Durrani is Allama Tajwar Najibabadi's granddaughter. Durrani is a transdisciplinary artist - epistemologist, Sufi methodologist, decolonial theorist, dissident political ontologist, anarchist-activist and an academic with a neo-marxist bent. She locates her practice at the intersections between Doctrinal Sufism, Western Philosophy and Social Theory, Neuroscience, Postcolonial Discourse Analysis and Transdisciplinary Aesthetics. She is undertaking a Doctorate in Art at the University of New South Wales Sydney. Durrani holds a Master and Bachelor of Fine Art *Cum Laude* from the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, subsequently extending her studies at the Sir John Cass School of Art London Metropolitan University. She has served in academic, higher executive and advisory capacities in the public and private sectors in higher education in Pakistan, Turkey and Afghanistan. Durrani

was the Director General and Principal of the Pakistan Gem and Jewellery Institute, TDAP Government of Pakistan. She founded the Punjsher Foundation Postgraduate Pilot Project in Traditional Art in collaboration with Hamdard University, an academic program grounded in Islamic Sacred texts. She presently serves as the Founder - Director of Shahkaar Research Hub, Jaanbaaz, and Urdu Markaz initiatives centred around decolonial aesthetics and Sufi praxis, interfaith dialogue, transgenerational and complex trauma, structural violence and epistemicide. Durrani has served as the Pakistan Commissioner at the Asian Biennale Dhaka 1995. In recent years she was nominated for the Abraj Capital Prize at Art Dubai in 2010 and the Jameel Prize in 2015, at Victoria and Albert Museum UK. Durrani is the recipient of the UIPA Australian Award in 2012 and the First Women Bank Award in 2011. She has exhibited widely with 40 solo exhibitions and several group shows at public and private institutions in Australia, Japan, USA, Canada, Norway, France, UK, India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Her works are in the permanent National Collection of Pakistan at the NAG National Art Gallery Islamabad and at TDAP Trade Development Authority Government of Pakistan. Durrani is initiated in the Chishti, Quadri, Qalandari, Naqshbandi and Suhrawardi Sufi Orders. Her dominant spiritual persuasion is Chishti characterized by Qalandari alignments defined by a strong Hallajian bent.

Source:

Sumaya Durrani

Urdu Markaz Australia

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