

OPEN A NEW DEPARTMENT BY THE MUNSHI NAWAL KISHORE PRESS FOR THE STYLE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Calligraphy is the most reversed forms of Islamic art and learning and considered one of the few vocational activities suitable for the Ulama. The style of calligraphy started in India with the advent of Islam and it traditionally held a high and privileged position in Islam. As a major center of Islamic learning and the site of the nawabi court and administration, Lucknow boasted an eminent tradition of master calligraphers. But coinciding with the end of the nawabi and the 1857 uprising, made unemployment to the many peoples. To provide employment for several generations of masters and pupils, firm like the Nawal Kishore press played a vital role keeping in their tradition alive. This article sheds on the Nawal Kishore's calligraphic department and calligraphers, which worked day and night for the development of the press.

KEYWORDS

Calligraphy, Nawabi, Employment, Department, Press.

1. INTRODUCTION

Calligraphy is the art of forming beautiful symbols by hand and arranging them well. It is not only attached with mural calligraphy or manuscripts, it is also available on coins, decorative art. The art of Islamic calligraphy started when the Islam spread outside the Arab world. The Iranian started writing in Persian as well as in the Arabic also. At this time the calligraphers continued their art of writing on stone, metal, leather, palm leaf and on other available things. But during Abbasid Islam spread outside the Arab world. The Iranian started writing in Persian as well as in the Arabic also. At this time the calligraphers continued their art of writing on stone, metal, leather, palm leaf and on other available things. But during Abbasid period, i.e. 10th century A. D. the institution for education and the art of book production gained supreme importance. Like other cities of the world, India had also many greatest Centre of the art learning and calligraphy. Many scholars and calligraphist came to India from Baghdad, Damascus, khurasan, Basra and different parts of Iran and settled in this country.

2. EVOLUTION OF CALLIGRAPHY IN INDIA

The story of the evolution of the Islamic calligraphy in India begins with the inscription dated precisely from 710 A. D. to 1857 A. D. It has not been limited to Delhi only, but also covers all the major parts of India. Mural calligraphy of the Sultanate period begins when the sultanate of Delhi was established by Muhammad Bin Sam Shehabuddin Muhammad Ghori. From this date onwards there are sufficient epigraphic materials to show the gradual development of different styles of Islamic calligraphy in India. After Ghori, Qutubuddin Aibak became sultan he did not have interest in this art. But his successor's Iltutmish gave full support he gave his sons the education of calligraphy than other education. His son Nasiruddin Mahmood did calligraphy of

Quran Sharif and complete his personal needs from its compensation. Barani wrote in *Tarikh- i- Firozshahi*:



The style of calligraphy as seen in the inscriptions of the above Sultans reached their culmination in the Khilji period. Then the latter half of the Tughlaq period saw the appearance of some new styles. The reign of the Sayyid dynasty was very brief and there seems to have been no new development in the field of calligraphy during that period. But the calligraphers of the Lodi period appear to have shown some new style of calligraphy. The major styles during the above mentioned period were mainly *Naskh*, *Tulth*, *Tughra* and partly *Kufic* in all over India.

One of the Indian and world fame calligraphist, Yaqut Mustafa Sami (1303 A. D.) has been considered the greatest master of Naskh character. His reputation was so great that even in his lifetime books copied by him had spread all over the world.

But the remarkable development in the field of Nastaliq, often considered the most beautiful style of calligraphy achieved its highest rank during the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar. Mullah Abdul Qadir Badauni, Abdur Rahim Khan- i- Khana, Mir Munshi Ashraf Khan, Mir Fathullah Shirazi was famous calligraphers at the time of Akbar.

Aqua Abdur Rashid was also one of the great artists and a calligraphist of high rank. Emperor Shahjahan (1628- 1656 A. D.) appointed him as a teacher for his son prince Dara Shikoh and Shah Shuja, for teaching Nastaliq style. Mulvi Ghulam Muhammad wrote in his *Tazkira- i- Khushnavisa*:

باوجود اشغال امور شایزادگی و دیگر امور بروید آقا عبد الرشید دیلمی شاید کسی مثل او نوشتہ باشد۔

At the same time the role of regional kingdoms of India such as Bengal, Bijapur, Golkunda, Malwa and few others is also remarkable in the development of calligraphy. Thousands of calligraphers gave special attention to the development to the art of calligraphy. They introduced a number of styles in this art. Ibn- e- Maqala founder of Naskh style. Ibn- al- Bawwab known as the God of calligraphy, Khawja Mir Ali Tabrizi, the founder of Nastaliq style, Meer Ali, Dharam Das, Dara Shikoh, Nasiruddin Mahmud etc. are among those who gave position to the art of calligraphy and made it a noblest art in comparison to the all other fine art.

But in 1856 the British government loses the throne of last Awadh Ruler Wajid Ali Shah and take the whole power in his hand. Then people hate against the British government. At this time in other places, people were stressed from the British government and they want to decline the power of the British. So in 1857 they began the war of independence to end the domination of the British. People and properties of Awadh ready for this. They also participate in this war. This war continued for some month. The whole country effected from this movement. But British won this war. British government destroys the Lucknow city from all his powers. They destroyed many presses. So in this difficult time scholars leave this city and moved around the other places. Calligraphers also became unemployed. The high rank people also worried for themselves and devastated then in such a situation who gave patronage the calligraphers. Munshi Amirullah, Tota Ram and others were the famous calligraphers of luck now at the time of the 1857 war and they

also face the difficulties and adopted copying than calligraphy. The case remained almost until the beginning of 1858 when peace was established like other artists the calligraphers also struggling to search of a living. Most presses were destroyed in the 1857 riots, which were supportive of their hopes. In such tumultuous times, suddenly lit a candle of knowledge. In the light of hope and despair artists will find hope in the future and their hopes center was Munshi Nawal Kishore Press, which came into effect in the middle of 1858. That man and his great efforts are also the reason behind the prominent publishing industry of today's India.

Munshi Nawal Kishore (1836-95) central character of this article was a great scholar, journalist and printer; his fame, however rests on his achievement in both general and scholarly publishing. The opening of his printing shop in Nov. 1858 marked a turning point in the history of print in Lucknow. As the first Indian to newly open a press in post- mutiny Lucknow, he heralded a new era of the mass produced book. He not only set printing, but also established a calligraphic department in his press. Many people working in this department for the development of this art. Munshi Amirullah Taslim, Maulvi Hadi Ali, Muhammad Shamsuddin Lakhnavi, Munshi Ashraf Ali 'Ashraf', Mulvi Muhammad Ismail, Munshi Ameer Ali Naqqash, Munshi Muhammad Baqar Ali 'Hamsar', Munshi Govind Prasad 'Fiza', and Munshi Braj Lal were the first among an impressive range of master calligraphers who were to render service to the Nawal Kishore Press.

2.1. MUNSHI AMIRULLAH TASILIM:

One of the first master calligraphers to join the NKP in 1859 was Munshi Amirullah Taslim. He was famous in all fields. He was not only an able poet of the Delhi school, but also an excellent calligrapher. He was born in Faizabad district in 1808. His father Majid Shaikh Abdus Samad was an educated person. He taught from his father. He had knowledge of Arabic and Persian. After completed, he was thinking about employment. He had served as a soldier in the army of Muhammad Ali shah and worked as a scribe for the mustafa'i press. He had keen interest in calligraphy from his childhood and became a pupil of the noted calligrapher Abdu Hai Sandelvi. After 1857 on opening his printing shop, Nawal Kishore employed him at a monthly salary of Rs. 20. He was expert both Naskh and Nastaliq. One of his masterpiece calligraphy seen in the Ghalib's famous book 'Qati- e- Burhan'. Munshi Nawal Kishore expressed about Taslim in his one article:

خوشنویسان جادو نگار عمدہ روزگار ہیں جیسے امیر اللہ متخلص و تسلیم.

2.2. MAULVI HADI ALI:

Second master calligrapher Maulvi Hadi Ali. Hadi Ali was a distinguished Islamic scholar and a poet of Persian and Urdu who wrote under the pen name 'Ashk'. He was considered an expert in the art of composing chronograms (Tarikhgoi). His career provides an excellent example of how calligraphy shifted from a context of traditional Islamic art and scholarship to the commercial domain. He was born in a scholarly family in the Qasbah of Bijnor. Maulvi Hadi Ali had been educated at Farangi Mahal and trained in calligraphy by Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim. Together with his poetic mentor Nawab Fateh ud Daula 'Barq', he spent some time at the court in exile of Wajid Ali Shah in Matia Burj and also worked as a scribe and proof reader for Haji Harmain Sharifain's Muhammadi Press. Upon joining Nawal Kishore's print shop in 1859 he was appointed the first formal editor of *Awadh Akhbar* and soon became head proofreader in Lithographic Department. In this position he continued to work as a calligrapher, while also

writing and editing various commentaries on religious works. Hadi Ali not only excelled in Nastaliq but was considered to have no equal in the writing of Naskh and the design of Tughras. A widely acclaimed large letter edition of the Quran, which took him five years to prepare. It was published posthumously as *Quran Sharif Jali Qalam* (1868) with the Persian commentary *Bahr-al- Ulum- al- Islamiya* in its margins. This Quran is the legacy of the late Maulvi Hadi Ali whose calligraphy has no equal in the whole of Hindustan.

2.3. MUHAMMAD SHAMSUDDIN LAKHNAVI:

One of the most accomplished of Hadi Ali's pupils was Munshi Muhammad Shamsuddin Lukhnawi (1831- 1921), known as *Ijaz- e- raqam* or 'Miraculous Pen'. He is credited with having invented a new style of Nastaliq which became popular in Afghanistan and Iran. He authored several widely used instructional tracts on calligraphy and trained many young calligraphers at the NKP and the Madrasa Furqaniya. The handsome monthly salary of Rs. 50 he received indicates his superior status among NKP calligraphers. One of the most splendid specimens of his artistry is an illustrated large- letter edition of Sadi's *Gulistan* (1886); his calligraphy of the *Bustan* (1877) was extolled as a gem of lithographic elegance by a British observer.

2.4. MULVI MUHAMMAD ISMAIL:

He was a scholar of Arabic and Persian and an expert in Nastaliq, was in charge of supervising the scribes and calligraphers at the NKP's Lithographic Department. In this position he was responsible for the compilation of the firm's catalogues and also oversaw the preparation of Lithographic drafts in Nagri script. On the opening of the NKP's Kanpur press in 1865, he was promoted to the position of branch manager. A famous Dastan *Samri Nama* of Muhammad Jaan Marikh written under his supervision. And the first volume of a Hindi translation of *Shahnama-e- Firdausi* also published under him.

2.5. HAMID ALI:

Hadi Ali's pupil Maulvi Hamid Ali known as *Murassa- e- raqam* or precious pen. A descendant of the venerated Lucknow saint Hazrat Muhammad Ali Shah. Hamid Ali was a scholar of Arabic and Persian who taught calligraphy at the local Madrasah 'Aliya Furqaniya'. To several fine editions of the Quran, he copied a host of Arabic and Persian texts for the NKP.

2.6. MUNSHI ASHRAF ALI 'ASHRAF':

The second newly hired master of Quran calligraphy was the scholar and poet Munshi Ashraf Ali known as *Javahir- e- raqam* or 'jeweled pen'. Ashraf Ali belonged to Lucknow and had received his training from Amirullah Taslim. An expert in the writing of Naskh, he prepared at least five different editions of the Quran, among them a large- letter edition that included Abdul Qadir's Urdu translation (1872). Another noteworthy accomplishment was his calligraphy of Shaikh Abul Faiz Faizi's famous Quranic Tafseer '*Sawati- al- Ilham*' (1888).

2.7. MUNSHI AAL- E- HASAN:

He was a famous calligrapher of Munshi Nawal Kishore Press and also known Naskh and Nastaliq. But expert in Nastaliq Calligraphy. He wrote *Quliyat- e- Shams Tabrizi* in Nastaliq which complete on one thousands 40 pages.

2.8. MIR HASHMAT ALI:

Among the masters of revers writing was Mir Hashmat Ali, who learnt his craft whilst working at the Nawab's Royal Press before 1857. He joined the NKP in its early years, to remain with the firm until his death. A laudatory poem composed in 1870 by Mohsin Ali Khan Saqi bears witness to his exemplary artistry:

وہ استاد ہیں میر حشمت علی	کہ پتھر پہ لکھیں خفی اور جلی
کہوں کیا کا جو پتھر بنائے ہیں وہ	تو قدرت خدا کی دیکھتے ہیں وہ
چہیے صاف سیدہ، جو النا لکھیں	نا کہیے کرامت تو پھر کیا کہیں

2.9. MUNSHI SAYYID ALI HUSSAIN:

The second master of mirror- writing and stone- correction was Munshi Sayyid Ali Hussain, a pupil of Shamsuddin, who excelled in Naskh, Nastaliq, and Shikasta. One of his admirers was Abdul Halim Shahrar, who would later employ him as a calligrapher for his journal *Dilgudaz*.

2.10. GHULAM MUHAMMAD KHAN AND MAULVI MAHBOOB AHMAD

They were also expert in mirror- writing. The latter became supervisor of the Lithographic department in the early 1870.

2.11. MUNSHI AMEER ALI 'NAQQASH'

He was a famous calligrapher of that time. He worked in Munshi Nawal Kishore Press. Munshi Nawal Kishore gives him a title “*yadgar- e- Mani- e- bahzad*”. His stylish calligraphy seen in the people's house. The covering letter was ready under him of the published books of Munshi Nawal Kishore. To impress from the works of Ameer Ali, London exhibition gifted gold medal and trophy to the press. Ameer Ali worked in press until his death.

2.12. MUNSHI MUHAMMAD AFZAL HUSSAIN

Munshi Shamsuddin *Ijaz- e- raqam* did proud to one of his pupils, Munshi Afzal Hussain is one of them. He was famous for artistry and calligraphy. He was a great scholar of Persian and Urdu language and expert in Arabic also. He had keen interest in calligraphy from his childhood. To write the name on the books covers fair used bold pen.

2.13. MULVI SAYYID ANWAR AHMAD

He was also expert in artistry and calligraphy. He was a contemporary of Munshi Ameerullah Taslim and Munshi Hadi Ali. He was very hard working and honest person He was written a famous hadith book “*Asat- ul- Lumat*” which is in four volumes.

2.14. MUNSHI MUHAMMAD BAQAR ALI 'HAMSAR'

He was a descendent of Munshi *Ijaz- e- raqam*. He belonged to a distinguished family. He was expert in calligraphy. He was also an expert in a Persian and Urdu languages. He was written *Qita- e- Tarikh* in Persian which is involved in first edition of *Gulistan- e- Bustan* which shows

great love and devotion from his teacher. He had an interest in poetry also. He wrote many books in Munsfi Nawal Kishore Press.

2.15. MUNSHI BRAJ LAL

He was one of the good calligrapher of Munshi Nawal Kishore Press. He did calligraphy in Hindi and Urdu both. Hindi books are published in lithographic press because at this time typing was not wide. So in Munshi Nawal Kishore Press many Hindi book were hand written.

2.16. MUNSHI GOVIND PRASAD 'FIZA'

A notable figure among the kayasthas working at the NKP was the Urdu poet Munshi Govind Prasad 'Fiza'. He had joined the press as a copyist of Persian, Urdu and Hindi works. He wrote many books of Hindi, Persian and Urdu. The first edition of Maulana Rum which published in NKP whose three copies written by him. His Masnavi *Gulzar- e- Fiza* and one Diwan also published in NKP. One of his calligraphic masterpieces is the first NKP edition of Rajab Ali Beg Surur's *Fasana- e- Ajaib* produced some time in the 1860. Munshi Nawal Kishore wrote about Fiza:

“منشی گویند پرشاد صاحب، فضا تخلص، شاعر، سخن فہم، شاگرد دراز مرحوم و خوشنویس پرانے، نہایت شیریں مواد، مثنوی مولانا روم کے اخیر کے تین دفتر منشی گویند پرشاد صاحب کے لکھے ہوئے ہیں۔”

Many others peoples also worked in nawal Kishore press they were Mir Ibn- e- Hasan, Pyare Lal Kalan, Munshi Tilak Ram Hosh, Munshi Chedi Lal, Munshi Chaman Lal, Mirza Muhammad Jawwad, Hamidi Lucknowi, Munshi Khalil Ahmad, Munshi Devi Prasad Sahar, Sayyad Riyazul Hasan, Munshi Sarju Prasad, Munshi Safdar Ali, Abbas Ali, Hafiz Ali Hussain, Munshi Abdur Rahim, Mulvi Hafiz Abdus Samad, Faiyyaz Hussain, Jafar Hussain, Munshi Qasim Ali 'Nakkash', Munshi Kalka Prasad, Mulvi Mahboob Ahmad, Lala Makhan Lal, Munshi Muhammad Mirza Jaan Mahmood, Mirza Mustafa Hussain, Munshi Wajid Ali Shirin 'Raqam', Munshi Hira Lal etc.

3. CONCLUSION

So in this brief view we see that NKP's master calligraphers were trained in their works and performed a variety of duties, including proofreading and emendation, editing, and translation. Many of them served in the department of composition and translation, the creative heart of publishing house.

Abdul Halim Sharar in his famous swan song of *Guzistan- e- Lucknow* says most poignantly, “*The Nawal Kishore Press is still the key to the literary trade without using it no one can enter the world of learning.*”

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