Sibawayh, Sibawayh’s book and interpretation science

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Sibawayh Name is Amr ibn Othman ibn Qanbar. According to famous statement his surname is Abu Bisher1 and according to another statement is Abul Hassan2. He was for a sometimes the clients of Bani Al-hares ibn Kaab and after that he became the clients of Al-Rabi Ibn Ziade Al-Herashi3. There is significant difference about the date and place of his birthday and also his death, but based on the reliable and valid sources, he was born on 140 in town of Bayza, one of the environs of Shiraz in Fars province. The place of his training and nurturing was Basra city, the scientific center of that era.


Keywords: Amr ibn Othman ibn Qanbar; Abu Bisher; Basra city

The different opinions had been suggested for the so called meaning and his title derivations such as:

A) Sibawayh is Persian a word and it means the scent of apple4.

B) When he was child, his mother danced him with this name, and repeated this name5. It is worthy to mention that we can see such words in the local dialects of this region. Such as Kako: my loved brother. Ahmad: the little and my loved Ahmad. In fact the preposition of “ o” at the end of a noun indicates that the person is lovely6.

C) Both of his cheeks were like an apple in redness and elegancy, so this title was assigned to him7.

D) Every person who encountered with him could smell thirty pleasant scents. In Arabic thirty means Salason and scent means Al-Raheh. As if he had thirty scents and a person smelled thirty pleasant scents8.

E) He liked to smell an apple and he had done it a lot and used to smell an apple9.

F) Because of softness, he was like an apple, the best and fine fruits10.

Professors:

He was student of a lot of masters in the divine law and syntax and got their opinions and ideas. His masters are as follows:

A) KHalili ibn Ahmad Farahidi was the writer of Al-Eyn, and the first Arabic and pioneer of rhyme science. Regarding to various refers of Sibawayh in al-kitab 398 times it comes along words such as سالت الخليل و زعم الخليل و هذا قول الخليل و ....... 11 it can state that he was real professor of Sibawayh in syntax. They had close relationship in addition to teacher and student relationship. When Sibawayh entered to his classes, He called Sibawayh special statements like (hello to a person who is never boring) and he had never used such statements for another students12.

B) He learned syntax, religious jurisprudence and tradition by Hemad ibn Salme. In fact, he corrected Sibawayh's errors in reading and pronouncing the final accents of the words and this caused that Sibawayh followed a science that no one could find his errors13.

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1 - refer to, or ma114/15-benkhl;463/3 ghaf346/2, da406/12  
2 - refer to, manbagh,nabar38- yaghmoni95-S-; bagh 229/2  
3 - refer to: manbagh  
4 - refer to; or, ma 115/15, ghaf 346/2, ebi al-fada 355/1,zeh,tar156,da407/12  
5 - refer to; or ma, 115/15- bnkhl 465/3 S; bagh 229/2  
6 - refer to ; da 407/12  
7 - refer to; bnkhl465/3;; ibn Jozi, al-Montazem 135/3 Baghdadi, tarikh318/5- Ebi al-fada355/1  
8 - refer to; or; ma, 115/15 S 229/2  
9 - refer to; Haji khalifeh1428/2- ghanoji93/3- S 229/2  
10 refer to; s 229/2  
11 - refer to; al-ketabo, ghes;al Mafsal 5463/1  
12 - refer to; or, ma 118/15- safdi 382/4  
13 - refer to; Marzban1, noroalghabs95- zeh, ta 299/3- Ziyat 268 refer to; Khatib, al-Jame 393/3 refer to; al-votovat ghorar 91/1- ebazi, hamiyano alzad 393/3
According to some sources, when he left the Hijaz's class he never return to tradition science and focused on learning of syntax14.

C) Abu Al-khatab Abdul-Hamid Ibn Abdul Majid titled to big Akhfish15 or old Akhfish16 Sibawayh learned lexicon from him and he referred to his name in his book 52 times39. According to Zahabi, if Sibawayh were not in the history of Islam the above named didn’t become famous18.

D) Esabn Omar was specialist in Arabic literature including syntax and reading. He was writer of two syntax books, famous to Al-Jame and Al-kamal and Khalil mentioned to them. Sibawayh learned syntax before joining to Khalil19. His witness to Esabn Omar's opinions is less than witness to Khalil's opinion. Sibawayh referred to his opinions and statements in al-kitab twenty times20.

E) Sibawayh had learned reading from Omar Ibn Aala, who was famous reader, syntax and lexicon specialist. He was referred to his opinions 16 times with a statement such as ..........21

F) Yones ibn Habib

Abu Abdul Rahman Alzabi or Laysi (182-94) was among syntax masters and reference of syntax experts in his era. He was poet critic and . Sibawayh had learned literature and syntax by him22. And sometimes discussed and investigated syntax issues. Sibawayh referred to his name 184 times in al-kitab in isolation or next to Khalil23.

G) Abo Zeyde Ansari ; Saeed ibn Ose ibn Sabete nahwi was lord and had syntactic and lexical compositions such as Al-Navader. According to his speech, Sibawayh attended in his class while he had two ringlets24. And also states that where the Sibaway used the statement of...means that: I am and I informed him25.

Sibawayh used this statement in his book 5 times26.

Sibawayh’s students: we must mention that all of the contemporary syntax experts and further centuries syntax experts were his students. Because all of them even Kasae and his followers read his book and benefited his knowledge. We can refer to two one among that times syntax experts as his real students:

Mohammad ibn Al-Mastanir (death 206) lexical and syntactic expert, he was famous to Ghotrob and learned syntax by Sibawayh and because he never got tired, he assigned this title to him27. He was teacher of Ebi Dolf Alajali's children and the writer of Al-Mosalas book in lexicon28.

Ghotrob: it is male Reynard or little animal which is walking all day and doesn’t get tired29.

Saied ibn Mosaade Al-Mjasheel, Abu-Hassan famous to medium Akhfish was knowledgeable in lexicon and literature. He was from Bakh. He learned syntax and analysis by Sibawayh, although he was older than Sibawayh 30. He was author of books like "interpretation of Koran meanings" and "description of meaning" and" derivation" 31

**Verification of Sibawayh's scientific level:**

The contemporary and non contemporary scientists appreciate Sibawayh's scientific levels and also they mention to the importance and value of his book including:

A) Abul Hassan Saeed ibn Masade titled to small Akhfish told: Sibawayh presented all of his syntactic collection to me and assumed that I was braver than him, but he was braver than me in that point32.

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14 refer to; al-Tadil and al-Tarjih 30/1
15 refer to; marahol jenan chapter five eshra maetin j 235/1
16 refer to; zahraadab 198/1- zeh, ta 343/3
17 refer to; al-kitab
18 refer to; 343/3
19 refer to; nakhl,vafiyat,463/3 belfehrest 57/1
20 refer to; al-kitab, ghes; al-mafsal, chapter nahoj5464/1
21 refer to; ghayato al-nahayat fi tabaghate al-ghora bobol eyn 268/1, alketab22/1,380,384,388
22 refer to; or, ma 116/5- divanol islam 96/1 chapter abnae zar koli 261/8
23 refer to; al-kitab 53,54,57,59
24 refer to; zeh, up page 156 events 171 up 180
25 Refer to; mangh, sobolo hoda and al-Reshad 227/1 ibn Qatile, almaref124/-1 al-moghy; akhbar anhavini 7/1
26 refer to; al-kitab
27 refer to; al-vafi belvafiyat 97/2- ibn asir, al-kamel 167/3 the events of 206
Baghdadi, tarikh 112/2
Zar kali 95/7, zeh, ta 59/4 chapter kaf
28 refer to; sabol 292/1, ibn nadim 78/1
29 refer to; al-mohit chapter ghamtar 14/2
30 refer to; saalebi, khasol khas 22/1 chapter fel odaba and nahveiyn -ghef, anbah 354/2
31 refer to ghanoji 40/3 sobol ol Hoda 281/1
B) His professor, Yones:
According to narrative of Abu Abideh, after Sibawayh died, Yones ibn Habib was informed that Sibawayh had collected a book in 1000 pages about Khalil's knowledge. Yones asked: when did he hear these from Khalil? Please bring his book for me. After he looked the contents of the book said: I am sure he was truthful in his statements about Khalil, because he was also truthful in his statements about me.33

Another example of Yones's approvals in the ibn Islam narratives:
Sibawayh taught syntactic rules and had full understanding of men's knowledge. As it is interpreted from ibn Islam tradition, he was informed of chain of narrators who stated traditions. In the session of teaching tradition science, he was recalled the accurate name of these narrators according to syntactic rules to his students. According to Mohammad ibn Salam, we were participated in Sibawayh’s class in Basra and talked about Ghatadeh tradition. Sibawayh stated strange tradition and told: this tradition was told by Saied ibn Abi Al-Arobe. One the children of Jafar ibn Suleiman told: what are these two wastes? (These two wastes means the word Ab and preposition of al) Sibawayh told: this is told in this way because Al-Arobeis the same as Al-Jome. And if a person says ibn Abode he makes mistake, ibn Salam countinues that I told this point to Yones and he confirmed Sibawayh's statement.34

Ibn Salam told some where else that I asked about the reason of appointed of the folk in the verse

লোলা কান্ত কৃষিয় মৃদু ফকেরা না কোম যোনেস
Sibawayh answered ala means but35.

The value and position of al-kitab:
The syntax was about dispersed issues related to lexicon and literature and… Sibawayh collected the syntactic rules in one framework and in the form of new and independent science. Although, the name of some the chapters are different by the further syntactic experts literally. His book is unlimited treasure, which the students of all fields benefited by it. The syntax writers only focused on this book and used it in their books. It was the source of training of Arabic and theologies teachers.

It was told that Fara always had this book with himself and even there are some evidences that he put this book behind his head in his death time, according to Aqfhash, Kasae learned al-kitab and got 50-100 dinar as payment. Aqfhash told: during the learning of al-kitab, when Kasae heard something for first time, he requested me to write that for him and I did it as he wanted.36

If we want to talk about the importance and value of this book, we must tell that they equalize this book with Batlamios book. As Saeed ibn Ahmad Al-Jiyan Andalisi told in his book (Akhbarol Hakama): “I don’t know another book which was published in traditional and modern sciences and surrounded all of the science and covered the components of that science, except Al-Majasi of Balthimos about heavens, the second Aristotle's book about logics and the third one the book of Sibawayh Basari nahwi. So, each of these books didn’t ignore art principles, except those things that didn’t have any value.37

Jahez's opinion
He told that: nobody had written a syntactic book like Sibawayh, and all of their books are like Ayali38.

Mubarrad
The value and importance of this book was high for Mubarrad. Whenever a person wanted to learn Sibawayh's book by him, he told to the reader because of the difficulties of the book and also its honor, had you ever navigate? It means that learning of this book is hard like navigating and the learner must prepare himself for encountering to difficulties.39

Mazani:
Mazani usually read this book as if it was stated that he turned over the leaves of 17 versions of al-kitab and studied it and all of the versions had been torn.40 In his opinion, the syntactic experts had no need to write another

32-refer to zahroal adab 198/1 text of akhbar ibn romi-marao al-janan and ebra alyaghzan j 235/1 events of 215
33-refer to: or ma,117/15
34-refer to: or, ma, 118/15, ghafti, anbao olrava 352/2
35-refer to; Marzbani, noroghabs 35/
36-refer to: or, ma, 122/15, seyre allam 207/10 ghas: marzbani, noroghabs35/1
37-refer to: or, ma, 117/15
38-refer to : benakh 463/3
39-refer to ; contents of table in ibn Nadim 57/1- ibn anbari, nezhatalbaa 39 ziat 267
40-refer to ; Marzbani, noroghabs81/1
book and told: if a person wants to write a perfect book in syntax after Sibawayh, he must be shamefule. (In the presence of Sibawayh's complete and valuable book, only the shameless can do such an action)\(^41\).

In the past centuries, the great men of letters gave this book as the best and valuable present to civil officials and culture lovers. Jahez gave one version of this book with Kasae's handwriting to Mohammad ibn Abdul Malek Al-Ziyat as a gift\(^32\).

Ibn Timiyi's opinion:

It seems that he had critic opinion about al-kitab and told to one of his friend: Sibawayh was not syntax prophet, but he had mistakes in 80 items in al-kitab\(^43\).

The effect of al-kitab among publics:

Not only the masters and great men of letters recognize the importance and value of al-kitab and they didn’t rely on syntactic issues and correcting their speech, but also the common people in different class in that period studied it and rely on Sibawayh and his book in correcting the others daily conversations. For example a man asked form fish seller in Basra:

The fish seller replied: woe is to you, you are stupid. I heard Sibawayh told that: ألمنها درهمان

Admiration of Zemokhsheri:

Zemokhsheri told in admiration of Sibawayh's book: the authors and the lecturers are not free of his book:

يكم هذه السمكة؟

man laughed, the fish seller told: man laughed, the fish seller told: woe is to you, you are stupid. I heard Sibawayh told that: ألمنها درهمان

Sibawayh’s book one of the sources of ignorance poem:

Nasereddin Asad introduced Sibawayh's book as a source after he mentioned to the resources of ignorance poem. It has full of examples about ignorance.\(^46\) Sibawayh was not mention to singer in stating the example. But in order to verify the Arabic rules, the criteria is the speech of first Arabs and ignorance poems and it is not speech of citizen Arab or new and newborn poets. So we can include the above poems in lexical an poetic sources. Although, according to Nasereddin Asad assigning the poems to poets must be done by Abu Omar Al Jermi and we must be careful in the assigning of the poems\(^47\).

Religious opinion of Jermi by al-kitab:

Abu Omar Al Jermi who was Akhfish's students and learned Sibawayh's book by Akhfish, told that I will make religious sentence according to Sibawayh's book for thirty years\(^48\).

Basher and Sibawayh:

Sibawayh was completely skillful in recognizing Arabic lexicons and their structures, because he was spent sometimes among Arab Bedouin. And if a person used a word against the Arabic rules, he criticized him severely. For example, basher made plural the word Non in the form of Ninan, he made clear his mistake immediately, and this caused that to be dispraised by Bashar. As they told that, he never criticized him in order to escape from Bashar's dispraises and also he relied to his poem in some cases\(^49\).

Sibawayh's book and its relationship with Esabn Omar's al Jame

It is interpreted of some statements that al-kitab is the esabn Omar's al Jame book or it is interpretation or description of the mentioned book.\(^50\)" It was said that Sibawayh took this book from isa and expanded it and wrote about Khalil Baran Havashi speeches and when he completed its discuss assigned it to himself. And that was his famous book" the thing which certify the accuracy of this claim is that after Sibawayh left isa (it seems after his death) he usually talked with Khalil and Khalil asked about isa's literary works and then he replied, he had 70 works in syntax. All of his works disappeared except two works namely ekmal which is in Fars and the next is the al Jame and this book which I worked on it and asked you about its complex issues, Khalili lower his head and after a few

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\(^{41}\) refer to ; ibn nadim 57/1- nabari, nazeh40- ziyat267

\(^{42}\) refer to ; or, ma 123/15 nabari, nezeh 39

\(^{43}\) refer to ; ibn Hajar, al-Dorror alkameneh49/1

\(^{44}\) refer to ; or ma123/15

\(^{45}\) refer to ; azhar alriyaz fi akhbar alghazi ayaz 334/1

\(^{46}\) refer to; Asad page 592

\(^{47}\) refer to ; Asad page 593

\(^{48}\) refer to; Mohebi, nafha alreyhaneh25/1- introduction of al-kitab 1/1 ghortabi, interpretation21/1

\(^{49}\) Refer to: Alghani309/1-Baghdadi, Khazaneh2/1- evidence- Marzbani, Norolghabs96/1- Almohebi,nahepreyhan25/1

\(^{50}\) refer to; Haji Khalife, kashfolzonon,1428/2
moments raised his head and told god bless of isa. And then sang the following verses: zahab alnahv jamian koloho….ghayra ma ahdaso esab omari (All of the syntax had been disappeared except the syntax which was designed by isa ibn Omar. One of them is Ekmal and this is Jame and both of this books are like sun and moon)51.

Debates demands:

It is concluded among some traditions, the debates and discussions were very popular for increasing knowledge or annoying and humiliating others. Sibawayh as student and professor was not exceptional and discussed with his classmates and professors 52. Among those who had discussion with him was Asmaee. Omaobn Marzogh says: I saw Asmaee and Sibawayh during the conversation and Yones nahwi told: Sibawayh was right, but Asmaee overcome him53.

Unfair discussion with Kasae:

Sibawayh entered to Baghdad after he had investigated Arabic sciences and continues teaching of them and completed his scientific knowledge especially in syntax. According to one tradition he asked Yahya Barmaki to create conversation session among Kasae and him. Yahya recalled the high status of Kasae among court and the people of Baghdad such as his statue as professor of his science: He told me sit down and listened to his speech. Sibawayh's insistence, he told this issue to caliph and also caliph accepted to have such a meeting. In the appointed day, the debate began with attendance of Faraa and Ali ibn Mobarak Ahmar and Hesham ibn Moaviyeh and Mohammad ibn Saadan. First of all, Bahmar who was Kasae's student asked one hundred question by him54. Sibawayh answered to all of the questions, but Ahmar rejected his answers impolitely55. Kasae completed the debate after him and asked: if you can answer: خرجت و إذا ذيقم؟

Is it correct to use the ghaem ( ) instead of ()? Sibawayh replied: no. Kasae asked what is your opinion in this sentence ( ghad kontozaan an alaghab ashad lesa men alzanbor) is fa heza hova heya correct or faheza hova iyaha? Sibawayh told: fahaz hova heya and iyaha is not correct. Kasae and all of the participants demigated him56. Kasae told: Arab said ghaem in two way marfo and mansob. But Sibawayh rejected his speech. Yahya ibn Khaleed said: you are the boss of your towns and have dispute with each other, who can judge among you? According to some traditions, Kasae refer to Arab Bedouin, previously Koffeh and Basra's people certify their accuracy and the originality of their Arab, Abu Faghaas, , Abu Desar, Abu Sarvan were among these lecturers who enter the debate by getting the caliph's permission and verified Kasae's speech and Yahya looked at Sibawayh and told: did you hear? Then Yaha gave him 100000 derham and he left Baghdad to Iran. According to Kasae's friends, those Arabs who voted in favor of Kasae were Hatmi Arabs, and Kasae socialize with them and learned Arabic by them57. Sibawayh didn’t assume that the altar of science and scientists made dirty by intrigue and evil, then he got upset and decided to go somewhere else, he searched for a position that interested in syntax. Some people directed him to Talhe ibn Taher governor of Khorasan but his end was came58.

The Asmaee and Sibawayh debate in the mosque:

Asmaee told: "they presented poems to me that Sibawayh brought in his book and I interpreted despite of his interpretation, Sibawayh heard this news and said he can debate with me in the Jame mosque. One day I was exiting of mosque he told me sit down. Abu Saeed. Why did you reject these verses? Why did you interpret them despite the necessary and required ones? I told: I interpret them perfectly, but your interpretation is incorrect. You ask and I reply." Asmaee continued "I raised my voice as if the people heard my fluent voice and looked at his speech impediment and told we hoped Asmaee overcome to Sibawayh. I was glad too...." Asmaee didn’t tell anything about questions and answers among Sibawayh and himself and he got embarrassed for that debate and discussion which seemed Sibawayh's humiliation.

Sibawayh and interpretation science:

If we read al-kitab carefully and compare it with some interpretations, we recognize the huge participation of Sibawayh in interpretation of Koran's verses. However, al-kitab is about syntax, but we can recognize that he was knowledgeable in Koran's interpretation. Ahmad Mohammad Kharat referred to his knowledge in his book (interpretive efforts of Sibawayh) in details. He brought some of the Sibawayh ‘s interpretations as the best and

51 - refer to; yafai, maroljanan140/1 events of the year 149
52 - refer to; benakhli, vafiyat456/3- or, ma 119/15
53 - refer to; Baghdadi, history 500/4- safdi 255/6- ibn manzor, introduction history of dameshgh79/5
54 - refer to ; or, ma 119/15- safdi 483/6—zeh, ta 483/3- Baghdadi khatib 278/5
55 - refer to; or ma 119/15- ghafazi, anbah arvah 358/2
56 - benakhli, vafiyat 463/3- ghas: or, ma 119/15- s bagh 230/2
57 - refer to ;ghaf, anbaho al-ravaho359/2-or, ma121/15-baghdadi, history 278/5
58 - refer to; ghaf, anbaho al-ravah 357/2- zeh, ou to page 198
accurate interpretations and acceptable of most of the interpreters in 6 chapters with example. 1- interpretation of singles in Koran: verbs and nouns and articles 2- examples of analytic interpretation of Sibawayh 3- interpretation of verses on the basis of words which are 4- interpretation of difficult verses in terms of pronouncing correctly the final accents 5- justification of reading of verses 6- example of Sibawayh’s conversations with contemporary scientists about interpretation issues.

The author is not intended to place Sibawayh in the level of interpreters, but he wanted to show Sibawayh's participation in interpretation science.

It was obvious from Sibawayh's statements, he didn’t know himself as interpreter for example he told:

و أما المفسرون فقولوا: المثران الله

if Sibawayh known himself as an interpreter, he never used such statements.

Evidencing and relying on poems:

Sibawayh was not poet but he knew a lot of poems of ignorant poets, and he presented them in different occasions such as description of syntactic rules as an example. As his book is full of poems, all of the interpreters relied on al kitab's poems in interpretation of difficult words in Koran and also experts of syntax relied on them in description of rules especially the syntactic items.

Yaghot stated about numbers of verses in al kitab from al Jermi by evidence which its verses are 1050. I asked about its singers and 1000 singers were known and 50 were unknown.

He was in deathbed and hugged his brother and it was stated that his brother began to cry when he opened his eyes he recognized his was crying. And read this verse: أخينين كنا فقَرَ الْدُهْر بِنَا...... إلى الامام الأفسي، و من يأ من الدهر؟

Death:

There is not any reliable evidence about the date and place of his death. The literature and historical sources mention to Basra, Shiraz and Saveh as the place of his death, it seems that the accurate place is Shiraz and they mentioned 161 up 194 as the year of his death. According to correct statements he was died in forty or maybe more in 180 Hejri because by referring to Isa Ibn Omar in al- kitab it seems that he reached to puberty before death of Isa Ibn Omar in 149 and participated in his classes.

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59 - refer to Ahmad Kharat; johod 43
60 - refer to ; al- kitab, page 122/1 and 203
61 - refer to ; Tabari interpretation, Ghartabi ibn Kasir and description of ibn Aghil
62 - page 123, 124 j 15- Baghdadi, khazaneh5/1
63 - refer to; or, ma 122/15- ibn quayyah, Oyono al akhbar 252/1-marzbani, noraalghabs36/1
64 - refer to; zeh; up 299/3
65 - refer to; benakhli, vafiyat 464/3-ghalghosh, sobh 162/2- Tohidi, al basaer332/1
66 - refer to; divanoal islam letter s 49/1
67 - refer to; or, ma115/15- estakhri, almasalek55/1- zeh, up to page 157 events 171 uo 180—ghafti, anbaho arvah 353/2- ziyat 267
68 - refer to; or, ma,115/15