

: PREFACE :

Moulana Sulaiman was a prolific writer, a sufi, a poet and traditionist. Yet nothing was known about him till recently beyond a paragraph in *Mira'ti-Ahmadi*. I have discovered two of his important manuscripts in Hazrat Pir Mohammad Shah Library, Ahmedabad while preparing its detailed catalogue i.e. *Majma' al Fawā'id* and *Mamba' al Khayrāt*, Former contains about 200 verses by Moulana Sulaiman, a selected portion of his *Rawā'eh al Wusul*, now extinct, and many other useful biographical details. Latter is an autograph copy, older than the one referred to by Ethe in his catalogue, which was supposed to be the only accessible copy till now. To it, is attached a note by Shah Karim, a disciple of the said Moulana, on the biography and the scholarly activities of his spiritual guide. This note copied and further made up-to date by Mohammad Rida, great grand child of the said Moulana, in his own hand in 1142 A.H., when he purchased the manuscript under reference, is more detailed than similar note attached with *SHAWĀHID AL HASANĀT* a manuscript of which is found at Royal Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

Though only a few of his works have come to light so far in the various libraries of the world, the said two works warrant convincing analysis of his mind, thought and approach. An attempt has been made to peep into his mind and reconstruct his personality. The critical appreciation of his works, found so far, is also revealing. He emerges as a man of principles, convictions a man of strong likes and dislikes, scrupulously submissive to his spiritual guide & God.

He died in the later half of the 11th century A.H. & his contemporaries more than hundred - all men of pre-eminence - are spread over the entire century. Majority of them are writers, authors & poets as is evident from more than 180 manuscripts by them on which this humble attempt is based. This may be said to be the golden period in the literary history of Gujarat. Bukhari family, Chishtiya family, Shirazi family, Edrus family, Alawi family etc. produced a number of distinguished personalities all of whom flourished during this century. Kurd family, to which Moulana Sulaiman belonged, played an important role in the scholarly activities of the age till the torch was passed over to Shaykh NUR AL DIN Mohammad by Moulana Ahmed Kurd, better known as Mulla Ahmed. There was hardly any subject then prevalent under the sun, which was not cultivated here. Gujarat produced four QADI AL QUDAT of India and a SADR AS SUDUR in this century. Hardly a year in this century passes, without recording the death of a renowned scholar.

Nobility of the saints, generosity of the rulers, excellence of the Governors, and prosperity of the land at its peak were conducive to realisation of the tranquility of mind, heart a soul which encouraged, on an unprecedented scale, pursuit of knowledge, truth a mysticism.

Since this humble attempt is predominantly based on the discovery of a manuscripts, a flood of facts have surfaced, over & above the information available in the known published sources both Persian & English, which is at any rate scant & disappointing. Manuscripts only heard of so far, have been

located & quoted, apart from unheard of known authors are found to have composed works, not referred to, in any source material. works referred to in them, but long supposed to be inaccessible, have been traced & quoted, notable among such works are FUYUD AL QUDS HASHIYA FAWA ID-I-DIYAIYAH & TAFSIR-I-MOHAMMADI. A good number of manuscripts are autograph copies as specified where necessary. Some of them are copied during the life time of their authors or few years after their composition or the death of their authors. Some of them were owned by the leading scholars of Gujarat, or their immediate equally renowned descendents & bear their seals, On some of them it is noted by the celebrities that it was this very manuscript through which they studied certain subject. Some of the manuscripts discovered & cited can be said to be either the only or the oldest extant copy. A good number of authors of Gujarat, not referred to at all in any source material, have also come to light with a long list of works to their credit traced in the form of manuscripts. Among them mention may be made of ABD AL AZIZ B. WALI, ABD AL MALIK ALAWI, SHAYKH ADAM b. ABD AL RAHMAN, ATA AL ALLAH, MOHAMMAD SIDDIQ b. MOHAMMAD SHARIF, & MALIK AHMED FAROOQUI.

9 These manuscripts do not ~~veiled~~ much information about the biographical details of their authors, one has to piece to gether the minor scattered information. Yet detailed biographical information about a few is recorded on certain folios as a co-incident, just as in case of Moulana Sulaiman. Similar details about DEHDAR OF SURAT, based on a contemporary source, substantially disapprove of what the subsequent TAZKIRA writers have said about him.

Original letter written by ALI MUTTAQI to Moulana MOHAMMED TAHIR of Patan, regarding the tiding of the Prophet is traced, earlier it was only known to have been written.

Original letters of authority - IJĀZAT NAMA - said to have been exchanged between MUSA b. JĀ FAR of KASHMIR & ABD AL QĀDIR EDRUS according to Shalī, have also been discovered & quoted.

The authors have been arranged in chronological order in accordance with the dates of their death. It gives a vivid picture of the literary condition of the 11th century A. H. Literary history of Gujarat is not traceable in the known source of material but has to be based on the discovery of manuscripts themselves. To the extent this possibility of discovery of manuscripts written by Gujarati scholars, persists any attempt, how ever comprehensive, to trace it literary history is bound to be incomplete, and the author looks upon such a possibility as distinct.

I am indebted to the authorities of the following libraries and Khangah-i-Chishtiya for their cooperation in making me available the manuscripts.

Hadrat Pir Mohammad Shah library, Ahmedabad.

Khangah-i-Aliyah-i-Chishtiya, Shahibaug, Ahmedabad.

Khuda Bakh Library, Bankirpur, Patna.

Royal Asiatic Library, Calcutta.

Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.

Madrasa Kanz al Marghub, Patan. (N. Guj.)

Gujarat Vidya Sabha (Husayni Pir Collection) Ahmedabad.

Mahmud
I am also thankful to Mr. ~~Mohammad~~ Pirzada of Ahmedabad,
my friend, for allowing me access to his Manuscripts.

My thanks are due to Prof W. H. Alawi who very affectionately co-operated with me and gave me an access to his ancestral collection.

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PLACE:- BARODA.