

Book Review

Shah Ghulam 'Ali, *MAQALAT-I MAZHARI*, being the *Malfuzat* and Letters of Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan. Introduced, Annotated and Translated by Muhammad Iqbal Mujaddidi, Lahore, 1983.

The tradition of scholarship, combining a thorough knowledge of the subject studied directly from the sources, with modern methodology, best represented in Pakistan by the late Professor Muhammad Shafi' and the late Sayyid Hussamuddin Rashidi which once seemed to be on the way out, has of late shown signs of new vigour. Muhammad Iqbal Mujaddidi is undoubtedly one of the most accomplished and the most productive of the new generation of scholars who are striving to raise aloft once again the flag of oriental scholarship. The editing of the book under review is a marvel of thorough-going research. In order to place Mirza Mazhar Jan-i Janan's utterances and letters in proper perspective, Mr. Mujaddidi has added a long, learned introduction which is itself a feat of scholarship. In this broad survey he brings under review the political setting in which the saintly Mirza lived and worked, and the tradition of Naqshbandi sufism, especially its Mujaddidi branch. His introduction not only illuminates the entire socio-political scenario but also enables the perceptive reader to appreciate the true significance of Mirza Jan-i Janan's teachings.

Mirza Jan-i Janan was the last of the great sufi saints of South Asia. His fame and following spread far beyond the confines of the subcontinent. He was fortunate in having in Shah Ghulam Ali a great disciple and successor who also compiled his master's *malfuz*. This collection of *malfuz* is possibly the best of its class since after the era of great *mulfazats* four centuries earlier.

A spiritual preceptor of great force of character, the literary mentor of the leading Urdu poets of the age, a poet of note himself, Mirza Jan-i Janan was a man of fine sensibility and deep spiri-

tual powers. He was indeed a person of rare parts, for not many sufi saints could boast of such a broad range of gifts. He was also a trend-setter in the literary world of the day, guiding the poets of the age to shift their gaze from Persian to Urdu and from the tricky but narrow path of "double-entendre" to the lyrical expression of the whole gamut of human emotions. The 18th century witnessed the decline of Mughul civilization and the disintegration of Mughul political authority. It was inevitably an age of much civil strife. The squalor of a declining culture was only relieved by the high spirituality of men like Mirza Jan-i Janan and Shah Ghulam Ali and the poetic sensibility of Mir and Sauda who both drew inspiration from the former.

Credit goes to Mr. Iqbal Mujaddidi for bringing the spoken words and the letters of such a unique personality within the reach of educated men by translating them into Urdu and by his enlightening comments on all matters needing explanation. Mr. Mujaddidi is in the developing stage of his career and we expect many more equally solid and more brilliant works from him.

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