

Tajzia Yadgar-e-Anis

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'Authors', remarked Schopenhauer, 'may be divided into falling stars, planets and fixed stars: the first have a momentary effect; the second a much longer duration; and the third are unchangeable possess their own light, and shine for all time'. In my individual opinion, Dr. Syed Taghi Abedi, by virtue of his work deserves to be placed in the third category of authors as defined by Schopenhauer.

Dr. Abedi, the learned author of the book 'Tajzia Yadgar-e-Anis', deserves genuine applause on this latest venture of his. Judging by the subject matter and the range it covers, this book ought to have taken a decade or so in its preparation and arrangement of the material. But it was for the tremendous labour of the author that, within a couple of years, it is shaped out in the form of a book.

The fact is that in the past too, attempts were made to present the work of Mir Anis in the sub-continent. Allama Shibli Nomani's venture 'Muazana Anis-o-Dabeer', can be broached as the best example in this direction, which appeared some 100 years ago. In contrast to Shibli's book, which dealt with numerous 'Marsias' of Mir Anis, Dr. Abedi's entire book is based on only one 'Marsia' of Mir Anis.

'Jab Qata Ki Masafat-e-Shab Aftab Ne'

(The sun had run his journey o'er the night).

In which the author has analysed and discussed about one hundred qualities and beauties of this 'Marsia'. Dr. Abedi, indeed, is the first person who has analysed one single 'Marsia' of Mir Anis with such creativity. It is, beyond doubt, a great achievement which is unmatched and unrivalled. Unique as this book is, it is supplemented by another work of paramount importance, the translation of the 'Marsia' in English by David Mathews, and in Arabic by Maulana Syed Ali Naqvi.

The book is based on 14 chapters. Three chapters (i.e., 11th, 12th and 13th) are of extra ordinary importance. In these chapters, the author has thoroughly analysed the fore mentioned 'Marsia' from the book 'Shahkar-e-Anis', by Prof. Masood Hasan Razvi Adeeab. Prof. Rizvi's book has 197 sixtains and all the sixtains have been beautifully and creatively analysed and incorporated in the book. Moreover, Dr. Abedi has arrived at his own coinages. But his most remarkable contribution is the ingenuity of form, because no form as such was known to exist before.

It will not be out of place to mention here that in addition to the analysis of

197 sixtains of the 'Marsia', the book provides a detailed study of the life of Mir Anis in chapter one. According to the author, the title 'Khuda-e-Sukhan' has been used for two great poets - Mir Taqi Mir and Mir Anis. The former used 'Ghazal' as a medium of expression, whereas the latter selected 'Marsia' and made martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) his subject. It was from his ancestors that Mir Anis has inherited the legacy of poetics and, therefore, he was justified in making a well-founded claim:

'Panchvein Pusht a Shabbir Ki Maddhai Mein'

(In Shabbir's adoration, mine is the fifth generation)

The real greatness of the poetry of Mir Anis lies in his mastery of language. He enjoyed such a perfect command over the language that he very easily couched into words not only the profoundest thoughts but even the sublimest of feelings. The depth of his thought, coupled with his limitless capacity to evoke feelings, indeed lent such a dignity to his poetry which no other Urdu poet has so far been able to create.

Mir Anis has the power of expressing one and the same thing in manifold ways. He was wellversed in the art of expanding and compressing a passage. He had such a rich and inexhaustible stock of words which no other poet of Urdu, nor probably any poet in any other language, appears to have possessed. The poetry of Anis is conspicuously marked by the characteristics of simplicity, elegance and eloquence. These qualities are not only abundantly clear in his work but are the very essence of his poetry. So glaring are these characteristics that they do not escape the attention of a reader, provided he or she has a taste for culture.

Besides, the poetry of Mir Anis, Dr. Abedi has also tried to trace the minute details of the life of Anis like his appearance, costume, punctuality, sensitivity, behaviour and habits, first and last 'Majlis' (sermons), prayers, illness and death. The last few years of Anis' life were disturbed by the turbulent political events. During his visit to Azimabad, he fell ill. When illness took a serious turn, he rushed back to Lucknow. He was ill for about a month and, at the age of 73, he breathed his last in 1874 A. D. The following couplet of Mirza Dabeer reveals not only the exact year of his death, but it is also the best tribute to the person who had been his life-long rival:

'Aasman Bay Mah-e-Kamil

Sidrah Bay Rooh-ul-Ameen

Toor-e-Seena Bay Kaleem-ul-lah

Mimber Bay Anis'.

(Poor is the sky without the full moon,

And empyrean without Gabriel, is meaningless,

Nothing is the Mount Toor, without Moses.

And pulpit without Anis, is worthless).