II

The Author And His Work

Life:-

Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din was the author of the *Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi*. According to C.A. Storey, it is a florid biography of Nawab Abdus Samad Khan Bahadur Diler Jung, who became Governor of Lahore in Farrukhsiyar’s reign in (1713-1719 A.D.). The Nawab crushed the Sikhs and captured their leader Banda in 1715. He became governor of Multan in Muhammad Shah’s seventh or eighth regnal year (1724-26 A.D.). He died in (1737-38)\(^1\). Storey identifies this Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din with another Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din who wrote a Zafarnamah on Ahmed Shah Durrani’s first invasion of India. Storey again writes that the author of the *Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi* appears to be identical with the Naib under Arif Beg Khan, Governor of Lahore. Apart from this, some stray but useful information is available on his life and his other engagements. No research work has been done earlier. His stray references to himself or to some occurrences are mentioned in the work. Some useful information about his life, his intellectual attainments and spiritual studies on Islamic Law, study of history, methodology of writing history, his philosophy of history, style of language in which he described the intellectual, economic and educational life at Lahore in the contemporary period gives us meaningful information about his accomplishments in various fields. He actually participated in the battles that the Mughals and the Sikhs fought. His position as

a Naib\(^2\) of the Governor gave him an opportunity to record his observations on the important events that were taking place in quick succession, one after the other. Beyond this, unfortunately not much account is given anywhere else.

**His Work:-**

As an eye-witness account the *Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi*\(^3\) is a fairly objective study of the events that were taking place in rapid succession. The author himself, in a very academic manner, divided his work into twenty two chapters. It has 174 pages. Each page has 15 lines. Each line has about 15 to 16 words. It remains unpublished. He has given a brief introduction in the first chapter. In the same chapter he praises the Almighty, and the Caliphs. The second chapter is devoted to the praise of the reigning sovereign. In the third chapter he has given the causes which prompted him to take up this assignment. Next twelve chapters from 4 to 16 (pages 14 to 131) are devoted to the Mughal - Sikh conflict for political power in the Punjab. Next chapter i.e. chapter number 17 (pages 131-139) deals with the suppression of Isa Khan Munj and his father Dualat Khan Munj. Next three chapters, chapter numbers 18, 19, 20 (pages 139 to 158) have been reserved for dealing with the life of the Afghans of Kasoor. Chapter 31 (pages 158 to 167) deals with the Sadats of Barah. The last chapter (pages 167 to 174) deals with curbing the revolt of the Kashmiris.

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\(^3\) Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, *Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi*, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London.
Purpose of Writing:-

The author has given the purpose of taking up of this assignment⁴. He gives various reasons for recording his own observations. He was convinced that observation was essential for a historian. The onset of rainy season had fascinated him. The change in climate had virtually taken off all his boredomness. A Royal Farman (Tughra) from the Emperor had informed him that history of the conquest of Balkh and Badakhshan by Sultan Murad Baksh had been completed. This further prompted him for the task. The loss of public interest in reading tales of Rustam and Sohrab had also encouraged him to go ahead with the new assignment. Apart from this, he had seen how the Nawab with his new strategies and fresh tactics had achieved a monumental victory over the deadliest foes. Besides, a literary work of great merit would be a suitable memorial to his talent and would also guide the next generation about the Nawab’s war-tactics. He was sure that his eye-witness account will be a more profitable source of information for the future scholars of history too. He was also convinced of the importance of putting his own seal and stamp on the narrative and that would render his account more credibility and trustworthiness. Leaving behind a literary memorial for himself and a network of new war strategies and fresh war tactics for the future generations was his purpose.

His Philosophy of history:-

A closer study of the Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi reveals his aptitude for understanding philosophy especially of the Islamic Law. He commences his work by

⁴ Ghulam-Muh-y-ud-Din, Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. ff.8-12.
offering certain attributes to the Lord Almighty. He considers the lord Himself a was philosopher and in support of this he notices many contradictions in the things around him and finds that the Almighty has imparted beauty, symmetry and planning to all those contradictions. The Lord is generous, munificent and has obligations, on the whole, to the entire universe both visible and invisible. He is all powerful and is a matchless artist. The pillar-less dome he has provided to the mankind speaks eloquently of his qualities as an artist. He is merciful too and often grants us pardons for all those sins, however grave and serious, but often committed through sheer recklessness by the mankind. His mercies transcend to such an extent that the author considers the concept of resurrection also as an indication of the Lord’s mercy. The author does not lend any credence to the view that resurrection was actually an act of shamefulness.

The author had viewed with considerable appreciation the Sikhs’ dedication to their faith and voluntarily accepting self-sacrifice as a great act on the path leading to the worshipping of the Almighty.

He calls Prophet Muhammad as the leader of entire mankind and that he was the last prophet to descend upon the earth. He further eulogizes the Prophet’s unparalleled qualities of mercifulness which he bequeathed to all those whom he considered fit for it. The Caliphs especially Usman, and Ali got their due share who subsequently handed over these to Hassan and Hussain. He philosophizes on the duties and responsibility of the common man under the reigning Monarch. In politics, his analysis is very deep and

5 Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.3.
6 Ibid., f.4. Epic poem.
7 Ibid., f.5.
8 Ibid., f.6.
searching. A government service is only for those who succeed in maintaining its ‘Rob-i-Sultani’ which works like a ‘Sad-i-Sikandri’\(^9\) to defend his rights as a sovereign power.

At another place too, he rejects outright the idea of introducing Rustam, Sohrab and Asfandyar\(^10\) for their valorous deeds and tactics. He rightfully considered Nawab Abdus Samad Khan far superior to those past heroes. In the organization of army, the adoption of new military tactics invigorated with new ideas and hopes will certainly speak of the greatness of the Nawab as a commander of army. In one, of course event the author loses his objectivity as a historian. He neither condemns, nor disapproves Nawab’s treacherous breach of plighted words he had given to Banda at the time of his conditional surrender, that the Sikhs asked for nothing except peace and security. It was obligatory on the part of the Nawab to have abided by his plighted words. The Nawab sent about one thousand of them including Banda alive to the Emperor’s court but the way they were sent was very tyrannical and a sure breach of the pledged words. The author could not be ignorant of the importance of promises pledged. He being a philosopher concealed the truth for fear of the Nawab. All these things were taken note of by another contemporary writer Khafi Khan who considered it a breach but justified it as an act performed on the basis of expediency measure.

**His Methodology of Writing History:**

Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din was a poet, a great writer of Persian prose and an historian of acknowledged distinction. He got the Shahi Farman or ‘Tughra’\(^11\) from the


reigning monarch. That surely made him a great historiographer of the time. He was not writing the traditional history because he had no opportunity as he was engaged in a most difficult enterprise. He was a Naib under Arif Beg Khan\textsuperscript{12}. He had talent but no time. It appears he was faithful to the discipline of history but he was not writing out of some profit from the reigning monarch. In the first campaign the contestants were the Sikhs and the Mughals. He was not prepared to do any injury to the Sikhs by adding some foul adjectives to the noun Sikhs. He used the word ‘Kaffār’ but that was a general term for the non-Muslims. It appears he wanted to point out about the Sikhs, their efforts, their methods all in their true picture. He doesn't treat them as his personal foes. In other words he tried to be just and wanted to keep himself away from treating anybody with impartiality. As a historian, he practises sincerity of purpose and integrity of character.

The author neither overstates virtues nor pushes them under the carpet. Nor does he ever try to ignore faults. Like Khafi Khan his contemporary, his observations are neither fictitious nor distortion of facts. Fail to extol virtues where he observes them is for him sinful. In making observations we find he is proceeding sincerely, honestly and cautiously. Such precautions, he never throws to the wind. On one or two occasions he was extolling Nawab Abdus Samad Khan’s virtues of generosity and some other laudable qualities related to history and it created a doubt that he was expecting some benefits for himself.

He evades highlighting the serious flaw in the Nawab’s character, which prevented him to give to the Sikhs what they had asked for i.e. ‘Aman’\textsuperscript{13}. He gave them


temporary shelter but not ‘Aman’. It was taken serious note of by Khafi Khan. This was perhaps a deliberate failure on the part of writer, or he may perhaps be not an eye-witness to that particular incident.

He was the first Muslim writer to give the causes of the revolt of Banda i.e. they were ‘Sinna Rish’ and ‘Kina Toz budand’\(^{14}\). They were all carrying wounded hearts in their breasts and all of them were boiling with rage to undo the injustice done to them and to teach a lesson to those guilty of such barbarous acts.

The writer never tries to show animosity towards the Sikhs. He practices moderation in his assessment of the situation but moderation is not to be at the cost of suppressing facts. All this shows that he was a profound writer. His objective thoughts, inspirations and reflections were motivated by his respect for intense objectivity. He keeps himself abreast of all situations, thought and suggestions bearing upon the central theme of his writing. One word of caution was that he has a soft corner in his heart for his co-religionists. He leaps up with joy when the Mughal soldier commits a heinous act of crime in the battlefield while finding a Sikh doing something shockingly similar he castigates the entire community. Piercing a wounded Sikh on a spear and keeping his body suspended in the air till he breathes his last was an act of mercy in his creed\(^ {15}\) but showers invectives if the Sikh commits a similar offence. It was a criminal act and we are sure Islam does not permit it. It must also be noticed that the writer belonged to the ruling class while the Sikhs were the subject people. The Mughals were the oppressors and the Sikhs were the victims. He would not hesitate to gloat over an act of cruelty committed by a Mughal but if a Sikh displayed an act of valour on the battlefield, that became a


\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*, f.63.
‘sangdili’ in his eyes i.e. heartlessness. His objectivity in such cases suffers an erosion and looses the luster to which the author otherwise was entitled.

His Style:-

Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din’s style is verbose, turgid and full of metaphorical language. In his style he is guided by his talent which appears to be universal and elevated. He gives an explicit and a vivid picture to his expression. His description is also full of life and seems to be fond of using loud adjectives in his prose and poetry too. His language is difficult and his lengthy sentences compelled the reader to consult a good dictionary in order to understand words and their correct meanings. Bread eaten with meat or baked with meat is called ‘Adim’, it also means surface of the earth, it could be the name of a horse or the expanse of the heaven too. These words are used at different places with different meanings and they have been correctly used wherever they have been placed.

The author is firmly of the opinion that flags of honour and fame can be raised only by those who have the capacity, potential, competence and aptitude. It could have been said in simple words also that one who is inherently competent acquires fame. In the other part of the same sentence he wants to convey that fame is acquired only by those who are blessed with prudence, logic and are rational. Actually he wants to portray that fame and circumspection are inseparable. It is not clear whether by displaying such a command over the language he wants to establish superiority in the domain of writing. Persian language has the facility to describe a famous person as one
who is cautious and careful enough to consider all circumstances and possible consequences.

He is using metaphorical language and is comparing the victories of Nawab Abdus Samad Khan with a beautiful flower in the garden. Whenever he becomes emotional he speaks through poetry. He gives epic poem at the end of every chapter. Sometimes his poems are full of didactic lessons but he seldom introduced humour in poetry as well as prose and like a true historian he is always serious. He is sometimes full of sentiments and emotions and gives a more vivid picture in poetry yet seriousness never departs from his writing. In some of his epic poems he is advocating peace. Even when he is writing superb pieces of poetry he never swerves from the rightful path of an historian and sticks to the proper, precise and conventional narration of whatever he has to present. Genuineness, integrity and credibility are virtues which an historian must possess and fortunately he is endowed with all these in abundance.

In his prose too, he gives a bright, vibrant and deep picture of the riches of Lahore, Kashmir and other places. His sense of keen observation forced him to describe every situation he witnessed in a deeply heart-felt manner and this provides him an opportunity to describe what he wants to portray. Humour causes hilarity and ridicule too and is open to fun but he manages to keep both apart. Though normally reluctant to humour yet he sometimes condescends to ridicule but only those whom he considered a part of his own like the Mughal forces.

Language used in chronograms is simple and could easily be remembered. He, however, cautions his readers about the correctness of the dates in them because it
rests on an historian to confirm dates. He was writing his observations on the battlefront and lacked the resources which he needed for the task.

Though he was not a student of economics, his references to the economic conditions provide us with some insight into the economic structure. He compared Lahore with the ‘Bag-i-Irm’\textsuperscript{16}. He is also praising the splendid architecture of Lahore. He used embellished language for such descriptions. At one place he himself is boasting of his honest comments to the faithful description of the Nawab’s strength of power and ability of improvising and tactics, wisdom in planning and taking all steps required for the successful prosecution of the war he was waging.

He was fascinated by the beauties and charms of Kashmir and draws a lucid picture of land. Kashmir was a land of beautiful gardens full of flowers, tall trees and beautiful lakes and he was not wrong in saying so.

He generally avoided panegyrics but whenever he found something to applaud he did not hide his appreciation. His florid and turgid language, long sentences sometimes go beyond understanding especially when they remained unpunctuated, but they often made a student of Persian language wiser about the nuances of the Persian words in prose or in poetry. Even in writing about his patron, he never uses hyperbolic language. One wonders how he succeeded in maintaining his equilibrium in situations which led many to hyperbole. His intellect was original, profound and impartial through of course he was extra-ordinarily enthusiastic and energetic a scholar amongst the Persian historiographers. His versatility always remains noticeable. His poetic genius was not incomparable but one could easily perceive talent in it.

\textsuperscript{16} Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din, \textit{Futuhat-Namah-i-Samadi}, MS., BM., Or. 1870, London. f.31 (Line 6).