

Mir Hasan speaks in his account of himself of having written Marsia or threnodies on the death of Imam Husain and Hasan. He also wrote soz and salaams which are forms of Marsias. This kind of composition was brought into perfection by his grandson Mir Anis and his contemporary and rival, Dabir.

He wrote a Tazkira of Urdu poets in Persian which contains an account of about 300 poets ancient and modern. The date of the composition is not mentioned but an examination of various dates mentioned in the body of the Tazkira points to 1194 A. H. (1780 A. D.) as the most approximate date of composition, when Sauda was seventy years of age. Mir Hasan has divided the memoir into three periods; the first period anterior to the reign of Furrukhsiyar; the second period from the reign of Furrukhsiyar to the end of the reign of Mahammad Shah; and the third and last period till the compilation of the Tazkira. It has the merit of writing accounts of poets alive in the time of Hasan and though the sketches run only to a few lines yet they are not without their value.

Mir Hasan has immortalized himself by his Masnavi *Siharul Bayan* and ranks very high in Urdu Literature for his simplicity, spontaneity, eloquence, sweetness, melody and erotic themes which often touch on sensualism and is thus considered by Insha to be a fore-runner of the writers of rekhti.

Mir (Mahammad) Taqi (whose *nom de guerre* is Mir and who is generally known as Mir Taqi, was the son of Mir Abdullah, one of the nobles of Akbarabad (Agra). He quitted Agra at an early age on the death of his father, during the reign of the Emperor Shah Alam, and resided with his uncle Khan Arzu (Sirajuddin) the celebrated Persian poet, who supported him and supervised his education. He also instructed him in the act of writing poetry. He rapidly rose to fame and his verses were on the lips of everybody. His ghazals were taken from city to city as valuable presents. Poets are proverbially poor and Mir was no exception. His proud and supersensitive nature did not allow him to court the patronage of the nobles at Delhi which was staggering at the various shocks delivered by the repeated foreign invasions of the Afghans and the frequent free-booting incursions of the Mahrattas. In a state of utter poverty, like most of the brethren of his tribe, Mir left Delhi for Lucknow in the time of Nawab Asafuddaulah. According to Azad he left Delhi in 1190 A. H. (1776 A. D.) but according to Lutf it was in 1197 A. H. (1783 A. D.) Garcin de Tassy follows Lutf, and Sprenger also says that it was after 1196 A. H. Hasan says in

Mir Taqi Mir 1125  
of 1223 A. H. 1798  
to 1810 A. D.

Leaves for Luck-  
now 1197 A. H. or  
1783 A. D.

his Tazkira that Mir was in Delhi at the time of the compilation of the biography (1194 A. H. or 1780 A. D.). The authorities therefore lean towards the date stated by Lutf which appears to be the correct one. Mir had not enough money to engage the whole of the coach to himself and he shared it with a gentleman, who to beguile the tedium of the journey commenced some small talk. Mir feeling offended at being addressed, peremptorily snubbed him at once. When he arrived at Lucknow he put up at an inn and hearing that a *Mushaira* was to be held in the evening he hastily composed a ghazal in the particular refrain set by the assembly and having dressed himself in the fashion of Delhi which was not in vogue at Lucknow he proceeded to the scene of poetical contest. Such an old figure dressed grotesquely in old fashion excited the laughter of the smart people of Lucknow which cut the old man to the quick. When his turn came to recite the ghazal people began to make enquiries from Mir about himself. Mir improvised a few couplets in the set refrain and incorporated them in his ghazal which he read out with much feeling and pathos. People apologised when they knew it was the great Mir who had come amongst them. In the course of time Nawab Asafuddaulah heard of Mir's arrival and assigned to him a monthly cash allowance of two hundred or three hundred rupees (according to Lutf) which was also continued by his successor Nawab Saadat Ali Khan (1798-1814 A. D.).

Mir however thought himself affronted by some seeming supercilious acts of the Nawab and according to Azad, retired early from the court and died in utter poverty and starvation 1225 A. H. (1810 A. D.). Lutf adds a few more details about Mir. A few celebrated Urdu writers were required for Fort William College at Calcutta from Lucknow and Delhi and Mir was also interviewed by Colonel Scott, the Resident, but he was passed over owing to his infirmity and old age. (Lutf also adds that when he fell out with Nawab Asafuddaulah the pension of three hundred rupees which had been fixed by Nawab and entrusted to be disbursed by Tahsin Ali Khan was not stopped when he ceased to attend the court but continued to be paid in its entirety until (1215 A. H.) (1800 A. D.) (the year of the compilation of the Tazkira of Lutf). (Lutf however mentions that Mir was not properly appreciated and he lacked the night's morsel which is probably an oriental hyperbole for comparative neglect considering the patronage lavishly bestowed on minor lights and his own attainments as a poet.

There is a conflict of statements as regards the age of Mir. The date of his death is firmly fixed by the numerous chronogrammatic verses composed by various poets, the most notable being those of Nassakh and Nasikh. According to Azad he attained the

age of one hundred years (lunar) ; according to Jahan, Mir was only eighty. The latter statement seems to be incorrect as Mushaffi when writing his biography in 1209 A. H. (1794-95 A. D.) says that Mir was then over eighty years of age.

Only a few scanty-details which are authentic are available about Mir's life. Sprenger however mentions that in the years (1848-50 A. D.) when he made the catalogue of the books in the libraries of Kings of Oudh he noticed in the Moti Mahal an autobiography of Mir Taqi (152 pages of 12 lines) bearing the title of 'Zikr Mir' or account of Mir written in Persian. (This valuable work seems to have been lost otherwise it would have thrown a flood of light and dealt a *coup de grace* to a great mass of incorrect speculation, fanciful stories and legends that have gathered round his name as round Chaucer's. Various conjectures and canards set afloat by people were incorporated by the contemporary chroniclers and sedulously propagated by other writers who based their information on these not very trust-worthy biographies. Mir does not write about himself in his *Nakat-ush-Shaura* with well assumed humility and in conformity with the ruling convention of the oriental poets. He only states that he is staying at Delhi.

The Tazkirah of Shaurish which was the poetical surname of Was Mir Taqi a Gulam Hussain Shaurish, composed about 1193 Syed ? A. H. (1779 A. D.) when Mir was alive and in Delhi, states that Mir was not a born Syed but he only assumed the poetical pseudonym of Mir (a title peculiarly used by the Syeds) and thus he came to be regarded as a Syed. Shaurish relies upon a Qita of Sauda which is not to be found in his works. This is an idle story quoted by Azad and there is absolutely no doubt of Mir being a Syed by birth as he frequently states so in his verses and refers to his noble descent and he was believed to be so by other contemporary chroniclers.

Azad, in his admirable but unfortunately occasionally gossipy Ab-i-Hiyat has allowed certain misstatements to creep in. He has related anecdotes and sayings of Mir illustrative of his ill-nature, supercilious temper, overweening conceit and uncritical attitude. He has also allowed himself to give currency to some incorrect statements on the authority of some of his ill-informed malicious contemporary writers. In order to make the book entertaining he did not pause to verify his facts and stories. Their veracity is now challenged in the light of *Nakatush Shaura* (pithy sayings of the poets) and other contemporary tazkiras which were not easily accessible then.

According to Azad, Mir states in his preface to *Nakat-ush-Shaura* that it deals with an account of one thousand poets, and that it gives useful hints to writers of Urdu verses. The preface of Mir does profess nothing of the kind. Azad states that every

one of those poets treated in the Tazkirah has come in for his share of rebuke and his account of Wali the progenitor of rekhta poetry is simply scandalous as Mir writes about him that he is "more notorious than Satan". The biography contains only an account of hundred poets and the criticism is neither unfair nor malicious. Mir, contrary to the oriental custom, does not indulge too much in extravagant hyperbole and strained metaphors. His criticism is short, pointed and on the whole just. He has disclaimed personal knowledge when he did not know the man. There are very few reproofs and most of them are well-merited. There is no mention of any ill-natured remark about Wali as is quoted by Azad. Again, according to Azad, Mir a Shiah and his uncle Arzu, a follower of Hanafi sect, quarrelled and became estranged owing to their religious differences but there appears to be no shade of annoyance or intolerance on the part of Mir. He speaks very reverently of Khan Arzu, and indeed of all other leaders of religion. He calls Khan Arzu his spiritual guide and 'Pir' and writes with the veneration of a disciple. It is abundantly clear that Mir was no bigot in his views and had tolerance and respect for the persuasions of others. It is possible that the estrangement may have come later on in life but he could never have spoken bitterly against him. (Azad's account that Mir usurped the poetical surname of Mir, from Mir Soz seems to be unfounded for Mir himself states that he had been using it long before Mir Soz assumed it but he gave it up for that of Soz when he saw that he would be eclipsed by the greater glory of Mir Taqi. Of Dard, Mir speaks in the choicest terms and with the greatest respect. Azad again speaks of Mir's contemptuous treatment of people who resided outside Delhi and who were thus supposed to have no knowledge of the purity of Urdu. On the contrary Mir praises whole-heartedly the work of poets not residents of Delhi. Mazmun of Chachau a village near Agra has been accorded good treatment.)

It is true that Mir had an overwhelming sense of self-respect and was proud and sensitive by nature. He looked askance at the advances of the nobles which he thought were meant to humiliate him. He was intensely reserved and self-centred and would brook no presumption. His poverty embittered his spirit and his lofty nature disdained pity and help. He was however irascible and short-tempered and he was himself conscious of the defect as he expressed in one of his couplets (and as is referred to by his contemporaries Hasan and Lutf). True it is that he speaks of his poems and Tazkira as 'more worthless than shells' and refers to his pupils as his friends but this depreciation and abasement of self is only a pose and originates in pride. It may be inferred that he was conceited and vain about his accomplishments as a poet and was partial to friends. His masnavi *Ajgar Namah* or 'book of Dragon' in which he regards

himself a dragon destroying all other animals (minor poets) is not a mere conventional performance but an expression of inordinate vanity and disdain for others. His contemptuous treatment of Hatim in his biography can be traced to the same source. He was very often generous as he praises unstintedly his contemporary Sauda, and some of his own disciples. (Azad seems to have embroidered in this weakness to an amazing extent for he states that Mir could never brook greatness of others ancient or modern and would never shake his head in token of praise even when verses of such masters of Persian poetry as Saadi and Hafiz were recited in his presence. Azad does not seem to have read the *Nakat* in original but has taken the statements of others on trust especially those of Qasim.)

Mir Taqi was a voluminous writer. He lived to a ripe old age and his literary activities extended over a very long period. His works are :—

His works.

- (1) Six large diwans of Rekhta ghazals.
- (2) A Diwan in Persian.
- (3) Numerous masnavis.
- (4) A pamphlet entitled Faiz-i-Mir.
- (5) A Tazkirah entitled *Nakat-ush-shaura*.

The diwans of Urdu ghazals contain not only ghazals, but rubais, mustazads, wasokhts, mukhammasat, tarjihbands, tarkibbands, musaddasat, matlat, haftbands, tazmin, fards and other varieties of composition. The diwans extend to many hundred pages and the ghazals number thousands.

Mir has written a few qasidas which are not of a very high order and suffer in comparison with those of his rival Sauda. Four of them are invocatory in character and only one in praise of Nawab Asafuddaulah. This form of composition did not attract him for his genius was not suited to it and his views and mode of life did not permit him to play the sycophant on nobles and Nawabs. It was also due to the fact that he was self-centred and reserved.

Some of his mukhammasat are invocatory and others are on the 'complaint of time' which are regarded as satires on Shah Alam and his court.

Next to his ghazals, rank his masnavis, which are numerous consisting chiefly of satires, eulogies, and love tales and which are extremely popular. The most important of them are :—

1. *Ajgar nama* also called *Azhdarnama* or 'the book of the dragon' is the ebullition of Mir's self-conceit and contempt for his contemporary Urdu poets. He fancifully represents himself as a dragon devouring the smaller animals, such as scorpions,

snakes, etc., within his reach, to wit the poets whose works be held in such light esteem.

2. *Shola-i-Ishq* or 'The Flame of Love.'
3. *Josh-i-Ishq*, or 'The Ebullition of Love.'
4. *Darya-i-Ishq*, or 'The Ocean of Love.'
5. *Aijaz-i-Ishq* or 'The Miracle of Love.'
6. *Khuab-o-khayal* or 'The Dream and Thought.'
7. *Mamlat-i-Ishq* or 'The Transactions of Love.'
8. *Masnavi Tambih-ul-Khayal* which praises the art of poetry and its dignity.

Three masnavis with the heading *Shikarnamah* describe the hunting expeditions of Nawab Asafuddaulah. There are many short masnavis on pets, such as cocks, cats, goats, dogs; one on monsoon and another on his own house devastated by rain, on the troubles of journey in rains, on lying, and delights of wine. There is a *Saqi Namah* or the Book of the Cup-bearer of wine which has Spring for its subject.

He also wrote a few Marsias but had no love for chronogrammatic verses.

To Mir belongs the credit of transplanting *Wasokht*, *Mussullus* Mir introduced and *Murabba* in Urdu poetry. *Tazmin* (the new forms in Urdu poetry. word means to intercalate in one's own verses those of somebody else. This name is given to pieces of verses where the intercalation takes place) also figures in the works of Mir.

Mir's fame chiefly rests on his ghazals and masnavis. The masnavis though not of the highest order are marked with spontaneity, emotion, freedom from constraint, eloquence and elegance of diction. Later poets such as Juraat and Mushaffi imitated them. They could not however be ranked with those of Mir Hasan.

(The Diwan in Persian was compiled in one year as Mushaffi informs us, when he had suspended composing in Urdu.

The Tazkira entitled *Nakat-ush-shaura* was written about the year 1165 A. H. (1752 A. D.). It is one of the earliest memoirs of Urdu poets and is exceedingly interesting and useful. It is unfortunately fragmentary. It also poses as an anthology for it contains selections from the verses of poets treated therein.

Mir introduced into Urdu poetry many idioms, phrases and words from Persian. He used these in two language and different ways. He either transplanted the idiom in its original form or did so by its translation into Urdu. Many examples are quoted by Azad in his *Ab-i-Hayat*. Many gained currency and survived, others fell out from use and died

His own ideas about rekhta embodied in the epilogue of his *Nakat* are interesting and instructive. "Be it known that rekhta is of several kinds, which I will explain to the extent of my knowledge. Firstly, one hemistich is Persian and one Hindi like the fragment of Amir Khusru. Secondly, half the hemistich is Persian and the other half Hindi, like the verses of Mir Moizz. Thirdly, the verbs and prepositions are Persian but this is objectionable. Fourthly, they use Persian construction; this is allowable to the extent it agrees with the construction of the rekhta idiom—this is known only to the poets—but if it is contrary to Rekhta grammar it is objectionable. It is to be observed that this is one of the methods followed by poets and that I have equally adopted it. If the Persian construction is in the spirit of the Rekhta language there is no harm in adopting it. Fifthly, *Ahyam* was much in vogue with former poets but now it is no longer in use. There is no harm in it, if it is witty and natural. *Ahyam* means that the word in which the meaning of the verse depends has two significations, one obvious and the other far fetched, and it is the latter which is intended by the poet. The style which I have adopted comprises all the figures of speech, as puns, resemblance of corresponding words in rhyme and measure, etc."

Urdu poetry is popularly regarded to be co-extensive with His ghazals. Urdu ghazal and as Mir is pre-eminent as a ghazal writer he is naturally regarded to be the greatest of Urdu poets. He brought masnavis to a high pitch of excellence but Mir's sphere is the ghazal and in his domain he reigns supreme. His verses are simple, eloquent, poignant, winged with pathos and pain. They have the greatest appealing power and force. In the ardour of passion, in the melody and music, in the felicity of phrase, in the ecstasy of feeling, his ghazals rank the best in Urdu literature. Many of his verses have that haunting quality which is regarded as a hall-mark of true and great poetry. His seventy-two 'lancets' have passed into a proverb though there are certainly a greater number of verses which could be regarded as possessed of the highest poetic qualities. His language is pure and chaste and his style extremely simple and highly polished. He is the Sheikh Saadi of Urdu ghazals. His ghazals are the elixir of Urdu poetry. Of short metres he is a master. There is an air of despondency and sadness which invests the poems with thousand charms. This dejection lends sweetness and true pathos to the ghazals.

Mir's position is unequalled in the history of Urdu literature. His reputation as a poet. He is popularly called *Khuda-i-Sakhun* or 'God of poetry'. Ghalib and Nasikh and all subsequent writers of note have acknowledged his greatness and speak of him as of a master. Even in his own day Mir was recognised as the greatest ghazal-writer. The contemporary and

later biographers bestow the highest encomiums on Mir and his poetry. Extravagant and out-of-way metaphors, far-fetched similes, picturesque phraseology, are lavished on him abundantly in praise. Poets and prose-writers vie with each other in eulogising him. No praise is too little for him. Domains of Art and Nature are ransacked and they furnish similes for his greatness. Mythological and historical allusions are yoked to do service for him. Hasan writes, "The chief of the poets of Hindustan, the most eloquent of the eloquents of his time, a heart-attracting poet, and an incomparable writer of verses". Lutf in comparing him to poets, ancient and modern, says that the difference is that of Sun and Moon, earth and sky. Mir and Mirza (Souda) are the standards for and fountains of inspiration for later Urdu poets. For his sweetness, for his poignancy, force and appeal, for his eloquence and spontaneity for his songs of woe Mir is one of the greatest of Urdu poets and as bringing the ghazal to a very high pitch of excellence he ranks with the greatest of writers of erotic verse.

Mir's fame rests on ghazals and masnavis, and Sauda is regarded as the master of Qasida and satire. Even compared in Sauda's day this was the general impression for Hakim Qudrat Ullah Khan Qasim writes, "It is generally thought that Sauda never approached Mir in the excellence of the ghazal, but 'every flower has a different colour and a different fragrance'. Mirza is a boundless river, Mir is a majestic canal. In the knowledge of verse-technique and prosody Mir has a superiority over Mirza, but in poetic powers and genius Mirza surpasses Mir. Khwajah Basit characterizes the works of Mir as Ah: Dear Dear (a sigh), and those of Mirza as Wah: Hear Hear (an exclamation of delight). The same difference has been embodied in one of his verses by Amir Minai.

Both were born poets of great powers. The difference in the style is the difference of the temperament. Mir was by nature a confirmed pessimist. His life was one of long misery and poverty. He was overweighted with an inordinate sense of self-respect. He carried his *amour propre* too far and to extreme limits. He led a retired and embittered life. He drank copiously of the gall of life. He was no fit associate for a riotous and festive board. Hilarity, uproariousness, and joy were alien to his nature. Souda, on the contrary was essentially an optimist and possessed a volatile temperament. He was bubbling with delight and good humour. He was in his element in a joyous assembly, and delighted in the play of wit and fancy. He took life easily and was never known to be in straitened circumstances. The poetry of each is coloured by his thoughts and reflects his temperament and his attitude towards the world. The language they adopted suited their respective genius and temper. Pathos speaks in

simple, subdued, gentle and unadorned language. The utterance is choked with tears. This style, natural and easy, is admirably suited to the ghazal and to particular metres notably the short ones in which Mir is seen at his best. The qasida requires picturesque phraseology, dignified diction, sublime similes and rare metaphors. An encomiastic ode could never be sung with a drooping heart. Languishing sentiments of love describing the agonies of separation and tortures of suspicion could never be befittingly expressed with words suited to qasidas. Mir is the supreme master of the pathetic and simple style. His poignant verses thrill with emotion which is real and not simulated. His thoughts are drawn from the fund of his own personal experiences and not from his imagination. Mir's life was a tragedy and Shelley's lines could apply to him with great aptness and force.

" Most wretched men  
Are cradled into poetry by wrong.  
They learn in suffering what they  
teach in song ".

" His sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thoughts ". Sauda's verses have not that impress of true pathos. Mir's verses make a powerful appeal to a bruised and agonised heart. His is a tale of woe. He depicts beautifully and faithfully that aspect of life which has despair and sorrow in all their purity. Sauda, on the other hand, portrays another aspect, that of hope and joy. His verses scatter delight and hilarity. His genius refused to be confined to a limited sphere. He transcended the narrow plane of human emotions and sought for a larger and fuller life. He explored new fields and his verses may be compared to bouquets of variegated flowers of diverse hues and fragrance. He allowed free play to other emotions and thoughts. Mir's world is full of gloom and sorrow. There is no gleam to relieve its despondency and agony. His verses bear the motto " Abandon all hope ye that enter here ". His laughs are sardonic and have a bitter ring and his sarcasm is mordant. It is incorrect to say that Mir never attempted the satire and the qasida. He tried and proved a failure as his genius did not lie that way. It is futile to say that he never entered the lists owing to his sturdy independence and indifference to power and pelf. He did write *Ajgar-Namah* which does not even approach the fine satires of Sauda replete with generic pictures of Indian life. His panegyric on Nawab Asafuddaulah is a poor performance in comparison to the majestic qasidas of Sauda.

Both Mir and Sauda have mastery in portraying the original faithfully and to perfection. They are supreme artists who mirror ideas in verses so truthfully and with such wealth of detail that the picture presented in words stands as a real thing before

the mind's eye. The portrayal may be subjective or objective, of emotions or of landscapes. In depicting the emotional side of human nature especially, the sad and the pathetic, Mir stands pre-eminent. Sauda had a mastery over every kind of emotion though he had not such a grip over the pathetic as Mir had. He was also equipped with an intimate and vast knowledge of the subjects which he could call forth to help him in the presentation of the picture. Mir's despondent nature, retired habits and brooding mind, self-absorbed and hypercritical, did not permit him to scour widely over the field of human nature. The narrow outlook of Mir was the outcome of his concentration and proud temper. He wooed his muse with all the fervour and intensity of an ardent lover. Such was his self-effacement and his self-extinction, in work that he did not notice for seven whole years a garden over which his sitting room looked out. Such absorption, to the exclusion of everything else must result in high artistic work in its own circumscribed domain. Mir however lacks the versatility of genius which is the greatest of gifts to Sauda. Sauda paints life as he found it in gay and grave colours. Mir's world was full of utter gloom. The flowers were faded and decaying. Pain, sorrow misery stalked in the land. There is an atmosphere of depression and darkness. The relief is sought in inaction, by indulgence in tears, by escaping into dreams, mostly gloomy, of his own creation. Sauda's world is the real world where gleam intermingled with gloom, where the garden is green, where the Zephyr plays merrily with the flowers who nod to its wafts and glisten in the sunshine with which the garden is bathed. In Mir there are few pictures of nature in its gay mood.

Similes and metaphors are essential to poetry and especially to oriental poetry. These symbols are decorations which if skilfully used, enhance the beauty of the verse. Sauda is the master artist who uses them adroitly and with striking effect. Such fresh, sublime and beautiful similes and metaphors are comparatively few in the works of Mir and occur more abundantly in those of Sauda. Sauda also scores over Mir in his knowledge of the various arts and sciences and his skill in utilising them into the service of his poems.

It is perfectly true that Sauda's ghazals occasionally lapse into exordiums of qasidas. This is more or less due to his powerful imagination, which plays him false and betrays him into themes and words not fit for ghazals. His vigour cannot be curbed, his fancy cannot be restrained. Mir is free from such blemishes. These verses of Sauda may militate against the canons laid down for the composition of ghazals but they are full of merit and beauty if considered singly and independently. It must also be remembered that this non-observance of the rules about the composition of ghazals is in conformity with the practice of later masters of Persian verse who served as guides to Urdu writers. The last

phase of the development of Persian poetry saw the enrichment of the ghazal with various other topics besides love. Philosophy, religion, ethics, sufism, science and art were laid under contribution. Love was reduced to a science. Urdu poetry, a handmaid of Persian could not escape the last heritage. It must however be admitted that these themes appeal to the intellect and leave the heart untouched and so lose in emotional character. There is however a difference between the grandeur of a qasida and the grandeur of a ghazal and the difference is seen most markedly in the works of novices who attempt to accomplish what only master-artists such as Sauda and Ghalib can achieve.

Both Sauda and Mir are masters of harmony. Their verses are compact, terse and denuded of superfluous words. Sauda paid more attention to the arrangement of words in a verse. He tried to make a verse complete in itself which requires greater skill in versification. Very rarely an ellipse is found in the meaning. Both avoid far-fetched metaphors and obscure allusions though Sauda occasionally errs on this side.

The comparison is very useful and valuable as both flourished at the same time and wrote in the same forms of poetry. They frequently composed odes in the same measure with the same rhymes and double-rhymes and the comparison is both interesting and illustrative of their temperament and outlook on life. Both suffer from the faults of that age. Both sometimes used debased words and indecent language. Occasionally the subject-matter of the verses, is indecent. There is a disparity of genders and tenses in verses, the defect is technically known as *Shutar Gurba* (camel and cat). There are vapid and indifferent verses in the diwans of both. Mir occasionally employs Ahyam. Both frequently indulge in the adoration of youths, a very disagreeable feature of the poetry of that time.

In the width of vision, in versatility of genius, in his mastery over details, in his knowledge of the world, in his *bon hommie*, in his sense of humour Sauda is superior to Mir. In simplicity of style, in the domain of love, in the treatment of the sad and the tragic, in Sufism, in eloquence Mir reigns supreme and excels Sauda. "The works of both are priceless treasures. Mir has got only diamonds: Sauda possesses diamonds but also has pearls, emeralds, rubies, sapphires. The final authority is the taste and temperament of the critic."

Many poets flourished during this period. Their names are other minor poets. legion and they are too unimportant to be mentioned here. They may be looked for by the curious in the various tazkiras, which have been compiled during this period or subsequently. There is nothing distinctive about their works.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE DELHI SCHOOL OF URDU POETS, PART III.

## THE AGE OF INSHA AND MUSHAFFI.

The division into periods is not so arbitrary as it looks. It is true that most of the poets who flourished during this period were contemporaries of those of the preceding age but they were young and had not attained that celebrity which fell to their lot later on. Moreover by reason of the language employed, this age saw a marked improvement in the diction of the previous age. Many old forms were discarded and the new forms were polished. Insha essayed his experiments with the language. Mushaffi favoured the old and carried on the traditions. Juraat tried to follow Mir as a ghazal writer.

This age was a prelude of the next as Urdu poetry begins to be linked to the court. The poets of an earlier age though they enjoyed pensions and stipends always maintained their independence and never sank into the position of a glorified servant. The poets of this age enjoyed greater patronage but surrendered their honour. Poetry was a source of enjoyment to please the ears of their masters. They pandered to the taste of their patrons. They were jokers and buffoons first and poets afterwards. Poetry was only a means to an end. The poets aspired to be the boon companions of their patrons. This subservience resulted in straining relations between poets. Up till now the poets were not swayed by sordid considerations and kept their poetic combats within bounds of decorum. Now there was a general scramble for the favours of the patron. The poets became jealous and envious of each other and harmonious relations were no longer possible. The quarrels of Insha, Mushaffi and Juraat which developed into scuffles are a blot on the pages of the history of this period.

With the bondage of Urdu poetry, decadance set in. Court-decadance in the ridden, it could not find scope for its development. There was no purity of sentiment. The purity of the sentiment of Urdu Ghazal. spiritual side was forgotten. The beloved celebrated in verses was not the Eternal One but a courtesan, a dancing girl who could be found in great numbers in the court of the pleasure-loving Nawabs. They revelled in sensualism more openly because they were cheered in the dissolute courts with greater zeal and were recipients of greater rewards from the nobles and Nawabs. This was not the practice in Delhi. The poets, although they were recipients of pension, retained their independence. Poetry was linked up with piety. It was consecrated. It thrived in sanctuaries of the pious. Shah