

The rubaiyat of Mir Anees

LITERARY NOTES

By Intizar Husain

DR Syed Taqi Abedi started out as a researcher in the field of *marsiya*. Soon after, he extended his area of study to other kinds of poetry. So he chose to study Ghalib and Faiz and presented some valuable compilations. Now, Abedi is back to his original field of study and has brought out the *Diwan-i-Rubaiyat-i-Anees*. Previously he had published *Rubaiyat-i-Dabir*.

In the case of both Dabir and Anees, their *rubaiyats* have been treated as supplements to their *marsiyas* and are almost always accommodated in various volumes of their *marsiyas*. However, their *rubaiyats* are not always related to the theme of Karbala and deal with a variety of subjects; only a part of them are thematically in agreement with the *marsiyas*.

It appears that in Urdu, only Anees and Dabir have employed this genre seriously for their poetic expres-

sion. The other poets have treated it rather casually. They usually seem to write a few *rubaiyat* just for the sake of variety, or what we call in Urdu *munh ka maza badalnai kay leyai*.

In the Persian poetic tradition, a *rubai* stands as an independent genre, self-sufficient in its four lines. There have been poets in Persian who only expressed themselves in this form. Omar Khayyam may be cited as an example. He was a purely *rubai* writer. And he never suffered from the feeling that much of what he wanted to say remained unsaid because of the inadequacy of this genre as a mode of expression. The wisdom he carried with him found its full expression in this short form.

But the martyrdom in Karbala demanded a full-length expression. It was left for Mirza Sauda to discover the form of *musaddas* which possessed the capability to cope with such an epic. Dabir and Anees were the two *marsiya* writers who understood well the possibility of expression in *musaddas* and utilised it to the full.

But at the same time, both these writers also wanted to exercise their poetic talents on themes other than the central one of Karbala in some other form. The short form of *rubai* suited this

purpose the most and they took it seriously and explored possibilities in it. And Abedi is the one critic and researcher who has understood the significance of their *rubaiyat* in addition to their *marsiyas*.

Abedi first researched the *rubaiyat* of Mirza Dabir. He retrieved most of what appeared lost and brought out the collection *Rubaiyat-i-Dabir* along with a detailed preface in which he discussed the origin of this genre and Dabir's achievements in this field. And his collection of the *rubaiyat* of Mir Anees runs to about 500 pages.

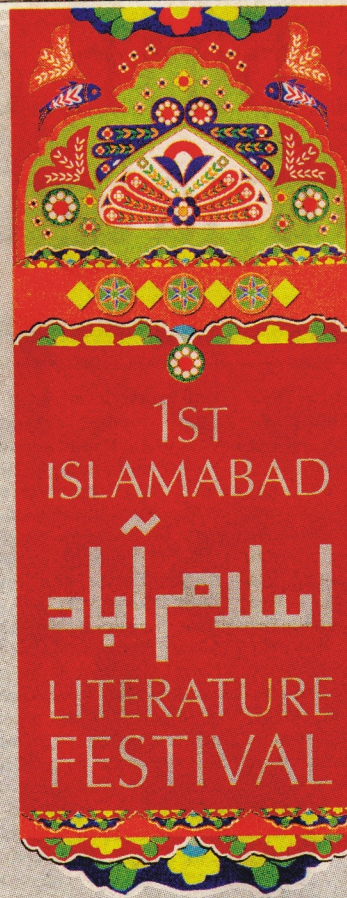
Abedi tells us that the most prolific writer of *rubaiyat* in Urdu was Shah Ghamgin who has almost 1,900 *rubaiyat* to his credit. But he chose not to publish his work. As for the collection of Mir Anees's *rubaiyat*, this volume contains 504 *rubaiyat*. They have been divided into sections in accordance with their themes and have been titled *hamdiya*, *natiya*, *munqabati*, *samaji* and *aitqadi*. Of course, there is also one section devoted to the *rubaiyat* written on subjects related to Karbala. But we see a variety of subjects in the collection. In fact, *rubai* is a form of expression through which poets like to offer pearls of wisdom or the sum total of their experiences. ■

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