

Tribute

Dr Ghulam Mustafa Khan

*Syed Munir Wasti**

Dr Ghulam Mustafa Khan [d. 2005] can truly be said to be a teacher of teachers [*ustadh al-asatadha*]. In his long and distinguished academic career spanning over six decades, he brought into existence literally hundreds of teachers in his subject Urdu and also created in many of them a taste for critical research that resulted in the existence of a whole corpus of standard critical material. This will endure in academic circles for a long time. It was his common habit to encourage his students, especially those of an academic bent of mind, to enrol for a Ph.D. in the course of which he would proffer them all kinds of assistance even if he were not their research supervisor. As such, the names of Dr Najmul Islam, who succeeded him as Chairman, Department of Urdu, University of Sindh, stands out. Dr Najmul Islam was the editor of a scholarly research journal, *Tehqiq*, which appeared in over 20 volumes in his own lifetime. Each issue contained scores of critical essays of a very high academic standard including his own [Dr N. Islam's]. There is also the name of Dr Hasrat Kasganjvi, who emerged as a creative artist and critic of merit later on authoring dozens of books of high academic standard. The list is long and distinguished and contains the names of the major teachers of Urdu language and literature at the main Pakistani universities. Apart from Urdu teachers, the thousands of persons who had the benefit of attending his lectures and courses are also evidence of his intellectual wide-ranging scholarship. Then there is the select circle of his *murids* who formed his circle of spiritual knowledge and who had proffered their religious devotion at his hands. To these he gave the benefit of his spiritual counsel and advice as well as the vast knowledge he possessed of the Islamic sciences in his table-talk. Among these persons, the name of ex-President Ziaul Haq is most prominent.

The Department of Urdu in the old campus of Sindh University [situated in an old Victorian-style castle-like building on Thandi Sarak, Hyderabad] was next to the department of English where my father, Prof.

SM Jamil Wasti was Chairman during 1960-67 and I often used to wander in its corridors reading the names of the various teachers whose rooms were located there. I read the name of Dr Ghulam Mustafa Khan on a large cool room on the ground floor. But it was only after the death of my father that I had the pleasure of meeting Dr Khan [in his house C 36, old campus, which had been allotted to him after the university shifted to its new campus at Jamshoro]. I noted the presence of a new mosque located just opposite his house whereas there was no mosque in the old campus previously and persons had to cross Thandi Sarak to go to the mosque in the district judge's office. The door was opened by Khan Sahib himself and I introduced myself. He swept me into his arms and was effusively kind and polite. He recalled his association with my father in the good-old-days of the sixties and other memories of those bygone days. He also showed me some large cupboards filled with the books he had written and asked what would be their fate [this vexed question recurs repeatedly in the case of the libraries of deceased scholars].

After this, I visited Dr Khan whenever I went to Hyderabad and was treated with kindness and courtesy. On one such visit, I saw a notice placed on his door saying that he had grown old and could not receive more visitors. I then did not disturb him but waited until the prayer-time when the Khan Sahib emerged from his house surrounded by his *murids* to offer his prayers. As he appeared to be unwell, I did not impose upon him by making my presence known. Once I went with his cousin, Muhammad Yusuf Qureishi, to Dr Khan's house in PIB Colony when he had come on a brief visit to Karachi and this was a very pleasant interaction. After this, I was taken to Prof. Abdul Ghani Niazi, Dr Khan's teacher before Independence, who was still alive [also author of books on Iqbal and *tasawwuf*] and thus was a compounded pleasure. Prof. Ghani spoke of the talent and skills of his pupil with genuine appreciation.

Dr Khan was also a spiritual preceptor [pir- of the Naqshbandi silsila] to many thousands of people. He also was familiar with paranormal phenomena and often received messages from deceased persons in his dreams. These he recorded in some of his many books. One such dream was of his late father [Gulab Khan] who appeared dressed as a soldier during the 1965 war possibly to fight in Pakistan's defence. There are interesting accounts of various dreams of his given by him and his encounters with spiritually eminent persons such as his own pir, Zawar Husayn Shah, which shows his spiritual prescience and prominence. There is no doubt that Dr Ghulam Mustafa Khan will live in the memories of his countless pupils and those of whom he met in the course of his long life and who were enriched by their association with him. May his soul rest in peace!

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