

ساتویں انڈین اورینٹل کانفرنس میں
پیش کردہ قاضی احمد میاں اختر
کے مقالے کا خلاصہ

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(IX. ARABIC AND PERSIAN SECTION.)

1. Sa'di's visit to Somnath.

By Kazi Ahmed Mian, Akhtar.

In the long array of Persian poets Sa'di is too well known to need any introduction.

Sa'di was a great traveller and adventurer. He can be compared with the famous Muslim travellers of the Middle ages. He has left no account of his travels; otherwise he would have given us a good deal of information about the countries he visited.

In the course of his travels Sa'di visited Khorasan, Turkey, Balkh, Kashgar, Ghazna, Somnath, Gujrat, Yemen, the Hijaz, and other parts of Arabia, Abyssinia, Palestine, Syria, North Africa and Asia Minor, to which occasional references are made by him in his Gulistan and Bustan.

He died at Shiraz in 690 A. H. at the age of 100 years.

Sa'di went on his extensive travels from the year 1226 A. D. The disturbed condition of Shiraz at the time led him to quit Shiraz to which he alludes in a poem given in the preface to his Gulistan.

During his travels, from 1226 to 12567, Sa'di proceeded via Balkh, Ghazna and the Punjab to Sind by land, from Sind en voyage to Somnath.

The remarkable adventure with which Sa'di met at Somnath is narrated by himself in the eighth chapter of his. Bustan (composed in 655 A.H.).

Dr. Ethe and Ross make mention of Sa'di's breaking idol. to pieces which is not supported by Sa'di's own account. Jami is the only authority who has inserted it.

The use of Zoroastrian religious terms used by Sa'di as, Adhar, Mugh, Gabr, Zend, Avesta, Pazend, Matran and Kishish, forms the subject of criticism by Shibli. This has led a Parsi writer Mr. Karkaria to think that Sa'di never saw the temple or the idol. Being a foreigner and unfamiliar with the religious terms of the Hindus, Sa'di is little expected to give appropriate terms. There is also to believe that Sa'di gave Persian equivalents to make his readers understand properly.

Browne while not suspecting the genuineness of the story remarks that Sa'di with all his wide reading and travels could not tell a story in a Hindu idol-temple without mixing up references to Zoroastrian and even Christian observances. Mr. Reuben Levy after speculating on the apocryhal character of the story is prompted to believe in Sa'di's visit to Gujrat and India.

Shibli's remark regarding the impurity of the ivory among Hindus is not well-founded. Ivory is used by Hindus for their ornaments which are inlaid with gold. I am told there is an idol of ivory at Benares. Sa'di might have mistaken white colour of the idole for ivory.

In Sa'di's story, Somnath means the city of Somnath-Pattan, mentioned by Marcopolo and Amin-i-Razi, and not the grand temple which was devastated by Sultan Mahmud 200 years before Sa'di.

No identification is possible after a lapse of seven centuries. The local tradition identifies it with the old Surya Narayan temple, a little to the north of the city, with a cellular cave below it and a well near by.

By Sa'di's reference to Hindustan, some Oriental scholars like Ethe, Hali and Shibli are led to think that from Somnath Sa'di went to Dehi, for which I do not find any justification. Ethe and Eastwick assert his prolonged stay at Delhi where Sa'di composed verses in Hindustani. Long ago the French Orientalist Garcin de Tassy held this view which was refuted by Dr. Sprenger.

By Hindustan the Muslim travellers generally ment the whole country of India excluding Sind, and so they called it As-Sind wal-Hind.

From Sa'di's story of Serai Aghlamish in Gulistan, some authors have identified Aghlamish with Altamish the Pathan King of Delhi, and are led to suppose that Sa'di went to Dehi. But this is unwarranted since Aghlamish has been authentically proved by Syed Sulaiman Nadvi to be the ruler of Ray and Ispahan in 612 A. H.

Therefore it would be right to assume that Sa'di went from Somnathen voyage to Gujrat, presumably to Cambay, a big port of land at that time, and after touring in some parts of Gujrat he sailed to Yeman.

A tradition, current in Gujrat about Sa'di's visit to that place, says that a native of Gujrat who met him during his tour and knowing him to be a Persian desired to hear Sa'dis verses, whereupon Sa'di recited extempore a couplet in which he passed a slur on the people of Gujrat.