

Unique Manuscript of the Ginan in British Museum

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N.M. Billimoria, the retired Superintendent of the Office of Political Agent in Kutchh, India has compiled “**Bibliography of the Publications on Sind and Baluchistan**” (Karachi, 1929). It was reprinted in 1930 and revised in 1977 in Lahore, Pakistan. He catalogued the Sindhi manuscripts preserved in the library of the British Museum, London, in which is included an important manuscript of the ginans. Billimoria writes, “This manuscript is particularly interesting from a philological point of view. It contains a collection of religious works in a form of Sindhi, in which there is a large admixture of Persian and Arabic words, written in a type of the Khwajah character (Khojaki).” (p. 70)

The above manuscript of the ginans begins with a preface by the scribe, Daya Surji, who according to Billimoria states that, “He commenced copying these treatises for Abdullah Ramji in Chaitra Samvat 1909 (March, 1852).”

It seems that Billimoria has fairly mistaken in his translation as the preface he reproduced in Gujrati character reveals different statement that the scribe, Daya Surji has copied his volume from the manuscript of Mukhi Abdullah Khiyatto Ramjiani of Zanzibar jamat in 1852.

It was not possible for Billimoria to reproduce the preface in Khojaki character. Hence, he employed its transliteration in Gujrati character.

The manuscript begins as under:-

હી ગ્રંથને ચોપડો પુજ ભાઈ અબદલા ખીયાતો રામજ્યાણીને આયો. લીખીયાસી
વસીલે પંજતન પાક જે. દયાસે લીખીયાસી સંવત ૧૮૦૬ ચેત ૧. લીખીયાસો
વસીલે શાહપીરજે. સહી જંગપારજી જમાતજે કદમે પાસાત લીખીયાસો. પુજ મૂખી
અબદલા ખીયાતો રામજ્યાણીને ચોપડો આહેસો. લીખીઉ પાહખાક કમતરી
દાઈયા સુરજી સલામ.

Translation

“The volume of these treatises belongs to honorable Abdullah Khiyatto Ramjiani, written with the merciful agency of Panjtan Paak, written on Samvat 1909, Chaitra 1. Written by (the mercy of) Shah-Pir. Written by sitting at the feet of the Zanzibar Jamat. The volume belongs to honorable Mukhi Abdullah Khiyatto Ramjiani. With regards, Daya Surji, the priceless feet-dust.”

In other words, the above note suggests that a certain Daya Surji, most probably an Indian Ismaili has transcribed his copy from the Ms. of Mukhi Abdullah Khiyatto Ramjiani of Zanzibar. It is however difficult to quest, how this Ms. found its way in London?

The following ginanic works contained in the Ms., the titles of which are taken from an index at the beginning of the Ms.

The following works are catalogued in this volume, the titles are taken from an index appended in the Ms.

Folio 2a	=	દસ અવતાર પીર સદરદીનને
Folio 13b	=	નુરનામુ નુર મામદ મુસ્તફાને
Folio 25a.	=	બુધ અવતાર પીર સદરદીનને
Folio 48b.	=	મૂમન સતવેણી પીર ઇમામ શાહજી
Folio 80b.	=	મનહર ગ્રંથ પીર ગુલામઅલી શાહજી
Folio 59a.	=	અનંત અખાડો ગુર હસન કબીરદીનને
Folio 144a.	=	દસમુ અવતાર મોટો પીર ઇદ ઇમામદીનને
Folio 283b.	=	કલામ હજરત મોલા મુરતઝાઅલી ને

On Folio 364b, the scribe's colophon, similar to the prefatory remarks. It is dated Kartika Samvat 1909 (November, 1852). This is followed by a dream-book, entitled:

ખાખનામુ ઇમામ નકર સાદકને

It is written by the same hand, bearing the date 5th Jeyeshtha, Samvat 1910 (June, 1853)

Folio 382b.	=	સતવેણી પીર ઇમામ શાહજી
Folio 461a.	=	હસનાપુરી પીર હસન કબીરજી

It appears that there would be few other old manuscripts of the ginans in the European museums.



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