

RISALA-YI NURIYYA-YI SULTANIYYA SHAYKH 'ABD AL-HAQQ MUHADDITH DIHLAWI

Edited, Introduced and Annotated

by Dr Muhammad Saleem Akhtar

Publisher: Islamabad: Iran Pakistan Institute of

Persian Studies, 1985, pp.165, price Rs.25/-

In the annals of Muslim India the 'Ulama have often rendered assistance to the contemporary Muslim rulers in the form of advice based on Shari'ah, so that the latter could carry on the day to day administrative work in accordance with the injunctions of Islam. Unlike some of the Caliphs or Sultans,¹ the Muslim rulers of India very rarely ordered the 'Ulama' to compose the Manuals of Administration for their guidance. Here the 'Ulama' themselves came to the rescue voluntarily. Some examples may be quoted by way of illustration. The Adab al-Harb of Fakhr-i Mudabbir written in the reign of Sultan Shams al-Din Iltutmish (1211-1236 A.C), though essentially a dissertation on the art of war, yet his remarks are very well-meaning as far as an ideal Muslim ruler is concerned. This work strictly speaking is not an Indian work, as the author was by no means an Indian and had been in India on some business when he composed this celebrated work. The Zakhirat al-Muluk of 'Ali Jayyid Hamadani (written towards the end of 14th century A.C) in spite of his closer contacts with the rulers of Kashmir cannot be listed among works on the pre-Mughal Indo-Muslim thought, as the author

hailed from Hamadan, visited Kashmir thrice, founded his Khanqah there and played a prominent role in the conversion of the local population to Islam.² This work deals more with ethics and mysticism than with government and administration; yet it does acquaint us with the standpoint of the mystics concerning their ideal of a Muslim government. The *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* of Diya' al-Din Barani written in the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388 A.C) is the only authoritative treatise ever written (based on Shari'ah) on the nature and objectives of government and the duties and functions of the Sultan as a ruler and an individual. During the pre-Mughal period of the Muslim history of Indo-Pakistan (i.e., 1206 - 1526 A.C) this is the only extant work on statecraft, government and administration.

With the advent of the Mughals in Indo-Pakistan, the art of history writing became a favoured occupation of the intelligentsia and innumerable works on history and manuals of administration were written during this period. Amongst the earliest of treatises dealing with the administration, the one written by Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi (1551 - 1642 A.C) is presently under review as below:

A word about Shaykh 'Abd al Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi (1551 - 1642 A.C). He was the son of a celebrated 'Alim Shaykh Sayf al-Din Sayfi.

I For example, Caliph Muta'sim (834-842 A.C) commanded the writing of *Suluk al-Muluk* for his benefit. Malikshah Saljuqi (1072-1802 A.C) ordered Nizam al-Mulk Tusi to compose *Siyasat Namah*.

2. *Khazinat al-Asfiya'*, Mufti Ghulam Sarwar, Lahori Nawal Kishore Press, Vol.II, pp.293-299 Qadiri. Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi was a prolific writer and a celebrated author of about a hundred books dealing

with innumerable subjects, e.g., Jurisprudence,

Traditions, Grammar, Logic, Morals, History, commentary, Sufism, career of the PROPHET, etc - all amply exposing the versatility of his genius. Nature had endowed him with a natural reverence and a large heartedness that combined within itself the excessive extravagance of the Sufis, the meticulousness, precision and penetration of the righteous Ulama' as one powerful current of spiritual exertions. His priceless Akhbar al Akhbar dealing with the biographies of about three hundred saints earned him lavish praises from Jahangir (1605-27 A.C) in his immortal Tuzuk. Dara Shukuh in his Sakinat al-Auliya' honoured him by calling him IMAM AL-MUHADDITHIN of the times. The Shaykh considered history a moral discipline and religion teaching by examples. He has had a lion's share in popularizing the science of Hadith in Indo-Pakistan and he himself was its matchless exponent and interpreter. He was also a poet of excellence; HAQQI was his nom-de-plume and he was the proud composer of as many as half a million verses.

The work under review, Risala-yi Nuriyya-yi Sultaniyya, was written by the Shaykh for the benefit of Emperor Jahangir as a sort of assistance to stabilize his government (in the light of the Shari'ah) which had received a setback under the heterodox policies of Akbar. This treatise is virtually a mirror for princes and is indeed very valuable in depicting the political conditions as prevailing in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The learned editor discovered three copies of the manuscript under review, two in the Delhi Persian Collection of the India Office and Records, London) and the third in the Islamia College Library, Peshawar; he carefully compared the texts of the three copies with one another and succeeded in presenting us a re-cession free from flaws and discrepancies. He has also placed us under a heavy debt of gratitude by adding to it a scholarly introduction and a bevy of fuller explanatory notes on vague and ambiguous terms. The present work is neatly printed on a durable paper and is a useful addition to the literature on Mughal administration.