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# FAMOUS URDU POETS AND WRITERS

by

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Sir Abdul Qadir



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*Dedicated*

*To*

THE MEMORY OF

THE LATE SIR JOHN MAYNARD,

*who presided over these lectures, delivered during  
the period of his Vice-Chancellorship of the Punjab  
University, and from whom the author received  
great appreciation and encouragement.*

محتویات

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Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha

## Foreword

My esteemed friend, Sir Abdul Qadir, scarcely needs an introduction to the Urdu-knowing public in India. My only justification for writing this Foreword to his book, which I have much pleasure in commending to readers, is the privilege which I have enjoyed of claiming his friendship for now more than half a century, and for having followed sympathetically his distinguished career in various walks of life, not only in the literary world, but also in administrative and judicial spheres. My first contact with Mr. Abdul Qadir (as he then was) was in the early nineties (1894), when he was editing a weekly journal, in English, at Lahore. It was in the office of the late Sir Muhammad Shafi (in Anarkali Bazar) that we met on the first occasion. Since then we have been the best of friends, and I have followed with great interest his highly successful career as a leading lawyer (both in the District Court and the High Court), as a public-man in the Legislative Council of the Punjab, and also its President. His work as a Minister of Education, as Revenue Member of the Executive Council, as a Member of the Public Service Commission, and of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, and later as his Advisor, constitute a record of public activities which may

well be envied, culminating as it did in his appointment as the Law Member of the Government of India. On the judicial side also he acted as a Judge of the Lahore High Court. In fact, I cannot call to mind, in my large circle of friends, any one who had placed to his credit such a record of useful public activities, both on the Executive and Judicial sides, in the administration of the country, as had Sir Abdul Qadir.

But during all these years of multifarious public activities Sir Abdul Qadir had been devoted to the pursuit and study of Urdu literature, both classical and modern. Beginning with his earliest publication ("A New School of Urdu Literature"), he had continued to take an abiding interest both in Urdu journalism and literature. His course of lectures delivered recently at the Allahabad University, and published under the title of "Urdu Language and Literature," and also the present collection of his essays on Urdu poets and prose-writers, are a conclusive proof that he has been as much, if not even a greater, votary of Urdu literature than that of Law and Administration. Perhaps what induced the publisher, Mr. N. B. Sen, to ask me to contribute this Foreword is the fact that some of the essays (brought together in this volume) originally appeared in the pages of the *Hindustan Review*—which I have edited since I founded it in July, 1900.

As a critic of the Urdu literature Sir Abdul Qadir's attitude is neither laudatory nor hypercritical, and there is much in his criticism of the prose-writers and poets which will command the

assent of unprejudiced readers. I commend this book as a careful and dispassionate discussion of the authors dealt with by Sir Abdul Qadir, for I regard it as a valuable contribution to the study of Urdu literature.

Sinha Library Road,  
Patna,  
March 31, 1947.

Sachchidananda Sinha.

## PREFACE

Many years ago, the Punjab University did me the honour of inviting me to deliver a series of lectures, dealing with the lives and works of famous writers of Urdu. The latter half of the nineteenth century, with particular reference to the post-Ghalib period of Urdu literature, was selected for these lectures, as Ghalib constitutes a land mark in the history of Urdu poetry and prose.

I had undertaken to deliver twelve lectures, but nine of them had been actually delivered, when the work was interrupted by some pressing engagements of public life. A period of official duties, including four years of service in the High Court at Lahore, and five years on the Council of India in London, intervened. Shortly after my return from England in 1939, I served in Bahawalpur State for four years. The long delay in arranging the publication of the lectures was due to this succession of official engagements. In the meanwhile those who had attended the lectures or had read some of them in print, in the *Hindustan Review*, the well-known monthly journal, edited by The Hon'ble Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, have been asking me to publish them in the form of a book. Some of those who expressed this desire were distinguished University students preparing for the I. C. S. competitive examination

in India, which included Urdu literature as one of the subjects that could be taken up.

Many other students and scholars made similar requests but the scholar who kept reminding me about the publication of these essays, as long as he lived, was the late Sir John Maynard. He attended all the lectures that were delivered in the Hall of the old Forman Christian College at Lahore. He presided over each meeting and made appreciative remarks. When he retired from the I. C. S. and went to England, he asked me to publish the lectures, and whenever I met him in England between 1934-1939, he used to enquire when the lectures would come out in book form. Out of regard for the keen interest shown in these lectures by my esteemed friend, Sir John Maynard, who was one of the ablest Vice-Chancellors we have had in the Punjab University, I am dedicating this book to his memory.

There is not much in these lectures that would add to the information of those who have studied in original the writings of the famous men of letters whose literary achievements I have described, but it has been a source of encouragement to me that many scholars of Urdu have also felt that besides giving information about the careers of the great writers and their works, these lectures have thrown some light on the peculiarities of the character of the authors concerned.

Three lectures which were not delivered at the time have been subsequently written and have been included in this collection to complete

the series. They are on Maulana Abdul Halim *Sharar*, Maulana Shibli Nuamani and Pandit Ratan Nath *Sarshar*. I have not been able to trace the lecture on Maulana Nazeer Ahmad in the form in which it was delivered and have, therefore, written afresh an account of his life and work.

The authors dealt with in this small volume do not exhaust the list of all the distinguished writers of the period dealt with, and do not include those who have helped the progress of Urdu literature from the commencement of the present century till now. They would require at least one more book of this size, which may be given to the public some time later, if circumstances permit.

A word may be added, in conclusion, to explain why lectures on Urdu literature were delivered in English. The first and the chief reason was that the medium was decided by the University authorities, when requisitioning my services for these lectures, but another reason was that it was intended, through the medium of English, to inform the non-Urdu-knowing public in India and abroad, that Urdu had a growing literature and could claim among its distinguished writers men whose careers and achievements can compare favourably with the work of their contemporaries of the same period in other lands.

3, Temple Road,  
Lahore,

5th April, 1947.

ABDUL QADIR.