

Reminiscences of G.M. Sayed Part II

By

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Contribution of G.M. Sayed to knowledge, language and literature and socio-cultural environments of Sindh.

G.M. Sayed was a great friend of educated young and old and university students. He found it easy to convince and train them to his ideology. No other politician was attempting it. His goal was to inject in them psychological spirit to become good Sindhi nationalists. The success would vary from individual to individual and depending on socio-cultural-economic environments to which one was to get exposed during the life time.

I have already mentioned in Part I of the article (published in Sindh Quarterly), his compulsory introduction of Khaki shirt and nicker, which was soon done away by Pir Illahi Bakash. The step was bold. Both Muslims and Hindus of Sindh considered it immodest to expose knees and though nicker was about an inch or two below the knee, yet knees were exposed in walking but the comfort this dress offered compared to salwar and pajama, lead to its immediate acceptance. It was like Kamal Pasha's promoting European dress for Turks.

In 1952 some one in USA, had presented me a book "Modern nationalities" and on return in 1953, I gave it to Mr. Ibrahim Joyo, who gave it to G.M. Sayed and who in turn asked me whether he could keep it. I willingly agreed. This book had great influence on G.M. Sayed, who theorised that Sindhis are a nationality in South Asia and a people can be called a nation or nationality if they meet the following four criteria:

- (i) If they own separate geographical territory.

- (ii) If they have distinct language with past history and preferably with its own literature.
- (iii) If they have distinct history of the their past.
- (iv) If they separate culture.

Sindh did met all these four criteria but it was G.M. Sayed who started working on these four topics to develop them more, to project to Sindhis them-selves that they are a separate nationality and his own contribution to these topics is not only unique but pioneering effect.

Sindh a Geographical entity

On maintaining geographical entity of Sindh, he had already contributed on separation of Sindh from Bombay. In 1948 he was put into jail for six months before separation of Karachi from Sindh and the government was convinced that if interned, he would lead a well organised agitation and stop separation of Karachi. In 1954 he was again sent to jail for 6 months, so that he does not create a successful resistance to passing of resolution in favour of “One Unit” in Sindh Assembly. Interestingly Ali Muhammad Rashdi had drafted and typed the letter on a new typewriter, which he did not use for the next 15 years, considering it historical machine and Khuhro had signed it under repeated pressures from Sikandar Mirza and sent to the latter for the Central Government to detain G.M. Sayed for 6 months. The same typewriter was used again a second time by Rashdi to prepare drafts for G.M. Sayed to break One Unit in 1969. In 1958 G.M. Sayed with help of his seven colleagues was able to have passed unanimously anti One Unit Resolution in the West Pakistan Assembly of 300 members and recommendations sent to the Central government to call the session of National Assembly for recreating the old provinces again. In 1969 G.M. Sayed again took the case to Yahya Khan to break One Unit in view of the 1958 Resolution of West Pakistan Assembly and it was done. Rashdi asked G.M. Sayed that 1970 elections should be fought on basis of “One Unit”. G.M. Sayed refused and Rashdi told him that he and his party then will be defeated in elections. G.M. Sayed said that in democracy, the Punjab will manoeuvre in favour of One Unit and he would prefer to lose

elections. He further said that dictators had created One Unit and only dictators will break it. Under his pleas with Noor Khan governor West Pakistan and president Yahya Khan the latter dismembered One Unit.

In 1969 he also pressed for Karachi to become part of Sindh, though Ali Muhammad Rashdi told him that Sindhis will lose power of their vote, by adding Karachi to Sindh, but Khuhro said that he was dismissed from Chief Ministership of Sindh in 1948 as he was opposed to separation of Karachi from Sindh. G.M. Sayed said that he was jailed for six months to separate Karachi so he wants Karachi to be part of Sindh. G.M. Sayed further said “No nation surrenders its historical claims to its geographical territory”. G.M. Sayed further said that people born in Sindh are Sindhis. Under One Unit all people of Sindh as well Karachi have suffered equally, whatever was their origin, so Karachi should be part of Sindh. He even said Lasbella is Sindhi speaking and so is Kutch, but we are not in a position today to get Kutch and Ran of Kutch, but we will do it when we are in a position to do it. His is how G.M. Sayed looked at geographical territory of Sindh and maintenance of its boundaries. This attachment to geographical knowledge of Sindh was so much that he persuaded Pirzada Abdul Sattar to visit Gorakh and establish hill station there. Knowledge of Gorakh came to him from the name of legendary Gorakhnath (?), who is said to have mediated there. He organised visit of Col. Rashid, Hassamuddin Rashdi, Ibrahim Joyo, Ghullam Rabani and my-self to Ranikot and gave us background on which is based on Col. Rashid’s and later on my article on Ranikot. He mentioned to us about a number of caves in Khirthar, which Badar Abro was to explore later on. These were unexplored before G.M. Sayed emphasised about them.

Sindhi a distinct language of Sindh

As a minister for education in Sindh, he was responsible for promoting Sindhi language and it ultimately lead to creation of Sindhi Adabi Board and this Board was created by Khuhro’s government in 1951 under influence of G.M. Sayed. He him-self was one of its members and board published the journal Mehran and some 250 books in next 15 years under secretary-ship of Muhammad Ibrahim Joyo. Examination of this journal and the books shows assorted mixture

of translation of history books from Persian to Sindhi but with elaborate notes, many Persian historical texts reflecting the past of Sindh, many political works in Sindhi and many history books on Sindh (Thar and Kohistan included) including many books on Sindh literature. Thus an interest in the past of Sindh was created and the next 40 years have shown enormous historical works published on Sindh, to the extent of quality and quantity which no other Province or State of South Asia can match, except in literature, in which case Bengali, Hindi and Tamil were already leading Sindhi before independence.

History of Sindh

By necessity he wrote on history of Sindh and became a historian, though this fact is projected very little. His own contribution of History of Sindh can be known from his own writings namely:

- Nae Sindh ji Jidojihad.
- Janab Guzarium Jin Seen, Vol-I and II.
- Jadid Siasat ja Nao Ratan.
- Sindh ji Bombay Khan Azadi.
- Sindh ja Soorma.
- Sindh ji Kahani, Sayed ji Zibani.
- Panhji Kahani Panhji Zabani.
- Matiari and Sanai Sayeds Ji Tarikh and Shujra.
- Muslim Sarbarah conference jo Tajzio.
- Sindhu Desh - A study in to separate identity through the ages.

All these works though apparently historical in nature depict past glory of Sindh, its weaknesses, and mistakes and guidelines for re-writing history of Sindh from nationalist point of view without telling lies and but projecting realistic national view point. Consequences and influence of this approach is perceivable in enormous literature previously produced on history of Sindh in Sindhi, Urdu and English and now being re-written. New writing on Sindh in general are rational and less coloured by prejudices and biases. The historians of pre 1970 era are being re-examined in new light. The work is still in infancy.

Sindhi Literature

Like history his interest in literature was to promote nationalism. Shah Latif was born at almost the end of 175 years of struggle of Sindh against Arghoons, Tarkhans and Mughals discussed by me in 40 pages article published in Sindh Quarterly and Sindhological Studies under title “Sindh’s Struggle Against Feudalism, 1525-1843 AD”. The environments had been destroyed, canals had decayed, area under agriculture reduced, no relief was in sight and Kalhora’s struggle to restore the canal irrigation in short period meant every man and woman of Sindh had to work hard but once peak was achieved, then came Nadir Shah’s looting the treasury, taking away library, imposing heavy annual tribute and taking sons of Noor Muhammad Kalhora as security against annual payments of tribute. The psychological approach to Shah Latif in form of his message to the people in the mid eighteenth century, became a convenient tool for nationalistic movement against the British first and then against high handedness of Government of Pakistan, as well as Government of West Pakistan and G.M. Sayed used this poetry and Bhit of Shah Latif as centre to create nationalism among Sindhis.

Bhit Shah Culture Centre was his idea and funds for it were committed by Pirzada Abdul Sattar in 1953 and in both years 1953 and 1954 he him-self was present along with G.M. Sayed at Bhit Shah. It was in 1954 that US Secretary for State visited Bhit Shah to discuss certain things with Pirzada Abdul Sattar in his tent and there G.M. Sayed’s personal guest the Russian Ambassador was also present in the next tent. Pirzada knew that G.M. Sayed could get his ministry defeated any time and therefore surrendered to any demands of G.M. Sayed and this is how Bhit Shah Centre gave its birth. G.M. Sayed asked Pirzada, who him-self was a good singer, to sing on the occasion before a selected group and he was obliged, a rare thing Pirzada ever did in public, but frankly all Chief Minister of Sindh from 1937 onwards were out to please him, being afraid that he could have their Ministry defeated in the next season, if he was angry. He made no personal demands, nor could he be bribed. All heads of State in Pakistan knew that he was incorruptible like M.A. Jinnah and never attempted to bribe him, but if he was opposed to them, they conveniently put him in jail.

There was a rumour that construction of Shah Awais canal in 1953/54 was a political bribe to G.M. Sayed. While on government duty since 1953, I visited the site every time I was going to Dadu and Larkana or returning to verify efficiency of pumps mounted on pontoons. I knew that their selection was defective. The scheme was proposed by Mr. Muhammad Moosa, Chief Engineer and Secretary Irrigation Government of Sindh coming from village Lakha some 10 miles South of Sann and he had done it to irrigate his family lands on that canal. His whole village was main beneficiary. G.M. Sayed had only 600 acres out of 20,000 acres. The scheme was protective and having been opposed by G.M. Sayed in 1964 elections, President Ayub was planning to close down the canal. G.M. Sayed was not bothered, but I mentioned to him that they have sanctioned a number of schemes namely, Kurram, Pahur etc. in NWFP. purely as protective, and there is justification for more pumping schemes from Talti to Kotri and people have to raise voice.

Following books of G.M. Sayed though apparently literary works have deep psychological influence on readers and were meant to guide and lead people to nationalistic thinking.

- Paigham-e-Latif.
- Shah Latif Joon Waiyoon and Kafiyoan.
- Hihara Haghha Thian.
- Choonda Mazmoon.
- Panhji Kahani, Panhji Zibani.
- Khutabat-e-Sayed.
- Sindhu ji Sannaha.
- Rahbar.
- Message of Shah.
- National Unity.

These are the literary works which discuss Sindh, but psychologically orient the reader to Sindhi nationalism.

In the same way various letters of his various friends, like Miran Muhammad Shah, I.I. Kazi, Pir Ali Muhammad Rashdi, Muhammad Amin Khoso writers, scholars and politicians. etc., are mixture of literature, contemporary political conditions, G.M. Sayed's attitude and stand to political issues and his role. Thus they go beyond literature to development of political psychology. They also describe contemporary socio-economic conditions.

Sindhi Culture

G.M. Sayed's book "Sindhi Culture" lays guide lines to understanding of culture as an entity to develop nationalism. When Sindh's lands were being allotted to immigrants from India in 1948, he told a group of students among whom I was one; "Rural Sindh had a typical culture in which these new comers must get absorbed or leave and this culture is: axe, kidnapping unmarried women and theft. We have small population and must increase it to match that of the Punjab and if they get absorbed better for us, as we won't have to give land to Punjabis". Twenty years later he said the Punjabis settled in Sindh under One Unit have suffered as much as we have and in future they will fight the Punjab along with us and it has been proved again and again.

Political writings

Political writings of G.M. Sayed are nationalistic. He has changed his opinions with changed situation. G.M. Sayed cannot be separated from Sindh from 1920-1995, nor can Sindh be separated from him. He is leading part of history of Sindh for three quarters of the last century. Although it is irrelevant here but in the same way Muhammad Ayub Khuhro cannot be separated from Sindh from 1922-1961. Hamida Khuhro's book on her father is well researched but yet incomplete and needs up to dating. Khuhro's letter to G.M. Sayed throw new light on these aspects.

Enormous writings of G.M. Sayed are made him immortal. Ali Muhammad Rashdi in 1969 in my presence told Hussamuddin Rashdi, with all these volumes left behind, he is going to live, going to live a few centuries. I saw sadness on his face, that though he was a genius, he had not

left enough to live that long. He was envious and possibly jealous and could do better than G.M. Sayed, but did not have a subject like G.M. Sayed, to write upon and had no time at age of 65 to mend his mistakes.

In my opinion to do research on G.M. Sayed and all his contemporaries one has to study the following:

- (i) Socio-economic and political conditions in the British India as well as Sindh from 1900-2000 AD or even 1843-2000 AD.
- (ii) Bombay Legislative Assembly debates 1923-1936.
- (iii) Records of Karachi Local Board of which G.M. Sayed was the President since 1929.
- (iv) Sindh Assembly Debates 1937- August 1947.
- (v) Sindh Assembly Debates August 1947-1955.
- (vi) West Pakistan Assembly Debates November 1955-September 1958 and 1963-1969.
- (vii) Pakistan Assembly Debates 1947 to 1999.
- (viii) Sindh Assembly Debates 1972-2000.
- (ix) India Today Annual report of Government of India to Parliament 1909-1947.
- (x) Indian Register 1909-1947.
- (xi) Annual Administrative Reports of the Bombay Presidency of various departments 1861-1937.
- (xii) Annual Administrative Reports of various Departments of the Government of Sindh 1937-1942.
- (xiii) Pakistan National Assembly Debates 1964-2000 AD.
- (xiv) Fortnightly reports of Chief Secretary Sindh and Governor of Sindh to Governor General and Viceroy of India 1937-1947.

I knew G.M. Sayed since 1943. When he was interned in his village or was other wise present there, I saw him from 1953 to 1979. From 1953 I used government vehicle, petrol and driver and claimed and charged travelling expenses and daily allowances from the government and showed the trips in the T.A bill and informed the Secretary Agriculture that I discussed agriculture crops, mechanisation of agriculture, tube wells, bulldozers, drilling rigs etc., with Mr. G.M. Sayed. Once Malik Khuda Bakash Bucha Secretary Agriculture asked me, “Bhai G.M. Sayed ka government kay bari me kia Khialat hain”. I replied; “he thinks the government has sent me to him as their spy, so he talks shop and nothing else.”

Politics

No politician ever admits his mistakes, but G.M. Sayed was upright in admitting his mistakes. His book “Struggle for new Sindh” blames Allah Bakash Soomro for his wrong policies and discussed these in great length, but in his book “Janab Guzarium Jin Seen”, he exonerates him clearly stating that in his policies Allah Bakash Soomro was right and we were wrong. We wronged by bringing Muslim league in Sindh, where as Allah Bakash always pleaded not to bring All India Organisations, as they will exploit Sindh and quotes many other incidents.

Another incident is his own publishing Khuhro’s letter to him, where Khuhro told him that he (G.M. Sayed) had joined hands with Home Minister Gazdar to fabricate Allah Bakash’s murder case against him and later on had apologised and due to this Khuhro had not only forgotten about it but had never mentioned it. G.M. Sayed’s publishing the letter was his own admission of the guilt. I know of no politician who has ever done such a thing. To keep records straight and reveal the truth, I am citing from my personal knowledge that Allah Bakash was killed by Hurs, who had come and stayed in Keti (forest land) of Adam Khan Panhwar and had told him about their plan with threat that they would kill him, if he leaks the matter out. This good man informed Ali Nawaz Panhwar another big land owner of Jacobabad and friend of Allah Bakash to inform Allah Bakash that tomorrow they will kill him, if went out to visit some Pir or another friend on a particular road. Ali Nawaz did inform Allah Bakash the very night, but Allah Bakash said that he wanted to see how they shoot a man to death and his carelessness cost him his own life. The Hurs were not remotely connected with Khuhro and he was made to suffer for nothing, but he did see that Muhammad Hashim Gazdar is no longer made minister in his cabinet. For years Adam Khan and Ali Nawaz Panhwars were so afraid of Hurs that they did not publicly tell the true story. Some twenty years later Ali Nawaz revealed it to me.

Conclusion

Impact of G.M. Sayed's political and non-political writings, preaching and contacts with people and university students, though little realised is, that he has left behind his thought all over Sindh from Kashmore to Keti Bander and Karachi to Karunjhar hills of Nagar Parker, and under his psychological influence all people of Sindh are equivocally asking for rights of Sindh, forgetting, their ethnicity, caste, and religious beliefs. It is spirit which G.M. Sayed has left behind and has joined all people of Sindh on one platform.