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MYSTIC FERVOR IN THE POETRY OF AMIR KHUSRAU

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ABSTRACT

Abul Hasan Yaminuddin, better known as "Amir Khusrau" was the mystical master and poet who had spent his entire life in search of truth, divine and human, giving message of peace, brotherhood and humanity. Amir Khusrau was a mystic and a spiritual disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya. Having come under the influence of this great Sufi saint, he had acquired a liberal out-look on religious and social matters like his preceptor he could not bring himself to differentiate between the Muslims and the Hindus. Khusrau was a true representative of Indo-Muslim culture. He is considered as a soul of India, a leading mystic poet all of the times. He became known as the 'Parrot of India' because of his excellence. The depth of humanism in his poetry springs from that some of "divine love". Khusrau's humanism transcended all barriers of caste, color and creed. Khusrau's mysticism is not bound to any particular religion, place, caste or class but it contains Devine love for entire humanity. He was not only a peer less poet but also a brilliant musician who is credited with making many innovations in the tradition of Indian classical music, inventing not only new forms of music but also instruments. In addition, he played a definitive role in the development of the sacred music of the Indian Sufis, which is called qawwali. He was an iconic figure of the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent. In the present paper, I will highlight mystical elements of divine and human in the poetry composed by Amir Khusrau.

Key Words: Amir Khusrau, Poetry, Mysticism, Indian Culture, Music, Qawwali

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INTRODUCTION

Amir Khusrau is an iconic figure in the cultural history of the Indian sub-continent. He was a true path finder, a great historian, a musician, a soldier, a naturalist and a mystic. Abul Hasan Yamin-ud-din Khusrau, better known as Amir Khusrau, was a famous Indo-Persian poet and a scholar of repute during the Khalji period. He was born in 1253 A.D in a Turk family at Patiyali in the Etah District of Uttar Pradesh.ⁱ His father Amir Saifiuddin Mahmud was a Turkish immigrant who found employment under sultan Iltutmish and settled at Patiyali. His mother was the daughter of Imadul Mulk, a high official of Balban. We may find that Amir Khusrau had a keen interest in composing poems in childhood and had commenced poetry at the age of eight.ⁱⁱ

The aim of this paper is to discuss the mystical dimensions and the concept of Devine and human in the poetry of Amir Khusrau who is undoubtedly known as the “Parrot of India”.

Abul Hasan Yaminuddin, known as “Amir Khusrau” was the greatest mystic poet of India. His father Amir Saifuddin mahmood Shamsi was a native of Kesh today known as Shahr-e- Sabz, a city in Uzbekistan.ⁱⁱⁱ During the invasion of Changez khan he came to India and settled at Patiyali. He got employment in the court of Sultan Shamsuddin Iiltutmish and held high military rank. Amir Khusrau was born in the year 1253 at Patiyali.^{iv} It is narrated when he was born his father wrapped him in cloth and took him to a saint for blessings, as soon as the saint saw the child he exclaimed “O, Amir! You have brought a child to me who would surpass even Khaqani. Amir Khusrau lost his father when he was eight years of age. After the death of his father came under the care of his maternal grandfather Imadul Mulk who was one of the foremost nobles and had a dominating position in the court of Sultan Gheyasuddin Balban. He was a great patron of poets, writers and scholars used to assemble in his court. Khusrau could get a chance to sit in their assembly where he made a tremendous progress towards his literary pursuit, but the most interesting feature of his life is this that he was a born poet. He endowed extraordinary passion for poetry from very childhood. Khusrau showed literary promise at an early age, and, after spending some time at the provincial court of Oudh, became attached at first to Prince Bughra Khan, the governor of Samana and later of Bengal, and subsequently to Prince Muhammad, the heir-designate of Balban, who maintained a magnificent court at Multan. The prince lost his life in a skirmish with the Mongols in 1285, and the poet went to Delhi. Balban’s successor, Kaiqubad, was Khusrau’s first royal patron. In all, seven rulers were to be his patrons, but it is doubtful whether he was greatly concerned by the kaleidoscopic changes of royalty.

Khusrau wrote poems relating to contemporary events. *Qiran-us-Saadain*, completed in 1289, gives an account of the historic meeting of Bughra Khan and Kaiqubad on the banks of the river Sarju, and contains an interesting description of the Delhi of those days. *Miftah-ul-Futuh* (1291) is a versified account of the exploits of Jalal-ud-din Firuz Khalji; in *Ashiqa* (1315) is an account of the romance of the Gujarati princess Deval Devi and Prince Khizr Khan, son of Ala-ud-din Khalji. The latter’s conquests are the subject matter of *Khazain-ul-Futuh* (1311), an ornate prose work, while *Nuh Siphr*, completed in 1318, celebrates the reign of Qutb-ud-din Mubarik Shah. In this book Amir Khusrau challenged the poets of Iran and sang of his native land, its hoary past, its love of learning, its flowers, and its fair, intelligent people. *Tughlaq Nama* describes the successful expedition of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq against the usurper Khusrau Khan. Khusrau was also among the earliest writers of Hindi poetry, and though the origins of the Hindi poems attributed to him are doubtful, he referred to his Hindi verses in the introduction to one of his Persian diwans. He also played a major role in the development of Indian music, as noted below.

Amir Khusrau as representative of Indian Culture

Amir Khusro was a mystic and a spiritual disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi. Having come under the influence of this great Sufi saint, he had acquired a liberal out-look on religious and social matters Like his preceptor he could not bring himself to differentiate between the Muslims and the Hindus. It seems at heart he was opposed to the official policy of suppression of the Hindus and denigration of their faith. Khusro was a true representative of Indo-Muslim culture. To celebrate the unity in diversity of Indian culture and heritage, The beginning of India’s composite culture can be traced to Amir Khusrau’s efforts. Our history bears testimony to the fact that it was the result of Amir Khusro’s preachings of other Sufi and saints that the basis and the shape of the government of the Sultanate became broader in the 14th century and thereafter. It is not surprising, that we find among his admirer both Hindus and Muslim.^v

Socio – Culture history in the writing of Amir Khusro

Khusrau’s all literary works reflect the spirit of the time and the tendencies at work. Literature is the mirror of the society which gives detail accounts of the social and cultural life of that time. Khusrau’s literary works reflect the people and represent the pictures of their social life and cultural activities. They give the vivid description of life and condition from birth to death. Amir Khusrau was not a historian but he was well versed in prevailing traditions of the historiography and has written about half dozen of historical books including prose chronicle and Mathnavis. He was more a poet than a historian. When he writes history, he keeps

restrain over muse of poetry and does not sacrifice facts for fancy. In India, he was a pioneer in this field and we can certainly indebted to him for the valuable historical data he left for us. Amir Khusrau was fully equipped with the knowledge, the experience, the narrative excellence and the ability to speak on unpalatable facts in concealed and suggestive manner. He passed the mystic insight and poetic fancy which helped him to bring home to his readers that facts were stronger than fictions. If the function of the historian is to be enlighten and illuminate by throwing fresh and adding the existing stock of knowledge of the past, the wealth of solid factual information furnished by Amir Khusrau, particularly in Mtftan, Khazain, and Tughlaq nama entitled him to be called a historian.^{vi}

Amir Khusrau a matchless Linguistic

As a linguist and a poet he was peerless. He gave a new turn to the development of the various dialects spoken in and around Delhi, dialects which long after him combined together in order to become one language called Hindi. Khusrau besides being a scholar in Persian his intellectual curiosity led him to pick up Sanskrit and the local language of the North. Amir Khusrau wrote for the masses. In a poem entitled Ashiq, Amir Khusrau pays a glowing tribute to the Hindi language and speaks of its rich qualities. The language in which Khusrau wrote it is learnt he himself described as Hindvi, which bears close resemblance with Khari Boli and even present-day Hindi. It was a mixed language born as a result of the intermingling of the Muslims and the Hindus. This improvised tongue became a kind of lingua Indica for the royal court in Delhi and all those who came under its influence. Khusrau was keen to bring the Hindus and the Muslims closer and for doing so he thought of a common language for both of them. Khusrau was the first to write in Hindvi or Khari Boli. He started versifying in this language as early as 12580 A.D. when Balban was the Sultan of Delhi. It is learnt, Khari Boli was then struggling for the status of a dialect. Khust's poetry gave it more than that. Although universally recognized as the architect of Khari Boli, Amir Khusrau was a court poet to as many as seven of them. He is said to have written over seventy books of which only about twenty-five are extant. He wrote poetry primarily in Persian, but also in Hindavi. A vocabulary in verse, the Khaliq Bari, containing Arabic, Persian and Hindavi terms is often attributed to him.

Amir Khusro: the Royal poet

Khusrau was a prolific classical poet associated with the royal courts of more than seven rulers of the Delhi Sultanate.^{vii} He is much popular because of many playful riddles, songs and legends attributed to him. Through his enormous literary output and the legendary folk personality, Khusrau represents one of the first Indian personages with a true multi-cultural or pluralistic identity. Amir Khusrau was the author of a Khamsa which emulated that of the earlier poet of Persian epics Nezami Ganjavi. His work was considered to be one of the great classics of Persian poetry in India. Khusrau also wrote, composed Suhaag geet, bhanne, mukhda, sehre , ghodi, mehndi geet and so on. All of them had Hindi as the base language. We do have different weather conditions in India and to highlight the beauty of the different weather, Khusrau also wrote Barkha Ritu Geets. The spring season is called 'Basant Ritu' and has a commemoration of thousands of years of Indian musicand spring is celebrated with great enthusiasm here. In contrast to Raag Basant, Hazrat Amir Khusrau created a new Raaga called 'Raag Bahaar'.

Ashq Rey Aamad Abr-O-Bahaar

Saaqiya Gul Barejo Bada Biyar

Amir Khusrau knew Sanskrit fairly well and it has always seemed to me that his designating the reader as having the tab'-e vaqqad (a temperament that is knowing, intelligent, bright, and fiery) is influenced by Abhinavagupta's theory of the sahridaya reader. In Abhinavagupta's formulation, "a sahridaya has the competence analogous to that of the poet to see, to hear, to feel, to participate, to experience."^{viii}

Mysticism in Amir Khusrau poetry

Mysticism emphasizes on unity of believe in one God, always diverse devotional expression. Mystic master have taught ways to unlock secrets of the unseen world and established an intimate relationship with the divine force. Khusrau composed for the masses. His dohas and pahelis are popular even today. He had written folk songs also. All these forms are characterized by his peculiar spontaneity of expression, lucidity of his style and his typical vocabulary with an exquisite combination of Persian and Hindvi. Kherau's literary

archive is not barren of any Hindu poetry, paranoiac lore, Bhakti ideas, upanishadic mysticism. Poetry reveals also another side of the saints. They are not only spiritual giants aloof from the world and its concerns, but they are also benefactors of the human kind.

More than Persian forms, the Sufis favoured the indigenous forms in writing Hindi poetry. The basic form is git, 'song'. Gits are in mystical Hindi poetry as important as are the ghazals in Persian and Urdu. Git is metrically very free, lyrical poem. No uniform rhyme scheme is applied in the git, and the first line of the poem serves as a refrain throughout the poem. The most common short form is doha or dohra, a couplet. Both lines have thirteen syllables and the same rhyming word. Dohas are in the Chishti sama` used much in the same way as the ruba`is and individual verses from masnavis and ghazals, as introductory or inserted verses. Dohas often paint a lyrical miniature, like the verse Khusrau is said to have written after the death of his master, Khwaja Nizamuddin:

The fair beauty sleeps in the bed, hairs fallen to her face
Khusro, go home, evening has set in every direction^{ix}

A mystic puts his emphasis on the development of self. He develops his personality by its development. The mystic experience or religious experience plays a key role in the development of self and personality. But a mystical experience or consciousness is absolutely different from the experience of an ordinary being. For Khusrau, Mystic this universe has been established on love. God, the absolute beauty is the ultimate cause of all love. Love is of three kinds: The divine love, the spiritual love, and the natural love.

Your beauty, by the fire of youth
Brings forth smoke from the lovers' hearts^x

The next verse is also attributed to Khusrau and it has his nom de plume, which in Hindi is called *chap*.

O Khusrau, river of love flows in the opposite direction:
Who rose from it, drowned; who drowned, he got across^{xi}

It is also common enough to describe the beauty of the beloved, or the radiant face of the beloved, as "fire, fiery, flame", and so on. Khusrau uses both metaphors as belonging to the domain of fact, rather than that of the imagination.

He says:

They say, Khusrau, what are you weeping at?
I am the turtledove of my own spring^{xii}

As we have seen, living on without the beloved, and even eating and drinking, are distasteful and in fact undesirable activities for the lover. Yet life has to go on, and here Khusrau's protagonist justifies a drink of water:

I never watered my heart with water
That was to my desire,
Each drop of water that I drank
Without you was a sword^{xiii}

usic in India

India is a great country with equally great traditions of cultural heritage and a history of thousands of years old civilization. Since the time of the Vedas, music was a part of the Brahmins' worship of God. Brahmins used to composed able and sing along with the Veena. But they never sold their talents or accepted alms from drunkards and dancers. Maharishi Vedvyas says that Chakrapani God Vishnu and his different incarnations did different great things, listening to them and reciting them with great concentration and telling the beads accordingly was really 'Prayer', 'Ibadat' of God. Narad Muni is a great example of this sort. Reciting and remembering God's name was a part of the religious value system. Whenever there is an appearance of Narad in any place, you will hear 'Narayan Narayan', 'Hare Raam Hare Krishna' and so on and so forth. So, when the Sufis came to India, who used to dance and sing while worshipping their God, then people here found them quite convincing and authentic and took great interest in their religion and culture. Sufis believed in 'No religion'; 'Jaat Paat Na Pucchay Koye, Har Ko Bhaje So Har Ka Hoye'

Amir Khusrau and Music

Amir Khusro was a Sufi musician, poet and a scholar. He was an iconic figure in the cultural history of the Indian sub-continent having contributed greatly to Hindi literature and Music. He is also credited with introducing Persian, Arabic and Turkish elements into Indian Classical Music and was the originator of the Khayal and Tarana style of music. Amir Khusrau has been reputed to have invented Musical instruments Sitar and Tabla. Music like religion and spirituality is distinct in its total social phenomena. But having interaction based relationship; music is part of religion and spirituality, and religion and spirituality are intermingled with music. Indian music had made an impact on the Arab systems as early as the conquest of Sind, and the interchange between the two forms was even more fruitful when the rich heritage of Persia and Central Asia was added. The result was the creation in North India of a new type of music, quite different from traditional Indian music which maintained its hold in South India. Credit for this important work of synthesis is given to the poet Amir Khusrau, whose fame helped to give prestige to the new music, which had as its rival in the Delhi court the musical modes favored by the Turkish rulers. The interest of the Chishti Sufis in "Hindustani" music and its practical cultivation by them further ensured its popularity. He had enriched it by introducing as many as eleven new Ragas. He is also credited with enriching Hindustani classical music by introducing Persian and Arabic elements in it, and was the originator of the khayal and tarana styles of music. A tarana is a piece of composition, which uses meaningless words as its text. Several taranas are attributed to Khusro and they have enticed several speculations on the hidden meaning of these words.^{xiv} He is regarded as the 'father of Qawwali'. He introduced the Gazhal style of song into India. Abd al Halim Ja'far Khan notes that the composition of many ragas is attributed to Khusro. Among them are ragas kafi and shahana, which are still widely performed. The invention of musical instruments sitar and sitar is also popularly attributed to Khusrau.^{xv}

Amir Khsuro and Qawwali

Qawwali is a recognized musical genre in the Indian subcontinent. It shares general traits with the light classical music. The term Qawwali itself applies both to the musical genre and to the occasion of its performance, the devotional assembly of Islamic mysticism-or Sufism. Qawwali' comes from 'Qaul' which is an Arabian word. Qaul which Hazrat Sallah Illahi Vassallam defines in 'Hadees', 'Man Qunto Maula', means whomsoever I help, Ali also would help'; or that 'Anaamdeenalool ilm-e-waalium bawada' that is 'I am the city of knowledge and Ali is the gateway'. Hazrat Muhammad's son-in law and the succeeding Khalifa belonged to the same lineage. In Arab, 'Qawwali' was accompanied by a 'duf' only when Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti came to India, music in old temples was the way of the world. Devotional songs were sung with old musical instruments. It was called Keertan. Sufis used to wear 'Bhagwa Bana', orange yellow clothes dipped, as they say, in the Rasa of devotion. Khwaja Sahib was highly impressed with this cult and so also supported the Sufi cult to spread its wings in the society; adopted their style of clothing and Qawwali was presented more or less as 'Keertan'.

The history of Chishti sama` is inextricably linked with the history of qawwali. The beginnings of creating this musical form are often traced back to Khwaja Moinuddin, and an often stated reason for his ability to create sama` is his desire to preach Islam to the music loving Hindus. The Sufis preached a simplified Qur'anic message to large masses with the help of music and vernacular poetry. Qawwali is connected to the mystical concerts of the Chishtis and the motive behind these events is experiencing mystical states. This presupposes mystical interpretation of the poems. The centrality of the musical context for interpreting a poem can be detected from the fact that the poetic repertoire of qawwali overlaps with that of certain other musical forms: The development of qawwali is connected with the name of Amir Khusrau, poet, musician and disciple of Khwaja Nizamuddin, as is the development of North Indian classical music.^{xvi}

Conclusion

The development of Persian literature in the sub continent entered a new era in the writings of Amir Khusrau. He was a poet born in a family of Turkish immigrants and began as a poet in the reign of Sultan Balban. He was a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya and was patronized in the courts of Jalaluddin Khalji, Alauddin Khalji and Ghiyasuddin Tughluq. He is said to have composed ninety-nine works on different themes and numerous verses of poetry. His poetry was written in the different forms of lyric, ode, epic and elegy. His writing style represents the first instance of Persian styles being composed in the Indian context. This came to

be known as the Sabaq-i-Hindi “the Indian style”. Among the important works composed by him are, Mutla-ul-Anwar, Shirin Khusrau, Laila Majnun and Ayina-I-Sikandari, these works were dedicated to Alauddin Khalji. Among his five Diwans are Tuhfat-us-Sighar, Baqiya Naqiya and Nihayat-ul-Kamal. He also wrote Masnavis which have been of great historical and literary value. Among these are the *Qiran-us Sa'dain*, *Miftah-ul Futuh*, *Tughluq Nama*, and *Khazain-ul Futuh*.

Amir Khusrau, who was a great exponent of this tradition, worked greatly into the perennial love that bound Hindus and Muslims in that era. He worked incessantly for the fusion of all great music forms of the world such as Arabian, Azmi, Turki and Indian. Amir Khusrau combined this Arabian Azmi Raag with the Indian Raagas and gave a vent to different parts, such as Raag Bhairav Bahaar, Ramkali Ki Bahaar and so on. After Khusrau, his followers followed the same patterns and composed good compositions. Hindu-Muslim unity and equality of all the religions has been an outstanding quality of Sufi cult and sufi music both. Amir Khusrau, combined Arabi Irani music with Indian Classical Music and created Raaga Gaud Malhar, which is popular in Irani Music as ‘Nahaband Moshhaar’. There is a reference to this Raaga in the 8th century A.D. which was then popularized by Hazrat Amir Khusrau as ‘Gaud Malhar’. Even today after a lapse of more than six hundred years, Khusrau’s verses seem modern. Amir Khusrau was not only a notable poet but also a prolific and seminal musician. The depth of humanism in his poetry springs from that some of “divine love”. Khusrau’s humanism transcended all barriers of caste, color and creed. Khusrau’s mysticism is not bound to any particular religion, place, caste or class but it contains Devine love for entire humanity. He was not only a peer less mystic poet but also a brilliant musician who is credited with making many innovations in the tradition of Indian classical music, inventing not only new forms of music but also instruments.

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