

Special Session –
Literature Facing Linguistic Challenges Today

Religious/Philosophical Movements –
Bhakti Cult and Sufism: Interface with Literature

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Abstract:

The rise of vernacular languages and local dialects emerged the revival of classical myths in literature, there was in a way revival of Hindu Renaissance and Religious Reformation in the Mediaeval History of India. These languages materially aided in the development of national and human consciousness and self-realization. It indeed undermined the feudal order and universal religious intolerance and casteism in India. The vernacular languages established through their respective literatures' fundamental truth, that there is a divine power and interference behind human force and the goal of individual and society is the social, religious, political unity and economic justice. Yet, there was gruesome picture of society in India where heretics were punished both by Hindus and Muslims respectively in their own communities, as it was treason to doubt the already prevalent teachings and principles of prescribed religions i.e., Hinduism and Islam.

Keywords: Vernacular Languages, Classical Myths, Local Dialects, Literature, Renaissance and Reformation

Importance of the Study and Objectives

The research study will refer to the teachings and philosophy and recognize the writings of various saints from inter-state/regional areas of India during the mediaeval age irrespective of their caste, sect, or religion. This research work will set a pattern of comparative analysis in context of representation, assimilation, and enculturation. The great doctrines, philosophies and sayings will be studied logically in context of socio-cultural linguistics and spatial-temporal consequences on the state and circumstances of the orient, artists, and litterateurs. How these transformed the political thoughts of the kings and emperors of mediaeval history of India? This scientific study of the available archives will cover the religious movements of this period, especially how these enriched provincial languages and literature. The research project study will emphatically concentrate on the greatest merit of both these (*Bhakti* and *Sufism*) parallel religious movements, keeping in view the point that they freed the Indian society from the dogmatic beliefs, ritualism, caste, and commercial hatred.

Introduction

The medieval age of India started with the conquests of the Mahmud Gazni, Muhammad Ghori followed by the wars, massacres by Timurlane, Turks, then the rule of Sultanate dynasty, that was later subjugated by Mongols, and ruled by the regime of Mughals and subsequently looted by Nadir Shah in 1739. All these years of political upheaval marked the age with shifts in religion, culture, and literature. The downfall of the rule by Rajput clans led to the spurt in powerful Sultanates and later Mughals in India in the mid-14th to 16th centuries. This transitional phase divided the population of India into two communal segments – Muslims and Hindus. The followers of Buddhism and classical Brahmanical cults faced threat to their religion and existence due to Islamic religion in offing. The whole subcontinent was ruled with lawlessness, despotism, cruelty, and conversion before the fifteenth century.

From the fifteenth to sixteenth century, the golden medieval period of Indian History witnessed the uprising of medieval art and literature that was blended exquisitely with the oriental art. The litterateurs in vernacular languages emphasized the literal portrayal of man and nature, but represen-

ted both as symbolic of the spiritual forces that dominate them. Everyday life and stories from History as well as incidents from the lives of Gods were portrayed both in art and literature. An integral part of learning in the Middle Ages i.e., twelfth to sixteenth century became an essential basis for many vernacular languages such as – Brijbhasha, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Rajasthani, Telegu, Tamil and Marathi etc. The importance of Sanskrit last lost its status as a medium of expression; it was still used in Indian families' religious occasions, ceremonies by Brahmans. The rise of vernacular “the latter period of medieval age sowed the seeds of religious movements in India i.e., *Bhakti* cult and Sufism that cut across distinctions of high and low birth, the learned and unlettered, and opened the gateway of spiritual realization of one and all” (Swain 293). The leader of Hindu revivalist movement was Shankaracharya who gave new orientation to Hinduism and was largely instrumental in extinguishing the last flicker of Buddhism; Ramanunjam in the south India, Ramananda in the north India, Valallabhacharya, Kabeer, Dharandisa, Raidasa in the north-western India, Dadu in Gujarat, Jagajivanadasa in Uttar Pradesh, Chaitnya in Bengal, Guru Nank in Punjab, Tulsidasa, Suradasa in the north India and Meerabai in Rajasthan, Jnanadeva, Namadeva, Ekantha and Tukaram in Maharashtra were combined with erudite scholarship with abiding faith in the path of self-surrender to God. Similarly, the twelve orders of *Silsilahs* in the *Sufi* faith, among them Shaikh Moin-ud-din Chisti (1236 A.D.), Shaikh Farid-ud-din in Northern India, Shaikh Jamal-ud-din Hanowi, Shaikh Ala-ud-din Auliya from Delhi to Devagiri, from Multan to Lakhnauti, Niris-ud-din Chirag-in Delhi and Shaikh Siraj-ud-din in Bengal were popular mystics who emphasized on deep devotion and on love as the bond between God and the individual soul. The medieval reformers, both Hindu and Muslims, not only emancipated the masses from social and religious tyranny but also substantially contributed to the cultural evolution of the country. The aim of the religious revival of the period was to create an environment of toleration and cooperation. The cardinal doctrine which they professed in their textual scholarship was that Hindus as well as of Muslims, Brahmans as well as of Chandalas (Dalits) are all equal before Him. They minimized religious favouritism, fanaticism and orthodoxy which is the need of the hour today.

Bhakti World in Pre-colonial India (Indian History Medieval Age)

Bhakti Movement



The term “Bhakti” symbolises devotion or a passionate love for the divine. The Bhakti Movement stresses the mystical union of the individual with God. The seeds of the Bhakti have been traced from the ancient times’ Indians’ holy scriptures like Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas etc. The development of the popular Bhakti movement took place in the South India between the 7th and 12th centuries CE. It was based on religious equality and broad-based social participation. They preached personal devotion to God as a means

of salvation. They disregarded the rigidities of the caste system and carried the message of love and personal devotion to God to various parts of the South India with the help of local languages.

The Bhakti movement gained movement in the northern parts of the country during the 12th-17th century CE. The northern medieval Bhakti movement was influenced by the spread of Islam in India. The main features of Islam like belief in one God (monotheism), equality and brotherhood and rejection of rituals and class divisions greatly influenced the Bhakti movement of this era. The movement also brought certain reforms against social taboos of the society.

Saguna and Nirguna are the two different ideological streams of the Bhakti Movement:

Saguna	Nirguna
Saguna represented those poet-saints who composed verses extolling a godly attributes or form	Nirguna represented those poet-saints who extolled God without and beyond all attributes or form. They are also known as Monotheistic Bhakti saints.

<p>Tulsidas, Chaitanya, Surdas and Meera were the main proponents of Saguna.</p>	<p>Shankaracharya, Kabir and Guru Nanak were the main proponents of Nirguna.</p>
<p>The Saguna poets were in favour of the dominance of Brahmins and supported the caste system. They preached a religion of surrender and simple faith in a personal God while also supporting idol worship.</p>	<p>The Nirguna poet-saints rejected the supremacy of the Brahmins and all conventions based on caste distinctions along with the practice of idolatry. They gave importance to the personal experience with God and even though they called their God using different names and titles yet their God was formless, eternal, non-incarnate and ineffable. It seemed their ideas were a synthesis of the three traditions – Vaishnava concept of the Bhakti cult, the Nanpanthi (non-religious sect) movement and Sufism. Thus though they had adopted the notion of Bhakti from Vaishnavism they gave it a Nirguna orientation.</p>

(<https://prepp.in/news/e-492-nirguna-school-of-bhakti-movement-art-and-culture-notes>)

To understand Bhakti cult, it is necessary to delve in the saints' philosophy to some extent according to their existing times and their gracious presence that proved pertinently closed to Islamic reformation period in the pre-colonial India as well as the emergence of many other popular religious communities that had been prevailing during the medieval age of the India history, indeed we can say there was pluralistic society, yet the conforming to their own community beliefs had always been an issue of endangering the common mass survival amidst relativity of culture and religion especially when despotism, autocracy and communalistic approach signified nexus of power and rule in terms of imperialism.

The prominent leaders of the Bhakti movement were –

Shankaracharya (c. 788-820 CE) propounded Advaita (Monism / non – dualism) that refers to “Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya Jivo Brahmatra Napa-raha” meaning is “The Absolute Spirit is the reality, the world of appearance is Maya” and Ekameva Aditeeyam Brahma” meaning is “The absolute is one alone, not two”. According to him knowledge (Gyan) could lead to salvation. His famous writings are – Upadesasahasri, Vivekachudamani, Bhaja Govindum Stotra, besides commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, the Brahma Sutra and the Upanishads. He set up mathas at Dwarka (Gujarat), Puri (Orissa), Sringeri (Karnataka) and Badrinath (Uttarakhand) in India. The saint **Ramanuja** – Illiaya Perumal – the ageless God in Tamil (c. 1017-1137 CE) is the exponent of Vishista Adaitavada (qualified Monism). According to his philosophy, the universe and Brahman are considered two equally real entities, as in dualism, but here the universe is not separate from Brahma, but is formed out of Brahman. The Brahman is considered as a personal God (Lord Vishnu) with omniscient qualities who has created the world out of his own self. Thus, the world bears to Brahman the relation of the part to the whole or the relation of a ‘qualified effect’ to the base (hence qualified monism – means that mankind enjoys higher status than in pure dualistic worship and is nearer to God”) He provided an intellectual basis for the practice of Bhakti (devotional worship) in three major commentaries: the *Vedantha-samgraha* (on the Vedas of Hinduism), the *Shri-bhashya* (on the *Brahma-sutras*) and the *Bhagavadgita-bhashya on the famous Bhagavad Gita*. Madhavacharya (c. 1238-1317 CE). **Madhavacharya** from Kannada preached Dvaita or the dualism of Jivatma and Paramatma. He believed the world is not an illusion, but a reality full of real distinction. He says there are three eternal ontological orders: God, Soul and matter are unique in nature and are irreducible to each other. He founded the Brahma Sampradaya (a sect) that follows the fact that God is a separate entity from the universe and the world is controlled by Lord Vishnu and all actions or thoughts subjected to the results of free action and freethought. Hence according to him – “Ignorance, which for Madhva as for many other Indian philosophers means mistaken knowledge (ajanaana), can be removed or corrected by means of devotion (bhakti) the deep mutual emotional attachment between a devotee and a personal god. Devotion can be attained in various ways: by solitary study of the scriptures, by performing one’s duty

without self-interest, or by practical acts. That devotion is accompanied by an intuitive insight into God's nature, or it may be a special kind of knowledge. *Bhakti* may itself become a goal; the devotee's adoration of Vishnu is more important than the release (moksha) that ensues from it".

Nimbarka belongs to the Telangana region of Karnataka state of India, the founder of Sanak Samparadaya, the younger contemporary of Ramanuja the propounder of Dvaita Advaita philosophy and the philosophy of Bheda Abheda (difference/non-difference or it is also referred to identity and difference) This philosophy believes that the world and the Brahman are both equally real and the world is a part of Brahman. The difference is in emphasis only.

Vallabhacharya (c. 1479-1531 CE) He was born in Benaras to a Telegu Brahmin family, propagated the doctrine of Bhakti through Lord Krishna whom he fondly addressed as Shrinathji. He founded pustimarga – also known as Brahmasambhavana (the path of grace, nourishing, flourishing) – a path that teaches a devotee how to offer selfless love and devotion to Shrinathji without expecting anything in return but love. It is apt to quote the saint Vallabhacharya: "The knowledge gained is not a means of liberation. Liberation is considered secondary to the enjoyment of Shri Krishna's bliss. In the state of liberation, the entity of the devotee merges into *Shri Krishna's blissful form, but in Bhakti (especially Pushti bhakti) the devotee does not seek liberation but he enjoys Shri Krishna's bliss by participating in it as a separate divine entity" (Pushti Sanskar; 2015).

In the state of Maharashtra, the Bhakti movement divided into two sects – mild devotees (Varakaris) disciples of God Vithala of Pandharpur, more theoretical, abstract, and emotional, while the other is Dharakaris, followers of the cult of Saint Ramadasa, the devotee of God Rama, rational, concrete, and practical. However, the realisation of God as the highest end of human life is a common aim of both. Without mentioning the four main saints that influenced the north-western Indian common mass, the discussion on the Bhakti movement remains incomplete. The saint Jnaneshwar or Jnanadeva (c. 1275-1296 CE). He condemned casteism and to attain God, the roadmap of Bhakti lies in action and thoughts. His famous works are "Amritanubhava" (Ambrosial / Immortal Experience). This writing discusses the aftermaths of pure-consciousness or complete self-realisation with the infinite ultimate reality which dispels any duality between our inner divinity and the individuality of our human soul. Namadeva (c. 1270-1350

CE) He was initially a tailor, then taken to banditry before he acquired himself to transform into sainthood. His poetry in Marathi language professes a spirit of intense love and devotion to God. He is considered as one of the five gurus of Dadupanth tradition within Hinduism, the other four are Dadu, Kabir, Hardas and Ravidas. His preachings known as Abhangas are included in the holy book entitled “Adi Granth” (Ivan; 2007). It is said that Namdev had made a vow to compose a hundred crore (a crore is 10 million) **abhangs**; all twelve members of his household became poets, and through them his vow was more than fulfilled.

He is the One in many,
countless are His shapes and forms.
He pervades all that exists;
wherever I look, He is there.
But very few perceive this reality,
for Maya ever enchants us
with her multiple reflections
of color and alluring beauty.
(Krishnamurthy, 2007)

One of his famous song originally in Marathi verse “ Baabaa ahankaar nishee ghanadaat” from his Anthology of Poetry (Shree Namadev Gatha, poem 2052), translated in a famous song which is in virtual world sung with the title song as “The Darkness of Ego as Dense as Night”

– The lyrics of this song are:
O friend, the darkness of ego was as dense as night
But through the Master’s Word dawned the light of Day.
From him I obtained the blessing of true devotion
Which revealed to me the infallible path.
Narhari, Rama, Govinda, Vasudeva
Are all his names-
Utter only one name with earnestness:
Repeat constantly the true name of the Lord.
(Puri & Sethi, 40)

The Saint Eknath (c. 1533-1599 CE) – He introduced a new form of Marathi religious song called Bharood. His idea of confirming faith in the

God does not mean renunciation from the family life, rather he believes that religious life can be practiced within the social environment also. Basically, he cared about resolving conflicts between householder duties and the demands of religious devotion, was against caste discrimination. Ramdas (c. 1608-1681 CE).

– He existed during the reign of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the founder of Maratha Empire, warrior and the contemporary of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in the last half of the seventeenth century. Swami Ramdas helped in building up the Maratha empire. His writings are still popularly narrated. He wrote “Dasabhoda” (1654) – an advice to the disciple. The narration is believed to have taken place in a cave called Shivthar Ghal (pronounced shiv-ther – gaal) in the Raigar district of Maharashtra. Other works of his are – “Karunashtaken, Janasvabhavagosanvi and Manache Sloka.

Dadu Dayal one of the saint whose master was Sheikh Buddhan, who was a Sufi Saint of the Kadiri line. Sheikh Budhan was the contemporary of the emperor Akbar in the fifteenth century, his descendants are still living in Sambhaar, an important town near Jaipur in Rajasthan on the shores of the famous Salt Lake of that name. Although Dadu Dayal well versed in the knowledge of Gujarati language, besides Persian and Sanskrit, yet he lived a married life and practised piety just like Sant Kabir, dedicated to divine pursuits with a contented life. He writes:

God is my Livelihood;
He is the provider of provisions to me.
Through His grace
Have I maintained my entire family (Upadhaya 7)

(*Shabd:Dadu Granthwali* 230, where Dau describes a true yogi or devotee as one who “eats not by begging” and requires not “going on begging rounds”).

Sant Paltu who was born in eighteenth century in the viallge of Nanga-Jalapura near Ayodhya, in the Fyzabaad district of Uttar Pradesh (a contemporary state of Northern independent India), lived when Shah Alam occupied the throne of Delhi. He led a householder life in the refuge of his guru Gobind Sahib earlier. Paltu was a great literary craftsman in the tradition of devotional literature – his volume of poetry collections are popular

with a particular poetic genre and forms – kundli, Rekhta, jhulna, shabd, arill, sakhi, kakerhra and kabitt. These poetically narrates myths with melody and in holy hymns.

Then in the 14th and 15th century **Non-sectarian Bhakti movement** carried forward in the teachings of Nanak, Kabir, and Ramananda, who helped common people to shun superstitions and attain salvation through Bhakti or pure devotion. The saint Ramananda (c. 1400-1476 CE) has his disciples irrespective of caste and belong to all sections of society, they were – Kabir – a Muslim weaver, Sena – a barber, Sadhana – a butcher, Raidasa – a cobbler, Dhanna – a jat farmer, Narahari – a goldsmith, Pipa – a Rajput prince. He is regarded as the founder of Ram cult in North India as his object of Bhakti was ram, since he worshiped Ram and Sita. He rejected the monopoly of the Sanskrit language over the teachings of religious texts. He preached in local languages to popularise his teachings.

Sant Kabir is said to be born in Benaras to a Brahmin widow who abandoned him after his birth and was brought up in the house of a Muslim weaver. He possessed an inquiring mind and learnt much about Hinduism when living in Benaras. He became familiar with Islamic teachings and Ramananda initiated him into the higher knowledge of Hindu and Muslim religious and philosophical ideas. He flourished during the medieval period between 1398-1518 A.D. The writer Prabhakar Machwe in his book “Kabir” (1977) describes Kabir’s mysticism, which was of the same kind and degree as that of the Vedanta or the Sufi. For him there was no dualism between the finite and infinite, as is well illustrated in the following two quotations from Rabindra Nath Tagore’s book entitled “One Hundred Poems of Kabir”. He writes –

O how may I ever express that secret word?
O how I say He is not like this, and
He is like that?
If I say that He is within me, the universe is ashamed.
If I say that he is without me, it is falsehood.
He makes the inner and outer worlds to be indivisibility one;
The conscious and the unconscious both are footstools.
He is neither manifest nor hidden,
He is neither revealed nor unrevealed;
There are no words to tell which He is (Aiso lo nahin taisa lo).
(Kabir: Tagore. P. 9)

And again, he expresses:
 When He himself reveals Himself, Brahma brings
 Into Manifestation That which can never be seen
 As the seed is in the plant, as the shade is in the tree,
 As the void is in the sky, as infinite forms are in the void –
 So from beyond the infinite, the infinite comes:
 And from the infinite the finite extends.
 The creature is in Brahma, and Brahma is in the creature:
 They are ever distinct, yet ever united...
 He Himself is the limit and the limitless:
 And beyond both the limited and the limitless is he, the Pure being,
 Hre is the Immanent Mind in Brahma and in the creature.
 The Supreme Soul is seen within the Soul...
 (Sadho Brahma alakh Lakhaya. Kabir: Tagore, p.6)
 (Guru Nank Sahib, c. 1469-1539 CE)

The first sikh Guru and the founder of Sikhism who was also a Nir-guna Bhakti Saint and social reformer. He was born in the village of Talwandi in the old Punjab of Lahore in Pakistan currently. He preached about the oneness with God and strongly denounced idol-worship, pilgrimages, and other formal observances of the various faiths. He advocated a middle path in which a spiritual life could be combined with the duties of the householder. His one of the famous maxims was “Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world”. He aimed at bridging distinctions between the Hindus and Muslims in order to create an atmosphere of peace, goodwill and mutual give and take. He guided people through his book “*Guru Granth Sahib*” to follow the principles of conduct and worship; sach (truth), halal (lawful earning), Khair (wishing well for others), niyat (right intentions) and service to the Lord. His philosophy consists of three basic elements – a leading charismatic personality (the Guru), ideology (Shabad), and organisation (Sangat). He denounced idol worship and rejected the theory of incarnation, introducing the concept of langar (community kitchen). He conceptualised God as Nirguna (attributeless) and Nirankar (formless).

Sir George Grierson in his magnum opus book entitled “*Linguistic Survey of India*” (1903-1928 (Delhi: 1967) and a host of the modern scholars especially Shiva Singh Segar in his book Shiv Singh Saroj considers that Tulsidas was born near about 1532 A.D. Tulsidas was a worshipper of God

Rama and composed one of his immortalised epic work called as *Ramcharitramanas*, which is also popularly called “Tulsi Krita Ramayana” in which he portrays most virtuous, powerful and the embodiment of the supreme reality (Parambrahma).

In a revealing poem in the “*Vianaya Patrika*”, the poet and the saint Tulsidas reviews the incident and gives us an idea of how he himself viewed his relations with his Lord and Master. He tells himself:

“Listen to this that I have to say and then do not what you will. Look with your four eyes (the eyes that look at the outer world and the eyes turned inwards) and say, in all the three worlds and the three ages, is there anyone who is as keen about your welfare as the Lord? Housed in your physical body, you have forged all sorts of new relationships. Put to test, the fraud behind these relatives, hypocritical professions of love have been exposed. The dealings of the crowds of your friends were no better than transactions made with swindlers. And even the clever gods must be seen as they really are. If they will do you one good turn, they will expect a millionfold return. And the acts of piety and religious merit too are fruitless – a mere weariness of the flesh unless inspired by the love of Ram. Without such love, it is like making sacrificial offerings over a heap of ashes or the rains pouring down on barren land. (The truth is) there is no master as full of compassion as Ram, none who is as ready to do good to all, at all times, in the beginning, in the middle and in the end, whose glory pervades the world and the “Vedas”. Wretch, how can you find rest or peace, if you forget the One who is dearest, the very life of your life. The Supreme benefactor, the One who purifies the lowliest and the most wicked? O, Tulsi, remember what Ram, the gracious king of Kosala, has done for you and recall in your heart the episode of Chitrakut.” (In *Ramcharitmanas* epic ‘Chitrakut’ signifies purity and piety, during Ram’s ceaseless travels across forest and mountains, of the saint Tulsidas while writing epic, who metaphorically undergoes through inner discovery and search for all – pervading Reality, which is the same in all worlds” (Singh, 21).

Surdas was a disciple of the saint Vallabhacharya who popularised the Krishna Bhakti cult. He wrote Sursagar in Brijbhasha the vernacular language of the North India which is full of verses on the charm of Lord Krishna and his beloved Radha. Meerabai was a great devotee of Krishna and she became popular in Rajasthan for her hymns (Bhajans). In the period

fifteenth and early sixteenth century, Meerabai's illustrious, joyous deliverance of spirituality significantly and extraordinarily establishes her unrestrained consciousness with the prevalent contemporary movement of Bhakti tradition of the medieval times of the Indian History. Her pious Soul reflects being a blissful, honest, mystical, devout worshipper who completely immerses in the Bhakti 'bhava' and 'rasa'. In other words, Mira's essence characterises her poetic literary sentiments in sacred harmony and cosmic unity with all divine Oversoul of the Lord Krishna.

The human laws cannot be against God's laws. Her poem '*Drink the Nectar*' relates to Meera's illumined outlook to the worldly crisis in her times and even at present times:

Drink the Nectar of the Divine Name,
O human! Drink the nectar of the Divine Name!
Leave the bad company,
Always sit among righteous company.
Hearken to the mention of God (for your own sake)
Concupiscence, anger, pride, greed, attachment
Wash these out of your consciousness. Meera's Lord is the
Mountain – Holder,
The suave – Lover
Soak yourself in the dye of His colour (Khanna 140).

These lines metaphorically express a message to mankind to transform their behavior, mindset, thought in order to achieve eternal bliss on earth and all earthly illusions are mere traps to deviate the mind and human body to attain pleasure or to lead to misery. Thus, self-liberation is impossible amid illusory liberation. The realization of eternal structure in humanity and nature can only be achieved if one man's action enables all men to live happily like Lord Krishna protected the humble villagers from heavy rains; he lifted the mountain like an umbrella to rescue the villagers from the wrath of God Indra who felt his ego hurt when villagers prayed to Lord Krishna in place of him. Similarly, all men's actions, will and thoughts contribute to the construction of a happier world, if they surrender their fulfillment and enjoyment of action for the welfare of all. Only then catastrophe of nature can be salvaged. Therefore 'Meera was not just yogi searching for the love of Lord Krishna; she was a messenger of God who spread harmony

in the society and tried to eliminate social ecological crises both in environment and in human nature' (Prabhat, 299).

There are two propositions of the Bhakti tradition –

1. NarNarayan doctrine
2. Sattvatt doctrine

Meerabai is the worshipper of the Sattvatt doctrine, in which one's love is based on oneness with God and its representative canonical piece of literary scripture is 'Shrimad Bhagwadgita'. The Puranic centre of this Sattvatt doctrine was near Chittore in Madhayamikanagari, which is currently known as 'Nagari' or town. Even the composer of the great epic Mahabharata, Ved Vyas too got a spurt of creative spark after composing the scripture of divine love.

Hence in my opinion it is the bestowments of the Divine Anchor and Almighty upon Meera and the Meera's enlightened self for the love of God could be the whole source of heartfelt emotional submission in her poeticlore.

Chaitanya was another well-known saint and social reformer of Bengal who popularised the Krishna cult. In Vrindawan where Meerabai breathed her last, he revived the Krishna Bhakti cult. He sung his poetic compositions in Sanskrit – and the medium of his expression was kirtan – group devotional songs accompanied with ecstatic dancing. The biography of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was written by Krishnadas Kaviraj. He did not reject holy scriptures or idol worship, though he cannot be classified as traditionalist. **Narsingh Mehta** (c. 1414-1481 CE), the saint of Gujarat who wrote songs in Gujarati depicting the love of radha– Krishna. He authored Mahatma Gandhi's favourite Bhajan "Vaishnav jan ko". **Saint Tyagaraj** (c. 1767-1847 CE) – He is regarded as one of the greatest composers of Carnatic music, who had composed thousands of devotional songs mostly in Telegu in praise of Lord ram. He is also considered as one of the precious jewels of the Carnatic trinity, the other two being Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri. He composed the famous *Panchratna Kritis* (meaning five gems). Tallapaka Annamacharya (c. 1408-1503 CE) – He was a pioneer in both devotional music sankirtans and also in the field of opposition to social evils such as the practice of untouchability. He was an ardent devotee of the Lord Venkateshwara.

Sufi World

To understand Sufism, William C. Chittick in his book entitled “Sufism: A Short Introduction” (2007) writes that the traditional reality of the exotic, frantic wild ritual activities that “Sufi Dancing” represents is to search the true vision which is ecstatically God’s disclosure of Himself and His Manifestations that can only be realized by the knowledge of the Real. According to him the religious ideals of Islamic faith that are manifested in the spiritual vision of Sufism sets a preview of classical formulations of the teachings that have permanently coloured the traditions of Sufis. The Sufi literature has its original canonical creations immensely in Persian Language and then in Arabic language and its popularly spread in the regions from Turkey to China and especially in the Indian Subcontinent. Sufism beautifies the intrinsic aspects of Islamic society. It derives its historic inheritance from a number of similar traditions– Kabbalah, Christian mysticism, Yoga-sutra, Vedanta or Zen. Notwithstanding these traditional resemblances, Sufism has its original archetype animating spirit of transcendental experience with divinity and its creative beauty, that seems unreal, yet it is real.

Further the author illustrates that Sufism, as a mystic experience that transcendentalises correct activity and correct understanding to achieve higher goal of human perfection, that it is accomplished by spontaneous virtue and spiritual perfection. Sufi teachers go beyond the Sharia and jurisprudence to ecstatically undergo the spiritual involvement by remembering God with the accompaniment of dance and music. It is a sort of immersion with fervent devotion for the Folk of Sama, it is the music – a secret language of God’s luminous audible signs. For Sufi followers ‘God is Great, All-Merciful, Compassionate’ and remembering God is an everlasting happiness, the garden of the Soul laughs when it is near God, it weeps when it is separated from God.

To delve deep into the Sufi cult, a follower understands religious messages and attractive revelations of Islamic tradition and its manifestations from the point of three religious’ connotations – that is “submission” (Islam), “faith” (Imam), and “Doing the Beautiful” (Ishan). All these are the constructs that an Islamic tradition tries to conceptualize by *Shariat* (daily activities of the revealed law to serve God), by *Hadith* (the corpus of sayings attributed to Muhammad), the *jurisprudence* (God shows mercy, love and mutuality in place of wrath and majesty, even if one falls to disobedience), by *Quran* (that freely and clearly expresses the incumbency of what to do

and what not to do), by *Shahadah* (the testimony of faith and knowledge is commonly brought by Prophets, the Messengers of Gods), and by *Kalam* (the tongue's realm expressing objects of faith in the remembrance of God).

To elaborate the Sufism and non-Sufi Islam, it can be understood in this way that Sufi followers die many times to achieve something better in love of God for the voluntary cultivation of their Soul, while non-Sufi leads his life to physical death by attributing his deeds for the sake of God's mercy in place of God's knowledge that is immanent in his creation that pervades His image and Beatitude. Thus, the reflection and perception of one's physical form in the mirror that is in the 'self' is Sufism. He means seeking for the face of God, one rises from the self and self is the veil of veils. Human disposition in context of his fall, subsequent God's mercy or wrath are all the symbolic representations of God's revelations of truth to mankind. If humility comes in man, when he sees good as coming from God, while a man recognizes his incapacity and worthlessness due to his sins and forgetfulness to God, the man reaches to an exalted state of salvation and glory.

To understand the propriety of Sufism, it is apt to illustrate some famous Sufi writers' references such as Ibn-al Arabi (1165-1240 A.D.), Amir Khusrau (1253-1325 A.D.), Kamil Darvesh Shah Latif (1689-1752), Ali Ibn Ahmad Bhushanji, Sana'I Nizami, Attar, Rumi, Sa'di, and Hafiz.

Ibn al-'Arabī, in full Muḥyī al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-'Arabī al-Ḥātimī al-Ṭā'ī Ibn al-'Arabī, also called Al-Sheikh al-Akbar, (born July 28, 1165, Murcia, Valencia – died November 16, 1240, Damascus), celebrated Muslim mystic – philosopher who gave the esoteric, mystical dimension of Islamic thought its first full-fledged philosophic expression. His major works are the monumental *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* ("The Meccan Revelations") and *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (1229; "The Bezels of Wisdom"). Ibn al-'Arabī was born in the southeast of Spain, a man of pure Arab blood whose ancestry went back to the prominent Arabian tribe of Ṭā'ī. It was in Sevilla (Seville), then an outstanding centre of Islamic culture and learning, that he received his early education. He stayed there for thirty years, studying traditional Islamic sciences; he studied with several mystic masters who found in him a young man of marked spiritual inclination and unusually keen intelligence. During those years he travelled a great deal and visited various cities of Spain and North Africa in search of

masters of the Sufi (mystical) Path who had achieved great spiritual progress and thus renown.

It was during one of these trips that Ibn al-‘Arabī had a dramatic encounter with the great Aristotelian philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroës; 1126–98) in the city of Córdoba. Averroës, a close friend of the boy’s father, had asked that the interview be arranged because he had heard of the extraordinary nature of the young, still beardless lad. After the early exchange of only a few words, it is said, the mystical depth of the boy so overwhelmed the old philosopher that he became pale and, dumbfounded, began trembling. Ibn al-‘Arabī once explained in *Futuhāt* the usefulness of the religious sciences and the truth of Sufism in these words:

Philosopher means lover of wisdom because the word Sophia (Sūfiyā), means wisdom in Greek; philosophy, therefore, means love of wisdom. Everyone who is endowed with intelligence loves wisdom. However, people who think reflectively are wrong more often than they are right about divine sciences (*ilāhīyāt*), both if they are philosophers and if they are Mu‘tazilites or Ash‘arites. (Ibn ‘Arabī 1999a, vol. 4, pp. 227–28).

In the light of the subsequent course of Islamic philosophy, the event is seen as symbolic; even more symbolic is the sequel of the episode, which has it that, when Averroës died, his remains were returned to Córdoba; the coffin that contained his remains was loaded on one side of a beast of a burden, while the books written by him were placed on the other side in order to counterbalance it. It was a good theme of meditation and recollection for the young Ibn al-‘Arabī, who said: “On one side the Master, on the other his books! Ah, how I wish I knew whether his hopes had been fulfilled!”

Much of the later literature of eastern Islam, particularly Persian and Indo-Persian mystical writings, indeed, can be understood only in the light of his teachings. Ibn al-‘Arabī’s lyrics are typical *ghazals*, sweet and flowing. From the late 9th century, Arabic-speaking mystics had been composing verses often meant to be sung in their meetings. At first a purely religious vocabulary was employed, but soon the expressions began to oscillate between worldly and heavenly love. The ambiguity thus achieved eventually became a characteristic feature of Persian and Turkish lyrics.

Hazrat Amir Khusrau (1253-1325 A.D.), was a devout Muslim, a profound expounder of ethics and strict observant of *Sharia*. Hazrat Ziyauddin Barani draws a vivid picture of his friend, Hazrat Amir, in these words:

Above and beyond all his scholarship, fluency, and proficiency he was an upright Sufi. For most of his life he offered prayers, observed fasts, recited the Holy Qur'an, etc. He was equally exceptional in performing obligatory worship and doing beneficence to others by way of charitable acts. He kept fasts regularly and was among the most trustworthy disciples of the Sheikh. I have not met any other devotee more sincere and more faithful than Hazrat Amir Khusrau. He was impregnated with divine love and participated in *sama*. He was a maestro who used to invent new *ragas* and tunes. Hazrat Amir Khusrau had a poetic nature and was a kind-hearted man of elegant taste. In every art related to skill and refined taste, God had made him unique. He was completely inimitable and his personality in this era was one of the wonders of time.

Amir Khusrau says that Hazrat Amir Khusro, after having offered *tahajjud* (late night) prayers, would recite seven chapters of the Holy Qur'an every day. "Tell me O Turk", Nizamuddin Auliya once asked him, "how did you find your devotion?" "Sir, it so happens that I bitterly weep late in the night", Hazrat Amir Khusro submitted. "Praise be to Allah, now some signs have begun to emerge."

His famous *kalaam* are till date sung with pleasure and ecstasy, an example of it is here:

*mohe apne hī rañg meñ rañg de rañgīle
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī
hamrī chadariyā piyā kī pagriyā donoñ basantī rañg de
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī
jo tū māñge rañg kī rañgā.ī merā joban girvī rakh le
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī
aan parī tore darvāje par mirī lāj-sharam sab rakh le
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī
'nijāmuddīn-auliya' haiñ piir mero prem piit kā sañg de
to tū sāheb merā mahbūb-e-ilāhī .*

(Diwan Ghuraat ul Kamaal by Khusrau)

Amir Khusrau as a *mureed* (devotee and disciple) had unbounded devotion and inflamed love for his *Pir* (Saint) named Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, a learned theologian, the saint who resided that time in Delhi. Amir Khusrau's complete immersion and surrender to his mentor and to his spi-

ritual leader is illustrated in these poetic verses. As a disciple Amir Khusrau wishes to be completely absorbed in the spiritual influence of his divine saint and mentor Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.

The popular Sufi poet and prophet was Shah Latif Bhitayi of the western part of the subcontinent of India, existed in the period of early eighteenth century. He writes in his poetic verses:

Jaey Hititi Hui Maruyi
TT Ladhayami Kari Kinnasi
Aardayasiyumi Umar Rakhey
Vejho thi Vantasi
Jaey na chhaduayi, ki Jhaliyayi
TT Panhinjo Angu Aachchiyansi
Lohey Lohey, Lathifu chaye
Hittan Hund Halansi
Mokhey Maleer Samuhin
Vathi Baahan Vayaansi
Rehbar Thi Rerdihayansi
Suhanrey Sanmih Dey.

Shah Latif Bhitayi says if his *Maruyi* (Conscience) had been in his times in imprisoned custody, he would have looked after it. He would have asked *Umar* (Body) to release Conscience. If the body had not acknowledged his request, then he would have become *Jamin* (Mindfulness) himself to get himself imprisoned in shackles, in place of letting Conscience remain imprisoned in body (*Umar*). He would have liberated Soul and would have held its form as the Being of Almighty, the Supreme Power and would have let it return to its Eternal Abode '*Maleer*'. In this composition Shah Sahib has ecstatically referred that the Soul that seeks surrender in Divinity, while it is being in the form of incarnated body on earth, then Almighty compensates all deeds of body to transcendentalism Soul and releases Soul from the custody of Heart (*Naffs*).

Shah Sahib spiritualism the waking body with awakened consciousness and extrinsically and intrinsically the prophet's wisdom finds submission to the infinite truth of the divine (*Mukamey Hak*). Shah Latif Bhitayi not only in Sindh, but also in most of the popular illuminated Sufi Darvesh used to be acclaimed for his poetic piety and pure consciousness. After

‘*Quran Sharif*’ in Sindh, Shah Sahib’s ‘*Risalo*’ is very much in acclamation. He epitomises the Sufi Soul and its culture in Sindh. Many devotees of God and Prophets (*Darvesh*) have been products of the land of Sindh. On account of his miraculous enlightened persona and his acclaimed compositions (*Ka-laam*) are not only known in Sindh, but claims magnanimity and elevated place among the world’s most popular beings with absolute realisation of consciousness. Like an enabled *Darvesh* (a prophetic seer), a righteous saint, Shah Sahib lighted the ignorant hearts that used to get lost in the darkness of the waking world or illusory world.

Fariduddin Masud was born in 1175 (571 AH) in Kothewal, 10 km from Multan in the Punjab region of what is now Pakistan, to Jamāl-ud-dīn Suleimān and Maryam Bībī (Qarsum Bībī), daughter of Wajīh-ud-dīn Kho-jendī. He was a Sunni Muslim and was one of the founding fathers of the Chishti Sufi order. He was a great mystic (Sufi) of his times. He conveyed the message of love, harmony, and peace through his poetry among the people. In a real sense he was a spiritual guide who spread warmth and love. He was known as Baba Farid Ganj Shakar Baksh. Ibne Battuta, an Arab traveller was all praise for this Sufi mystic. He shifted from Multan Punjab to Delhi to attain spiritual knowledge in Islamic doctrines in the mentorship of Qutub-u-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, who died in 1235 A.D., hence Fariduddin his successor returned to Ajodhan an old name of Pakpattan (now in Pakistan). In commemoration every year Urs is held. According to Qamar Hashmi in his book entitled “*Kalam-e-Khuwaja Ghulam Farid*”, the poetry of Farid advised his followers to be kind-hearted, peaceful and ethical.

Here mentioning an excerpt of his poetic verses that expresses the meaningfully that life journey in the form of an earthly being should be morally congenial, should be away from judging anyone either by way of tongue or by way of merit or demerit, or by way of beauty. Unless mankind is away from evaluation of others, then only one can look into oneself and find others with those qualities which one does not possess of. He says:

Na Ras Jibh Na Rup Na, Kari Kivehha Maan Ni
Na Gunn Mant Na kaaman Maye Jaana Ni
Na Gunn Mant na Kaaman Jaana, Kyu Kar Sahu Nun Bhaavan
Sahu Bahutiyan naari Bahu Guunyari, Kit Bidh Darshan Panwa
Na Jaana Sahu Kisey Rawesi, Meyra Jiyu Nimaanna
Na Ras Jibh Na Rup Na, Kari Kivehha Maana

Baba Farid used to say do not use a harsh word for anyone, for the True Lord abides in all and does not break the heart of anyone as they are priceless gems. Humility and sweetness are the essences of human virtues. Once he told a visitor “Do not give me a knife, instead give me a needle, as a knife is an instrument for cutting and a needle for sewing together”.

Hazrat Shaikh Khwaja Syed Muhammad Nizamuddin Auliya was the fourth Spiritual Successor (Khalifa) of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer – the founder of the illustrious Order of Chishti saints in this country. He was specially selected by his Pir-o– Murshid Hazrat Khwaja Fari-duddin Ganjshakar, for this onerous responsibility because of his unique merits as a learned scholar, an able and diligent administrator and a perfect Spiritual Master, on the recommendation of a "*basharat*" (revelation) from the Holy Prophet.

After the demise of Hazrat Baba Fari-duddin Ganjshakar, Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia, therefore, succeeded him as the fourth *Sajjadanashin* (highest spiritual leader) of India; Hazrat Allauddin Ali Ahmed Sabir of Kalyar being the third in the order of precedence.

Types of Saliks

According to Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, there are 3 kinds of dervishes or Saliks:

- *Salik* – Those who renounce the world and devote their lives exclusively to Sufism.
- *Waaqiff* – Those who have acquired a stability between 'Obedience' and 'Devotion'.
- *Raajai*– Those who, having acquired due stability, suspend and do not return to the path of Sufism.

Essentials of Devotion

Hazrat Nizamuddin says that for a salik, there are six essentials of devotion to God:

1. He should remain in seclusion which will help him in overpowering his Nafs (appetitive soul).
2. He should remain clean and under wazoo' (ablution) which must be refreshed when necessary.
3. He must try to observe fasting daily but, if he cannot do so, then he must cut off his eating to the minimum.
4. He must try to avoid everything except God.

5. He must be an obedient devotee of his Pir.
6. He must hold God and Truth above all.

According to Hazrat Nizamuddin, a salik must avoid four things:

1. The world, especially the rich.
2. Mention of anything else except the zikr of God.
3. Give up love for everything else, except for God.
4. Purification of heart from all other worldly things except God.

"Akhlaq" Or Morality

Hazrat Nizamuddin emphasises upon the cultivation of moral and religious values for the character of a dervish. He says that a *salik* achieves success by 4 things:

1. less eating
2. less sleeping
3. less speaking
4. less meeting with people.

He advocates mercy and piety in all dealings and says: To hurt a human heart is to hurt the grace of God. A dervish must never curse anybody, however great may be the persecution which he may suffer. He must always refrain from disclosing the faults of the people which is a virtue and one of the best devotions to God. Rights of a Neighbour

One day, speaking on the rights of a neighbour, Hazrat Nizamuddin said: If your neighbour needs a loan, give it to him; if he needs anything else, give it to him; if he needs your sympathy in illness and misfortune, give it to him. And if he dies, then attend his funeral service and pray for his salvation.

Like all great Sufis, Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia was a staunch follower of the Prophet's traditions and Shariat. He stressed upon the punctuality of offering Namaz in congregation and even in his advanced age, he followed this rule strictly. Moinuddin Hasan Chishti was born in Sijistan (modern-day Sistan) in Iran in 1141-42 CE. After receiving Khilafat at the age of 52 from Sheikh Usman Hara-wani, he went on Hajj to Mecca and Medina. While he was praying in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, Khwaja is said to have heard the Prophet telling him to go to Hindustan and to the city of Ajmer.

At that time, he had no idea where Ajmer was. However, he proceeded via Baghdad and Herat to Lahore and then to Delhi and Ajmer. Muizuddin Muhammad bin Sam of Ghor had already defeated Prithviraj Chauhan and established his rule in Delhi. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti started living and preaching in Ajmer. His instructive discourses, full of spiritual insights, soon drew the local populace as well as kings and nobles and peasants and the poor from far and wide. Moinuddin Chishti (1141-1236) also known as Gharib Nawaz (benefactor of the poor) was one of the most significant saints of the Indian subcontinent. He travelled to India in the early 13th century, covering the route of Lahore and then Ajmer. After getting married in Ajmer, he visited Delhi during the reign of Sultan Iltutmish. He introduced and established the Chisti order in South Asia and significantly contributed to the spreading of Islamic Sufi mystic order. In his discourses **Chishti** preached about loving all our fellow creatures, irrespective of religion and status. His **key** teachings include charity and compassion for the poor and helpless, **leading** a pure life of devotion to the Divine, and achieving oneness with God in the service of his creations. The **Dargah** of **Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti** is the most revered shrine of Muslims not only in Rajasthan, but in India also. The **Dargah** is a living example of Mughal Architecture and their faith. The daughter of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan had established a prayer room especially for the women followers.

The shrine has been visited by Muhammad bin Tughlaq, Sher Shah Suri, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Dara Shukoh, Jahanara Begum and Aurangzeb, among many others. Even today, film stars and heads of states, both the rich and the poor, make a pilgrimage to the shrine.

The book '*Shams-e-Tabrizi*' (2011), translated by Farida Maleki, published by the Science of the Soul Research centre, New Delhi states that Sufism, or Islamic mysticism, is the most accessible, liberal, and pluralistic aspect of Islam, and a uniquely valuable bridge between East and West. The book refers to Al-Ghazâlî, who (c. 1056-1111) was one of the most prominent and influential philosophers, theologians, jurists, and mystics of Sunni Islam. He was active at a time when Sunni theology had just passed through

its consolidation and entered a period of intense challenges from Shiite Ismâ'îlite theology and the Arabic tradition of Aristotelian philosophy (*falsafa*). Al-Ghazâlî understood the importance of *falsafa* and developed a complex response that rejected and condemned some of its teachings, while it also allowed him to accept and apply others. Al-Ghazâlî's critique of twenty positions of *falsafa* in his *Incoherence of the Philosophers* (*Tahâfut al-falâsifa*) is a significant landmark in the history of philosophy as it advances the nominalist critique of Aristotelian science developed later in 14th century Europe. On the Arabic and Muslim side al-Ghazâlî's acceptance of demonstration (*apodeixis*) led to a much more refined and precise discourse on epistemology and a flowering of Aristotelian logics and metaphysics. With al-Ghazâlî begins the successful introduction of Aristotelianism or rather Avicennism into Muslim theology. After a period of appropriation of the Greek sciences in the translation movement from Greek into Arabic and the writings of the *falâsifa* up to Avicenna (Ibn Sînâ, c. 980-1037), philosophy and the Greek sciences were "naturalized" into the discourse of *kalâm* and Muslim theology (Sabra, 1987). He wrote in the eleventh century:

"The heart of man has been so made by God that, like a flint, it contains a hidden fire which is evoked by music and harmony, and renders man beside himself with ecstasy. These harmonies are echoes of that higher world of reality which we call the world of the spirits....they fan into a flame whatever love is already dormant in heart"(*Shams-e-Tabrizi*, xii Foreword).

Al-Ghazâlî had published his two refutations of *falsafa* and Ismâ'îlism he left his position at the Nizâmiyya madrasa in Baghdad. During this period, he began writing what most Muslim scholars regard as his major work, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Ihyâ' ulûm al-dîn*). The voluminous *Revival* is a comprehensive guide to ethical behavior in the everyday life of Muslims (Garden 2014: 63-122). It is divided into four sections, each containing ten books. The first section deals with ritual practices (*'ibâdât*), the second with social customs (*'âdât*), the third with those things that lead to perdition (*muhlikât*) and hence should be avoided, and the fourth with those that lead to salvation (*munjiyât*) and should be sought. In the forty books of the *Revival* al-Ghazâlî severely criticizes the coveting of worldly matters and reminds his readers that human life is a path towards Judgment Day and the reward or punishment gained through it. Compared with the eternity of the next life, this life is almost insignificant, yet it seals

our fate in the world to come. In his autobiography al-Ghazâlî writes that reading Sufi literature made him realize that our theological convictions are by themselves irrelevant for gaining redemption in the afterlife. Not our good beliefs or intentions count; only our good and virtuous actions will determine our life in the world to come. This insight prompted al-Ghazâlî to change his lifestyle and adopt the Sufi path (al-Ghazâlî 1959a, 35–38 = 2000b, 77–80). In the *Revival* he composed a book about human actions (*mu'âmalât*) that wishes to steer clear of any deeper discussion of theological insights (*mukâshafât*). Rather, it aims at guiding people towards ethical behavior that God will reward in this world and the next (al-Ghazâlî 1937–38, 1:4–5).

Falsafa was a movement where Christians, Muslims, and even pagan authors participated. After the 12th century it would also include Jewish authors. For reasons that will become apparent, al-Ghazâlî focused his comments on the Muslim *falâsifa*. In the early 10th century, al-Fârâbî (d. 950) had developed a systemic philosophy that challenged key convictions held by Muslim theologians, most notably the creation of the world in time and the original character of the information God reveals to prophets. Following Aristotle, al-Fârâbî taught that the world has no beginning in the past and that the celestial spheres, for instance, move from pre-eternity. Prophets and the revealed religions articulated the same insights that philosophers expressed in their teachings, yet the prophets used the method of symbolization to make this wisdom more approachable for the ordinary people. Avicenna continued al-Fârâbî's approach and developed his metaphysics and his prophetology to a point where it offers comprehensive explanations of God's essence and His actions as well as a psychology that gives a detailed account of how prophets receive their knowledge and how they, for instance, perform miracles that confirm their missions. Avicenna's philosophy offers philosophical explanations of key Muslim tenets like God's unity (*tawhîd*) and the central position of prophets among humans. One of the most popular and the greatest Sufi mystic known across in the Islamic Sufi World is the name of Jalal ud-Din Rumi. He was the most prolific Sufi poet and writer. Rumi was born in Balkh, capital of Khorasan, in what is known as Afghanistan, on September 30th, 1207. And migrated with his family to Anatolia shortly before his home city was destroyed by the Mongols in 1221. After training as a Muslim preacher and jurist, he taught Sharia law, of the Hanafi school, in a madrasa in Konya, where he died on the 17th

December 1273 – around the time of Dante’s eight birthday – where his shrine, the Yesil Turbe, or Green Tomb, still stands. At the age of 37, Rumi’s life was transformed by meeting an enigmatic wandering Dervish called Shams Tabrizi. Shams brought about a major spiritual epiphany in the respectable jurist, and the two quickly became inseparable. From Shams, Rumi discovered that beyond safe forms of Muslim devotion – the life of prayer and preaching and studying the Sharia – and beyond the call of renunciation – of fasting, self-control and self-discipline – that there lay above all a spirituality of love. When Shams mysteriously disappeared, Rumi’s grief was expressed in one of the greatest outpourings of the poetry of longing and separation ever produced in any language: a great waterfall of Persian verse – some 3,500 odes, 2000 quatrains, and a mystical epic – the *Masnawi*, 26000 couplets long, a rambling collection of tales and stories of “the Nightingale who was separated from the Rose”. It is, in the eyes of many, the finest, deepest, most complex and most mellifluous collection of mystical poetry ever written in any language and out of any religious tradition. Rumi’s writings certainly stand as the supreme expression of mystical Islam.

Rumi saw his writing as an extension of that of Shams – indeed Rumi explicitly states that Shams is the voice speaking through his poems:

*Speak, Sun of Truth and faith, pride of Tabriz!
But it is your voice that mouths all my words.*

In another couplet he describes himself as impregnated by the spirit of Shams:

*The lady of my thoughts gives constant birth,
She is pregnant but with the light of your glory.
(Shams-e Tabrizi, xiii Foreword)*

Rumi’s absorption and total annihilation in his master Shams al-Din Tabrizi, shines through his poetry collection entitled *Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi*, which has been accessible even to western readers. In one of his compositions, Rumi expounds on Shams’s love, compassion, grace and power in a series of paradoxes about his beloved Sheikh. Rumi describes the face of Shams as the Sun that makes the ephemeral eternal. He writes about Shams:

*No favour was left which that winsome beauty did not bestow.
 What fault of ours, if he failed in bounty towards you?
 Thou art reviling, because the charmer wrought tyranny;
 Who ever saw in the two worlds a fair one that played not the tyrant?
 His love is a sugar-cane, tho' he gave not sugar;
 His beauty is perfect faith. Tho' he kept not faith.....
 The Sun of the face of Shams Din, glory of the horizons,
 never shone upon aught perishable, but he made it eternal.*
 (Nicholson, 23)

In these lines, Rumi describes Shams as bounteous tyrant because he gives the disciple freedom, but demands everything in return; he bestows faith on the disciple, but then hides himself to increase the disciple's longing.

In the eleventh century, in Persia, there lived a mathematician named Ghiyathuddin Abulfath Omar bin Ibrahim al-Khayyami – or, Omar (1048–1131), son of Abraham, the tent-maker. His book entitled “Umar Khayyam ki Rubiyat” published in 1960 in the translated version from Persian to English. One of the original lyrics is derived from his original script –

*maa.em ba-lutf-e-haq tavallā karda
 vaz tā.at-o-ma. asīyat tabrra karda
 āñ-jā ki ināyat-e-tū bāshad bāshad
 nā-karda chū karda karda chuñ nā-karda*

The poet Umar Khayyam in these lyrics expressing his inner fear that hesitates him to face the reality of divine truth on the earth. He felt the reality of life as sword that frightens human to accept the ultimate, infinite truth to surrender to the Almighty while traversing the path of life in the earthly world. However, rather than the “carpe diem philosophy” professed in FitzGerald’s *Rubáiyát*, the Khayyam Persian original offers a pessimistic view of the world and the Sisyphean situation humans are stuck in. In his quatrains the world is a “salt-desert, a nest of sorrow, a station on the road”, but in FitzGerald’s transcreation it becomes more about making “the most of what we yet may spend”. However, rather than the “carpe diem philosophy” professed in FitzGerald’s *Rubáiyát*, the Khayyam Persian original offers a pessimistic view of the world and the Sisyphean situation humans are stuck in. In his quatrains the world is a “salt-desert, a nest of sorrow, a station on

the road”, but in FitzGerald’s transcreation it becomes more about making “the most of what we yet may spend”.

Omar wrote poetry, and while his rhymes received little attention in their day, they were rediscovered and translated into beautiful English—more than seven centuries later—by a gentleman and scholar named Edward FitzGerald. It was a meeting of minds, a great collaboration of the past and the present, and FitzGerald's rendition of those passionate verses has become one of the best loved poem cycles in the English language. With their concern for the here and now, as opposed to the hereafter, Omar Khayyam's quatrains are as romantic today as they were hundreds of years ago; they are a tribute to the power of one moment's pleasure over a lifetime of sorrow, of desire over the vicissitudes of time. Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, presented here with Edward FitzGerald's original preface, is truly a classic, and it will stand forever as one of our finest monuments to love. The **Rubáiyát** of Omar Khayyám is a lyrical composition in quatrains (four-line stanzas). Rather than telling a story with characters, the verse presents deep feelings and emotions on subjects such as life, death, love, and religion. The diction of the poem conveys high divine and sensitivity to spirituality. The beauty and simplicity is so immaculate that people of all faiths and those who have no faith at all can seek divine solace in it. **Omar** has used popular metaphors in his passionate praise of wine and love.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám is the title that Edward FitzGerald gave to his 1859 translation from Persian to English of a selection of quatrains (*rubāiyāt*) attributed to Omar Khayyam (1048-1131), dubbed "the Astro-nomer-Poet of Persia".

Although commercially unsuccessful at first, FitzGerald's work was popularised from 1861 onward by Whitley Stokes, and the work came to be greatly admired by the Pre-Raphaelites in England. FitzGerald had a third edition printed in 1872, which increased interest in the work in the United States. By the 1880s, the book was extremely popular throughout the English – speaking world, to the extent that numerous "Omar Khayyam clubs" were formed and there was a "fin de siècle cult of the Rubaiyat".

FitzGerald's work has been published in several hundred editions and has inspired similar translation efforts in English and in many other languages. In the context of a piece entitled *On the Knowledge of the Principals of Existence*, Khayyam endorses the Sufi path (Mehdi 8). Csillik (1960) suggests the possibility that Omar Khayyam could see in Sufism an ally

against orthodox religiosity (Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 75). Other commentators do not accept that Omar's poetry has an anti-religious agenda and interpret his references to wine and drunkenness in the conventional metaphorical sense common in Sufism. The French translator J. B. Nicolas held that Omar's constant exhortations to drink wine should not be taken literally, but should be regarded rather in the light of Sufi thought where rapturous intoxication by "wine" is to be understood as a metaphor for the enlightened state or divine rapture of *baqaa* (Albano 59-77). Bjerregaard (1915) defended that Omar Khayyam was a Sufi (3). Idries Shah (1999) and Dougan (1991) attribute the reputation of hedonism to the failings of FitzGerald's translation. In his essay "The Enigma of Edward FitzGerald", Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges wrote that "the two [Khayyam and FitzGerald] were quite different, and perhaps in life might not have been friends; death and vicissitudes and time led one to know the other and make them into a single poet," shedding light on the birth of "Fitz-Omar". Scholars and writers view FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* simply as English poetry with Persian allusions, and it is widely accepted his quatrains in English are loose translations *based* on the original verses. In fact, FitzGerald himself called the translation "very un-literal", but "at all cost, a thing must live... Better a live sparrow than a stuffed eagle". He called his transcreation of Khayyam's verses, "transmogrification". In what is called the 67th Bodleian quatrain, Khayyam had written:

Roz-ast khush o hava nah garam ast na sard
Abr az rukh gulzar hami shawid garad
Bulbul ba-zaban pahalawi ba gul zard
Fariyad hameen zind kah mein baawad khurd

The quatrain was transcreated by FitzGerald as:

And David's Lips are lock't; but in divine
 High piping Pehlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!"
 "Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose (p.12).

That yellow Cheek of her's to incarnadine

While there have been many controversial cases of transcreation, FitzGerald's work raised many questions primarily because he was accused of

attributing verses to the *Rubáiyát* that Khayyam never wrote. Of the 1,400-and-odd quatrains attributed to Khayyam, some scholars estimate only 200 are his, while others such as Ali Dashti (author of *In Search of Omar Khayyam* and an authority on the works of the Khayyam) say that “only 36 quatrains have a likelihood of authenticity”.

In the introduction to *Rubáiyát*, Daniel Karlin notes that “the structure of the poem, in one sense, ‘translates’ nothing, because it has no counterpart in the original text”. Despite the contention, FitzGerald’s *Rubáiyát* not only gained immense recognition but also established Khayyam as a poet, who was freethinking and hedonistic.

Idries Shah (16 June 1924–23 November 1996), also known as Idris Shah, né Sayed Idries el- Hashimi and by the pen name Arkon Daraul, was an author and teacher in the Sufi tradition who wrote over three dozen books on topics ranging from psychology and spirituality to travelogues and culture studies, and also a leading thinker of the 20th century. His seminal work was *The Sufis*, which appeared in 1964 and was well received internationally. Born in India, the descendant of a family of Afghan nobles, Shah grew up mainly in England. His role in the controversy surrounding a new translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, published by his friend Robert Graves and his older brother Omar Ali Shah, came in for scrutiny. However, he also had many notable defenders, chief among them the novelist Doris Lessing. Shah came to be recognized as a spokesman for Sufism in the West and lectured as a visiting professor at several Western universities. His works have played a significant part in presenting Sufism as a form of spiritual wisdom approachable by individuals and not necessarily attached to any specific religion. Abdullah Dogan taught a practical fourth-way method of self-development for Westerners, initially drawing on the ideas of G.I. Gurdjieff, Hazrat Inayat Khan and Sri Ramdas of Kerala, among others. Increasingly his own inner development informed his teaching.

Abdullah's main aim was to wake people up so they might find their psychological and spiritual potential. To this end he instructed individually, held regular question-and-answer sessions for groups of pupils and conveyed his ideas in written, graphic art and musical form. Both Idris Shah and Abdullah Dogan argue that Omar's poetry is to be understood as with a specialized knowledge of philosophical ideas. On the other hand, Iranian experts such as Mohammad Ali Foroughi and Mojtaba Minovi rejected the hypothesis that Omar Khayyam was a Sufi (Bowen, 72). Foroughi stated that

Khayyam's ideas may have been consistent with that of Sufis at times but there is no evidence that he was formally a Sufi. Aminrazavi Mehdi (2007) states that "Sufi interpretation of Khayyam is possible only by reading into his *Rubā'īyyāt* extensively and by stretching the content to fit the classical Sufi doctrine (The Wine of Wisdom, 128). Furthermore, Frye (1975) emphasizes that Khayyam was intensely disliked by several celebrated Sufi mystics who belonged to the same century. Shams Tabrizi (spiritual guide of Rumi) and Najm al-Din Daya (Razi) a 13th century Persian Sufi in Anatolia on reading the translated version of Fitzgerard's of Omar Khayyam's poetry (The Wine of Wisdom 128), described Omar Khayyam as "an unhappy philosopher, atheist, and materialist" (Bowen 72). Dāya says in his commentary of the Qur'an, "Verily all that God created in the world of form has its like in the world of meaning; all that He created in the world of meaning– this being the hereafter– has its true essence in the world of reality, which is the uttermost unseen. Know too that of all that God created in all the worlds, a specimen and sample is present in man (Quoted in Esmā'il Ḥaqqī, *Rū' al-bayān, Istanbul, 1389/1970, I, 404*)

While on the other side, some Sufi mystics like Attar of Nishapur regarded him not as a fellow – mystic but a free-thinking scientist who awaited punishments hereafter. Rahim in his review of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's book mentions Nasr's underline notion that Muslim philosophers did not see a dichotomy between intellect and intuition but considered them to make a hierarchy within the totality of the sources of human knowledge. He discusses the limits of theological schools and philosophers who restrict knowledge to that which is attainable by demonstration (224). Consider, for example, his statement about the divine essence: "Islamic metaphysics places the Absolute above all limitations," and "It knows that the Divine Essence ... is Non – Being or Beyond-Being" (63). He in the chapter Nine of his book *Islamic Philosophy from its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (2006) argues that it is "reductive" to use a literal interpretation of his verses (many of which are of uncertain authenticity to begin with) to establish Omar Khayyam's philosophy (165-183). Instead, he cited as evidence Khayyam's interpretive translation of Avicenna's treatise *Discourse on Unity (Al-Khutbat al-Tawhīd)*, where Avicenna expresses orthodox views in agreement with the Sayyed Hossein Nasr on Divine Unity (The belief in 'Unity of the actions of Allah (SwT)' informs us that everything and everyone which exists in the entire universe – even the leaves

of a tree which move with the passing breeze – originate from Allah (SwT). Nothing can take place without His command – the cutting which the sword performs, the burning which a fire produces and all other actions stem from His order. To sum this belief up in one sentence, we refer to the tradition mentioned in Bihar al-Anwar that reads: “There is no one effector in the creation except Allah” (178). The prose works believed to be Omar's are written in the peripatetic style (in Aristotelian manner travelling from one place to another) and are explicitly theistic, dealing with subjects such as existence of God and theodicy (The Wine of Wisdom, 160). As noted by Bowen these works indicate his involvement in the problems of metaphysics rather than in the subtleties of Sufism (71). As evidence of Khayyam's faith and/or conformity to Islamic customs, Aminrazavi in his book *The Wine of Wisdom* (p.14) mentions that in his treatises he offers salutations and prayers, praising God and Muhammad. In most biographical extracts, he is referred to with religious honorifics such as Imam, *The Patron of Faith* (*Ghīyāth al-Dīn*), and *The Evidence of Truth* (*Hujjat al-Haqq*). He also notes that biographers who praise his religiosity generally avoid making reference to his poetry, while the ones who mention his poetry often do not praise his religious character (48). For instance, Al-Bayhaqi's account which antedates by some years other biographical notices, speaks of Omar as a very pious man who professed orthodox views down to his last hour (174).

Based on all the existing textual and biographical evidence, the question remains somewhat open (Aminrazavi 14) and as a result Khayyam has received sharply conflicting appreciations and criticisms (E.D. Ross 360).

To mention about contemporary writers – is one such Sufist mystic – Sadia Dehlavi (1957 – 5 August 2020). She was a devotee of Khwaja Garib Nawaj of Ajmer and Nizam ud-Din Auliya of Delhi. She criticised radical interpretations of Islam and called for a pluralistic understanding of Islam. In April 2009, Dehlavi published a book on Sufism entitled *Sufism: The Heart of Islam*. Sadia's discourse in her book is against delinking of Sufism from Islam (by Western writers) or the assertion that Sufism is not part of Islam (by Muslims). Dehlavi try to convince both groups by stating that “the Messenger of Islam remains the primary source of Sufism.” She argues that “Sufism cannot be understood without reference to the Holy Book.” She says, “Although Sufism, similar to other mystic traditions, offer universal ethics and meditation practices, its internal spiritual current cannot be alienated from its outward Islamic dimensions.”

To her Muslim readers she tells clearly that Sufism emanates from the *Sharia*. “Sufis strictly follow the Sharia,” Sadia declares. “The Sufi philosophy is classified into three stages: *Sharia*, the outward law, *Tareeqa*, the Way and *Haqeeqa*, the Truth.” But elsewhere she states that “those who pursued the study of *Sharia* laws came to be known as jurists. The scholars who devoted themselves to the development of virtuous inner qualities came to be known as Sufis.” While all Muslims recognize *Sharia*, fewer people understand *Tareeqa* as part of mainstream Islam. she writes: “I feel that the stress on rationale is misplaced. I often argue that had God been an academic trophy, the ability to know Him would be restricted to those with powers of intellect. Stringent modern attitudes, requiring a scientific basis for everything, tend to overlook the importance of the heart and sincere emotions.”

In her next book, *The Sufi Courtyard: Dargahs of Delhi* (2012), Sadia attempts to bring in discourse a sort of revisualisation of Sufi Shrines in Delhi, the *Divine Mysteries* of Sufi Saints/*Pirs* as well as *Dargah Evenings* and the rituals. She alleged that, there was an urgent need for a compendium on Sufism, a kind of carry-with-you reference handbook that could explain the basic facts about Sufism, its origins, its history in India, the major *Silsilas* or spiritual lineages, their specific traits, commonalities and differences and the impact of Sufism in India. One needed something that one could go back to, in order to check the meaning of particular words like *Barkat*, *Aqeedat*, *Sam'a*, *Haal*, *Urs* and other Sufi practices and rituals. One is needed to understand why women are by and large not permitted inside shrines. One is needed to know about the areas of conflict between the clergy and the Sufis and between the state and the Sufis. What kind of relations did they build with other spiritual traditions, the reasons for their popularity and their relevance today? In a Delhi, this specific book on Sufism, expects to get information on all the major Sufi shrines and little notes on the history of the Sufis, their times and their contributions. In a way this book attempts to reframe Islamic mystics and their spiritualisation of the waking-world for the heavens.

Similarly, the book *Delhi by Heart* (2013) authored by Raza Rumi brings forth the influence and reflections of mystical Islamic Sufism from the times of the advent of Nizam ud-Din Auliya in Delhi, which later in span of ups and downs of history from mediaeval to the post-modern Delhi opens certain in-depth, inherent, indented conceptions, formations of Islamic culture and its adaptations in the Hindustani culture of past, present

and future. *Delhi by Heart* is a sensitively written account of a Pakistani writer's discovery of Delhi – Why, asks Raza Rumi, does the capital of another country feel like home? How is it that a man from Pakistan can cross the border into 'hostile' territory and yet not feel 'foreign'? Is it the geography, the architecture, the food? Or is it the streets, the festivals, and the colours of the subcontinent, so familiar and yes, beloved... As he takes in the sights, from the Sufi shrines in the south to the markets of Old Delhi, from Lutyens' stately mansions to Ghalib's crumbling abode, Raza uncovers the many layers of the city. He connects with the richness of the Urdu language, observes the syncretic evolution of mystical Islam in India and its deep connections with Hindustani classical music – so much a part of his own selfhood. And every so often, he returns to the refuge of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, the twelfth-century *Pir*, whose dargah still reverberates with music and prayer every evening. His wanderings through Delhi lead Raza back in time to recollections of a long-forgotten Hindu ancestry and to comparisons with his own city of Lahore – in many ways a mirror image of Delhi. They also lead to reflections on the nature of the modern city, the inherent conflict between the native and the immigrant and, inevitably, to an inquiry into his own identity as a South Asian Muslim. Rich with history and anecdote, and conversations with Dilliwalas known and unknown, *Delhi by Heart* offers an unusual perspective and unexpected insights into the political and cultural capital of India.

Conclusion

“To look at a much later period, the tradition of ‘medieval mystical poets’, well established by the fifteenth century, included exponents who were influenced both by the egalitarianism of the Hindu Bhakti movement and by that of the Muslim Sufis, and their far-reaching rejection of social barriers brings out sharply the reach of arguments across the divisions of caste and class. Many of these poets came from economically and socially humble backgrounds, and their questioning of social divisions as well as of the barriers of disparate religions reflected a profound attempt to deny the relevance of these artificial restrictions and the issues of contemporary equality that characterize so much of contemporary society.” (Amartya Sen, 11).

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