

A STUDY ON CONTRIBUTION OF AMIR KHUSRAU IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

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Abstract:

A new era dawned in the history of India with the birth of Abul Hassan Yamin Ud-Din Dhusrau better known as Amir Khusrau Dehlavi, who was a famous Sufi Musician, Poet , Historian and scholar of late 13th and early 14th Century. He is one of the leading figure who have focused on the cultural icon in the history of Indian civilization for almost seven hundred years. When Amir Khusrau was in his twenties, he began his career early as a professional writer and later as a Historian. For the next fifty years , until his death in 1325, Khusrau was initially in the court of smaller nobles and princes , then later permanently at the court of the Sultans of Delhi. He witnessed the rule of seven sultans and managed to survive the political intrigues of the various factions and individuals at work in the court of Delhi Sultans .

Key Word: *Dhusrau , Sufi Musician , Cultural Icon, Civilization, Khusrau, Political Intrigues*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The main motive of writing this manuscript is to study contribution of Amir Khusrau in literature, Music, different language and the importance of his works as historical source, Khusrau , who never claimed to be a historian , wrote prolific records of what he saw and what had happened during the reign of the various Sultans whom he served in Delhi. His works are very similar in terms of raw content to that of any other travelogue or history of that time.

That real name of Amir Khusrau was Abul Hasan Yamin ud-Din-Khusrau , but he became famous by the name of Amir Khusrau. He was born in 1252 in Patiyali , near Badaun in western Uttar Pradesh. He was the son of Amir Saif ud-Din Mahmud , was a Turk and his mother Bebi Daulat Naz was a native Hindu women. At the age of 8 years his father passed away . after the death of her husband, Khusrau's mother moved back to her father's house in Delhi with her children. It was thus in the house of his Rajput maternal grandfather. Rawat Arz (known by his title as Imad-Ul-Mulk), that Khusrau was raised , Khusrau was proud of the lines, a Turk and a Rajput. He wrote "I am a Turk of Hindustan, I answer in Hindavi. I don't have Egyptian sugar to speak. Arabic" Khusrau was an intelligent child. He started learning and writing poetry at the age of nine. In his poetry, and throughout his life, Khsurau affirmed that he was an Indian Turk (Turk-e-Hindusani).

Khsurau's love and admiration for his motherland in transparent though his work . It was due to the great patriotism shown to the land of Hindustan that Persian lyricist Hafiz of Shirazulla described him as (Tooti-e-Hind) "the signing bird of India". He was the follower of the chishti order. In 1310 Khsurau became a disciple of a famous sufi saint of the Chishi order , Nizamuddin Auliya . At the feet of his mentor , Khsurau sang the song of love to messes who enjoyed his folk

song and literature. His rich Persian poetry became so famous that it was sung by the Qawwals, the tradition that still continues in the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi today. As far as his religious view is concerned, he was liberal to other sects. On one occasion, while strolling on his terrace with his friend, the poet Amir Khusrau, Nizamuddin Auliya saw a group of Hindus at worship. Greatly impressed at their devotion, he said to him, “Every community has its own path and faith, and its own way of worship.

Amir Khusrau was proud to being an Indian. He says, “I have praised India for two reasons. First, because India is the land of my birth and our country. Love of the country is an important obligation... Hindustan in the heaven. It is like Brahmins here are as learned as Aristotle and there are many scholars in various fields...” Amir Khusrau was so keen towards the literature that, he did not stop his literary work till the last breath of his life. Khusrau passed away in October 1325 in Delhi, six months after the death of Nizamuddin Auliya, Khusrau's tomb is next to that of his spiritual master in the Nizamuddin Dargah in Delhi.

2. LITERATURE :

After the death of his grandfather, Amir Khusrau joined the army of Malik Chajju, nephew of Ghiyas Ud-din Balban. It was here that his poetry was brought to the attention of the assembly of the Royal Court where he was honored. Amir Khusrau has the honour of writing near about two thousand five hundred books, among them ninety nine have been identified. He experimented with all the poetical forms, and created a new style of Persian which came to be known as Sabaq-i-Hindi or the style of India. His famous book entitled Raht-ul-Mohibben encompasses the discovery of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Amongst his other books the most permanent are.

Kiran-us-Sadayan (Meeting of the two auspicious stars): Khusrau remained in the service of Muiz ud-Din-Qaiqabad, for two years from 1287-1288. He finished his first Masnavi in 1288. It is written in Persian and includes Gazaals. Its main theme is the conflict and the meeting between Bughra Khan and his son Sultan Muiz Ud-din Qaiqabad. Besides that in this book Khusrau also gives information about the army, the climate in Awadh and the description of the city of Delhi.

Miftah –ul-Futuh (Key to the victories) another historical masnavi of Khusrau, provides the details of the military campaigns of Sultan Jalauddin Khalji (an old admirer of the poet), the revolt of Malik Chhajju (under whose patronage the poet started his public career) and its suppression along with the victories achieved by the Sultan in Karra and Jhain together with his military advance to Ranthambore.

Khazain –ul-Futuh (The Treasuries of Victory), this book is also known as Tarikh –i-Alai. This book is a panegyric account of the first fifteen years of the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khalji. This book has one of the important specialties that this is the only contemporary account of the reign of Alauddin Khalji. In the book Khusrau has written about various expenditures of Alauddin viz. Gujarat, Chittor, Malwa and Warangal along with an eye witness account of the

Deccan campaigns of the Sultan's commander Malik Kafur. Historical importance of the work also lies in its description of the administrative reforms of Alauddin Khalji as well as in its geographical and military details.

Deval-Rani-Khazar-Khani (Historical masnavi) : In this book Amir Khusrau has brought to limelight some of the brighter aspects of Alauddin's character as well as of events ignored in the contemporary historiography. Although a love story of Deval Rani (daughter of Gujarat Ruler Karan) and Khizar Khan (Alauddin Khalji's son) it also provides a short historical sketch of Muslim rulers of India besides highlighting the peaceful and prosperous condition of India under Alauddin's rule, after his successful repulsion of the Mongols. Significance of this work also lies in the fact that while describing Alauddin Khalji's victory over Gujarat and Malwa, it also provides the topographical details of these regions

Nuh-Siphir (Nine skies) : Among all the works of Amir Khusrau , Nuh Siphir (Nine skies) is considered as the most significant not only for understanding his attitude towards Hindustan, but also for showcasing the virile productivity of his poetic talent. Khusrau wrote this historical masnavi for his patron Mubark Shah Khalji who , as a ruler , has not received much appreciation from the historians. The importance of this masnavi lies more in the fact that it contains multifarious topics such as praise of God, prophet , Mubarak Khalji's accession to the throne , his military expedition to Deogir, description of Delhi and its superiority over other important cities of the world along with vivid details of the climate of Hindustan, its flora and fauna , sciences , religious beliefs and languages .This work is quite remarkable as it is full of pride for the land of Khusrau's birth and also for the projection of India as a unified cultural zone despite its diversities in flora and fauna, language and religion.

Tughluq-Nama (Book of the Tughluqs): it is an historical Masnavi . it was composed by Amir Khusrau to commemorate the victory of Ghiasuddin Tughluq over Khusru Kha, leading to the establishment of new ruling dynasty, it is valuable primary source of history for the reign of Ghiasuddin Tughluq.

Ijaz-i-Khusravi: It is massive collection of diverse types of documents , personal letters and treatises by Amir Khusrau to his friends , master , to satisfy his literary and intellectual hunger. Some of these are the official documents , like the Fathnama of Lakhnauti , drafted by him on the orders of the Sultans , which are of immense historical importance. In general the contents of Ijaz-I-Khusravi constitute an invariable source of study for socio cultural history of the times.

Besides the above discussed books, there are various other books written by Amir Khusrau like Khamsa-e-Khusrau (A quintet (Khamsa) of five Masnavis ; Matla-ul-Anwar, Khusrau Shirin, Laila Majnun , Ain-e-Sikandari . Hast Bihist , Tuhfat us-Sighr, Wast-ul-Hayat, Ghurat-UI-Kamaal, Baqia-Naqia, Afzal-ul-Fawaid, Nihayat-UI-Kamaal, Khaliq-i-Bari, Jwahir-i.Khusravi.

3. MUSIC:

Amir Khusrau is a pioneer of Indo-Persian literature and a great exponent of music. Amir Khusrau was favourite of both Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya and the Sultans of Delhi. After Sultan Alluaddin Khalji's conquest of Decan , many distinguished musicians from that region moved to Delhi. Amir Khusrau seized the opportunity to study the Decant music of the Karnataka School , which preserved the musical tradition of ancient India with greater purity. Amir Khusrau was has given the title of Nayak or the master of both the theory and practices of music , introduced many perso-arabic airs (rags), such as aiman, gora, sanam etc. Musicians credit Khusrau with the creation of some styles of music ; qaul , qalbana, naqsh , gul, Tarana and Khyal. He is also credited with having invented the Sitar and Table.

Amir Khusrau is credited to have created 'Qawwali' a from of Sufi devotional music , by fushing the Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Indian Musical traditions in the late 13th Century. A well-punctuated chorus emphasizing the theme and devotional refrain coupled with a lead singer utilizing an orante style of fast tans and difficult svara combinations are the distinguishing characteristics of a Qawwali. It is because of the immense contribution of Amir Khusrau that he is called father of Qawwali.

But his chief fame rests upon Ghurratul ,which are preserved in five voluminous poetic collections namely Tohfatus Sighar , Wastul Hayat; Ghurratul Kamal; Nihayatul Kamal and Baqiyah Naqiyah. The ghazals of Khusrau are full of artistic merits and are finely turned to the sound of music. They are adapted to Indian geo-social conditions and they have been sung by the qawwals right from the time of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya down to this days and one can enjoy the everlasting freshness of his ghazal , which over centuries has become Indian heritage.

4. LANGUAGE :

As in most pre-modern civilization the literary tended to be different from those that ordinary people spoke. Writing in the beginning of 14th Century, Amir Khusrau had noticed the existence of regional languages and remarked:" There is at this time in every province a language peculiar to itself, and not borrowed from any other-Sindhi , Lahori , Kashiri, Kubari(Dgori the jammu region), Dhur Samundari (Kananda of Kamataka) , Tilangi (Telugu) , Guraj (Gujarati) , Mabari (Tamil), Gaudi (North Bengal) , Bengali , Awadh (Awadhi) and Delhi and its environs (Hindhavi) used for every purpose by the common people". The credit for recognizing Dehliv or Hindavi as a language of the masses goes to Amir Khusrau who made frequent use f them in his poems and other literary compositions. He actually uses the word Hindi for the Zaban –i-Hind or the language of the Indian masses, which was as yet comparatively freeform the Persian or Arabic vocabulary. He says;

"I am a parrot of India; therefore , ask me something in Hindavi language so that I may sing a melody."

Amir Khusrau composed a large number of couplets and verses with mixed vocabularies of Turkic , Arabic , Persian and Braj Bhasha (a dialect closely related to Hindi) which laid foundation for the inception of a new language called Urdu.

5. AMIR KHUSRAU AS HISTORIAN :

Khusrau’s works become handy as far as the factual information with historical relevance is concerned. The later historian Barani quotes Khusrau on many occasions to confirm some of the major points of view on past events. In many works Barani’s assertion was supplemented by the facts furnished by Amir Khusrau. Khusrau is also eloquent where Barani chooses remain silent. Thus , in that course of development of a historical consciousness from being “embedded” to a more modern or “externalized” historic consciousness. It is in this context of development that the works of Amir Khusrau and his contemporary written are of great concern to us as historians .

On the standards of modern history –writing , Khusrau was not writing history. He was merely noting down the event with his own interests, comfort, superfluities , additions, omissions , slips , exaggerations and experience . But while doing this, he left a huge amount of data behind , which is of extreme importance for the researchers of modern historian . His style is full of exaggerations and metaphorical description, but the fact of history are given with tolerable fidelity. It is now for us to bear in mind his biases and favours and then look at his masnavis to reconstruct the history of the Sultanate. Because as E.H. Carr has uttered. “Before reading the history, read the historian”.

6. FINDING:

The role played by the Amir Khusrau as a poet , musician , courtier and historian in Delhi Sultanate is remarkable. His literary works has shown the great patriotism. He was proud to be an Indian and upheld the diversity of India through his literary works. Khusrau has praised the Indian languages , including Hindi (which he calls Hindavi) . Amir Khusrau was a prolific classical poet associated with the royal courts of more than seven rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. He wrote many playful riddles, songs and legends which have become a part of popular culture in South Asia. He was also an accomplished musician and took part in religions musical gatherings (sama) organized by the famous Sufi Saint, Nizamuddin Auliya , Amir Khusrau as a Muslim was able to draw upon a vast treasure –house of Muslim folk and religious lore and was able to enhance the Indian Muslims’ sense of belonging to a universal culture, they could identify themselves as not merely a local immigrant sect. Khusraus’ love for India shows that the ‘Turkish ruling class was no longer prepared to behave as a foreign ruling class , and that the ground had been prepared for a cultural rapprochement between them and the Indians.

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