CHAPTER – IV

THE ROLE OF SUFI SAINTS IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF PERSIAN LITERATURE

The spirit of religion and mysticism has struck a dominant note in every form of Persian literature through all the stages of its development. Thus the lyricisms of a ghazal, the romanticism of a masnawi, or the meditative solemnity of a rubai have been skillfully harnessed to communicate mystic experiences directly, or through allegory and symbolism. Mysticism as a force of social reformation, breaking the barriers of religious intolerance, commanded considerable influence in the masses.

The early missionaries of Islam in India, coming southwards were disciples of the great Sufi saints in the north. Chronologically the political conquest of the Deccan by the Muslim invaders is an event of much later period, as compared to the imperceptible infiltration of Islamic influences through the missionary activities of the Sufi Saints and Savants of Islam. These standard bearers of a new message who either heralded from the north or from Persia and Iraq, and who generally adopted Persian or Arabic as a medium of expression for writing, if not for speech, were primarily responsible for the diffusion of
Islamic learning, and mysticism in Southern India\textsuperscript{2}. The presence of Auliyas, Sufis and Saints, who disregarded all distinctions of colour and creed, or rank and status and who were far removed from pomp of the royal courts; and freely mixed with all strata of society, gradually tended to popularize Persian words, phrases and colloquial expressions in the indigenous languages of the Deccan. Their influence created and developed a genuine liking for Sufistic literature in their followers, who indirectly promoted the spread and popularity of Persian language and literature.

These saints acted as a vital link between the ruling aristocracy and the general populace and exercised a powerful influence on both classes of society. During this regimes of the Bahmanis and the subsequent Muslim Sultanates in the Deccan, we witness the phenomenon of a harmonious collaboration between the Church (the hierarchy of Divines and Saints) the State (the sovereigns) in sponsoring the sacred mission of the diffusion of Islamic ideology, and thus indirectly Persian language and literature\textsuperscript{3}. In the centuries immediately following, Deccan was very intimately bound up by cultural tiea with Persia and Arabia by the services of these godly men. Amongst them a few have also been poets, historians, theologians and commentators of Scriptures. Some of their
literary works are still surviving in the manuscript form, and those which have become extinct have left behind copious stray extracts occasionally to be met with in the chronicles and memoirs of this period. A brief resume of the literary services of these mystics and divines, some of whom were contemporaries of the Bahmani rulers is a necessary preliminary to a critical study of the literature of this period of the Muslim rule in the Deccan. It was thought advisable to group them together in one chapter, even at the risk of transgressing chronological limits.

Long before the beginning of political conquest of the Deccan, and the permanent settlement of a section of Muslim population in the South, Muslim saints like Haji Rumi, Hisamuddin Tegh-Barhana, Shaikh Shahid, Asadul Auliya, Baba Sharafuddin, Baba Shihabuddin, Baba Fakhruddin, Ali Shahid and many others had undertaken the sojourn in the South for the spread of their sacred mission. Almost all of them were accompanied by a host of disciples. By these noble sacrifices and sufferings, their mission gained strength and popularity. Some of these godly men with their missionary zeal for toleration and universal brotherhood, soon attracted numerous adherents to their fold. They befriended the illiterate masses to such an extent that nicknames in local languages were soon coined for them. Some of them were popularly known as Pir Mithe, Pir Bawle, Pir
Maqsud, Shah Raju, Chinagi Shah, Shaikh Bhikari, Shah, Baba etc. They were distributed throughout the South, and their centres of activity were located in the Karnataka, Mysore, Maharashtra and Madras. Daulatabad, Ahmednagar, Gulbarga Talikot, Balaghat, Gogi, Bijapur, and Trichanapally were a few amongst the many places of their cultural and missionary activities. With the forced migration of the nobility and gentry of Delhi to the South, the pace of influx of the missionary class was also accelerated. Many saints, scholars and poets including Amir Hasan Dehlawi, Sayyid Yusuf Hussaini, Khwajah Husayn Khwajah ‘Umar, Shaikh Zaynud-Din Daud and Burhanud-Din Gharib came and settled down in the Deccan.

1. Shaikh Ibrahim Sangani or Sanjani:

He was a precursor of ‘Aynud-Din Ganjul-ulum, and a prominent figure in the circle of scholar-saints in the Deccan during the period before the Bahmanis. He was known as Adham-e-Sani. Ganjul-Ilm has written a short account of this saint in his Atwarul-Abrar, which has been copied by later biographers of saints.⁵
2. Siraj-e-Junaydi:

A descendant of Junayd-e-Baghdadi, a Wali of Gulbarga, commanded respect and a large following in the early period of the Bahmani rule. Bahmani kings had very great faith in the spiritual powers of Shaikh Siraj, and invoked his pious blessings in every political expedition. He attracted leading scholars and mystics like Sayyid-us-Sadat ‘Alaud-Din Hussaini and Sayyid Ahmad-e-Bukhari from Northern India and Persia. Siraj-e-Junaydi and Ganjul-‘Ilm commanded so great a reverence at the Bahmani court, that no prince or nobleman was exempt from offering obeisance to them on their appearance in the royal presence.

3. Shaikh ‘Aynud-Din Ganjul-ulum:

The greatest scholar-saint of the Deccan before Banda Nawaz, a spiritual leader and a friend of almost all the contemporary mystics and saints in India, and a versatile writer in Persian and Arabic on diverse subjects, Shaikh Aynud-din Ganjul-Ilm flourished in Southern India in the Bahmani regime. He was born in the suburbs of Delhi in A. H. 706 relinquished the place of his birth in quest of knowledge, and proceeded to Gujarat which had become a seat of learning and scholarship through the cultural activities of religious celebrities. After a
short sojourn in Gujarat, he went to Daulatabad, the new capital of India, where the renowned doctors of religion and philosophy had flocked from Dehli and other places. Aynud-Din enlisted himself in the discipleship of Sayyid Khwand Mir, and continued his studies in theology and philosophy under Shaikh Shamsud-Din during his stay at Daulatabad. He lived for a few years at Aynabad (Sagar), and finally settled at Bijapur in A. H. 773, where he breathed his last in A. H. 795. He was a contemporary of the first five rulers of the Bahmani dynasty and was held in deep reverence by them.

He devoted his life to the cause of religion and literature, and is reputed to be the author of one hundred and thirty two literary works, on a number of subjects ranging from Quranic commentary to history and biography. Some of them are probably scholastic and polemical in their contents. His contribution to the historical literature of this period is a work named *Mulhaqat-e-Tabaqat-e-Nasiri* or *Tarikh-e-Ilhaq*. This work was a supplement to *Tabaqt-e-Nasiri* of Qazi Minhajud-Din and was evidently an authentic work on history, being a source of Ferishtah and Tabatabai. Ferishtah gives this work, the second place in the long list of his sources, and derives much valuable information of the early Bahmani history from it. He has occasionally quoted passages from this work in the text of his
narrative. Ibrahim e-Zubayri, the author of *Basatinus Salatin* has referred to another work of Ganjul-ulum, viz. *Atwarul-Abrar*, which was a biography of holy men. This work evidently enjoyed considerable popularity for quite a long time since it has been a primary source of information to *Rawzatul-Awliya-e-Bijapur*, along with another work of Shaikh Aynud-Din viz Kitabul-Ansab.

Shaikh Aynud-Din is now acknowledged by research scholars as an early writer of prose in Dakhni. Three treatises in Dakhni Prose are generally ascribed to him. They deal with problems of theology, and are regarded by research students and scholars of Dakhni language and literature as the first prose compositions in Dakhni\(^\text{10}\).

4. Khwajah Banda Nawaz:

The great Saint of the Deccan, Khwajah Banda Nawaz. Sadrud-Din Abul Fath Sayyid Muhammad-e-Hussaini, popularly known as Gesu Daraz\(^\text{11}\), and a disciple and successor to the Saint Khwajah Nasiruddin Mahmud Charagh-e-Delhi, came to the Deccan and settled at Gulbarga in A. H. 815, during the reign of Firoz shah Bahmani. Col. Haig refers to him as Jamaluddin, which is obviously inaccurate. He was born on 4th Rajab A. H. 721, and was taken to Daulatabad at an early age of four by his father Sayyid Yusuf Hussaini. It is also maintained
that Sayyid Yusuf did not go to the Deccan along with the early batch of immigrants but went much later. He received his early education from one Shaikh Babu at Daulatabad, and was greatly fond of attending the Sufi dance and music. After the death of Sayyid Yusuf at Daulatabad, his mother returned to Delhi along with her two sons. Sayyed Muhammad was about fifteen years of age then, on his arrival at Delhi his natural aptitude towards spiritualism soon attracted him towards the famous Divine and Mystic, Khwajah Nasiruddin Mahmud Charagh-e-Dehli. He became his disciple in the following year, soon after he became a ‘Hafiz’ of the Holy Quran, and commenced performing devotional exercises for the discipline of his soul. He won favour of his spiritual preceptor within a very short time. The ‘Master’ developed fondness for this young disciple and was so deeply impressed by his progress in spiritualism, that the claims of the veteran and senior disciples of the ‘Pir Dastgir’ were wailed, and Khwajah Muhammad was chosen to be the successor to the Holy Seat, fell to his lot.

On the death of his master in 1356, Khwajah became his Sajjada-Nashin. His mission continued to diffuse mystic learning and its cardinal doctrines for a period of forty years and his fame as a leading mystic of this land spread far and wide. When Dehli was threatened by the Mongol invasion in A.H. 801, Khwajah
Muhammad left the Capital and proceeded towards the Deccan along with his family and followers. He went to Gujarat en route Bahadurpur, Gawaliar, Bhandar and Khambaiat. It is reported that he stayed with Khwajah Rukund-Din Kan-e-Shakar (“the Sugar-mine”) for a number of years. Thence he proceeded to Baroda and next to Daulatabad and Khuldabad, where he paid homage to the holy shrine of his revered father. He finally arrived at Gulbarga, and it was in compliance with the pressing request of Firoz Shah Bahmani. That the Khwajah should blessed his capital by making it his permanent residence that settled down at Gulbarga, he remained alive for another twenty two years and died on 16th Zil-Qada 1422, aged 105 Lunar years, a month after the coming to the throne of Ahmad Shah Wali Bahmani in 1421. Ahmad Shah’s first act on coming to the throne was to honour the saint, to whose blessings he attributed his success. A magnificent mausoleum was built out of a very rich endowment granted by Ahmed Shah for this purpose, and Khwajah Muhammad was laid in it. This shrine is a sacred seat of pilgrimage, in the south even to this day.

The Khwajah was highly respected by the ruling dynasty of The Bahmanis. Ahmad Shah Wali was his professed disciple. Descendants of this Divine have played leading roles in the political and religious activities during this period. Many of them
were married in the royal families and became councilors of the sovereigns. As torch-bearers of the light of religion they formed a link between the religious-minded masses who had implicit faith in them, and the sovereigns, whose confidence and trust they enjoyed. Khwajah Muhammad was not merely a Divine or a Sufi, he was also a scholar and a writer of great repute. Usually his widespread popularity as a Sufi Saint, has eclipsed his merits and excellences as a poet.

a. *Kitab-e-Khatima*: In this treatise on mysticism, the practical and demonstrative aspect of the mystic lore has been emphasized, and the *Kitab-e-Khatima* can therefore be regarded as a very useful book on practical mysticism. In this book, Khwajah Muhammad has pointed out the mystic implications and subtleties in many religious commandments regarding ablution, prayer, fast, etc., and has further elaborately stated the physical and mental requisites for “ecstasy” (*Sama*). In the later part of the work scrupulous regulations have been laid down for observance by a pupil and a seeker of divine Knowledge. This intricate system of purgation and purification of the soul, its direction on the spiritual path by suppression and curbing of carnal instincts of a Spiritual Pilgrim ‘Salik’ is a marvel in itself and speaks admirably for the fastidiousness of Khwajah Muhammad for thoroughness and perfection in mysticism.
b. *Jawame-ul-Kalim*: This book is a compilation of day-to-day verbal discussions – preferably replies – given in answer to the queries put to the Khwajah by his disciples, compiled by Khwajah’s eldest son, Sayyid Muhammad Akbar-e-Hussaini in the form of a diary. The book therefore is a joint production, in so far as, it is written by Akbar Hussaini and also includes an introduction, and a few laudatory fragments composed by the compiler. But it should also be noted that Sayyid Muhammad Akbar-e-Hussaini was merely a chronicler, and the entire subject-matter has come from the lips of the Khwajah. The compiler has the highest regard for these utterances and expresses it in the following words. “In so far as these short sayings and concise expressions are pregnant with copious meanings and abound in exuberant mysteries (subtleties) – both manifest and occult -; and to every hidden mystery (of spirituality) there is another (underneath); and since they (these sayings) are effulgent from the lantern of the niche of prophet ship, are manifest from the storehouse of mysteries of Ali, are a fruit from the tree of Batul (Fatima) and possess the attribute of prophetic perfection; the name of this ‘Utterance’ is *Jawame-ul-Kalim* (a collection of Discourses).

*Jawame-ul-Kalim* is an in-exhaustive mine of rich information on a number of topics ranging between the common problems of temporal life on the one hand, and the practice and
procedure in the system of spiritual discipline, or the excellence of religion, or the moral virtues of benevolence and penitence etc. on the other, Hundreds of followers belonging to different classes and vocations in life flocked to the venerable threshold of the Khwajah, and sought elucidation of a number of philosophical, religious and mystic problems from their Pir. The book is a compendium of all such discourses. The approach to these controversial problems of theological dogmas and mysticism is more of a popular nature than scientific. A convincing analogy is a certain instrument of driving home an argument, and this method is freely employed in this work. Interesting anecdotes from the life of the Prophet, and his companions, as also from Islamic and legendary history have been profusely quoted. Some inaccuracies and anachronisms have inadvertently crept in, but such instances are comparatively few. Over two hundred stories of all kinds, including reminisces, biographies, and anecdotes from history have been recorded briefly in this book. The selection of these anecdotes reveals a keen perception of the psychology of the layman whose imagination is normally tickled and enlivened by thrills and, sensations. Many of these stories read like romantic tales, while a few others inspire awe and respect in the minds of the devout. Even to a rational agnostic there are resources very cleverly concealed under the allegorical
cloak’. The book is catholic and universal in its appeal, and is a monument to the versatility and utilitarian outlook of the Khwajah towards life and its problems. It is again a proof of the Khwajah’s success as a missionary and an argumentation.

**5. Shah Meeranji Shams-ul-Ushshaq:**

Shah Meeranji Shams-ul-Ushshaq had migrated to Arabia in his early life returned to India when the Bahmani kingdom was on the decline. Now Bijapur and Golconda had become the centres. Shah Meeranji Shams-ul-Ushshaq also left Bidar and went to Bijapur. Here outside the fort of Bijapur on hillock he is buried.

Shah Meeranji Shams-ul-Ushshaq was a prominent member of the chain of disciples of Hazrat Bandanawaz and was himself the founder of the chain of Chishti Sufis in Bijapur and the whole Deccan. The Chishti School is a separate and one of the prominent schools of Sufism and several from the progeny and disciples of Shah Meeranji Shams-ul-Ushshaq have been renowned exponents and practitioners of this school.

Shah Meeranji Shams-ul-Ushshaq was a very great religious leader and teacher. Every day hundreds of people used to go to him to learn or to get their doubts cleared. He had made
himself available to all on all occasion and under all circumstances.

Shah Meeranji Shams-ul-Ushshaq had written many books and pamphlets. The following are very well known; Khushnama, Khash Nagz, Shahdat-ul-Haqeeqat, Sharh-i-Marghoob-ul-Qulub, Magz-i-Marghoob, Chahar Shahadat etc. Gulbas and Jal Tarang are also said to have been written by him.

Shah Meeranji Shams-ul-Ushshaq promoted the scheme started by Bandanawaz and popularized his instructions. The method of his explanation even of intricate problems was very lucid and simple. Thus he has rendered a great service to the people as well as to the Dakhni language and literature.

6. Burhanuddin Janam:

Burhanuddin Janam was the son and successor of Shah Meeranji Shams-ul-Ushshaq. He was an illustrious son of an illustrious father. His works in literature particularly in Sufi literature are as important as are the works of his father. He had also to the credit a number of booklets and pamphlets in prose, Irshad Nama in his famous work in poetry. Catechism is the style of this work and the subject matter is religious philosophy of the Chishti School.
Two of his books *Hujjat-ul-Baqa* and *Kalimat-ul-Haqa-eq* are also famous. Their style is also the same and the matter is also Sufistic teachings. His other books are *Vasiyat-ul-Hadi, Sukh Sohaila, Muftah-ul-Iman, Nuqta-i-Wahid, Naseem-ul-Kalam, Basharat-uz-Zikr, Panj Gunj* etc.

Burhanuddin Janam has written a number of distichs which are found in many of his books. This shows that Burhanuddin Janam was a prolific writer. His language is more refined and progressive. One of his disciples Shah Dawal has written a booklet called *Kashf-ul-Wajood*.

### 7. Aminuddin Aala:

Aminuddin Aala was a son of Burhanuddin Janam, was also a great saint of his period. He was always in a meditative mood and talked very little. For a long time he remained in his room and came out only once a week, thousands of people used to gather to steal a look at him. His head was always bent and he never looked up. He seldom made anybody his disciple but his successors were rather broad minded in this matter. The few of his famous disciples were Meeranji Khudanuma of Hyderabad, Khudawand Hadi of Chincholi and Qadar Linga. To his credit go a number of booklets in prose and poetry. Famous among them
are Ramuz Salikeen, Nizam Wajoodiya, Mohabbat Nama, Guftar Shah Aminuddin and Ganj-i-Maqfi. He died in 1685.

From among the disciples of Aminuddin Aala, Qadar Linga is famous for his works particularly his Ghazals and Masnawis. His famous masnawi is Mouzija-i-Khatun-i-Jannat. In the period of Sikander Adil Shah, Qadar Linga gained fame for his poems and prose works.

One of his disciples, Mouzzam was also a great writer. Shajarat-ul-Atqiya is famous poetic work of his. Two of his prose works which have earned a name are Risala-i-Wajoodiya and Wajood-ul-Arifeen.

8. Sayed Ballaqi:

Sayed Ballaqi was attached to the court of Abdullah Qutub Shah. His taste for Sufism was a refined one. He wrote a masnawi in 1669 called Meeraj Nama in which there are 1500 couplets. Shah Raju was a saint of the period. A number of poetic works have been traced which are said to have been written by him.
9. Abid Shah Abid:

Abid Shah Abid was the famous disciple of Shah raju who has written a booklet and a pamphlet in which he has pronounced his teacher's theories and tried to explain them.

His famous work is *Gulzar-us-Salikeen*. Abid has also translated into Dakhni the prescriptions of Bandanawaz which were in Persian\textsuperscript{16}.

10. Meeranji Khudanuma:

Meeranji Khudanuma was the most prominent of all the Sufis of the period. He held an important post in the government of Abdullah Qutub Shah. On a governmental mission, he had been to Bijapur and there he chanced to meet Aminuddin Aala. From the very day a change came over him. He resigned his post, renounced the world, became a hermit and remained for a year with his leader and Murshid, acquired spiritual benefits and returned to Hyderabad. Here he spent the whole of his life in the service of humanity, guiding them, teaching them and helping them. Thousands were his disciples and devotees not to mention the number of the beneficiaries.

Meeranji Khudanuma was the most important of all the Sufi writers of Golconda\textsuperscript{17}. He could write with equal ease both in poetry as well as in prose works *Shahr-i-Shahr-i-Tamhidat,*
Ain-ul-Qazat, Risala-i-Wajoodiya and Risala-i-Marghoob-ul-Qulub. There are two long narrative poems (*Mazsnawis*) and another Sufistic poem *Basharat-ul-Anwar* besides a number of *Ghazals*.

He died in 1663 and he was buried in a tomb which is known as Qamraqi Gumbad at Hyderabad.
References:

1. T.N. Devare,  *A Short History of Persian Literature*, p.20
2. *Ibid*, p.21
3. *Ibid*, p.22
4. *Ibid*, p.23
7. Ibrahim Zubairi, *Rauzat-ul-Auliya-i-Bijapur*, p.27
8. Abdul Jabbar Malkapuri, *Tazkira Auliya-i-Dakhan*, p.28
9. Muhammad Qasim Ferishtah, *Tarikh-i-Ferishtah*, p.75
10. *Urdu ke Asulib-i-Bayan*, p.25
11. Muhammad Qasim Ferishtah, *op.cit.*, p.781
12. Descendants of the Sufi exercised great influence on the masses and on the kings alike.
13. Ibrahim Zubairi, *op.cit.*, p.94
15. *Ibid*, p.169
17. *Ibid*, p.251