CONCLUSION

The role of Prophet Mohammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in Islam is very crucial and pivotal. He is the pioneer, the one who sowed the seed from which this great tree of religion sprang forth and then nurtured and reaped it throughout his life. He appears as a devotional focus, a leader and the model to the seeker of truth.

Many writers, poets, scholars and other literates have studied and attempted to tap the greatness of this luminary, which has been put forth in the chapters. Over the centuries, Persian poets in general and Sufi poets in particular have presented brilliant testimony of the chronicles of the Holy Prophet of Islam in their literary works. These poems contain the idea and expressions of personal piety and feelings. The most important theme amongst these poetries has been the love of Prophet Muhammad, the praised one. The most important theme in these poems is love for Him who appears as a father figure, a revered family elder, a close relative or a dear friend to whom one would turn for assistance.

Poets composing poems with such Prophetic love have developed a genre in Persian poetry which is known as Na't Sharif – that is used today for both meditative and explicative of the mystical path, understanding the Prophet as the pioneer and epitome of spiritual maturity.

We see that, the poetry that honors the Prophet is not only for the elite, but also for the commoners. They are caters to every taste and ability. These poetries were composed essentially in the praise of the Holy Prophet, his chronicles, to spread the message of Islam and its messenger’s teachings, yet they are also be used for spiritual ascendency. These are used to harness and hone one’s spiritual strength so as to achieve atonement with God.

During the 19th Century, Bengal seemed to become one of the key centers of Persian literature. Literati with an aim to study and contribute to Persian literature started to congregate in this region.
Persian language and culture came to Bengal through Iranian traders, Sufis and dervishes from Iran and Middle East who arrived to this territory with the message of Islam. They played a significant role in popularizing Persian among the populace of the land.

We come across several accounts of scholars evincing that during the long period of Muslim rule in Bengal extending over several centuries, the Persian language and customs had already infiltrated to the core of the society, by way of the language and culture brought in by the Persian speaking Muslim rulers. It was witnessed and has been acknowledged that the Muslim rulers were great admirer and enthusiast of art and culture, be it architecture, music, painting or poetry. It was under their rule that art and literature was so greatly promoted. Due to their keen interest, artisans and poets from all around the world came to their empire to be appreciated and rewarded. Persian being the official language during that time only added to its great advancement and resurgence.

It was during that period that the British were trying to take root in these lands. They had become the closest partners in trade and their scientific advancement occurring in Europe, especially in the field of arms and weaponry started to make the rulers of India dependent on them for weapons and security. The British imperialism had found firm footing on our soils. As a result, the Persian language faced a challenge and by the act of 1837 A.D. it had been replaced by English as the official language of the province. The study of Persian was, however, not discouraged. Both the native and the European scholars contributed magnificently to the development of Indo-Persian Literature.

Many celebrated poets and scholars during that period came to fame in this region. This century bore witness to a class of literary giants, a few of them being Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib, Obaidi Suhrwardi of Midnapur, Abdul Rauf Wahid of Calcutta, Munshi Mohammad Khadim of Burdawan and Hazrat Sufi Sayyid Fath Ali Waysi of Chittagong. Even European scholars proved to be
great zealot for the genre. They may not have made great contributions in the field but they played an active role in translating many of the Persian literary works in English. Among the legions of such enthusiasts were Neil B. Edmonstone, William Kirkpatrick, Francis Gladwin and Mathew Lumsden and Charles Stewart.

Thus in every respect the Department of Persian of the Fort William College has a great role in promoting Persian language and literature in 19th century Bengal.

Bengal even served as a pioneer to Persian journalism during the by-gone era, with the printing of first Persian newspaper in the city of Calcutta, *Miratul Akhbar*, edited by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the first modern man of India. He discovered the common elements of Islam and other religions of the world and fused them together in his celebrated work *Tuhfatul Muwahedin* in Arabicised Persian. Although this newspaper ran for a short period of time but its contemporary newspaper *Jam-e-Jahan Numa* continued for a pretty long period. Besides the above two newspapers, *Aina-e-Sikander* was by far the most celebrated Persian newspaper circulated from Calcutta all over India, edited by Moulvi Sirajuddin who had long association with Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib of Delhi.

And while mentioning poets and writers of 19th century Bengal, the name of the noted poet and writer of Urdu and Persian literature, Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib must not be forgotten, who passed some memorable years of his life in Calcutta which gives him privilege to enlist his name in the lists of famous poets and writers of Bengal. The poetry of Mirza Ghalib both in Urdu and Indo-Persian literature is of equal importance and has earned him fame among Indians. Ghalib was an intelligent writer so whatever verses he said either in amusement or in grave mood, became immortal. Ghalib was also a talented letter writer of Urdu and Persian literature. His *Panj Ahang* is a
collection of letters containing approximately more than 126 letters written in Persian.

Bengal again was privileged to witness yet another landmark in the advancement of Persian literature with the foundation of the Calcutta Madrasah or the Mohammedan College of Calcutta (as named by its founder), the first educational institution in British India, was founded in October 1780, by Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of the East India Company. The main object of the founder was to promote the study of the Arabic and Persian languages and of the Mohammedan law, with a view to qualify the sons of Mohammedan gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices and to train officers for running the revenue administration and judiciary.

We notice an influx of scholars and poets even from outside India to Bengal. Poets and literary personalities used to meet each other and exchanged views. During this period the several writers of Persian literature emerged in the literary horizon of undivided Bengal.

The 19th Century Bengal was blessed with a shining star in the firmament of Persian poetry - Sayyid Fath ‘Ali Waysi, who holds an eminent and unique position in the realm of mysticism gnosis and esoteric love. He was a celebrated Sufi of Naqshbandiya order in Bengal. Waysi was born in 1241/1825 A.D. in Chittagong and he migrated to Murshidabad at an early age. He completed his early education at Madrasa of Dahsa situated at Munshirhat. Since his childhood was a brilliant person. At a young age he studied the Holy Quran and other important religious books. He acquired knowledge in Tafsir, Fiqh, Usul-e-Fiqh, Religious Philosophy, Logic and General Philosophy including Arabic and Persian literature. He took *bait* (initiation) under Maulana Sufi Noor Mohammad Nizampuri (d.1858) who happened to be the companion of his father Maulvi Waris Ali of Chittagong was a learned and religious preceptor. After completing his education he settled in Calcutta in 1856 and served the deposed Nawab Wajid Ali Shah as his private secretary at Matiabruj. After that
he was appointed as superintendent of Political Pension Office. Later on in 1867 he resigned from the post and dedicated the rest of his life about nineteen years in teaching spiritual education and preaching of religion.

Sufi Fath Ali Waysi was not only a Sufi but a good scholar and a great Persian poet. He has a unique position among the poets of his age. He adopted the form of ghazal to express his deep feelings and profound love towards the holy Prophet, the praised one. After the death of Waysi, his Persian verses were collected and compiled by his maternal grandson, Md. Mir Hassan. The Diwan of Waysi was first printed at Ghausia Press, Calcutta in 1898; consists of 208 pages and reprinted at the Qayyumia Press, Kanpur in 1922 containing 232 pages. In this collection of poems, there are 175 ghazals, 23 qasidas and 6 miscellaneous couplets.

He was an ardent lover of the Holy Prophet. He has a limited subject in poetry. But with this limited subject he has written more than 3000 verses successfully and beautifully with great zeal and enthusiasm.

Hazrat Waysi had studied extensively the Persian compositions of all the great poets of Iran as well as India. The influence of the theme and style of these poets are seen in his verses. He was a great follower of Hafiz of Shiraz. He himself compiled the Diwan-e-Hafiz which was published from the Mohammadi Press, Calcutta in 1859. We cannot help but notice that most of his ghazals, composed by him are in the same meter and style of Hafiz, but the difference lies in the fact that his verses unlike those of Hafiz are free from different interpretations and gives the reader intense pleasure with the direct approach of the poet towards his goal.

After going through the Diwan of Hazrat Waysi, we come to know that he has a wonderful command over Persian language and vocabularies. He has invented appropriate and beautiful phrases and idioms and has appropriately used them to praise the Holy Prophet, the praised one, for instance در دریای وقار (the pearl of the river of dignity); زبده کون و مکان (the choice of universe); سرور
After delving into his poetic accomplishments and deeply studying his Diwan, we find sublimity of thoughts, exquisiteness of expression, flight of imagination and depth of meaning which are found in the poetic works of Persian poets of repute.

Among the saints and poets who chose Persian language the medium of expression for writing Na‘t, Sufi Fath Ali Waysi occupies a distinctive position. He emerged as a great spiritual teacher of Bengal during the second half of the Nineteenth Century. So far as the composition of Na‘t is concerned, from the beginning of Islam till the present age, he is one of the poets who have composed a complete Diwan in honor of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The other poet who had a Diwan of Na‘t to his credit was Shah Nematullah Wali. In this respect, Diwan-e-Waisi is unparalleled and this is the evidence of his deep feelings towards the Prophet.

His composition is fundamentally in the Na‘t form but his poetry is in ghazal. Waysi has expressed his profound love and respect for the Holy Prophet in each and every couplet of his Diwan. His compositions are the interpreter of his afflicted heart and the crux of his desire is the honorable personality of the Prophet.

His contributions have also led him to a position of equal stature with the famous qasida writer Khaqani and the eminent companion and eulogizer of the Prophet- Hassan ibn Saabit.

Sufi Fath Ali departed for heavenly abode on 8th Rabi ‘al- Awwal, 1304 A.H (6th December 1886) at the age of 61 years in Calcutta and was buried at Munshi Para Lane, Lala Bagan adjacent to Manicktalla.

Waysi stands out as a unique personality amongst the Sufis of the 19th century Bengal. His excellence in mystical ideas has procured him eternal name
and fame because he matured his spiritual experience and exercise and served humanity by preaching high ideals and teaching men the truth about god and life.

His mystical thought is mainly based on love of God and love of prophet of Islam. The spiritual preaching of Waysi calls upon the people to be aware of those who try to mislead the Muslims by their heretical views. We find that he preached love, humanism and universal brotherhood.

Waysi’s mystical poetry has frequent references and description of nature, celestial bodies, etc. They are compressed in meaning yet light and lucid in reading. At times they are humorous; while at other times, ironic and caustic.

Ethics and morality are the main theme of Sufi literature because these teach us love, compassion, self-surrender, social regeneration and self sacrifice. Ethic is the most powerful vehicle for the propagation of humanism and universalism. Persian ethical literature has also left a deep impact on Waysi poetry.

On the whole, we see that Sayyid Fath Ali Waysi was an eminent Sufi poet of Persian of the 19th Century and was in no way inferior to any of his contemporaries who contributed in this language. Apparently he preferred to eulogize the Holy Prophet as he felt it to be his duty to exercise his poetic talent in expanding the true qualities with which the Holy Prophet, the praised one, is generally noted.