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SAYYID SUFI FATH ALI WASYI [1825-86 AD.] AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO PERSIAN NA'T

The role of Prophet Mohammad (Be Peace upon him) in Islamic spirituality is pivotal. He is a devotional focus, guide, a leader and the model to the seeker of truth. On the basis of various Quranic verses including one that declares Prophet Mohammad rehmatan lil aalameen (a mercy to the world).

Over the centuries Persian poets in general and Sufi poets of Persian in particular have given brilliant testimony to their art of writing verses in praise of the virtues of the holy Prophet of Islam.

In the history of Persian literature Nasir Khusraw and Hakim Sanai are famous for versifying Na't. Other famous poets like Sanai, Attar, Jami, Saadi, Maulana Rumi, Hafiz etc., enriched Persian poetry by composing elegant and beautiful Na't.

Hazrat Sufi Fath Ali Waisi, an illustrious son of Bengal and one of the great spiritual teachers of the 19th century AD. also tried his talent mainly in praise of the holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him) and confined his poetic ability and genius to attain the mercy of the Prophet of Islam.

Sayyid Fath Ali Waisi who holds an eminent position in the realm of mysticism, gnosis and esoteric lore, is not only a great Sufi of the 19th century. Bengal but also a shining star in the firmament of Persian poetry). He was born at Chittagaoon (now in Bangladesh) in 1825 AD. studied in a reputed madrasa, being

intelligent he, in a very short time attained proficiency in Islamic learning. He was well versed in Quranic exegesis, jurisprudence, tradition, logic and philosophy. He attained spiritual knowledge from the naqshbandi saint Sufi Noor Mohammad. Nizampuri (D. 1275/1858), who became his religious guide in Sufism.

He came to Calcutta in 1856 and became a private secretary to the deposed Nawab Wajid Ali Shah at matiabry. Later on he was appointed a superintendent in the political Persian office of the British government he worked there for man about 10/12 years and at the age of 47 in 1867 he resigned from service and dedicated the rest of his life in spiritual education. After propagating the teachings of Islam for about 19 years Sufi Fathh Ali waisi died in Calcutta at the age of 60 and buried at Maniktalla graveyard.

Sufi Fath Ali Waisi in spite of his Bengali upbringing, mastered in Persian language and literature. Waisi is exclusively considered a poet of Na't, for almost all his ghazals and qassidas, which comprise his Diwan are in praise of the holy Prophet. The Diwan contains. 175 ghazals, 23 qasidas and 6 poems. There are altogether 3347 couplets in the Diwan.

Poetry, in the words of William Wordsworth is 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. A poet under the impact of emotional impulses (felt or conceived) tries to convey it through best words arranged in a metrical form, so that he can create the same emotion in his reader. Viewed from this angle, the poetry of Waisi often reveals an intensity of feelings and emotions which the poet, as a lover of the prophet felt in the depth of his heart and tried to pour it out in his poem as he says in the following verses which his Diwan opens:

Another notable aspect of the poetry of Waisi is the beauty of expression, which makes his ghazal lively and charming. Mark the style of describing the beauty of the bloved – the poet seems to say nothing, but shows the beloved himself as revealing his glowing face and musky ringlets in a manner that suggests an implied sense coquetry:

All the couplets of his ghazal are having the same theme i.e., the praise of the holy Pophet, but in each and every couplet he has used such unique words, beautiful similes and metaphors that every ghazal of his Diwan seem to be lively, novel and wonderful.

As we see there is no dearth of Diwan in Persian literature which are famous and immortal, such as Diwan-e-Hafiz, Diwan-e-Shams Tabrezi etc. The special feature of the Diwan-e-Waisi is that is has been composed centering round solely to the Holy Prophet Sayedul Ambia Hazrat Mohammad Mustafa (S). It is not known whether any poet of Persian has composed a full diwan based only on love for Rasul of Allah Many got immortal fame by writing 'na'ts' and ghazals like Balagal 'ula bikamalihi, Qasideh-e-Burda, but none wrote a Diwan solely on the prophet, only this son of the soil of Bengal created that on a world standard.

A cursory outlook may lead many to conclude that it might be enough to compose on or more than one poem on Rasul-e-Khuda, what is the utility of writing a complete Diwan? Yes, it is a superficial outlook, but love is a different thing, it does not abide by any hard and fast rule. There is declaration in Al-Quran that God and His angles send Darud on the Prophet (S). Under these circumstances a hundred Diwans are not enough to praise Him, it seems a particle only.

Diwan-e- Waisi should be translated in the living languages of the world like Rubaiyat-e-Oman Khayyam, Masnavi of Maulana Rum, and Diwan-e-Hafiz. In this way the contribution of an erudite son of Bengal will go a long way in enhancing the glory of our country and nation.

On the whole Waysi appears to be a talented poet. Waisi deserves our appreciation for composing verses in Persian at a time when the language had started losing its importance in Bengal and also in other parts of the sub-continent.