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## **CONTRIBUTIONS OF ULAMA AND SUFIS OF BENGAL TO PERSIAN LITERATURE**

The study of theological sciences and mystical literary and their contributions to the enrichment of Indo-Persian Literature makes an impressive reading. The spirit of religion and mysticism has always played a significant role in every form of Persian literature in all the stages of its development. The intellectual services of sufees, savants and Ulama of Islam are, in this regard, shining chapters of the history of literary world. The sufees who had exerted Islamic influence on the language, literature and culture of the people of Indian were mostly of Iranian or Central Asian origin. They generally adopted Arabic and Persian as their medium of expression for writing their letters (maktubaat), discourses malfuzaat and books to disseminate high religious, spiritual and moral values.

In fact sufees were instrumental in the spread of Islamic learning and growth of mystical literature of Persian in India as "the sufees appealing to the heart, came closer to the people than the Ulama or theologians, who approached their brain and lacked emotional appeal.

The establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal in 1253-54 A.D. and the subsequent expansion of the political power there, provided a congenial and conducive atmosphere to sufees to track down to this land. Some of them settled here permanently and others perhaps went back after some time. Among the sufees and saints and Ulama of Islam who came to Bengal in different periods

and made tremendous contribution to Islam and Persian literature mention may be made of: Maulana Ashraf al-Din tawamah, Sheikh Sharfud-Din Ahmad Munceri, Sheikh Jalalud-Din Tabreeze, Sheikh Alaul-Haq Pandaoui, Sheikh Zahoor Haji Hameed, Sheikh Nur Qatb Alam, Sheikh Hameed Danishmand Bangali, Sheikh Badrud-Din Badr Liqa, Sheikh Ali Sheir Bengali, Shah Muahmmad Daimul-lah, Shah Nuri, Sheikh Abdur-Rahim etc.

Among the notable sufecs and Ulama of 18<sup>th</sup> century Bengal, the names of: Shah Mohammad Mujeebullah, Mulla Waheed al-Haq, Shah Ghulam Naqshband, Mulla Muhammad Wajeedul-Haq, Shah Nurul Haq Tapan and Shah Aayat-ullah, deserve our special attention.

These mystics laid great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge ('elm) and called upon the Muslims to consider teaching and learning as a part of their religious duty and source of blessing. 'Eshq o'llm and 'Aql were regarded essential qualifications for one who looked after the spiritual advancement of other. Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki told Farid Ganji-Shakar "an illiterate mystic falls prey to the machinations of the devil".

With this purpose in mind and inspired by the command of the Holy Quran and traditions of the prophet of Islam, almost every important mystics and Bengal was found engaged in imparting spiritual lessons to the students gathered in the Khanqahs.

Following the example of spiritual activities and literary taste of the sufecs and saints of Bengal, Ulama who were the exponents of the Shariat in all its range covering belief, ritual, personal law, etc. and occupied an important position in the Muslim society took the responsibility of delivering lectures and writing books on various branches of Islamic theology to enable people to regulate their lives accordingly. Though some sufecs and Ulama were adept in both Arabic and Persian, most of them relied on Persian for most of their literary efforts. As a result Persian literature grew up in Bengal consisting of ethical, mystical and religious themes. Klbrit-i-Ahmar of Shah Nuri, a renowned

Sufi of high order. *Safina-i-Malumat wa Makashifat* and *Malfuzat-i-Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Mohammad Waris of Shah Mujibullah*, *Nuzhatus Salikin*, *Shamaile-tirmizi*, *Tafsir-i-Quran of Mulla Mohammad Wajihul Haque*, *Fazaili Nabi of Shah Shulam Naqshband*, *Zadul Akhirah*, *Tahqeequl Imaam*, *Fawaidi Ahmadi*, *Zikri Salat of Mulla Mohammad Waheedul Haque*, *Anwarul Tariqah*, a Persian diwan containing, philosophical, ethical and mystical themes are undoubtedly very important and valuable treasure of Persian literature. These works not only enriched Persian literature but also played a vital role in the development of Indo-Muslim religious learning in Bengal.