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Topic- Amir Khusraw (امير خسرو)

Online Class Materials

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AMIR KHUSRAW

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Khawja Khawja Yaminuddin Mohammad Abdul Hasan Amir Khusraw, the great Persian poet, scholar and politician of Medieval India was undoubtedly a man of rare qualities and exceptional powers. He was an erudite scholar not only of Persian and Arabic, but also of Sanskrit, Hindawi, Avadhi and Turkish.

He was born in 651 A.H/1253 A.D. at Patiyali in the district of Etah in Uttar Pardesh. His father, Amir Saifuddin Mahmud migrated to India from the city of Kush in Central Asia, during the reign of Sultan Shamsuddin Altumish. He lost his beloved father at an early age. The maternal grandfather 'Imadul Mulk', the Defence Minister under Sultan Balban, then took care of him and paid special attention towards his education and training. He was brought up in the traditional style of Muslim education and at an early age he obtained high efficiency in the customary arts and literature and other branches of learning such as Fiqh, Astronomy, Philosophy, Grammar, Logic, History, Mysticism, and Religion. He was also well versed in the art of music. After the death of Imadul Mulk in 671/1272 A.D. Khusraw became a disciple of the sufi saint Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, to whom he showed his deep love and devotion. He was a born poet and began to compose verses from his very boyhood. A short elegy composed spontaneously on the death of his father (1260 A.D.) was quite remarkable.

Khusraw witnessed the reigns of some eleven kings from Ghiyasuddin Balban to Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq and continued to win the favour of each ruler. They took pride in him for his scholarly achievements, intelligence and wisdom and above all for his and purity of heart.

Amir Khusraw was a versatile genius, whose colourful personality has contributed a lot to the development of Indo-Persian literature. He was a great poet, an equally great prose writer, a sufi, a scholar a historian, a linguist, an artist, a man of wit and humour and a great musician. He is credited with the authorship of innumerable verses and a number of prose works. He has to his credit a large number of Ghazals, Rubais, Masnavis, Qasaides, Mukaris, Dohas,

Riddles and several other varieties of compositions and in each of these forms of poetry he attained singular success.

WORKS

A short description of his works written in different periods of his life are given below:

DIWAN

Khusraw compiled five diwans namely 1) Tuhfatus-Sighr 2) Wasatul Hayat, containing many qasidas in praise of Khan-e-Shaheed 3) Ghurratul Kamal, containing qasidas in praise of Muizzuddin in Kaiqubab, Jalaluddin Firozshah and Nizamuddin Aulia 4) Nihayatul Kamal and 5) Baqiyya-e-Naqiyya

HISTORICAL POEMS

The first masnavi which Khusraw wrote is called 1) Qiranus Saadain. It relates the affairs of Bughra Khan and his son Kaiqubad. 2) Miftahl-Futuh is another masnavi of the reign of Sultan Jalaluddin Firoz Shah. 3) Nuh-Sipih (composed in 718/1318 A.D.) deals with the events that took place in the beginning of Qutbuddin's reign. 4) Ashiqa or Ishqia or Deval Rani Khizr Khan, describing the love affairs of Khizr Khan, son of King Alauddin and Deval Rani, daughter of Raja of Gujrat. 5) Tughlaq Nama, describing the conquests of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq.

Beside he wrote the Panj Ganj, after the model of the 'Khamsa' of Nizami Ganjavi. Khusraw is the first Persian poet to set himself to this task after Nizami. All the five masnavis contain 18000 couplets and were composed between the years 1298-1301 A.D. their titles are 1) Matlaul-Anwar 2) Shirin-u-Khusrau 3) Aina-Sikandai 4) Hasht Bahisht and 5) Majnun-u-Laila.

PROSE WORKS

Khusraw has also left to his credit three works in prose, the most important being Khazainul-Futuh or Tarikh-e-Alai. It is history of Alauddin Khalji (1295-1315 A.D.). His another prose-work Ijaz-i-Khusravi or Rasail-ul-Ijaz deals with the principles of grammar and prose writing. The third prose work of Khusraw is called Afzalul-Fawa'id containing the sayings of Shaikh Niizamuddin Auliya.

AS A GHAZAL WRITER.

Among the Indian poets of Persian, Amir Khusraw is regarded as the champion of Ghazal-writing in Persian. As a Ghazal writer his contributions are also accepted and appreciated by the Iranian scholars and critics. He was a poet of good taste and sweet diction. His eminence as a poet mainly rests on his ghazals. He without doubt is one of the best ghazal writers in Persian. Prof. Habib speaks highly of him when he writes “as a writer of ghazals Khusraw has been equalled but not surpassed.” According to Shibli Nomani, Khusraw, like Saadi had had brought his Language closer to the colloquial thus making his poetry all the more sweet and appealing. The chief characteristics of his ghazals are purity and simple fluency, delicacy and fire, tenderness and elegance, love and life, softness and refinement, music and melody.

The ghazals of Amir Khusraw reflects that his personality was marked by a certain degree of abandon and ecstasy. His lyrics show that he has the remarkable gift of merging himself with the object of his love and devotion. He has nothing rigid or stubborn about him. This condition emerges from the depths of his being.

Amir Khusraw has not only the skill of preciseness in the expression of his experiences but also of giving the impression of naturalness. Some of his ghazals exhibit this particular genre.

In short, it may be said that these qualities which constitute his real greatness earned for him a commendable place in the pages of the history of Persian language and literature. Jami, for his sweet, delicate and powerful poetry, pays his tributes to Khusraw:

جامی از خسرو همی گیرد سوز و درد

طور او نبود خیالات محال انگیختن

Dr. M. Waheed Mirza, an authority on Khusraw states: “There have been in the history of the world but few instance of a scholar or a poet acquiring a popularity and a fame like those of Khusraw.....Centuries have elapsed since the ‘Parrot of India’ sang his last song and the voice that had charmed princes and peasants was hushed forever, yet the memory of his name is as fresh today as ever.”