

Abstract and Bio-data of Participants

Aqeedat Ke Rang: Expressions of Devotion in Islam

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Zikirs of Azan Faquir: Assamese Devotional Songs and Inter-Community Relationship

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Like any other languages in India, Assamese language is rich in devotional songs. It was Mahapurush Sankardeva, the great Vaishnava saint of Assam (1449-1569), who gave the Assamese society a distinct character of devotional songs known as Bargeet. The next generation of Assamese devotional songs came from a *Faquir* (Muslim religious ascetic). He is Azan Faquir (1605-1690). Born as Shah Meeran in Bagdad, Azan Faquir migrated to Assam in 1634/35, learnt Assamese language and culture in order to propagate Islam. In doing so, he got acquainted with Vaishnava tradition and composite culture of Assam. He taught the Muslims about the basic tenets of Islam through the help of devotional songs composed in Assamese. These are known as *Zikirs*, which are performed in social gatherings. *Zikirs* are popular devotional songs which find a place of respect in the Assamese society and are performed in almost all social and cultural functions. A *Zikir* is performed in a dance form by a group of at least twenty persons led by one accomplished singer. *Zikirs* not only tell about the values of pious and honest life, and the religion of Islam but also about the inter-community relationship in a composite society of Assam. The present article presents a brief life-sketch of Azan Faquir and his time and cites some of innumerable devotional songs which teach harmonious inter-community relationship.

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Naat

Anis Ahmad Khan 'Anis'

The dictionary meaning of “*Naat*” is quality, praise, character or conduct. In a poetic term “*Naat*” is an Ode to and In Praise of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) in which the character, qualities, conduct and inner and outer beauty of Prophet Mohammad are versified. In Holy Quaraan God has praised him. God has referred Prophet Mohammad as a boon for the entire universe. Naat traveled to Indian from Arabia Via Iran. Arabic leading *Naat*’s poets are M/s. Ali, Hassan Bin Saabit, Abdullah bin Rabava, Kaab bin Zuber. Persian leading *Naat*’s poets are Hafiz Shirazi, Saddi, Urfi Shirazi and Ghalib. Urdu leading *Naat*’s poets are Haali, Hafiz Jalandhri and Jigar Moradabadi. The afore said Urfi has said that it is a tough form of poetry *Naat* saying is like walking on the edge of sword.

I quote below one Urdu couplet of my Naat:

*“Mere Qalam Bhi Sahibe Eiman Ho Gya
Naate Rasool Likh Ke Musalman Ho Gya”.*

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Concept of Aqeedat in Sufism as Shown through the Sufi Musical Poetics of Medieval Indian Poets

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Aqeedat is Persianised Indo-Islamic connotation to denote sufistic love and devotion to one's spiritual master.....the foundation or base of the entire sufistic edifice. The concept is as old as the tradition itself. The concept shows and establishes the tradition of relation between spiritual master (*peer*) and the *Murid* or the pupil initiated in this tradition through show of devotion, though one or the other form of music which may vary from place to place and from culture to culture, but the idea is to show and present devotion to one's master. The tradition is so magnificent and strong that it had acquired the importance as the corner stone of Sufi tradition. *Sama* has got the part and parcel of the Sufi tradition. The Sufi master carries the legacy of this master and before his departure from this material world he hands over this rein of spirituality to someone able and chosen *Murid*.....who had till then shown the very *aqeedat* to the master by performances in the form of *sama* or singing the praises to his master. *Aqeedat* shown in such fashion is extremely popular which may be in the form of *Sufiyana ghazals*, *qasseda*, *munaqbat*, *qauwwali* and similar other kind of music. Music brings ecstasy to the minds of the spiritual masters and it is considered one way closer to the creator or his spiritual master.....in total contrast to the fact that the orthodox Islam doesn't permit *sama*. It has come to be one form of workshop also. That establishes communication between the "seeker" and the "sought after". Throughout the historical period we have numerous examples of such devotional songs composed and performed and in this regard the name of Amir Khusro stands out whose *aqeedat* shown to his spiritual master Sheikh Nizamuddin Aulia. This paper is an attempt in this regard of understanding the concept in entirety with Amir Khusro as of one the best example of this unique spiritual musical practitioner as part of his spiritual quest.

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Holy Quran and its Recitation (Quirat)

Mohammad Nauman Khan

Revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by the Almighty Allah some fifteen centuries ago, the Holy *Quran* is the first Holy Scripture to have been preserved and recorded by committing it both to memory and writing in the lifetime of the Prophet himself. The *Quran* undoubtedly has remained intact and unadulterated throughout all the ages and climes with its timeless, unique and inimitable text without the slightest manipulation or modification therein. The chief aim of this Book is to guide mankind through the darknesses of ignorance, illiteracy and polytheism to the light of learning, gnosis and monotheism; inculcate in them virtues and forbid them from vices.

The copies we possess now and those brought out across the globe are all in line with the standard official copy of Hazrat Usman, the 3rd Orthodox Caliph. Recently, three copies prepared by Usman have been unearthed and they are considered to be the genuine ones as they are supported by various proofs. One of them is in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, the second in Topi Qapi Sarai Museum, Turkey, having the blood stains at the verse (2.137) and the third one in India office library, London, which bears the official seals. There are scripted on thin parches, not on papers and all the three are in same script and handwriting.

It is interesting to note here what Dr. Hameedullah has mentioned in his famous transcript book named *Khutbat-e-Bhawalpur* that some time back Popes in Germany thought that the original Gospel, which was in the Aramaic language, has become extinct and disappeared from the surface of the earth. What we, Christians, possess now and think the base copy for the subsequent translations in the Greek. They collected all the copies available in Greek from the world over. Having collected all the available copies in Greek, complete and defective, they compared and collated them and eventually published a report showing a stunning fact that there were some two lakh variations in narration or *riwayat* in them and 1/8 of them were important. They also established an institution in Munich, Germany, by the name *Quranic Research Institute* and the process of collecting of different copies of *Quran* from different parts of the world continued for three generations. In 1933, when its director, Prtetzle, came to Paris to take photocopy of the *Quranic* copies available there, he informed Dr. Hameedullah that he was having photocopies of 42 thousand copies of the *Quran* and the process of collation was on. During the Second World War a bomb fell on this building, razing it to the ground and destroying it completely. Before the war started, an interim report published which showed that there were some typographical mistakes, but there did not exist a single variation of narration.

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Patriotism & Humanism in the Sufism of Sindh The Legacy of Bhitai Shah Abdul Latif

Noor Zaheer

Sindh being the custodian of one of the oldest civilizations of the world has become in the region through its people a symbol of peace, fraternity and hospitality. It is thus not surprising that there is very strong belief among the masses as well as some scholars that Sufism was born in Sindh and while one branch of it spread to the West Asia another reached out to the East that is India.

The paper would be on the uniqueness and individuality of the Sufism of Sindh with focus on Shah Latif and his writings about the life of Sindh. While he and other Sufi poets of Sindh could trace their ancestry to Iran or one of the Arab countries, they identify with Sindh and use symbols and metaphors from the folktales and fables of the region. Shah Latif set the trend of using the language of the common man and not the more respected Persian or Arabic. Beneath this was an intense yearning to reach out to the masses. This was set a trend of redefining patriotism and humanity not as the ruling classes portrayed it but as the masses desired it. (This concept needs to be re-analysed as the world again undergoes a process of forcing patriotism into communal moulds).

The Sufi poets of Sindh, rejected the influence of the alien style and diction and adopted the one that has a close liaison with the landscape, cultural heritage and the aspirations of the people of Sindh, which was mainly to get some relief from the tyranny of the feudal lords. Shah Latif uses rare verse forms of the then dying Sindhi folk traditions and revives them to portray simple folktales with a strong message of humanism. His style of expression though breaking new grounds is marked with dignity and clarity of vision.

In the various characters that come alive in his book "*Risalo*" Shah Abdul Latif defines patriotism and links it with humanity saying

"Blessed the blacksmith who connects the links of the chain
showing humanity can survive if beings connect with each other".

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The Tradition of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi in North India

Rakshanda Jalil

Originating from the Arabic word, *Mawlid*, meaning birth, *Milad-un-Nabi* means, literally “birth of the prophet”. Functions celebrating this joyous event are celebrated in different ways in different parts of the world. While *Milad mehfils* are more commonly held all through the month of *Rabi-ul Awwal* and specially the 12th day to celebrate the birth of the Prophet, they are also organized to celebrate births, marriages, moving to a new home, starting a new business or any sort of auspicious event. In North India, they have made a special place in the lives of Sunni Muslims – just as the *majlises* have for the Shias. A typical *Milad* would begin with the recitation of verses from the *Quran*, followed by *Hamd*, *Naat*, and ending with *Dua*. All of the above would be interspersed with short speeches on the life and teachings of the Prophet. The paper would also look into why certain schools of thought considered such *mehfils bidat*.

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Darood wa Salaam: Expression of Devotion in Islam

Riyaz Punjabi

Darood wa Salaam is a tribute which is usually paid to the Prophet of Islam, Mohammad. *Darood* is a typical South Asian practice and does not exist in other Muslim societies of West Asia and North Africa. *Darood* is a praise sung in unison for the Prophet by the followers of Islamic faith. *Darood* generally highlights the great qualities, spiritual and personal, of Prophet. It is sung in such a devotional manner as if the participants are standing face to face with the Prophet.

There are regional variations in offering *Darood*. For instance, in Delhi, it is offered in the form of couplets prepared in Urdu. In Kashmir, it is offered in pure Arabic language. *Darood* is generally offered after Friday prayers. However, it is also offered in the homes after a religious event is held. The practice of *Darood* certainly carries the South Asian cultural impact.

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Munajat, One of the Expression of Devotion (Aqeedat Ka Rang) in Islam

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Museology is an academic discipline in which man's special relationship with reality and memory is explored and studied and presented to the public. Today museology is understood in a broader perspective in which intangible heritage is considered as a broader framework in which the tangible heritage takes its shape. Museums around the world today have realized that natural and cultural environment manifests itself not only in tangible form but also through intangible ones. With this realization the museums are concentrating on collecting, documenting safeguarding and preserving the intangible heritage of the world, both natural and cultural.

The revealed, heard, chanted and received words have been a significant intangible (oral) and tangible (script) heritage of human cultures and civilizations. Documentation, conservation of this human cultural heritage is the responsibility of museums along with their traditional engagement in dealing with the material evidences of human endeavor.

Believes, rituals, traditions and languages of societies and cultures all are intangible heritage. They are important components of cultural identities of different group of people in various parts of the world. In the Islamic communities of different parts of the world different expressions of devotions have evolved after a synthesis with local traditions, languages and practices. One of the expressions of devotion (*Aqeedat Ka Rang*) of Islamic religious/cultural tradition is *Munajat* (A lyrical poem as prayer to God).

Ibn-e-arabi conceives of prayer as being an intimate dialogue between an individual and his personal lord. God's prayer is seen as existentiating his creatures, whereas the devotee's prayer is seen as existentiating his personal lord. *Munajat* originating in the form of chanting and oral recitation have evolved historically as both a genre of religious poetry as well as tradition of devotional music.

In the Indian subcontinent *Munajat* has evolved as a popular form of Urdu *shairee* (poetry).

In the modern times when the diversity of human cultural heritage is being threatened by the forces of globalization, it is very significant for museums and other cultural organization to focus on the issues of preserving and conserving the diversity (*runga rungi*) of cultural heritage both tangible & intangible) and identities of the world. One of them is expression of devotion including the *Munajat*.

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Towards Understanding Indian Social and Cultural Values as Depicted in the Old Elegiac Verses of *Marsiya*, *Soz* and *Nauha*

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No literature of the world can survive in absence of socio-cultural elements of the society. Deeper the rootedness of literature into the cultural heritage greater would be its association with the society and even more greater would be its role in building up a healthy society. This makes the literature an ever-green treasure of the society. In this paper a modest attempt is made to investigate and assess such elements in the old elegiac verses of *Marsiya*, *Soz* and *Nauha* that has made the literature alive and comparable to any international standards of literary criticism.

Bemoaning and mourning on agonies of life or over the death of a relative and friend is a universal expression of grief. In India, in its intensity, people begin to utter words and sentences in melodious tone expressing their intense grief. They often describe the character, recollect the deeds and memorise the long and personal association with the departed soul. Chanting and reciting the elegiac verses over the dead body is, thus, natural expression and is our old rich tradition, specially associated with the rural female folk. This is our life style and has been deeply picked up with all its details by elegiac literature.

Chanting of *dirges* commemorating the sufferings and the brutal martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A's) and his family members and companions at *Karbala*, thus, found a very homely ground in India because of deep pathos associated with this great event of history. This became a rich heritage of Indian literature. Its origin appeared in form of "*Dahey*" and "*Dohey*" which gradually shaped into most sophisticated and reformed version of long tragic poetry in Delhi and Lucknow.

This paper attempts to highlight the socio-cultural elements of *Marsiya*, *Soz* and *Nauha* of an early age. The literature is submerged in the rural culture and traditions. The style, feelings and sentiments are all colloquial which shows highest level of transparency, fairness and spontaneity. These are the roots of our literary heritage on which the whole empire of modern sophisticated elegiac literature has been developed later on. The investigation of such roots is of special significance and need proper attention, which is gradually fading out.

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Devotional Music in Islam

Shahid Meer

Though music said to be forbidden in Islamic traditions and customs are reverberating with lilting melodies. The recitation of *Salam*, *Marsia*, *Naat*, *Hamd* and *Manquébat* are in accordance with Indian classical music traditions, having a definite “Rag” a well defined rythem and constant “*Layakari*”. The quawwali is the extreme form of evolution of music in Muslims supported by well defined poetry and musicality in its rendering. The present paper brings to surface all these intricacies with intimate details.

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Bibi Ki Kahani

Sughra Mehdi

Bibi ki Kahani is a form of oral recitation. It is recited when somebody's wish comes true. "If this work gets done I will hear *Bibi Ki Kahani*". When that work is completed successfully the person hears it. Generally it is heard on sweets or sugar. The sweat is distributed among those who had gathered to listen and the one who is reciting it.

The story goes like this. At the time of Prophet there was a Jew who was getting his daughter married. He came to the Prophet and requested him that he should grant permission to Hazrat Fatema, the Prophet's daughter to attend his daughter's marriage. The Prophet told the Jew that he should take permission from Hazrat Ali. He went to Hazrat Ali and requested the same. Hazrat Ali said he may request Hazrat Fatema directly. So he went to her and requested her to attend the wedding. She accepted the invitation and asked him to make arrangement for some conveyance. When the Jew went, Hazrat Fatema prayed to God that how could she go since she did not have clothes appropriate for marriage. As soon as she finished her prayer she found that the Angel from Heaven had brought clothes and jewellery for her. She then went to the Jew's house and all those present there fainted on seeing her aura. After some time every one regained consciousness and they found the bride dead. Fatema got so disturbed that she again prayed to God to save her honour as these people will say that she was the cause of the bride's death. As soon as she finished her prayers the bride came to life and she along with five hundred Jewish women would embrace Islam. They thanked Hazrat Fatema for coming and sent her home with great honour.

The background of this story is that there was a goldsmith whose son fell in the potter's fire. The mother cried so much that she fainted. She dreamt that a lady comes to her and says that if she listens *Bibi Ki Kahani*, her son will come back to life. She promises to do so. She then opens her eyes and sees her son standing in front of her. She becomes happy and buys sweets and asked her neighbour to come to her house and recite the *Bibi Ki Kahani*. Every one refuses. She starts crying and strays in to a jungle. There she meets a veiled and pious looking woman who consoles her and recites the above story. How this story came in to existence? What is its source and origin? No body knows. It has taken a form of story which is recited both in prose and poetry form.

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The Urdu Marsia

Syed Mujahid Husain Husaini

The term '*Marsia*' has been derived from the Arabic word "*Risaa*" which literally means *Lamentation for a Departed Soul*. It is equivalent to the English word "ELEGY". Although, Marsia is a common word which may be used for mourning the death of any near and dear one, but, specifically speaking, it is not used for the form of poetry mostly associated with the memory of the tragic happening of *Karbala*. *Karbala* is the name of a city in Iraq where Hazrat Imam Husain (A.S.) was martyred along with his seventy one relatives and loyal companions on the 10th of Moharram 61 A.H. The tragedy seems to be more horrible and brutal that Hazrat Husain, his followers and his family members remained hungry and thirsty for three consecutive days and nights. Last, but not the least, these inhuman acts were committed by the so-called Muslims, who respected Hazrat Mohd. (S.A.W.) the real grand father of Hazrat Imam Husain as their Prophet. Yes, they had sold their consciences to Yazid, the killer. Urdu *Marsia* has history of its own, expanding over one thousand fourteen hundred years. It is but natural that Marsia—goi or the composition of *Marsia* originated in Iraq itself in Arabic. From there, it was carried to Iran, where poets like Mohtashim Kashi and Muqbil wrote very impressive *Marsias* in Persian. Of course, when this form of poetry came to India, the Urdu poets embraced it for the sake of literary taste, and also with the idea of a religious act. The Deccani Rulers patronized it a lot. When *Marsia* reached the Northern India, Urdu poets like Mir Taqi, Sauda, Anis and Dabir worked hard for its perfection. Till this date, they are treated as the Stalwarts. In our time, we know Josh, Jameel Mazhari, Nasim Amrohvi, Ali Raza, Arzoo Lucknowi and Najm Affendi as the best *marsia* – writers.

Besides having a religious background, Urdu *Marsia* possess many other beauties. It has set the standard of Urdu language – Hyderabad, Lucknow & Delhi were the treasure houses of *Marsias*. This form is also known for propagating humanism, nobility, moral courage and higher values of life; it was the *Marsia* which brought the awareness of exploitation, dictatorship and misrule. Mahatma Gandhi declared that his theory of non-violence was based on the great tragedy of Karbala only. *Marsia* is a heroic poem, a descriptive poem, a dramatic poem and a form of poetry, which is absolutely divine in nature. It truly asked for a detailed study.

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Marsia in Awadhi Folksong

Viswanath Tripathy

In Awadh, *marsia* is a long lasting tradition. Anees is a renowned name in Urdu marsia belonged to Lucknow. In his *kalam* vibrating culture of Awadh's language and nature is intimately embedded.

In my opinion the basis of poetry of great *marsia* composers, Anees and Dabir were Awadhi *marsias*. These marsias are sung collectively by low caste and subaltern groups of society. The comparison of Awadh's *marsia* popularity are only be done with *Ramcharitmanas*, in this Hindu-Muslim unity can easily be seen.

In Awadh Muharram is not only a religious occasion but a cultural occasion also. In this presentation light will be thrown on cultural dimension of Muharram in Awadh and also recitation of *marsia*.

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An Analysis on Orality of Dargah in Chennai City

V. Ramakrishnan

Orality had been used by people of all ages all over the world. But in Tamil Nadu, the folklore has not been used by Tamil Muslim people to a great extent until 19th century. In addition, there are no materials or evidence available to researchers in this regard. But on the contrary, in 20th century, many research programmes were conducted by many eminent scholars in this particular field as to find out ways to initiate proper arrangements for the development of folklore in Tamil Nadu. Folklore includes: Love Songs; 'Work Songs; Cradle Songs; Drinking songs; Patriotic Songs; Dancing Songs; Mourning Songs; Epic Songs; Narrative Songs and Dargah Songs.

Dargah songs are popular in: Kunnan Gudi Masthan Sahib Dargah; Stanley Dargah; Mount Road Dargah; Sha-in-sha Baba Dargah and Modi Baba Dargah. Literary songs of Kunnan Gudi Mathan Sahib have been analyzed as to how this Orality is utilized in many Dargah and comparisons of developmental activities carried out on folklore in previous years and today.

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Hamd: All Praise to Allah

W. A. Nomani

Prayer is the heart of Religion and Faith. *Hamd* is the soul of the prayer. To think in devotion of God's name and His Nature; to praise Him for His creation and His cherishing care; to call to mind the Realities, seen the unseen; to offer Him worship and ask for His guidance; is *Hamd*. The Arabic word *Rabb*, usually translated Lord, has also the meaning of cherishing, sustaining, bringing to maturity, God cares for all the world He has created. There are many worlds, - astronomical and physical worlds, worlds of thought, spiritual world and so on. In every one of them, God is all in all. Following is the best kind of *Hamd* and to recite is to seek all help and guidance from ALLAH.

In the Name of Allah,
The Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah,
Lord of the Worlds, the compassionate,
The Merciful
Master of the Day of Judgement!
You alone we worship,
And to You alone we look for help.
Guide us to the straight path,
The Path of those upon whom You bestowed
favours, not those who have invited Your
wrath, nor those
who have gone astray.

WASI AMMAD NOMANI Practising Supreme Court Advocate for the last 20 years and Secretary Indian Islamic Cultural Centre (IICC); written and authored more than 100 articles on Legal, Political and Social Affairs which were published in National daily and monthly magazines in Hindi, English and Urdu.

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