

Seminar on

Aqeedat Ke Rang: Expression of Devotions in Islam

CONCEPT NOTE

The tradition of oral transmission in Islam can be traced back to the concept of *wahi*. Quranic verses were revealed to The Prophet through Jibrail, the messenger angel of God, through the word of mouth and certain other ways such as: *Roya-e-sadiqua* (revelation through true dreams) and *salsalutul jaras* (sound of ringing bells) and direct dialogue with God (known as *manajat*). The Prophet conveyed and spread these verses to the masses through oral recitation. The Quran was compiled in a book form as available today during the time of the caliphs starting from the first pious Caliph. Another oral tradition is that of *Hadith*, which contains advice and solutions to the day today problems of the people provided by The Prophet to his followers.

Oral transmission of the Quran by the *Hafiz*, the traditional reciter is another significant institution which has played a great role in the spread of Islam. *Hafiz* memorises (*hifz*), the verses and renders them verbatim. The process of oral rendition of Qu'ran is called *q'irat*. There are different styles of *qirat* called *qirat-e-saba*. *Qirat* used to have some regional variations also.

During the month of *Ramadan* there is a tradition of reciting the Quran in mosques after the *Isha* prayer (night prayer). This is called *taravih*. In *taravih* the entire Quran is recited within the period beginning with the visibility of moon of *Ramzan* and ending with the visibility of moon announcing the festival of *Id-ul-Fitr*.

Apart from *qirat*, oral rendition of devotional poetry is also very strong in Islam. Various literary forms such as *hamd* (poetry in praise of Almighty God), *na'at* in praise of the Prophet) *manquabat* (poetry in praise of the family

of the Prophet, his companions, associates and other religious figures) are very popular. *Marsia* is a form of lament poetry which came to be mostly associated with *Mercias* of the memory of tragic happenings of *Karbala*. This poetry acquired an indigenous hue in India. It became a strong metaphor against exploitation, dictatorship and misrule. Indian poets used local linguistic idioms and symbols to bring out the pathos in the poetry. This syncretism gave rise to *dahe* in *Awadhi*, *ashurkhana* in *Deccani*, *kabad* in *Panjabi*. etc.

The seminar will also look at different styles of recitation such as *sozkhani*. Different literary forms like *Mercia*, *Salam*, *Manqabat*, *Noha*, *Qasida* etc. are recited in this style. Influence of local traditions also impacted the style of recitation e.g. *Darud Khawani* and *Award Khawani* in Kashmir, which clearly demonstrates the subtle impact of the Buddhist chanting tradition.

Next comes the tradition of devotional music which in the Sufi parlance is called *Samah*. Some forms of that need mention here are *qual* and *Quawali*, *manajat*, *baulgiti* and *nazrulgiti* of Bengal and *Chaharbait* from Tonk and Rampur. Women have played a great role in preserving the tradition of oral recitation in Islam. Forms such as *milad Khawani*, *Salam*, *dua*, *Qasida* and *zikr* will be in focus here. *Zikr* is a form through which one remembers Almighty *Allah* and the in the *Darud Khawani* the Prophet is eulogized individually and in a group respectively. The form of *zikr* and as well as *darud Khawani* varies from region to region.

Among the Shia Muslims the tradition of *kahani* also present us with interesting syncreticism of classical forms with the indigenous tradition. *Koshkol* songs sung by Takiya Faquirs are another important dimension of folk music. *Quissa goi*, though not religious in character, is also an important part of Islamic culture in India and the workshop will include this as well in its ambit.

In order to project different colours of devotion and dedication in Islam, with special reference to its Indian rootedness, the IGNCA is organizing a three-day workshop.

The workshop has been divided into four broad themes:

- *Qirat*
- Devotional poetry
- Devotional music
- Indigenous folk forms

Besides presentation by scholars, this festival aims to bring together a plethora of performances by professional, amateurs and household groups during each session.

Also an exhibition on culture and religious tradition in Islam will be organized during the seminar.