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## Literature, Religion and History in Malik Muhammad Jayasi's Text

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Malik Muhammad Jayasi's voluminous Hindi text in its early 16<sup>th</sup> century historical context, Most of Jayasi's works were written in regional dialect. As the Devanagiri script had not been developed during this period, his works were written in Awadhi language in Persian Script. Later his works were translated by people belonged to different religious sects such as *Satnami*, *Gorakhpanti*, in *Kaithi* and in other language. Hence it could be said that Jayasi idea was highly influential and widespread in other religious sects. He had a deep knowledge about religious culture and practice, which was quite well reflected in his folklore. In recent times as well, Jayasi's folklore is quite popular among the masses.

There has been numerous historiographical works on Sufi Premkhyan based on Jayasi's Padmavat. But they mainly took up the study of Jayasi's work Padmavat while ignoring his other significant works such as *Kanhavat*, *Akhari-Kalam*, *Akharavat*, *Masalanama*, *Kaharanama*, *Chitrarekha* etc. These works communicate different perspectives on a wide array of aspects of the society. Hence, by focusing on a single text, it would not be possible to comprehensively understand the approaches and ideas of Muhammad Jayasi within the literary culture of sixteenth century. Through his works, Jayasi talked about different aspects such as gender relations, norms and conduct, economy, religious culture so on of a concerned society. For instance Jayasi remarked that:

karani karhahu, rahu jani vaisi

Jisaki lathi, tisaki bhainsi (Masalanama)

Some of Jayasi's works reflected on Sufi mystical approach and progressive ideas. His early works forwarded the progressive ideas which are quite similar to that of Kabir's ideas. For example :

Kabir tell – kal kare so aaj, aaj kare so ab karo,,

Pal me praly ho jayegi, bahuri karoge kab (kabirgarthavali)

Jaysi tell – karile aaju ahai jo karana

sDhandh–chhadi, akhir hai marana (Masalanama)

Hence both present progressive ideas. Along with this, much of his later works such as *Akhari Kalam*, *Kanhavat* and *Padamvat* communicated the Sufi mystical ideas. Jayasi self-claim of Sufi

could be seen in his works compiled in his later ages. Hence it is much to curiosity to search for the reason behind this change in his approach.

In his *Kanahavat*, he talked about the love story of Krishna and Radha which is a marked example of his progressive approach. In his another work, *Kaharanama*, Jayasi talked about the agony and isolation of women in their household. This work is also a good example of his progressive ideas. Jayasi remarked that:

Hind-turak dow ham dekhahu, jo balak so byaha re,

Bujhi bichari lau jiy piyow so, yahi jisane ko laha re , (*Kaharanama*)

Jayasi explained that there was no difference between Hindu and Turak women after their marriage as they were going through same sufferings and seclusion.

Awadhi was mainly spoken in Ayodhya, Lakhnow, Fajabad, Sitapur Allahabad etc. This land is quite fertile and mainly produces paddy, wheat etc. Awadh region was the center of power and politics during Mughals . In eighteenth century, it was the turbulent space between the Mughals and Awadh *Nabab* in their bid to claim political hegemony.

In the historiography of the Sufism in South Asia, the contributions of many scholars such as Khalid Ahmad Nizami, Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizavi, Simon Digby, Richard M Eaton, Carl Ernst, Bruce Lawrence, Sunil Kumar and Razuddin Aquil were of primary importance. They provided an insight into the different roles played by the Sufis and their centre. They talked about the role of Sufis in institutions and structures of power and authority as it became a centre for the diverse body of people both Hindu and Muslim. Having said this, these historians seldom paid attention to the importance of Sufi texts written in vernacular language. For instance, *Hindavi Sufi Premkhyan* written in Awadhi remains vital to the understanding of Sufi discourses and their ideas circulated in its local idioms and vocabulary.

Different from the above-mentioned scholars, Ramya Sreenivasan analyzed the different narrative interpretation regarding the story of Rani Padmini and her confrontation with a Muslim ruler. For this purpose she extensively used different genre of texts ranging from Jayasi's *Padmavat*, the texts of Jaina poets to the reconstruction of this story found in the British historical accounts by James Tod. Sreenivasan explained the theme mainly from the perspective of its functionality in constructing a different layers of historical memory of Rajput identities over the period.

Aditya Behl's research postulated that *Hindavi* works are a part of an Indian Islamic literary culture followed in Muslim courts since the period of the Delhi sultanate and continued to be a part of the minor regional courts. Behl suggested that at the core of this literature contains the desire to capture divine, invisible dimension of god's creation in worldly terms with a local Indian relevance. The *Awadhi* romances distance themselves both from the classical Indian

literary tradition as well as from Persian models. This double distancing creates its specific identity of *Hindavi* poetry.

Also jayasi not write and tell for only Islamic purpose but also criticizes of Islamic faith, other thing he was patronage of Sher Shah Shuri and also glorify his power and administration because he was under king but outside his court tell own thought a without hesitation.

Pathar kati kai devat saja ,

Andheran ka jas kanvai raja (Masalanama)

Setting this background, I would like to study the works of Malik Muhammad Jayasi such as Masalanama, Kaharnama, Postinama, Akhravat, Akhari Klalam, Kanhavat and Padmavat. The folklore written by Jayasi in early phase such as Maslanama and Kaharnama, was very popular in Awadh region and as well as in other areas. Although the original manuscripts of these documents was in Awadhi, it has not been discovered yet. But the translated work of *Masalana* and *Kaharanamawas* found in 1959. That language used in these documents is *Devnagari* with rarely mention of the words of *Kaithi*. Some of the interesting points can be noted in this context from this text; such as paging. The page of the above mentioned documents was in the form of Ram 1, Ram 2 and onwards. Second noticeable thing about the document is its translator Jagjivan Sahab, who was a follower of *Satanami* sect. He started the manuscript with “*Shri Ganeshay Namh*”. This means Jayasi was also popular in other religious sect and his ideas influenced people of different religious and cultural communities. Another remarkable point is the amalgamation of Hindu and Islamic cultural symbols used in the aforementioned texts.

His text *Kanhavat*, which was on the story of god Krishana and Radha love story, was the first time written in regional language like Awadhi. It was a devotional work framed in Islamic reference. Here Jayasi explained about Mathura regional culture as well. The text used the *chaupai-doha* format which was also found in Jayasi’s other works.

*Akhari-Kalam* is relatively a small work in the *chaupai-doha* format, dated by poet in 936 H. A noticeable point is that Jayasi mentioned Babar in his text. The stanza consists of seven chaupai and a concluding *doha* like in *Padmavat*. Jayasi could have taken his inspiration from the rise of millenarian speculation that was popular in his days. His pronounced allegiance to Saiyid Muhammad, the self-proclaimed Mahadi of Jaunpur, and the reference to the dajjal in his text *Padmavat* indicate that the coming of the end of the time was an important theme for the poet. The poet described that the faith he wanted believers to follow is to search for enlightenment and devotion to the Pir. In the praise of his Pir Saiyad Ashraf Jahangir, he emphasized that the bright light of guidance of *pir* has the capacity to save the fallen. The poet also described how he himself was saved by the *Pir*’s blessing.

Hence Jayasi’s approaches bridged the gaps between Islam and popular devotion.

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