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FOREWORD

It is with immense pride and a deep sense of purpose that I present the inaugural issue of the Shibli National Academic Journal (SNAJ) to the global community of scholars, researchers, and students. Named in reverence to the towering legacy of Allama Shibli Nomani — a scholar whose intellectual contributions transcended boundaries of language, discipline, and geography — this journal aspires to carry forward that same spirit of rigorous, cross-cultural inquiry.



SNAJ was conceived from a simple but pressing conviction: that meaningful scholarship should not be confined by the language in which it is written, nor by the discipline from which it emerges. India's intellectual tradition has long thrived at the confluence of languages — English, Hindi, and Urdu among them — and it is this confluence that our journal seeks to honour. By welcoming original research across the humanities, social sciences, education, and emerging interdisciplinary, multilingual fields, we hope to build a genuinely inclusive platform for academic dialogue.

As Chief Editor, I have had the privilege of witnessing the dedication of our editorial board, reviewers, and contributors, whose collective commitment has shaped this first issue. Every article herein has passed through a rigorous double-blind peer review/ indexed process, and each is assigned a Crossref indexing, registered DOI, reflecting our unwavering commitment to academic integrity, originality, and permanence in the global research ecosystem.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed reviewers, editorial board members, and the scholars who entrusted us with their research. It is through their collective effort that this journal has moved from vision to reality. I also invite researchers, academicians, and students from across disciplines and linguistic traditions to consider SNAJ as a home for their scholarship in the issues to come.

It is my sincere hope that this journal will serve not merely as a repository of research, but as a living, evolving conversation — one that bridges languages, disciplines, and generations of scholars in pursuit of knowledge.

With warm regards,

Dr. Mohammad Zahid

Chief Editor
Shibli National Academic Journal (SNAJ)

Literature and Society in the Qutb Shahi Deccan: A Historical Reading of The Epic Romance Qutb Mushtari.

Abu Asad

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-9328-5777>

Abstract

Composed in 1610 CE at the Qutb Shahi court of Golconda, Qutb Mushtari by Asadullah Wajhi is one of the earliest romantic masnavis written in Dakhini Urdu. This paper argues that the poem is not only a love story but also a historical document that reflects various aspects of the Qutb Shahi society, such as evolution and development of language, human emotions and their representation in creative ways and the idea of deccan as a distinct identical region. Through three themes - the use of Indic and Persian vocabularies for different emotional expressions, the blending of north Indian literary ideas, Arabo-Persian literary traditions, and Deccani regional identity, and the poem's use of astronomical and natural imagery to describe human emotions - the paper shows how Qutb Mushtari represents the cultural aspects of the Deccan in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This paper also reflects on evolution and development of present day Urdu from Dakhini Urdu by comparing the work of Wali Deccani with the work of Wajhi.

Keywords : Dakhini Urdu Literature, Historical Reading of Literature, Indo-Persian Cultural Synthesis, Qutb Shahi Deccan soc.

Text and Context

The Qutb Mushtari was composed in 1610 CE (1018 AH) by Asadullah Wajhi - also known as Wajeehi in some scholarly traditions - at the court of the Qutb Shahi sultanate of Golconda. The poem narrates the love story of the reigning sultan, Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (r.1580–1612), and Mushtari, a princess of Bengal.¹ Written in Dakhini Urdu, it stands among the earliest and most significant romantic masnavis in that literary tradition. To appreciate the historical and literary contribution of this text, it is necessary to situate it within the broader context of emergence and development of deccani urdu, tradition of the masnavi writing and within the specific context of the Qutb Shahi Deccan.

‘Urdu’ emerged through long social and cultural interactions between Persian-speaking people (such as ruling elites, soldiers, artisans) and the local populations of India throughout the 11th to 17th century . Still it was not known as ‘Urdu’ as we know today, it was then called Hindivi/ Hindi.² Its development began in Punjab after the Ghaznavid conquest in the eleventh century, where Persian came into contact with local languages, gradually producing a new mixed language used for everyday communication. After the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, Urdu developed further and spread southwards during the military campaigns and migrations into the Deccan, especially after Muhammad bin Tughluq shifted the capital to Daulatabad in the fourteenth century. In the Deccan, courts of the

¹ Though some scholars have tried to portray mushtari as bhagmati(lover of prince quli) , but we don't find any indication in this Masnavi or elsewhere which shows that Mushtari was historical. Infact Mushtari, which means Jupiter was used as a literary figure in Persian Literature and mythology. .

² Luther, Narendra. Prince ,Poet, Lover, Builder: Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, The Founder of Hyderabad. New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1991. P. 28-35.

Bahmani and later the Qutb Shahi and Adilshahi rulers played an important role in encouraging Dakhni as a literary language.³ Alongside political patronage, Sufi khanqahs and saints also contributed to its spread by using a simple and accessible language for religious communication.⁴ By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Dakhni had developed into a rich literary tradition, and it was within this cultural and linguistic atmosphere that Mulla Wajhi and other poets composed their works.

The Masnavi is a form of narrative poetry written in rhyming couplets, where each pair of lines has its own rhyme. This structure gives poets the freedom to continue long stories over hundreds or even thousands of verses without the restrictions of a single repeating rhyme throughout the poem. Because of this flexibility, the Masnavi became especially suitable for telling detailed tales of love, spirituality, and heroism. Originating in the Persian literary tradition, the form was widely employed for romantic epics, ethical allegories, and mystical narratives. When these forms were adopted to the Indian subcontinent, it carried this rich literary inheritance with it. The earliest masnavi composed in India is generally considered to be Amir Khusro's *Qiran us-Sa'dain*, written in 1289 CE. In the Dakhini tradition specifically, Fakhruddin Nizami's *Kadam Rao Padam Rao*, composed at Bidar between 1421 and 1434 CE, is regarded as the foundational text.⁵ By the late sixteenth century, the tradition of Dakhini poetry was firmly established at both the Qutb Shahi court of Golconda and the Adilshahi court of Bijapur, producing a body of literature that drew on Persian models while increasingly absorbing the linguistic and cultural character of the Deccan.

³ Ibid, P. 36

⁴ For example, work of Banda Nawaj Gesu Daraz (14th-15th century) in deccani specially, *Miraj-al Ahshiqin*

⁵ Panchal, Parmanand. "Traditional Indian Forms of Deccani Poetry." *Indian Literature* 53,

Within this tradition, most Dakhini masnavis were adaptations of celebrated classical Persian romances retellings, in the local literary language, of stories whose plots, characters, and emotional conventions were already well established.⁶ What distinguished Wajhi was a decisive creative departure from this practice. Among the masnavi poets of the Golconda court, he was the first to build his narrative around an original romantic theme, choosing as his subject the love story of his own patron rather than retelling an inherited tale.

The poem's structural opening follows classical Indo-Islamic literary conventions. It begins with the Hamd - section in praise of God - followed by the Naat, offering praise of the Prophet Muhammad, and then the Munqabat, traditionally a eulogy of Sufi saints or Sahaba (companion of Prophet). The Qutb Shahi dynasty maintained a pronounced Shia identity, and this affiliation leaves a clear mark on the poem's devotional architecture. Both the poet himself and Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah - who was also a poet of Dakhini - dedicated their Munqabat exclusively to Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet and the central figure of Shia devotion. This was not merely a matter of personal piety; it was a political and religious demonstration, embedding the poem within the specifically Shia identity of the Golconda court.

After the devotional opening, the poem moves into a long section praising Ibrahim Qutb Shah, the father of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah and the earlier ruler of Golconda. This praise was not included only to honor the king; it may demonstrate the political purpose also. By

no. 5 (September/October 2009): 211–219. Published by Sahitya Akademi.p. 212.

⁶ Devare, T. N. *A Short History of Persian Literature at the Bahmani, the Ādilshāhi and the Qutbshāhi Courts – Deccan*. London and New York: Routledge, 2021. P. 347-51.

connecting Muhammad Quli's love story to the reign of his father, Wajhi places the narrative within the larger history of the Qutb Shahi dynasty and presents its rulers as part of stable royal lineage. Such praise was a common feature of court literature in the Indo-Islamic world, where poetry often worked as both artistic expression and political assertion about authority of the ruling dynasty. Only after establishing this religious and political background does Wajhi begin the love story of the poem.

The central theme of the poem is *ishq*-love - a concept that carried both worldly (*ishq-i-majazi*) and spiritual meanings (*ishq-i-haqiqi*) in the Indo-Persian and Sufi traditions. Although *Qutb Mushtari* mainly tells the story of romantic love between human beings, the spiritual dimension of love still remains present in the text. This can be seen in the advice of Ibrahim Shah which was given to the young prince, where he reminds him that the love and friendship of God (*Kartaar*) is greater than attachment to worldly relationships.⁷ Muhammad Quli's own poetic style also reinforces this connection between earthly love and divine spirituality. His poems describing wine, beauty of women also end with praise of God, the Prophet, and Ali.⁸ In this way, worldly desire and spiritual devotion reflected a relation of closeness mostly, rather than totally contrasting.

Taken together, these elements - the poem's place within the Dakhini masnavi tradition, Wajhi's originality of the theme, the devotional and political architecture of the text, and the interplay of earthly and divine love - establish *Qutb Mushtari* as a text of considerable historical importance. After discussion of this

background and context, followings are our analysis of themes.

Language and the Expression of Emotions

One of the most revealing dimensions of *Qutb Mushtari* as a historical document is the way in which it deploys language itself as an expressive instrument. The poem is composed in Dakhini Urdu - a literary language that had evolved over two centuries of cultural interaction in the Deccan (14th-16th century), absorbing vocabulary, imagery, and idiom from Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit-derived Indic languages, and the everyday speech of the region's mixed populations.⁹ What makes Wajhi's text important for historians is not just its use of different languages and literary traditions together, but the way these different styles are connected to different emotions and experiences in the story. A close reading of the poem shows that Indic words are often used to describe physical beauty and colourful visual scenes, while Persian words are more commonly linked with inner emotions such as longing, anxiety, and sadness. Though this pattern is not completely planned or fixed, it reflects the mixed cultural world in which both the poet and his audience lived.

To appreciate what Wajhi was doing with language, it is necessary to understand something of the literary environment in which Dakhini Urdu had developed. As T. N. Devare has argued, the earliest poetry in Dakhini was deeply shaped by Sanskrit-derived vocabulary, regional idioms, and images drawn from the Indian natural environment, often composed in Hindi metres familiar to local audiences.¹⁰ *Qutb Mushtari* reflects this rich cultural mixture, bringing

⁷ Mullah Wajhi. *Qutb Mushtari*. Compiled by Maulvi Abdul Haq. New Delhi: Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu, 1939. P.

⁸ Haroon Khan Sherwani. *Muhammad-Quli Qutb Shah: Founder of Haidarabad*. London: Asia Publishing House, 1967. P. 47-48

⁹ Saksena, Ram Babu. *A History of Urdu Literature*. Allahabad: Ram Narain Lal Publisher, 1940. P. 32-35.

¹⁰ Devare, T. N. *A Short History of Persian Literature at the Bahmani, the Ādilshāhi and the Qutbshāhi Courts – Deccan*. London and New York: Routledge, 2021. P. 350-51.

together Indic, Persian, and regional linguistic traditions into a distinctly Dakhini literary form. **We can't simply say that wajhi only borrowed words from different languages. In reality the originality of Dakhini also appears in its strong use of native vocabulary and local speech patterns. Words such as *munje* (me), *nako* or *nē* (no/not), *dasya* (to see), *mane* (in the middle), *thaar* (place), *soon* (with/from), *kita* (kitna, how much/how many), and *kāta* (said) reflect the living spoken language of the Deccan. Similarly, grammatical forms like the suffix “-aa” in words such as *baatā* and *haathā*, or the use of *ahai* for “hai,” give Dakhini its distinctive linguistic identity.** With this originality wajhi took from Indic and Persian literary vocabulary to construction of emotions, description of beauty etc.

This natural blending of languages becomes especially clear in the poem's descriptions of beauty. When Wajhi describes the beloved, he turns to Indic images taken from nature. Her beauty is expressed through flowers, colours, light, and other familiar elements of the natural world. In one especially vivid passage, he presents the beloved through a flowing series of rich visual metaphors:

*Samud te sabhi roop rang jal hai jyun,
Kanwal mukh ki gardan so dandal hai jyun.
Ankhiyan par bhanwa chhand soo chhayen hain,
Ki tarkaan sara par taare laaye hain.*¹¹
(The countless forms and hues of the ocean - all are, in essence, nothing but water; precisely as a shapely neck serves as a stem for a face akin to a lotus. The eyebrows cast a shade over the eyes, as if bumblebees were hovering above; it seems as though the very stars themselves have descended from the celestial firmament.)

¹¹ Mullah Wajhi. Qutb Mushtari. Compiled by Maulvi Abdul Haq. P. 96

¹² कत कत देखौं स्याम को कमल मुख, सखी री मोहिं कल न परत। (Oh friend, where can I

The vocabulary here - *kanwal mukh* (lotus-face), *dandal* (stem), *bhanwa* (bumblebee), *ankhiyan* (eyes) - belongs to the Indic poetic tradition. The lotus as a metaphor for the beloved's face, the comparison of eyebrows to bees hovering over a flower, the interweaving of natural imagery with the human body - these are conventions deeply rooted and widely present in 16th century Hindi devotional and romantic poetry of Surdas and Mirabai etc.¹² In short, the beloved's beauty is described through the familiar aesthetic language of the land and its natural surroundings.

When the poem moves from describing outward beauty to expressing inner emotional suffering, the language noticeably changes. This shift becomes especially clear in the episode where the lovesick condition of the young prince Muhammad Quli is described by his father:

*Shahanshah sunya baat yun sar ba sar,,
Chalya fikarwand ho haram ke udhar.
Kahya mayi ko baap uu aaye kar,
Ki farzand ko vek(dekh) tak jaye kar.
Ki farzand ka kuch khabar ni tujhe,
Khabar le khabar yun agar nee tujhe.
Apas me ape aah bharta ahai,
Deewana hokar saand karta ahai.*¹³

(Upon hearing this account in its entirety, the Emperor - filled with deep concern - proceeded toward the royal harem. There, he addressed the mother of his child, saying: "Go and look upon our son; go and see him with your own eyes. Do you have no knowledge whatsoever of the child's state? Go and inquire after his well-being, for clearly, you remain oblivious.. He sighs deeply to himself, and- as if driven mad- he wanders about in a frenzy.)

see the lotus face (kamal mukh) of my Shyam? I find no peace.) From Sur Sagar

¹³ Mullah Wajhi. Qutb Mushtari. Compiled by Maulvi Abdul Haq. P. 31

There is emotion of restlessness and anxiety of prince Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah appear in another passage also :

Jo har baar yun khwab me yaar aaye,
To ashqi ko bin khwab hi kuch na bhaye.
Pareshan , *hairaan betaab* tha,
Na kuch usko araam na khwab tha.¹⁴

(If the beloved were to appear in dreams every time like this,
Then nothing except those dreams would please the lover.
He was distressed, bewildered, and restless;
He had neither peace nor even the comfort of sleep.)

Similarly, the pain of separation and displacement is expressed in deeply personal language:

Nikalna kise ghar se bhata ahai,
Munje dil ye sitami lajata ahai.¹⁵

(Who truly enjoys leaving home? My heart feels ashamed of this cruelty.)

In these passages, the emotional weight is carried largely through Persian-derived words such as *fikarwand* (anxious), *qarār* (peace), *betāb*(restless), *pareshān*(distressed), *hairān* (bewildered), *sitami dil* (cruel heart) and *dīwāna* (mad with love). These terms come from the long tradition of Persian Sufi and romantic poetry, where sleeplessness, madness, longing, and restlessness symbolize the pain and intensity of love.¹⁶ By using this vocabulary in moments of emotional crisis, Wajhi places his characters within a familiar Persianate emotional world that his courtly audience would immediately recognize and feel connected to.

It is important, however, not to overstate the systematicity of this pattern. The Dakhini language that Wajhi worked within was itself a

living mixture, and the poem does not maintain a rigid separation between its linguistic construction at all points. In moments of joy and celebration, both Indic and Persian vocabularies appear together, as in the following couplet celebrating the king's happiness on birth of prince Muhammad Quli :

Ki shah ko khushi yu badi aaj hai,
Anand par aanand, kaaj par kaaj hai.¹⁷
(Truly, the King is filled with immense joy today
- delight upon delight, success upon success!)

Here *khushi* is Persian in origin while *anand* is deeply Sanskrit - yet they sit side by side in a single verse without any sense of anomaly. Positive emotional states - joy, celebration etc. - seem to require no single linguistic home; they are expressed through whatever words come naturally, drawn from whichever tradition best serves the moment. It is primarily in the contrasting emotional territories of beauty and suffering that the two vocabularies tend to separate, each finding its own expressive domain.

Multicultural Influences and use of Metaphors, Idioms in early Dakhini poetry

Among the most historically illuminating aspects of Qutb Mushtari is the way its figurative language (words that convey a meaning that is different from their literal meaning such as metaphors, idioms, and symbolic references) traces the cultural history of the Qutb Shahi Deccan. The poem's imagery is not merely a decorative instrument for a romance narrative, rather, it serves as a historical archive of the many cultural worlds that shaped Mulla Wajhi's imagination, the audiences he addressed, and the social values he sought to articulate. Through its metaphors, one encounters a society in which Persian literary conventions, Indic traditions, Islamic symbolism, and regional Deccani

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 27.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 47.

¹⁶ T.N. Devare, op. Cit.

¹⁷ Ibid, P. 22.

consciousness were deeply intertwined. These traditions coexist within the poem, producing a literary language that reflects the composite social world of the seventeenth-century Deccan.

At several points in Qutb Mushtari, Wajhi has deliberately focused on his belonging to Deccan and Telangana. He has mentioned about its wealth, beauty and about its language, Dakhini also. These description places cultural and geographical identity of the Deccan:

Dakhan mulk bhoo tej khasa ahai,
Telangana is ka khulasa ahai.¹⁸

Dakhan me jo dakhini meethi baat kā,
Adā nee kya koi is dhāt ka.¹⁹

(The land of the Deccan is especially radiant and distinguished - Telangana is its very essence. There is no speech as sweet as Dakhini in the Deccan, and no one can equal that of this language.)

These verses are historically remarkable for several reasons. They reveal a developed and articulate sense of Deccani regional identity - a pride in belonging to a specific land with its own character and distinction. Telangana is identified not merely as a geographical location but as the political and cultural core of the dynasty to whom the poet belongs. Rather than viewing itself as merely an imitator of Persian or North Indian centres of learning, the Deccan asserted its own distinct cultural identity. Its rulers and literary figures imagined the region as a space with its own linguistic richness and historical experience. This regional consciousness is crucial for understanding the poem's broader cultural synthesis, where Persian, Indic, and Islamic influences are woven together into a uniquely Deccani literary vision.

¹⁸ Mullah Wajhi. Qutb Mushtari. Compiled by Maulvi Abdul Haq. P. 100

¹⁹ Ibid, p 16

Though they asserted their identity based on deccani language and region still their literary works borrowed hugely from various literary and linguistic traditions. Persian literary tradition was one of the most significant in influencing earliest Dakhini poetry. Still this influence was limited as compared to native traditions and it increased gradually. As we discussed earlier about T. N. Devare's argument in his study of Persian literature at the Bahmani, Adilshahi, and Qutb Shahi courts, that early dakhini literature was more influenced by Indic and Sanskrit tradition.²⁰ Over time, however, as the sultanate courts deepened their engagement with Persian administrative and literary models, a gradual process of Persianization became increasingly apparent in Dakhini poetry. Devare identifies two principal reasons for this shift: the adoption of the Arabic script for writing Dakhini, and the fact that the literary culture of the sultanates was produced almost entirely by Muslim writers whose education and aesthetic formation were grounded in Persian and Arabic traditions.²

This Persianization was not a sudden break. It was a slow and gradual change. Over time, the balance of language and imagination shifted away from Indic roots toward Persian forms and conventions. We'll analyse this change by comparing the later 17th century poetry of Wali Deccani, who is said to be pioneer of present day Urdu Poetry. As Gopi Chand Narang has documented in his study of Wali, the poet's engagement with the North Indian literary elite of Delhi - where Persian-dominated literary culture held a powerful place - accelerated and deepened the process of Persianization that Devare had identified as a broader tendency within Dakhini literary history.²¹ Following are some couplets of Wali's poetry:

²⁰ T.N., Devare, op. Cit. P. 350

²¹ Edited by Gopi Chand Narang. Wali Dakni: Tasawwuf, Insaniyat aur Mohabbat ka Shair. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2005.

Muflisi sab bahaar khoti hai
Mard ka e'tibaar khoti hai.

Kiya mujh ishq ne zaalim koon aab, aahista
aahista,
Sunya dil-bar ne meri izarab, aahista aahista.²²

(Poverty destroys all the beauty of life - it destroys a man's reputation and trust. Love has slowly subdued this tyrant within me, little by little - my beloved has heard my restlessness, little by little.)

The vocabulary here - muflisi, e'tibaar, izarab, dil-bar, aahista - is Persian in character. There is very little presence of deccani words in comparison to the later 16th and early 17th century poetry of deccani. The everyday Hindi idioms, the vernacular proverbial expressions that influenced Wajhi's verse have largely reduced.

It is within this context of cultural equilibrium that Wajhi's deployment of vernacular Hindi idioms acquires its full historical significance. The poem uses expressions taken from everyday North Indian speech and places them within the formal structure of the masnavi. When a mother, urged to visit her son (Prince Quli), declares her absolute determination:

Ki mai sar suun chal wā talak jaungi,
Api mai yaha shah ko liyaungi.²³

(I shall walk on my head to reach him - I myself shall bring the prince here.)

The idiom- sar suun chalna - going to any extreme length, at whatever personal cost - belongs to the vernacular Hindi idiomatic

tradition.. A similar proverbial wisdom surfaces elsewhere in the poem:

Dekhen kaam is hor tuj baat aaj,
Ki maslan ahai ek pant hor do kaach.²⁴

(Looking at this matter and listening to your story today it looks like we can do two tasks in one way.)

The use of ek pant do kaach - equivalent to the Hindi proverb ek panth do kaaj, accomplishing two purposes through a single action - within a courtly romance is historically telling. As Parmanand Panchal has observed, traditional Deccani poetry maintained a close relationship with the spoken idioms and cultural forms of its local environment, a quality that distinguished it from the more self-consciously elevated registers of contemporaneous Persian court poetry.²⁵

Alongside these vernacular idioms, Wajhi draws extensively on the figurative words of the classical Arabo-Persian literary tradition. He used the romantic pairs Laila-Majnu and Yusuf-Zulekha as established standards for the experience of love. To these he adds the Persian metaphors such as Sama-Patanga - the moth drawn fatally to the flame, emblematic of self-annihilating devotion. Metaphor, Chakor-Chaand, the mythical bird believed to live only by gazing at the moon, belongs to Indic poetry originally but it is widely used by both traditions.

Agar nee hai ashik chakor chand ka,
To rātān ko voo kya sabab jaagta.²⁶
(If the chakor is not in love with the moon, then why does it remain awake through the nights?)

²² Edited by Gopi Chand Narang. Wali Dakni: Tasawwuf, Insaniyat aur Mohabbat ka Shayar. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2005.

²³ Mullah Wajhi. Qutb Mushtari. Compiled by Maulvi Abdul Haq. P. 29

²⁴ Ibid, p. 71

²⁵ Premchand Panchal, op. Cit. P.

²⁶ Mullah Wajhi. Qutb Mushtari. Compiled by Maulvi Abdul Haq. P. 14

This blurring of cultural boundaries within a single metaphor is itself emblematic of the Qutb Shahi synthesis.

The poem's figurative language also operates at an explicitly political register, most powerfully in Wajhi's praise of Muhammad Quli through deliberate contrast with figures drawn from the Persian historical and mythological tradition:

Sahi jyun kiye shah aali janāb,
Na Dara kiya voo na Afrasiyab.²⁷

(The exalted king rules with justice — he is neither Darius nor Afrasiyab.)

Darius, the historical Achaemenid emperor, represented in the Persian literary imagination a figure of immense worldly power ultimately brought low by fate and loss by Alexander - a symbol of the fragility of even the mightiest earthly authority. Afrasiyab, the mythical king of Turan in Firdausi's *Shahnamah*, was the villain of the Persian epic tradition - powerful, and ultimately overcome by the forces of righteousness and divine order. By placing his patron above both the great historical emperors and the powerful mythological tyrants, Mulla Wajhi creates a carefully shaped image of royal greatness. The patron is shown as superior to even the most powerful figures known in the Persian literary tradition, giving the Qutb Shahi dynasty ruler an authority greater than both historical glory and mythical power.

It is, however, in the final union of Muhammad Quli and Mushtari that the multicultural character of Qutb Mushtari reaches its clearest and most historically significant expression. At this moment of narrative completion, Mulla Wajhi turns not to a Persian metaphor, but to one of the most familiar and meaningful images of devoted love from the Hindu devotional tradition:

²⁷ Ibid, p. 106. Both Dara and Afrasiyab are celebrated in Persian literature, Though Dara was historical, he is also known as Darius III who was the last Achaemenid ruler. Afrasiyab is the most complex and enduring villain in Iranian

Suhati hai dhan shah khush faam suun,
Ki gumti hai seeta magar raam suun.²⁸
(The beautiful queen feels comforted with the king, just as Sita wandered only with Ram.)

In the Bhakti literature specially of Tulsidas, Rama and Sita symbolize the ideal of pure and devoted love - a union closely connected with moral and spiritual harmony. For me, this comparison was not only based on the idea of devotional and final meeting of the couples. Wajhi used figures due to one more reason that was similarity between both figures in certain aspects. Both Ram and Quli Qutb Shah fought with the devil and defeated them and then got their love. Both migrated from their home, though the reasons were different but this plot in the background of the poet may be one of the reasons to use the Ram and Sita as concluding couplet of the love story.

Historicizing Astronomical and Ecological Details

In Qutb Mushtari, nature and the cosmic world are not presented simply as background scenery, they actively shape the emotional and political atmosphere of the narrative - a living environment whose elements feel, observe and celebrate alongside the human figures at the centre of the narrative. Wajhi's representation of nature operates across two interrelated ways: the astronomical, in which celestial bodies structure the poem's political imagination and give characters their very identities, and the ecological, in which trees, flowers, birds, and animals closely linked to human emotions and everyday experience. To read these representations historically is to recover something of the emotions of the early seventeenth century Qutb Shahi society- the ways in which people understood, expressed, and

mythology, originating from ancient Zoroastrian texts before becoming the central antagonist of the *Shahnamah*.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 108.

organized their inner lives through the natural and cosmic order that surrounded them.

The astronomical dimension of the poem begins, significantly, with names. The very characters of Qutb Mushtari carry within their names a celestial representation that structures the entire narrative. Mushtari is Jupiter - the largest and most luminous of the wandering stars in the classical astronomical tradition, associated with beauty, abundance, and good fortune. Utarid, the painter figure who appears in the poem, carries the name of Mercury - the planet associated in both the Arabic and Sanskrit astronomical traditions with artistry, communication and intellect. The name of the sultan himself - Qutb, meaning the pole star - is perhaps the most politically charged of all. The pole star is the fixed point in the sky. It is the guide that provides direction, the constant reference point visible to all who navigate the night sky. The title Qutb Mushtari, combining the names of the pole star and Jupiter, therefore places the love story within a larger cosmic framework where kingship, destiny, and celestial order are deeply interconnected.

This celestial imagery of kingship reaches its most direct expression in the words of Ibrahim Qutb Shah, who addresses his son Muhammad Quli with a verse of emotional and political resonance:

Tu soor hai, nako door ho aasman te.²⁹
(You are the sun - do not distance yourself from the sky.)

The father's advice to his son is simultaneously personal and political. On one level it is paternal advice - do not migrate from the palace to search for Mushtari, do not give yourself pain of different kinds in search of love. On another level it encodes a specific theory of kingship: Prince would be the next king and if he goes then political stability may be fragile. This

solar metaphor for royal authority was deeply embedded in both the Persian and the Indic traditions of political thought and was widely deployed in the literary and visual culture of the Indo-Islamic empires.³⁰ As Haroon Khan Sherwani has noted in his study of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, the Qutb Shahi court cultivated a sophisticated political imagery in which cosmic order and royal authority were presented as mutually sustaining - the king's just rule reflecting and maintaining the harmony of the heavens.³¹ Ibrahim's verse to his son thus does more than offer fatherly guidance; it locates the prince within a cosmological framework of sovereignty that the entire court would have recognized and understood.

It was within this richly astronomical poetic environment that Wajhi composed Qutb Mushtari. The influence of Muhammad Quli's own poetic sensibility on Wajhi's compositional world is directly traceable. Muhammad Quli was himself an accomplished poet in Dakhini, whose verse displayed a characteristic delight in the imagery of seasons, celestial bodies, and the natural world. In one of his own compositions, he writes:

Basant khelen ishq ki aa pyara,
Tumhi hain chand mai hu jo sitara
(Come, beloved, let us play the game of love in spring - you are the moon and I am the star.)³²

The ecological dimension of Wajhi's nature imagery is equally historically revealing. Throughout the poem, the natural world is represented not as passive scenery but as a living and emotional presence capable of feeling and participating in human experience. In a celebrated description of the garden in spring, Wajhi writes:

Chaman tar na shabnam ki hai aab su,
Ki muh dhoye hain phool gulab su.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 44

³⁰ H.K. Sherwani, op.cit. P.

³¹ H.K. Sherwani, op. Cit. P. 53-54

³² Narender, Luther, op. Cit. P. 75

Bhanwar jhund ho ban me ghumte athe,
So phulā kare muh ko chumte athe.

Ki paatā ke pardyan ko sab phaar kar,
Phoolan jhankte the sarā kaad kar.³³

(The garden is moistened with the water of dew - as if the flowers have washed their faces with rose water. Swarms of bees wandered through the forest, kissing the faces of the blossoming flowers. Tearing through the veils of leaves, the flowers were peeking out from the leaves.)

The garden here is not described but animated(with full of energy). Flowers wash their faces, bees kiss blossoms, flowers peeking out amidst the leaves - the entire natural world performs the gestures of conscious, feeling beings. This literary technique, which resembles what later European criticism would call pathetic fallacy, was deeply embedded in both the Persian and Indic poetic traditions, where nature's moods were understood to mirror and participate in human emotional states. It reveals how the people of the Deccan in this era understood their relationship to the natural environment - not as detached observers of an external world but as participants in a living ecological community whose members shared the same emotional rhythms as human beings.

This sense of nature's participation in human life extends to the animal world with equal vividness: So tawoss, pankhi, tooti, kabak, hans, Pakad pet lotne lagne has has.³⁴

(The peacocks, birds, parrots, partridges, and swans began rolling on the ground holding their bellies, laughing and laughing.)

The image of peacocks and swans rolling with laughter is deliberately comic and enthusiastic - a moment of pure celebratory joy in which the boundary between human and animal life dissolves entirely. Joy was understood as something that spread beyond human beings into the surrounding natural world, filling nature itself with the same sense of life and energy. Such descriptions tell us something important about the emotional description of the Qutb Shahi court: . As Muzaffar Alam has observed in his analysis of Sufi narrative conventions, the representation of nature as a responsive and feeling presence was closely connected to broader spiritual ideas about the interconnectedness of all created beings within the divine order.³⁵

This intimate connection between human emotion and natural environment reaches its most tender expression in the poem's depiction of the lovers' union:

Suahte the shah dhan so us waqt yun,
Ki hirani ko le beta baag jyun.³⁶

(The king and the beautiful queen rested together at that moment, like a deer taking shelter in the garden.)

The simile of the deer in the garden - gentle, trusting, at ease in its natural habitat - give the lovers' union through an image of complete naturalness and peace. The ecological world here places the human love story within the broader harmony of the natural order. Hence Both dimensions(astronomical and ecological) , read historically, illuminate not merely the literary conventions of a courtly poem but the deeper structures of thought and feeling that shaped life in the early seventeenth century Deccan.

³³ Mullah Wajhi. Qutb Mushtari. Compiled by Maulvi Abdul Haq. P. 8,. 62

³⁴ Ibid, P. 8,62

³⁵ Alam, Muzaffar. "World Enough and Time: Religious Strategy and Historical Imagination in an Indian Sufi Tale." In Tellings and Texts:

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³⁶ Mullah Wajhi. Qutb Mushtari. Compiled by Maulvi Abdul Haq. P. 107

Conclusion

What this paper has demonstrated is that Qutb Mushtari is read not only as a literary romantic poetry but as a primary historical source. Its language, images, and metaphors clearly show the cultural world of early seventeenth-century Deccan in a way that official chronicles may not fully capture. Its figurative world reflects a society where stories like Ram and Sita could express a Muslim sultan's love just as naturally as Laila and Majnun. Its cosmic and ecological imagery shows a court that saw kingship as connected to the order of the stars and human emotions as part of the natural environment.

There is something quietly remarkable about reading Qutb Mushtari as a historical document. Wajhi was not a historian, he was a court poet searching for the right word for a beloved's face, the right metaphor for a sleepless night, an image grand enough to honour his sultan. He could not have known that, in doing this, he was also recording a whole civilization. Through his language and imagery, he was capturing the cultural and linguistic aspects of a society that would not remain the same. The Qutb Shahi sultanate was conquered by Aurangzeb's armies in 1687, less than eighty years after this poem was written. The balance that made Wajhi's blending of cultures possible did not last for long. It slowly broke down because of various regions such as contact of Dakhini with north Indian Persian poetry writing and standardization of Urdu poetry on the basis of Persian parameters. What remains today is the poem itself, which still carries signs of a world that might otherwise have been lost without any clear literary record.

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