

Amīr Khusraw Dehlawī

Written by
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Amīr Khusraw Dehlawī (b. 651/1253, Patiyālī; d. 725/1325, Dihlī). For over 52 years, he was court poet and historian to eleven kings, especially Ghīyāth-ud-Dīn Balaban and Muḥammad Khān of Multān. From childhood, he was a friend and follower of Nizām-ud-Dīn Awliyā, the foremost *shaykh* of the *Chishtīyyah* Order. Khusraw's legacy includes five *dīwāns*, a *khamisa* (quintet) in the tradition of Nizāmī Ganjawī (d. 600/1203), and several works in prose. He is known for his love of India, innovations in music, and exquisite Persian Sufic lyrics. He rivals Sa'dī and Ḥāfiẓ in *ghazal* and Nizāmī in *qaṣīdah*.

AMĪR KHUSRAW DIHLAWĪ

Known as the parrot (*tūtī*) of India, Amīr Nāṣir-ud-Dīn Abū al-Ḥassan (Yamīn-ud-Dowla) Khusraw ibn Amīr Saif-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Dihlawī is India's foremost Persian poet and thinker. Born in 651/1253, he was the son of Saif-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd, a chief of the Lāchīn tribe (*Qarakhitāi*) of Kūsh (present-day Shahr-i Sabz), Transoxania. Before the Mongol invasion of Turkistan, Maḥmūd fled to India where he became the Commander in Chief of Shams-ud-Dīn Iltūtmīsh's army. He settled in Patiyālī (Etah, Uttar Pardesh), married the daughter of the Indian nobleman Imād al-Mulk, and had three sons, 'Izz-ud-Dīn 'Alīshāh, Nāṣir-id-Dīn Maḥmūd, and Khusraw. Saif-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd died in 659/1260.

Originally a Turk, Amīr Khusraw spoke Persian fluently and knew Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, Brij Bhasha, and Avadhi. He did not receive any formal training either in the sciences or, except for calligraphy, in the arts. In poetry, he was his own master and by 671/1272 found his way to the court of Bughrā Khān of the Dihlī

Sulṭanate. This date is significant because at about the same time, he also became a disciple of Nizām-ud-Dīn Awliyā. Throughout his life, he successfully coordinated his service to the Sulṭanate with his duties as a member of the *Chishtīyyah* Order. His career lasted for 52 years, most of it enmeshed in court intrigue. Nevertheless, he left a rich legacy in prose and poetry. In addition to Persian, he also composed poetry in Urdu, Arabic, and Hindi. Indian scholars regard him as the founder of Urdu literature and his Hindi songs are famous in northern India.

Khusraw's *Chishtīyyah* affiliation is noteworthy. His father, a warrior Turk, was keenly aware of the importance of education for his sons whom he reared as warriors and scholars. He acquainted his sons with the chief of the Sufi poets, *Shaykh* Nizām-ud-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Dihlawī (Nizām-ud-Dīn Awliyā) at a very early age. Unlike the *Suhrawardīyyah* that promoted the Sunnī elites exclusively, the *Chishtīyyah* supported governments that sought prosperity for everyone, including the unorthodox Sunnīs, Shī'ites, and Hindus. Even at that tender age, Khusraw recognised the significance of the teachings of the saint, and the *Shaykh* appreciated Khusraw's special gift for poetry. The *Shaykh* paid special attention to Khusraw and Khusraw reciprocated by reciting his poetry in public only with the *Shaykh's* approval.

The milieu in which the *Shaykh* and Khusraw worked was suffused with turmoil and intolerance. Nizām-ud-Dīn's example in tolerance and support for the downtrodden shaped Khusraw's world view. He learned that the *Suhrawardīyyah's* intimidation tactics were futile and that Hindus were more likely to become pious Muslims by observing examples of good Muslim behavior.

Khusraw served in various capacities at the courts of Bengal and Dihlī. Over all, he served eleven kings (from Ghīyāth-ud-Dīn Balaban to Ghīyāth-ud-Dīn Tughluq, 720/1320-725/1325); they all respected him and bestowed honors on him for his intelligence, scholarship, and piety. Amīr Khusraw died in 725/1325. He was buried at the foot of the saint.

Even though he started composing poetry when he was twelve, Khusraw's poetic career, with the penname "Sulṭānī," began when he was twenty. His literary output consists of several multi-volume works, a collection of lyrics, and several prose works. His *divāns* include both poetry and prose. However, it is his poetry—*ghazal*,

qaṣīdah, *rubā'ī*, *qit'ah*, *tarjī'band*, *tarkībband*, and *mathnawī*—that stands out. A feature of his poetry is that shorter form, e.g., a *ghazal*, is included in the longer forms, e.g., a *mathnawī*. And he has 5,000 independent *ghazals* that are not found in any of his *divāns*. The themes of Khusraw's poetry include nature, love, Sufism, literary criticism, and history. He is the only Persian poet to write five *divāns* corresponding to the phases of his own life. In this, Jāmī, Nawā'ī, Mushfiqī, and others imitated him. Let us begin the discussion of his literary works with the *Panj Ganj* (five treasures). Containing mostly *mathnawīs*, the Five Treasures are:

- a) *Tuḥfat-uṣ-Ṣighar* (gift of youth, 671/1272), 3000 *bayts*, melodies composed when he was twenty. He imitated the Persian poets Anwarī and Khāqānī but avoided the latter's farfetched metaphors.
- b) *Wasat-ul-Hayāt* (middle of life, 683/1284), 4401 *bayts*, composed when he was 34. He continued to emulate Khāqānī but added local colour to differentiate himself from the master. In writing the *ghazals*, he emulated Sa'dī.
- c) *Ghurrat-ul-Kamāl* (light of perfection, 693/1293), 8800 *bayts*, is the most important of the five. It was composed at the request of his brother 'Alā-ud-Dīn 'Alī when Khusraw was 42. This volume contains Khusraw's most important philosophical and spiritual verses, as well as his biography, a discussion of the merits of poetry, and the superiority of Persian poetry over Arabic poetry.
- d) *Baqīyyah Naqīyyah* (the pure remnant, 716/1316), 8360 *bayts*, was written when he was 64. It includes praises for 'Alā-ud-Dīn Muḥammad Khaljī (695-715 AH) and a *marthīyyah* (elegy) for him. There is also a long *qaṣīdah* in praise of Nizām-ud-Dīn Awliyā.
- e) *Nihāyat-ul-Kamāl* (peak of perfection, 725/1325), 4084 *bayts*, includes Khusraw's last poems. Here he tries his hand one last time at imitating the masters, just to prove his stamina as an aging poet.

In addition, Khusraw wrote a number of historical *mathnawīs*, in which he sang the praises of the natural beauty, customs, and the ancient legacy of India:

- 1) *Qirān-us-Sa‘dayn* (conjunction of two auspicious stars, 688/1288), 3944 *bayts*, is an account of a peace ceremony between Mu‘izz-ud-Dīn Kayqubād and his father Nāṣir-ud-Dīn Bughrā Khān. The young Khusraw drew criticism at first but, eventually, was praised for the *mathnawī*.
- 2) *‘Āshiqah* (mistress, 715/1315), 4519 *bayts*, is an account of the romance between the Muslim Khidhr Khān and the Hindu Dewāl Rānī, the daughter of the Rajah of Gujarāt. Khusraw's aim was to promote a rapprochement between the warring factions. The preface of the *mathnawī* details the spread of Islam in India. The tragic events and the characters that populated them were real and known to the poet.
- 3) *Miftāḥ al-Futūḥ* (key to victories, 690/1291)), 750 *bayts*, is a historical *mathnawī* describing four victories by Sultān Jalāl-ud-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (689-690/1290-91) within the same year, as well as an account of his coronation.
- 4) *Nuh Sipīhr* (the nine heavens, 718/1318), 4509 *bayts*, is written in praise of Quṭb-ud-Dīn Mubārak Shāh Khaljī (716-20/1316-20). He wrote it in praise of his homeland, India, enumerating her contributions to mathematics (the zero factor), philosophy, sports (chess), and music. This is the first story in Persian in which a poet uses several poetic meters in the same piece.
- 5) *Tughluq Nāmāh* (the book of Tughluq, incomplete), 3000 *bayts*, is an account (now lost) of the brief reign of Ghīyāth-ud-Dīn Tughluq Shāh (720/1320-725/1325), the founder of the Dihlī Tughluqī line.

Towards the end of his career (699-701/1299-1301), Khusraw wrote his *Khamsa* (quintet), in which a didactic work is followed by four romances. Like Nizāmī's *Khamsa* that Khusraw emulated, this is the work of Khusraw that lends itself best to illustration. Khusraw's inclusion of Hindūstānī colour adds a great deal to the events described. Khusraw is not only a distinguished *mathnawī* composer, but also the first to write a *khamsa* in response to Nizāmī's, thus initiating a series of *khamsa* compositions. Khusraw's *Khamsa* includes:

- 1) *Maṭla‘-al-Anwār* (dawn of lights, 698/1298), 3310 *bayts*, is a reply to Nizāmī's *Makhzan al-Asrār*. It consists of 20 stories on Law, the Path, and the Truth. The topics are further divided into: self-

- realisation, learning, Islamic principles, generosity, courage, and others.
- 2) *Shīrīnu Khusraw* (Shīrīn and Khusraw, 698/1298), 4124 *bayts*, is a reply to Nizāmī's *Khusraw wa Shīrīn*. It includes a *majlis* (session) in which Khusraw discusses the sky, the stars, and the four elements with the philosopher Buzurg Umīd and the minstrel Bārbad.
 - 3) *Majnūnu Laylā* (Majnūn and Laylā, 698/1298), 2650 *bayts*, follows Nizāmī's style and account of the lives of Laylā and Majnūn.
 - 4) *A'ī na-i Sikandarī* (Alexander's mirror, 699/1299), 4450 *bayts*, includes praises of Nizām-ud-Dīn Awliyā, the story of Alexander's war against the Khāqān of China, and highlights of the inventions attributed to the time of Alexander—astrolabe, looking glass, and tents made of cotton cloth.
 - 5) *Hasht Bihisht* (eight paradises, 701/1301), 3352 *bayts*, follows Nizāmī's *Haft Paykar*.

Khusraw's other works, mostly in prose, include the prefaces to his *divāns*, *Khazā'in-ul-Futūḥ* (treasure-chamber of victories) or *Tārīkh-i 'Alā'ī* (the history of 'Alā) about the victories of 'Alā'id-Dīn Muḥammad Khaljī (695/1295-715/1315), and *Afḍal al-Fawā'id* (719/1319), which contains the lectures of Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā. It also provides information on Sufis within and beyond India; for some, it remains an only source of information. There is also the epistolographic *I'jāz-i Khusravī* (Khurau's miracle, 719/1319), a technical manual on music, rhetoric, style, and poetics. *Manāqib-i Hind* and *Tārīkh-i Dehlī* are also attributed to him.

In the *ghazal* genre, Khusraw emulated Sa'dī; in *mathnawī*, Nizāmī; in *mawā'iz*, Sanā'ī and Khāqānī; and in *qaṣā'id*, Razī'-ud-Dīn Nīshāpūrī and Kamāl-ud-Dīn Ismā'īl Khallāq al-Ma'ālī. Rather than imitate, however, Khusraw tested his own ability against the masters. He regarded Nizāmī as his master and identified himself as Nizāmī's son in the sense that his thoughts took source in the thoughts of Nizāmī.

Khusraw's simple, melodious, varied, and delicate pieces have contributed to the development of the *ghazal* genre. His Sufi *ghazals* contribute immensely to the *samā'* gatherings of the *Chishtīyyah* order and some of his *ghazals* are included in the *shashmaqām*. He provides wonderful descriptions of nature, joyous parties, and court ceremonies.

The themes of his *ghazals* include the fickleness of love and fortune, the vagaries of Time, advice, and ethics. Over all, his innovative methodology, unique style, and diction have enriched Persian literature to a great extent.

Khusraw's *qaṣīdahs* are either in praise of patrons or about philosophical themes. His own sentiments are masked by the protocol required by circumstances. Even so, he urges the rulers to be just, fair, and supportive of their subjects and admonishes injustice, greed, and vengefulness. Jāmī, Nawā'ī, and other *qaṣīdah* composers have followed Khusraw's example.

Amīr Khusraw was drawn to music at an early age. He has a book and a number of articles on the subject. Combining his skills in Persian and Indian music, he invented a new Perso-Indian style. Khusraw's musical career can be divided into two phases: the era of indulgence, e.g., Jalāl-ud-Dīn's (689/1290-695/1295), when wine, music, song, and dance abounded, and of Alā-ud-Dīn Khaljī, when strict Islamic prohibition was enforced. During the first phase, he frequented the court in the tradition of bards like Rudaki and composed thematic *ghazals* to fit the moods of the kings. He was rewarded profusely, once with the weight of an elephant in precious stones. During the prohibition era, he adapted his *ghazals* to *sāmā'* and excelled because now, rather than for the court, he composed for the masses. His popularity is reflected in the fact that northern India's folk literature includes his Sufī lyrics more than any others. Moreover, his compositions closed the cultural gap between India, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Iran.

The works of Khusraw reflect the gradual development of the mediaeval Indo-Muslim civilisation. His *Rasā'il* (epistles), for example, are a mine of information on religious, ethical, cultural, and aesthetic aspects of 13th-century India. But how much of this information is recycled through the poet's fantasy and how much is fact remains to be determined.

Although stationed in Dihlī, Khusraw travelled all around India and developed a particular love for his land and people. He also learned a great deal about ancient Indian culture and the kingdom's vast reservoir of human and natural resources. His *Nuh Sipīhr* reflects this spectrum of values through the eyes of India's unique son, Khusraw.

Khusraw's popularity is noteworthy. Although when the Ghūrīds introduced Persian poetry into India, Islamic culture and literature

were already rich, Khusraw is credited with the invention of *Sabk-i Hindī* (Indian style). This is a complex style, especially after the 16th century and its ascription to Khusraw is not without difficulty. There is no doubt, however, that Khusraw's works contain the premiere examples of the style. Similarly, he is credited with the invention of a number of melodic modes and musical instruments, including the *sitār*, an instrument with three-strings. These claims, too, remain unsubstantiated.

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The Goddess

Written by

Amir Khusrau (d. 1325)

Translated by

J. H. Hindley

*supplemented by Iraj Bashiri

O Thou whose face,
With envied grace,
the magi's Gods inflames!
How'er my verse
Thy praise rehearse,
Still more thy beauty claims.

Sprightly and gay
As fabled fay
Soft as the roseate leaf!
Say what I will--
Superior still!
Wonderous! beyond belief!

My vagrant eye
Did ne'er descry
A fairer form than thine:
Is it of earth?
Or heavenly birth?
Or Fairy's, half divine?

The world I rov'd,
And frequent lov'd
Those charms which all adore:
Maids who excell'd
I oft beheld--
But thou art something more.

Each soul thy prey,
Each heart thy sway
Avows with mad'ning pain;
Thy magic eyes
Idolatry maintain.

۱ - اسے چہرہ کر ساسے نور نگاہ بہت اپ آدمی
ہر چندہ صفتی کتم در سخن انراں تو بیا تری
۲ - ہرگز نہ بیا یہ وہ نظر نکتے زرد ویت خوب تر
شخصی نہ انہم یا مستخر جوری نہ انہم نہ پدی
۳ - آفا تھا گردیدہ ہم ہر پستان در نیدہ ام
بسیار تو زین دیدہ ام بیکن کہ پیر سنسے دیگری
۴ - عالم ہر ہر سنے تو نکتے ہمہ مشہد اسنے
آن زنگین شہلا سنے تو آوردہ رسم کاستری
۵ - تو از پری چاہک تری تو بر بگل نازک تری
دو ہر چہ گویم بہت تری خفا جانیب و بیری
۶ - اسے راحت درام جان! تو چوں سرودہاں
زیناں ترودا من کشاں کارام جانم ہی پری
۷ - جزو تماشا کردہ آہنگ مسمرا کردہ
جان و دل ما بردہ ایشتت رسم و بیری؟
۸ - سخن تو شدم تو سن شدی من جان شدم تو سن شدی
جانکس گوید بعد از من در رسم تو در گری
۹ - خسر تو غریب است وند اقادہ در شہر شہا
باشندہ از بہر خدا موسے غریباں بہت گری

* Than jinis nimbler,
More delicate
Than rose's heart:
My praises
Thee surpass,
How wonderful thou art!

* Cypress statur'd
Art thou,
My soul's solace and comfort:
Don't abandon me
So abruptly,
And my heart transport.

* Intent to see
The show,
The desert thy destination:
Our hearts and
Souls ataking,
What custom's this fascination?

* I become thee
Thou become me,
I become the soul, thou the heart:
How can they
Now claim,
I am apart, thou art apart?

Khoosro, fair maid,
entreats thine aid,
A stranger at the door;
Oh, in God's name,
Regard the claim
Of strangers who implore!

What Station Did I Cross that Night?

Written by
Amir Khusrau (d. 1325)

Translated by
Iraj Bashiri

What station was I at, pray tell me,
The station I think I passed;
Blood sacrifices abounded, I recall,
And dance;
At the station I crossed
That night.

Who was that Beauty,
The cypress-statured one, I mean;
The tulip-cheeked ravisher
The Jewel that adorned the station,
And the night?

Rivals attentive, she a coquette
I, a fearful, trembling mute;
Words had turned into stone,
My being entirely afloat.
What was the station I was at, pray
tell me;
The station I crossed
That night?

You crossed the NO PLACE station,
Where He holds assembly
Where the Prophet is the Light;
NO PLACE it was, Khusrau,
The station you crossed
That night.

- ۱ - نیدانم چه منزل بود شب جانیکه من بودم
بهر سو رقص، بس بود شب جانیکه من بودم
- ۲ - پری پیکر نگاری، سرو قری، لاله ریشاری
سرایا آفت دل بود شب جانیکه من بودم
- ۳ - اقیانان گوشش بر آواز او در ناز من آریسان
سخن گفتن پر شکل بود شب جانیکه من بودم
- ۴ - خدا خود میر مجلس بود اندر لامکان خسرو
محمد شمع محفل بود شب جانیکه من بودم

امیر خسرو دهلوی

وداع :

ابر می‌بارد و من می‌شوم از یار جدا
ابر باران و من و یار ستاده بوداع
سبزه نوحیزوهوا خشم‌و پستان‌سرسبز
نعمت دیده نخواهم که بماند پس‌ازاین
حسن تو دیر نماند چو ز خسرو رفتی
چون کنم دل‌بچینین روز ز دلدار جدا؟
من جدا، گریه‌کنان، ابر جدا ، یار جدا
زانگه روی سیه مانده ز گلزار جدا
ماند چون دیده ز آن‌نعمت دیدار جدا
گل بسی دیر نماند چو شد از خار جدا

آرزوی جوان :

تن پیر گشت و آرزوی دل جوان هنوز
عمرم با آخر آمد و روزم پشب رسید
عالم تمام پر ز شهیدان فتنه گشت
بیدار ماند شب همه‌خلق از قیر من
هردم کرشمه‌های وی افزون و آنگهی
دل خون‌شد و حدیث‌بنان بر زبان هنوز
مستی و بت‌پرستی من هم چنان هنوز
تترکِ سرا خدنگ بلا در کمان هنوز
و آن چشم نیم‌مست بخواب‌گران هنوز
خسرو ز بسند او بامید امان هنوز

کج کتله :

کج کتله‌ها، ستمگرا، تنگ‌قبای کیستی ؟
لعب گرا و دلبرا ، عشوه‌نمای کیستی ؟
زیر کلاه جمد سر تا کمرت کشیده سر
بسته بچاکی کمر ، چست قبا کیستی ؟
مرکب ناز کرده زین، داده بغمزه تیغ کین
ساخته آمده چشبین تا ز برای کیستی ؟
سینه' بنده جای تو ، دیده بریز پای تو
ما همه در هوای تو ، تو بهوای کیستی ؟
تا رخ خود نموده‌ای جان ز تنم ربوده‌ای
آتش من فزوده‌ای ، میهر فزای کیستی ؟
خسروخته‌را سخن بسته شد از تو دردهن
طلوبی شکرترین من ، نغمه سرای کیستی ؟

آن شبها :

بسی شب‌بامی بودم، کجاشد یارب آن‌شبها
کنون هم هست شب اما سیه از دود یارها
خوش آن‌شبها که باوی بودم، گمست و گم‌خوش
جهان بر من شود تاریک چون یاد آرم آن‌شبها
همی کردم حدیث ابرو و مؤگان او هر دم
چو مطلقان‌سوره' نون‌والقلم خوانان بسکتبها
چه باشد گر گهی پرسد که در شبهای بی‌پایان
غریبی زیر دیوارش چگونه می‌کشد تنها
مرنج از بهرجانی خسروا گرمیکشد یارت
که باشد خورویانرا بسی زینگونه مذهبها