



MUSLIM TAMIL POETS AND THEIR LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

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Introduction

It is colossal that the contribution of Muslims for the enrichment of Tamil language and its literature. There were significant and great Tamil Muslim poets right from the 17th century. Omer Pulavar and Mastan Saheb were the early 17th century poets who devoted themselves to the growth of Tamil literature. These two poets have contributed unforgettable and prominent works such as “Seera Puranam” and “Gunangudi Mastan Padalgal” respectively towards the growth of Tamil literature. These two great works are spoken and referred to many significant ways. Seera Puranam is often used to quote in different literary works.

Tamil Muslims poets have composed various poetic and literary works related to their religion. Nayakar Puranam, Nakurppuranam, Mukaiyitin Puranam, and Seera Puranam are some of the great works by Tamil Muslim poets. Tamil Muslim poets excelled in each one of the literary genres found in Tamil literature like kalampakam, antati, parani, ula, kovai, thoothu, katakam, pillai thamizh and vannam. They have also composed almost all kinds of literary genres in poetic works, similar to those poetic composition dedicated for Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Jainism.

“Seera Puranam” is one of the most important works in Tamil Islamic literature composed by the Tamil Muslim poet Omer Pulavar who narrates the biography of the Prophet Mohammed Nabi (PBUH). These great Islamic Tamil works consists of 5027 poems in Tamil language. Nanmanimalai, Kungudi natar Pathitruathanthathi, composed by the Tamil poet saint Kunangudi Mastan, is one among the few noteworthy Islamic Tamil works. Poet Sheik Abdul Kadar Nayinar Labbai composed one kalampakam, two talapuranams and an antati on Mecca city.

Tamil Muslim poet Ibrahim composed a total of fourteen poetical works in various kinds of literary genre including antati, pillai Tamil, kalampakam and tiruppukal with rich ideas and principles of Islamic religion. Vannak Kalanjaya Pulavar created the work of Mohideen Puranam describing the tale of an enlightened soul stayed at the Nagoor mosque. Tamil poet Mohammed Hussain composed an ethical work in kural venpa known as Penputti Malai for women.

The great Islamic scholar, philosopher, saint and poet Thackalay Peer Mohamed Appa composed 18,000 philosophical hymns. At present, his seventeen works are available including his maser piece “Gnana pukalzchi”.

Palsanthamalai

Palsanthamalai is considered the very first Islamic Tamil literature belonging to the year 1350 AD. According to Mr. Arunachalam, the author of the Tamil book “Tamil IlakkiyaVaralaru – 14 aam Nootrandu”, Palsnthamalai is the Tamil poetic work composed in praise of the King Vinnan of Vaguthapuri State’. There have been only eight verses of Palsanthamalai available so far. These eight verses of Palsanthamalai have been quoted in a Tamil book “Kalaviya Karigai” of Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai published in the year 1931.

Period of Palsanthamalai

It is said that Palsanthamalai belongs to one of the 96 types of “Prabandas “consisting of 10 verses to 100 verses with different rhythms for every 10 verses. However, Palsanthamalai does not fall under the above said metre of poetry. It seems that the author of Palsanthamalai has followed Tholkappiar’s style of language. He coins the term “Iyavanar” to indicate Muslims in Palsanthamalai.

Poems of Yacob Siddhar

Yacob Siddhar lived in Sathuragiri hills near Srivilliputhur in southern Tamil Nadu, India. Yacob Siddhar has devoted himself as a Siddhar having composed 17 Tamil poetic works in his masterpiece work Yacob Gurunool. He has also added that those who have gone through all his 17 poetic works must also be a Siddhar.

There are three kinds of temperament such as flatulency, bile and phlegm in all three traditional systems of medicine known as Ayur veda, Yunani and Sidha followed in India. The basic concept of these traditional systems of medicine is that the human body will have disease or demise if there is no harmonious functioning among flatulency, bile and phlegm. Ayurveda is considered the very ancient system of medicine in India. There is, however, no authentic evidence for the actual age of Ayurveda. Modern Hindus claim that Ayurveda was discovered by Lord Shiva Himself as He is being called as ‘Vaitheeshawar’. According to R.V. Sambasevam Pillai, Arab maritime traders who visited India in seventh century got their home land back with some Hindu texts and scriptures. It is believed that they translated Hindu Ayurvedic texts into Arab and Persian languages.



Yacob Siddar's all the 17 Tamil works such as Vaithya Sinchamani, Gurunool, Sunnakandam, Sunnam, Sunna Suthram, Loka Chenduram, Chendura Suthram, Vakarakabangu, Panchami Mithram, Thandagam, Idaipagam, Seypagam, Vaithya Vatha Suthram, Vaithyam, Kallada Sasthram, and Sasthrathukana Arumpatha Urai have been published by a non Muslim Ramasamy kon in twelve volumes, The Seventh edition of these books were brought out in the year 1969.

As the publishing editor of Yacob Siddhar's Tamil works was a non-Muslim, it seems that he must have misunderstood the Arab words used in Yacob Siddhar's poems. The Arab word 'wali' means god-man or spiritual personalities being close to the God. Without being able to understand the exact meaning of the Arabic term wali, the publisher has replaced the word 'wali' with 'Nabi'. Only a Muslim would be able to distinguish between the terms 'wali' and 'Nabi'. 'Nabi' is the Arabic term used to refer to the prophets or proclaimers of the will of God. The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) or his predecessors are called 'Nabi'. However, Yacob Siddhar must have understood the difference between these two words.

As a non Muslim, the publishing editor might not have been able to distinguish these two Arabic terms 'Wali' and 'Nabi'. That was considered the reason he interpolated the word 'Nabi' in place of 'wali' originally used by Yacob Siddhar in his poems. However, the first poem of the compilation, Yacob Siddhar's 'Vaithyam' must have had the term 'wali' instead of 'Nabi. Yacob Siddhar must have met a few 'walis' in his life time.

Thus, it goes without saying that the contribution of Tamil Muslim writers to Tamil literature cannot be written off. They have always been a part and parcel of Tamil literature.

References

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