

## Literary luminaries of sistan: Their art & thought

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### Abstract

The ancient language of Iranians was a branch of Indo-Iranian family; of which many other languages of civilized world viz. Sanskrit, Latin, Greek etc. were derived. During great Iranian empires viz Sassanid, Achaemenid or Parthian, not only different sciences made headway but art, language & literature passed through the different stages of its development. After the establishment of Arab rule in Iran, the Persian language got subjugated. The Arabic became the language of communication and scholarship so much so that the Iranian scholars became so well versed in Arabic that they penned down great works in religious sciences, philosophy, astrology, medicine and other disciplines during the 200 years of Arab domination. But after the end of Arab rule in 205 A.H, there was a revival of Persian language for what Sistan became the flag bearer.

In this paper, a serious attempt has been made to precisely illuminate the contribution of the very famous among the huge galaxy of poets from Sistan to the Persian poetry throughout the centuries. In order to have a feel of their exalted spirit, elevation of thought and creative zeal, a few selective verses are also appended at the end of the brief sketches of the each poet.

**Keywords:** arabic, persian, qaseeda, gazal, rubaie, mathnavi, sistan, khorasan, sagdi, revolution, samanid, frakhi, *mad'dah*, *mashaikhs*, *mutaqadimin*, *majma-ul-fusha*, *haft aqleem*, *deewan*, *shaeran-e-sistan*, *dobaiti sara*

### Introduction

The history of Persian literature reveals the fact that the Iranians started creating poetry around 3000 years back [1]. The Persian poetry passed through many stages of its metamorphosis through the centuries; chiseling out its form, selection of suitable vocabulary, allegories, similes, metaphors, ironies and style. The creation and development of literary genres; *Qaseedah*, *Mathnavi*, *Nazm*, *Gazal*, *Do-baiti / Rubai*, *Marsiyah* etc for expressing and representing different scenarios of beauty, imagination and mystic experiences became standards of expression; though changed over the time both in form, content and context. This trend led to the formation and foundation of five main schools of poetry right through its development as "*Sabk-e-Turkistani (Sabk-e-Khorasani)*, *Sabk-e-Iraqi*, *Sabk-e-Hindi*, *Sabk-e-Bazghasht and Sabk-e-Mashrootiyat (Sabk-e-Jadid)* [2]. The meters (*Wazn-e-Shear*) of Persian poetry reached to its gradual perfection from last 3000 years. During this era of evolution and development, the people continued to ornate the verses with sober, sweet and very sensitive numbers and notes. Many a scholars wrote upon the science and techniques of *Urooz* (prosody) which include *Chahar Maqala* of Nizami Uroozi. So on its way to perfection, the varieties of meters were so abundant in Persian poetry that it left the scholars of other languages dumb founded [3].

Persian poets chose particular genres for expressing different

situations. For the subjects of praise for kings, friends companions etc. they chose *Qaseedah*. For expressing love and extreme feelings and touch of heart they chose *Gazal*; for expressing patriotism, mysticism, bravery and ethical subjects they chose *Mathnavi* [4].

Today, the Persian poetry in Iran reflect every kind of expression of the modern trends, human values, quality, freedom of expression, hopes, despairs, patriotism, rationalism, criticism of rulers, new ideas and also above all, Iranian adherence to their religious beliefs but the classical poetry did not ponder in the very practical dimensions of life but predominantly the subjects of their verse had remained philosophical, mystical, ethical, portraying of beloved's beauty and above all praise for the rulers. Hereunder, in this context a bird's eye view is presented to make a reader acquainted with the art & thought of the classical luminaries of Sistan.

### Classical Poets of Sistan (*Shairan-e-Claseek*)

#### Abul Faraj Sistani

Abul Faraj Sistani was contemporary of king Amir Abu Ali Ibrahim bin Simjor (333-372 AH / 945-983 AD) and was panegyrist (*Mad'dah*) of the ruling dynasty of Isfahan and died at the age of 120 years in 393 AH / 1003 AD [5]. He was extremely well versed in poetry and has some poetic compilations to his credit. Malik-ush-Shora Unsari was his student. Amir Abul Ali Simjor was the ruler of Khorasan from

<sup>1</sup> Estelami Mohammad, "Bar" Rasi Adabiyat-e- Emrooz-e-Iran", Amir Kabir Publications, Tehran, 1349, p.131

<sup>2</sup> Zareenkoob, Abdul Hossain, "Saire Dar Shaer-e-Farsi", Mosassa-e-Entisharat-e-Naveen, 1363 Shamsi, p.138-140

<sup>3</sup> Qasmi, Sharif Hussain, "*Jadid Farsi Shairie Ek Mukhtasar Tajziya*", Indo Persian Society, Delhi, 1977, p.16

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Sistani, Eraj Afshar, "Sistan Nameh", vol-2, Nashr-e-Morg-e-Aayeen, Tehran, 1369, p.935.

Samanid court before *Aal-e-Sabuktagin* established their empire. Abul Hassan Mohammad Nasir ud Dowlah (373-377 AH / 984-988 AD), the son of Amir Abu Ali opposed Subuktagin and a fierce battle took place between them. Khorasan was destroyed and plundered by Subuktagin's forces. The former was made captive and thus Khorasan fell to Sultan Mehmood Gaznavi. From there, Abul Faraj as per the directions from the successor princes (*Aal-e-Seemjor*) started writing *Hijo* [6] of Amir Mehmood mainly questioning and mocking his lineage (*Hasab Wa Nasab*). Mehmood got infuriated and ordered for his killing. But the poet took refuge with his student Unsari who later succeeded in getting amnesty for his master. Abul Faraj died in the year 393 A.H. (1002 A.D.) Following are a few of his famous verses.

عنقای مغربی است درین دور خرمی  
چندانکه گرد عالم صورت بر آمدیم  
هرکس به قدر خویش گرفتار محنت است

است آدمی خاص از برای محنت و رنج  
غمخواره آمد آدم و بیچاره آدمی  
[7] کس را نداده اند برات مسلمی

### Farukhi Sistani

Abul Hassan Ali bin Jalog (Jaloog) who won fame as Farukhi Sistani is considered as one among the greatest poets of Persian literature. He was from Sistan. His father Jaloog was an employee in the court of Amir Khalf bin Ahmed, the ruler of Sistan. Farukhi in the following verses has endorsed the fact that he (Farukhi) was from Sistan.

من قیاس از سیستان دارم که آن شهر من است  
[8] او ز پی خویشان ز شهر خویشان دارم خبر

From his early childhood, he loved poetry and was bloomed with creative zeal. After Farukhi developed the skills of creativity, he thought of someone to be his *Mamdooh* (A person whom to praise) who would encourage him and reward his art. Farukhi heard of Abu Muzaffar Chogani, the then Governor of Balkh from Mehmood Gaznavi. The later supervised and encouraged many poets. So he set for Choganian. Abu Muzaffar patronized him [9]. A few verses of the Farukhi's famous *Qaseedah* recited by him before Abu Muzaffar just after he got an honourable position in his court are mentioned hereunder:

با کاروان حله بر فتم ز سیستان  
با حله فریشم ترکیب او سخن  
هر تار او برنج بر آورده از ضمیر  
از هر صنایعی که بخوهی بر او اثر  
تا نقش کرد بر سر هر نقش بر نوشت

با حله تنیده ز دل یافته ز جان  
با حله نگار گر نقش او ز فان  
هر بود او بجهد جدا کرده از روان  
و زهر بدایعی که بخوای بر او نشان  
[10] مدح ابوالمظفر شاه چغانیان

Abu Muzaffar in return gave him horses, land and gold coins as a reward. Farukhi did create some of the everlasting verses in the praise of Abu Muzaffar's stable which was vast chunk of land having thousand of horses with flowing streams and springs.

Some verses of this famous *Qaseeda* are as under:

چون پرند نیلگون بر روی پوشد مرغزار  
خاک را چون چادر ناف اهو مشک زاید بی  
پرنیان هفت رنگ اندر سر آرد کوهسار  
بید را چون پرده طوطی برگ روید بی  
قیاس  
باد گونی مشک سوده دارد اندر آستین  
سیمه ها بر بانگ چنگ مطربان چرب دست  
باغ گونی بستیان جلوه دارد در کنار  
خیمه ها بر گانگ نوش ساقیان می گسار  
[11]

After few days Frakhi was called by Mehmood Gaznavi to his court and was bestowed with a dignified position and won laurels in a very short span of time. His art of painting nature, portraying the combats and battles and praise for his patron Mehmood Gaznavi in his verses is so live and original that even after more than a millennium past but the language, style and format of his verses seem quite contemporary. Whenever Farukhi used to create imageries or nature, he would paint it in raw; with highest level of reality and originality leaving one in awe and surprise [12].

Farukhi wrote many *Qasayid* in Mehmood's praise. His collection of poetry is comprised of more than nine thousand verses. He was master of *Arooz* (prosody) and *tanqid* (literary criticism). He had proven his authority on these subjects in his work "*Tarjamanul Balagah*". That book was lost in the course of time [13].

A few lines of his two famous *Qasayid* in Sultan Masood's praise are mentioned hereunder:

بر آمد بیلگون ابری ز روی نیلگون دریا  
چو رای عاشقان گردان چو طبع بیدلان شیدا

چو گردان گشته سیلابی میان آب آسوده  
چون گردان گرد بادی، تند گردی تیره اندروا

بیارید و زهم بگست و گردان گشت بر گردون  
چو پیلان پراکنده میان آبگون صحرا

عدیل شاد کامی باش و جفت مملکت باقی  
قرین کامگاری باش و یار دولت برنا

میان مجلس شادی، می روشن ستان دایم  
گر از دست بت خلق، گه از دست بت یغما

بدین خرمی و خوشی روزگار  
چنان گشت گیتی که ما خواسیم  
خداوندگار جهان فرخست

بدین خوبی و فرخی شهریار  
خدایا تو چشم بدان نور دار  
[14] که فرخنده باشد همه روزگار

To summarize, Farukhi's poetry is full of deep insertions, philosophical deflections, source of knowledge with highest capabilities of rhyme sequence and authenticity of meters (*Bahr and Wazn*), similies and Metaphors. Farukhi died in 429 AH / 1038 AD [15].

### Abul Fateh Busti

Abul Fateh Ali Bin Muhammad Busti was a reputed poet of

<sup>6</sup> When a poet creates verses portraying a negative picture of a person (King / Enemy etc.; these verses are called Hijoo)

<sup>7</sup> Samarkandi, Dawlat Shah "Tazkirat-ush-Shora", Kalaleh Khawar, Tehran, 1348, p. 936.

<sup>8</sup> Shafaq, Reza Zadesh, "Tareekh-e-Adabiyat-e-Iran", p.87

<sup>9</sup> Nomani, Shubli, "Sherul Ajam" "Muarif Publications, Azamgarh, India, 1962, vol-I, p.64.

<sup>10</sup> Opcit, "Tareekh-e-Adabiyat-e-Iran, p.88.

<sup>11</sup> Opcit, "Sherul Ajam", p.65.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 69-71

<sup>13</sup> Opcit, Tarikh-e-Adabiyat-e-Farzi, p. 88-92.

<sup>14</sup> Sistani, Eraj Afshar Sistan Nama, vol.2 "Nashr-e-Muroh Aayeen, 1369 A.D. Tehran, p.939.

<sup>15</sup> Opcit, "Tarikh-e-Adabiyat-e-Iran, p.95.

4<sup>th</sup> century AH / 10<sup>th</sup> AD. He was born in Bust – a city of then Sistan. He had complete hold on Arabic. Among his works two collections of his Persian and Arabic poems do exist today. He died in 401 AH / 1011 AD. Hereunder is a sample of his verses which the writer of “*Door Numai Az Farhang-e-Irani wa Asr-e-Jahani-e-Aan*” has mentioned.

یکی نصیحت من گوش دار و فرمان کن / که از نصیحت سود آن کند که فرمان کرد  
همه به صلح گرای و همه مدارا کن / <sup>[16]</sup> که از مدارا کردن ستوده گردد مرد

### Shams Busti

Shams Busti belongs to 6<sup>th</sup> AD / 12<sup>th</sup> AD. His commandment and poetic expressions are very unique. He would recite verses extempore. Whatever said in prose, he could express the same in poetry. Not much is known about his total number of verses. Some sources reveal that he was known as Imam Shamas- ud-din. A Quartet (*Rubai*) of his is mentioned hereunder, which has been frequently given space by many scholars in their works regarding Sistan for it being worth mentioning on the basis of the quality of the verses.

گویند زر تو را بود خرسندی / خرسند شوی چون دل از او بر کنندی  
زرکنده کان و بی وفای دهر است / <sup>[17]</sup> برکننده بی وفا چرا دل بندی

### Samoori Sajzi

One among famous personalities of Sistan, Samoori Sajzi lived during 6<sup>th</sup> century AH / 12<sup>th</sup> AD. He had excellent writing skills. His choice of subjects (*Mouzoo'aat*) for his verses was mainly philosophical, ethical and educational. He always used to propagate message of dignity and peace. A few of his verses are:

هر که چون گل به زر فریفته شد / در عمل آبروی داد به باد  
دست کوتاه باش و راست همچون سرو / <sup>[18]</sup> تا سر افراز باشی و آزاد

### Siraj-ud-din Sagzi

One among highest reputed poets of Sistan, Siraj-ud-din enjoys a very distinguished place. Having Siraji as his nom-de-plume (*Takhal'us*), he lived during 1<sup>st</sup> half of 7<sup>th</sup> century AH / 13<sup>th</sup> AD in Sistan. In his “*Tareekh-e-Ad'dabiyat Dar Iran*”, Zabihullah Safa mentions that Sagzi started his poetry in Sistan. He wrote excellent *Qasayid* and was a Panegyrist (*Mad'dah*) of local rulers initially <sup>[19]</sup>. For a short period he stayed in Baluchistan also. Then travelled to India and stayed at Shamsuddin Altumash's court for some time. He would use difficult verb structures, idioms and unusual *Radeefs* <sup>[20]</sup> due to his immense mastery and grip upon poetry writing. He was therefore, known as *Masari-ush-Shoar'ra* (the Boat or ship of poets). Apart from Persian, he was well versed in Arabic and equally was a distinguished scholar of philosophy and astronomy which is clear from his own verses as under:

هم منجم هم حکیم و هم مرمل هم ادیب <sup>21</sup> / آنی آنگهی از خاندان منکور اقران درجهان

Siraj-ud-din Sagzi has many excellent *Qasayid* to his credit. He has praised Nizam-ud-din Mohammad Al-Junaidi and his son Nizamul Mulk Qawam-ud-din Mohammad Al-Junaidi.

Among his much famed *Qasayid*, a selection of his verses is penned down so as to comprehend the skills of this great master.

He praises his great lineage as:

بنده ی داعی سراجی سیدی از خاندان / با نصیب وافر است اندر هنر من کل باب  
در مقام شاعری سر دفتر است و در نجوم <sup>[22]</sup> / بر عطارده خنده سازد در مقامات حساب

In a *qaseeda* written in the praise of Qazi Muayad'dul Mulk Nizam-ud-din Mohammad bin Abi sa'ad, he has used the word *Chashm* (eye) and *Rooi* (face) in every stanza and verse.

ای تنگ چشم ترک سمن ساقی ماهروی از چشم من نهان چه کنی سال و ماه، روی  
چشم ستاره بار شد از مهر روی تو <sup>[23]</sup> / رخ در مکش ز چشم من ای ترک ماهروی

In the following *Qaseeda*, he has made mention of *Aatish* (fire) *Aab* (water) *Baad* (air) *Khak* (clay) with a distinguished capability.

آتشی دارم به دل از آن دو لعل آیدار / باد تا زلفش پریشان کرد گشتم خاکسار  
خاک ره گل می شود از آب چشمم ناچرا / آتش اندر من زد و رفت از بر من بادوار گر بر آرم باد سرد آتش زخم در آسمان و در بیارم  
آب گرم از خاک سازم لاله زار / در لب و بر سر مرا بادست و خاک از هجر او  
<sup>[24]</sup> / و ز دل و چشم آب و آتش بر زمین و بریسار

### Mir Hassan Allae Sajzi

Hassan Bin Allae Sajzi was among the celebrated mystics of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> AH / 13<sup>th</sup> AD in Sistan. He was well versed in different prevailing disciplines of knowledge. Besides, a very excellent poet. His collection of verses (*Deewan*) is comprised of nine thousand verses. The most famous poetic master piece is his *Mathnavi* known as *Mathnavi-e-Eshq Nameh* containing 606 verses and this great poet did create all these verses in a span of one night only. The *Mathnavi* begins with this *Matlah*.

محبت لوح بود و عشق خامه / از آن نامش نهادند عشق نامه  
نمودم اندر این چندین تفکر / سواد یک شبه بود این همه در

Apart from the *Deewan* (collection of verses), he was equally very prompt in prose and penned down a massive work “*Fawaidul Fawad*” in five volumes, a valuable master piece of this time indeed. He died in 737 AH / 1337 AD <sup>[25]</sup>.

### Malik Shah Hussain Sistani

Malik Shah Hussain was among those having royal ancestry; a descendent of Amr bin Laith Safari. His father was Malik Gayas-ud-din Mohammad and mother was known as Bibi Maryam Sultan. Shah Hussain acquired knowledge of contemporary disciplines from famous scholars and jurists of his time viz. Maulana Sulhi, Sheikh Jazairi and Sheikh Mohammad Moin etc. Maulana Fatoohi who was himself a

<sup>16</sup> Dehmurdah, Haider Ali *et' al*, “Shairan-e-Sistan”, Rawabite-Amooni, Danishgah-e-Zabol(Public Relations Dept. University of Zabol) 1380 A.H. p.11.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.15.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.13.

<sup>20</sup> Last word/words of a verse identical with last word or words of other verses in a poem is called *Radeef*

<sup>21</sup> Opcit, “Sistan Nama”, p. 943-944.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.944

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.944

<sup>24</sup> Safa, “Zabiullah”, “Tareekh-e-Adabiyat Dar Iran”, vol.3, part-1, Tehran University, 1355 A.D. p.367.

<sup>25</sup> Opcit, “Shairan-e-Sistani”, p13.

poet, encouraged him to create some verses. Malik Shah did study Persian literature deeply to the extent that he ones sat to create verses parallel to Anvari's style as the latter's text of verses are considered to be the most difficult one. He travelled extensively and met galaxies of scholars and poets. He authored few of the most authentic works on Persian literature as *Ahya-ul-Malook*, *Mathnavi Mehr-o-Wafa*, *Tohfatul Haramain* and above all, he documented a volume providing information regarding the life and works of the poets from past to his time entitled as *Tazkira-e-Khairul Bayan*. A few of his verses are mentioned hereunder:

بر شمع مراد خود دمی سرد زدیم  
صد شعله به دست آرزو مندی دل  
خوش حالتیست چشم مرا با گریستن  
به خرمن صبر عقیه پرورد زدیم  
بر سینه صدای صد جهان درد زدیم  
که گرم گریه گشتن و گه نا گریستن<sup>[26]</sup>

### Hamza Gafil Sistani

Malik Hamza (nom-de-plume: Gafil) son of Malik Jalal-ud-din was a poet of 11.A.H. Being a powerful ruler of Sistan, he had earned respect and fame for helping the needy and weak. Although he was always witty and responsive, he chose *Gafil* (unconcerned) as his nom-de-plume (*Takal'us*); clearly depicting his generous and down to earth nature. One of his famous verses is as under:

غافل نشوی از این دو معنی غافل  
زین راهنمایان به یکی شو قایل  
سرمایه مرد از این دو گردد حاصل  
یا عقل درست یا جنونی کامل<sup>[27]</sup>

He was also a master of *Rubai* (Quartet). Two of his famous quartets are mentioned here:

آدم ز عدم رو چو درین وادی کرد  
پنداشت که غم کم است پر شادی کرد  
از غمکده ی جهان چو بیرون می رفت  
غم را به زمانه وقف اولادی کرد

از پرده ی دل، طفل سر شکم به قماطست  
زان گریه که سرمایه شادی و نشاطست  
بیرون نتوان رفت ز ویرانه ی عالم  
هر جا که روی داخل این کهنه رباطست<sup>[28]</sup>

### Abul Fateh Sistani

He was brother of Hamza Gafil Sistani (11<sup>th</sup> AH / 17<sup>th</sup> AD). He had been in full cooperation with his brother in running the affairs of Sistan but was a different kind of poet than his brother. The following *Rubai* was addressed to Abul Fateh by his brother Malik Hamza.

بر خاطر عاطرت عیاری نرسد  
هر چند طلای خاطرات را عشق نیست  
از گفته ی من ترا نقاری نرسد  
بی رحمت آتش به عیاری نرسد

Abul Faeh responds in this way:

نضم ز شراب معنوی سرشار است  
محتاج به پایمردی آتش نیست  
در کش را هوشیاری ای در کار است  
نقد سختم طلای دست افشار است<sup>[29]</sup>

### Mirza Shuja Sistani

Mirza Shuja was cousin of Malik Hamza and Malik Abdul Fateh. He was a known and respectable poet of Sistan of 11 A.H. He migrated to Isfahan but turned back to his native place and died there. His poetic taste and the skills of creating meaning in poetic constructions were absolutely powerful. One of his verses is:

پناه ز معصیت به کلام خدا بریم  
که شاهراه نجاتست مَدبسم الله<sup>[30]</sup>

### Mirza Himmat Sistani

He was contemporary and an inmate of Abul Fateh Sistani using nom-de-plume as *Himmat* (courage and valour) in his poems. He left his native place and travelled to India and stayed there for rest of his life. He spent his life with delight and glory. One of his verses is as under:

زندگی در خواب غفلت همچو ایامت چشم تاوا کرده ای آغاز و انجامت گذشت  
گذشت<sup>[31]</sup>

### Ahwali Sistani

Ahwali Sistani was a native of Sistan. As per the belief of some scholars, he migrated to Kashmir in 1024. Mulla Abd Al Nabi Fakhr-uz-Zamani Qazvini in his work *Tazkira-e-Maikhanaha* mentions that he met Ahwali in the beautiful valley of Kashmir. Ahwali at that time was 50 years old. He further asserts that Ahwali was a descendent of Prophet's (SAW) family and belonged to the principality of Neemroz<sup>[32]</sup> of then Sistan. Ustad Ahmad Golchin Ma'ani in his book "*Karwan-e-Hind*" claims that the poet changed his nom-d-plume from "Ahwali" to Bismil in his later years of life. Awhadi believes that his *Deewan* (poetic collection) till the year 1024 AH / 1615 AD did comprise of more than five thousand verses. He in 1031 AH / 1622 returned back to Sistan but his year of death remained unclear in all *Tazkirahas*. Below are some of the verses of this genius poet.

ساقی بده آن باده که غارتگره هوشست  
چون عشق کلید دو دلهای خموشست

آن آتش گلفام که در چشم صراحی  
چون خون به دل اهل محبت همه جوشست

به صورت هر که دلشاد است محزونست در معنی  
لب هر گل که می خندد دلش خونست در معنی

نگویم بی وفا گل را که می رنجد دل بلبیل  
شکست حسن لبیلی، خبث مجنونست در معنی<sup>[33]</sup>

### Hussaina-e-Sistani

Hussaina is considered among very famous *Dobaiti Sara* (Quartet reciter) of Sistan, who has bestowed the land of poetry (Sistan) a real glamour. He was born in late 9 AH / 14<sup>th</sup> AD and lived his whole life there. His *Dobaiti* (Quartets) are the sweetest expressions of his realization, understanding, delights, and sorrows. The beauty and uniqueness of these verses is that the vocabulary and constructions followed in the

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.21.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>28</sup> Opcit, "Sistan Nameh", vol2 p.946.

<sup>29</sup> Isfahani, Mohammad Tahir Nasr Abadi, "Tazkira-e-Nasr Abadi", Tehran, 1317, p37.

<sup>30</sup> Opcit, Shairan-e-Sistan, p.17.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.16.

<sup>32</sup> One of the provinces of present Afganistan

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.12.

verses are same as people of Sistan do themselves in their day to day life.

Hussaina has abundance of verses to his credit; which being representative verses of common masses, have been from one generation to the next transferred and frequently used by them in their discourses. Hereunder are mentioned a few of his famous verses.

حسینا گفت ازی ده می کن یار  
سپاهو می رو از دست دلدار  
سپاهو می رو اینجه نممنو  
میون، دوست و دشمن گشیتو خوار  
حسینا را بدید شیب می رفت  
و باغستو و سیل میوه می رفت  
و باغستو برای میوه خوب  
و قریون نو چشکای سیاشا  
و قریون نو چشکای سیاشا  
چطو دل ور کنو از یار شیرینی  
چطو دل ور کنو از یار شیرینی

### Ibrat Sistani

Among the great predecessors (*Mutaqadimin*) poets of Sistan, Mirza Mohammad Ali Rahimi, known as Ibrat (Ebrat) Sistani has earned an exalted place among the great poets of Sistan. He was born in 1283 AH / 1867 AD and is the son of great scholar and jurist Aqa Sheikh Golam Reza Waiz. His mother Sahira Khanum was equally not only a scholar of theological sciences but also an unparallel *Aarifa* (mystic) of her times. A collection of her verses is also available today. Her abilities were well appreciated and endorsed by Qajar court to the extent that Nasir-ud-din Qajar had fixed an annual scholarship for her.

Ibrat toured many places in Iran and abroad; Islamic and Arab countries, India, Afghanistan etc. In India his *Deewan* (poetic compilation) *Ebr Namah* got published in Sangi printing and got lost with the passage of time. But recently was found after an extensive search by one of the scholars of Sistan and got published which comprises only the portion of Ghazals of Ibrat as 102 pages of his *Deewan* had been destroyed by the mites. *Kitab-e-Qasayid-e-Ibrat* has been also published in 1344 AH / 1926 AD at Karachi (Pakistan) by the endeavors of his son. He died in 1339 AH / 1921 AD. A few of his famous verses are mentioned here.

ای گدای خوشه چین دانی که خرمن آن کیست  
وی حریف مست دانی باده از پیمان کیست  
از خماری نرگس مستش تو در خواب و خماری  
هیچ می دانی که آن گل زیب نرگس دان کیست  
آمدی با گوی سر در عرصه میدان عشق  
لیک واقف نیستی سر در خم چوگان کیست  
برده پندار افتد عاقبت از کار تو  
پس عیان گردد که آن خلوت نشین جانان کیست  
کهنه را از تن برون کن جامه های نو بیوش  
لیک چون صوفی مراقب شو که از احسان کیست  
چهره شام حرم شاه حرم را گر ببینی در حرم  
بر تو روشن می شود کاین شاه تو در بیان کیست  
کاینات از خوان انفاسش تمتع برده اند  
باز می پرسد ز (عبیرت) کامن نعم از خوان کیست<sup>[35]</sup>

### Farid-ud-din Sajzi

Farid-ud-din was among the famous literary luminaries of his time. In Haider Ali DEhmurdeh has asserted in "Shaeran-e-Sistan" that Amin Ahmad Razi has praised his tender temperament and his art of creating verses as well as prose. He would remember him as *Farid-e-Asr* <sup>[36]</sup>. He also mentions that Oofi has also praised his excellence of creativity by saying that on the canvas of superiority he (Farid-ud-Din) was itself a king and in the sky of skills and art, he was a shining moon. Following verses belong to him.

راه دل من آن بت دلخواه زند  
چاهی است که چاه ز نخش می گوید  
وز دوست عجب نبود اگر راه زند  
زلفش همه دل بر سر آن چاه زند<sup>[37]</sup>

### Zain-ud-din Sajzi Sistani

Zain-ud-din was the poet who was great lover of knowledge and art. According to Dehmurdeh, Mohammad Oofi in his work *Lubabul Albab* records that Zain-ud-din was born in the town of Behsak in Sistan and Amin Ahmad Razi in his work "Haft Aqleem" (A commentary on poets) has praised him; saying he was always with wonderful expressions for having plenty of ideas, diverse knowledge and prompt understanding. The following verses belong to him.

مشنو سخن عالم فانی مگویی و ندر طلبش مدار چندین تک و پوی  
دنیا چو گل است ای پسر بر لب جور تا چشم زنی رنگ بینی و نه بوی  
تابه او روشن کنم راز نهان خویش را<sup>[38]</sup> سوختم چون شمع مغز استخوان خویش را

### Shamas-ud-din Mubark Sistani

Mubarak Sistani is considered among the bright starts of the Sistan's contribution in poetry. A number of his works are available today. The most famous is *Majma-ul-Behrein*. According to Dehmurdeh, Oofi has revealed that the poet loved his native place much and in its praise has said. "Sistan (our city / place) is superior on the basis of its three peculiarities i.e *Sheer* (Lion), *Amir* (ruler) and *Shear* (verse)". In praise of Nasr-ud-din, a minister of Neemroz, here is his famous verse.

نصر الدین که فرارش سعادت  
امل را بعد تحصیلات سیری  
خیام احتشامت بر فلک زد  
به عون همت او شد یکی صد<sup>[39]</sup>

### Moulana Ashiqi Sistani

Apart from a far sighted and visionary Sufi (Mystic) and a lover of Almighty Allah, Maulana Ashiqi was also a poet of excellence. He followed the style of Amir Khosraw Dehlavi in his Gazals. In early days of his creation, his passion for search led him to travel to Syria and for a long stayed in service of a Sufi of his time *Darweesh* Musa. Musa was a very famous among *Mashaikhs* of the time. From there, he went for the pilgrimage to Holy Macca and Holy Madina and soon returned back to Sistan due to extreme love for his native place. Maulana Wali who was also a very famous poet of the time was so impressed by the following verse of the Aashiqi that he expressed his strong desire to bestow his whole poetry

<sup>36</sup> Referring here to Sheikh Farid-ud-din Attar, the great Sufi poet of Mangol period in Iran whose *Mantikut tair* has won him fame across Sufi orders all over the globe

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.16.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p.18-19.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.17.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p.27-28.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p.29-30.

to Maulana Aashiqi for that verse. The verse is mentioned here.

سر چشم یار گردهم که هجوم غمزه او      نفسی نمی گذارد که دل آرمیده باشد  
ز شگفتن رقیب بر سحر در اضطرابم<sup>[40]</sup> که چه نوق دارد، آیا چه به خواب دیده باشد

### Malik Mohammad Kiyani

Malik Mohammad was elder son of Malik Gayas-ud-din Mohammad. He had tendency and temptations towards Sufis and Mystics. He would never wait any body for a salutation to him but would always take the lead in salutation to others showing his utmost moral antiquities and enlightenment of soul. One of his verses is as under:

خواستم پنهان بیوسم پای او بیدار شد<sup>[41]</sup> سر به پیش افکنده ماندم شرمساری را ببین

### Maulana Sulhi

Maulana Sulhi Sistani was also a poet from Sistan. His father was also a literary figure. Sulhi used to sit in the company of Malik Gayas-ud-din Mohammad. He had an excellent handwriting. Every day, he would copy 1000 *bayt* (verses) by his left hand. Here is a sample of his verses.

به بیداد تو ای نا مهربان از بس که      نمی خواهم که یک دم فارغ از آزار من  
خوشحالم      باشی  
ندارم تاب دووری همچو صلعی ای اجل      که از راه کرم یکدم به فکر کار من  
خواهم      باشی<sup>[42]</sup>

### Sarfi Sarabani

Maulana Sarabani was from Sistan. He went to Keej and Makran city and stayed for along and died over there. There are some of his verses.

ای درد تو مایه جوانی      غمهای تو عمر جاودانی  
درد تو اگر سبب نمی بود      مشکل می بود زندگی  
ای دیده شب فراقی یاران      دارم ز تو چشم خونفشانی<sup>[43]</sup>

### Safi-ud-din Busti

Born in Bust – a principality of then Sistan, Saif-ud-din had command on *balagat*<sup>[44]</sup>, fairness of his words and fluent expressions has carved him out a poet with a unique position among literary luminaries of the time. In *Majma-ul-Fusha*, the poet has been noted as a scholar of highest dignity and capability with sweet tendency of expressions. These are a few of his verses:

زهی چون خرد در همه جاستوده      فهی چون قضا بر همه کس مظفر  
چه خواند تو را عقل، روح مجسم      چو گوید تو را روح، عقل مصور<sup>[45]</sup>

Among the large galaxy of learned scholars, researchers and poets of Sistan, many others could be recorded to have produced best of their master pieces of art and creative zeal, so much so that they have turned to be the proud of dignified land of Sistan. But their works for one reason or the other did not reach to the posterity and with the passage of time got

extinct. A few of those poets could be mentioned as Mohammad bin Mukhlad Sistani, Abdul Qadir Sistani, Khaja Hassan Sajzi, Qazi Yahya Sistani, Hamdi Sistani or Qazi Naseer Sistani.

It is obvious that the poets throughout the centuries have been considered in the fore front of every society as the people get enlightened by their creativity to reach to human perfection. No time and space shall be left devoid of any poet. The poets shall be always there to receive praise and love from the people. Therefore, whatever light has been thrown to enlighten the great personalities of the discussed poets above is bird's eye view and an abridged profile of them who had in turn lived through different eras of history in the intellectually fertile land of Sistan. For a detailed account of their poets, a huge volume is needed to incorporate all the details of their life and skills/works. So an attempt was made to present a holistic picture of these poets in an abridged form; lime lighting their art and creative excellence. The endeavors of this scholar shall definitely encourage and energize the future researchers to inquire in detail, the other important aspects and dimensions of the life and contributions of these great poetic masters of Sistan.

Among the galaxy of learned scholars, researchers and poets, many others could be recorded to have produced best of their works. So much so that they have turned to be the proud of dignified land of Sistan. But their works for one reason or the other did not reach to the masses and with the passage of time got extinct. A few of those poets are mentioned here as Mohammad bin Mukhlad Sistani, Abdul Qadir Sistani, Khaja Hassan Sajzi, Qazi Yehya Sistani, Hamdi Sistani, Qazi Naseer Sistani etc.

It is obvious that the poets throughout the centuries have been considered in the forefront of every society as the people get enlightened by their creativity to reach to human perfection. No time and space shall be left devoid of any poet. The poets shall be always there to receive praise and love from the people. Therefore, whatever light has been thrown to enlighten the great personalities of the discussed poets above, is bird's eye view and an abridged profile of them who is in turn lived through different eras of history in the intellectually fertile land of Sistan. For a detailed account of these poets a huge volume is needed to incorporate all the details of their life and skills/works. So an attempt was made to present a holistic picture of them in an abridged form. So that future scholars could easily pick up threads from there and take up the task to study these great poets in detail.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.24.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.24.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.26.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p.27.

<sup>44</sup> capability to communicate the dimensions of meaning

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.27.

5. When a poet creates verses portraying a negative picture of a person (King / Enemy etc.; these verses are called Hijoo)
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