

## THE EVOLUTION OF URDU *SĪRAH* LITERATURE IN DECCAN BEFORE 1857: AN OVERVIEW

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to explore deeply the historical development of Urdu *Sīrah* literature in Deccan during the pre-colonial period up to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It commences by figuring out the origins of the Urdu language, highlighting the vigorous role played by *Şūfiyā'* in fostering its development as a medium for cultural and spiritual connection among the masses. Additionally, the study attempts to examine the early literary endeavours, particularly the genre of *Maulūd Nāmāhs*. Such literature, written in both *Naẓm* (poetry) and *Nathr* (prose) forms, primarily commemorated and delineated different aspects of the Prophetic *Sīrah*, particularly his birth and *Mu'jizāt*, reflecting a profound devotional commitment of the authors. However, while employing descriptive cum analytical methods, an attempt shall be carried out to critically analyze such initial writings. Notably, some significant early *Sīrah* works authored during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the region shall be reviewed, highlighting their literary style, structure, impact and academic contribution. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the Deccan region contributed to the Prophetic *Sīrah* and how its unique religious and cultural context shaped *Sīrah* writing while offering a thorough understanding of the evolution of Urdu *Sīrah* literature in the region prior to 1857.

**Keywords:** Urdu, *Şūfiyā'*, *Sīrah*, Deccan, Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad, *Maulūd Nāmāh*, *Naẓm*, *Nathr*.

## **Introduction**

The *Sīrah* of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (*The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*) occupies a distinctively imperative place in the broader framework of religious history. The subject, therefore, holds a core position within the field of Islamic Studies, and its historicity is generally accredited and well-established within academic scholarship. From the earliest periods, Muslim scholars succeeded in compiling the *Sīrah* using systematic thematic methods, styles, and approaches designed to extensively depict the versatile aspects of the Prophet's life and his all-embracing character. Their primary objective was to preserve this legacy as a quintessential example for the reformation of humans in all spheres of life. These early compilations laid the foundation for subsequent generations. Although primarily recorded in Arabic, the tradition of *Sīrah* writing evolved through different phases and languages, including Urdu.

As Urdu came into existence as a distinctive language in the Indian Sub-continent, the regional (especially Deccan) scholars recognised the importance of making religious texts, including the Prophetic *Sīrah*, accessible to a wider readership, thereby playing an essential role in the development of Urdu *Sīrah* literature. The expressive richness of Urdu enabled authors to transmit profound religious and spiritual themes, bridging classical literature with the cultural ethos of the region. This process included translations of classical Arabic works, which provided a foundational framework for further academic advancements. Nevertheless, Urdu *Sīrah* writing was not merely a replication of Arabic texts. Scholars introduced their works with the literary nuances and linguistic potential of Urdu, rendering the *Sīrah* more relatable and appealing to the common masses. This literary assimilation added to the exclusive nature of Urdu *Sīrah* writing. As it progressed, it evolved in terms of different styles and genres. Consequently, it offered the regional readership a deeper understanding of the Prophet's life, as well as insights into Islamic teachings and Muslim civilisation.

## **Urdu Language and the Role of *Şūfiyā*'**

During the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526 AD), the interaction between the locals and foreign soldiers - speaking Turkish, Arabic, and Persian - gave rise to a new language, Urdu, meaning literally '*The Language of the Camp*'.<sup>1</sup> As a result, Urdu developed as a synthesis of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and regional tongues,<sup>2</sup> and consequently

assumed the title, *Hindwī*. It changed names as it evolved throughout several periods. After *Hindwī*, it was also referred to as *Zabān-i-Hind*, *Hindī*, *Reikhtah*, and *Hindustānī*, until finally recognised as ‘Urdu’ in the end.<sup>3</sup> Since Urdu is a combination of multiple languages, it has been a medium for socio-religious and cultural transformation. However, since it evolved mainly for the religious requirements of the regional Muslims; therefore, its content has mainly been religious. Although the official language in the Indian subcontinent has been Persian with Arabic as the academic language, later on, Urdu not only replaced Persian but became a permanent academic language in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent. Moreover, its influence has not been limited only to the Indian sub-continent but also to some other parts of the Muslim world as well, and now it is acknowledged as an academic language and recognised among the major living languages of the world.<sup>4</sup> Over time, in response to the religious needs of the people, Urdu appeared as a medium employed by the *Šūfiyā* to express their message and convey religious teaching.<sup>5</sup> It started gaining vigour and significance during the reign of Emperor Akbar (d. 1605 AD).<sup>6</sup> In this regard, Prof. Mas‘ūd Husayn Khān<sup>7</sup> expressed:

“Primarily, the *Šūfiyā*’ employed Urdu as a medium to convey their teachings; and wrote a few treatises in both *Naẓam* and *Nathr* on religious and spiritual topics”.<sup>8</sup>

Prof. ‘Abd al-Qādir Sarūrī<sup>9</sup> discusses the role of the *Šūfiyā*’ and highlights the challenges faced by early Urdu speakers. He explains that they had to establish relationships with a new civilisation and culture, fostering mutual understanding while also articulating religious beliefs for the newly converted Muslims. Consequently, early Urdu writings were predominantly religious in nature, with the earliest contributors often being scholars and *Šūfiyā*. The Persian-speaking immigrants who settled in India had to coexist with the local population, gradually losing their fluency in Persian. This created an urgent need to transmit religious knowledge in the emerging Indian language, Urdu. Unsurprisingly, religious themes became the primary focus of early Urdu writers.<sup>10</sup> Although Persian remained the official language of the Delhi Sultanate, it merged with local languages like Sanskrit, giving rise to a new linguistic form. During this period, the *Šūfiyā*’ employed mystical terminologies to convey religious truths in Urdu. Dr Rāfi‘ah Sultānāh, from *Osmania* University, Hyderabad, mentioned:

“During this period, all the Muslim scholars who came to India introduced Islam through the lens of *Taṣawwuf*,

fostering a strong bond with the newly converted people through love and affection. These *Şūfiyā*’ hailed from diverse regions, including Arabia, Iran, and Afghanistan. Despite their varied native languages, they chose to communicate with the local population in Urdu—an emerging language at the time, often referred to as ‘*Hindi*’ in the context of India. This approach ensured that their message could reach every household.”<sup>11</sup>

The *Şūfiyā*’ mainly exercised Arabic as their religious language and Persian for daily communication. Similarly, Prof. Sayyid Muḥī al-Dīn Qādrī<sup>12</sup> remarked that the *Şūfiyā*’ needed to make religious understanding accessible for the spiritual purification and education of their disciples and newly converted Muslims.<sup>13</sup> This objective could not have been achieved without adopting the local languages for both spoken and written communication. Therefore, a significant collection of religious vocabulary was first developed in Urdu.<sup>14</sup> However, they also employed Urdu to effectively connect with the common masses.<sup>15</sup> Hence, it is evident that Urdu emerged largely to address the religious needs of Muslims in India.

### **Early Impressions of Urdu *Sīrah* Literature**

Initially, *Taşawwuf* and other ethical teachings began to spread among the people. At the same time, the *Sīrah* events started to be introduced to the common masses. These factors mark the initial impressions of Urdu *Sīrah* writing.<sup>16</sup> The main regional author of the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE was Khājah Geisū Darāz (d. 1422).<sup>17</sup> He produced more than one hundred works in Arabic, Persian and Urdu, including a treatise on *Sīrah* entitled *Risālah Sīrat al-Nabī (Ṣal Allah-u-‘alaihi wa sallam)*.<sup>18</sup> It is noteworthy that impressions of *Sīrah* writing in early Urdu literature are mainly found in *Nazm* (*in verse*). This is largely because *Nazm* was more popular than *Nathr* during that time, as people found it more appealing and preferred to listen to it. Thus, *Nazm* flourished abundantly in Deccan in particular and across the Indian subcontinent in general, often highlighting various aspects of the Prophetic *Sīrah*. In this era, particularly in the Deccan region, many *Mathnawīs*<sup>19</sup> were composed, describing events from the *Sīrah* and highlighting various aspects of the Prophetic life. The *Mathnawī* emerged as a particularly effective and purposeful genre, as its sequential structure made it ideal for narrating *Sīrah* events. As a result, early *Sīrah* literature in Urdu, especially in the Deccan, is predominantly preserved in the *same* genre, even though other genres also contribute to highlighting different aspects of the *Sīrah*.<sup>20</sup> Many of the early *Mathnawīs* in Urdu from the Deccan were either

translations from Persian or heavily influenced by them.<sup>21</sup> However, Deccan poets later composed original *Mathnawīs* in Urdu. According to Prof. ‘Abd al-Qādir Surūrī:

“The earliest poems in Urdu that have come down to us are short *Mathnawīs*, composed 15<sup>th</sup> century CE and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century CE. While the use of *Mathnawī* in later Urdu literature became more specifically associated with storytelling, its application in early Urdu was much broader. During that period, the *Mathnawī* genre was used to convey riddles, advice, adages, and mystical ideas.”<sup>22</sup>

In the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, Emperor Akbar founded a new creed, based on his misguided beliefs and flawed ideas.<sup>23</sup> Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624), a great reformer of the era, strongly emerged in opposition to Akbar’s cult, i.e. *Dīn-i-Ilāhī*.<sup>24</sup> He authored a treatise titled *Ithbāt al-Nabuwwah*, emphasising the essence and significance of the institution of *Nabuwwah* and the *Sunnah*.<sup>25</sup> The first comprehensive work on the *Sīrah*, however, was written by Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Dehlawī (d. 1642) under the title *Madārij al-Nabuwwah*. Originally written in Persian, it was later translated into Urdu.<sup>26</sup> The treatise gained immense recognition among scholars and had a profound impact on the public, inspiring subsequent generations of the whole region, particularly Deccan scholars, to produce extensive *Sīrah* literature in Urdu.

### **Deccan’s Role in the Rise of Urdu Literature: A Few Socio-Political Factors**

*Sīrah* literature found its place in the evolutionary journey of Urdu *Nathr* (in prose) relatively late. While Urdu *Sīrah* writing in *Nazm* began during the Delhi Sultanate period, its development in *Nathr* formally started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE, even though the Urdu language itself had already emerged in North India.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, the Deccan region adopted Urdu after Delhi but embraced it with extraordinary enthusiasm. From the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Deccan scholars produced hundreds of works in both *Nazm* and *Nathr*, spanning various artistic and intellectual forms, including poetry, oratory, and scholarly writings.<sup>28</sup>

The primary reason behind this delay is that Persian was the official language in northern India. Although Urdu had become a commonly spoken language, it lacked royal patronage. As a result, most written works continued to be produced in Persian or Arabic, the religious language of the region’s Muslim population. In contrast,

‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥasan Bahman Shāh (d. 1358 CE), upon establishing his empire in the Deccan (1347-1527),<sup>29</sup> favoured the use of Urdu over Persian as the language of the Bahmanī court. During the reign of Muḥammad Tughlaq (d. 1351), Bahman Shāh declared independence and established himself as the ruler of the Deccan—a region previously annexed by Sulṭān ‘Alau al-Dīn Khiljī (d. 1316). He expanded his province by conquering adjacent lands, thereby laying the foundation of a vast kingdom. A visionary ruler, Bahman Shāh, not only consolidated his domain but, being a great patron of knowledge, extended support to scholars, poets, writers, and intellectuals. Among those he patronized were Maulānā Luṭfullāh, Mullā Ishāq Sirhindī, Mullā Ḥakīm ‘Alīm al-Dīn Tabrīzī, Ḥakīm Naṣīr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Sharīf Samarqandī, and Raḍī al-Dīn Jagajūt. He also received scholars who had been ignored or neglected by the Delhi Sultans. One notable instance is Maulānā ‘Aṣāmī, who, disappointed by Muḥammad Tughlaq, migrated to the Deccan and was warmly received by Bahman Shah—an act viewed as a great honour. Under his patronage, Maulānā ‘Aṣāmī authored a detailed historical work in *Naẓm* titled *Futūḥ al-Salaṭīn*, which chronicles events from the reign of Maḥmūd Ghaznavī (d. 1030) up to Bahman Shāh’s era. Bahman Shāh also established educational institutions (*Madāris*), providing state allowances to both teachers and students, thereby nurturing a vibrant intellectual and cultural environment in the Deccan.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, in Deccan, royal patronage played a significant role in elevating this colloquial tongue to the status of a formal language, and the support of the Bahmanī rulers proved instrumental in fostering the growth and development of Urdu.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, poets, writers, and scholars associated with the courts of Bijapur and Ahmednagar began composing their works in Urdu.<sup>32</sup> However, the real credit for promoting Urdu in the Deccan goes to the theologians, scholars, and *Ṣūfiyā*, who not only addressed their followers in this emerging language but also employed it in their writings for religious instruction. As a result, the surviving *Nathr* samples from this period are almost entirely focused on religious themes.<sup>33</sup>

### ***Maulūd Nāmahs: The Early Genre of Urdu Sīrah Writing***

Following the development of religious subjects such as *Taṣawwuf*, ethics, *Malfūzāt*, and *Sawāniḥ* literature, the Prophetic *Sīrah* also witnessed considerable proliferation in Urdu literature. The tradition of Urdu *Sīrah* writing began in *Naẓm*, mainly in *Na’tiyah* poetry (encomiums), commonly identified as *Maulūd Nāmahs*. These compositions were collectively recited, mostly in *Mīlād* gatherings,

where they described the *Wilādat* (birth) of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad* (*The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*), his *Bi'that* (advent), *Mu'jizāt*, and *Shamā'il* (physical and moral characteristics). In Deccan, the tradition of writing *Maulūd Nāmahs* emerged from deep religious devotion. These *Milād* and *Mi'rāj* gatherings were held in homes to recite these works, where sweets were distributed, and *Durūd* (salutations) were offered, thus serving as an inspiration for poets, who participated in them to seek spiritual rewards. These assemblies often drew participation from scholars, the public and even rulers of the time. The *Maulūd Nāmahs* were primarily written in *Nazm* to evoke emotion, enthusiasm, and warmth in the remembrance of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad* (*The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*). Over time, nevertheless, *Maulūd Nāmahs* began to appear in *Nathr* as well. The tradition had a long-lasting impact, inspiring even prominent 19th-century scholars such as Nawāb Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān Bhopālī (d. 1890), Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (d. 1898), Maulānā Altāf Ḥusayn Ḥālī (d. 1914), and others, who each authored their own *Maulūd Nāmahs*, thus continuing this rich literary tradition.<sup>34</sup>

The use of the suffix 'Nāmah' in Urdu book titles, both in *Nazm* and *Nathr*, reflects the influence of Persian literature. Titles such as *Pand Nāmah*, *Shāh Nāmah*, and *Siyāsat Nāmah* were common in Persian literary tradition. Inspired by these, local poets and writers in Urdu adopted the same suffix, creating works like *Faqr Nāmah*, *Lōrī Nāmah*, *Charkhah Nāmah*, *Qiyāmat Nāmah*, *Khāb Nāmah*, *Waṣṣīyyat Nāmah*, *Ibrat Nāmah*, and others.<sup>35</sup> In the context of the Prophetic *Sīrah*, titles such as *Milād Nāmah*, *Mi'rāj Nāmah*, *Wafāt Nāmah*, *Shamā'il Nāmah*, and *Nūr Nāmah* focused on specific aspects of the Prophet's life and attributes. Most *Maulūd Nāmahs* were written in the *Mathnawī* style, though several were composed in *Nathr* as well. Interestingly, many *Maulūd Nāmahs* combined elements of both *Nazm* and *Nathr* to enhance their appeal and effectiveness. Appropriately named *Maulūd Nāmah*, *Mi'rāj Nāmah*, *Wafāt Nāmah*, *Shamā'il Nāmah*, and *Nūr Nāmah*, these works became foundational genres of early *Sīrah* literature in Urdu.

- ***Maulūd Nāmah*** focused on narrating the *Wilādat* of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad* (*The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*). While this genre is primarily dedicated to this particular theme, many *Maulūd Nāmahs* (also known as *Tawallud Nāmahs*) also recounted key events from the Prophet's *Wilādat* to his demise.

- **Mi'rāj Nāmah** recorded his miraculous journey (*Mi'rāj*) to the heavens. However, many *Mi'rāj Nāmahs* presented this event in a mythical (*Afsānawī*) form.<sup>36</sup>
- **Wafāt Nāmah** recounted the events surrounding *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad's* (*The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*) final days, including his illness, passing, and funeral rites.
- **Shamā'il Nāmah** focused on his physical traits and attributes. In addition to the *Aḥādīth* on *Shamā'il Nabawī* found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Imām Tirmidhī's (d. 892 CE) *Shamā'il al-Tirmidhī*<sup>37</sup> serve as the primary source for all Urdu *Shamā'il Nāmahs*. These works vividly described *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad's* (*The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*) physical appearance, eulogising every aspect of his blessed body. They also highlighted his habits, virtues, and exemplary character, making these aspects essential components of the *Shamā'il Nāmah*.
- **Nūr Nāmah** explored the belief that Allāh Almighty created the *Nūr* (light) of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad* (*The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*) from His own *Nūr* before the creation of all beings. This theme, often supported by a few *Aḥādīth*,<sup>38</sup> became particularly popular in both *Naẓm* and *Nathr*. As a result, most *Sīrah* works written in Deccan Urdu begin with this subject.

Dr Anwar Maḥmūd Khālīd (d. 2021)<sup>39</sup> has prepared an extensive list of *Maulūd Nāmahs*, written prior to 1857 in early Urdu. Most of them are in *Naẓm*, some are in *Nathr*, and some are a combination of both *Naẓm* and *Nathr*.<sup>40</sup>

### Shortcomings of *Maulūd Nāmahs*

The primary sources for these *Maulūd Nāmahs* were the books of *Dalā'il* and *Shamā'il*. Additionally, narrations from well-known works of *Ḥadīth*, *Sīrah*, history, and *Tafsīr* were occasionally incorporated. These *Maulūd Nāmahs* fulfilled an essential need among the public by strengthening their spiritual connection with *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad* (*The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*). Through these works, less-educated people became acquainted with significant aspects of the Prophet's life, including his birth, lineage, family, migration, demise, miracles, virtues, and morals. However, the authors of these works often did not cite their sources or provide the *Sanad* (chain of transmission) for the narrations, which could be seen as a limitation. They often begin by narrating an event like this: *There is a tradition... Experts of Sīrah*

have written...Historians mention..... Exegetes write..... etc.)<sup>41</sup> Similarly, many *Maulūd Nāmāhs* in Urdu not only repeated fabricated traditions but were often copied verbatim from one another, though with slight variations in language, expression, and style. Additionally, several *Maulūd Nāmāhs* appear to be mere Urdu translations of Arabic texts.<sup>42</sup> In their zeal to express utmost admiration, authors frequently overlooked the authenticity of the traditions, particularly those concerning *Mu'jizāt*. According to Dr Anwar Maḥmūd Khālīd, while these *Maulūd Nāmāhs* are undoubtedly parts of the vast literary heritage of the *Sīrah*, they should be approached with a critical eye and accepted only after undergoing rigorous scrutiny.<sup>43</sup> Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī (d. 1953), a distinguished *Sīrah* scholar of the Indian sub-continent, aptly addressed this issue:

“These books, filled with various fabricated and unauthentic accounts of miracles, later became the basis for many *Maulūd Nāmāhs*. Credulous devotion and a sense of wonder granted unjustified reverence to these false miracles, overshadowing the reliable ones. This conflation made it difficult to differentiate truth from untruth. Notably, collections like *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah* - especially *Al-Bukhārī* and *Al-Muslim* - are completely free from such accounts. The objective of these authors was not to compile reliable traditions of miracles but to accumulate exaggerated and astonishing stories that could expand the chapters on the *Faḍā'il* and *Manāqib* of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions)*. Later, vigilant *Muḥaddithīn*, such as *Al-Zurqānī* (d. 1710), critically scrutinised these narrations, refuting them and pointing out their flaws. Nevertheless, the widespread acceptance of these fabrications, which have become deeply embedded in Islamic literature, calls for further evaluation. This is particularly crucial because many of the events recited in *Mīlād* gatherings in our country are laden with these groundless traditions.”<sup>44</sup>

After highlighting the weaknesses of *Maulūd Nāmāhs* and examining the reasons behind the inclusion of unauthentic traditions, Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī critically challenged the validity of most of the *Mu'jizāt* mentioned in these works. Furthermore, he refuted thirty widely circulated traditions that appear in nearly every *Maulūd Nāmāh*.<sup>45</sup>

### Deccan's *Sīrah* Literature in *Nathr*

Historians hold differing views regarding the origins of Urdu *Nathr*. Even after the Mughal conquest of the Deccan in 1687, Urdu writings continued to flourish in both *Nazm* and *Nathr*. However, works in *Nathr* were fewer in number compared to *Nazm* during this era.<sup>46</sup> As the Mughal Empire declined in the Deccan, writings in *Nathr* on subjects like *Fiqh* and '*Aqā'id*' began to emerge, including works on *Sīrah*. While the Deccan had produced significant *Sīrah* literature in *Nazm*, it also contributed notable works in *Nathr*. Naṣīr al-Dīn Hāshimī identifies three key *Nathr* works on *Sīrah* from the Deccan: *Rīyāḍ al-Siyar*, *Mumtāz al-Tafāsīr*, and *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah*.<sup>47</sup> However, Dr. Anwar Maḥmūd Khālīd suggests that additional works, such as *Tajalliyāt al-Anwār*, could also be included in this list.<sup>48</sup> Pioneering authors like Khājah Muḥammad Bāqir Āgāh (d. 1805), Maulānā Muḥammad Ghauth (d. 1823), Mufti 'Ināyatullāh Kākōrwī (d. 1863), and Qāḍī Badr al-Daulah (d. 1863) laid the foundations for Urdu *Sīrah* in *Nathr*. Although their works followed conventional methods, they were well-received by the literary class and held significant positions before 1857. However, as writing in *Nathr* became more common in Delhi and its surrounding regions, a flow of admirable works rapidly surpassed the earlier contributions from the Deccan.<sup>49</sup>

### Some Prominent Works in *Nathr* before 1857

#### 1. *Karbal Kathā*

This book, while primarily focusing on the events of Karbalā, also records the incidents from the final days of the life of *Haḍrat Muḥammad (The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions)* in its opening sections. The work in question is *Karbal Kathā*<sup>50</sup> by Faḍl 'Alī Faḍlī.<sup>51</sup> The first draft was completed during the reign of the Mughal emperor Muḥammad Shāh in 1733 and was revised fourteen years later, in 1747. *Karbal Kathā* is essentially an Urdu translation and summary of *Rauḍah al-Shuhadā*, authored by Mullā Ḥusayn bin 'Alī al-Wā'iz al-Kāshifī (d. 1505 CE).<sup>52</sup> However, *Karbal Kathā* extends beyond literal translation, incorporating additions and, in some instances, deliberate differences from the original text. Notably, Faḍlī has explicitly indicated these differences in the footnotes, demonstrating his approach to engaging critically with the source material. The textual differences between *Rauḍah al-Shuhadā* and *Karbal Kathā* are so apparent that the latter

can be regarded as a distinct, original work of Faḍlī as viewed by Mālik Rām.<sup>53</sup>

*Karbal Kathā* is one of the earliest works of Urdu *Nathr* in India. No other translated or original book from that era in northern India has emerged, further enhancing its historical significance. This book also represents the earliest known example of the *Dehlawī* style of language, as the author had spent most of his time in Delhi. Prof. Khājah Aḥmad Farūqī, former Head of the Urdu Department at Delhi University, who discovered, edited, and published the manuscript of *Karbal Kathā*, concurs with this view. Based on the available evidence, he asserts that this book can be regarded as the oldest known work of Urdu prose.<sup>54</sup>

## 2. *Riyāḍ al-Siyar*

According to numerous scholars, one of the significant early works of Urdu *Nathr* from that era is *Riyāḍ al-Siyar* by Muḥammad Bāqir Āgāh (1745-1805).<sup>55</sup> Written in the late 18th century CE, the book chronicles key events from the birth of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions)* to his passing. This work is also known by two alternate titles: *Ḥaḳīqat-i-Nūr-Muḥammadī* and *Maulūd Sharīf*. Notably, three manuscripts of the book are preserved in the *Āsifiyah* Library in Hyderabad.<sup>56</sup>

At the beginning of *Riyāḍ al-Siyar*, there is a discussion of *Nūr-i-Muḥammadī*, followed by a detailed account of the Prophet's *Wilādat*. The book generally presents the *Sīrah* events in chronological order. The sources of *Riyāḍ al-Siyar* are well-known Arabic works on *Sīrah*, and its style and approach closely align with them. Some scholars note that the influence of Arabic is particularly dominant in the writing style, with certain sections appearing as direct translations from Arabic into Urdu.<sup>57</sup> While narrating the birth of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions)*, the author records:

جب گزری تھے مہینے حمل شریف حضرت کی سی پھر دیکھا والدہ شریفہ حضرت کی نے خواب میں فرشتہ کو کہ کہتا ہے اے آمنہ! بشارتہ پہنچی کہ حاملہ ہوئی ساتھ حامل تو اے دین خیر العالمین کے، جب کہ وہ پیدا ہوں، تو نام محمد رکھیو۔ روایت کی ہے ابو نعیم نے ابن عباس سے جب کہ نو مہینے حمل شریف کے منقطع ہوئے، آسیہ اور مریم شب تولد حوروں کو لے کر حاضر ہوئے بارویں تاریخ ربیع الاول کے روز دو شنبہ کا تھا۔ وقت فجر کے یا تیسری یا

آٹھویں یا دسویں ربیع الاول اس مہر سپہر نبوت نے مطالعِ فلکِ سعادت سی نور شہود و یکھایا اور قدومِ مہمنت  
لزومِ برجِ حمل سے بار لاکر نور ظہور اپنی سی زمین و زمان کو شرف کیا ہے۔<sup>58</sup>

When six months of pregnancy had passed, the Prophet's mother, Āminah, saw an angel in a dream who said, "O Āminah! I bring you glad tidings: the child in your womb is the best of human beings. When he is born, name him Muhammad." Abu Nu'aym narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that when the nine months of pregnancy were over, Āsiyah and Maryam came with the maidens on the night of the Prophet's birth on Monday, the twelfth of *Rabī' al-Awwal*. At dawn on the third, eighth, or tenth of *Rabī' al-Awwal*, the seal of prophethood, Prophet Muhammad, graced the heavens and the earth with his blessed birth.

Similarly, when discussing *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad's (The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions)* stay in terms of the number of years, the *Ghazwāt*, a few notable instances, and *Sarāyā* (sing. *Sariyyah*) - the wars in which he did not personally participate, the author recorded it as:

مدتِ اقامتِ حضرت علیہ السلام کی مدینہ منورہ میں بالاتفاق دس برس ہے۔ اس دس برس میں غزوات ساتھ  
قول مشہور کے بانئیں ہیں اور روایت ہے زید بن ارقم سے کہ "غزائے میں نے ہمراہ حضرت علیہ السلام کے سترہ  
بار اور ابن اسحاق اور ابو معشر اور موسیٰ بن عقبہ نے کہ مشہور یہ ہے کہ آپ بانئیں غزوات میں تشریف لے گئے  
اور سرایا پچاس ہوئے۔ مقابلہ نہیں فرمایا آپ نے مگر سات میں۔ غزوہ بدر، غزوہ احد، غزوہ بنی قریظہ، غزوہ بنو  
مصطلق، غزوہ خیبر، اور غزوہ طائف۔<sup>59</sup>

*Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (Rasūlullāh Khātām al-Nabiyyīn Ṣallallāhu 'Alaihi wa Sallam)*'s time in Madīnah is widely recognised to have spanned ten years. During this period, twenty-two *Ghazwāt* are reported to have taken place. Zayd bin Arqam narrated that he accompanied the Prophet on seventeen of these campaigns. According to early sources such as Ibn Ishāq, Abū Ma'shar, and Mūsā bin 'Uqbah, the total number of *Ghazwāt* in which he took part was twenty-two. In addition, there were fifty *Sarāyā*. However, among the *Ghazwāt*, the Prophet is known to have actively participated in seven major battles: *Badr*, *Uḥud*, *Banū Qurayzah*, *Banū Muṣṭaliq*, *Khaybar*, and *Tā'if*.

The excerpts from *Riyāḍ al-Siyar* reveal that its language lacks fluency and coherence compared to modern Urdu and displays notable differences from contemporary usage. The primary aim of Muḥammad Bāqir Āgāh's *Riyāḍ al-Siyar*- and his other works – had been to familiarise less-educated individuals, particularly women<sup>60</sup>, with religious knowledge.<sup>61</sup> It is reported that Āgāh authored over 300 works, of which 16 are in Urdu. Among these, *Riyāḍ al-Siyar* and *Hasht Bahisht*<sup>62</sup> are exclusively dedicated to the *Sīrah*. Although the author refers to the language of these two books as Deccan rather than Urdu, it is fundamentally Urdu with slight linguistic variations. For this reason, it is often referred to as Deccan or early Urdu.<sup>63</sup> Bāqir Āgāh authored works on the *Sīrah* in both *Naẓam* and *Nathr*, carefully drawing upon primary sources. From an academic perspective, his writings possess notable distinguishing features among the religious literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. As a result, scholars have consistently recognised and eulogised his contributions. Prof. Muḥī al-Dīn Qādrī,<sup>64</sup> commented on Bāqir Āgāh's contributions, stating:

“Bāqir Āgāh stands as one of the foremost patrons of Urdu literature. Proficient in both *Naẓam* and *Nathr*, his works span various genres, including poetry, odes, *Mathnawī*, and more. Indeed, the intellectual tradition, literary style, and eloquence of the Deccan era reached their pinnacle with him. Following his time, South India did not witness the emergence of another writer or poet of his calibre.”<sup>65</sup>

Before *Riyāḍ al-Siyar*, Muḥammad Bāqir Āgāh authored a book titled *Tuḥfah al-Nisā*,<sup>66</sup> in which he highlighted the character and virtues of the wives and daughters of the Prophet (*Ṣal Allāh-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) as well as other prominent early Muslim women. Consequently, several events from the *Sīrah* are also included in the work. Dr Anwar Maḥmūd Khālīd has noted that this treatise can be regarded as the earliest effort of its kind in early Urdu literature on this subject.<sup>67</sup>

### 3. *Mumtāz al-Tafāsīr*

Sayyid Amīr al-Dīn Ḥusayn's *Mumtāz al-Tafāsīr*, written in 1835, is a significant work in the Deccan prose of its time. Although the title suggests a focus on *Tafsīr* (Quranic Exegesis), the book also provides a substantial account of the *Sīrah* of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad* (*The Final Prophet of Allāh, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*).<sup>68</sup> Written from a *Da‘wah* perspective,<sup>69</sup> the author, as a preacher, has structured the book into several chapters, including:

1. *Bayān-i-Durūd Sharīf* (The mention of Salutations on *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions)*).
2. *Nūr-i-Muḥammadī*.
3. *Maulūd Sharīf* (Birth of the Prophet).
4. *Raḍā‘at* (Breastfeeding).
5. *Manāqib* (Virtues).
6. *Shamā‘il* (Traits).
7. *‘Alāmāt-i-Ḥubb-i-Rasūl* (Signs of Love of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions)*).
8. *Akhbār-i-Rasūl* (Prophetic Narrations).
9. *Nuzūl-i-Waḥī* (The descent of the first revelation).
10. *Mir‘āj*.
11. *Tafsīr Āyat-i-Awwal* (Interpretation of the first Revelation).
12. *Hijrah*.
13. *Sharā‘it-i-Muḥabbat* (Conditions of the Prophetic love).
14. *Wafāt al-Nabī* (The Demise of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions)*).<sup>70</sup>

The author’s writing style, marked by both comprehensiveness and conciseness, is evident in the following paragraph, which narrates ‘Utbah bin Rabī‘ah’s message to the *Makkan* aristocracy, their response, and the migration of the *Ṣaḥābah* to Ethiopia:

عنبہ آپ علیہ السلام کی مجلس سے اٹھا اور اپنی قوم میں گیا اور کہا "واللہ! میں نے ایسا کلام نہیں سنا تھا، مصلحت یہ ہے کہ ان کی ایذا رسانی میں مبالغہ مت کرو"۔ قوم نے کہا: "تجھ پر محمد کے سحر نے اثر کیا"۔ جب کفار بہت ایذا دینے لگے، آپ نے بعض صحابہ کے حق میں مصلحت جان کر ملک حبشہ کو حکم ہجرت فرمائے۔ گیارہ مرد اور چار عورتیں ملک حبشہ کو گئیں۔<sup>۷۱</sup>

‘Utbah left the gathering of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (Rasūlullāh Khātām al-Nabiyyīn Ṣallallāhu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam)* and returned to his people, the Quraysh. He said to them, “By Allah, I have never heard such words (as those in the *Qur‘ān*). We shouldn’t cause any more trouble for him and his companions.” However, the people responded that Muḥammad had cast a spell on him. As the Quraysh continued to create significant trouble for the companions, the Prophet, keeping the situation in mind, ordered the migration to Abyssinia for some of his followers. Consequently, eleven men and four women migrated to Abyssinia.

#### 4. *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah*

Maulawī Muḥammad Sibghatullāh (d. 1864),<sup>72</sup> commonly known as Qāḍī Badr al-Daulah, authored a book on the *Sīrah* in 1839 titled *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah*.<sup>73</sup> This work surpassed all others in its distinction and popularity, marking the final *Sīrah* book written in Deccan *Nathr*.<sup>74</sup> It was published multiple times in Madras, Bombay, Bangalore and Hyderabad.<sup>75</sup> Badr al-Dawlah, born in 1797 in Madras, studied under renowned scholars, including *Baḥr al-'Ulūm* Maulānā 'Abd al-'Alī Firangī Maḥlī (d. 1811),<sup>76</sup> one of the most eminent scholars of his time. In addition to his expertise in *Tafsīr*, *Ḥadīth*, *Sīrah*, and *Fiqh*, the author was well-versed in philosophy, history, mathematics, and medicine. Nawāb Ghulām Muḥammad Ghouth Khān appointed him as the *Qāḍī al-Quḍḍāh* (Chief Justice) of Karnataka,<sup>77</sup> bestowing upon him the titles *Qāḍī al-Mulk* and *Imām al-'Ulamā*.<sup>78</sup> Qāḍī Badr al-Dawlah authored several works in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. He wrote thirteen books in Urdu alone on various subjects, including *Sīrah*. Among his works, *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah* earned him recognition as a prominent author in the Indian Subcontinent.

Scholars regard this book as a summary and essence of the renowned Arabic *Sīrah* works.<sup>79</sup> Given the constraints of the classical methodology, it represents the maximum that could be derived from the available Arabic *Sīrah* literature.<sup>80</sup> While Nawāb A'zam Jāh, the ruler, desired its compilation, the author himself felt the need for a *Sīrah* book in Urdu due to the common people's unfamiliarity with Arabic and Persian. Below, we present the author's statement, which not only supports this claim but also provides insight into the author's style:

پھر دل چاہا کہ حسبِ خواہش اس غریقِ رحمت کے رسالے کو بسط کروں لیکن دیکھا کہ بازارِ علم کا بہت کاسد ہو گیا ہے اور علم کے جاننے والے اس دنیا سے گزر گئے۔ اب کوئی کتاب زبانِ عربی یا فارسی تصنیف کئے تو کچھ فائدہ اس پر مرتب نہیں، جن کو ان زبانوں کی معرفت حاصل ہے، ان کے لئے بہت سے کتب موجود ہیں اور کسی کو خواہشمند بھی نہیں پایا، تب زبانِ ہندی میں یہ کتاب لکھنا شروع کیا، تاکہ عوامِ مومنوں کو اس سے فائدہ حاصل ہووے اور اپنے پیغمبر صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کے احوال سے واقف ہو کر ان کی پیروی خوبی کے ساتھ کریں اور اس کی تالیف کا سبب حقیقت نواب مغفور (نواب اعظم جاہ) تھے۔<sup>81</sup>

Then I felt a deep desire to write in greater detail about the Prophetic *Sīrah*. However, I observed that the pursuit of knowledge has declined, and those who truly valued it have passed away. At present, writing a book in Arabic or Persian

does not seem very useful, as those proficient in these languages already have access to numerous works, and, in any case, there appears to be little interest. Therefore, I chose to write this book in Hindi (Urdu), so that ordinary Muslims could benefit from it. By becoming acquainted with the life of their Prophet, they might follow him more sincerely and effectively. The primary reason behind the composition of this book was the earnest wish of the late Nawāb Ā'zam Jāh.

It is important to note that in its early stages, the Urdu language in North India did not have a specific name and was referred to by various titles. However, in South India (the Deccan), it was commonly known as '*Hindi*' or '*Deccani*'. Early Deccani poets and authors commonly used these titles to describe the language.<sup>82</sup> The author has carefully considered all the major classical *Sīrah* works, including Ibn Sayyid al-Nās's (d. 1334 CE) *Uyūn al-Athar*, Ibn al-Qayyim's (d. 1350 CE) *Zād al-Ma'ād*, Ibn Ḥajar's (d. 1449 CE) *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī's (d. 1505 CE) *Al-Khaṣā'ish al-Kubrā*, Shihāb al-Dīn Qaṣṭalānī's (d. 1517 CE) *Mawāhib al-Ladunniyyah*, and 'Abd al-Haqq Dehlawī's (d. 1642 CE) *Madārij al-Nabuwwah* and others.<sup>83</sup> *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah* is a comprehensive work divided into four main chapters. The first chapter presents a historical account of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad's* (*The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions*) life, from his birth to his demise. The second chapter focuses on his physical appearance, traits, and attributes. The third chapter highlights the proofs and miracles of his *Nabuwwah*, while the fourth discusses the etiquettes and rights obligatory upon the *Ummah*.<sup>84</sup> This book held a prominent position in Urdu *Sīrah* literature, surpassing Khājah Bāqir Āgāh's *Riyāḍ al-Siyar* in language, style, and content.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, it gained greater admiration in South India than any other Urdu work on the *Sīrah*. It holds the distinction of being the first authentic *Sīrah* book written in Urdu before 1857.<sup>86</sup> Muḥammad Murtaẓā emphasises this distinction in the book's foreword:

“Just as Bāqir Āgāh's language appears antiquated after the passage of three-quarters of a century, similarly, the language of *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah* no longer aligns with the standards of contemporary Urdu eloquence after a comparable period. However, regardless of how sophisticated our language may become in the future, the author's effort should not be underestimated. Even today, apart from Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān's *Khuṭbāt-i-Aḥmadiyyah*, there is no Urdu work considered more authentic than *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah*.”<sup>87</sup>

From the aforementioned works of Deccan authors, it can be concluded that despite some weaknesses in narration, Deccan literature represents the first significant endeavour in Urdu *Sīrah* writing. This foundational effort later paved the way for scholars to compile the Prophetic *Sīrah* more systematically. Naṣīr al-Dīn Hāshimī, an eminent litterateur from Hyderabad, after analysing passages from these works and assessing the literary significance of early Deccan *Sīrah* literature, offers the following conclusion:

“From the preceding pages, it becomes evident what Deccan poets and prose writers contributed to the *Sīrah* and how they laid the groundwork for writing *Sīrah* in Urdu. While it is true that many of these works contain both authentic and unreliable traditions and events, it is important to note that the method of *Dirāyah* (critical examination of traditions) was not prevalent at the time. Furthermore, the cultural milieu of the period was inclined toward fictional storytelling, prompting authors and poets to present their narratives in the form of tales.”<sup>88</sup>

To sum up, these scholars and authors have been significant benefactors of the Urdu language and literature. Their efforts offer us insight into the evolutionary stages of Urdu, the subjects it has absorbed, the expressive forms it has developed, and the extent to which it paved the way for those who, in later times, would document the *Sīrah* of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (The Final Prophet of Allah, Peace be upon him, his Progeny and Companions)*.<sup>89</sup>

### **Research Methodology**

This study aims to explore the emergence of the Urdu language in the Indian subcontinent and the role of *Ṣūfiyā'* (Sing. *Ṣūfi*) in its promotion within the region. It primarily focuses on the evolution and growth of Urdu *Sīrah* literature in Deccan, analysing various genres and contributions of *Sīrah* writers, alongside key examples of *Sīrah* literature produced prior to 1857. The study will employ a combination of descriptive and analytical methods to evaluate the available source material, striving to offer a comprehensive understanding of the research theme. The study largely relies on primary and authentic secondary sources. Furthermore, rare sources available through reliable online platforms have been directly referenced. Only a few unpublished manuscripts have been cited, based on a reliable secondary source. Thus, both primary and secondary sources on the subject will be thoroughly examined to ensure a well-rounded exploration. The approach aims to provide

academic readers with a deep and nuanced understanding of the study's subject matter.

### **Research Findings**

Muslim Scholars have produced extensive *Sīrah* literature since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AH/ 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, and it continues till now in almost all major languages, including Arabic, Persian, Urdu, English and others. During the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526), Urdu came into existence primarily for religious requirements, with *Şūfiyā* playing a vital role in its promotion by transmitting moral and spiritual teachings. The evolution of Urdu *Sīrah* writing reflects a rich history shaped by literary efforts, cultural amalgamation, and a profound devotion to proliferating the *Sīrah* in the Indian subcontinent. Although Urdu originated in northern India, but did not achieve official status under the Delhi Sultanate, where Persian was the official language. However, it flourished in the Deccan under Sulṭān ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ḥasan Bahmān Shāh (d. 1358 CE), who, upon establishing his empire, provided it with royal patronage, thereby promoting it over Persian and fostering its growth. As the region's literary landscape evolved, poets, writers, *Şūfiyā*, and scholars proficiently adapted *Sīrah* to resonate with local readership demands, initially expressing its themes through *Naẓm* forms. Over time, Urdu developed in the region with all essential literary components, encompassing both *Naẓm* and *Nathr*. While *Sīrah* renditions in *Naẓm* dominated for a long period, works in *Nathr* marked a substantial impact and contributed to the subject in later times. Khājah Geisū Darāz (d. 1422) was among the earliest Deccan authors to compose a treatise on *Sīrah*, entitled *Risālah Sīrat al-Nabī*. Impressions of *Sīrah* writing in early Urdu literature are predominantly found in *Naẓm*, with a particular focus on the *Mathnawī* genre. The most prominent genre of early Urdu *Sīrah* literature was the *Maulūd Nāmāh*. While these works familiarised the common people with different events of the Prophetic *Sīrah*, the authors often failed to base their works on primary sources. Consequently, fabricated (*Mauḍū'*) narrations, particularly concerning *Mu'jizāt*, found their way into *Maulūd Nāmāhs*. Notably, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> CE, Deccan scholars made substantial contributions to *Sīrah* literature in *Nathr*. Figures such as Khājah Muḥammad Bāqir Āgāh (d. 1805), Maulānā Muḥammad Ghauth (d. 1823), Amīr al-Dīn Ḥusayn (NA), Qāḍī Badr al-Daulah (d. 1863), and others authored significant works that enriched the tradition of Urdu *Sīrah* writing. The study demonstrated that despite some narrative and methodological limits, Deccan *Sīrah* literature not only laid a foundational role in the evolution of Urdu but also marked the earliest effort in *Sīrah* writing

in Urdu. Consequently, it paved the way for later scholars and encouraged them to develop the Prophetic *Sīrah* more systematically.

### **Conclusion**

This study underscores the engaging journey of Urdu as a medium for religious teachings with special reference to *Sīrah* writing. Although early Urdu literature originated in North India, the Deccan region cultivated it to such an extent that, between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, a prolific *Sīrah* literature was produced in both *Nazm and Nathr*, earning widespread appreciation, though it often included weak and fabricated narrations. The pre-1857 *Sīrah* literature fostered a deeper spiritual connection with the Prophet's persona among the masses, **preserving traditional narratives** and offering valuable insights into the religious and cultural landscape of the region. When critically examined, the literature can also acquaint contemporary scholars with the earlier methodologies. Therefore, their relevance in the contemporary *Sīrah* writing cannot be overlooked altogether.

With the advent of colonial rule, Orientalists started questioning the historical reliability of the sources. In this context, traditional *Sīrah* writings, lacking academic rigour, **struggled to** confront the modern intellectual challenges, **thereby creating a gap between devotional literature** and evolving academic standards. However, Urdu *Sīrah* writing witnessed incredible growth post-1857 in the entire Indian Sub-Continent. This period marked a significant shift from traditional *Maulūd Nāmāhs* to the modern scientific methods, characterised by critical analysis of sources – an approach pioneered by Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (d. 1898) and 'Allāmah Shiblī Nu'mānī (d. 1914). While responding to the Orientalists, the trend of producing authentic *Sīrah* works gained impetus across academic circles. Different authors contributed their distinctive perspectives, catering to diverse readerships. This diversity highlights the richness of Urdu in encompassing the multifaceted dimensions of the *Sīrah*.

The futuristic study of the subject would be enhanced by a comparative analysis of early Deccan *Sīrah* literature and modern approaches<sup>90</sup> to trace shifts in narrative approach, source examination, and religious context. Scholars could also explore how early genres might be integrated with contemporary methods to reach out to diverse audiences. Regional studies in literary centres such as Hyderabad, Patna, Rampur, Aligarh, Delhi and others may unveil local impressions upon *Sīrah* narratives across the ages. Moreover, digitisation and critical editing of manuscripts would enable more

systematic scrutiny. Similarly, employing multidisciplinary methods like sociological, political, psychological, and others would also better shed light on the relevance of *Sīrah* in the contemporary era.

### Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> Visit: [Urdu language / History, Origin, Script, Words, & Facts / Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/topic/urdu-language/history-origin-script-words-facts) (Accessed on 09/11/2024).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Allāmah Shiblī Nu‘mānī, *Maqālāt-i-Shiblī*, (Azamgarh: Dār al-Muṣannifīn, 2020), 2 /67.

<sup>3</sup> Shamsur Rahman Faruqī, “A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part I: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture”, in *Literary Cultures in History*, Edited by Sheldon Pollock (London: University of California Press, Ltd., 2003), 806.

<sup>4</sup> For thorough discussion on the subject, see: Dr. Saima Iram, et al. “Development of Urdu Language and Literature in Sub-Continent and its Impact on the Society”, *Palarch’s Journal of Archeology of Egypt/ Egyptology*, 20, No. 01, (2023), 713-727.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Āftāb Aḥmad Ṣiddīqī, *Shiblī – Aik Dabistān* (Azamgarh: Dār al-Muṣannifīn Shiblī Academy, 2015), 46.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Anwar Sadīd, *Urdu Adab Kī Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh* (New-Delhi: Aalami Media Pvt Ltd, 2014), 42.

<sup>7</sup> Prof. Mas‘ūd Ḥusayn Khān (Prof. Emeritus) accomplished his Doctorate from AMU and D.Litt. from Paris. He served as Prof. Department of Linguistics AMU, & Head Department of Urdu, *Osmania University*, Hyderabad.

<sup>8</sup> Mas‘ūd Ḥusayn Khan, *Muqaddimah Tārīkh-i-Zubān-i-Urdu* (Aligarh: Educational Book House, 1999), 110.

<sup>9</sup> Professor of Urdu Literature, *Osmania University*, Hyderabad.

<sup>10</sup> Prof. ‘Abd al-Qādir Surūrī, *Urdu Mathnawī Kā Irtiqā’* (Aligarh: Educational Book House, N/A), 22.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Rāfi‘ah Sulṭānah, *Urdu Nathar ka Āghāz wa Irtiqah* (Hyderabad: Majlis Tahqīqāt -i-Urdu, N/A), 23.

<sup>12</sup> Former Professor of Urdu, *Osmania University*, Hyderabad.

<sup>13</sup> Naṣīr al-Dīn Hāshimī, *Deccan Mei Urdu*. (New-Delhi: National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language, 2002), 36.

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Sayyid Mohī al-Dīn Qādrī, *Urdu Kei Asālīb-i-Bayān* (Hyderabad: Aḥmadiyyah Press Char Mīnār, 1932), 26.

<sup>15</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccan Mei Urdu*, 41.

<sup>16</sup> Muḥammad Mohsin, “*Urdu Adab Mei Sīrat Nighārī Kā Irtiqā’*”. PhD Thesis, (Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University, Ajmer, 2017), 60.

<sup>17</sup> Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī, commonly known as Khājah Bandah Nawāz Geisū Darāz was a famous *Ṣūfī* of *Chisṭī* order who advocated spirituality, tolerance, peace and harmony among various religious communities of his era. He belonged to the *Sādāt* family (Descendents of the Prophet’s family) of Khurāsān who were famously known as Geisu Darāz. Khājah Bandah Nawāz was the disciple of the well-known *Ṣūfī* of Delhi, Naṣīr al-Dīn Chirāgh

Dehlawī (d. 1356). During Timūr's attack on Delhi around 1398, Khājah moved to Daulatābād and finally settled in Gulbargah Deccan (Presently Karnataka) at the invitation of Sultān Tāj al-Dīn Firōz Shāh. For more details, see: 'Aṭā Ḥusayn, *Sīrat Bandah Nawāz* (Hyderabad: Nizām Press Chatah Bāzār, N/A). Similarly, to get acquainted with his sayings and adages, see: Shabbīr Ḥasan Chisti Nizāmī, *Ḥaḍrat Khājah Bandah Nawāz Geisū Darāz* (Lahore: 'Azīm & Sons Publishers, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> Shaykh Muḥammad Ikram, *Āab-i-Kausar* (Delhi: Tāj Company, 1987), 370-371. See also: Dr. Anwar Maḥmūd Khālīd, *Urdu Nathar Mei Sīrat-i-Rasūl* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pak, 1989), 201.

<sup>19</sup> *Mathnawī* is a kind of poem, based on independent rhyming lines, written in rhyming couplets. It has no limit in length of syllables. This genre of poems has been written in Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Urdu as well. Rūmī (d. 1273)'s *Mathnawī* possesses a special distinction in *Taṣawwuf*.

<sup>20</sup> Khālīd, *Urdu Nathar*, 231.

<sup>21</sup> Nasīr al-Dīn Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Tahqīqī Maḍāmīn* (Delhi: Āzād Kitāb Ghar, 1963), 23. The author, a renowned author and litterateur of Hyderabad, in the same book has written a separate chapter on Sīrah literature in earlier Deccan Urdu entitled as, '*Qadīm Urdu Mei Sīrah al-Nabī Kā Dhakhīrah*' from page 22 to 50.

<sup>22</sup> Surūrī, *Urdu Mathnawī Kā Irtiqā'*, 22-23.

<sup>23</sup> Visit: [www.britannica.com/topic/Din-i-Ilahi](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Din-i-Ilahi) Accessed on 02-11-2024.

<sup>24</sup> For more details about the very cult founded by Akbar, please go through the fourth volume of Maulānā Abu al-Ḥasan 'Alī Nadwī's, *Tarīkh Da'wat wa 'Azīmat* (Lakhnow: Majis Tahqīqāt wa Nashriyāt, Lakhnow, 2008)

<sup>25</sup> Shaykh Sirhindī's *Ithbāt al-Nabuwwah* has been translated into Urdu by Ḥāfiz 'Ubaydullāh Tāhirī, published by Idarah Muajaddidiyah Karachi, N/A. Digitized and published electronically by Maktabah.org, Nov. 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Prof. Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī, *Hayāt-i-Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq Muḥaddith Dehlawī* (Lahore: Maktabah Rahmāniyah, N/A), 193.

<sup>27</sup> Khālīd, *Urdu Nathar*, 219.

<sup>28</sup> Hamid Ḥasan Qadri, *Dastān-i-Tarīkh-i-Urdu* (Delhi: ABC offset Printers, 2007), 66-67.

<sup>29</sup> The Bahmānī Sultanate was a Muslim kingdom in the Deccan region of India, lasting from 1347 to 1518. It was established in 1347 by 'Alā' al-Dīn Bahmān Shāh, who, along with other military commanders, led a revolt against the Delhi Sultan, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq. From its founding until 1425, the capital was Aḥsanābād (modern-day Gulbarga), after which it was moved to Muḥammadābād (present-day Bidar). The sultanate reached the height of its influence during the vizierate of Maḥmūd Gāwān, from 1466 to 1481. For more details, Visit: [Bahmani sultanate | India, Map, & History | Britannica](http://Bahmani sultanate | India, Map, & History | Britannica) Visited on 27/06/2025. Also visit: [Bahmani Kingdom, Map, Rulers List, Founder, UPSC Notes](http://Bahmani Kingdom, Map, Rulers List, Founder, UPSC Notes).

<sup>30</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccan Mei Urdu*, 44-45.

<sup>31</sup> The language used by the Bahmānī kings came to be known as '*Dakani*,' a new dialect meaning 'of the Deccan.' It gained widespread popularity during their reign. Initially referred to as '*Dakkani Urdu*,' this dialect eventually

evolved into what is now recognized as the Urdu language. See: [Bahmani Kingdom \(1347-1527 AD\) - Medieval History UPSC](#)

<sup>32</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 220.

<sup>33</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 220.

<sup>34</sup> Nawāb Şiddīq Ḥasan Khān Bhopālī (d. 1890), following the prevailing trend, authored a *Maulūd Nāmāh* in Urdu titled *Al-Shamāmah al-'Ambariyyah*. Prof. Yāsīn Mazhar Şiddīqī (d. 2020) provided a detailed twenty-page review of this work in the second volume of his renowned book, *Maşādir-i-Sīrat-Nabawī*. See: Prof. Yāsīn Mazhar Şiddīqī, *Maşādir-i-Sīrat-Nabawī*, (New-Delhi: Qazi Publishers and Distributers, 2016), 2/502-524. Similarly, before *Khuṭbāt-i-Aḥmadiyyah*, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (d. 1898) authored a short *Maulūd Nāmāh* in Urdu prose in 1842, titled *Jilā' al-Qulūb Bi Dhikr al-Maḥbūb*. The primary sources for this work were Shāh Walīullāh's *Surūr al-Maḥzūn* and Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Dehlawī's *Madārij al-Nabuwwah*.

(Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Jilā' al-Qulūb Bi Zikr al-Maḥbūb*, Sir Syed Room, Maulana Azad Library: AMU, <http://archive.org/details/JilaUlQaloobBezikaAlMahboobBySirSyedAhmadKhanAliGarh.>)

Sir Sayyid composed this *Risālah* in line with the customary practices of the time, incorporating numerous traditions popularized through earlier *Maulūd Nāmāhs*. See: Maulānā Muḥammad Ismā'īl Pānīpattī, *Maqālāt-i-Sir Sayyid* (Lahore: Majlis Tarriqī-i-Adab, 1962), 31.

Likewise, Maulānā Alṭāf Ḥusayn Ḥālī (d. 1914), in addition to his other commendable works, also authored a *Maulūd Nāmāh* in Urdu titled *Maulūd Sharīf*. Dr. Anwar Maḥmūd Khālid regards it as Ḥālī's first literary work. See: Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 270.

<sup>35</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 231.

<sup>36</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 233.

<sup>37</sup> Imam Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il al-Tirmidhī* has been translated into Urdu by many scholars. However, the most famous translation and commentary has been rendered by Maulānā Zakariyyah Kāndhalwī (d. 1982), entitled as *Khaṣā'il al-Nabawī*.

<sup>38</sup> However, scholars well-grounded in Ḥadīth literature deny the authenticity of such narrations.

<sup>39</sup> Professor of Urdu, Government College, Faisalabad.

<sup>40</sup> Prof. Sayyid Mohī al-Dīn Qādrī, *Tadhkirah Urdu Makhtūṭāt* (Hyderabad: Kitāb Ghar, 1996), 1/4-9.

<sup>41</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 307-308.

<sup>42</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 308.

<sup>43</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 308.

<sup>44</sup> Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī, *Sīrah al-Nabī* (Azamgarh: Dār al-Muṣannifin Shiblī Academy, 2019), 3/498-499.

<sup>45</sup> Nadwī, *Sīrah al-Nabī*, 510-530.

<sup>46</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 221.

<sup>47</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Tahqīqī Maḍāmīn*, 45.

<sup>48</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 239.

<sup>49</sup> Qādrī, *Dastān*, 82.

<sup>50</sup> Faḍl ‘Alī Faḍlī, *Karbal Kathā*, edited by, Prof. Khājah Ahmad Farūqī (HOD Urdu, Delhi University), Delhi: Department of Urdu Delhi University, 1961, Foreword, p. ۳. Prof. Farūqī had found the manuscript of this rare book in Tuebingen University Germany.

<sup>51</sup> Although, the author belonged to Deccan, however, it is reported that he did not stay at his native place rather was educated in north India where he learnt writing. See: Qādrī, p. 86.

<sup>52</sup> *Karbal Kathā*, foreword, p. ۳. See also: Qādrī, *Dāstān-i-Tarīkh-i-Urdu*, 84.

<sup>53</sup> Faḍl ‘Alī Faḍlī, *Karbal Kathā*, (Patna: *Idārah Taḥqīqāt-i-Urdu*, 1965), p. 15 (Foreword by Mālik Rām).

<sup>54</sup> *Karbal Kathā*, p. ۱۰.

<sup>55</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 242.

<sup>56</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Taḥqīqī Maḍāmīn*, 46.

<sup>57</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 242.

<sup>58</sup> Muḥammad Bāqir Āgāh, *Riyāḍ al-Siyar*, Manuscript No. 35, Hyderabad: *Kutub Khānah Āsifiyah*, on the authority of Sultānah, *Urdu Nathar ka Āghāz wa Irtiqah*, 443 and Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 242-243.

<sup>59</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Taḥqīqī Maḍāmīn*, 46.

<sup>60</sup> Jasvi, M. (2021). Women’s Rights and Social Status Determined by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). *Karachi Islamicus*, 1(2).

<sup>61</sup> Sultānah, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

<sup>62</sup> Likewise, *Riyāḍ al-Siyar*, the subject of ‘*Hasht Bahisht*’ is Sīrah as well, with the difference that the former is written in *Nathar* whereas the latter is written in *Naẓm*. See: Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 246.

<sup>63</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 248.

<sup>64</sup> The former Head of *Idārah Adabiyyāt-i-Urdu*, Hyderabad.

<sup>65</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 248-249.

<sup>66</sup> Qādrī, *Tadhkirah Urdu Makhṭūṭāt*, 1/137.

<sup>67</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 249.

<sup>68</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Taḥqīqī Maḍāmīn*, 49.

<sup>69</sup> Khālid, *Urdu Nathar*, 255.

<sup>70</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Taḥqīqī Maḍāmīn*, 49.

<sup>71</sup> Sayyid Amīr al-Dīn Ḥusayn, *Mumtāz al-Tafāsīr* (Manuscript), 85 on the authority of Hāshimī, *Deccani*, p. 50.

<sup>72</sup> He was the great grandfather of Dr. Muḥammad Hamīdullāh (d. 2002), who is regarded as the *Mujaddid* of ‘*Ilm al-Sīrah*’ of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. See, Dr. Maḥmūd Ahmad Ghāzī, *Muhāḍrāt-i-Sīrat* (New-Delhi: Areeb Publications, 2011), p. 611.

<sup>73</sup> Qāḍī Badr al-Dawlah, *Fawā’id-i-Badariyyah* (Hyderabad: Shams al-Maṭābi’ Machine Press Uthmān Ganj, 1341 AH).

<sup>74</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Taḥqīqī Maḍāmīn*, 47.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Dawlah, *Fawā’id-i-Badariyyah*, 1.

<sup>76</sup> For more details about him, see; M. Isharat Ali Molla, “*Life and Works of Mulla Bahr al-‘Ulūm*”, (Mphil Dissertation, Department of Arabic, AMU, 1993). Also see: ‘Alīm Ṣabā Nawīdī, *Nawāb Wālā Jāh Aur Ḥaḍrat al-‘Allām ‘Abd al-‘Alī Bahr al-‘Ulūm*, Madrās: Tamil Nadu Urdu Publications, 1995, p. 47.

- <sup>77</sup> Dr sayyid ‘Azīz al-Raḥmān, *Jāmi ‘Urdu Kitābiyāt-i-Sīrat*, (Karachi: Zawar Academy Publications, NA), e-book: [اردو میں سیرت النبی ﷺ پر درس ہزار سے زائد کتابوں کا اشاریہ - Baseerat Online Urdu News Portal](http://www.baseerat.com/urdu-news-portal)
- <sup>78</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Tahqīqī Maḍāmīn*, 48.
- <sup>79</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Tahqīqī Maḍāmīn*, 48.
- <sup>80</sup> Al-Dawlah, *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah*, 3.
- <sup>81</sup> Al-Dawlah, *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah*, 4.
- <sup>82</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccan Mei Urdu*. p. 37.
- <sup>83</sup> Al-Dawlah, *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah*, 4.
- <sup>84</sup> Al-Dawlah, *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah*, ۳-3.
- <sup>85</sup> Khālīd, *Urdu Nathar*, 263.
- <sup>86</sup> Ghāzī, *Muhāḍrāt-i-Sīrat*, 611.
- <sup>87</sup> Al-Dawlah, *Fawā'id-i-Badariyyah*, 4-5.
- <sup>88</sup> Hāshimī, *Deccani (Qadīm Urdu) Kei Tahqīqī Maḍāmīn*, 50.
- <sup>89</sup> Khālīd, *Urdu Nathar*, 229.

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