

Before it is too late...

- [Shafey Kidwai](#)

The Khawaja Moinuddin Urdu, Arabi, Farsi University, Lucknow acquainted young minds with the essence of literature and mysticism.

Underscoring the value of Sufism in the modern world, a recent seminar acquainted young minds with the importance of mysticism and literature.

Ever increasing tide of intolerance coupled with the waning ability to discard shibboleths is likely to wash over us by turning us homicidal and the scourge of bigotry — hallmark of an ostensibly plural society we live in — can only be trounced if the fading sense of self-purification and self-improvement is invoked. This is what binds literature and spirituality together and poetry, mysticism and book act as buffers in resolving all sort of external and internal conflicts and in order to drive this message, a newly established State University Khawaja Moinuddin Urdu, Arabi, Farsi University Lucknow devoted a whole day for acquainting the young minds with the essence of literature and mysticism. The University organised extension lectures on Sufism, Majaz Lakhnavi and worth of books at a time when book reading hardly cuts any ice with new generation.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University and eminent academician, Professor Khan Masood said that new generation needs to be made aware of a life that goes beyond deceit and craftiness as propagated by all pervasive consumerism. Desire for self-attainment should not be frittered away in the relentless pursuit of worldly pleasures and materialistic gains.

The opulence fed modern world desperately needs some sort of abstinence in everyday life and the age-old tradition of Sufism unflinchingly underscores it, cogently argued the well-known historian and Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University Professor Ratan Lal Hangloo. In his brilliantly presented lecture filled with historical evident, Professor Hangloo said that the colonialism set in motion in India in early 19th Century sowed the seeds of separation and now people tend to forget a period of 1000 years. From the eighth Century to the 18th Century there were no signs of serious conflict or communal strife across the country. Colonial historians have a design and they always view the Sufism as a ritualised set of beliefs which keeps one away from the social realities. It is far from truth and Sufism makes clear that no God exists beyond man and the ultimate abode of God is human heart. Mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras and even several temples do not have any image of God still they spread the message of God — universal brotherhood.

According to Professor Hangloo, Sufism invokes God in human beings and takes one away from worldly distractions. In a richly diverse country like India, holistic notion of human life is to be pursued religiously and Professor Hangloo, who taught history at North-East University, universities of Kashmir and Hyderabad Central and studied at JNU, seems to be quite categorical in deploring all that is set to stamp out million year of rapprochement that produced composite culture. How did indigenous cultural traditions produce a nuanced narrative of religious sensibility? The tangible answer to this question can be found in the teachings of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, Nizamuddin Auliya, Bakhtiyar Kaki and a plethora of equally revered saints. Professor Hangloo asked students not to be carried away by rhetorical flourish of the fanatics who are essentially rabblers and they deserve no respectability from any quarter.

A book puts a question mark on the very nature of individual ownership as it unflinchingly betrays knowledge which cannot be made personal asset hence book is a legacy that must be continued. This was aptly articulated by famous Urdu critic Professor Sharib Rudaulvi while parting with his most cherished passion — books — and handing over more than 5000 books over to the University. For Professor Sharib Rudaulvi, who has more than two dozen books to his credit, books help us to rid oneself of pride that leads to immodesty and immorality and book reading enables us to maintain moral behaviour under all circumstances.

At a time when students seem immensely attracted towards the distorted image of real revolutionaries they must be made aware of the poets who stood for equality by fighting against all sort of exploitation, discrimination and subjugation. One of the leading Urdu poets, Majaz Lakhnavi did it with remarkable creative dexterity and the University organised an extension lecture on his life and works. Professor Syed Ashrafi said Majaz was the first Urdu poet who fought for gender equality and his poems reveal a new sense of hope against all odds.

Majaz was a revolutionary in true sense and his poems goad us to speak against all attempts to stifle dissent. It is regretted that Chi Guevara, who relentlessly fought against capitalism before being killed in Bolivia, is now reduced to a fashion icon whose proverbial black T-shirt and cap has been creating waves in the market. Difference between revolution and its fallacious notion has become blurred and in order to understand what social inequalities are and how they should be highlighted, revolutionary poets unflinchingly tell us. Majaz Lakhnavi was one of such poets who used colonial signs such as railways and other machines to highlight the intense conflict between man's individual aspirations and external pressures that try to tame him down completely.

In universities where internet, mobile and new information technology driven notion of knowledge has gained currency, it was a welcome step to make the students aware of various inherent aspects of human sensibility that lay in oblivion and nobody could sense the magnitude of loss.