

# SUFIANA MUSIC OF KASHMIR

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## THE MUSIC LEGENDS OF KASHMIR

### VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

In the recent past State run Radio Kashmir played its role to promote this art but it was limited due to the paucity of resources available. State's Cultural Academy also played a role



but again lack of resources at their disposal hampered the progress. The maestros like Ustad Kamal Bhat, Ustad Ghulam Muhammed Qaleenbaaf, Muhammed Abdullah Tibetbaqal and finally Ustad Ghulam Muhammed Saaz Nawaz contributed with the help of Cultural Academy to promote this art and in seventies started holding music classes on regular basis to teach and impart Sufiana music to younger generation and during these courses scholarships were also offered as an incentive to these

students. Mushtaq & Shabir are making a great effort to keep the tradition alive and pass it on to the future generations. Kashmiri Sufiana Music is facing extinction and due to paucity of funds the family is struggling to keep their head above water. Any financial assistance to the family would be a great service to the survival of Kashmiri music.(Photo by Ameer Tarin)

This continued approximately for three years and the program had to be abandoned due to scant attention and interest by the local population and among other reasons has been attributed to the cultural invasion from central India. Moreover, the older generation who kept the tradition alive passed away one after another and the new generation lost the touch completely.

### ENSEMBLE



Sufiana Kalaam is primarily vocal, choral music. It is performed by an ensemble of four to seven musicians and all musicians sing in unison except the main singer (leader of the ensemble) who sings the main lines of the song. The poetry associated with Sufiana Kalaam is in two languages, Persian and Kashmiri. The favourite poems are those of the great Sufi mystics of Persia and Kashmir such as Hafiz, Jallauddin Rumi, Jami, Omar Khayam, Amir Khusro, Rasul Mir, Neame Seab and others.

## SULTAN HASSAN SHAH

Budshah's brother Sultan Hassan Shah (1472–84) introduced an independent Government department to promote music. Sultan ZainulAbidin had a special interest in music and he would organize special meetings for musicians to perform. His son heir apparent Sultan Haider Shah was good at playing instruments available. His grandson Sultan Hassan Shah was also good in the art of music. He invited musicians from South India to promote music in Kashmir. An exclusive department of music was created for the first time in his life time. Kashmiri music, it is said, was at its zenith during the time of Sultan Yousuf Shah Chak as he himself practiced music and performed with perfection and his Queen Habba Khatun was also a great musician and RAAST Kashmiri raag is her invention.

Sultan Yousuf Shah Chak attached lot of importance to poetry and music and his personal liking made quite a difference to its popularity. Chak kings exit from the dynasty rule deprived Sufiana music of state patronage and protection resulting in its decline. Thereafter it survived getting protection from Sufi Saints and spiritual people (Darvesh) and also the rich elite as this provided musicians and lovers of Sufi music with zeal, enthusiasm, spiritual enhancement and very importantly a source of income.

In the not so distant past Kashmir liked the style of Sufiana music and is considered as the classical music of Kashmir. As most of the poetry used is Persian which has its origin in Iran and central Asia but at the same time the local Kashmiri language blended with Persian gave it a different flavour.

## BACCHE NAGME (Gharayee Lanczh)

A colourful group of people, generally from villages, visiting almost every house in Srinagar city playing this nice musical instrument called **Surnai**. This group, generally made an appearance on EID (Muslim festival) and other good occasions, is identified as Gharayee Lanczh. The group comprised of two or more people clad in typical rural attire, Pheron (wintergear Robe), Kameez (shirt), Yezaar (loose trousers) and white turban.

Each one holding on to his respective musical instrument like Surnai (a kind of a flute blown from the top through a very thin and flat nozzle, it makes very loud and piercing sound but it is melodious) a flatter type of a side drum and the forgotten instruments called Wasool and Saaz - e - Kashmir. The most significant notable aspect of the group is this **Lanczh** (a Eunuch) dressed in reds, blues and greens. The centre of attraction his two huge Kanewaje (earrings) studded with colourful imitation stones. This eunuch had to be a six-footer, with a slim body structure and a hoarse voice being a pre-requisite.

Now this BaCche` Nagme` (Male young dancer performing to entertain admirers of this art) is also an inseparable part of Kashmir culture and cannot be ignored. BaCche, a Cherub in Biblical terms is again a centre of attraction dressed in the typical *inhi logoon ney li na duppatta mera* outfit of a typical dancer busy dancing surrounded by his male partners playing different musical instruments. Kashmiris have tremendously suffered at the hands of foreign invading rulers and all of them made women a special target. That is why people developed a habit of hiding their women and this gave rise to males or eunuchs dressed in

women's clothing to entertain people and this became part of the culture. Now these troupes are nowhere to be seen and this art is a thing of the past.

For centuries Kashmir has had a history of invasions by outside forces to subjugate people by perpetual use of force and apart from persecution and plunder, the worst hit has always been the culture of this paradise on earth. Sufiana music, a very old tradition is dying and an urgent action is needed to save it from extinction. Only a few families in Kashmir practiced this musical form, whereas the tallest Ustad Muhammed Abdullah Tibetbaqal, Ghulam Muhammed Qaleenbaaf, Ustad Ghulam Muhammed Saaz Nawaz and Ustad Abdul Ghani Namtahali contributed to impart to their family members and were/are practicing artists.

Human Right violations, atrocities and ruthless behaviour demonstrated by Indian fascist establishment backed by army are unprecedented and are never heard of in the past. Indian arrogance makes them believe that genocides committed in Kashmir can easily be brushed under the carpet. India also believes that the military might it displays will deter Kashmiris from raising their voice and will ultimately succumb to the pressure. Kashmir fought India for the last seventy three years and will continue the fight till the cherished goal of independence from India is achieved.

India planned for decades investing billions of US Dollars to destabilize Pakistan. The main target was to focus on Pakistan's business hub Karachi and rich in minerals, silver and gold Baluchistan Province. India needed Baluchistan to gain access to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Europe. Pakistan army and its intelligence agencies dashed all Indian hopes and brought the country's turmoil under control. Pakistan is still struggling to wipe out the political mafia who were embedded with deep roots in the so called democratic set -up to create mayhem with a special target to weaken army and economic back-bone of Pakistan. The enemies planned and so did Allah.

## MUHAMMAD ABDULLAH TIBETBAQAL



*S/O Khawaja Abdul Ghani Bota Wani*

*Resident of Aali Kadal Srinagar Kashmir*

*Born: July 14, 1914 Died: January 03, 1982*

Tibetbaqal was in full employment with State run Radio Kashmir. He was the master of a unique voice full of melody and received appreciation from all the lovers of music having a special relationship with Sufiana Kalaam. He did not belong to the family of musicians but a family of businessmen dealing in world famous Pashmina shawls and fruit like Apricot in particular.

Because of the business connections, his family was influenced by getting in contact with people from Russia, Ladakh, Tibet, and Yaqand. This Mongolian race from the regions of Ladakh, Tibet and Yaqand was referred to as *Bota*. Since the poetry used in Sufiana Kalaam is mainly Persian he had acquired fairly good knowledge of Arabic and Persian which helped him to first understand what he was to sing. Since his childhood, having a good voice, he was allowed to sing prayers in Maktab (School) on regular basis which in turn proved to be helpful for his future achievements. At a later stage because of his good voice and his

personal liking and attachment with Sufiana Kalaam he received initial training in this from Ustad Ghani Joo and Ustad Ramzan Joo.

His family vehemently opposed his interest in singing but he remained steadfast and adamant to continue receive the training and stayed associated with the art. In 1948 Radio Kashmir had just been introduced to Kashmiris and Tibetbaqal got this employment as a breakthrough and was soon famous. His attempt to blend the Sufiana Kalaam with local Kashmir dialect was a very good venture and was highly acclaimed.

He continued to sing Naat and Manqabat (spiritual singing) from Radio Kashmir while receiving appreciation from lovers of this art especially his best capabilities to play this wonderful local musical instrument called Santoor. He, at times, played other instruments like Sitar, Harmonium and Tabla. He also worked with the State department Cultural Academy and contributed to promote this art. Though he received invitations to visit different countries but for some reason he declined all these offers and preferred to stay in Kashmir.

## ABDUL KHALIQ SETARI



*S/O Khwaja Abdul Gaffar Setari*

*Resident of Vejoubuor, Islamabad, Kashmir*

*Born: 1904 Died: 1958*

Also known as Khala Saeb belonged to a family of Sufiana Kalaam professionals and hails from the home Mazaar area of Sufi music village Shangaz, Kashmir.

Khaliq Setari has been associated with the art since his childhood and received basic training from his father elder Setari. He is reported to be a very good sitar and tabla player and it was his own brother Ghulam Muhammed Setari and Sannaullah who taught him these skills.

Being so good at playing Sitar he assumed the nickname of Setari and finally this nickname became the family's surname. After his home village Shangaz, another village Vajebuer also received laurels to achieve a special place in this art of music. Khala Saeb's expertise for using Aaho bands an acknowledgement or a nod for approval of song's continuity. He has extensively travelled a facility provided by the department of Cultural Academy and thus visited various places to perform and receive laurels from the public at places like Bhopal, Bombay and quite a few places in central and northern India. The Bhopal Academy awarded him a certificate of appreciation.

In 1960 he got an opportunity to introduce himself on Radio Kashmir and his performance gave him quite a big fame. He had learned Persian language and was very good in interpreting Persian poetry to his fans directly during conversations or through his songs. His command on the language was so good that he was always mistaken to be an Iranian. This was something outstanding as he did not receive any schooling and was totally illiterate. He maintained his good voice and entertained people with his magic voice till he breathed his last. Among his pupils who received training notable are Muhammad Abdullah Setari, Abdul Majid, Showkat Khan, Altaf Hussain and Abdul Majid Akhoon.

## SHEIKH ABDUL AZIZ



S/O Sheikh Abdul Karim

Resident of Gaw Kadal Srinagar, Kashmir

Born: 15-03-1928 Died: 02-12-2005

Ustad Sheikh Abdul Aziz is counted as one of the masters from the group of elite musicians and has been trained in the art since his childhood. He would organize gatherings at his own house and invite people from all walks of life having deep interest in Sufiana music and perform. His older brother had also developed an interest in Sufiana Kalaam.

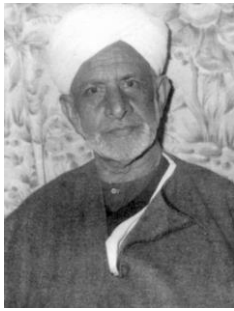
This was a unique way to socialise and get to know people which ultimately would become a family affair. His father did not have any interest with all this and expected his son to be more inclined towards education. As he was attracted to this art right from the start he worked very hard to attain perfection in the art of singing and playing instruments like Santoor and Sitar.

To start with he received training from Ustad Ghulam Muhammed Qaleenbaft and then learned under the guidance of Ustad Muhammed Siddique, Muhammed Abdullah Tibetbaqal and Maulana Shamsuddin Hairat Kamili. In short he was fortunate to receive training from the elite group of maestros. He is even the author of very well known book titled *Kashur Sargam* which is an achievement in itself wherein he discussed and explained most of *maqam* notes and the book is in three parts. He was also in charge of **Institute of Music and Fine Arts** nearly for twenty years.

He also contributed to impart training to his young students who are performing though at a slow pace. He was later employed in radio Kashmir and was instrumental in promoting Sufiana kalaam to a large extent. Here he would encourage group performance and his mastery about Sitar became popular, though his favourite instrument being Santoor, he would try his hand on other instruments as well. It was noticed that he had a firm grip on flow and notes (taal) that would enhance his capabilities to perform to deliver and perform with confidence. He is presently working in *Doordarshan* (Indian TV) and also involves himself with programs organized by State Cultural Academy. He is known to have performed on stage frequently which has received appreciation. He is said to be of the opinion that Dholaki (an Indian musical instrument) is better than Tabla as it coincides with **Sufiana mousiqui**. He received invitation to visit USA (Maryland) where he performed with tremendous success and quite a few students of music showed interest to learn Kashmiri Sufiana music.

While paying very high tributes and an acknowledgement for the intellectual capabilities of Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Jozef M. Pacholczyk in his book 'The Classical Music of Kashmir goes on to say " the three volume set of 'Kashur Sargam' by Sheikh Abdul Aziz (1963-65) which contains notations of repertory, provided the bulk of the materials used for my analysis." He further continues to mention "Aziz's 'Koshur Sargam' is by far the most comprehensive anthology of Sufyana. Because of its reliability, it will be used in this research as an important primary source.

## GHULAM MUHAMMAD QALEENBAAF



*S/O Muhammed Siddique*

*Resident of Khanakah-e-Maula Srinagar, Kashmir*

*Born: 1909 Died: 1994*

Qaleenbaaf was employed by Radio Kashmir on permanent basis from 1949 to 1971. He belongs to the elite group of singers and musicians. He had developed interest with the art since his childhood and would participate in all household gatherings where lovers of music would assemble and listen to Sufiana Kalaam.

He is known to be unique in maintaining the flow of music while his singing has always been appreciated. Initially he was trained by one Sula (Sultan) Joo and then later by Khala (Khaliq) Joo both were known to be music masters of their own time. He has contributed a lot to keep this tradition alive and has also worked as a teacher to impart this tradition to boys and girls of Amira Kadal High School, Srinagar. As he acquired good fame he was appointed as teacher at State Cultural Academy to train young generation so that the art would live for future. He continued to work with Radio Kashmir and State Cultural Academy till he breathed his last. His students namely Shiekh Abdul Aziz, Mushtaq Ahmed and Muhammed Yaqub were all recognized musicians.

## KAMAL JOO BHAT



*S/O Muhammed Kamal Bhat*

*Resident of Wahthor Tchodur Kashmir*

*Born: 1913 Died: 1978*

Kamal Joo Bhat was fortunate and one of the first to get a job in Radio Kashmir which gave him a breakthrough and soon his name became a household. He inherited the art from his father and his cousin and playing of Sitar he learned this skill from Ramzan Raether of Yetchgam, Kashmir.

He started his career singing at private gatherings, though illiterate, he was gifted with huge memory and would be able to translate Persian poetry with ease. He is known to have mastered raags like druya, yake, dupke, namdur, mukhmas, tchaqeel, neemtchqeel, setaal, chapandaaz and hajr. He also had a special skill to play Sitar, Tabla and Surnai and being best at Sitar, maqam kanra though difficult to sing would make people ecstatic. His sweet voice full of melody would make Lalle wakhan the poetry of famous poetess Lalla Arifa and the (shurkh) spiritual poetry of Hazrat Shiekh Nooruddin Wali a treat to listen to.

Ustad Kamal Bhat was employed by Radio Kashmir in 1948 on permanent basis and involved himself with programs organised and conducted by State Cultural Academy. Apart from knowing Sufiana kalaam he would take to dancing as well and did all this with perfection. He also organised to hold classes and would teach the youngsters the art of singing and dancing. He has travelled to some parts of India (now in Pakistan) before

partition of India in 1947. Notably, two of his students Abdul Gani Bhat and Abdul Gani Namtahali are practicing Sufiana Kalaam are practicing artists.

## MUHAMMAD RAMZAN JOO



*S/O Ustad Wazir Joo*

*Resident of Kaka Soth, Jamallata Srinagar Kashmir*

*Born: 1881 Died: December 7, 1971*

Ustad Ramzan Joo, belonging to the family of great musicians and being brother of Maestro Sidh Joo, is ranked as a top class artist in Sufiana Kalaam and acquired this art from his ancestors. He would always participate in spiritual gatherings and getting in touch with other highly acclaimed singers and artists benefited him to learn and master the art singing especially Sufiana Kalaam.

His teachers were achievers in this art like Ustad Wazir Joo and Ustad Abdullah Shah. His motivation, as is said, was his love for Sufiana Kalaam and its spirituality and any financial interest has been of no consequence. He was relentless in his effort to carry on with promoting this art which he did with great success and imparted training and whatever he had learnt to younger generation.

He was employed by Radio Kashmir in 1955 and initially received a B class status. It goes to his credit that he was best at playing Santoor but was adept in playing Sitar as well. He also performed in the programs organised by State Cultural Academy and received **Robe of Honour** from the same department. His students, notably, include Ustad Ghulam Muhammed Saaz Nawaz, Abdul Ghani Saaz Nawaz and Ghulam Ahmed Saaz Nawaz.

## GHULAM MUHAMMAD SAAZ NAWAZ



*S/O Ustad Ramzan Joo*

*Resident of Dana Mazar, Safa Kadal, Srinagar, Kashmir*

*Born: July 1940*

Saaz Nawaz was fortunate enough to learn the art from his father when he was very young. Though being part of the group of musicians belonging to his uncle Ustad Sidh Joo, the relationship helped him to attain fame very quickly as his Uncle was already a recognized Sufiana musician.

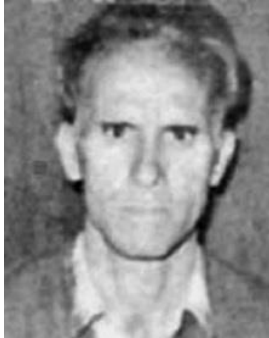
He loves to sing Persian spiritual poetry and his delivery of pronunciation being correct added to the flavour of his singing and people love to hear him sing. He is known to play with perfection the instruments like Santoor, Sitar, Tabla and Saaz-e-Kashmir but has an extra edge at playing Santoor. He was initially employed by Radio Kashmir as a &acute;B&acute; class employee and because of his hard work and perseverance soon became a big name in Sufiana kalaam. He also received a (**Sanad**) appreciation from Sadiq



Memorial Trust. He has also received a few awards from State and Sangeet Academy of India which he received in the year 1999.

Saaz Nawaz received appreciation and acclaim as one of the greatest exponents of Sufiana Music. He also hopes the tradition he inherited from the great masters will be carried on by his sons Mushtaq and Shabir who are learning the art under his guidance and encouraging the youngsters is the only glimmer of hope keeping this tradition alive.

## **GHULAM RASOOL AHANGAR**



*S/O Abdul Rahman Ahangar*

*Resident of Lodur, Tehsil Varmul, Kashmir*

**Born: July 1952**

Ahangar was employed by State Information Department as an artist. He is best known by his short name Sarangi as he was known to be best this instrument. As a young boy, he received training from Haji Ghulam Nabi Bulbul and he was further trained by Abdul Rahman Bhat and Shiekh Ali Muhammed.

He visited Delhi, Ajmeer, Jaipur, Bombay, Agra and Calcutta through **Cultural and Tammadun** departments of the State where he performed with his group to gain laurels. He has a group of students receiving training in the art and to name the few are: Muhammed Subhan Shah, Ghulam Ahmed Dar, Ghulam Hassan Shiekh and Abdul Raheem Shah. His most famous song will be remembered for a long time.

*Thari yawnneni bargey posh    Bali maryey mai rosh*

*Lalawun mey thounum naar    Newnam qarrar vesiyey*

## **MUHAMMAD YAQUB SHEIKH**



*S/O Abdul Ahad Sheikh*

*Resident of Bona Shah Kralapur, Budgam, Kashmir*

**Born: April 10, 1960**

Yaqub hails from a family of Ustaads like his maternal grand father Ghulam Muhammed Qaleenbaaf and then received training from famed people like Shiekh Abdul Aziz and Ustad Kamaal Bhat. He is adept in playing Santoor, Sitar, Tabla, and Saaze Kashmir but was more inclined to play Santoor where he achieved perfection.

He learned to play Saaz-e-Kashmir from late Ustad Kamal Bhat. He travelled to Switzerland/Geneva, Paris, Germany, Italy and Algeria to perform and earned laurels. Yaqub currently runs a music school at Kralpura where a good number of students are learning the art. He has also served as music master in Radio Kashmir where he would perform with his associates and students.

## GOPI NATH Gupe BaCche



*Resident of Kashmir, Achhabal, Anantnag (Islamabad), Kashmir*

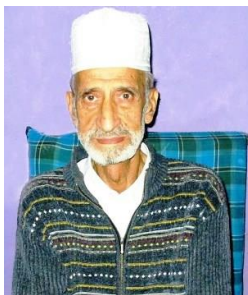
*Born: 1920 Died: January, 2001*

Gopi Nath is the first Kashmiri Pandit who took to dancing and became very famous in a very short time. His family tradition would not allow him to lead a path of this nature and had to struggle to continue dancing.

His commitment and perseverance made him a well known figure and learned the art of singing as well. His singing includes Hindu Leela, Naat, Chakri and Roaf. His singing party included Muhammed Ismail Dar, Abdul Aziz, Ghulam Rasool, Muhammed Ramzan and Abdul Samad. Gopi Nath was famous for playing Harmonium but would play with comfort instruments like Tabla, Noat (Kashmiri clay pitcher) and Banjo. He initially sang in marriage parties and in some specially organised private parties and then went on to sing at Radio Kashmir where he was employed on permanent basis. He at times would perform on Indian Television channel Door Darshan as well.

Later, he was employed by States Field Publicity Department and trips organised by the department would take him to other places in the state to perform. He made such trips to states rural areas and regions. He would occasionally perform in the programs organised by states Cultural Academy and through them travelled to Delhi, Bombay, Goa and has also visited Africa wherefrom he returned with medals and awards.

## AMIR DEEN ZAZ



*S/O Abdul Rahman Zaz*

*Resident of Zainakadal, Srinagar, Kashmir*

*Born: 1931 Died: 10-11-2008*

Ustad Amir Din Zaz started singing at the age of 20 years and being a good learner picked up the art of playing Santoor, Sitar and Harmonium with perfection. He was admired for his good voice and soon became part of the ensemble of the elite group of Sufiana Masters.

He had his early training from Ustad Rahman Joo Zaz and learned the skill of making *sur* and later joined the group of Mohammad Abdullah Tibetbaqal. On certain occasions became part of the group led by Ustad Ghulam Mohammad Qaleenbaaf. Amir Din never chose his singing as a career and his love for the art was highly acclaimed. He was even offered jobs at Radio Kashmir or State run TV channel Doordarshan but he always turned it down. He will be remembered for his famous song *maqam subhdam*:

*zaag sundari bagh babri naag nendre ma paiyee*

## PANDIT BHAJAN SOPORI



Sopori is one of the few minority community Kashmiri Pandits who received laurels for his mastery to play the magical instrument known as SANTOOR. It can be said that Sopori, among many, played a great role in introducing Kashmiri music to one billion people of India.

Music may belong to any nation or place, the fact remains that it is always good to ears. In other words there are no barriers of language or words that limit music lovers to listen and appreciate a good voice or a tune. Music has always been a part and parcel of human culture and tradition and has had a unique status. The sweet tunes thus produced touch the heart and mind and even consoles human souls. No one knows for sure the origin of music but it is believed that the origins of music can be traced to Egypt and from there spread to other nations.

## SANNAULLAH BHAT



*Resident of Krari, Pattan, Kashmir*

*Born: 1904 Died: 1974*

One of the first musicians who associated himself with Radio Kashmir and got his first employment as Rabab (musical instrument) Nawaz but he was not satisfied with the job and resigned in 1973. He was one of the first proponents of introducing and playing Rabab with perfection and soon after Radio Kashmir was born he even directed music for the early feature dramas relayed from the radio station. He is famous for rendering music for a popular song sung by Raj begum which became an immediate hit.

*Vasiyey gulan amai bahar Az saale' antan baalayar*

Gulrez another masterpiece of poetry was again sung by Raj Begum and fine tune provided by Ustad Bhat and notable and unique being his mastery over this instrument, Rabab. He extensively travelled to Delhi, Bombay, Lakhnow, and Calcutta, to demonstrate his capabilities.

## MUHAMMAD SIDIQ (SIDH JOO)



It is said he was very handsome and where ever he went to perform, the place used to be very well decorated and furnished expensively. Frequently he would sing and play instruments while Hafiz (dancers) would also perform. He played violin with perfection. Once in a talk show on radio Kashmir his son Ghulam Qadir who was the Sufiana music teacher at cultural Academy had all the praise for his father for the qualities inherent in him as a singer especially when he performed with the company of Hafiz dancers and would maintain the line to keep up with the rhythm and

musical notes. Qadir Joo is also said to be a master Tabla nawaz and playing sitar would be his specialty. The flawless performance of Tabla beat and the Hafiz dances were noteworthy which would send the lovers of music into ecstasy. The non stop repeat of verses would generally continue for more than half an hour.

It is also said that Raja Ram Singh was a lover of Hafiz performers and he would organize these programs even at the official Governors secretariat at Tanki pora. The son of Maestro Sidh Joo would be the introductory musician followed by his father's expert performance. Apart from the Sufiana music, he would also sing Indian classical Thumri with seriousness and with a slight touch of romantic notes. One of the Hafiza known as Moti Jan was a paragon of beauty and would generally grace such occasions. She was also referred to as the Queen of beauty. Another Hafiza known as **Teath seab** was charming due to her big eyes and she was learned educated and had the knowledge about Astrology and commanded respect in all the circles of the society. In order to enhance their beauty they used ornaments like Peshwaza and Tikka an ornament (pendant type) hung around centre of the forehead. Other notable Hafiza were Noore`Aarmein, Gannz Gul and Waza`Gul. Sidh Joo was best at playing 20 notes in a beat with ease. He received his initial training in this art from his mentor, Guru and father Wazir Joo. And to keep the records straight, Ustad Sidh Joo was brother of famous Maestro Ustad Ramzan Joo.

### **ABDUL GANI NAMTAHALI (GANAI)**



S/O Abdul Salaam Ganai

Resident of Namtahal, Tchodur, Budgam, Kashmir

Born: 1925 Died: December, 2001

Gani, though not a professional singer, was a very well known figure in Sufiana Kalaam. He was spotted while at school leading prayers in the Assembly and his Head Master Ghulam Nabi Kalkati encouraged him to sing on regular basis. This little fame allowed him to sing in small private gatherings and was soon introduced to influential people like Mohan Lal Aima, Pushkar Bhan, Ghulam Ahmed Mahjoor and Ghulam Mohiuddin Balpuri. This provided him with a opportunity to move around with Sufiana Singers of fame like Ghulam Qadir Bhat, Kamaal Bhat, Muhammed Rathaer and Shiekh Abdul Aziz. He has also been fortunate enough to be in the company of famous Poets Ahad Zargar and Samad Mir and would sing in the gatherings organised by by these famous poets. He was, like others, employed by Radio Kashmir in 1960.

The success of Kashmiri film **Habba Khatun**'s credit goes to Gani for providing his contribution as musician. He travelled to Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, Ajmeer and various other places in India to play and perform. These tours were organised by State Cultural Academy and was able to perform on Indian Television Door Darshan.

He is known to be good at playing instruments like Sitar, Tabla and could also play Harmonium and Santoor with confidence. He has worked hard to impart training this art to his two sons, Ghulam Nabi Namtahali and Abdul Rashid Namtahali. He has also taken active part in state politics and was elected to the Legislative Assembly from 1967 to 1972.

## MATRAS AND TAALAS

Raga a melody and Ta'ala a rhythm have the element of pitch relegated into sw'ras (notes). It produces emotional effects leaving an impact on the listener at times travelling spiritually into ecstasy. Raga a basis of classical rendering is based on the principle of combinations of notes selected. A performance with training and knowledge can create a desired effect full of emotions. Ta'ala is the rhythmical grouping of beats independent of the music it accompanies and has its own groupings.