

Khusrau's River of Love: Cosmopolitanism and Inclusion in South Asian Traditions
Preview Transcript

Moderator

- **Ali Asani**, Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures, Committee on the Study of Religion and Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University

Performers

- **Ali Sethi**, singer and writer
- **Himanshu Bajpai**, Dastango, writer, and journalist

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

Ali Asani: Greetings, everyone! We are here to celebrate and bring attention to South Asia's rich traditions of cosmopolitanism and inclusion, looking specifically at the ways they are expressed in the literary and performative arts. These centuries old traditions offer us a compelling alternative model for engaging with and understanding human diversity—one that has endured over time.

Himanshu Bajpai: Khusrau is no ordinary man; he is a river of love. A river that has been flowing for 700 years now, drenching the lands of this subcontinent with its holy waters making them fertile. Making flowers of love, compassion, purity, and morality blossom on these lands. In the past 700 years, the world has witnessed many a change, it was a period marked by many upheavals, but the power of Amir Khusrau's words lived on, their influence, their beneficence, their magic stayed strong. And that is why the poet Allama Iqbal said, "The battles of Aibak and Ghorī may be long forgotten, but the freshness, the sweetness of Khusrau's words, of Khusrau's verses is forever."

Ali Sethi [sings]:

O lamps of clay

Listen to what I say

Tonight, I await my sweetheart

So, burn bright through the night

I see the light of grace,

In all it's splendid colors!

TRANSCRIPT ENDS HERE