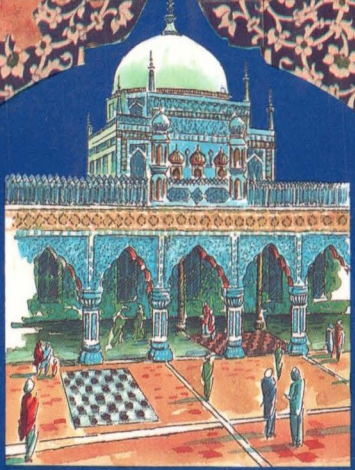
SHAH ABDUL LATIF BHITAI STUDIES 1



# Shah Abdul Latif,

## his Mystical Poetry

Edited by

Abdul Hamid Akhund

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**Shah Abdul Latif Bhit Shah Cultural Centre Committee**

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# Shah Abdul Latif,
## his Mystical Poetry

Oh. God, may ever you on Sindh
bestow abundance rare;
Beloved! all the world let share
thy grace, and fruitful be.

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# FOREWORD

'Are you a Sufi' inquired the jean clad, daughter of the French Minister for Culture. 'I am one' she asserted, 'And how is that'? I questioned her, 'Well you see I have just returned from a long trip to India and there I met my Guru, the greatest sufi of present times'. Now who according to you is a Sufi and she had no answer. This interesting dialogue took place in August 1987, where Pakistani artists including the Ragai Faqirs of Shah Abdul Latif were performing during the 'Theatre Festival' in Avignon, France. To this girl 'Sufi' was one who could sit eyes closed cross legged and receed into a trane, as if Sufi is a yogic Lotus position to be switched on and off according to whims and will. To term oneself a Sufi is a popular present day jargon amongst the Western youth. All that is required of you is to close your eyes, take a deep breath, conveniently fall into a visionary rupture and behold you are transformed into the mystic Wajd. Scholars may describe Sufism with whatever origin and characteristic features, but the present day disillusioned youth so familiar with short cuts in life views it differently. We have disgressed from the path adopted by Sufis to successfully understand the philosophy of life and to practice tolerance, love and a quest for reality, but still the attraction to the concept totally unknown and grossly misunderstood and malpractised indicates its power over the human soul.

Since this anthology is concerned with the life and works of the great poet laureate of Pakistan Shah Abdul Latif, I have chosen to state above an episode which to my mind is amusing.

Life has become so materialistic that we grope at intellectual and social mirages to accept and find momentary solace hypnotic experience. This is not what our great Sufis practised or preached, they were not looking for scapegoats, they preached tolerance, love and a search for ultimate Union, but above all they were honest to themselves and their cause.

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, is one such phenomena of human emotions who adopted the language of his people and used local symbols to communicate with them. That a man born at a time when all vehicles of expression were restricted should dominate the language, culture, traditions and literature for three centuries with such a stronghold that even the greatest of contemporary writers, seek refuge in him, indicates his strength and depth, however popular and age old the metephors or the tales, it is through him that they have achieved immortality, mention Marui, Noori, Sorath to the illiterate, Latif rings a big bell. This then is the Shah of Sindh and on the 14th of Safar, all, the high and the low, converge to the mound he called 'Bhit', to pay homage, to seek and to understand the mystery behind the force that moves millions and the motivates his Ragai Faqirs who play and sing his Damboor from sunset to sunrise. Come rain, come winter, they sit in the precincts of his mausoleum immune and oblivous to the surroundings and recite his works since the day he desired it to echo in his ears to make audible the final call for the first sound of Union

A lot has been said and written on Shah Abdul Latif but very little of it conforms to sound research and literary trends. Sorley dissertation to the present day is still outstanding and significant. Dr. Baloch leads the scholars of Sindh, his monumental work on Shah-Jo-Risalo, (in Sindhi) the second volume of which is nearing completion, will lay a solid foundation for research scholars. Some day a serious attempt will be made by our scholars to take to serious research on Shah and write in authentic terms. He is a fathomless ocean and our understanding of his works is yet to mature. Very few poets of world literature can stand alongside him when he refers to his people, their joys and sorrows, his hills, his birds, his villages, his

desert and above all his Sohini Marui (Sindh)

This volume is an attempt to present the life and mystic works of Shah Abdul Latif as a systematic publication series. We plan to produce many such volumes based on research articles and monographs.

I will be failing in my duty if the service rendered by Jam Sadiq Ali, Chief Minister of Sindh an ardent devotee of Shah is not placed on record for having made available unprecedented grant for the development of the Centre during his visit to Bhitshah on 7th September, 1990. This will help in establishing the Bhitshah Cultural Centre on modern lines and it shall Inshallah truly be a Centre of which Pakistan will be proud. During the 247th Urs a Community Centre and a Reading Room is being established and six books are being printed

I would also like to acknowledge the support extended to the centre by the Planning Development Department and the Finance Department. .

I would humbly stress upon our scholars to contribute to this series and make it an outstanding Research Project. The Faqirs of Shah has sung their reverence, it is now for the scholars to contribute in concrete terms.

Jiye Latif

20th August 1991 **Abdul Hamid Akhund**

# THE BIRTH OF A CLASSIC

H. T. Sorley

# THE BIRTH OF A CLASSIC

H. T. Sorley

THE emergence of genius is an event which in the present state of human knowledge approaches the inexplicable. Heredity and environment are certainly an inadequate explanation. There is usually little in the immediate circumstances of his birth and his upbringing to account for the manner in which an exceptional man towers above his fellows. In Shah Abdul Latif's case the enquirer finds small help towards knowing how this outstanding poet came to the fulfilment of his genius. Shah Abdul Latif's life in fact would seem to prove the truth of the old adage 'poeta nascitur, non fit'. It is true that Shah Abdul Latif came of a well-known family of Sayids and that down the centuries Sayids in Sindh have produced a number of men famous for their learning and their saintliness. The poet's great-great-grandfather was the Shah Karim whose name is still held in reverence in Lower Sindh. Though some poetry is attributed to Shah Karim and a few of his verses are believed to be incorporated in the Risalo there has come down to us nothing of outstanding merit. Nor is there in Sindhi literature either before or after Shah Abdul Latif's time anything fit to be compared with the Risalo.[1]

The East in general is a place where learning and the love of learning cannot be said to be widespread. The learned man is exceptional. If he lives amongst a simple, rustic and largely unlettered people. 'he obtains' easily a reputation for wonder-

1 There is a big edition of the poetry of Sachal (Sarmast) by Agha Ghulam Nabi Khan Sufi.

ful achievement which the critical examination of a later age may find to be undeserved. Very little is known of the education of Shah Abdul Latif. One of his preceptors was a Nur Muhammad Bhatti of whose scholastic ability we are singularly ignorant. 'We do not know', says Lilaram Watanmal, 'how long our poet studied with Nur Muhammad or how much he learnt from him.[1] We shall not, however, be far wrong in assuming that Shah Abdul Latif was familiar with the traditions of his own family and that he must have had some command over the kind of learning which a studious Sayid of his time could have acquired. Tradition says that the Quran, the Masnawi of Jalaluddin Rumi and the Sindhi verses of Shah Karim were constantly in his hands. The general truth of this assertion need not be doubted. But though it may explain some of the characteristic literary and scholarly qualities of the Risalo, it does nothing to account for the poetic excellence of the verses. We are thus reduced to the simple fact that genius knows no limiting bounds. Shah Abdul Latif must by nature have possessed those qualities of observation, expression and sincerity of thought which enabled him to put his own ideas and the ideas of the common people amongst whom he lived into verses that can without exaggeration be said to have a claim to immortality.

In the days when these verses were composed Islam in Sindh preserved the true native form of its characteristic power. That power had been contributed to by a succession of Muslim dynasties which for centuries had set their seal upon the land. The thinking of the common people was permeated by ideas which, much more than they do in present-day Sindh, penetrated deeply the Muslim consciousness. Today that territorial dominion has been lost. With the break-up of the typical theocratic society much of the structure of its social polity has disappeared. Thus against the whole mental background of those days there stood out a quality which is vital no longer in quite the same way and with quite the same power. The Muslim India of the Middle Ages, of which eighteenth century Sindh

1. Shah Latif, p.11.

was a relic, was in some of its features very reminiscent of medieval Christian Europe. There was the same sort of moving about to fairs and on pilgrimages. The 'mullo' and the mosque corresponded to the priest and the church. The darwishes were a kind of wandering friars. The structure of society was perhaps in an external way more deeply religious than it is today. Economic conditions were simpler, even if economic comfort was harder to attain. Owing to the general fatalistic and uncritical attitude that the average man adopted when faced with the blows of ill-fortune or distress it is probable that hardship was borne more stoically than today. It may not, therefore, be true to say that the economic struggle did not then absorb so much of human spiritual energy as it does now, when people are readier to worry about the attainment of creature comfort and when they see that the possibility of reaching a higher standard of living is not so distant as it used to be. But society was certainly then more static and more graded into classes. Men, therefore, accepted the blows of fate with greater complacency because they had not realised the extent to which human effort can alter the conditions under which people live.

The Sindh which was the soil from which the poetry of a Shah Abdul Latif could spring was more like the 'Merrie England' which prevailed in the days of the economic self-sufficiency of the village, the small town and restricted local enterprise. It was a society of landholders, petty cultivators, herdsmen, craftsmen and traders, knowing little of the outside world except what could be seen of it at markets and fairs, in the gatherings of strangers at tombs on saints' days or in the company of fellow pilgrims. Islam has never had the established hierarchy of Christian medievalism. To that extent it had a greater sense of the democracy of man and the common people shared more in its widely-flung culture of religious idea and belief. Life was hard but it was not without its compensations in a common ability, through certain social customs, to find simple relaxations from the rigours of a penurious existence. In such a society the saintly man, the interpreter of the simple creed of the Quran, the 'mullo', the 'shaikh', the 'akhund' and the 'ustad' exercised a kind of authority which departed when life be-

came more complex and economic struggle more absorbing of mental energies. Shah Abdul Latif was born at a time when a great transition was beginning. This transition continued throughout his lifetime. The supreme territorial authority of the Muslim dynasties was breaking up and the settled structure of a medieval society was wearing a little thin. The elements which went to the making of this structure were numerous. There was the acknowledgements of man's state as the result of God's disposal of the world. It was accepted that there shall be the rich man in his palace and the poor man at the gate. The holy man was still a kind of uncrowned king amongst an illiterate people. Nothing has ever quite taken the place of this structure. When in a multitude of ways individualism began to supplant authoritarianism, much of the contentment which accompanied a quiet resignation to things as they were disappeared. The world ceased to be 'merrie'. Human endeavour became more self-centred and men were more prone to demand 'rights'. The other-worldly days of the poet, sage, saint were beginning to be numbered.

In Shah Abdul Latif's lifetime we can trace fairly easily most of the sighs that the old order was soon to pass away. The poet's own life displays the successive stages he went through from poet to sage, ending finally in sainthood. The important point, however, is that Shah Abdul Latif is the last of the great medieval poets. He sang for a people whose religious outlook, intelligible and respected today, has lost for ever that equality of homogeneity with its environment which is so characteristic of medievalism. It is extremely doubtful whether poetry like Shah Abdul Latif's can ever again be composed in Sindh. The verses can of course be imitated and have been imitated. But we feel that such imitation, however skillful, can be nothing but a feeble copy of something that has lost the lively meaning it once held. This statement may perhaps seem paradoxical since the poems of Shah Abdul Latif still bind Sindh with a powerful spell of love and admiration. But there is really no paradox. Modern delight in the poems is of a different genre entirely. It comes partly from the development of a literary taste that is quite modern. It springs partly from a

sentimental regard for the fine things of the past characteristic of all peoples at certain stages of their cultural development. Though the ideas in the poems are still believed they are not believed in quite the same way or for quite the same reason. It is precisely because the simpler and more burning conviction of a previous age has gone that the probabilities are all against Sindh's producing a second Shah Abdul Latif.

To expect this to happen would be like expecting another Donne or another Milton to appear in present-day England. The emphasis of literary conception has altered. Values have changed. People have fuller minds than they had in those simpler days. Donne and Milton are still admired and loved. But the ideas they preached do not strike the modern mind in the manner that appealed to seventeenth century England. These ideas can now be seen to be capable of examination from quite another angle. To change the metaphor, they are like some exquisite work of art which later ages see only through a camera obscura, real indeed but somehow invested with a penumbra of unreality. In the field of art when something has been done once supremely well, the achievement becomes static. It reaches a sort of finality and becomes not an object of emotion so much as a subject for introspection, which is a very different matter. The uniqueness of Shah Abdul Latif's poetry must therefore be explained in some such way as this. Shah Abdul Latif was the first great exponent of the imaginative use of the Sindhi language. His achievement took place in days when Sindh was still medieval in outlook. His poetry has in consequence been stamped with a peculiar cachet of its own, one that can never be applied again. No one will ever produce again this particular kind of poetry amidst the same local environment and in the same halo-content of thought, belief and feeling.

The poverty of Sindhi literature before Shah Abdul Latif was the result of the late emergence of the Sindhi vernacular as a vehicle of literary expression. While Islam was setting its authoritative seal upon the structure of thought in all Muslim India most of the inspiration came from the great Arabic and Persian tradition. The emperor Babur was profoundly con-

temptuous of the merits of India. He has shown this by the caustic comments in his memoirs, 'the people of Hindustan have no good houses, no good flesh, no grapes, no muskmelons, no good fruits, no ice or cold water, no good food or bread in their bazaars, no baths or colleges, no candles, no torches, not a candlestick.'[1]

It was not surprising that Urdu was regarded till the late seventeenth century as a barbarous and uneducated tongue unfit for the gems of poetic inspiration. The Courts used the Persian language. Persian was the medium of literary expression. Learned men wrote in Arabic or Persian. Except in areas where Sanskritic languages had reached a scholarly standard, no one thought it worth while attempting to employ the language of the common people with superlative skill or to discover in the vernaculars their potentiality for linguistic felicities. But now all has changed. Persian in India has become a language of pedantry used for the writing of literary conceits and jeuxd'esprit, and not for the spontaneous local expression of literary thoughts. Sindhi too, has now developed on modern lines. If great poetry is to be written in it hereafter it will be in a manner congenial to modern ideas of thought and expression. A present day poet may imitate Shah Abdul Latif's turns of phrase, employ his imagery, and indulge in a wealth of Sufi philosophy, but it will be modern poetry and in so far as it seeks merely to be a facsimile of what was better said in the eighteenth century it will fail to live. Every age evolves for itself its own methods of literary expression best suited to proclaim its living convictions and beliefs and nothing which merely apes the past will be more than an unsubstantial shade. Thus are we left with the strange uniqueness of Shah Abdul Latif's poetry, the only gem cast up from the sea of Sindh's vernacular literature at a time when that was able to express with patent sincerity the convictions of a living medievalism.

Shah Abdul Latif is no mere imitator of Jalaluddin Rumi, of Jami, or Hafiz or Al Bistami. He is actually expressing in his

1 Memoirs, p.333.

own language ideas that were the current thought of his time. The uselessness of mere imitation has been well brought out by Professor Browne. Talking of the later Persian poets in India he says: 'These poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced what the late professor Ethe has happily termed the "Indian summer" of Persian poetry, and they had of course a host of imitators and successors as long as Persian continued to be the polite language of India. These last who were at best skillful manipulators of a foreign idiom I do not propose to notice.[2] Browne is here speaking of the Indian poets who wrote in Persian, imitating the language and form of Sanai, Attar, Mahmud Shabistari, Jami and others. There is little in their work that cannot be recognized for what it is, namely the slavish copying of ideas better expressed by others, the manufacture of verses from which the light of life has departed. Shah Abdul Latif stands in a different category. He is a poet using for the first time with supreme skill the language of the country folk and employing it to interpret ideas of beauty and of religious philosophy, which, while drawing much inspiration from Persian models, succeeded in maintaining a high level of native originality and local eloquence. He was a man steeped in an understanding of the mystical teaching of Islam and familiar with the form of thought found to perfection in the great Persian masters. But this method of expression and his use of these ideas are quite individual and sincere because they actually responded to a true impulse to interpret the deepest ideas of the common folk amongst whom he spent the whole of his life. If it is the function of a poet not merely to express felicitously the ideas of his time but also to use his own language musically in order to bring out great truths, then Shah Abdul Latif has established his claim to be an original poet of his own right and not a soulless copyist of ideas better expressed by others before him.

The tyranny which Persian models have exercised over Indian poetry in general is bad. It has confirmed the poets of India in their common failing-a failing not confined to Indian poetry alone- to imitate rather than to initiate. The fault is due in

2. Persian Literature in Modern Times, p.168.

some measure to inherent complacency strengthened by the conservation of Oriental poetry, which tends to limit its interests to certain topics only, and worse still, to employ the same imagery and the same symbolism as have been used with success by the masters of another idiom. Shah Abdul Latif cannot be called conspicuous for any great originality of thought. But he expresses supremely well a species of religious philosophy current amongst the better educated men of his time.

Of what did this better education consist in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sindh? There is not much direct evidence of contemporary character which can be called reliable. Mirza Kalich Beg has, in his 'Old Sindh', given some account of the learned men of Thatta during the period of its greatest splendour.[1] The learned men of Moghul and Kalhoro Sindh do not make a company imposing in achievement, though their number is not small. Their learned works were concerned mostly with religious disquisition, with the duties of the true Muslim, with annals, chronicles and histories as then understood and with verse on the Persian model. But these authors, some of whom were erudite and highly cultivated people, wrote in Persian and Arabic and not in the language of the countryside. This was the result partly of the tyranny of a conservative literary tradition and partly of Islam's insistence on the superiority of the languages of Islam's historical progress. In a land where the Muslim theocratic theory prevailed so strongly it was inevitable that religion and education should go hand in hand. Thus most of the learned men of Old Sindh were Sayids, Kazis, Mullas or persons concerned with the teaching of the Quran and the exposition of the Muslim faith in one way or another. If they were not themselves actively engaged in this form of activity they had certainly gained all the learning they possessed at the 'maktabs' and 'madressas' presided over by 'mullas', 'akhunds' and 'ustads'. The Memons, a class of Muslims hailing originally from Cutch, were remarkable for their interest in learned things. They have produced, says Burton,[2] many very learned men and done much to introduce the relig-

1.. op cit., pp.173 sqq.

2. History of Sindh, p.248.

ious sciences into this country.

Mirza Kalich Beg gives long lists of famous names associated with light and learning in Thatta during its days of glory. It will suffice for our present purpose merely to mention some of them. The standard of their learning and the quality of their scholarship are not difficult to determine because they have left few relics of their work. At least, if such relics do still exist, they must be buried in manuscripts which are in the hands of private persons and which have not been published for the benefit of succeeding generations. Of famous Kazis at Thatta, Mirza Kalich Beg cites Kazi Namat Ullah, Kazi Hamad, Kazi Abiqullah, Kazi Shakikh Muhammad. Other names are Shaikh Sadaruddin, Makhdum Rukhanaldin, Makhdum Miran walad Moulana Yakub, Makhdum Fazalullah, Makhdum Feroz, Makhdum Usman wald Makhdum Bahawaldin, Mulla Muhammad Damaghi, Makhdum Abdul Jamil, Makhdum Faizullah, Makhdum Hamzo Waiz, Moulana Muhammad Tahir, Makhdum Mahmud, Makhdum Adam mian Abul Hasan, Makhdum Rahmatullah and many others. Of poets and writers there is also a formidable list containing the names of Muhammad Mukim, Mulla Abdul Rashid, Abdul Kayum, Mullah Mohabat Ali, Mulla Salami, Mulla Abdul Hakim, Mulla Yar Muhammad Khadam, Mulla Raza Hashmi, Mirza Ghulam Ali Momin, Asadullah Tabah and others. Poetry, astronomy, medicine, philology, dialectics, and similar learned subjects were the topics of discourse. The chief centres of learning were Thatta, Matiari and Rohri, places famous for the residence of Sayids and holy men attached to tombs, mosques and shrines. It was characteristic of much of the learning of those days that the writers belonged largely to families that had immigrated into Sindh. They were not Sindhis by birth. During the days of the Afghans who preceded the moghuls, and even earlier, Sindh proved a favourite home for learned men of this type which has always appealed to Islam. Both the Afghans and the Moghuls showed a tendency to encourage the settlement of men of this character who were further attached by the reputation which Sindh had gained for its Sufi philosophy and its Sufi exposition of Muslim doctrines.

The age of the Arghuns and Tarkhans was specially notable for the entrance of this kind of intellectual aristocracy who spoke and wrote, however, a language that was intelligible only to the learned intelligentzia. It could have had but little effect upon the unlettered cultivator class who knew of Arabic little beyond what they learned at the mosque for their religious devotions, and who used neither Arabic nor Persian in their daily speech. In this respect Sindh was merely typical of Muslim India generally. 'The foreign immigrants', says Arnold,[1] 'and their descendants, Arabs, Persians, Turks, Mughals and Pathans formed an important element in the total Muhammadan population and exercised a preponderating influence in the administration, the social organization and the religious life. The missionaries to whose proselytizing efforts the conversion of whole tribes is attributed and the saints whose tombs are still venerated throughout all parts of Muslim India were for the most part of foreign extraction. The effect of this constant stream of foreign immigration has been to keep India in close contact with the main currents of theological belief and speculation in Islam.

Sindh has always had a number of persons called 'hafiz' who know the Quran by heart. But this does not mean that they have any scholarly knowledge of the Arabic language. Burton has very sarcastic remarks to make on the standard of Persian and Arabic knowledge displayed in Sindh by persons who professed to be familiar with these languages. The ancestors of Abul Fazul, the statistician of the Ain-i-Akbari were typical instances of the immigration of learned men from the highlands of Central Asia when the intellectual standard of Islam was high and the pursuit of learning was accounted a matter of great worth. Shaikh Musa, Abul Fazul's great-great-great-grandfathher settled at Rel, a pleasant village of Sewistan, and married into a family of God-fearing and pious people; and he did not exchange his retired habits for the occupations of the world. 'His son and grand-children,' says Abdul Fazul, 'following his example lived happily and were instructed in

1 'Islam in India' in Hasting's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. V,pp.895-7.

the esoteric and esoteric doctrines of philosophy. In the beginning of the tenth century (i.e. Muhammadan) Shaikh Khizr set out impelled with the desire of visiting the saints of India.[1] Among the holy men he visited was Shaikh Yusuf Sindhi 'who had traversed the fields of secular and mystic lore and had acquired many perfections of the religious life'.[2]

These illustrations bring out clearly some characteristic features of learning and education in Sindh. Both learning and education were part of the great impulse of Islam and they were largely kept alive from outside. The system of education followed the general type found in Muslim countries. Education centred round the mosque to which the 'maktab' was attached. There were 'madressas' for higher study of a medieval scholastic nature. There flourished a well-established school of Sufi thought which long continued to attract that studious religious type of mind so often found amongst Muslims who have the time and the means to penetrate into the arcana of their faith. We have no contemporary account of the working of this educational system in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Sindh. The best description of it has been given by Burton who, in his own meticulous fashion, elicited the facts orally from learned men of the last century still retaining personal memories of what had been handed down to them or told them by their elders in an age when oral tradition had a much greater force than it possesses today. This education was then exactly the education prevalent generally throughout the countries of Islam.

It is certain that in its heyday Thatta was a great centre of erudition and learning. But it is impossible to believe Hamilton when he says that the Thatta of his time (circa A.D. 1699) contained four hundred colleges and schools. It is true that Hamilton may be referring not to Thatta alone but to Sindh generally when he says, 'The city of Thatta is famous for learning in theology, philology and politics and they have above four hundred colleges for training up youth in these parts of learning. I was very intimate with a Sayid who was a professor of

1. Ain, III, pp.418-9.

2. ibid., p.419.

theology and was reckoned a great historian. He asked me one day if I had heard of Alexander the Great in my country.' Hamilton wrote up his fascinating memoirs long after he had retired from adventurous living. His account of Sindh must have been compiled at least twenty years after 1699. As his writings are usually fully circumstantial and detailed we are justified in assuming that he must have maintained diaries and records of what he saw. But it is beyond the bounds of credibility that a place the size of Thatta could have been provided with so many centres of instruction. Even one hundred schools would have been excessive. The only inference that can reasonably be drawn from Hamilton's account is that Thatta had a large number of 'maktabs' and seminaries frequented by students and presided over by men learned in Islamic teaching.

Law's well-known work on the 'Promotion of Learning during Muhammadan Rule' is of very little assistance in respect of Sindh during Moghul days. Nor would it be wise to accept Law's wide generalizations about the enlightened educational policy of the Delhi Emperors. The evidence in fact does no more than show that as a general rule the Moghul Emperors were not insensible to the promotion of education and learning and that they and their nobles occasionally, and fitfully, helped to found certain important institutions and libraries. When Aurangzeb decreed that in Gujarat every year teachers should be appointed at the cost of the public exchequer and stipends be paid according to the recommendation of the Sadar and the tasdiq of the teacher, the grant made was small and only three moulvis were appointed, one at Ahmedabad, one at Patan and one at Surat and only forty-five students were given subsistence allowance (Mirat-i-Ahmadi 272). The Moghul Empire indeed was framed for quite another purpose than the propagation of learning. It is beyond all dispute that the proportion of the state revenues actively devoted to education through the Department of Alms, administered by the Imperial Almoner, the Sadr-us-Sadur, was very small indeed.

3 Hamilton, op. cit., in Pinkerton, Hamilton appears to have died about 1732 and is believed to have written his memoirs about the second decade of the eighteenth century.

Poets and learned men were encouraged at the court. But that is not to say that there was any recognised educational policy. Many of these poets were no more than courtly flatterers engaged in extolling the virtues of the prince in the usual Oriental style of hyperbole. The chief manner in which education was encouraged was by the bestowal in wakf of inams, jaghirs and grants to mosques and religious foundations. But many of these exhibitions of favour were the result of the religiosity of local rulers and not of the enlightenment of the Delhi throne. Law says pertinently 'While speaking of the schools and colleges of those days we should not lose sight of the educational work done by distinguished learned men teaching pupils in their houses. They supplemented the educational work done by the literary institutions and provided a field for post-collegiate studies.'[1] There is certainly no evidence that I have seen that would warrant the belief that a single educational institution in Sindh owed its origin to any act of an Emperor of Delhi.

Jahangir promulgated an ordinance that whenever a well do do man or a rich traveller died without any heir his property would escheat to the Crown and be utilized for building and repairing 'madressas', monasteries, etcetera. But we know of no instance in which Sindh benefited from these orders. The Moghuls themselves were fond of learning and books. Some of the Delhi Emperors were widely read and intelligent men, but it is more than doubtful whether they ever carried out consistently any comprehensive educational scheme amongst the subjects of their dominions. Indeed one of the sayings of Akbar recorded in the Ain is definitely retrograde. 'The prophets were all illiterate. Believers should therefore retain one of their sons in that condition'.[2] We shall, therefore, not be wrong in concluding that Sindh in Moghul days showed merely the operation of the Islamic educational system and was helped in no way except that in which education is encouraged by Islamic teaching. The chief support of the literary groups came from revenues granted in the form of inams to mosques

1. *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, p.164.

1. Sayings of Akbar in Ain, III.

and to 'maktabs' attached to mosques. Learning in any real sense was confined to small coteries of studious men whose chief stimulus towards self-improvement came from the religious doctrines in which they believed with high sincerity. The great mass of the people remained illiterate. Beyond the smattering of Arabic required for their religious devotions the common people had little acquaintance with the written word. But in an age when learning is rare the scholar attains a sort of sanctity which attaches to him a small band of admirers. It is mostly from these small nerve centres of thought that learning was transmitted in an imperfect way to the population at large.

Enough has been said to show that education and learning in Sindh followed the usual Muslim practice. This practice can be studied better in the accounts of those centres of Islamic learning like Cairo, Baghdad, Cordova, Samarkand or Bukhara of which descriptions are available. Primary and secondary courses of study both prevailed. The course of higher studies under the Muslim system shows many resemblances to the trivium and quadrivium of medieval scholasticism in Europe. This medieval system regarded learning more as a means to purely intellectual exercise or debating dexterity than as a commentary on the actual life of the day. Primary education was very hidebound. When the child began to speak he was taught the Muslim articles of faith, the words from the Quran *'Exalted is Allah, the King in truth: there is no God but He, the Lord of the stately throne of Heaven"* (xxii, 1170); the throne verse (ayat al kursi) ii. 256 and the last two verses of sura lix (surat al hasr). At seven began the systematic study of the Quran combined with instruction in important religious precepts and usages, the correct responses of the azan, the different kinds of washings and the prayers in the mosque and the procedure of joint prayer. This was accompanied by the writing on tablets or boards (takhti) and exercises in reading and writing in the Arabic script. Legends of the prophets and stories of holy men formed part of the regular course. Poetry was also

studied but all eroticism in poetry was strictly excluded. Burton has much to say on the system he found prevailing in Sindh. He mentions the importance attached to caligraphy and the five qualities which a good reed pen must possess: it must be sanhi (fine), sain(straight), salira (well pierced), surkha (red) and supak (well grown).[1]

Secondary or higher education also followed a well-defined course of study at 'madressas'. We do not know, however, if more than a few students carried their education so far in Moghul, Kalhoro and Talpur times. Burton has described fully the course of study. He learnt this by personal enquiry from one who had himself gone through the course. Students acquainted with the medieval university system will recognize the similarity of the course of study to that pursued in typical middle age universities in Europe. In the primary course the student had already learnt the simple form of the Arabic conjugations. The works studied were the Mizan-i-sarf by Lal Shahbaz, the famous scholar and saint of Sehwan. Then followed study of the Ajnas or Munshaib rules for the formation of the increased derivatives, and the Kisim-i-doyyum for the irregular verbs. Both these works were by Lal Shahbaz but were written in Persian. The next book to be read was the Akd, also by Lal Shahbaz, in Arabic and Persian mixed, dealing with the permutation of letters. After them came the Zubdat. Much of this part of the course was committed to memory either as it stood or by means of rhyming mnemonics. After this grounding in the dry structure of language the pupil next proceeded to Nahw (declension of the noun and pronoun) and went into the deeper study of Sarf, reading either the work of Mir Sayyid Ali Sharif or the Sarf-i-Zarradi composed in Persian and Arabic by the poet Jami. Nahw was then continued in more difficult works like the Nahw-izarari of Abul Hasan Ali, and then advanced to the study of logic (mantiq), where the chief works to be read were the Isaguji (Isagoge of Prophyry) translated into Arabic by Asir al din Abbasi; the Kalakuli, a commentary on the above; the Shamsiya, a book on dialectics by the poet Hafiz; and various commentaries. From logic and ele-

1. Burton: History of Sindh, p.396.

mentary dialectics the advanced student proceeded to higher dialectics and had then to study the authoritative works of the Hanafi theology, like the Hidayat, the Wilayat and similar books, and peruse some commentary on the Quran and the Ilm-i-hadis. Burton says that very few students advanced as far as to study rhetoric and those who did seldom proceeded beyond the text book called Talkhis and its commentaries the Mukhtasar and Mutawwal. The highest branches of study were the pronunciation, reading and chanting of the Quran, dialectic, prosody, medicine, the occult sciences of geomancy, astrology and divination by numbers, and philosophy. At all stages of this course a great strain was placed upon the memory and pupils were expected to learn long passages by heart. There does not seem to have been much inspiration or intelligence about the teaching and the hidebound nature of the course of study must have smothered originality, and indeed everything except subtlety in argument and adroitness in dialectic on topics that bore very little practical relation to the everyday life of the people. Learning was thus a kind of self-centered knowledge of limited scope, a closed science with fixed rules, the unfortunate student having for years to overtax his memory and devote his mental energies to such subjects as grammar, formal syntax, formal logic, dialectical argument and similar dry bones of study.

This peculiarity of Muslim learning in the special conditions of Sindh accounts fully for the reference with which men learned in this lore were held by the uneducated populace, who could not possible have understood the jejune formal ideas which occupied the minds of these erudite but narrowly-confined intelligences. While intellectualism in Islam has had its renaissance, it has never had a romantic revival, which in fact it would have resisted. The result has been to maintain till a very late day a purely scholastic attitude towards knowledge of God, life and human activity. In Sindh, which has never been distinguished for learning and could have had few chances in medieval times of maintaining anything like a Muslim university, the effect of this starved intellectualism was to atrophy much of what was learnt by only a few persons after

prodigious feats of memory and concentration. Nor have we any reason to think that the products of the learned men of Sindh challenged comparison with what was achieved in other and more enlightened parts of the Muslim world. It is quite certain that Shah Abdul Latif was not a learned man in the narrow scholastic sense. Nor should we be justified in assuming that he had more than a smattering of the higher education of his day. The works of Hafiz, Jalaluddin Rumi and Jami were, however, known in some fashion to the leading akhunds of his time. Shah Abdul Latif with his deep sense of poetry and his understanding of some of the more personal aspects of the Muslim conception of God and mankind's relation to Him, must have picked up enough Arabic and Persian to be able to realize better than his teachers the spirit of the Muslim theosophy preached by the great writers of Persia. In this he was typical of the best thought of his own and preceding generations. In Sindh this took the form of a simple-minded conviction of the tenets of a tolerant sufism. From this have flowed certain important consequences, namely the establishment of a Sufi school of thought, a more pantheistic conception of Islamic doctrine than prevails elsewhere, an absence of bitterness between Sunni and Shia, and a kind of rapprochement between the deeper mystical ideas of Muslim and Hindu thought. The last especially helps to explain the extraordinary fact that the typical Islamic mysticism of the Risalo is understood and loved in Sindh by Hindus as much as by Muslims.

It does not appear that the teaching profession has ever been held in any great respect in Sindh. Burton comments on the practice of giving perquisites to teachers to supplement their meagre earnings. The 'akhund' refused to start anything new without a fee. At the three great Ids of Bakr, Fitr and Barat the teacher used to write two or three couplets upon crudely ornamented paper. For this he received from four annas to a rupee in payment. These compositions were called 'Idis' and were hung upon the walls of the house. Teachers were seldom paid more than half a rupee by each pupil per month. In the time of the Talpurs Sindh possessed six 'madressas', at Sehwan, Trip-

pat near Sehwan, Kohra north of Sehwan, Matiari, Mohar or Walhari near Umarkot and Chothiyari on the Nara river. In this account of the Town and Port of Karachi in 1840, Captain Hart states 'Each scholar takes a handful of rice and a few sticks with him as a present to the master daily and a rupee or two is paid monthly by the parents. The Persian language is taught by the Mullas of whom ten or twelve have classes which generally assemble in the mosques. The children of those who intend them for employment in the service of the government are there instructed, the charged varying from a tunga to Rs.3 or 4 monthly, according to the progress made by the pupil; and on the completion of the child's education it is usual for the master to receive a present. . . . Muhammadan females are taught to read the Quran.'[1] Burton states, however, that a boy was nine years old before he began the systematic study of his own language in Sindhi. When he did the course of study was (1) the Nur Namo of Abdul Hashim, an easy religious treatise on the history of things in general before the creation of man, (2) the works of Makhdum Hashim beginning with the Tafsir, (3) tales in prose and verse, such as the adventures of Saiful or Lail-i-Majano, the adventures and sayings of celebrated saints of the golden age of Islam and books on the life and death of the Prophet. It is unlikely that conditions were any better in the ruder and rougher days of the Moghuls and Kalhora. The Sindhi language was much neglected as a medium of instruction except by Hindus, who used a non-Arabic script. The whole system was dull and deadening. It emphasized the exercise of the memory at the expense of the intelligence, a defect of vernacular teaching that has not yet been cured anywhere in India. These facts about education and learning in Sindh make still more remarkable the creation in the eighteenth century of the great Sindhi classic of Shah Abdul Ḷatif. They prove indeed the truth of the saying that the poet is born and not made.

If the poems of the Risalo have their origin partly in the expression of Muslim thought, they have another source in music

1. Government of Bombay Records. Selections, New Series, XVII, Part I, p.216.

and singing. The poems are due to the lyrical impulse. They are originally composed to be recited, intoned or sung to a musical accompaniment. This close connexion with music they still retain. Europeans have found much difficulty in understanding the music of India because it presents features which, superficially at any rate, differentiate it strikingly from the familiar music of western Europe. In addition Indian music has a religious and mythological background utterly out of keeping with the scientific structure of western music. Indian music is only now ceasing to partake of the character of a black art known to initiates alone and is still devoid of any kind of universal system of script notation. All these features of Indian music put it into a category which Europeans find difficult to appreciate, since music in the West has long since been emancipated from such trammels and has been reduced to the form of science, which anyone can learn if he has the skill and powers of application.

The difference between eastern and western music is, however, only a surface difference. The principles of music are the same everywhere. Research in Indian music has revealed its essentially primitive character. But this primitiveness in structure and content has not been dissociated from an amazing elaboration of detail after the Oriental fashion. Indian music is on much the same footing as the Sanskrit language, which is a primitive vehicle of expression overlaid by an enormous quantity of elaboration and complicated by artificial grammatical rules. The real truth is that Indian music is simpler than European music because it has become completely conventionalized on certain early and primitive lines which were deserted by European musicians centuries ago. These primitive lines have, however, been elaborated with a complexity of detail exactly similar to the intricacy of ornament found in the carvings of Hindu temples, or in the involved tracery of script writing used for decorative purposes. Music in India has in fact fallen under the same general influence as complicated the grammar and syntax of Sanskrit and the principles of Indian philosophy. These influences tended to make music a closed field of semi-secret lore within which generations of ingenious

and subtle minds have thought out a vast variety of permutations and combinations of a few simple originals. Thus while European music has shed itself of all modes except the major and minor scales, with a few straggling relics of earlier modes hardly used except in brief moments of expression, Indian music has continued to employ a large number of modes and has also retained and developed a system of musical intervals which make little appeal to the European ear. European music has concentrated on exploring the major and minor scales and has generally enhanced their significance by the systematic development of harmony, counterpoint and the application to musical instruments of the potentialities of the four basic kinds of human voice, the bass, the baritone, the tenor or alto and the soprano. Thus while rhythm and melody remain common to both Indian and European music, there is a vast divergence in the field of harmony, the chief glory of European music, which, though present, is still in a very rudimentary form in Indian music, and in the treatment of musical intervals. It is characteristic of musical modes that they employ different runs of notes for the expression of melody. As Indian music has many more modes than European music and as it has also been extremely conservative about the manner of employing these runs of notes, Indian music has a greater range of melodic possibility but has utterly failed to develop that richness which European music has lavished on its treatment of the two modes which, alone of all those it once possessed, it has deliberately retained. Indian music has furthermore suffered greatly from its remaining a closed system in the control of professional performers and musicians who have kept the practice of it by traditional methods in their own hands. As a result of the failure to develop harmony musical instruments in India are generally of a very simple type, quite incapable of producing the effects of such developed and intricate instruments as the organ, the piano, and the variety of instruments which when played together make possible orchestration on a grand scale.

These defects of Indian music are being gradually realized in India today. A strong movement has arisen to rescue music

from the hands of the professional musician or minstrel class who have hitherto preserved it as an almost magical field of their own, to introduce general scales of notation which will enable anyone to write down melodies and perform them for himself, and to explore the possibility of extending harmony in Indian music. But there is no unanimity of view in these matters. Thus while the professional minstrel, who is usually a person of poor education and is often indeed illiterate possessing merely a certain dexterity in performing on his simple instrument, has lost a great deal of the respect in which he used to be held, a general knowledge of music is still hindered by the absence of a common written notation. The taste of the public is moreover becoming debased by the adoption of the handblown harmonium tuned to the European major and minor scales, and also by the excruciating cacophonies of incompetent brass bands playing garbled versions of European tunes. These bands are employed to give an impression of opulent uptodateness at weddings and similar ceremonies once graced by the performance of genuine Indian music by proficient exponents of the minstrel class.

In the days of Shah jo Risalo this demoralization of musical taste had not set in. It was still possible to write poetry with the assurance that it would be accompanied musically in the manner intended by the poet. The minstrel was still a person commanding respect, despite his low social position. The disreputable character of the minstrel's private life was often responsible for his low social standing, for he commonly associated with persons who indulged in opium, bhang and other intoxicants capable of producing a kind of frenzied exuberance and his womenfold were engaged in the unedifying occupations of prostitution and nautch dancing. So uncritical was the public of those days that the mere dexterity of the performer and his capacity to produce on his sitar, sarangi or bina melodies, which only a member of his class could so perform, was sufficient to create in the minds of the listeners a belief that this music was a kind of mysterious and almost superhuman art closed to the bulk of mankind. For this nalive and childlike attitude of thought the vague sentimental mythology

which linked music with religion as one of the mysteries of grace and light was largely responsible. Music in fact was still a form of mumbo-jumbo. This primitive appraisement has appeared at all early stages and had not died out entirely in Europe in the middle ages. Shakespeare makes effective use of it in 'The Merchant of Venice'.

> 'There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest
> But in his motion like an angel sings
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims:
> Such harmony is in immortal souls,
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot heat it.'

The Sur Sorath in the Risalo is based on the same idea of the mystery and magic, the holy force, of music. The poem is interesting not only because it depicts the great power of the musician, 'the man of music', who by playing on his strings, can induce the king to yield up his head in willing sacrifice in sheer mystical abandonment, but also because it makes clear the relation believed to exist between music and immortal things. 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music', says Jessica in 'The Merchant of Venice', emphasizing the power of music to bring the mind to thinking of the deeper things that move the spirit of man. This attitude is typical of the musical influence that runs through the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif. Without an understanding of it the full force of the poetry cannot be apprehended. This message is not yet lost in the East where music, despite its modern debasement, is still, in popular esteem, regarded in some way as the handmaid of religion.

The poems of the Risalo are arranged according to their musical settings, though not all of them are named after the tunes to which they are sung. To understand this system of nomenclature we must consider for a moment some of the characteristics of Oriental music in India. While the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif is typically Muslim in sentiment and expression, the musical foundation owes little to Islam. The Ain-i-Akbari describes the music of Sindh as 'kami' (amatory). The raags and raaginis constitute a form of Hindustan music pure and simple. There is nothing essentially Muslim in them. The Arabic

chant song, the important influence in Muhammadan music, is quite different. This delighted in rhythm rather than in melody and was built up on the natural quantities of the syllables in the Arabic language. This chanting is heard in the intoning of the Quran in the mosques. The song music was different but that too depended upon correct rhythm and the beating of time upon the hand-drum. Monotony is, therefore, a characteristic of Muslim music. Ghazzali divides Arabic songs into religious pilgrim songs, war songs, songs of joy, love songs, and songs expressive of religious ecstasy. The religious significance of music is much stressed by this great Arabic writer. 'And I say that to God Most High belongs a secret consisting in the relationship of measured airs to the souls of man so that the airs work upon them with the wonderful working.. . . . The seventh kind of listening is the listening of him who loves God and has a passion for Him and longs to meet Him so that he cannot look upon a thing but he sees it in Him (whose perfection is extolled) and no sound strikes upon his ear but he hears it from Him and in Him.'[1] Here Ghazzali is speaking more of the metaphysic of music than of its structure. Indeed he connects the listening jto music with 'wajd', or the rapture and ecstasy of the Sufis. In a puritanical strain blasphemous and obscene poetry is barred and so are the poems extolling the beauty of any particular woman. Nor must music be listened to if it stirs up thoughts contrary to the teaching of the Quran. While it would not be right to hold that influences of this nature are absent from the musical attitude of Shah Abdul Latif, it would be more correct to say that the Sindhi poet, in using the musical accompaniment to emphasize the meaning of his verse, employed the musical forms of India, which were the most suitable vehicles for his purpose because they were indigenous and understood by all classes of the populace.

There is no distinctively Sindhi school of music. The music of Sindh is part of the musical heritage of Hindustan. The broad facts about Indian music have been made clear by Clements in his masterly 'Introduction to the Study of Indian music'. Indian

1. Emotional Religion in Islam as affected by Music and Singing. Translated by D.B. Macdonald, J.R.A.S., 1901, p.229.

music belongs to two great groups, the Hindustani prevalent in the north and west of India and in the Deccan, and the Karnatic prevalent in the south and east. 'Many scales', says Clements, 'are common to both and the general aspect of the two systems is apparent from the scales which are first taught to beginners. In the south it is a chromatic scale. In Hindustani music it is called the Raga Bhairava, with semitones between the first and second, third and fourth, fifth and sixth and seventh and eighth degrees.'.[1]

The Hindu theory of music serves the present day forms of melody types (ragas) through (1) grammas, (2) murchanas, scales of seven notes for the string called the murchana of the note chosen, (3) jatis which introduced a drone accompaniment, fixed final notes, vadis and semivadis, and (4) gramma ragas. Into the technicalities of this process of development it is unnecessary to enter here. Indeed to do so would be irrelevant to the present purpose. The point of the matter is that the ragas developed in this manner from the melodic schemes into which all the tunes of Hindustan's music fall. The classification of these melodic schemes follows a highly faniful system which has been described by many authors but by none so clearly as the famous early Orientalist, Sir William Jones. 'The different position of the two semitones in the scale of seven notes gives birth to seven primary modes, and as the whole series consists of twelve semitones, every one of which may be made a modal note or tonic, there are in nature (though not universally in practice) twenty-seven other modes which may be called derivative.. . . .The Hindu arrangement is elegantly formed on the variation of the Indian year and the association of ideas, a powerful auxiliary to the ordinary effect of modulation. The modes in this system are deified and as there are six seasons in India, namely two springs, summer, autumn and two winters, an original Rag, or God of the Mode, is conceived to preside over a particular season. Each principal mode is attended by five Raginis, or Nymphs of Harmony. Each has eight sons or Genii of the same divine art: and each rag with his family is appropriated to a distinct season in which alone his mel-

1. Clements' Introduction to the Study of Indian Music. p.2.

ody can be sung or played at prescribed hours of the day or night'.[1] There is thus a great deal of artificiality and mythological make-believe hampering the artistic development of the art of music in India, confining it to conventional channels and limiting particular melodic forms to particular times and particular purposes only. Musicians in consequence are restricted to certain definite notes only, namely those permitted in the modal form, in the expression of any melodic idea. Furthermore, since the melodic forms have become deified and are represented in the religious art in stereotyped ways as gods and goddnesses with special powers, the whole system has tended to be identified with religion and the practice of the art has been confined in the typical Hindu manner to castes of performers. The poems of the Risalo are all set to melodic forms of this rigid character. Most of the musicians in Sindh have been Hindus and not Mussulmans. Possibly in this circumstance may be found another reason why the Islamic poetry of Shah Abdul Latif exercises so strong a spell over the non-Muslim inhabitants of the land. While the thought may be Islamic, the musical forms in which the poems are sung are part of the Hindu heritage of India.'

The poems of the Risalo are set to raags and raginis of the generic types described. These types have of course many local variations. Many of the modal raaginis to which some of the surs are sung are Sindhi variants of Hindustani generic forms. In his commentary on Shah Abdul Latif, Mirza Kalich Beg has classified the raags and raaginis according to the system of Indian music. He finds six forms of raag, namely Bharava, Malakus, Sri, Megh, Hindol and Dipak with their accompanying raginis, 'sons' and 'associated relatives', extending to a very considerable number. Those who are interested in this topic may be referred to the writings jof Mirza Kalich Beg.[2] The subject is a technical one and has no relevance to the poetic worth of the Risalo itself. I have mentioned it here merely with the object of showing how important the musical influence was in the formation of the poems. Of the twenty seven

1. Works, Vol. XIII, pp.312-14.

2. Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, pp. 175 sqq.

separate poems in the Muntakhab all but a few are named after the musical modes directly traceable to the musical system of India. The few exceptions to this general rule are poems like Sohini, Sasui Abri, Momul Rano, Lilan Chanesar and Khohari which are named after the subject matter. But even in these cases the musical accompaniment will be found to fall into some melodic form suitable to the type of subject matter, the time of the year or the time of day when the song should be sung.

There is nothing distinctive in the music of Sindh. The instruments employed are chiefly the ektar, the sitar, the sarangi, the tambur, and the various kinds of pipes and drums employed elsewhere in India. The bina, or vina, is hardly ever seen. The professional musicians are drawn mostly from the ministrel class, which is held in low esteem. There are many capable amateur performers. Doubtless there have always been such, because Sindh has long had a reputation for proficiency in musical execution prevailing amongst all classes. Burton has remarked of the poetry of the countryside that 'it is much more various and valuable than the prose and yields not in importance either to the Marathi or the original compostions in the Hindi and Braj dialect. . . . . Its poetry is not without its charm. To a great variety of expression it unites terseness of idiom with much freshness and some originality of idea and language. . . . The favourite figure is alliteration and this combined with omission of the casal affixes and of other such prosaic appendages gives a very distinct and peculiar rhythm'[1] The people are very fond of music and singing to which the natural rhythm of the language offers much aid. Of the peculiar native form of poetical and musical compostion Burton cites the 'fatehnamo' or song of battle composed by Langahs and resembling to vigour the productions of the old Arab poets, the 'kafi' or 'wai', generally amatory, the 'baita', or couplets sung to the tambur or guitar, the 'dohad' accompanied on the 'duhad' or kettledrum, and the 'sanyaro', or amorous missive, sung to the music of the nai or pipe and particularly popular amongst the wilder clan people.

1. History of Sindh, p. 77.

# SHAH ABDUL LATIF OF BHIT

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The Islamic world is rich in great religious personalities, mainly poets, who have spoken the mystic thoughts in artistic verses or in simple folk songs, and from the coast of the Atlantic upto the Indian Sub-continent these poets have made an important contribution to the development of the folk languages: the Turkish, the Persian, the Pushto and the Bengali and many other languages are indebted for their higher development to those, who untiringly preached and sung to their countrymen the secret of God's love, the devotion to the Almightly and unspeakable wonderful Beloved.

Also in Sindh-that province situated at the lower part of the Indus, which was since 711 under Islamic Rule, we meet a mystic genius, whose poems are on the lips of every Sindhi even today.

It is Shah Abdul Latif, son of a mystic born in 1689, not far from the present Hyderabad, Sindh. During his growth he wandered with a group of Yogis through deserts and over mountains, visited the holy places and settled at Bhit, where surrounded by a host of students and disciples, he died in 1752. He is not the first who has written mystic poetry in his mother tongue, Sindhi, but in his Risalo for the first time a great and artistic poem has been created, which captivates every reader immediately. In this work Shah Abdul Latif took the old stories and sagas which were alive on the shores of the riv-

er Indus, made them the foundation of his meditations giving them a mystic idea. Out of the simple stories which are presumed to be well known, there rises a religious interpretation of the events, often embellished with verses from the Qoran in the original Arabic.

We follow the loving Sohni who every night wishes to see island where her beloved shepherd lives till one night her sister-in-law replaces the vessel to which Sohni clings on her mighty crossings with an unbaked one and so causes the death of the lovers and we hear Sohni's complaint:

"In the terrible floods of the river the mighty crocodiles gigantic alligators in the stream so many that you can't count them, I do not find strength any more in my body, separated from you O' playmates,
Prince, Beloved, let me reach the goal of my journey".

Sohni becomes the Soul which seeks to be united with the divine Beloved but finds it only in death.

And it is the same with Sasui, whose brothers-in-law have kidnapped her husband while she was lying in "careless slumber". Day in, day out she is running on bleeding feet through the deserts searching while finally she finds the Beloved in herself and the angel of death also his features.

Or we follow Marui who has been kidnapped by a king and brought to his castle, where in unending faithfulness she is waiting for her relatives to bring her back to her poor but beloved fatherland. This poem, being a glorification of patriotic love, at the same time symbolises the eternal longing of the soul for her divine Home, from which all outward riches and glitter cannot divert her mind. And as Shah Abdul Latif is making this one and many other sagas the starting point of his mystical flights of thoughts so he has also depicted the lonely woman who is standing at the bank of the river Indus, waiting for her husband who has sailed to foreign countries, or the dangers of a sea-voyage, the camel rides at night and life of the wandering yogis. The rain which makes the earth bear fruit again after a period of drought, refreshes man and animal and gives cheaper corn, becomes for him personification of the di-

vine Beloved.

"Also today wind blows from North, the cukoo sings his song,
The peasant walks behind the plough, the shepherded gladly watches his flock,
My beloved today wears the dress of the cloud.
Today also wind blows from North, so black and heavy the wall of clouds,
Big drops were falling, and every branch was blossoming,
The desert winds were vanishing, now cattle still the burning thirst,
The cows are grazing, fat, on the land and to their herd return.
Also today wind blows from North, the cloud is black like his hair
And dressed like him in red the lightnings glittering
The friend, who has been far away, the rain brings near to me!"

The whole world is for the poet significant of the divine beauty, everywhere he sees the marvels of the Creator who is one and all:

It is a castle with a thousand doors, with windows impossible to count,
Wherever you turn to gaze, you will see the Lord in his glory."

This divine Beloved, the source and the end of all beauty, is the wonder doctor who heals all sufferings; but the lover has to be prepared to renounce everything for him and to endure unbearable sufferings-not in vain is the famous Arabian mystic Husain Bin Mansur Hallaj who was executed in Baghdad in 922, spiritual leader of Shah Abdul Latif (as well as of numerous other mystic poets). In complete devotion, man succeeds in the union with God, utters the genuine inner prayer, and recognises that all is God:

"He is all exalted high, He is of the deepest beauty
He is the image of the beloved, He is all charm,
He becomes Master, Disciple, Dance of all dreams,
And from the wreath of all things become known to us."

Shah Abdul Latif has never tired to sing of the unity of all being; the heroines of his poetry are convinced that from the beginning of the Universe, when no angel nor human being was as yet created, fate had destined them to search for the divine Beloved, and they become unforgettable symbols of the never ending love.

These deep and pure sentiments, combined with the simple and melodious verses, extract a very strong influence on the heart of every Sindhi, and the beautiful tomb of the great saint-singer is still a place of pilgrimage for educated and uneducated, for everyone who is ready to be moved by his poetry which is as fresh as it has been 200 years ago.

# SHAH: HIS POSITION AMONG THE WORLD POETS

Allama I.I. Kazi

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Allama I.I. Kazi

Our times boast of internationalism and, no wonder either. It was introduced religiously, officially, fourteen hundred years ago. But at heart we all remain at the utmost nationalists. The irony is that the Quran's religion itself has been transformed into a kind of nationalism. The necessary consequence is that "mine" and "thine" are still in full flourish. Every one boast of one's own poets. That would not be bad if one did not run down others to exalt one's own. But the truest aesthetic insight is still lacking, and beauty is not admired because it is beautiful but because the object belongs to 'me'.

In judging Shah Abdul Latif, therefore, we are not going to use the criteria that our own hearts suggest, but we are using those that have been brought into existence by the modern world and are well recognized and admitted in the literary world today.

**First Test**

It is more that one hundred years ago that Carlyle gave up writing verse in favour of prose, and cried out that if Vedas, Bible and Quran were written in prose it was good enough for him, and added for the benefit of the versifier that unless his verse could be sung it could never amount to poetry and it was hardly worth writing.

*By courtesy: The Sindh University Gazette, Hyderabad.

Now let us apply this criterion to the works of most of the greatest poets of the world that we know- we don't mind whether it be Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, or even Walt Whitman. Will they stand this test?

Before we decide whether they will, let us see whether they have stood the test. Has every line of their creation been sung in their own country? We do not worry whether they are singable at present. The modern man will laugh and say: 'Well theirs is not all lyrical poetry but other kinds of poetry too which nobody expects to be sung'. That is not how Carlyle looked at it.

Latif never thought of his poems as 'works' because they did not entail labour. He created them in ecstatic moods when no work as work was possible. So he called them *Paigham* (message) and every line, without that he should have suggested, has been sung by those who understood the verses and also by those who cannot understand them at all: sung they have been and no one can stop people from singing them. This verifies the assertion of Carlyle that there is a kind of poetry that every man feels like singing rather than reciting or reading, because of its inherent music.

One Arab writer describes poetry as 'music expressed through harmony of words'- as what we call music is expressed by harmony of sounds- thereby emphasising that the musical quality inherent in the lines is *sine qua non* of poetry. So this is the first test of a great poet as admitted by every one. Anyone may apply that touchstone and see the result for himself.

Some one might suggest that consideration of the volume of verse would be necessary. Even there, Latif's work, as far as the bulk is concerned, will compare favourably with most of the great poets. There are practically 36 dramatic incidents and even there, except Shakespeare and Goethe, no other poet will come up to him so far as the bulk is concerned.

**Second Test**

The second test that the modern critic generally applies is: can one replace words in the lines of the poet to improve the lines, make them more expressive or add to their beauty? Ben

Johnson when once told that Shakespeare never corrected his verses while he laboured to correct his work more than ten times, replied that he wished that Shakespeare corrected it twenty times. Time has proved that the work which was corrected ten times may still be correctable, but most of the spontaneously produced verses of Shakespeare defy correction and, in most of the lines, alteration of a single word would destroy the harmony of the verse itself. Anyway, it will be deterioration and not improvement. Very few poets, as far as larger bulk of their work is concerned, will stand this test while in Latif to alter one word in any line is to alter the notes in a melody. It entirely kills it. It becomes jarring. No word can be replaced or displaced. This applies to the entire bulk of his creation. It is not every line but every word, and the way it is placed, that is of essence, and is unchangeable.

No poet of the world can stand this test as far as the entirety of his work is concerned. Great many lines of Shakespeare have been altered and supposed to have been improved, leaving other poets aside. So this is the second test that the greatest modern European critics apply to find out the genuineness of a poetical work. These two should be quite enough to decide the place of our poet in the galaxy of the world poets.

**Third and Final Test**

Now the third, the final, the greatest, and the unfailing test that profound criticism has devised in the last resort to decide the place of a poet. That is, the use of the medium through which the poet express himself. Milton is supposed to have used 8000 words and Shakespeare 16000 words of the English language. That is one way of judging the compass of expression, without considering the suitability of the use. But that is not the way to apply this test. Can English language be made to express ideas in the sixteenth century beyond the limits that Shakespeare could extend it to? In other words, the utmost use that a language can be put to as far as the expression is concerned, is the criterion. No man could have dreamt or dared to express through Elizabethan English what Shakespeare did. That holds good in the case of Dante as well as Goethe. But the limits which these poets reached are, except Shakespeare, not

exceptional as what the Sindhi Poet did.

The language of the eighteenth-century Sindh made itself pliant and capacious in the hands of Latif. One can hardly recognize that it is the language ordinarily spoken at that period in Sindh. A dialect as some would call it, Sindhi becomes one of the grandest and the most expressive languages when plied by this great poet. We can hardly recognize or realize that his medium is that simple provincial dialect. So the last and the most unfailing test of the poet that the great European critics have all agreed to be the best of tests, sets the crown on the head of Latif.

The three criteria that we have spoken of are not ours but of the most advanced peoples of the world, and it is a simple process to find out that no poet of the world except Latif, completely answers to them.

We are not thinking here of those mystic depths and skyey-heights, the sense and the sensibilities of a poet, or a divine singer- that is quite another tale. We do not here even mention how much of the light it is capable of throwing on 'life' itself. Or to come nearer home, how much of the Quran it includes and clarifies. We do not institute a comparison with Rumi about whose Mathnavi it was said: 'It is Quran in Persian language'.

All these matters are worthy of attention of the scholars and volumes could be written on them. Let the world see, if it has eyes and their eyes are not covered by hide-bound nationalism.

# SHAH ABDUL LATIF

H. T. Sorley

# SHAH ABDUL LATIF *

H. T. Sorley

I have written very fully elsewhere on Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit a volume of detailed scholarship. This is not the place for any exhaustive commentary on the merits of this great Sindhi poet of the eighteenth century, who lived in the small village of Bhit, which means "sandhill", near the little town of Hala in the Hyderabad district of Lower Sindh. He is a natural poet of Sufi leanings, that is to say, he is a poet of Islamic mysticism and his message cannot be fully understood without some idea of what Islamic mysticism is. In the dedication of my book on Shah Abdul Latif, which is to the People of Sindh, I have touched on some of the qualities of Shah Abdul Latif as a poet.

"No might is here of Rumi's verse.

No Jami's soul wrapt music swings.

No high-tuned note of Hafiz' wit.

Within your humble minstrel rings.

And yet! strange paradox it be,

That not less searching is the calm,

The simple music of his lays,

Than wise, deep utterance of Islam"

Shah Abdul Latif after two hundred years he died in 1782 is

* Musa Purvagans. _ Aberdeen University Press.

still the Burns of Sindh; known affectionately to all by familiarity with his verses which are repeated at mushairas and broadcast from the Pakistan radio from time to time. As I have remarked elsewhere "In Sindh his poems are held in such universal and popular esteem as is accorded only to poetry which has successfully interpreted the most intimate thoughts and the sincerest feelings of a people." In my opinion Shah Abdul Latif is the greatest poet which the country that is now called Pakistan has produced. That he is not the national poet of Pakistan is due to historical and political reasons which are quite divorced from considerations of literary excellence. Another poet is today the "national poet" of Pakistan. But that is another story. Future generations, after national fervour has found its settlement in the full process of time, will have no doubt as to the comparative merits as poets of Shah Abdul Latif, and Iqbal. For the moment I am concerned with placing Shah Abdul Latif, or "Shah" as he is affectionately called by Sindhis today, in his place in the procession of the wandering muse through two and a half milennia of waxing and waning moons. To me it seems clear that of all the poets from whose works I am offering translations now "Shah" is the greatest. (For this reason I have given a fuller selection from his work than from the achievements any of others.)

No one can read his poetry without being conscious at once that here is something really great: here is beauty expressed with the utter frankness of sincerity, without conceits, collaborations or pomposity, which are the common faults of all Oriental poets from the time of the great Persians, who are masters of them all. In "Shah" are set forth in sheer simplicity the feelings of reverence, adoration and humility, feelings which are the base of all religion and essential to the highest qualities of poetry. Here there is no clever intellectualism. There could not be. The man was not educated by any standard that would pass muster today. It is doubtful to what extent he was fully literate. Yet these wonderful poems were poured forth without effort and collected and compiled by his followers. For, after the Sindhi fashion of reference for Sayids, reputed in Sindh to be all descendants from the family of

The Prophet, he was accounted a holy man in his own right.

Two great classes of languages have enriched the civilised world, exclusive of the portion of the earth where the Chinese culture has prevailed. These are the Semitic languages and the Aryan languages. In the poetry of Ibn Zaidun we have seen the flowering of the Muslim genius in the heyday of Muslim success, through the majestic language of Arabic. In Ibn Zaidun there is little that can be ascribed to anything but the pure genius of the Semites. With Shah Abdul Latif we witness something different. He wrote seven hundred years later then Ibn Zaidun and in the India of the Moghul Empire, instead of in Cordovite Spain, then under full Muslim domination, and drawing little from outside the realm of Muslim learning, religion and sensitivity. Sindhi is one of the great Aryan languages of India, like Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Oriya and Bengali. But it is a peculiar example of its kind because, owing to the fact that as Sindh was the first conquest of the Muslims in India, three hundred years before the regular invasions of Màhmud of Ghazni which commenced the Muslim conquest of Upper India later extended to almost the whole of the subcontinent except the very extreme south, Sindh has been a Muslim land uninterruptedly since A.D. 712. In that year one of the youngest of military conquerors, Muhammad Bin Qasim, a youth of nineteen years and a military genius, defeated the ruling dynasty of Brahmans and made himself complete master of the country as far as Multan. The Sindhi language is derived from one of the "outer band" of Prakrits which developed from the break-up of spoken Sanskrit. To understand the process that took place, one must think of Sanskrit as the centre of a big wheel which rayed out in all directions: the local variants of the Sanskrit at the outer edges differing from those nearer the hub. Sindhi was one of the languages that sprang from a Prakrit almost as far away as it could be from the original centre in the heart of Aryavarta in Bihar, and the country of the great Hindu places of worship like Benares, Patna and Muttra. Now this pure Aryan language has, since the Muslim conquest in the early eighth century A.D., been permeated by Arabic and later by Persian elements which over centuries

have done to Sindhi what Norman French and Anglo-Saxon did to English; they formed a compact fully-developed language out of utterly diverse elements. So thorough has been the Arabic penetration of Sindhi that Sindhi alone of all the Aryan languages of India has the pronominal suffixes, which are characteristic of Arabic and Hebrew and have, through Muslim influence in Persia, also become fixed in Persian. Furthermore, in Sindhi, though the language is Aryan, very many indeed of the commonest words used daily are of Arabic and not of Sanskritic origin. So it is that Shah Abdul Latif, writing in Sindhi in the eighteenth century A.D. represents a fusion of Semitic and Aryan language and thought which is unique in the India sub-continent. It is doubtless this which explains the extraordinary fact that Sindh Hindus are, or rather were (for most of them have now left Sindh) as great admirers of the mysticism of Shah Abdul Latif as the Muslims are. Indeed much of the literary commentary on "Shah" has been the work of erudite Hindu writers.

Shah Abdul Latif took the village folk-tales which the mothers sing to their children in their cradles and turned them into subtle psychological poems shot through with the deep intricacies of Sufi philosophy, as the colours shine in watered silk. Shah Abdul Latif is a poet in direct line from the master poets of Persia, Jalaluddin Rumi and Jami, that is, he is one of the great poets of the world. Though he uses much of the conventional phraseology of sufistic thought he is entirely original in his treatment of his subject matter. His purely religious poems, of which there are several exquisite examples in the "Risalo", can be compared only with the most moving of mystical Christian hymns. The poem "Live on, O Sweet One, live" or the perfectly lovely poem on "The Joy of Beloved" takes one back at once to the fervours of St: Ambrose, or St. Bernard, or, in modern times, to the ecstatic reverence found in Newman's "Praise to the Holiest in the Height" or Harriet Auber's superb "My blest Redeemer ere he breathed his tender last farewell." This kind of poetry is on a place altogether higher than that of the clever intellectual who can express subtle thoughts clearly and well, but without the depth of feeling

that makes the difference between the ordinary and the sublime. The poems which I have included in this selection give a good idea of Shah Abdul Latif's range, his mystical absorption of a pure Islamic kind, and of his lyrical excellence. To me he is the most worthy poet in the whole of the present selection. His poetry, like all Sindhi verse, is completely lyrical and meant to be intoned or sung, as in fact it always is. The East has not yet divorced poetry from its natural origin in recitative and song. The existence of mushairas all over Pakistan today is proof of that fact. If it is questioned, the doubter has only to go to the shrine of the poet at Bhit Shah and hear for himself.

# SHAH LATIF AND RUMI

Shamsul-Ulema Dr. U. M. Daudpota

# SHAH LATIF AND RUMI*

Shamsul-Ulema Dr. U. M. Daudpota

To pose a subject like 'Shah Latif and Rumi' challenges a comparison between the two poets, who are poles apart from the point of view of their times and milieu. It is just like putting Ibsen against Shakespeare or Marlowe against Goethe. There could be no comparison between Shah Latif the poet of rustic Sindh, and Jalaluddin Rumi, to whom might be applied Dante's phrase regarding Homer that 'He flies over poets like an eagle'.

Rumi has been acclaimed by Dr. Nicholson as 'the greatest mystical poet of any age', and Hermann. Ethe before him considered him to be 'the greatest pantheistic writer of all ages'. This is not a hollow exaggeration, and it would indeed be unfair to compare Shah to Rumi, whose range and height are both inaccessible to the ordinary rung of poets. Shah is certainly incomparable in his own sphere, so far as Sindhi poetry is concerned. He has drunk deep at the Pierian spring of the native Muse, and has not been affected by foreign influences. It is indeed amusing when we read the statements of scholars like Trumpp, Qalich Beg, Gurbakhhani and Sorley that Shah's mystical poetry was largely influenced by Rumi. Hafiz and Jami, Shah's form of verse is absolutely his own, and its content is no less original. He has rather taken a leaf from his great predecessors like Qazi Qazan, Shah Karim, Lutfullah Qadiri, Shah Inayat and Miyan Isa.

* Read before the P.E.N. (Pakistan Centre) Session, Karachi on 15-12-1953.

## Similarity of Ideals

Here and there we may catch glimpses of Rumi and others in his thought, but that does not mean that he has consciously borrowed his ideas from them. The language of mystics all over the world is non-existent and they will not study the unreal; like the compass they circle ever round a point, on which their thoughts, actions, and very being depend: they cannot stray away from their course any more than a star can leave its orbit. Hence all mystical writings are the record of one spiritual experience and are pervaded by a single overpowering emotion. This accounts for the similarity of ideas and diction used by the mystical poets all over the world.

Like Rumi, Shah has no system. His thoughts are expressed at random, the gems being jumbled with gypsum. Nor does he possess any technique about mystical terms, which was formulated by the famous Andalusian mystic Ibnul-Arabi (1165-1240), the propounder of Pantheistic philosophy in Islam. It is quite likely that the entire bulk of Shah's poetry has not come down to us, so that we may change our opinion. The Risalo in its present form was compiled by his disciples- from their memories, after the prototype was drowned in the Lake of Kirar, and does not possess any unity of thought. As regards the ripeness of his verse and the richness of its content, we must remember that Sindh was itself the home of eminent Sufis and Shah's poetry must have been impregnated by their ideas. Its smoothness and music may be explained by the fact that unlike other religious mystics, who preceded him, Shah was a singer par excellence, in whose hands the coarse form of verse became smooth and mellifluous. As Dr. Sorley says, Shah Abdul Latif was the first great exponent of the imaginative use of the Sindhi Language. He expressed in his own tongue ideas that were the current thought of his time.

## Lyrical Genius

The genius of Shah is essentially lyrical and it is in his love poetry that mystical thoughts are to be found. The central theme in all stories is the separation of the Lover from the Be-

loved, the Lover's wanderings in quest of the Beloved, and their ultimate re-union, often after their physical death. The pursuit is ceaseless and unending, ever exciting the seeker to greater efforts to achieve that far-off goal:

The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow.

He says:

Let me search and search, and not find;
Good that I did not meet the beloved!
Lest the longing in the heart be quenched by such a union.

and again:

Even if the Beloved were to meet on the Resurrection day,
It would be too soon.
It is after this that the tidings of union are heard.

Dr. Sorley has not versified such passages of deep mystic meaning, probably because they are not to be found in the Muntakhab. His verse translations are extremely fine although they do not bring out the pithiness, harmony and music of the original. I shall sometimes quote him.

How is then eternal life to be attained? By dying to yourself before death, Says Shah:

By dying live that thou mayst feel
The beauty of the Beloved. Thou
Wilt surely do the righteous thing
If thou wilt follow this advice.
They who died before their death
By death are not in death subdued.
Assuredly they live who lived
Before their life of living was.
Who lived before their living was
From age to age will live for age.
They will not die again who died
Before the dying came to them.

## Islamic Spirit

Shah is a Muslim first and last and the mysticism of the Risalo is thoroughly Islamic in spirit. He stresses the unity of God in various ways:

God who is One no rival hath..
Herein of Him the Oneness is,
And righteousness of Truth. But who
Embraced false Two-ness lost indeed
The savour and salt of life.

Yet this 'unity' is manifested in 'diversity' without affecting the oneness which is the essence of God, like the numerous waves on the surface of the ocean, while it remains undisturbed and serene. All things- man, beast, birds and trees- proclaim with one voice that they are He and lose their existence in Him and suffer crucifixion like Mansur the Carder.

After this Pantheistic outburst, he speaks of the Prophet, who was the only aspostle of God, who established His unity. He wonders why mankind stray away from such a wonderful personality and bow before others.

He is the One, Who hath no Peer.
Confess ye this. In heart of heart
Acknowledge ye this Praised One, Who
The Causer of the causes is.
Why go ye then and bow yourselves
In front of others, why go ye?

He then hints at the Recite of the Prophet Muhammad, more fully treated by Khwaja Muhammad Zaman:

Call him not the lover, nor the Beloved,
Call him not the creator, nor the created
Tell this mystery to one who is free from imperfection.

The Prophet was on the highest horizon of human perfection, bordering on divinity, like the twilight, which is neither day nor night.

There is no limit to man's spiritual advancement; it is infinite, provided he can annihilate himself in the true Being:

No beginning nor end has Thy slave
Those who knew the beloved were lost for ever.
Non-existence by its grace
Raised the slave to lofty place
Who secret are in their heart
Are secret in outward part.
Here how can mystery be told
Which the Beloved doth enfold?

# IMPACT OF RUMI ON SHAH ABDUL LATIF

By: Dr. Afzal Iqbal

# IMPACT OF RUMI ON SHAH ABDUL LATIF

By: Dr. Afzal Iqbal

There is a striking similarity between the thirteenth century of Rumi's Persia and the eighteenth century of Shah Abdul Latif's Sindh.

Rumi's time was a period of political turmoil, economic insecurity and the general decline of Islam. The Sunnah in Rumi's days had become for the Sufi an ideogram of mere Platonic importance, for the theologian and the legist, a mere system of laws which had no relevance to life; and for the Muslim masses nothing but a hollow shell. The world of Islam was tottering in the 13th century. While on the one hand Christendom was engaged in waging a Crusade against the forces of Islam, the Mongols, on the other, were busy devastating the fabric of Muslim social order. The Muslim Empire crashed under the weight of the Mongol invasion. There was a cry of horror throughout prostrate Islam. Baghdad, the seat of the Caliphate, resisted but for a week.

The plight of Islam was somewhat similar in the Shah's days. Shah Abdul Latif was a young man of eighteen years when Aurangzeb died. The mighty Mughal Empire was tottering. He was fifty years old when Nadir Shah sacked Delhi and made Sindh tributary to Persia. He was fiftyeight when Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded Delhi and Sindh became subject to Kabul. Five years later the Shah died at the age of sixty-three. Six years after his death, the second factory of the East India Company was established at Thatta. The British chal-

lenge was soon to submerge India in a cataclysm which was worse than the Crusades and the Mongol invasion of Persia. While Rumi was literally driven out of his home in Balkh to seek refuge in Qonya, Shah Abdul Latif founded a village of his own on a Bhit and lived there in peace and prestige. Bhit like Qonya was a haven in the midst of turbulence, tyranny and turmoil. The Shah was scion of a notable Syed family of Matiari and lived in a society in which Syeds, by virtue of mere birth, occupied privileged position. In his Folklore of Northern India, Crookes gives us a glimpse of this society.[1]

"There were miracle-working tombs. There was the canonization of reputed holy men. There was the personal worship of Pirs. There was the institution of caste-saints. There was the working of miracles by holy men. There were nine-yard tombs. There was the efficacy of holy relics for the cure of diseases..... and there was the universal use of talismans, especially by the peasant class, as a protection against the evil eye and all kinds of human ills. The powers ascribed to saints were immense- causing the birth of children, especially in cases of barrenness and old age; curing complaints and diseases like madness, deafness, dumbness, blindness; exercising dominion over birds, beasts and fishes, breaking through chains, fetters, doors and walls; living without food, drink or sleep; ..... stilling storms and changing females into male children".

But Abdul Latif was not such a Syed. "His whole life was one of continence and abstemiousness, then sufficiently rare amongst the race from which he sprang."[2] He lived with decorum and dignity. He cut himself from the old ties and founded a village at Bhit (Sandhill) which he helped to build with his own hands.

The poet spent about three years with Hindu ascetics but his basic source of inspiration remained the Quran and the Mathnawi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi. One of his modern biographers states with some authority that the Quran, the Mathnawi and the Sindhi verses of Shah Karim, the poet's great-great-grandfather, were constantly in his hands. The confidants and amanuenses of the Shah were Tamar and Hashim, while Chelepi and Zarkob performed the same function for Rumi. Rumi

wrote in Persian while he lived for the larger part of his life in Anatolia. His father migrated from Balkh to Qonya while he was still a young man. It was Yunus Emre who carried his message in Turkish to the masses in Turkey. In the process of this transmission the core of the message was preserved but not its beauty, poetry and power.

Shah Abdul Latif uses Sindhi with great skill, local eloquence and originality to carry Rumi's message to his own people in their peculiar milieu in Sindh. He is not conspicuous for any great originality of thought of his own but he expresses extremely well the core of the metaphysical philosphy of Islam. He could he correctly called Rumi's messenger to Sindh. He articulates the Master's message to the masses.

**Music in Mysticism**

According to Pythagoras, sounds are accidents produced in substances by the movement and permeation of the soul. Since the celestial spheres revolve and the planets and stars are moved, it follows that they must have musical notes and expressions with which God is glorified, delighting the souls of the angels, just as in the corporeal world our souls listen with delight to melodies and obtain relief from care and sorrow.

Rumi says:

"Hence philosphers have said that we received these harmonies from the revolution of the (celestial) sphere, (And that) this (melody) which people sing with pandore and throat is the sound of the revolution of the sphere:[3]

پس حکیمان گفته اند این نحها از دوارِ چرخ بگرفتیم ما
بانگِ گرد شهائے چرخست این که خلق می سرایندش بطنور و بحلق

Sama, according to Rumi, is the food of lovers. Says he:

"Therefore Sama is the food of lovers (of God), since therein is the phantasy of composure.

From (hearing) sounds and pipings the mental phantasies gather a (great) strength; nay, they become forms (in the imagination). The fire of love is made keen by melodies, just as the

fire (ardour) of the man who dropped walnuts into the water).[4]

بس غذائی عاشقان آمد سماع  که درو باشد خیالِ اجتماع
قسوتی گیرد خیالاتِ ضمیر  بلک صورت گردد از بانگ و صفیر
آتشِ عشق از نواع گشت تیز  آنچنانک آتشِ آن جوز ریز

Rumi explains the ecstatic state in which a Sufi sings and dances:

> "(Holy) men dance and wheel on the (spiritual) battle-field: they dance in their own blood. When they are freed from the hand (dominion) of self, they clap a hand; when they escape from their own perfection, they make a dance.
>
> From within the musicians strike the tambourine, at their ecstasy the seas burst into foam."[5]

رقص اندر خونِ خود مردان کنند  رقص و جولان بر سرِ میدان کنند
چون جهند از نقص خود رقصی کنند  چون رهند از دستِ دستی زنند
بحرها در شورِ نشان کت می زنند  مُطر با نشان از درون دف می زنند

And this is no theorising. Rumi, the great scholar who had given a stern ruling against poetry, dance and music discarded his gown of learning and danced publicly in front of a goldsmith's shop in Qonya and discovered a kindred soul in Salahuddin Zarkob. The spark that was kindled by Shams-i-Tabriz completely transformed the scholar. Every ghazal in the Diwan-i-Shams-i-Tabriz was sung in his presence, and music became a passion with him. It stirred his soul and gave him solace. The Mathnawi begins with the song of the reed which still resounds softly in Rumi's mausoleum in Qonya.

Shah Abdul Latif is a great votary of music. His poems are arranged according to their musical setting. The music of Sindh is part of the musical heritage of India. The Sufi saints of India have always listened to sublimated songs with rapture and ecstasy. The poems of Shah Abdul Latif are all set to melodic forms in ragas and raginis, developed in the setting of

Hindu wroship of vairous gods. While the thought may be Muslim, the musical forms in which the poems are sung are part of the Hindu heritage of India. Many of the model raginis are Sindhi variants of the Indian generic forms. In his commentary on Shah Abdul Latif, Mirza Qalich Beg has classified the ragas and raginis according to the system of Indian music.[6]

The people of Sindh are very fond of music. The poems of the Shah owe a great deal of their popularity to the bards and minstrels who helped carry his message to the remotest corners of Sindh with their sweet melody. They have developed a characteristic style of singing which is now identified with the Shah's poetry. This is exactly what happened to the Mthnawi which is sung in a highly individual style associated exclusively with the song of Rumi.

The contemporary Ulema took strong exception to the Shah's penchant for music as part of religious devotion. A delegation waited on him to advise him against this practice. The Shah is reported to have ordered that musical instruments be kept concealed in the adjoining room. Shah Abdul Latif received the Ulema and politely met their argument against music being sinful by a parable. "Suppose", he said, "there be a tree, from which the world derivers a great deal of benefit, and it be getting dry and dying for want of water, and some dirty water be at hand; would it be better and proper to put that water in the roots of the tree, or let it die for want of good and pure water". They all answered that the tree might be watered with it. "Then", the Shah said, "In my heart there is a plant of Divine love, which unless I hear music, gets dry. Without it my attention cannot be fixed on that Perfect object". As soon as he had uttered these words, the music commenced playing from inside the house. The Ulema were confounded. They left the Shah in peace.[7]

The musician has a role to play in the life of a mystic and Rumi is so grateful for their help that he pleads to God for this class which was generally looked down upon by the people. God bless the musicians, he says, with the sweetness of honey, and give their hands strength to play on their instruments. They are devoted to love and deserve their rightful

place of honour. Their melody has helped revive many a dropping heart. Why, then, should they not receive the recognition due to their merit? In a loving tribute to the companions who contributed to his Sama evenings, Rumi says:

خدایا مطربان را انگبین ده  برانی ضرب دستِ آهنین ده
چون دست وپای وقفِ عشق کردند  تو همشان دست و پای راستین ده
چو پُر کردند گوشِ ماز پیغام  تو شان صد چشم بختِ شاه بین ده
کبوتر وار نالانند در عشق  تو شان از لُطفِ خود بُرج حصین ده!

In "Sur Sorath" of the Risalo, the ruler Rai Dayach places his very life as a tribute at the disposal of the master musician.

"If I were to weigh this palace or even my Queen Sorath against the musical chords of your instrument, they would fall short in the balance".[8]

Nai, the flute is the instrument immortalised by Rumi who also mentions and listens to other instruments. For Shah the favourite instrument is danburo (tambur) though he appreciates other instruments as well. He keeps yearing for that "divine melody", which transcends all forms of music. In a poem under Sur Ramkali in the Risalo, the Shah spells out his yearning for that "unique" meldoy of the danburo. In the same Sur, talking of the musical instruments of the ascetics with whom he associated for several years, Shah Abdul Latif recalls their "Conshells which are worth gold."[9] "I have been deeply captivated by their musical instruments", he says.[10] Talking of his seperation from the ascetics the Shah states:

> "I give vent to cries at their discarded seats.
>
> I simply cannot help it. I have received the state from the "Lahut" ascetics through their music. It is a tragedy that I cannot follow them."[11]

These holy men, says Shah Abdul Latif, carried their musical conshells on their shoulders, but their chief associate was the woe of seperation from the Beloved.[12]

On 14th Safar 1165 A.H the Shah ordered music to be played and he sat listening to it, wrapped up in a sheet of cloth. When the musicians felt utterly exhausted after playing on instruments for three days in succession, they realised that the poet, who sat motionless throughout this period, was dead. This is like Solomom dying on his staff in his temple at Jerusalem.

And the Shah laid down his life at the door of the Beloved in a great musical abandon:

> "You should weep bitterly at the door of Allah, the Generous, O bard! Never take off your lips from His thresh-hold even for a moment. Your only source of appeal to him is through the musical performance."[13]

The eminent Muslim saints, Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria and Khawaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, were contemporaries of Rumi. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan (b.1182) worked among the masses in Sindh and converted the entire Samma clan to Islam. Shaikh Fariduddin 'Ganj-i-Shakar', his cotemporary in the Punjab, used to refer to Multan and Sindh as the territory of Bahauddin Zakariya.[14] Lal Shahbaz Qalandar was his disciple. Another disciple, Fakhruddin Ibrahim Iraqi, was perhaps the first Indian Muslim who met Rumi in Qonya. Prof. Said Nafisi, the editor of Kulliyat-i-Iraqi, talks of three meetings that Iraqi had with Rumi.[15] In his Discourses, (Fihi ma Fihi) Rumi talks of a man in Sindh "having the fragrance of world", perhaps a tribute to Zakaria and his accomplishment in Sindh.[16] Rumi is certainly aware both of Hind and Sindh for he says:

سِندیاں را اصطلاح سِند مدح
هندیاں را اصطلاح هند مدح

(Math vol II, line 1757)

Three centuries before these saints, Syed Ali Hujwiri, the celebrated author of Kashf-al-Mahjub, had settled down in Lahore during the Ghazanvi period. Hujwiri and his successors carried aloft the torch of Taswuf in India. The Khiljis overthrew the Turks in 1290 A.D. Alauddin Khilji learnt Persian after his accession to the throne. Eminent saint-scholars like

Amir Khusrau and Hasan flourished during his reign. Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia, one of the greatest saints of Muslim India, lived during this period. Poetry and music were inextricably mixed up with mysticism and the Mathnawi which was written in Persian began to be read seriously for the first time by a few leading intellectuals in Muslim India of this time.

Akbar's reign (1556-1605) is the golden age of Persian literature in India. Akbar who was born in Sindh (Amarkot) was deeply interested in the Sufi doctrines of Persia. But Rumi was by no means the favourite of Abul Fazal and Faizi, the two courtiers who exercised a major influence on the Sovereign. The spirit of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's attack on Akbar's heresy was more in conformity with the message of the Mathnawi. The liberal courtiers who had a concept of their own shunned the Mathnawi. It was not untill the reign of Shah Jahan (1628-1658) that it found a place in the curriculum of studies. Abdul Lateef Abbasi who lived during Shah Jahan's reign devoted a life-time to an elaborate study of the Mathnavi. He prepared an authentic text. He wrote a book, "Lataif al Mathnavi", in which he explained obscure verses in the Mathnawi. He also prepared a dictionary of difficult words in the Mathnavi under the title "Lataif al Lughat". From now onwards the arrested interest in the Mathnawi found full expression and spate of commentaries and selections were published. During the reign of Aurangzeb, (1660-1707) who reversed Akbar's religious policy, the Mathnawi gained unprecedented popularity. It was freely quoted from the pulpit and the platform and scores of books were written.

During Shah Abdul Latif's period (1690-1760) the Mathnawi had become the favourite reading of the ulema, and its characteristic rendering in music had become a familiar phenomenon in the Sufi circles. It is not surprising, therefore, that, the Mathnawi of Rumi became the constant companion of Shah Abdul Latif. Mian Noor Muhammad Abbasi, the contemporary ruler of Sindh, sent a beautifully transcribed copy of the Mathnvi as a present to the Shah.[17] Maulvi Mohammad Saleh, a disciple of Shah Abdul Latif, was assigned the duty of conducting regularly a *wa'az*, (a serman) on the Mathnawi after

the Zuhr and Juma prayers.

The poetry of Shah Abdul Latif exercises a spell over Hindus in Sindh as complete as that over the Muslims. As far as the common people are concerned they are influenced by Hindu predilections which they have known for centuries. Popular Islam is curiously intermingled with the popular religion of the indigenous Sindhis.

Shah Abdul Latif is an epitome of his age. His life reflects the rural circumstances of the people among whom he dwelt. "The fact that since his poetry was composed it has retained its universal appeal proves that the spontaneity of his message lies deep in the hearts of all classes of Sindh's population. The reason must be that, despite the debasement of religion, there is in his poetry something of higher and nobler content in the exposition of Islam than can be depreciated by the extravagances of ignorance and superstition."[19]

Shah Abdul Latif expresses supremely well a species of religious philosphy current amongst the better educated men of his time. "He is a poet using for the first time with supreme skill the language of the country folk and employing it to interpret ideas of beauty and of religious philosophy, which, while drawing much inspiraton from Persian models, succeeded in maintaining a high level of native orginality and local eloquence".[20] The mysticism of Shah Abdul Latif is not philosophic. He writes "a rude kind of poetry. It has no proper metre, no feet, no syllables, no accent. It has rhyme and rhythm only. It is in the form of stanzas composed of lines numbering from 2 to 10 and sometimes more, all of which have one common rhyme at the end, except the last line which is broken in two parts, the first part only taking the common rhyme. Sometimes the first line of the stanza is also broken in parts like the last one. Sometimes again a line increases in length on account of being stuffed with a big Arabic quotation, and yet it ends in the common rhyme. This is very rare."[21]

There are thirty Surs in Shah-jo-Risalo. Each Sur has a different name. The *Surs* in the Risalo correspond to the ragas and raginis in Indian music. Shah has named his *Surs* more in re-

gard to the subject of the poem. In composing his music-poetry the Shah was assisted by Atal and Chanchal, two young musicians from Delhi. It was in consultation with them that he arranged the modes of singing.

The first couplet that the Shah composed for his Risalo was about the same subject as the first couplet in the Mathnawi of Rumi. The last piece that the Shah wrote, only a few days before his death, is the song in Sur Sohni, the refrain of which is:

"To what use is
My existence without my friend".

Faqir Qadir Bakhsh Bedil (d. 1289 A.H) was the first to cite verses from the Mathnawi and the Risalo on the same subject on at least 40 different points of thought in his book "Panj Ganj". Agha Muhammad Yakoob has cited Rumi at least 300 times in the three volumes of Shah-jo-Risalo or Ganje Latif, which he has edited and translated into English.[22] We have gained a great deal from this able work of a Civil Servant and will henceforth refer to it as Ganje Latif only.

One has to contend with the fact that although Rumi exercised an enormous influence on Shah Abdul Latif, there is no direct acknowledgement of this debt in the Shah's poetry. The research oriented scholar of today may be astonished at this lack of authentic reference to a Master but this was not the training of medieaval scholars and poets. The Shah is no exception. The only direct reference to Rumi in the Risalo may be translated as follows:

1

**Talib Kathar Sunhan Sar,**
inside sits the prince Rumi[23] or
in ward lies Rumi's judgement)
Where are the men there! Don't you see that
it is a cobweb of magic!

2

**Talib Kathar Sunhan Sar,**

This the composure of Rumi
Those who saw the situation, they uttered
not a word.

3

**Talib Kathar Sunhan Sar,**

Rumi is such
That if he opened the window
you will have the inner vision.

4

**Talib Kathar Sunhan Sar.**

is the discourse of Rumi:
First negate the 'I', then see the Beloved.

5

**Talib Kathar Sunhan Sar**

It's Rumi's ecstasy,
Those who saw the company, they uttered not a word.

6

**Talib Kathar Sunhan Sar**

It's the abode of Rumi
If you are baked in separation
You will have the inner vision.

Agha Yaqoob, in his compilation Ganji lateef,
(Vol.1 verses 11/12), cites the following lines on pps.204/6.

(1)

"According to Maulana Rumi, and that is a fundamental with him, the entire mankind seek Him. The fountainhead of all beauty is Allah, the Unique. Those who have attained to that stage and reached the realm of the Prince keep mum."

(2)

According to Rumi the mankind seek Allah who is the fountainhead of all beauty. If people lay aside the veil of ignorance, they would find His manifestation within themselves.

(3)

It is stated by Rumi that the mankind seek Allah who is the fountainhead of all beauty. He sought multiplicity as against His Unity. It is necessary to annihilate the human identity completely before expecting to see Allah.

(4)

It is a matter of exhileration for Rumi to say that mankind sought Allah who is the fountainhead of all beauty. Those who have witnessed the Truth have kept mum.

(5)

It is widely preached by Rumi that mankind sought Allah who is the fountainhead of all beauty. If only people break open the door of separation, they will witness Allah within themselves.

## A Comparative Study

Rumi advances a claim:

بیتِ من بیت نیست اقلیم است
هزلِ من هزل نیست تعلیم است

"My verse is no mere house, it is a continent,
My joke is no mere fun, it is education.

The Shah goes further and proclaims:

"Those (verses) which you regard as mere baits (poetry) are in fact the ayat (verses of Quran) or the signs of God."

This is no boast for the idea is to warn the reader that the Shah is not writing poetry for poetry's sake. He writes for the sake of the Quran which must command the allegiance of God-intoxicated men. He does not preach a philosphy of his own but commends the teachings of the Quran with a moving per-

sonal conviction and rising above the parochial prejudices of the contemporary professional preachers of Islam. Instead of ponderous sermons which can be counter productive, the Shah approaches the common man in his own tongue and arouses his interest, much like his Master, by telling them familiar stories, not merely as a frivolous pastime, but as a poweful instrument of propagating his theme which is none else than the teachings of the Quran. The Shah gains the acceptance of his audience not merely by evoking a response to the familiar legends but by using the power and beauty of music to convey the lesson. He not only preaches purity but practices it. And there in lies his contribution to the cause so dear to him. The cause has to be noble but the way to communicate the cause has also to relfect the beauty and nobility of the cause itself. A noble cause can go by default if the presentation is ignoble. Think of the story in Rumi's Mathnawi in which an Azan, badly given by a muezzin, provokes a determined Jewess to give up her resolve to become a Muslim. An Azan becomes an act of disservice to Islam if it is not properly couched in a voice which is melodious and appeals to the human ear. The emphasis of Sufis on music is not, therefore, a vain endeavour but a considered approach to carrying a message with clarity and beauty.

Shah Abdul Latif cannot be accused of corrupting the Divine message by couching it first in Sindhi words and then covering it with Hindi modes of music so that it carries the desired effect to the listeners who were more Hindus than Muslims.

Rumi felt himself as being one with all the proverbial 72 sects of Islam and refused resolutely to condemn any one of them, although he became the target of calumny on the part of the contemporary Ulema. A man of God cannot differentiate between His creatures and seeks to guide them all to the one and only Allah who is the God of all the worlds. To Him do we all surrender and to Him shall we all return. It is not surprising that the Shah, when asked about his religion stated that it was between the Sanni and the Shia.

The first volume of Ganje Latif opens appropriately with Sur Kalayan, which means peace. This is what Islam is all about peace, harmony, complete surrender to the Maker of

mankind. The origin of existence is Divine. Man was separated from his source and life is all about his endeavour to return to his source. The Nai, separated from the reed bed, is wailing and crying for its companions. Attachment to this world detracts from man's efforts to seek his proper place in the scheme of universe. Man is no mere animal. He is not an angel either. But he is a synthesis of body and soul and he has to learn to strike the right balance. In verse 11, of Sur Kalyan[24], this is what Shah Latif says:-

> "Whoever has assimilated the oneness of Allah and had reached the state of complete self-effacement, has fully recognised the Prophethood of Muhammad as the final apostle of Allah.... Such people are real Muslims. In recognition thereof Allah has absolved them of all earthly affiliations and impurities....."

Such a man, in the words of Rumi 'has passed from annihilation to abiding existence, and he who exists in abiding existence is not mortal."

زانکه در اِلّاست اُو از لا گذشت
هر که در الله ست اُو فانی نگشت

Shah Abdul Latifis is an uncompromising monotheist.

> "Plurality has emanated from unity, verily there is the one Transcendental being. There is nothing outside or beside him. I swear by Allah that nothing else exists."[25]

Rumi certainly confirms the thesis:

"The heavens and the elements are the limbs. This is the unity, and all elsc is deception".

افلاک و عناصر و موائد اعضا
توحید همیں است دگرها همه فن تن

"Allah is the possesor of Majesty", Says Shah,

> "He is the sole essene of beauty. He himself is the beloved and embodiment of beauty. He is the Pir and the follower. He is his own manifestation. The

seeker can know all this from within his heart".[26]

Rumi says in the Diwan:

خود کوزه و خود کوزه گرو خود گلِ کوزه
خود برسرِ آن کوزه خریدار بر آمد

"He himself is the jug, its Maker and the clay for its production. On top of it all he himself comes as its purchaser"!

Says Shah Latif:

> "(O Allah!) Your manifestations are in millions of forms. Your essence is present in every human being, and yet human appearanes and performances are dissimilar to each other. My dear Lord! How can I describe your attributes?"[27]

Says Rumi:

جمع یک نُور ست لیکن رنگہائی مختلف
اختلافی درمیانِ این و آں انداختہ

"The Divine Light in tolality is the same, but its hues are different. He Himself has cast differences between this and that".

Shah Latif says:[28]

> "O you perverse Physician! Why do you brand my skin? I am already in bodily distress, and you force me to take the (bitter) potion. Whosoever deems the gallows a bridal bed, death to them is the means to their union with Allah."

Says Rumi:

مرگ سازد مغز را صافی ز پوست
تا ر ساند دوست را نزدیکِ دوست!

"Death relives essence from the shell so as to take a friend to his friend".

There is that famous verse of Rumi:

شاد باش ای عشقِ خوش سودائی ما
اے طبیبِ جملہ علّت ھا ئی ما!

Similar sentiments are echoed by Shah Abdul Latif:

> "You are the beloved! You are the Physician. You are the medicine for my trouble....."
> "O Lord physician! Kindly cure all diseased persons of their troubles".[29]

Rumi believes that medicine works where pain occurs, the cure shows itself where the malady attacks:

پر کجا دردی دوا آنجارود
ھر کسی رنجی شفا آنجارود!

Shah says:

"Some diseased persons associate with the physicians and patiently abided by what was prescribed for them. The physicians felt compassionate towards them, treated them carefully, and gradually restored them to health".[30]

**Determinism or Free Will**

Agha Yakoob, the translator of Shah Abdul Latif, has pointed out that the "poet has in many cases followed Maulana Rumi's line of thought, particularly in the case of man's spiritual journey, the necessity for a guide in this connection, the soul's yearning for reunion with Allah, the methods to be adopted for achieving that end, the material death before the physcial death and his belief in monism and his forceful preaching thereof..... Like the Maulana, Shah has introduced stories as a medium of imparting guidance. Each story is charged with a distinct moral."[31]

In regard to the problem of determinism and free will, the Agha holds that Shah Abdul Latif was a firm believer in predestination but he was not a fatalist. On the contrary he

"vehemently believed in endeavour and advised all characters in the Risalo that effort should continue until death. It was not to be abandoned due to faith in fatalism."[32] Rumi argues that God is not idle for moment. How can man remain inactive? He must strive ceaselessly in the way of God.[33]

The Shah exhorts Sasui to seek and exert herself:

> "O Sasui! Do not sit inert at Bhanbhore. Make a perceptible effort..... This is what Latif suggest: 'Sasui! move on your head and meet Punhu"![34]

It was only after a prolonged and painful search that it dawned on Sasui:

"When I peeped within myuself and had an intimate talk with my heart I discovered that there were no mountains to climb, nor was it necessary to follow the party of Punhu, and it was merely the lot of Sasui, as Sasui, to experience the travails".[35]

Five hundred years before the Shah, the Maulana had come to the same conclusion after years of agony and pain that his search for Shamsi-Tabriz was nothing but his search for himself!

وصفِ حُسنش که می فزودوم من  خود همان حَسن و بلطف بودم من
شیره از بهرِ کس نمی جوشد  در پیِ حُسنِ خویش می کو شد

> "Although I glorified his beauty.
> I was the repository of all that beauty and grace.
> The human soul does not suffer for others.
> In fact it aims at the perfection of its own beauty.

The freedom of man is the freedom to surrender to the supreme Creator.

بنده آزادی طبع دارد ز حد
عاشقی آزادی نخواهد تا ابد

"It is only the slave who longs for emancipation. The lover never craves for it".

Both Maulana and Shah are fundamentally prophets of love. Love is the motive force of all creation. It transforms the quality of life. And what is love? Answers Rumi:

"This is love: to fly heavenward,
To rend, every instant, a hundred veils.
The first moment, to renounce life,
The last step, to fare without feet.
To regard this world as invisible.
Not to see what appears to one's self."[36]

Prophet Muhammad, for both Sufis, is the Logos, the archetye and final cause of creation. In him the supreme idea of humanity is realised. And the Prophet attained perfection through love, not logic, not through a studied pursuit of knowledge. Adam won honour through love and Iblis was rejected though he had all the intelligence:

داند اؤ کو نیک بخت و محرمست
زیرکی ز ابلیس و عشق از آدمست

## The Technique of Stories

Maulana uses the technique of telling a known story to his audience with much relish and eloquence and springs a dramatic surprise when the reader least expects it. He does not moralise like a preacher but the story sums up the moral.

خوشتر آن باشد که سِّر دلبران
گفته آید در حدیثِ دیگران

The Shah has chosen to tell tales with which his audience is already familiar. He tells folktales about Sasui Punhu, Sohni Mehar, Umer Marui, Leela Chanesar, and many more. He tells the story of the martyrdom of Imam Husain, a chapter of Islamic history which moves every Muslim. These tales were carried by bards and minstrels to the remotest corner of the land. The stories written by both the Shah and the Maulana are still sung and captivate the hearts of their listeners.

There is a story in the Mathnawi about four blind men touch-

ing various parts of an elephant and describing the elephant in accordance with their own perception. The idea is to bring out the fact that the same reality is perceived differently. This story is summarised by Shah Abdul Latif in the following bait occuring in Sur 'Asa'.

"The blind ones were involved with a dead elephant.
They touched with their hands but did not see with their eyes."
"Only those wholly normal can recognise the elephant in reality,
It's the insight of the superior ones which restores the sight".

The other story from the Mathnawi that the Shah has briefly repeated in the Risalo is the story of the Chinese painters who polished the wall instead of making any paintings and defeated their competitors by adopting this technique.

## Love Not Logic

Rumi discards his scholarship and embraces the fervour and ecstasy of love.

جُبّه و دستار و علم و قیل و قال
جمله در آبِ روان انداختیم

"We have totally discarded the mystic's cloak, the scholar's turban, all knowledge and all logic have we thrown in the flowing river."

This is the universal way of the Sufis. Shah Abdul Latif literally threw away the collection of his poems in the Kirar Lake. The idea is to emphasise that love transcends logic. The purpose of knowledge is not egoism but submission to the Creator of all knowledge. Says Shah Latif:

"O you unfortunate man! How can you be Qazi merely because of the theoretical knowledge? You seem to be extremely presumptuous because you are lost in wayward thinking and egoism. That surely is not the way to proceed along the path of love..... Inci-

dentally you may consult Azazil (Iblis) about the taste of the sip that he had taken."[37]

Iblis is a symbol of logic. Rumi says:

زیرکی ز ابلیس و عشق از آدم است

"Reason or argument is from Satan & love from Adam".

It was Iblis who started arguing with God when he was commanded to prostrate himself before Adam.

"Then Satan became argumentative and said:
I was honoured (for my devotion) and now you have dis honoured me."

باز آن ابلیس بحث آغاز کرد
که بُدم من سُرخرو کردید زرد

Rumi exhorts a man of love to set fire to formal knowledge and seek the Beloved,

صد کتاب و صد ورق در نار کُن
روئی دل را جانبِ دلدار کن

"Set fire to hundreds of books and pages and set your heart towards the Beloved."

Shah Latif asks:

"Why this manuscript writing? Why this wastage of ink? Seek directly your way to Allah, the Originator and the primary Compositor."[38]

Love is a feeling, a sensation, an experience. It cannot be dissected, analysed, described or conveyed.

Says Rumi:

هرچه گویم عشق را شرح و بیان
چون به عشق آیم خجل با ستم ازان

"Whenever I try to describe love, I fel ashamad to do it. It simply cannot be described."

Shah Abdul Latif gladly endorses this conclusion:-

> "According to Latif, love cannot be described, expressed in words and talked about. It is the fate which asserts itself....."[39]

Rumi exhorts us to strive hard until our last breath, and Shah endorses this appeal:

> "Life is fleeting. Continue spinning so long as it is possible....."[40]

The Shah states that ascetics also pursue the path of love with vigour and zeal:

> "I know of the ascetics who never believe in idleness and procrastination. Even on hot days they roam about mountains for the wild fruit. In jungle too they are busy with the remembrance of Allah and self-reproof while they gather the wild fruit".[41]

There are those famous lines of Rumi in which he argues beautifully that God remains hidden because he has no opposite. And things are known only by their opposites:

پس بضدِ نور دانستی تو نوز ضد ضد را می نماید در صدور
پس نهانیها بضد پیدا شود چونکه حق را نیست ضد پنهاں بود

"Hence by the opposite of light you came to know light. By its appearance a contrary proves its opposite. Accordingly the hidden things are known only through their opposite; since Allah has no opposite he remains hidden (incomprehensible)."

The same thought, almost literally, has been summed up by Shah in the following verse in Sur Khahori:

> "To prove light Allah created its antonym darkness. (On that analogy) dark night and bright day were created. But since Allah has nothing contrary to Him simply because He is unimaginable, nothing by way of contrast can be put up to prove him. In the realm of His individuality nothing exists outside of him by way of colour or form".[42]

The mysticism of the Shah provides no escape from the ri-

gours of religion. Tariqat, the way of the Sufi, cannot be allowed to discard Shariat. On the contrary emphasises the Shah, much in the manner of Maulana:

"If you are keen to be a Jogi, realize and believe in the full implications of the Kalima. Maintain namaz five times a day and observe all the fasts in the month of Ramzan when it comes. When thus you find yourself well on the straight road of the Sharia, then wear the conventional thread of Sufism."[43]

Both Maulana and Shah condemn pseudo Sufis who exploit the simple gullible folk and both advise the budding Sufi to take a proper guide before they seek to venture out on this perilous journey. Warns Shah Latif:

> "Do not embark on the search without a light. To undertake the search is, indeed, hard. Millions of people became blind and lost their way due to ignorance".[44]

Rumi has stated:

هر که اُو بی مرشدی در راه شد
اُو ز غولان گمره و در چاه شد

"Whoever undertook the journey without a guide, was misled by the Satan and fell in the well."

The Maulana warns the pilgrim, much as the Shah has done, to be aware of the guiles of Iblis:

ای بسا ابلیس که دم روئی هست
پس بهر دستی نباید داد دست

"There is many a man in the guise of Iblis- you should not, therefore, give your hand, in fealty, to every person."

The Shah firmly believes that:

> "Those who have no guide, may have passed through a considerable area, but they are still in the wilderness. The fact is that none without a guide will get on the proper track to reach the beloved".[45]

It is not without good reason, therefore, that Rumi exhorts:

پیر را بگزین که بی پیر این سفر
رهست بس پُر آفت و خوف و خطر

"Select a guide. Without a guide this journey is full of dangers. "Shah Abdul Latif has a verse which reminds one strongly of the first line in Rumi's Mathnawi.

The Shah says:

> "What has been dismembered from a tree, wails for reunion with it, and what has been afflicted (or seperated from the beloved) cries for reunion with the latter. The former sorrowfully recollects its disconnected foliage, and the latter mourns his seperation from the dear one".[46]

This is precisely the song of the reed with its attendant philosophy that man, seperated from his original source, seeks to revert to it. The entire structure of evolution of man, the struggle of good and evil, and his ascent to undpredictable heights is based on this premise.

Let me end with a lyric of Rumi which Sa'adi considered the best in Persian literature:

"Every moment the voice of Love is coming from left and right.

We are bound for heaven: who has a mind to sight-seeing?
We have been in heaven, we have been friends of the angels,
Thither, sire, let us return, for that is our country.
We are even higher than heaven and more than the angels;
Why pass we not beyond these twain? Our goal is majesty supreme.
How different a source have the world of dust and the pure substance.
Tho'we came down, let us haste back- what place is this?
Young fortune is our friend- yielding up soul our business;
The leader of our carvan is Mustapha, glory of the World."

هر نفس آوازِ عشق می رسد از چپ و راست
مابه فلک می رویم عزمِ تماشا کراست
مابفلک بوده ایم یارِ ملک بوده ایم
باز همان جا رویم خواجه که آن شهر ماست
خود ز فلک برتریم وز ملک افزون تریم
زین دو چرا نگزریم منزلِ ما کبریا ست
عالمِ خاک از کجا گوهرِ پاک از کجا
گرچه فرود آمد باز رویم این چه جاست
بختِ جوان یارِ ما دادنِ جان کارِ ما
قافله سالارِ ما فخرِ جهان مصطفیٰ است

The message of love is meant for all mankind, men and women, saints and sinners, paupers and princes, high and low. The society of Sufis is not an exclusive club. It is an open house. Those who dare may enter: The invitation is there:

"Come, Come, Come again.
Who ever you may be.
Come again, even though
You may be a pagan or a fire worshipper.
Our centre is not one of despair,
Come again, even if you have
Violated your vows a hundred times,
Come again!"

Shah Abdul Latif ends the Risalo with a piece of advice to Sohni, the heroine of Sindh and Punjab:

"Love is limitless. It is free from the contention of figures.... O Sohni! There is no prescribed place for Mehar in spacelessness. He has no beginning nor end."[47]

This, then, is the message of love, eternal and ever lasting. It

is valid for all times and all climes. It is not restricted to any country or continent. It has no language. It has no barriers. Both the Maulana and Shah speak the same immortal idiom. Both convey the same immortal message. The brief paper that we have presented at the persuasive persistence of our brother Akhund is by no means exhaustive. Far from it. We hope, however that we have introduced the subject in its right perspective. It is now for the scholars to pursue this provocative and profitable study. Meanwhile we conclude on a note the Maulana may have wished to strike. We have no doubt that he would have gladly joined us, for it is in his words that we pay this tribute to Shah Abdhul Latif of Bhit, who is not only the national hero of Sindh but a prominent member of the fraternity that belongs everywhere and inspires humanity to great endeavour. With Rumi we says:

شاہ بود شاہ بس آگاہ بود

خاص بود و خاصہ اللہ بود

"The Shah was a prince among men and he was conscious (of this distinction). He was special and indeed very special to God".

## Foot Notes

1. H.T Sorley- Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, Karachi. p.168
2. Ibid., p. 172
3. Mathnawi, IV, 733-34.
4. Ibid., 742-44.
5. Ibid., III, 96-98.
6. Shah abdul Latif Bhitai, pp. 175 Sqq.
7. Life of Shah Abdul Latif- K. F. Mirza, Hyderabad. 1980, P.43.
8. Risalo Vol. II, p. 1649.
9. Verse 8, Vol.2, Risalo p.744.
10. 14 A, 11, Risalo, p.746.
11. Verse 20, vol.II Risalo, p. 749.
12. Verse 9-c, Ibid p. 733.
13. Risalo Verse 20/21. p.255.
14. Fawaid al Fuad, Amir Hasan Sijzi, p.138.
15. Kulliyat-i-Iraqi, Tehran 1338, A.H. Introduction p.24.
16. Discourse of Rumi (No.22) A. J. Arberry, London, 1961.
17. SIGMA (Dayaram Gidumal): Something About Sindh, Hyderabad Sindh, 1882, p. 426.

18. Sorley H.T., op. cit., p. 166.
19. Sorley H.T., op. cit., p. 170.
20. Ibid., p. 208.
21. Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai- K.F Mirza, 1887, p. 54.
22. Published by Shah Abdul Latif Bhit Shah Cultural Centre Committee, Hyderabad, 1985.
23. This reference to Rumi occurs in chapter V of Sur Yaman Kalyan.
24. Ganje Latif, p. 121.
25. Ganje Latif, verse 18, p. 124.
26. Gange Latif, verse 19, p. 125.
27. Ganj p. 128.
28. Ganj, p. 130.
29. Ganj, verse 1, p. 159.
30. Ganj, verse 5/6, p. 168.
31. Ganj, Vol. 1, p. 44.
32. Ganj, Vol. 1, p. 69.
33. Persian Portion

اندرین ره می تراش و می خراش
تادمی آخر دمی فارغ مباش

34. Ganj, Vol.11, p. 1052,
35. Ganj, Vol.II, p. 1086.
36. Diwan (Nicholson) p. 136.

عشق است در آسمانی پریدن صد پرده بهر نفس دریدن
اوّل نفس از نفس گستن آخر قدم از قدم بُریدن
نا دیده گفتن این جهان را مردیدهِ خویش را ندیدن

37. Ganj, Verse 21, p. 209.
38. Ganj, Verse 32, p. 214.
39. Ganj, Vol.1, p. 336, verse 8.
40. Ganj, Vol. 1, p. 362. Verse 5.
41. Ganj, Vol.2, p. 707, Verse 19.
42. Gang, Vol. II, p. 728, Verse 15.
43. Sur Ram Kali, Verse 2A, Ganj Vol. II, p. 779.
44. Sur Ramkali, Verse 20, Ganj Vol. II, p. 849.
45. Ganj, Vol. II, p. 1122.
46. Ganj, Vol.III, p. 1209, verse 19.
47. Ganj, Vol. III, p. 1780.

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSIONS OF LATIF'S POETRY

A. K. Brohi

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSIONS OF LATIF'S POETRY

A. K. Brohi

While discussing the contribution which Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit has made to the life of thought one has necessarily to take cognizance of the fact that we have met here under the aegis of the Pakistan Philosophical Congress. We ought therefore to focus our attention on the "philosophical aspect" of the contribution that Shah Abdul Latif has made. It is no use entering into the age-old dispute whether 'poetic' and 'philosophic' approaches to reality are not inconsistent with each other. On a careful consideration, it would appear that like other dichotomies discernable in the light of reason as these manifest themselves in our perception of reality, this dispute appears to be more verbal than real. We have supreme illustrations of the grand spokesman of these two apparently conflicting attitudes of human mind as for instance we have poet philosphers like Lucratius, Dante, Goethe, Jalauddin Rumi, George Santayana and Iqbal, just to name a few. Endless debates have gone on to answer the question whether the consciousness of these men was dominated by poetic inspiration or philosophical contemplation. But, here as elsewhere, "the cause of truth" it may be remarked in passing, has never been advanced by proceeding to apply artificial labels to mark the distinctive features of the creation of 'philosopher-poet' in question. As I regard higher poetry, as even perennial Philosophy, as emanating from profoundest depths of our being, I will not venture to squeeze the personal-

ity of Latif to fit it into any specific mould. He is so much of a universal spirit that he is not amenable to such a treatment. He is undisputably a poet of no mean proportions but that does not mean he has not presented to us a logically consistent view of the universe and man's place in it. All great poetry and philosphy, no doubt, differ in their expression of truth but they nevertheless attempt to stimulate man to transcend himself and to have a view of a reality which goes beyond the familiar face of this work-a-day world.

Considering that many of those who have assembled here in this conference are not from Sindh I am not far wrong in presuming that most of the participants may not fully be conversant with the historical background of the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif. It is necessary therefore that, quite at the outset, I should present some pertinent and conspicous details of the age in which Latif lived in order to secure better comprehension of his general philosphical position concerning the nature of reality and more specifically man's role herebelow.

Shah Abdul Latif is an eighteenth century sage, sufi-poet and a saint of Sindh. The dates of his birth and death have been located after a scholarly research as falling in 1689 and 1752 respectively. This was the time when Kalhora dynasty was ruling Sindh. It may be stated more accurately that he witnessed what might be called "the twilight time" when the star of the Persian political influence had set in India and that of of Afghan dominance was in its ascendance. Around this time the Kalhoras did seem to be strenghtening their hold over Sindh but this was more due to the fact that the welders of the authority in Delhi had become increasingly helpless. Sindhi governors appointed by them were all but independent although it must be conceded that they were always ready to surrender at any time of serious assault made upon them by the rulers from Delhi. Originally Sindh was added to the Mughal empire by Akbar in 1592 and continued to remain part of the empire till the advent of Nadir Shah in 1737 when it first fell under the Persians and then in 1747 under the Afghan dominance (See H.T Sorley's Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, p.9). This must have been the time of struggle and stress on the part of

the rulers of Sindh and the fast changing political conditions must have had considerable impact on the lives of the common man.

Dr. H.T. Sorley while musing over the course of Sindh's history is struck by the fact that, in some strange way, although Sindh has been sandwitched between the desert of Arabian Pennensula on its west and fertile terrain of Asia on its East, it has shown a sort of resiliance to withstand the penetration of alien influences that have reached it from cultural environment of Asia-instead, it has steadfastly adhered to, and accepted, the message of the Prophet of desert. In his words:

"For the most part Sindh has remained apart from the really crucial events happening in the rest of the neighbouring Asia. Some of the more important of these have affected Sindh deeply but in most cases the repercussions have been slight. This alloofness in the story of Sindh and its people is best illustrated by comparing the life of Sindh to a pool into which from time to time a pebble is thrown from outside. There are a few ripples after the splash and then all is still once more, or, to vary the metaphor, the restless tide of Indian history beats upon the barren reef of Sindh's isolation and only a few mild waves break gently upon the sandy beach. It would not be incorrect to describe Sindh's history as episodic, isolated, characteristic of the non-bellicose nature of the bulk of its population throughout time, and as showing to a late date the theocratic foundation of Islamic society in a very marked way."

We must therefore make a pointed reference to the great event that took place in 712 A.D when Mohammad bin Qasim, one of the great warrors of Islam, conquered Sindh and left it not only as a gateway for Islam to move into India but also as an outpost of Islamic civilization and culture in India. This state of affairs continued even after the time when 300 years later a more systematic muslim invasion of India took place, this time from the North West compound wall of the subcontinent. Sindh seems as if by some providential plan, the precise character of which can only be the subject-matter of a conjecture, to have been assigned in western part of India a role of serving as seedplot for the spread of Islam in the East.

In classical literature we find references to two prominent geo-political realities of the sub-continent viz., Sindh and Hind; Indus valley was Sindh, the rest was Hind. Sindh appears to have been earmarked for accommodating the creative flowering of genius of Islam in a manner in which no other place or terrain either to the West or East of Arabia can be cited as a rival example. The first wave of Islam that we associate with the advent of Muslim armies under Muhammad bin Qasim was a pure wave but the wave that lashed against North West compound wall of India 300 years later and penetrated right upto Delhi and a little later, beyond was a Muslim wave no doubt but it had become somewhat muddy by reason of some alien influences that came from Khurasan, Ghazni, Balakh and Bukhara.

Shah Abdul Latif was a grandson of the famous saint of Sindh, Shah Abdul Kairm of Bulleri. We have, as a result of recent research, some details about the way in which his grandfather came from Herat to Sindh and settled down here. The Poet's father Shah Habib was also a man of great piety and lived in lower Sindh. The life of Shah Abdul Latif has been reconstructed by Mirza Qalich Beg from scanty historical material that is available and this has subsequently been elaborated by Professor Gurbukhshani, the famous commentator of Shah jo Risalo (literally, "message"). We may also add here the names of Dayaram Giddumal and Lilaram Watanmal. According to H.T Sorley, Shah Abdul Latif saw the rise of early Kalhoras to power. He was fifty years old when Nadir Shah invaded Delhi and made Sindh a tributory to Persia. He was fifty eight when Ahmed Shah Durrani brought about coup against the dying Delhi empire, founded modern Afghanistan and made Sindh subject to Kabul. Five years later and six years before East India Company's factory was estblished at Thatta, Shah Abdul Latif died at the age sixty three years.

Study of the Shah-jo-Risalo tends to show that Shah was well- versed in the classical learning which was provided by study of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit languages and literature. He quotes extensively from the Holy Quran and the Hadith and in some of the stanzas in the Risalo interspersed here

and there, are to be found copious quotations from these sacred sources of Islam. There is the apcryphal story that when asked by his teacher to learn the alphabet he did not proceed beyond pronouncing alif; when the teacher asked him to pronounce the word ba he refused to do so, surprising his teacher with the statement "Of what use is ba; alif alone will be sufficient for me." Of course, when the attention of Latif's father was drawn to what his son had said to his teacher, the father expostulated with his son and remarked that the remaining letters of the alphabet had also to be learnt if one was to learn to read and write the language at all.

The method of composition of Risalo was not of the conventional kind. All the verses contained in it appear to have been sung by the poet in a state of spiritual ecstasy. There would always be his disciples listening to his song. They would either remember the verses and later reduce them to writing, or write them as these were being sung by Latif.

The beauty of the poetry of Latif is that it is primarily anchored in musical tradition of the day; it is singable. The arrangement in the Risalo itself proceeds on the basis of apportioning the verses under appropriate headings which are no other than the names of various melodies (raagas). There are of course certain Surs like Marui , Lila Chanesar or Sohini that do not correspond to any ascertainable raaga.

The poetry of Shah Abdul Latif utilizes the tales that were prevalent in his day, like "Sasui and Punhu", "Sohini and Mehwar", "Umar and Marui ", "Lila and Chanesar", "Moomal and Rano", etc. as allegories for the purpose of weaning away man's attention from the pre-occupations of this world and lead him to God, who is our ultimate Home and to Whome we would eventually have to return. The one important theme which is spread out throughout the warp and woof of Latif's poetry is man's inveterate longing to search for a life which is better and more enduring than the one he is in possession of at present. Latif approaches this supreme mission of man's life, which is no other than that of striving to go beyond what he has in his grasp, and he does this by utilising familiar experiences of our everyday life as mere pegs on which to hang a coat of

man's quest for eternal life. His poetry is pre-eminently allegorical in its symbolism; in the language of higher mysticism his poetry can be described as the aarifana kalam, that is to say, verses that impart gnosis or "higher knowledge" to the seeker.

Latif's poetry can also be approached from yet another point of view which, in my opinion, is equally valid: his Risalo is to be regarded as a commentary and a restatement of the basic approach of the Quran to the problems posed by man's life on earth and his link with his Lord which makes for his eventual return to the Master Whose slave he is. Man, according to the Quran, has been sent here as Khaliftul ard, as a successor to earth. So regarded, whole Risalo would appear to be an invitation to man to remember his Lord and so be saturated with Zikr; its one concern is to induce in man the disposition to love God. Latif himself, in one of his verses has claimed, "whatever verses I have sung are signs as they draw attention of the soul of man to his beloved's habitat".

Of course Latif sings fervently about the supreme doctrine as it is propounded by the Quran concerning the status of man and his role in the scheme of things. His poetry has great appeal for common man if only because he casts this message in the vernacular of his age and presents the argument in it support in such a manner that it can be easily understood by those who have not been otherwise initiated in the mysteries of estoric wisdom.

I shall first state, in what follows, the elements of this supreme doctrine which is discernible if a careful study be made of the Quran and the Hadith and then proceed to show by citing appropriate verses from the poetry of Latif the way in which he brings these great truths to the attention of the common man of his day. His poetry is for the masses and if you were to talk to the peasants in rural Sindh you will be amazed to find how much they love to hear Latif's verses. H. T Sorley too says about Latif that he was a poet who sang for the people of rural side. One will not be far from truth if he were to say that, for an average Sindhi, the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif is something so natural as is the air he breathes; after all it has

gone in him with his mother's milk.

The supreme doctrine which defines the outlook of a Muslim, as is well-known, is embeded in the Shahada, LA ILAHA ILLALLAHO MUHAMMAD UR RASOOLULLAH which translated means "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet". To say this believingly is to qualify oneself to be admitted to the sanctuary of Islam. But the extent to which one travels on the road to God and acquires the status of those who are described as "muqarraboon" depends upon a disciplined will (the acquisition of which is the essence of a muttaqi) and enlightened outlook which is furnished by knowledge. The whole range covered by the total spectrum of belief in One God and Muhammad being His Messenger as also the strategy of action which makes for righteousness are merely the variations on the theme of the Shahada.

The metaphysical foundation of the relation of God to man as enjoined by Islam is discernible in that Surah of the Quran which refers to the primeval contract entered into by man with his Master. "And when thy Lord brought forth from the children of Adam from their loins, their descendants and made them bear witness about themselves: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes; we bear witness. Lest you should say on the day of Judgment we were unaware of this (See Chapt. VII v. 172). The belief in the 'Hereafter', in the Day of judgment, is necessary adjunct of man's sense of accountability which is ingrained in him by his very nature. Account will be taken from him in respect of all gifts that have been given to him since, as the Quran says: 'Nothing belongs to man except his effort'. It is by the extent of his earnest striving to fulfil the law that his worth will be assessed on the last day. This life, therefore, becomes a test and trial for the believer who must so conduct the operations of his life herebelow that he serves well His Lord and Master Who created him. All of man's actions must conform to the law as it is promulgated by the Divine Will and indeed everything that he does or avoids doing herebelow is to be for the sake of the Lord. As a beliver he is made to say "All my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death are for the Sustainer of the creation who hath no compeer and this I have

been commanded to accept and this I have accepted and I am the first of the muslims." The cardinal principle of Islam is faith in the claim of the Prophet that he is inspired by God to bring guidance to mankind on the basis of revelation which is contained in the Quran. The Holy Book contains warnings about the pitfalls that are to be avoided and prescribes the practices that are to be followed if the believer is going to succeed in living this life well and winning the reward of eternal life in the hereafter. In the very first rukku, of the Surah Baqara are mentioned credentials of those who are on the correct path and will be successful in this life and these are those:

> "Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them. And who believe in that which has been revealed to thee (O Prophet) and that which was revealed before thee and of the Hereafter they are sure. These are on the right course from their Lord and these it is that are successful."

As to the condition of disbelief in which man might be plunged, its psychology has been portrayed in the succeeding two verses:

> "Those who disbelieve it mean the same whether thou(O Prophet) warn them or warn them not; they will not believe. Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing and there is a covering on their eyes, and for them is a grievous chastisement.

This condition of disbelief presents a spectacle in which a disbeliever puts himself in condition of spiritual deafness and blindness; he can neither hear nor see the signs of the Lord that are presented to him in those outer and inner circumstances of his life which reveal to him the meaning of this life and its scope and funtion during its sojourn on earth. But somehow, by showing a daring disregard of these reminders, he becomes a law unto himself or rather delivers himself to chaos. He lets himself be ruled by his lower passions and so conducts himself as to bring about impoverishment of all his potentialities.

Finally, it is of the essence, if not the quintessence of the

creation of man, that although he has been fashioned out of clay yet God has also blown His spirit into him. Thus God has lodged in him an undying and immortal element of His Being and it is the presence of this element in man's make-up and constitution which gives to him a high place in the scheme of things. And it is the extent to which he activates this divine principle that has been embodied in his being and makes of it a sovereign ruling force of his life that he succeeds in transforming the base metal (clay) of which he is made by the alchemy of zikrullah (the rememberance of the Lord) into becoming an expression of the Divine. Of old it has been said: "Only when the spirit breathes on clay is man born." Such a man is admitted into company of the elect and his reach goes much beyond the phenomenal world; such a one intensely longs for beholding the realm of light whose creature he is.

The foregoing concise statement of the teaching of Islam concerning its supreme doctrine does not take notice of the means that have been ordained by religious law in order to enable man to accelerate the pace of his evolution. These are to pray, to give zakat (poor rate), observe fasts in the month of Ramzan, to go on pilgrimage etc. But, as any one can see, even these are concomitant conditions that co-exist with the upholding of supreme doctrine; a believing person who has expressed his commitment to the supreme doctrine would anyhow fulfil, as a matter of course, the religious ritual since it is aimed at strengthening his will for accomplishing the higher purposes of life.

Now the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif in its essence, I submit, is not only a vigorous restatement of this supreme doctrine but also a fervent plea to adhere to its principles and practices. In ways too numerous to recount, Latif sings lovingly about all that he sees, he hears or experiences in the depth of his soul in the purple light of this supreme doctrine. He sees in them the intimation of Here-beyond, a sort of communication from the Holy of Holies.

In Sur Kalyan with which the Risalo (the message) begins we have a discourse on the Unity of God, on His uniqueness and the supreme importance of accepting Muhammad as Prophet of God. In its very first canto, the verses of the Quran on these

themes have been cited. The following free translation made of the relevant verses in this behalf is cited to illustate this device:

"In the Beginning Allah is,
Who Knoweth All, Who sits aloft.
The Lord of all the World that be.
He is the Mighty, Old of Days,
Of His Own Power Established,
He is the Lord, One, only One,
Sustainer and Compassionate.
Sing ye the praise of Him Who Heals,
The True One, sing ye praise of Him
He is the One, Who Hath No Peer.
Confess ye this. In heart of heart
Acknowledge ye The Praised One, who
The Causer of the Causes is.
Why go ye then and bow yourselves
In front of others, why go ye?
Men were who said: 'He is the One.
Without a Peer', in heart of heart
Acknowledge the Praised One, who
The Causer of the Causes is.
Such men did from the righteous path
Set not an erring foot astray.
Men are whom God the One hath cut,
Whose bodies He hath cut in twain.
Who, having seen the severed parts,
Doth not for self, unfortunate,
Desire like theirs the severance?
God who is One no rival hath.
Herein of Him the Oneness is,
And righteousness of Truth. But who
Embraced false Two-ness lost indeed
The savour and the salt of life."

It is impossible to convey in a an English rendering the power and the beauty of the original verse nor again is the idiom of 18th century Sindhi language capable of finding adequate conceptual framework in modern language which by and

large, tends to become oververbalised and highly inflated if only because it becomes more cerebral and sophisticated. Talking of unity discernible beyond the veil of apparent duality in which all human knowledge is caught, Latif has set-forth certain images to sugest how best to comprehend the idea of unity of God. Following attempt reflects the sum and substance of the Doctrine of the unity of being (wahdatul wajood). The doctrine is more appropriately associated with the teaching of Shaikhul Akber Ibnul Arabi, but it reflects in reality an old and indefeasible attitude of the human mind that has intuitively realized that from unity came multiplicity and despite apparent multiplicity unity is the reality. The truth, in fact is one-any other way of expressing it is error which you must avoid, says Latif:

1. "The Echo is the Call if you could
   Discern the 'turn' in the speech.
   To begin with, they were one; it is
   Only in hearing that they became two."

2. Although one palace, lacs of doors, countless are
   windows therein.
   From where ever I proceed to discover its essence;
   I see the Master of the House before me."

In the famous Sur of Marui Latif picks up the tale of Umar and Marui which must have been current in his days and makes it serve as a means for communicating higher significance. The very first stanza begins by recalling "the primeval contract" entered into by man with His Maker to which reference has been made earlier. The story of Marui briefly told has reference to Umar (believed to be king of Sindh) having fallen in love with a rustic girl, Marui by name, got her forcibly brought from the hamlet, where she was living with her humble folk, to his palace. But then, as she had previously been betrothed to a relation of hers she declined to surrender her person at the alter of the regal authority of the seducer. After many years of suffering, the king on finding her steadfast and cast in a mould into which pure ones are made, allowed her to return to her people. Latif uses this tale to draw his reader's attention to situation of the soul of man that too is

locked up in the prison house of earthly life but by reason of its heavenly origin it is all the time longing to be released so that it could go back to its real home. The soul of man finds itself encased in this 'muddy vesture of decay'. and what is more, often enough succumbs to the temptation of the world and gets involved in its wicked ways. Despite this contamination, such is its nature that its natural purity is never completely tarnished and it longs for its return to Heaven which is our home above! The very first verse with which the Sur of Marui begins is a line from the Quran "Am I not your Lord (alastu birabbikum)"

Here is how Sorley translates the verse in question:

"When there fell on mine ears the word
Am I not your Lord?
And with 'yes' my heart gave assent.
It was then that my promise I made
With the folk in the hedge pent."

It was due to the sanctity of this compact that Marui would not succumb to the temptations that beset her when she was in palace of Umar. She had to be loyal to the one to whom she had been betrothed. The state of Marui 's suffering and her longing to return to her people has been sung by Latif in a language which it is impossible to translate. The following English rendering by H.T. Sorley will give us some rough idea of the power of the original verse:

"T was my fate to be prisoned. It falls!
How else would one enter these walls?
They were shown me by writ of the stone.
My life, body, life have no joy.
If I be from the goatherd alone.

O Lord, by the will this decree,
With her Marus that Marui be,
Life engoaled was the fate that I took,
That I should live miserable here,
'Body here, soul with Thee', saith the Book

Here's my heart! Let the power of God move
That I join with the friends whom I love.
'Bound by fate' is the saying that I
Keep in fold of my garment. 'Fate's pen
With what came to pass is gone dry.'

By the flow of fate's pen so it passed
That the Marus should traverse the waste,
While I in the upper-rooms stay.
I'll burn all these places with fire
If the folk of my land are away.

'To their Prime go all things back again'.
For my people I suffer in pain,
My folk of the jungle, that, near
Mine abode come again, I may see
The land of mine own in Malir."

"Marui's wearied of the halls,
And sad with sadness is her face.
On oil-less hair she puts no oil.
By grief she's robbed of beauty's grace.
When hot wind touched her (Saith Latif)
Her camphor-scents of gladness fled.
How can the girls whose minds are crushed
Smile and put oil upon the head?
She turns her face towards Malir,
To weep for ever with the cry:
'I think thy joy like gallows-noose,
O Sumro. Maru's stuff am I.
A wife by force I will not be.
My heart the men from yonder seized.
Fort-bound it never can be free'.
She turns her face towards Malir,
Outwearied standing: yet retains
The blanket that the Marus gave.
Beware, O Sumro, not with chains
Enshackle thou a virtuous slave.

'I turned my face towards Malir.
I climbed the fort. For my land's sake
My tears welled forth. I shrieked aloud
With cry that from my soul did break.
And yet the people of the hedge
Heard nothing of my wretchedness.
O Umar, how can helpless girls
Bedeck themselves in cleanly dress
Whose helpless husbands in the wastes
Endure the insults of distress?
Can they, O Sumro, good wives be
Who with their husbands break their vows?
While I am sleeping on the quilts
My husband suffers: damp wind blows,
O do not that, mine Umar, no!
Nor laugh at me in my rough clothes.
How can I sleep upon the quilts
When husband suffers in the waste?
That I should suffer thirst more meet
Midst father's kindred. Take away,
O Sumro, all thy sherbets sweet".

There are roughly nine stories that Latif has sung about and we have a separate Sur assigned to each one of them. Of these, Sur Marui I have already referred to. It is necessary to mention in addition Sur Sohini, Sur Lila Chanesar, Sur Momal Rano, Sur Sasui (which is spread out roughly in five varying surs, like Sasui Abri, Ma'azoori, Desi, Hussaini, Kohyari). Each one of these tales is not the text but only a pretext for reading into them a higher significance. Latif, it may be pointed out, does not so much recount even the major details of these tales: indeed he assumes that they are well-known to those who are listening to his song. He is solely concerned to use these tales for pointing out deeper truths about the life of man on earth and his link with the here-beyond.

The story of Sohini Mehar is too well-known to be recounted to a Sindhi or even a Punjabi peasant. But Latif utilizes the main features of the tale to expound for us the spiritual journey which salik has to perform on his way to God. The salik

(seeker), while he has to pass on his pathway to God, notices certain land-marks, or stations of wisdom like Shariat, Tariqat, Haqiqat and Ma'rifat. All these images of the Higher Way are selected from the panorama presented by the longing and suffering experienced by a simple girl in love. She crosses the river to meet her beloved, to meet her Sahir (the beloved). The torrential flood of the waters of Indus, the terrors of a dark night, the bloodcurdling thunderstorm that is raging, are depicted with a great poetic excellence. Sohni moves into the angry waters with nothing but an un-baked earthen pot in her hand, just to be able to swim across the river to meet her beloved. Previously, of course, she used to go with a baked earthen pot with the help of which to swim to the shore but this time it had been clandestinely substituted as a result of some intrigue in the house. The earthen pot dissolves in water and she meets her death. The following English rendering by H.T. Sorley highlights the significance of man's quest for God and points out the necessity of our renouncing all we depend on here before we can hope to meet our beloved; and indeed only when all the means that seemingly minister to our need of getting to our beloved are given-up, then alone we hear the voice of the Beloved calling us unto Himself:

"Upon the river's border women stand and cry,
'Oh, Sahir, Sahir. While the thoughts of some of them
Are on a private grief concentred, others say
'We take no reck of life' and plunge within the flood.
Sahir indeed is theirs who risked and entered in.

E'en such a one is Sohini who did put her hand
Upon the pot of clay and let the water flow
All o'er her arms, and luckless midst the stream did cry
Aloud to Sahir: 'Love my love, return to me
For I am envy's target for the envious ones'.

The water-herons rested on the trees: the time
For Muslim's middle prayer had passed. Thereafter she
Did take the pot and enter on the flood whenas
She heard the cry that calls to evening prayer, and

scanned
To find the place where Sahir well-belov'd might bide.

Thus Sohini spake: 'By earthen jar did I behold.
My herdsman's visage. How shall I destroy the jar
On which my life doth hang? If it be broken, then,
Of sooth, 'tis vanished. Still, in hope not faithless be.'
'Of Allah's mercy do thou not despair', thus runs
The saying. Make of it thy raft on which to float.
Then, with the joy that fills the hearts of those who love
The Lord, thou mayst behold the herdsman's countenance.

When jar was broken and when life was sped and means
Of life's safe-conduct vanished, Sohini's ears did ring
With cries of the loved herdsman of the buffaloes.
'Come not across of thy self-ferrying: forget
The ways of safety, Suhini. Love himself will take
Thee o'er the rough and tumble of the troubled waves.
They quickly cross deep waters who have love to do
The piloting. Come not across self-ferrying.
Set forth without conveyance; dash the unbaked jar
To earth in fragments. Take love's yearning on the deep.
The herdsman seeks for news of them who seek for him
For them a raft's a burden who have boundless love."

Time was when God, the One and the Eternal, spake
Unto the souls and thundered: 'Am I not your Lord?,
Then, even then, to Sohini had there come a love
And longing for the neathered.' I was of God's own will
That might of waters broke her earthen pot in twain.
What fate God's will had fashioned for her there indeed

She brought to due fulfilment in this world below.

Sur Sohini, in view of the consensus of scholarly opinion, is considered to be the last Sur in the Risalo; it has the same status assigned to it as the play "Tempest" has in Shakespearean workmanship.

Strange as it may seem, in this Risalo of Shah Latif which

comprises over 1200 closely printed pages of the ordinary book-size and expressses the grand truth of man's relationship to God in a variety of ways, the most picturesque characters around which the poet has focused his attention are all women. Latif has not portrayed any hero- he sings only of heroines. And of himself he speaks in feminine gender. Although in all love tales there is a lover and the beloved, but with Latif it seems the woman is the lover par excellence and it is her condition of relentless search that he is anxious to portray.

In Surs Marui and Sohini the sufferings to which these heroines were subjected are not of their making; it looks as though they were overtaken by a force which was much greater than all the power of the personalities with which they were endowed. Their situation is something which reminds us of the Greek concept of Tragedy where the hero is invariably destroyed by jealous gods- gods, who do not wish to see men flourishing and becoming a success! Well may Sohini and even Marui have described their tragic situation to the view reflected in well-known Shakespearean image "As flies are to wanton boys, we are to gods who kill us for their sport." Yet in other important Surs like Sasui and Lila Chanesar or even in Moomal-Rano each one of the three heroines does suffer a great deal but one can easily understand that this is by reason of some fault, committed by them or some flaw in their character that suffering has overtaken them. Sasui, the ardent lover, succumbs to sleep and the beloved Punhu is taken away stealthily by his brothers from her and it is only on her awakening that she discovers her loss, namely, that Punhu is no more with her. In order to regain him she begins to track his footprints and ventures to cross the mountaineous terrain barefooted despite the hostile elements that beset her way. Lila again is virtually punished because of her love for precious stones and jewellery. She was happily married to King Chanesar who loved her immensely. But another lady, Kouro by name, on discovering her weakness for precious stones tempts her by showing her a beautiful necklace and eventually manages Lila to virtually sell Chanesar to her for one night. Affairs are so arranged that on returning to the bridal bed Chan-

esar finds not Lila but Kouro on the bridal bed. Naturally, on being told about the intrigue he gets annoyed with the Queen, throws her out of the palace and she, who was once the Queen and to her belonged all that belonged to the King, is now a destitute beggar and an accused widow. She goes about in the streets, bemoaning her loss. The poet admonishes her to go back to the king and confess her sin and ask for his mercy and forgiveness. The poet is sure that she would be accepted because he is merciful. In the story of Moomal and Rano, Moomal has attired one of her sisters as a male and sleeps with her in the same bed. She was expecting Rano that night. But as on the night of occurrence Rano failed to arrive at the appointed time, Moomal feeling dejected and despondent and thinking the Rano was no longer faithful to her, just to play a cruel trick on her lover, dressed one of her sisters in clothes like Rano and made her sleep on the same bed. Rano arriving later found two figures sleeping on the same bed and imagined that Momal had another lover. He in utter disgust left the palace leaving behind a stick by the side of her bed so that on her awakening she, that is, Moomal should see the truth. This was a case of a stratagem recoiling on its author and Moomal goes through a great deal of suffering to expatiate for her own intrigue.

In all the three cases there is some fatal flaw, as Bradley, the famous Shakespearean critic would put, which had exposed these heroines to suffering. In the last resort it is what they do which accounts for their suffering. In their case character is destiny.

In this context one ought to refer to Sur Sorath where Latif has sung about the relationship of the salik to the spiritual guide. It is a story of a musician who took up the challenge to bring the head of a benevolent king called Rai Diach to King Anerai who was one of his rivals and he was able to do this because of the power of his music. He played for the king when the latter was sojourning on the top of Girnar mountain for those 40 crucial days when his murder, according to the astrologer's prediction, was due to take its place. Beejal sung through all these 40 days and nights for the king and so much

pleased was the king with his songs that he was asked to designate the prize the king should give him in recognition of the power of his music.

Beejal asked for his head. The king having given his word that he would give whatever Beejal asked, cut his head with his own hands and handed it over to the musician. Although here the title of the theme is Sorath (which was the name of the beautiful daughter of Anerai for whose hand many princes of the day were contending and the king had announced that he would have her married to one who will bring back the head of Rai Diach), Sorath herself does not play much part in the presentation of the theme. It is equally difficult to see how Beejal could be considered as a hero considering that he commits the heinous sin of cutting off the head of a noble king, by the power of his music. Per chance it is Rai Diach who may well be considered as a hero since he played the role of a salik and implicitly obeyed the call of the musician who may be treated as his spiritual guide to give up his life. A rendering of one of the verses of this Sur by H.T. Sorley is presented:

With hope set in Allah he parted from here,
The Singer who decked with a stringing
Of tassels and rattles the fiddle he played.
He saw from afar the royal sedan
Of King Diach and thus began
At that very moment with prayer humbly prayed
To Him who is One:
'O Merciful Master, by Thee be it made
That the King shall delight in my singing'.

The Sultan, found joy of full flavour
As in his red swing he reclined and he cried:
'Come up, sacred bard, where clear space is.
At thy feet I would pour out in sacrifice
A mint of money. This head's my guest:
Come, here I yield it at thy request'.
In some men a deep perception lies.
To life's great mystery
They reached. In that Secret they made them wise

Of things hidden whereof this the trace is:
'Man is My secret: I am his'.
Here lies the key to mysteries.
This phrase the signer took to sing
The song he sang before the King:
And when he sang, where there were Two,
The pair to single One-ness grew.

Fine instruments he took of cunning sound
The skilful master of music,
And from the start in motion set the chords
Before the kingly presence. When he gazed
Diach at once saw clear
And manifest the meaning's power.
The singer drew the knife and plunged it deep
Within Diach's skull. The flower
Of Girnar's plucked: and weep
The wailing women. Hundreds like Sorath
Stand up and moan. The head, with crowning lock.
Arranged, they give the man of music:
And bitter is the wailing women's cry:
'Last night the King did die."

I have given you some idea of the way in which Shah Abdul Latif employed the tales that were more or less the subject-matter of conversation between the people of Sindh, for the purpose of suffusing into them a new meaning. This is exactly what great writers have done in the past. Shakespeare's treatment of the old tales particularly those to be found in Hollensheds' chronicle of Scotland is a case in point. So also Goethe took up an old legend about Faust and dramatised it with a view to exhibiting a new significance of man's primeval contract with God. But in order to avoid misunderstanding it is necessary to add that the range of the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif is much wider than merely setting forth a rendering of the stories and legends that were current in his day. He took up familiar experience in the lives of the common people and articulated through them his own interpretation of the nature of things. Take the case of Sur Kapaiti where Latif deals with the

occupation of spinner who is busy at his wheel weaving the yarn and making cloth. He approaches this familiar avocation of the spinner to point out how much depends on the spirit of a dedicated service than upon mere skilful making of the yarn. The auditors who ultimately accept our product in the market have their own test with which to evaluate the quality of our work. Yarn produced by the spinner with love in his heart is accepted even if it is coarse and uneven but even the fine yarn is rejected if it is produced with hatred in the heart of the worker. Similarly Sur Samundi deals with the lives of the boatmen, the sea-farers who go sailing on the high seas to negotiate the unchartered course of their voyages. The following verse of Latif reminds one what one reads in Goethe. Latif admonishes the sea-farer to see that he daily oils his little skiff which is constantly exposed to waters in the midst of which it stands. Goethe too says the same thing when he sings: "He alone earns freedom as well as life who daily must win them anew." Inadequately translated in English:

"O thou who ferriest folks across,
Make me my loved one meet.
O Captain, I stand at the cabin door
To pour my prayers at the feet".

Similarly he deals with the "Moth and the lamp" and there is the whole canto in his Risalo dealing with the philosphic significance of the way the Moth is atracted by the light regardless of its fate that it would be burned down to ashes if it went too near its source.

I have not the time to deal with any particular Sur of Latif in depth. That requires an elaborate discussion of his special technique of communicating the incommunicable significance of things. If the role of a philosopher be that he is endowed with the capacity for seeing life steadily and as a whole, every Sur of Latif's Poetry would seem to substantiate the claim that Latif besides being a remarkable poet was also a great philosopher.

# NEW LIGHT ON THE MYSTIC THOUGHT OF SHAH ABDUL LATIF BHITAI

Prof. S.Qudratullah Fatimi

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Prof. S. Qudratullah Fatimi

Shah Latif's mysticism is a many-splendoured jewel. Scholars of diverse nations have put much labour of love towards the understanding and appreciation of its different facets. But the deep sea which produced it seems to have escaped their notice. This paper makes an attempt to draw their attention to the folowing lines of Shah Latif:

> The constant pliers on the ocean,
> have returned to the river,
> They deal not in gold, but
> costlier commodities still,
> They deal in pearl of the deep.
>
> ***
>
> Cloves and cardamoms and clothes,
> And pearls of excellent hue,
> Fill up the roomy holdss of their boats.[1]

We, who are afflicted with the fear of water, may find it difficult to understand any relationship between things maritime and the mystic thought. But a writer like Herbert Warington Smyth who was "bred of salt water" would tell us that

> there is nothing sordid, cramped, or unhealthy for body or mind in what a man may learn from sailing-boats. It is a subject beyond most, shrouded about by the immensities which are the 'vesture of the Eternal'. Leading into the solitudes of Nature, and into the presence of the Immeasurable, it must need enlarge

> men's natures in a degree impossible in much of modern Western life.[2]

Again, he puts the question: "What is it in the sea life which is so powerful in its influence?" And he answers:

It is the sense of things done, of things endured, of meanings not understood; the secret of the Deep Silence, which is of eternity, which the heart cannot speak.[3]

Unlike Smyth, Hilaire Belloc was not a professional seaman, but like Shah Latif he had heard the music of the deeps and was intoxicated by it. He wrote:

The sea contemplates itself and is content with that endless self-neighbourhood; on which account, I suppose, it is that you will hardly find any man bound to a sea-faring life but has something profound about him, more than landsmen have.[4]

Smyth's above-quoted dictum: 'There is nothing sordid... in what a man may learn from sailing-boats' may remind the students of Muslim history the experience of Ikrima, son of Abu Jahl, who fled for his life when the Holy City of Mecca was liberated. He tried to take a boat for lands beyond the reach of the conquering armies of the Muslims. The boatmen refused to take him on board, for, as Ibn Ishaq reported, they said that no one who was not pure in his heart and firm in his belief in the One Almighty Power could safely steer the boat.[5]

Perhaps, it is to such human experiences that Allah has referred when He said, "When they embark in the ships, they call on God; making their religion sincerely His".[6] And the mystic portents of the life on sea have been proclaimed by Allah in a number of verses. One of these exhorts man, "Hast thou not seen how the ships run upon the sea by the blessing of God, that He may show you some of His signs? Surely in that are signs for every man enduring, thankful."[7]

But the Deep Silence kept its mysteries to itself. There were some exceptions to this general rule and the Shah was one of those rare ones. There were some others, too. For instance, in Milinda (Menander), the Philosopher-king of ancient Indus-

land, and his mentor, Nagasena, the Shah could find his kindred souls. Milindapanha ('the Questions of Milinda') by Nagasena is as popular among the Buddhists and as profound in its thought as the Bhagvad Gita is among the Hindu scriptures. Like Sur Samundi of the Risalo, the Milindapanha dwell upon the mystic significance of the sea, its ships and their masts, sails, the anchor and the steermen,[8] and like Sur Sriraag it describes the rich maritime trade of Pakistan of those early days and draws mystic lessons from it.[9]

Like Shah Latif, King Milinda, too, was the gift of the Indus Delta to mankind. According to the Milindapanha, he was born at Kalasigama,[10] unmistakably the Kalachi of Shah Latif. It further states that Kalasi was located at Alasandadvipa,[11] the island of Alexander, meaning most probably Alexander's Haven at Karakola. The fact of its being a port-town and not the land-locked Alexandria-under-the Caucasus as presumed by a number of eminent Indologists[12] is emphasized when it is described in another passage of the Milindapanha along with the famous ports and coastal towns of ancient times.[13] In Kautalya's Arthasastra it is associated with Barbara (Varvara),[14] which is apparently Barbarei of Ptolemy situated on an island of the Indus Delta,[15] and Barbaricum, its thriving sea-port described by the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea.[16] The memory of this famous port appears to be enshrined in the name of a small village, Babra, situated close to the archaeological site of Bhanbhor.

We have to pass through some nineteen centuries in time and about as many hundred miles in distance to find a peer of our own poet. He was Hamza Fansuri of Sumatra who lived in the second half of the seventeenth century. In his sufi doctrines and in his unsurpassed eminence among the poets of his country, Hamza of Indonesia is the closest parallel to Latifs Indusland.[17] The following stanza from Hamza's long poem, Prahu ('the boat') may serve as a specimen of his poetry:

Know, O thou young mariner,
The waters are unruly, the waves are like coral
And whales will swarm to attack,
To drag thou to mid-stream

The mouth of the river is very narrow,
Where the boats and the rafts have to pass.
But if thou hast a compass,
Thou wilt complete thy journey which is very long.
Therefore, make thy Boat secure
Lash the land-line to the anchor-rope,
The winds are strong and the waves angry
The island, where thou hast to land, is far away,
Make ready the land-line and the anchor-rope.
Go speedily ! On the way thou wilt meet many foes
The Ocean is tempestuous.
'There is no god but God" is the stout rope.
To those who cling to it,
The tempestuous seas will be becalmed.
The compass will direct thy Boat swiftly,
So that it will reach the island safely.

Sri Lanka is approximately midway between Kalachi of Shah Latif and Hamza's Fansur, a small port-town on the western coast of Sumatra. This island of jewels and a jewel among islands is a favourite theme of both the poets. Shah Latif sings:

The ploughers of the salty deep,

The waters sweet have entered now;
Their inmates bargained not for gold
But greater wealth they wished to reap.
The flourishing mariners, to
Port of Ceylon for pearls did sweep,
And safely in the boat they keep
The treasures they in Lanka found.[18]

Succinctness, allusiveness and metonymy of Latif's diction and his joyous mood can be compared with the mastery of details, simplicity and directness in Hamza's style and his admonitory tone. He exhorts,

The sea of Ceylon is very deep,
There boats are damaged and sunk
Though many dive there,
Yet few get the sapphire they seek.
The sea of Ceylon is One and Almighty,

The currents are fast, the waves huge,
The winds are strong and may toss the boat round
Take care of the tiller, never let it shift.
That sea is the most magnificent.
All (of us) will return there
Get the provisions of wood and the delicacies.
Blessed be thou in complete Beatitude.
The waves of Ceylon's Sea are restless,
Many will be going there,
The storms and hurricanes are awful,
But keep the compass steady.

Shah Abdul Karim (1536-1624) was the spiritual as well as patrilineal ancestor of Shah Abdul Latif. He was the seed that blossomed forth in the mighty pipal tree of Latif's poetry. But as far as the maritime element in his poetry is concerned we have precious little to quote. Here are two of his abyat that we could collect on the subject. Shah Karim says:

The brave divers
do not even look at the shallow waters,
Their eyes seek the treasures
deep down in the midstream.[19]

***

Those with faith crossed the river,
those without it were afraid;
The Mullah found it too swollen,
you brave it with smile.[20]

Though Sur Samundi and Sur Sriraag are the more evident repertories of Shah Latif's maritime poetry, it is in Sur Sohni that his maritime genius comes in sharp outline. The story of Sohni Mahiwal (or 'Suhni Mehar' in Sindhi) is the folk heritage of Pakistan. It is popular all over its plains. A number of Punjabi poets like Waris Shah (b. 1740), Hashim Shah (b. 1753), and Ahmad Yar (b. 1768) have versified this romance, but the most popular one is that which was composed by Fazl Shah (1827-1890). A comparative study of Fazl Shah's Qissa Sohni Mahinwal with Shah Latif's Sur Sohni would be a fruitful exercise in more than one respect. It would, in the first in-

stance, fully bear out the truth in Allama Kazi's incisive comment that Shah Latif 'picks up, like Shakespeare, every extant story and legend of his country and gives us the most signifcant point in it in his poetic form.[21] It is remarkable that in the tenderly beautiful story of the love of the rich merchant from Balkh and the heroic daughter of a Panjabi potter "the most significant point" for Shah Latif is neither the manly beauty of the Mughal youth nor his exemplary devotion to his lady-love and neither the delicate charm of the Panjabi maiden nor the diabolic drama of the change of the floating jar. Ignoring all these points each one of which could tempt even a Shakespeare to wax eloquent over it, he picks up only the details of 'the terror and the tumult that rage within the water where eddies gurgle, crocodiles congregate and monsters shelter', of 'ships in the abyss' and of 'the distant banks afar'.

As is well-known, the tragedy occurred on the muddy waves of the Chenab river. People not acquainted with the unique features of the river system of Pakistan are apt to emphasize the distinction between the river-craft and the sea-craft. But the fact is that nature provided Indusland not only with an excellent maritime location but also with a unique river system which gave its people command over a very vast and deeply penetrated hinterland. This necessitated the building up of water transport and watermanship which could meet the continental as well as the maritime requirements of its water-borne trade. In his study on the twin ports of Daybol,[22] the present writer has dealt with this subject in some detail. Half-backed and illplanned modernization has played havoc with our river system and brought water-logging, salinity, soil erosion, and frequent floods in its wake. Now the only living evidence of the vast, deep and complete co-ordination between the salt and the sweet-water transportation is in Shah Latif's poetry. In the final stanza of Sur Sohni the Shah declares:

> It was the ocean deep,
> No shallow creeklet drowned her,
> Nor the swampy marsh.[23]

To further illustrate the points raised in the above paragraphs, we would like to quote some of the stanzas of Sur Soh-

ni which depict poignant pictures of the watery expanse and its perils:

'Come not across of thy self-ferrying: forget
The ways of safety, Sohni. Love himself will take
Thee o'er the rough and tumble of the troubled waves.
They quickly cross deep waters who have love to do
The piloting. Come, not across self-ferrying.[24]

Ships in the abyss
Have been engulfed whole till not a trace of wreck
Nor any timber showeth the catastrophe.
The whirling waters holds some power of dread : for ships.
Depart thence and return not.[25]
With help of Allah then make thou of faith thy raft.
These women ne'er will perish who take Sahir's word.
Wise men do clutch at bushes when they're like to drawn:
See (saith Latif) the virtue that resides in reeds :
Perchance they bring thee safely to the bank : Perchance
They break and take thee with them down amidst the flood.[26]

Herbert Warington Smyth, whom we quoted earlier, states from his own experiences and those of his illustrious admiral ancestors:

At sea, more than in any life of man, more even than in time of warfare, it is the worst that must be anticipated and prepared for. It is this certain knowledge of impending struggle which makes the sailor-man the alertest of mankind and the most patient.[27]

The story of "Morirro and the Whale" has in it all the ingredients of being one of the most heroic sea stories ever told. It fully illustrates the contention made in the above-quoted statement of Smyth. It can make as great a novel as Moby Dick. The bare outline of the story is that in the whirl-pool of Kalachi there was a large whale that had devoured many fishermen including the six sons of Obhayo. At last, his youngest son named Morirro determined to avenge the death of his

brothers and rid the coast of the monster. He constructed a ka'i ji-kal (a glass capsule machine), a sort of a diving cage. placed himself in it took a sharp harpoon in his hand and got himself let down into the sea with a stout comrades. As soon as he went in, the whale pounced upon him and devoured him, cage and all. Morirro having once settled in the belly of the whale set himself cutting it out from inside and, the thus, killed it. Then, he gave a signal pull on the rope and was drawn out alive. The huge carcass of the monster whale was also dragged out as a great trophy. The graves of Morirro's six brothers and a sister stand within the Karachi city area near the road leading from Khadda to Mauripur. while the grave of the great hero stands on a hilltop at some distance from the brothers' graveyard.[28]

The Shah is not a story-teller, as we pointed out earlier. The adventures of sea life inspire him only to sing his Sufi message. In Sur Ghatu he alludes to the above-narrated story to draw his mystical moral, namely:

> The fisherman got deep into the whirlpools
> and killed the shark of desire
> Now their eyes beam with joy.[29]

The maritime imagery of Shah Latif's mystic poetry permeates the four books (Surs) of his Risalo which we discussed above, namely, Sur Samundi, Sur Sriraag, Sur Sohni and Sur Ghatu, but is not at all confined to them. For instance, in Sur Asa he declares his faith in the doctrine of the Unity of Being in these words:

> Across life's ocean no one yet
> With 'I' as guide his foot hath set.
> God indeed who is One
> Adoreth One-ness alone.[30]

Wherefrom did Shah Abdul Latif get his inspiration for the martitime element of his mystic poetry.?

Despite some acute parallelismes, Milindapanha's being a model for Shah Latif's Risalo is simply out of question. Hamza Fansuri was not much removed from him as regards time, but he was much too distant from him. However, physical distance is not much of a barrier where sea is concerned, and our Shah

sings of distant lands as far east as China, but there is no positive evidence showing his awareness of Hamza's poetry. Shah Karim's maritime references are too scanty to inspire. Thus we believe that he had to rely on his own personal experiences of the maritime life of the Indus Delta of the Kalhoro Age and on the originality of his genius.

But there was one perennial sources of inspiration for him that never failed him. It was the Book of Allah, the Guidance for all mankind. While compiling his Maritime Anthology of Classical Arabic Prose and Poetry, the present writer had the privilege of collecting and arranging subject-wise as many as 140 verses of the Divine Book pertaining to seas, the ships that sail on them and the winds that drive them, and experiences of the sea-farers and the stars that guide them and other related topics.

The Qur'an gives a complete picture of the sea life : of "the ships that run with sails raised up in the sea like banners"[31] and dauntlessly "plough the waves"[32] in "the vast, abysmal sea, overwhelmed with billow, topped by billow, topped by dark clouds".[33] Sometimes they run in calm waters, where "Allah stills the wind and they remain motionless on sea's back".[34] In the tempestuous seas they face crises of a contrary nature when "the waves enshroud them like awnings.[35] But in these and many other trials and travails they had two constant helpers: One, "the change of wind",[36] which was "surely one of the Signs for a people that are wise",[37] and, two, "the stars by which they guide themselves",[38] Of course, their supreme sustainer in these adventures was their simple, but not very consistent, faith in Allah, as the Qur'an rebukes them : "And when they mount upon the ships they pray to Allah, making their faith pure for Him only, but when He brings them safe to land, behold! they ascribe partners unto Him."[39] Sea is according to the Divine Book, the backbone of man's economic activity, for "Your Lord is it Who drives for you the ships on the sea that you may seek His bounty: surely He is All-compassionate towards you."[40] Besides being the most efficient means of communication sea is also the source of nourishment and adornment, for "it is He Who has subjected the sea unto you that you might eat there-

from fresh flesh of fish and take from it ornaments and wear them."[41]

Shah Latif's maritime poetry is the most eloquent and unique testimony of the fact that he had fully imbibed the Qur'anic spirit- the spirit of the sea-and he was certainly justified when he claimed :

> What you consider to be abyat
> are nothing but ayat.
> For they sublimate you,
> and bring you nearer to your Dearest.

## Notes


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# THE CONCEPTION OF LOVE AND MYSTICISM IN SHAH ABDUL LATIF BHITAI

Dr. Jamila Khatoon

# THE CONCEPTION OF LOVE AND MYSTICISM IN SHAH ABDUL LATIF BHITAI

Dr. Jamila Khatoon

We at present are living in a science-oriented age. The power placed in our hands by the spectacular achievements has out-stripped the consciousness of our own being and its relation to reality. It has divided us, has dissected our soul and has made us the prisoners of our own "robots". A conflagaration has broken out and no one knows what is safe and where it will end. The zenith of material progress is leading to the sunset of humanity. The remedy lies in self-restoration and self-equilibrium, the conversion of soul which is possible only through piercing the veil of ignorance, self-deception and illusion, through knowledge of Really Real or Ultimate Truth. Science has made tremendous progress in the realm of sense-experience, but our philosophy based on verified and verifiable knowledge has led us only to the Unknown and the Unknowable. The spiritual and idealistic schools of thought have helped to a great extent in resolving our difficulty through providing a comprehensive outlook. To a great extent it has succeeded in rising above the situation and giving "a determining voice in ordering of the universe". Through reason and reflection or through speculative knowledge we can attain the "common denominator" or principle to resolve conflicts and achieve balance of mind. But here the method is discursive, didactic and rather cold. Its path is meandering and intricate. The idea of the ocean is being given through the droplets in the

test tubes.

Over and above, though in a sense in close alliance to scientific and speculative knowledge, is religious experience. Mystic or unitive experience which flows from religious consciousness makes religion more justified in its verdict that God can be known than science in its presupposition that the world can be known. It "like the bird sees its traceless way", unattended by intellect, restoring to "the living heart of man" the invisible wealth of life that lies within. As a way of life and expression of the whole personality, it brings to man the point of rest amidst all flux and change, doubts, perplexities, temporal considerations, physical 'mental' limitations of finitude. The consciousness of alliance with the Infinite and awareness thus attained is objectively True. We are led to the precincts of the Divine. This stage of experience may appear unrealistic and abnormal due to our involvements in abstractions. We have to rise above these abstractions.

This experience is identical with love and opens to man a new sphere of illumination wherein are unrolled vistas of Reality comprehending Divine Presence. Here Reality is revealed in wholeness and fullness. Here we have the source of revelation of Ultimate Truth which is Kashf, Ecstasy, Heart.

Love when taken in this light becomes Ultimate and Divine in essence; characterises finite and Infinite. It forms the very basis of self-redemption of the Absolute which results in duality between 'I' and 'thou'. God creates to have mirror for His Reflection or to get a stage for the manifestation of His grandeur and glory. It corresponds to the famous Hadith:

> "I was a Hidden Treasure; I desired to be known, so I created creation in order that I may be known".

Love forms the vital, living, assimilative and creative force throughout existence. It permeates the "many-splendoured" and "multi-coloured dome of Reality." The great Religions and philosphies identified with love and God with love and creation as manifestation of love. Plato presents love as a cosmic force or movement towards Beauty. Inspired by that philosphy Avicenna defines love as the appreciation of Beauty,

and as a force which permeates and actualises all striving, movement and progress from one level to another. It works behind the process of assimilation, growth and reproduction. It works as a driving force in the eternal march towards the First Beloved.

It appears as a unitive and fusive experience and becomes a keynote in mysticism and yields the realisation of the Absolute both in the unified simplicity of its all-assimilative "Being as well as in the variegated manifoldness of its all-inclusive Becoming."

Al-Ghazali bases his conception on Quran and Hadith e.g "God loves them and they love God".

> "No one will be truly faithfull till God is dearer to him than all else."

According to Al-Ghazali, the highest satisfaction, joy and bliss is the vision of God and it is possible only through purification of heart. Suhrawardi regards divine love as the highest spiritual state of perfection through which Reality reveals itself. Love finds its expression in "I am the speaking Quran" (Ali), "I am the creative Truth" (Hallaj), "Glory to me" (Ba Yazid) and in Rabia's ecstasy when she exclaims:

"This purest love when Thou dost raise.
The veil to my adoring gaze."

For Rumi, Beloved is hidden in the heart which is fully saturated with Divine Love.

For Iqbal, love is a cosmological feeling, mediates between God and man, consumes all doubts and difficulties, narrow ends and selfish desires. It is a blazing fire to all other than God. It kindles the heart with Divine Light, vibrates it with Celestial music. It is an end in itself, does not weigh, measure and calculate. In divine madness, it plunges itself into fire.

It illuminates the self and enables it to see the cosmos in its light. It raises man to the stage where his eye becomes the eye of God and his word the word of God. We have "the possession and enjoyment of the Infinite" and become conscious of "the loving embrace of the Being in which we live, move and

have our being."

The mysticism of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, whose songs and music vibrate through the valley of Sindh, is love-mysticism. Like all great mystics, he "soars aloft on the wings of Divine Love, which leads him to union with God, to the sinking of individuality in the ocean of the Divine" to "the vision of delight and fulfilment."

The great mystic poet was born and nurtured in an atmosphere of religion and mysticism and, disciplined under proper guidance and Divine grace, he rose to the height that can be compared with Rumi. Mysticism exercised such a tremendous influence in Sindh that, without exaggeration, it is being called the land of mystics. The mystic influences carried from Baghdad to Mecca and thence through Spain and Persia passed to India. The luminaries like Junaid. Ba Yazid, Ghazali, Rumi and Mujadid threw their rays in Sindh also and served as a beacon light for the Shah. With their stress on unitive experience, love and ecstasy, they had given new light and colour to orthodox religion and lifted it to new ethical and visionary planes. The fact that the poet was well-versed in Persiam is evident from his devotion to Rumi, from which it can be safely infered that he inherited his share of mysticism through him.

In comparison with great master minds of Persia he is cast into a homely and simple mould and expresses himself through the local medium-folk stories, music, language which is understood and appreciated by the people around him. It has imparted the ineffable charm to his expression. His lyrics, melodies and music have power to strengthen love and 'inflame the tinderbox of the mystic's heart'.

He expresses his religious experience through music which involves the response of man's whole nature, lifts it above secular interests and fills the heart with the Divine and consummates his whole belong. It reaches its climax in Sur Sorath when the king, overwhelmed and over-charmed by the singer yeilds up his head to the singer in loving sacrifice and gains communication with God. It proves what is presented by Rumi in the following lines:

Oh, music is the meat of all who love
Music uplifts the soul to realms above.
The ashes glow, the latent fires increase
We listen and are fed with joy and peace.

The Shah communicated his living experience through poetry with simplicity and grace, which is solemn and sublime. Here we find a restless soul, yearning for his lost home, to pierce the veil that hides the Divine Beloved. The quest, longing, despair and despondency, the craving of heart, the mystical certainty, knowledge, illumination, ecstasy, contentment and bliss, all find expression in his lyrics.

His folk stories in which we meet the 'selves' enkindled, glow, inflamed and even blazing with love represent the different stages in mystic experience. The spark of love kindled in their hearts turns into fire and flames which burn all that is narrow, private, selfish and secular. They give the "impression of a master-mind that has scaled the height of mystical science and from that summit looks down upon and dominates the plane below and the path leading upward." The very soul and spirit of the mystic is revealed through them with all exuberance. It is the Divine and the Divine alone that operates through him and subsists in him. His folk stories symbolise the successive stages through which 'self' passes before consummation. Here we have realisation of being through becoming, the realisation of God in His aspect of transcendence through the aspect of manifestation. We pass through the mundane and emphemeral to a stage where the lover, beloved. and love all are united in One.

But when I fled from Bhanbhore, lo! my grief
was changed into joy,
From me woe's dark curtain drawn, and I and
my loved one became one

'Thy love is in thy lap': why askst thou like this for sign of
him?'

'Nearer than vein of neck is he'. Thine own is with thy self.
For self is bound with self indeed: To those in love true
self is near.

If lover's fire is akindling kindle it,
And fan it till its flames reach the skies.
Forget the very stuff existence is,
In non-existence place it all away.
By dying live that thou mayst feel
The Beauty of the Beloved.

Here is expressed the mystic progress through which self passes before attainment of union with God. We are in contact with the process of becoming in all aspects involved in it, infused and guided by love, leading ultimately to the sublime, Beloved All-Glorious Beauty.

"The craving of heart for heart." the real human appeal, infused and guided by 'mystical certainty', ends in the perfect joy of attainment which comes from union with the Divine. The flame, the fire, the blaze lead to the full joy; the secret of self is revealed and the key to the mysteries is got.

The banishment of duality and realization of becoming in Being, are well presented when he says:

Away with things that are two,
Go to the side of one.
Thou reveillest in deceit, O squint-eyed woman:
thy spouse
Sundering cannot abide. with them who
would break with thee
Break not but join thyself, like the fold of a garment hem.

God is presented as One, Omniscient, Omnipresent All-powerful, Sustainer, Compassionate, All-Merciful, the Cause of the causes, The Unique One without peer.

God is One no rival hath.
Herein of Him the Oneness is,
And righteous of Truth. But who
Embraced false Twoness lost indeed

The savour and salt of life.

Again he says:

After what goes thou? Why dost thou remain
The servant of other?
Stirrup-leather lay hold of, The Merciful One's
Even the Lord of the World's.
For certain that man will be happy whose love
Towards Allah is turned

Throughout his poetry, a sense of personal communion prevails. The unification, the absorption or effacement of the finite in Infinite is the stage of spiritual experience. As presented by Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi it is the first stage of spiritual experience which does not obliterate the distininction between the Creator and created. At the sound stage the presence of duality dawns upon finite consciousness presenting God as the ultimate Reality and the world as its shadow or 'zill'. At the third stage man has the affirmation of the Divine Reality as transcendent being which includes human personality. 'Fana' means substitution of the lower by the higher.

By dying live that thou mayst feel
The Beauty of Beloved. Thou
Wilt surely do the righteous thing
If thou wilt follow this advice
They who died before their death
By death were not in death subdued.

Assuredly they live who lived
Before their life of living was,
From age to age They will not die again who died
Before the dying came to them.

The personality of the finite self, over-whelmed and saturated with Divine attributes, loses itself in God as, to use the simile of Rumi, the stars lose themselves in the light of the sun or as the iron put in the fire loses it colour. The stars appear to lose their identify in the sun and the iron glorified by the colour of the fire may say 'I am fire but neither the one becomes sun nor the other fire.' In the words of Nicholson "when one has

reached the complete 'Fana' of one's individuality in God, one, at the same time is remaining and perpetuated in God. 'Fana' is not merely cessation of self, like Buddhist Nirvana, but, as we have seen, it includes the continuation of the worshipper's self in God. Thus 'Fana' in this sense is identical with 'Baqa' and it is in conformity with the Islamic conception of Tawheed and philosophy of all great mystics in Islam, who have inspired him.

His mysticim is not the outcome of his philosophy and is not represented through the technicalities of mysticism but is permeated and guided throughout with the light of reason infused in it as an integral element. The richness of the mystic experience cannot be captured in syllogism or logical sequence but, being the expression of man's whole personality, it comprehends the logical core in it. It overflows out of his living and loving heart. It is the Divine and the Divine alone that operates through subsists in, and transmutes his finite being and is expressed in, and through, him. The sublimity of inspiration, the mysteries and wisdom which cannot be treated dialectrically and which are too subtle to be expressed in syllogistic form have the symbolic garb. It is the Divine Control, Divine Grace and Divine Glory that pulsates throughout his poetry, music and melodies. The stages in the quest for the beloved take on ethical character. We are given the mirror wherein are reflected many in One, permeated and transcended by the Glory of God. The misery of man lies in his self-will which uses others for the realization of his selfish ends and purposes. His message has the power like that of all great mystics to resolve all conflicts, confusion and chaos and raise man above caste and creed, private, narrow interest and regionalism.

# HOW WAS THE RISALO PRINTED FIRST?

Ernest Trumpp

# HOW WAS THE RISALO PRINTED FIRST?*

Ernest Trumpp

In offering this work to the Sindhi student, I have only a few remarks to make. I had collected, during my residence in Sindh, a number of tales, ballads and songs, which were dictated to me by different old bards, who were in the habit of reciting them to the people at festive occasions, with the view to arrange them into a Volume of native Sindhi literature, to serve as a basis for further philogical researches. For I had soon convinced myself, that a deeper study of the language of the country could only be made upon such materials as were most familiar to the people themselves. Instead of making translations myself, I endeavoured to collect, what ever I could, of the literature of the country, consisting as I soon found out, of an inexhaustible store of legends, ballads and songs, which had been handed down orally and committed to the memory of the travelling bards and singers; for written books are scare in Sindhi, and those, which came to hands were without exception learned treatises of the Mullas upon religious subjects, stuffed with Arabic and Persian phrases and words, and for this very reason, ill-adapted to my purposes. I found it however very difficult to digest the poetical effusions, which I had thus collected into a readable volume of Sindhi literature; for the ballads and songs differed either very greatly, when compared together owing to a slip of memory or

* Being the Introduction to the Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, edited by Dr. Ernest Trumpp; Leipzig (Germany) 1866.

to the fanciful interpolations of the reciters, or they were so mutilated and incomplete, that they were only of indifferent value, except for the purposes of lexicography. I would have preferred by far to give selections of prose literature, poetry always presenting its peculiar disadvantages to a beginner; but unfortunately I could hit upon no native work of any merit, prose being peculiarly disliked by the Sindhis, who have only an ear for jingling verses, like most semi-barbarous nations.

**Hafiz of Sindh**

After many serious deliberations I resolved, instead of editing different minor songs and ballads, to present to the student the famous work of Abdul Latif Shah, known under the name of Shah-jo-Risalo. I had thus the advantage to be able to follow the authority of manuscripts, instead of being compelled to rely solely upon the relative strength of the memory of the bards, who had dictated to me their poetical treasures. As to Abdul Latif, Burton has already remarked 'that his fellow-countrymen consider him the Hafiz of Sindh, and that there are few of them, learned or unlearned, who have not read or heard his pathetic verses. His poetry is the delight of all that can understand it. The learned praise it for its beauty and are fond of hearing it recited to the sound of the guitar. Even the unlearned generally know select portions by heart and take the trouble to become acquainted with their meaning". A work so generally esteemed by the natives themselves I thought best fit to serve as a pattern of the language, the more so, as its diction is, on the whole, of the purest Sindhi, which can by no means be said of the compositions of Makhdum Hashim and Makhdum Abdullah, two learned Sindhi Mullas.

A few notices about Abdul Latif and his Risalo will not be out of place here. He was born about A.D. 1680, and is said to have departed this life in the year of the Hijra 1161.* He lived at Bhit, a village near Matiari, above Hyderabad, where he is also buried. Abdul Latif was a Sufi, like most of his countrymen, and it is said, that he has risen to the rank of Mashaikh or Master in Tasawwuf or Sufism, though he had never studied, which is however sufficiently refuted by his own Diwan (Rialo), where he exhibits a deep learning in Arabic and Persian.

## Love Adventures

The attraction, which the Risalo of Abdul Latif exercises upon the minds of his countrymen, is chiefly owing to the circumstances, that he has chosen as substrata for his sufic effusions popular tales and stories, which are known through the length and breadth of the country. There is everywhere a "Terra-Cognita" for the reader or hearer, and Abdul Latif has not disdained to borrow occasionally whole stanzas from these popular compositions. The Sufic doctrines, he intended to inculcate, he put either into the mouth of his heroes or heroines, or, after the manner of the oriental poets, he introduced himself with a ponderous sentence. That he has treated with predilection love adventures, such as Suhini and Mehar, Punhu and Sasui and with the mystic system of Pantheism, which he advocates in his Diwan what he wished to be understood under the types of earthly love, he declares now and then with bare words, as in Suhini:

> Those, which thou takest for (mere) couplets, are signs
> Which lead thy mind in the direction of thy friend (i.e. God)

## Sufic Influence

In order to understand the mystic couplets of Abdul Latif it will be absolutely necessary for the student to make himself first acquainted with the tenets of Sufism, which is widely spread amongst the body of the people in Sindh. The close affinity to and very probably the derivation of Sufism from the vedantic system of India is now conceded on all hands. For the right understanding of the Risalo the reader should particularly turn his attention to the sufic doctrine, that the human soul is a particle of the divine breath, that its immortality is deduced from its immateriality, and that for this very reason immortality without beginning and immortality without end are assigned to it. The human soul, whilst in the body, is in a state of bondage, from which it should be liberated by a system of penance; annihilation of the body is to the soul the greatest boon, as it will thereby be reunited to its original source, from which it has sprung by a system of emanation.

That the idea of personal immortality has no place in such a system, is natural enough; neither is the notion of sinner of sinful state of the soul reconcilable with it, sin being nothing but an illusion of the human mind. The Sufi is therefore either an ascetic, absorbed in the contemplation of the divine love, or more commonly an abandoned debauchee.

The Risalo of Abdul Latif is by no means an easy work, though its style is on the whole lucid and plain; the mystic sense, which underlies the whole, puzzles not infrequently the European reader, and even learned natives are now and then at their wit's end, when called upon to explain certain couplets; but the persevering student, will on the other hand be amply repaid for his labours by many beautiful passages, he will meet with, every where.

**The Metre**

The metre in which the Risalo is composed, is the so called Doho. It is a rude kind of metre, rhyming always at the end. The number of syllables (short or long) in a Doho is not fixed by a strict rule, but may vary according to the fancy of the poet; two and more Dohos form a verse with a common rhyme, the last Doho of which is always divided by a caesura into two halves, of which the former half must rhyme with the final syllable of the preceding Doho, the latter half remaining rhymeless. A certain number of verses forms a Sur or Rag (Song) named either after the chief subject, treated therein, or after the melody, according to which is should be intoned. The rhyme in a Sur is not the same throughout; each verse may rhyme differently, verses being considered quite independent of each other. The artificial and intricate meters of the Arabic and Persian poetry are quite unknown in Sindhi, the syllables being not measured by their original quantities, but merely intoned, after a certain rhythem, which is petty fairly kept up through the whole of a Sur, and which is by no means disagreeable to the ear, the Sindhi possessing in this respect peculiar facilities by reason of the vocalic termination of nouns.

Every Sur is concluded by the Vai, a kind of epilogue the peculiarity of which is a refrain which is repeated after every

couplet (in some Surs after every second couplet) and which throws an air of tenderness and melodiousness over the whole Sur.

**Text of Risalo**

The present edition of the Risalo has been made upon two good manuscripts, which have been carefully compared together by a learned native; where they differed, the most easy reading has been followed, as I had no further means at hand, in my present position, to decide, which of the two was the more genuine one. Great care has been taken in revising the proof sheets; but it was nearly impossible to prevent the frequent slips of the vowel-prints, the editor not being present at the place of printing. The reader's kind forbearance must therefore he asked for any deficiencies of this kind, which by careful attention to the context may easily be remedied.

In order not to render the volume too bulky and too expensive at the same time, a few Surs towards the end have been left out in this edition, as they were only of small compass and of indifferent value. The only one, the omission of which may be regretted, is the Sur Umar Marui, but as that is one of the largest Surs, it was felt an imperative duty to forego it, lest the allowed printing expenses be too far exceeded.

**Sindhi Alphabet**

It remains now to advert with a few words to the Alphabet, which has been employed in this edition. As the question about the alphabet best suited to the genius of the Sindhi language may still be considered an open one, I have chosen after mature deliberation and research, the Naskhy character with the additional signs and marks, which have come into common use in Hindustani; and as the Hindustani is more and more becoming a general language in India, and is now-a-days read and taught nearly in every Government or Mission School I considered it quite gratuitous to invent new alphabets, which hamper the spread of education in India. Every student, who has acquired the Hindustani alphabet can therefore without any further trouble master the few additional dots, which become necessary in adapting the Hindustani alphabet to the Sindhi. In

order to distinguish I from E, U from O, which in Hindustani are respectively expressed by one and the same letter, additional marks have been added for the convenience of the European scholar which however, may be dropped in prints destined for natives, as they will easily enough distinguish them. For further particulars I hope soon to be able to refer the student to my Sindhi Grammar, which will shortly after be published by the liberality of the Bombay Government.

In conclusion it is only just to state, that the means for publishing this first volume of native Sindhi literature have been most liberally granted by his Excellency, Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of Bombay who, ever since his appointment to the Commissionership of Sindh, has taken the liveliest interest in promoting the welfare of that province.

We humbly trust that by the publication of this Volume a firm base may be gained for the study of a language, which though not widely spread, is in many points superior to any other modern language of India and well deserving the notice of the linguist.

# THE RISALO: ITS MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

Tirathdas Hotechand

# THE RISALO: ITS MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

Tirathdas Hotechand

The word Risalo is a misnomer. It is in fact a musical compendium. It is a collection of inspired and spontaneous music. Shah Abdul Latif did not write out his compositions nor were they written down as composed. Their collection, consolidation and classification is posthumous, carried out by his disciples. The words of the music have indeed been reduced in writing permanently, but not the music of the words. The reason is that no staff notation has yet been devised to preserve permanently the music of Shah Abdul Latif. We have therefore to fall back on the oral method, that is to gather it from the lips of the common man, professional minstrel, the wandering bard and the mystic tramp. This method of course can not be free from error. Music like any other art is a living thing and it is always in the process of growing. What the present music of Shah Abdul Latif is said to be may not be the music in which he himself sang for his Sindhi listeners.

## The Dohira

The Risalo is a collection of two musical forms: the Duha and the Vai. Duha is termed as Dohira in the Sindhi language. It is a couplet form of Hindi poets. It was adopted by other Hindi poets like Tulsidas, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mira Bai, Surdas, Nasi Bhagat, Amir Khusru and many others. It was also adopted by Shah's predecessors such as Qazi Qazan, Shah Abdul Karim and many others. Duha is like a paragraph of

prose, containing more of meaning than its words. The collection of Duhas or stanzas are grouped in a Sur which means a complete poem. Each Sur is divided again in cantos and each canto is concluded by a Vai, a kind of epilogue. A vai is short lyrical poem like an ode or a song and the important peculiarity of it is a refrain which is repeated after every couplet. The prosody of Duha is based on the principles governing Sanskrit poetry. The Persian Ghazal which was the most common mode of expression of poetic thought, in the days of Shah Abdul Latif, was completely discarded by him because of the quite different genius of Sindhi language. Sindhi prosody does not depend on accent but it is exactly like the classical prosody of Greece and Rome based on the quantity of syllables, long or short. In Duha ryhme is used universally, but not the rhyme of the last syllabus but the rhyme of the last two syllables at least which must correspond with those of other lines. Each line of Duha contains 24 matras or instants or pulse-beats, divided up again in two feet according to the recognised plan. A matra denotes a length of time occupied in the utterance of a short vowel. The Duhas have many forms. There is a Soratha Duha which is an inverted Duha in which the second half of each line changes place with the first half. There is a choupai Duha of 4 lines, each line having 16 matras. Then we have chhahpai Duha of 6 lines. Shah latif has taken a lot of liberty with the standard forms of Duhas. His stanzas sometimes go as far as 9 or 10 lines due to his free and frequent flights of fancy and exigencies of time. Duha is the best adoptation when the verses composed are intended to be sung. The uniformity of the matras sometimes goes away whenever our poet has added Arabic or Persian phrases or epigrams in his verses but this inequality is hardly noticeable when the lines are sung out. Thus in Duha there is both rhyme and rhythm.

**Sindhi Music**

In the development of man and art, tradition, inheritance, environment, association play a very important part. The same piece of art when taken in a different country takes a somewhat different shape. It is more so in the case of music. Genius may be the same but the species are different. The same piece

of music is sung differently in different places. Rhythm or time measure is the soul of music. Time in music signifies the measure by which it is regulated. The time of Sindhi music resembles more or less the rhythm of Greece, Rome, and Iran. Rhythm is no other than the poetical feet which forms the basis of musical measure. The time relations of music are affected both by the structure of the language and by the method of verification which ultimately derives from it. In Sindh words are set to music rather than music is set to words. Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish and Afghan languages are considered to be harsh languages and unfavourable to music because of the paucity of the vowels and more abundance of consonants. Sindhi like Sanskrit has more of vowels and therefore is sonorous beyond any doubt and is particularly adopted to music. Sindh has all along been a land of synthesis and the Sindhi language having quite a different genius from that of Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, Afghan and other European languages, has not assimilated their music to its musical system. The languages of the invaders enriched no doubt our vocabulary, but they exercised a very negligible influence on the poetry and music of Sindh. The influence of geographical contiguity is always there, more so when the languages of the contiguous countries are derived from the same stock from which also the Sindhi language is derived. Therefore the Hindi, Punjabi, Gujrati, Kachi, Marwari, Kathiawari and Brohi systems of Music have left their impact on our system. The powerful rhythm of Arabic language and the practice of musical intoning of the mosque has done very little to mould the form of poetical and musical compositions of Sindh. For example Sur Khambat is of Gujrat and Sur Sorath of Kathiawar.

The Indian scale of music divides its octave into 22 srutis, intervals or semitones. The Greeks who adopted their octave from Egypt divided it into 24 semitones. This is illustrated as under:-*

| | Ni | Sa | Re | Ga | Ma | Pa | Dha | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indian | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 22 semitones |
| Greek | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 24 semitones |

The human voice has a tendency to ascend by leaps and descend by steps. The Greek system has one more leap than the Indian in Re and Dha. An experiment of Sindhi Kafi made with Indian Thumri showed that the Sindhi intervals are 24 like those of the Greek Eastern music. This experiment requires to be confirmed scientifically in a well equipped laboratory. A line or verse of Duha has also 24 instants. A Duha composition is therefore best adopted to Sindhi music. If the experiment is scientifically correct then the old theory that Sindhi music is a part of the heritage of Indian system of music is exploded. When Orientalists like Colonel Todd and others are of the view that the Indian octave was invented on the banks of the Indus, it is for the researchers to find out whether or not we have influenced the Indian system or the latter has influenced us. Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Baloch's research that Shah Abdul Latif made his new Tamboor, a five stringed instrument appears to suggest that it was made to make up the deficiency of two semi-tones in the Sindhian octave. A line of 24 matras can be divided into 4 feet of 6 matras, 3 feet of 8 matras, two feet of 12 matras and these can lend a variety of rhythm.

**Chant Music**

Duhas are sung in chant music. In investigating the chant music of Shah Abdul Latif we should not lose sight of the fact that the Vedas, the oldest literature of the world, were composed and chanted on the banks of our river Indus. We should also keep in view the powerful rhythm of Arabic language and the musical intoning of the mosque that it carried out even uptill today the chant music of the mosque. The result of this integration is the Tuppa which is still sung in a rude style by the camel drivers of Punjab. The Tuppa is also the favourite measure with Rajputs. Its chief character is plaintive simplicity. It is analogous to the Scotch or perhaps still more to the Normans. It is indigenous form. Its origin is the land of five rivers. The folklore of Hir Ranjha is still sung in the Punjab in Punjabi in the Tuppa style which is also prevalent in Rajputana, Cutch and Kathiawar. The peculiarity of the Punjabi Tuppa is that it is intoned in one stereotyped musical mode where as the chants of the Sindhi Duha are sung in the variety of musical

modes of the various Surs. If the Sur is, say Kalyan, then the Duhas under the chapter of Kalyan are chanted within the same scale of Sur Kalyan. The celebrated musician Shoree perfected the Tuppa style in India by giving it elegance and excellence. Shah in Sindh brought it within the ambit of the melody of each Sur. He did not allow it to remain in one stereotyped form but lent to it its variety and charm. Such a chant music is sung in more than two parts, sometimes three and sometimes four parts. For such music the instruments required are those for the purpose of droning such as the Ektaro, Tambur (Chautar), Rabab, Guitar etc. In Duha the music is subordinated to words and is monophonic in character.

**Choral Character**

A vai is folk music and is choral in character. It is peculiar mode of poetic composition in Sindh in which after every one or two verse one line runs as a chorus or a refrain which is repeated after every couplet, and the last word of the verse rhymes with the last word of the chorus. The choral repetition adds pleasantness to the piece. It is a choir singing a church music like Bhajan. It is sam-Kirtan i.e. united praise. It is congregational music. It denotes a large gathering of the audience. The crowd itself serves as a stimulus that keeps everyone rollicking, dancing, sometimes howling in emulation. One gives the song the others follow it by repeating the same lines once again. All join together when the lines lead to the burden of the song. In such music all are performers and there is no audience so to say. The music of the Hindu saints of India took the form of Bhajan; amogsts the Muslims of India it took the form of Qawali and in Sindh it took the form of Vai. In Vai the music is still subservient to its poetic theme. Its melody is gross because the notes are often cramped or extended a little away from the true notes. The Vai as it is sung still by the Faqirs at the shrine of Shah Latif makes this quite clear. A Vai is lyrical and its theme is love and prayer but is congregational in essence. No finer instruments are needed for this form of folk-music.

## Latif's Kafis

Besides the Duhas and Vais, there are many many Kafis of Shah Abdul Latif still on the lips of almost every Sindhi. Although they have now been collected and compiled in a book form, it is not known why the Kafis were not included in the Risalo. Were they excluded because of their lower poetic value, or because of the lightness of its music or for any other reason? These are the questions which have not been answered so far. There can be a possibility of the view that perhaps Kafi was not known in the days of Abdul Latif and is a later development of the Sindhi folk music.

Music occupies an integral part in the life of every nation but in our country music specially was discouraged, disapproved and denounced as profance and sacrilegious by the Mulla, Akhund and Qazi. An anecdote of Shah Latif which appears in the present compilation would illustrate this fact. Music therefore was confined to the minstrel class. It was for this reason our music still remained in the state of folk-music and made no progress towards the formation of classical music. The music in Sindh did not grow into a science as in the Indian counterpart. We have no Tarana, no Solfa-music, no Khayal, no Dhrupad, no Nataka. The times of Sindh history were turbulent, there were foreign invasions one after the other. But bellicosity is to the constant quality of man's mind. The intervals of peace and pursuits of art always come, though in Sindh they have been very few and far between. Hetrodoxy will always make itself felt and refleflected at least in the ordinary common man. Out of these omissions and commissions there grew out a musical form which is called the Sindhi Kafi. Kafi is the veritable music of Sindh. It is lyrical in essence. Its theme is love. Love songs have always had a wider field of appeal. Every nation is possessed of its love songs and Sindh is not a bit far behind them. The old sing them as acts of devotion, the young derive pleasure out of their contents; the pious considers them as sacred, while the profane will find in them many things which they glory either to have themselves performed or should have been glad to have had it in their power to achieve. These songs are the sacred hymns of Sindh and are

the lays of the Lord. It has become a musical form rather than a musical mode as it is in India. Our Kafis can be sung in any musical mode. The Kafis are more simple, short, and lucid than Vais in their texture and form. The Kafi is an individualised form of Vai. It is the solo music of Sindh. When Aieen Akbari talks of Sindhi music as Kami or amatory it talks of the Sindhi Kafi. Sindhi Kafi is not manly and solemn. It is light and graceful, womanly and voluptous like Khayal of the Indian counterpart. It does not possess the hard and deafening rhythm of Qawali. Sindhi Kafi is half way between classical and light music for it is a product of Tappa, Khayal and Thumri. It is lively and well adopted to pantomime or dancing. They are simple little melodies which keep the audience enraptured. It is divided into two parts: Asthai, the main part of the musical mode and Antra, the second half of the musical mode which includes notes of higher tetrachord. It admits of graces and Alap intonation. Its melody is simple yet sure. It needs no previous thought or special effort. It is elegant, bright and gay. It embodies small number of matraś ranging from 8 to 16. Judging this musical form in the light of the entire output of the Risalo the possibility of the view that it had not yet taken its form in the days of Abdul Latif is excluded. To its formation, Shah Latif has contributed considerably. The most important thing for which Shah Latif cannot be forgotten is the fact that he wrested the music from the minstrel class and gave it to his people as a substitute for religion. Any effort on the part of any musical institution to merge the Sindhi Kafi in the Ghazal is bound to fail and will fail miserably due to the different set-ups of the two languages. But any attempt to align it with Punjabi Dholki music will succeed sonorously, for Dholki like Pakwaz is the instrument of percussion still prevalant with the women folk of our country. The Sindhi Kafi has taken centuries in its formation which the posterity of Sindh will not willingly let die or forget.

# THE DIVINE INFLUX

Prof. M.A. Ansari

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A current flows quietly, imperceptibly throughout the physical universe. It passes through the toughest of the barriers. It fills the empty space between one atom and its neighbour. It penetrates an atom and causes jerks to the electrons urging them to communicate with the outside world. It makes its way through the membrances of a living organism, linking energies, powers, faculties, forces. It tilts, jolts, disturbs, causing imbalance everywhere. It charges, discharges, recharges. Under its impact, old order changes yielding place to new, old patterns fade, new patterns appear, old symphonies die out, new symphonies are born. Monstrous forces tremble and despoil themselves at its voice. Gigantic mountains crumble, decay, and disappear at its command. Oceans evaporate at its call. Man- helpless man - however proud he may be, ultimately bows and submits to its will. It washes away the glamour and pageantry of the sin-soaked world. It is the Destroyer, the Preserver, the Creator.

Latif never cares to give us complete action. There in no systematic exposition taking the reader to the crisis and then coming down to the inevitable denouncement. Rather he seizes a psychic moment, identifies himself with the heroine and pours down a gentle effusion of his soul. There is no logical and chronological sequence, no raising up of a structure to block our view of the ultimate reality. The Universal so irradiates the particular that all dark veils are burnt away and we have the vision of one true light.

Man's onerous task of crossing the sea has been described in Siri raag and Samoondi. There, man uses the sailing boat to carry out trade and commerce with the world and exposes himself to the hostilities of the physical environment from which only merciful providence can save him. On a solid ground man feels invulnerable and complacent; on board he risks himself for worldly profits while his wife waits patiently praying for his safe and successful return. Even the worldly transactions have ethical and emotional undertones which are set to music by a mastermind. But it is in Sur Sohni that a woman is made to throw all precaution to winds; she swims across the river in terrible spate with no other aid but a paltry baked pot - which also later on she dismisses as an unnecesary encumbrance for the soul - simply in order to have a glimpse of her lover. Note again the change in situation: from solid ground to the frail board and then throwing the raft away and entrusting oneself to the bosom of the river, taking only one's longing into the deep! After all how long can a human being retain a solid ground under his feet? Imagine the lovely limbs of Sohni in rhythmic motion balancing her delicate body against the cold waves which might devour her! Imagine Mehar on the other bank wistfully hoping to wrest his beloved from the arms of his rival - this time the river! Beware, O beware! assimilation and emission go on incessantly in microcosm and macrocosm. The ground of life is slippery: many a pit, many a bog, many a fen, are there, wherein an unwary traveller may slip and be lost for ever.

What is the background of the present precarious situation? Blessed be the time when Sohni dwelt, dainty and debonair, in the homely cottage of her father, the potter named Tulla. That was the state of innocent blessedness similar to that enjoyed by Adam and Eve in paradise before they committed the act of disobedience. In life the songs of innocence are invariably followed by the songs of experience. A rich merchant's son named Izat-beg from Bukhara happened to see her and fell deeply in love with her. He came every day on the pretext of buying pots and held secret conferences with her. Suhni responded. Soon Izat-beg lost his wealth in buying the pots and

he became a pauper. He offered his services to Tulla who made him his cattleherd. He became an expert in looking after the buffaloes and at the same time made secret advances to Sohni. Note the feelings of Sohni:

ادیون سڀ اندام چڑن منهنجا چوریا
لارن جا لئو لائي سا کيئن آچيان عام
لڳس جنهن جي لام سو دلاسا دوست منجي.

" O my friends! Every fabric of my being in set to sprightly dance by the sound of cattle-bells. The very sight of calves creates a thrill of ecstasy which I cannot communicate to common folk. May the friend now send consolation! for, on him do I entirely depend".

The taste of curds which Mehar offered her, the lilting bells of Mehar's buffaloes, stimulated Sohni towards the loss of stability and well-adjusted ease. A humming sound of invisible birds summons us to dangerous situations.

But the clandestine meetings could not continue indefinitely. The secret was discovered, Mehar was expelled from the house and Sohni was married to another potter's son named Dam. Mehar continued to herd the buffaloes on the other side of the river. Sohni managed to keep her chastity safe and sound from her consort telling him plainly that he had already given her heart away and that he had no right over her. "The abashed huband was completely crestfallen and never tried to molest her."

Behind the story there is an allegory with univeral significance. I have tried to explain it in another article thus:

"Who is Dam? he is our ephemeral earthly appendage who never completely relaxes his hold on us until we breathe our last. He is a world that is too much with us and tries to wash away from our minds the dear memory of our eternal home. He is our silly self that is bewitched by toys. He reminds us of those quibbling and equivocating weird sisters that make a fool of Macbeth by false promise of glory and grandeur and finally bring about his downfall. Sohni never surrenders to his

wiles. She understands that of which Macbeth was most ignorant: Dam is a thorn that prick her side and causes pain, Sahir is the rose. Her heart's yearning is for him alone." Note how Sohni expresses her mind in this respect:

ڏم ڏيهاڙي ڏي، سندا ميهر ميهڻا
جهليم ٽي جهوليءَ ۾، پلءِ پايو سي
مرجان چاليه چئي، سگهان سهرين جي.

"Every day Dam accuses me of having relation with Mehar. I accept all such reproach, all such taunts, all such calumnies. Let him say anything to his heart's content, I will bear all these slanders for I am ultimately destined to have relations with my friend alone."

That relations with Dam symbolize our relations with the world and relations with Sahir symbolize our relations with Heaven, can be clearly the conclusion drawn from the following comments of our poet:

سندو ڏم ڏمڪار، هڏهين ڪونهي هن ڪي
هيءَ پاڻيءَ سين پانهنجو، پسائي نہ سينگار
ڪارڙ منڌ ميهار، ڪاريءَ رات ڪن تري.

"She is not demoralized by the harassment of Dam. She does not soil her beauties and graces by the dirty waters of the earth. For Mehar, the woman swims across the strong current in the dark night."

However hard we try to interpret Sohni's relationship with Dam otherwise, we do not succeed. Her union with Dam is an artificial, forced union, without her consent, and involving no natural affection or affinity, which cannot last long.

ڏينهن ڏهلا ڏم سين، آهيان اهڻان ڌار
ساڪڙ! سائو سيرهم.

"Hard days I pass in the company of Dam. I have been separated from you O friend! Help me in the midstream.

" These hard days are those of our ephemeral earthly existence in forced union with the body, with contacts with the material world which bring in their train greed, jealousy, malice, hard dealings, incriminations and myriad other evils, suffocating the soul.

Mehar on the other hand is our eternal home, our universal self to whom we have got to return and the ultimate peace we are destined to attain. What a mental torture on this side of the river and what tranquility on the other! Only if humanity were to keep constantly before itself the pledge the soul made before the Creator, what a paradise would it establish even on this earth!

الست ارواحن کي جڏهن امر ڪيو احد
هو من ڪاڏو مهار ڏي، سهڻي سڪڻ سڏ
دلو دور درياھ جي، ڪيو ارادي اڏ
جيڪن آيس ڏانهن عهد، سو پاري مند پاتار ۾.

"When the One Creator asked, 'Am I not your Lord? and the souls replied in the affirmative, the Lord commanded the souls to obey Him alone. At that time Sohni's heart was inclined to Mehar. The earthen pot was broken into two through the motion of the river-water. It was the Will. The woman fulfilled the promise in the bottom of the river which he had made on the very first day of the Creation."

This is her role here below in between the first day of creation and the last day when souls will be summoned:

ڪامان، پچان، پچران، لڇان ۽ لوچان
تن ۾ تونس پرينءَ جي، پيان نہ ڏاپان
جي سموند منهن ڪريان، تو ۽ سر ڪيائي نہ ٽي.

" I am consumed. I am burnt. I struggle. I writhe. I seek. There is eternal thirst in my soul to unite with my universal self. The more I drink from life's reservoir, the more thirsty I become. Even if I drink the whole sea, it is not a single sip.

The life-time of longing, search and struggle does not bring respite to the human soul. In the words of Tennyson:

That which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Life is thus an uphill task demanding upon us faith, high aspiration, courage, fortitude and heroic will to attain a higher end. We have to thirst, burn and struggle so as to leave behind lower stage and advance to the higher stage keeping constantly before us one true light from which we have come and to which we have got to return.

(2)

The physical universe consists of waves - a system of radiation - beating tremulously on the sea shores of time. Even when we are on the ground we are surrounded by waves. There are waves of atmosphere, there are electro-magnetic waves, there are cosmic waves. What is man but waves, psycho-motor waves temporarily bottled up but establishing relation with the universe in time and space through mysterious channels of communication. Our education consists of inner purification, inner expansion, modifying reponse after experience of results, learning through personal experience and also through experience of other souls. No sight but gives us new insight into things and persons, no sound but brings to us a new message from a great beyond, no touch but electrifies us towards a new consciousness of psycho-physical relationship, no smell but initiates us to the dream-world of love and beauty, no taste but makes us connoisseurs of elixirs and nectars!

Let us now reflect upon Latif's references to water as a symbol of purity, freshnes, swift activity, change, expanse and depth. I wish one could appreciate the aesthetic significance of the following lines:

لهر مڙيو ئي لال، وهڻ ڪنوريان وترو
اوپهارا عبير جا، جر مان اچن جال
ڪنن گهڙي ڪاله، سڪ پريان جي سهڻي.

"Wavelets have the same nature, the same character, the same charm as the most precious diamond. The softest element carries within itself the characteristics of the hardest metal. The flushing flow of the river-water is more fragrant than the best of the perfumes. At least for the sensitive mind of the poet, the deep water carries within itself sweet odours beyond the capacity of the most bewitching ottoes. It was Sohni's aspiration for the beloved that urged Sohni to plunge herself inside the swiftest current."

Who can grasp the thought, the imagery and the symbolic significance of these lines?

دائم جا درياه ۾ سا مڇي ڪني ڪوهه
آهس ايءُ اوندهه پاڻي ڪٽي ته پيان.

"How can that fish grow stale and rot which is always in the river? When current upon current, layers upon layers, lights upon lights wash her, purify her, refresh her, irradiate her, how can she lose her soul's beauty and freshness? When human soul is constantly under the divine process of education in the intitution of univeral wisdom, how can it remain poor, ignorant, lethargic? Even in that state its constant aspiration is towards more and more drinkable water, assimilable light. Its constant cry is: where is water for me to drink, light for me to assimilate, wisdom for me to acquire?"

What other poet has stirred the soul with the stimulating drink such as this?

ڪا جا ڪن ڪرين پنهيءَ پنهيءَ ٻڻ جهڻ پاڻ ۾
اکيون تنهن آب کي آڏيءَ اکرين
توڻي تکون ڏين، ته بہ اڄ انهين کي نہ لهي.

"The swift, whirling currents whisper to one another secretly when the morning is still wet with dew. The eyes remember that water even at midnight. Even though they gulp their thirst is never quenched."

What is the significance of swift, swirling, sweeping currents? What secret whispering goes on amongst them? Why does even the plentiful intake not satisfy the restless soul? These are the questions which made us pause.

Water is the cause of health for the body and the mind; water helps us to swim to the other side of the river; water seems to threaten but is really a helpful and merciful medium; water charms and stimulates us to activity; in silent sympathy our personality begins to thaw and float freely; water may cause disintergration to our raft but ultimately it unites us with the beloved. Sohni discloses the secret of her heart even to a floating log accepting it as a companion in the journey:

٩ ڀاندي جي ٻيلي ٿيين تہ حال ڳرهيان هيءُ
سگهو ساعت نہ جندڑو، جر ريءُ منهنجو جيءُ
ساوڻ، سيارو پائٽيان، وهہ پريان جي ويءُ
پار جنهن جو پيءُ، ويڃڻ واجب تن تي.

"O floating log, if you be my friend, I may unfold the secret of my heart to you. Not for a moment does my being remain healthy without deep water. For me even the rainy Sanwan is like the dry winter, the wet season does not deter me from my goal. It is my moral obligation to swim to the other side for my love resides there."

The terror and tumult of the river, the dark night, the pattering rainfall, the beasts of the land, those of water do not shake Sohni's determination. The currents of love are stronger within her than even the most powerful eddies:

ڪاري رات ڪچو گهڑو مٽان وسي مينهن
هڪڙو ٻيڙو بيراهہ جو ٻيو سانيارن سينهن
شال م ڇڄي نينهن، گهڑان گهوريو جندڑو.

" The night is dark, the jar unbaked, the rain falls all over. There is no clear path and lions are prowling. May the ties of love be not tarnished! Let me plunge into the deep. Life without love is meaningless for me, let it be sacrificed!"

The poet's encouragement to Sohni finds no better words than these:-

تار ترندين، لڙ لنگهندين عشق جي آڌار.

"You will swim through the river in spate, you will pass through the baffling and buffeting tumultuous waves with the support of love."

(3)

Only if a man were inspired by love, what would he not face, what would he not achieve? Latif's variety of theme is inexhaustible. The question of ends and means has haunted many a philosophic mind from times immemorial. In his famous book carrying the same title, Aldous Huxley expresses this remark: "It is sufficiently obvious that the systematic cultivation of self-awareness may as easily produce undersirable a desirable results. The development of personality may be regarded as an end in itself or, alternatively, as a means towards an ulterior end- the transcendence of personality through immediate cognition of ultimate reality and through moral action towards fellow individuals, action that is inspired and directed by this immediate cognition. Where personality is developed for its own sake, and not in order that it may be transcended, there tends to be a raising of barriers of separateness and an increase of egotism." It is chiefly with proper development of personality and the transcendence of human personality through cognition of ultimate reality that Latif is chiefly concerned. He points out to us the dangers of the barriers of separateness and the increase of egoism. The earthen jar which Sohni uses as a raft is the symbol of the multifarious 'means' like personality, physical body, clothes, machinery, administration, money and institutions. Our preoccupation with means, our worship of clothes and machinery, our greed of collecting more and more of worldly chattel, our conceit and egotism

create schisms in the society and separate us from the universal soul. Sohni does not give much importance to means however indispensable they appear at the initial stage. Note her conduct:

گھڑ گھڑو هٿ ڪري، ٻهون نهاري ٻنگ
داما من خاف مقام ربة، ايءُ لنگهيائين لنگھ
سڪندين کي سيد چئي، ڪين جهليندو جهنگ
رات جنين جو رنگ، الا سي اڪارئين.

"She managed a jar, looked for the opportunity and then entered the river. She stood awe-stricken at the sight of sublime Reality. The intricate forest will not check the progress of those who aspire for the higher ends. May God help her to cross the dismal places which bear the very colour of the dark night!"

Note her respect for the means which bring her nearer to the beloved:

مِنهِن جنهين جي مون ڏٺو مُنهُن ميهار جو
آهم ساه سٽون سو ڪيئن گهڑو گهوريان

"The jar through whose pretext I saw the face of Mehar is dear to me as much as my breath. How can I sacrifice it?

But again in the following verses she does not take it to heart if the jar is broken:

گهڑو ڀڳو تہ گهوريو، پاڻان هو حجاب
واڃٽ وڃي وجود ۾، رهيو روح رباب
ساهڙ ري ثواب، آئون گهٽو ئي گهوريان.

"If the jar is broken, let is be sacrificed: It was a barrier. In my being there is a divine music vibrating. Without the beloved I sacrifice even the blessed state of happy innocence."

Unless man reaches that state where the soul is unattached and unencumbered he cannot reach the goal of divine union.

Science, technology, industry, democracy and administration through justice are all means to an end. They become unnecessary restrictions for a soul which has attained divine beauty and must be pushed aside if one desires a glimpse of the Divine Face:

گهڙو ڀڳو منڊ مٽي وسيلا ويا
تنهان پوءِ سُڻا سهڻيءَ سڏ ميهار جا.

The earthen jar disintegrated, the woman died, all the means disappeared. Only after that Sohni heard the calls of Mehar.

How can a dead woman hear the calls? This is a mystery inexplicable. Here is the poet's analysis of the situation:

جڏهن وسيلن لوڙهي ڇڏي لڙ ۾
پاراران پرين تڏهن پڇي سهڻي.

"When the means drowned Sohni in the tumultous uproar, the beloved from the other side of the river remembered her. The poet then turns to all and renders this advice:

پاڻ مَ ڪڍ پاڻ سين وسيلا وياءِ
عشق ساڻ الاءِ پير پريان جي پار ڏي.

Don't take your self along with yourelf, lose all means,
Take only love and move gently towards the beloved.

Once we pay no attention to means, become indifferent to the worldly reward and even do not depend on the hope about the next world, there is no question of who merges into whom. According to Latif it was not the sea that drowned Sohni, on the contrary it was Sohni who drowned the sea within herself.

سهسين سائر ٻوڙيا، منڊ ٻوڙيو مهراڻ

This is the state at which physical existence ceases to have any significance, emotional abandonment on the stimulation through music does not satisfy the soul, even virtuous conduct and good work with the hope of getting any reward do not goad the spirit. The only regret of the soul is: "On what account

should I be separated from the soul of my soul, life of my life, light of my light.

نڪا تفاوت ۾ نڪا منجهه رباب
ڪهڙي منجهه حساب هڻڻ منهنجو هوت ري.

*Thus the trinity or triple relationship of Sohni, Sahir and Sair (the seeker, the one sought and the current that carries) is dissolved. This is the mystery of all the mysteries:*

ساهڙ سا سوهڻي سائر پڻ سوئي
آهي نجوئي ڄڃ ڄجهاندڙ ڳالهڙي.

The 'Hijab', the curtain, the separateness is torn to shreds and one is face to face with the Divine Reality. In the words of the Holy Quran:

ماعندكم ينفذ وماعندالله باق ط
ولنجزين الذين حبروا اجرهم باحسن ماكانوا يعلمون

"Whatever is with man must vanish. What is with Allah will endure. And we will certainly bestow on those who patiently persevere their reward according to the best of their actions."

If you want to endure let the light of Allah advance within your being. Your places, your cloudcapped towers, your gigantic machines, your splendid ships, shall all diappear leaving not a rack behind. Remember your pledge and live and die for the Lord alone. Live, work and die in Allah.

# HEROINES OF SHAH ABDUL LATIF

Abdul Rahim Shaikh

# HEROINES OF SHAH ABDUL LATIF*

Abdul Rahim Shaikh

Shah Abdul Latif, the philospher-poet, sufi and saint of Sindh was one of the greatest poets of his times. Although his works are of an international literary importance and possess a treasure of immense value, he is still confined to the people of the land to which he belongs. "A poet is born not made". And such poets do not grace the world with their existence and presence in all climes and season but find their birth in the age most fitting to them and the climate most suitable to their environments. Shah Abdul Latif had rightly been born in the desert land of Sindh and has been quite aptly termed as the 'Nightingale of the Desert'. He was not only a born poet but also a lyricist, a philosopher and the best chronicler of his times. He could portray every shade of life, with its unending miseries and sorrows mixed with happiness and sweetness. He could hold a mirror to life, life as it was then led. But he had his vision on the future as he had a peep into the past. He has taken his tales from the whispering tongues of the rustic people thus popularising them by giving a touch that is of his own making. They do not only engirdle the boundaries of the intellegentia but also touch the borders of the common man's universe. He becomes the greatest story-teller by telling tales that were current in this 'land of sufis and saints'.

*Taken from: The Sind3h- People and Progress, Karachi, 1954

In all his works, Shah is more just and generous to his female characters. His portrayal of the 'weaker sex' is strong testimony of the fact that it is for a woman to love and launch a ceaseless struggle against the heavy odds of the most potent of emotions called "Love". His female characters are more active than opposite sex and dominate the latter in all respects. They are, in the realm of Shah, the real rulers and men figure as insignificant creatures. His heroes lead a 'passive' life, throughout the duration of the story and more or less contribute to a sad and tragic end to which most of his famous heroines are drifted. In short, Shah believed and translated his belief faithfully that it is the woman alone who is capable of sincere sacrifice and can bear the 'pangs of despised love'.

The heroines that Shah has created in his ever enjoyable poems, stand unparalleled in the domain of Sindhi literature. Shah has given these "Airy nothings, a local habitation and a name". He shapes them in flesh and blood; and they have become immortal in the literary field. Shah's heroines in his stories virtually enact the characters of heroes. They are in action more than their counterparts. Possibly his idea was to glorify and immortalise the womanhood by enkindling the fire of love in them for their opposite sex. In addition, to magnify them further, he introducess fate and creates situations and obstructions which are beyond the control of his heroines.

Shah-jo-Risalo is a sacred trust to the people of Sindh and it comprised the entire treasure of literary value. It consists of several folk stories of Sasui-Punhu, Suhini-Mehar, Umer-Marui, Lilan-Chanesar, Noori-Jam Tamachi, Moomal- Rano, etc. All the stories have a common theme- "Love and its aftermath". An atmoshpere of romance prevails throughout. The reader takes up the book only to finish it. The tales take their birth when the situation has reached a climax and are primarily concerned with the main theme and culminate in the end in a manner fitting to the set-up of each story. The main role in his stories is performed by the female characters, who are the real heroes more than their counterparts, who only supply the remaining material necessary for the tale to complete. He paints and picturises his characters with a peculiar touch in or-

der to exhibit and demonstrate his mystic ideals and ideas. He, therefore, feeds them carefully and tenderly with the spoon of his sufic doctrines, and makes them the vehicles of his poetic expression.

Even the names of his stories are after his heroines. His heroes are nothing by themselves and they exist only for the heroines. In comparision with Suhini, Mehar is a mere figure. We have to think of Sasui's sacrifice in order to forget Punhu. In the story of Noori and Jam Tamachi, the latter is known not as the ruler of Thatta but as a lover of Noori. It was Noori who gave lusture to his otherwise 'dead' existence and but for her he would have died unheard, unsung and unknown. Says Shah:

"It was Noori, who immortalised Tamachi."

Moomal and Lilan, who unlike Sasui, Suhini or Noori, are not without defects and certain weakness has been attached to them only to depict them as inferior to the above heroines, who constitute their creator's entire doctrine and faith of a real 'Salik'. But Mommal and Lilan are not less superior and amiable to Rano or Chanesar. Chanesar is immortalised by Lilan, the woman he loved. Shah was more attracted by the remorse of Moomal than by the royality of Rano.

An author seldom brings his own self while depicting the characters of his stories. But Shah acts contrary to the dictum he being more of a story-teller. he identifies himself with his creations and they are his 'lengthened shadows'. His poetry is reflection and shadow of his own life. The different characters that crowd his stories, represent and exhibit their author's views of life. He points out various zig zag ways and means and byelanes of approaching the same goal. Shah was a poet, a lover, a mystic and a philosopher and all these qualities and traits combine and are grouped in his heroines. So overdominated by these ideas he is, that whenever, his character is led astray, he himself indulges in preachings and directions. It is true that Mehar was the first to fall in love with Suhini and to court asceticism in consequence. So was Punhu, who on hearing about the bewitching beauty of Sasui left his princehood and came down to meet his love:

"Bhanbhor was sweetened with the sweet-smell of the Caravan".

Inspite of all this, Shah speaks of his heroines only and forgets to remember his heroes. To illustrate, in Sur Suhini, Shah unfolds the river with its revolving whirpools, raging floods, innumerable crocodiles ready to devolve Suhini, who enters the river on a dark night to meet her lover. Thus Suhini is made more prominent and Mehar less conspicous. We get but a faint and feeble shadow of the latter when the former is removed from the scene and when he utters:

> "Holding a straw in his hand, the lover standing at the bank, is crying and questions the Indus its courage to drown his beloved. The lover says: O' river; I will complain to God against you on the day of resurrection".

The Surs Abri, Ma'azoori, Desi, Kohyari and Hussaini, which relate the story of Sasui-Punhu, contain only the woes and the heart- rending cries of the heroine. They reveal the true impulses and emotions of Sasui who corresponds to the theory of Aristole's "Man in action" and more or less is epitomised by the poet. She, in search of her lover, undertakes the hazardous and irksome journey, ready to face the onslaught of the outrageous. But Shah seems to be uninerested in Punhu who has been kept in the background for the reasons known to Shah alone, and we are not shown of his sufferings in silence. Only once, he speaks of Punhu:

"Punhu along with other washermen is cleaning clothes".

Similar is the fate of Mehar, Chanesar, Rano, Jam Tamachi, Umer, Khetsen etc. Lilan although spurned by her husband Chanesar due to her own folly, succeeds through protestations in reconciling with him, yet Chanesar remains silent and the only glimpse that we get of him is through her.

Marui, the semblance of chastity and patriotism, dominates from the beginning to the end of the tale. The whole episode centres round her and we hear very little of Umer or Khetsen. Umer is brought in only as the author's instrument in bringing Marui and reducing her to a sad plight, which raises her to the forefront.

'Noori', the light and life of Sur Kamode has more lustre

than the ruler and monarch of the Lower Sindh Jam Tamachi, who deserved to be allotted a longer space than has been given to him. True to his belief, Shah prefers Noori- a fisherwoman drawn from the rustic life- to a prince coming from the royal family. The only exception which Shah makes is in Sur Sorath or Sur Ghatoo where the poet dwells more on Rai Diach and Bijal or seven Valiant Brothers respectively, although this appears to be accidental. Preacher, as Shah was, he does not only refrain from advising but also indulges in admonishing his heroines. To Suhini he renders the advice:

"Die with Mehar, do not return".

When Lilan sold Chanesar for a diamond necklace to Kaunru and in return got sad separation, the poet suggests to her:

"O Lilan! give up all excuses if you want to attain success.
Wrap thy cloth round thy body and drown yourself in the ocean of poverty.

If you make your husband happy he will not banish you".

He also rebukes her by saying:

"O foolish woman! you are enamoured by a diamond necklace".

So also Moomal to forget the absence of Rano clothes her sister and recreates Rano. As a consequence she looses Rano partly due to his misunderstanding and partly owing to her foolishness. Shah does not leave her but picks her up in her distress and becomes her adviser:

"You took Rano to be a toy. How can you expect him to come back".

His guidance needs no bounds and he occasionally surpasses in consoling his creations. To Marui he says:

"Do not weep or bewail or cry. When the world sleeps you pray to God. you will see the lands in which you have been married".

He also at times takes the role of a prophet and forewarns his characters of the impending dangers and misfortunes. Sasui receives such a warning from him:

"Mind you; Jats might take away Punhuu from you
Hence prepare for their warm reception".

Shah could have touched his heroes in a more realistic and artistic manner, had he intended to make them lovely and lonely, but this he reserved for his heroines only. He begins his stories where his heroines come on the scene and ends his tales where they have been removed tragically or otherwise. Sur Moomal-Rano, however, differs in this respect from other stories as it gives some details.

Shah believed that it is for a woman to go in search of man and to strive to achieve her object. To her, love is not only a feeling of the moment or "desire of the moth for the flame" but a conviction, a doctrine and an article of faith. But love without the man with whom she is in love, is no love for her. Lovers of Shah are mainly heroines and not the heroes. It is Suhini who dies while crossing a river to meet her lover. To her adventures, he gives a wider space but neglects Mehar totally. In order to eclipse Mehar, Shah avoids the popular anecdote of Mehar's cutting of flesh from his thigh which, if narrated, would have given Mehar an equal place with her, if not more. Mehar had also swam across the river several times and on many dreadful nights but Suhini's crossing is immortalised perhaps because she was a woman.

Shah carries Sasui into sandy deserts and stony mountains in search of her lover. He is not satisfied with her premature death and carries the story to a life after death:

"When Azrail came and woke the sleeping girl,
Sasui fancied "Punhu sent this man."

He has successfully probed into the depths of her feelings and he has so to say cut open her heart breathing with life.

Marui, although a prisoner and helpless to reach her parents and her Khetsen, seldom forgets to remember her country and people. The poet has not mentioned anything of Khet. Even her parents forget her so that she is forced to say:

"None has turned up-not even the camelmen
Even my own people did not come."

But she never never forgets them and longs to see them in her

country:

"I always remember the cattle that graze in my lands".

Jam Tamachi fell in love with Noori, but her character has been made somewhat a subordinate to that of his. She is the personification of innocence and simplicity. Shah has tried to show that "It is for a man to command and women to obey". He re-echoes Milton: "He for God only, She for God in him." She exists for him and therefore she has to humiliate herself and make him happy. Noori did not love physical and outward happiness as she knew that happiness of heart and spirit was far superior.

Every story- be it a poem, prose, etc, has some central theme. Shah has also one central idea along which his story revolves. His tales though differently told, are mostly tragic. He has maintained the unity of thought in all the stories. Man's chief aim in life is to search truth and Shah expressed this doctrine through his heroines. One has to encounter and surmount several obstructions and obstacles to achieve that aim. But one has to endeavour and preserve. This is correctly and truly reflected in the character of his heroines. They lose themselves in order to find the real truth; they withstand all the temptations which this world has to offer and thus attain their goal. In Noori's character, Shah expresses:

"Those who are humble always succeed."

Before God only supplication and humility weighs. Noori who was a fisherwoman conquered the heart of Tamachi because of her humble and simple character, whereas Lilan lost her husband as she was proud, naughty and selfish.

"All those Samma and Soomra girls go to hell who are proud."

It was, again, through her humbleness and repentance that Lilan got her husband back. When she felt ashamed of her childish act, she told Chanesar:

"O my beloved; Do not leave me for I am blameworthly".

In Moomal, Shah has shown that real satisfaction and eternal bliss cannot be got through artificial substance. It was her re-

pentance which reconciled her to her husband.

"O Mendhra (Rano)! come back and forgive all my faults.
You are husband to many, but to me your are the one."

Shah compliments her:

"Rano has been sent to you. You will get him back now,
Early in the morning in your 'Kak' will enter the camel of Rano".

Even Moomal and Lilan, who rocked in the cradle of pomp and luxury, had to give up every thing in return for enternal joy. This philosophy is well illustrated in Shah's characters particularly his heroines. His fatalism is also present in his poetry which is spoken through his heroines. Sasui after separation from Punhu, cries:

"Who am I to oppose the divine decree".

Marui also speaks in the same tone when she says:

"It was destined; otherwise who would come in this castle".

And so Suhini says:

"Without His will who can enter the waters".

These three heroines embody the idea of Shah's fatalism. His other heroines, though they are made to suffer, suffer without accusing nature. On the contrary Moomal and Lilan blame themselves. The main reason for this differential treatment in their character is that the first three suffer not because of their follies or blunders but undergo trials and tribulations because of love. The only consolation for them in their encounter with fate is to make nature responsible for all plights and persecutions.

Shah's famous heroines come from the low and rustic class. Marui is the daughter of a poor peasant of Thar; Noori is fisherwoman by caste; Suhini is the daughter of a potter; Sasui, that of a Brahmin but was bred and brought up by a washerman. Moomal, Lilan and Sorath alone come from the high family. Moomal is the daughter of Raja Nand; Lilan is the queen of Chanesar and Sorath is in fact the daughter of Raja Anerai but is more popularly known as Ratna, potter's daughter.

This treatment in characters by Shah is not altogether unjust. His experience in life had made him feel that poverty is the real touch-stone of character rarely reared in upper strata of society.

Determination, self-sacrifice and self-denial are the important ingrediants required by those who are in search of truth. Shah discovered these qualities in poor people and not in the rich.

The troublesome and complicated life which the heroines of Shah lead, prove that Paradise and God are to be seen thorugh the binoculars of human tears. It is through human efforts and struggles that we can reach the super human. Sorrows and sufferings may come in the way of human beings but to undergo these hardships bravely and valiantly is realy angelic. As a goldsmith in order to test the quality of gold, places a bar of gold in burning fire, Shah also makes his heroines cross the fire of worldly ordeals and see the path of union through their death.

Shah's heroines do not belong to the same catagory but are drawn from different sources. If, however, an attempt is made to classify them, Suhini and Sassui, and Moomal and Lilan will form an admirable couple and pair. Noori is in contrast to Lilan and Moomal. Marui is a character by herself and Sorath is different in all respects from the rest.

Shah occupies a unique place in the field of Sindhi literature. He is lonely but lovely and a shining star in the otherwise dark firmament of Sindhi literature. He is the stenographer to Truth and mysticism. His heroines constitute his cardinal principle of love and life. Through them he has justified the ways of 'God to Man'. They if alloyed together will make one complete 'Salik' which was the aim of Shah.

## SUCH IS MY BELOVED

At times He closes the latch,
At times the Beloved's doors open wide,
At times I come, no admittance find,
At times He calls, and lead me in,
At times I for a whisper long,
At times He wears me in His heart,
Such is my Beloved.

## ECHO AND THE VOICE

Echo is the same voice
Only if thou knowest the twist of the sound
Before even they were one;
In hearing only they seem as two.

## THE PALACE

The palace is one, windows myriad,
Look where I may, the Lord is before me.
Myriad are thy bodies, myriads on myriads.
Life is one in every being, forms look many, apart.
Oh love, how can I speak of thy ways!

# HEROES OF SHAH

Abdulally F. Kalbani

# HEROES OF SHAH

Abdulally F. Kalbani

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, the poet laureate of Sindhi language a poet of no kingly court but of the King of kings, the creater of the Universe- has sung only the praises of the Providence, directly and indirectly through his Romantic stories. Inspite of the diversity of description, the unity of idea runs throughout the Muse asserting the existence of the Highest, All-Powerful, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, the Lover of all and the Beloved of all- the Most loved, the Most sought.

The collection of Latif's poetry called 'Shah-jo-Risalo' contains 36 chapters including seven such chapters in which Shah has woven in verse, seven stories of Love wherein the chief characters are:

1. Suhni and Mehar.
2. Sasui and Punhoo.
3. Leela and Chanesar.
4. Moomal and Rano.
5. Marui and Umar.
6. Noori and Jam Tamachi.
7. Sorath and Rai Diach and Bijal.

In the above list, the names of heroines are shown first and of the heroes after them, for two reason:

(1) the compilers of Shah-jo-Risalo have maintained that order, and

(2) the stories are renowned under such captions as in the Arabic, Persian and Punjabi stories like Laila-Majnoo, Shirin-Farhad, Hir-Ranjho etc.

Some commentators argue that the names of the heroines are purposely shown first because the Oriental poets have dwelt much more at the heroine than on the hero. No doubt Shah Latif, too, has in his Muse portrayed the heroine more than the hero. The hero is often silent, it is the heroine that speaks, weeps, cries and re-counts her miseries. No body can deny that according to the original stories, the heroes too have suffered in the path of love same sort of difficulties and tortures but Shah never gives vent to their sufferings, they bear them silently and bravely. The heroes of Shah, therefore, are more daring, gallant, valorous, audacious, resolute, bold, firm, confident and self-relying than their counterparts. This, Shah proves through the words of the heroines who testify that each hero of the story is more beautiful, elegant, graceful, wise, virtuous, noble, lovely, wity, exaulted and demigod. Suhni says about Mehar:

Who so ever saw the face of Mehar,
Uneasy would they lie craving for my lord.
For Him they would merge in ocean
Dashing in whirlpools thro' love and Passion.

Sasui says about Punhoo:

Had they seen my Punhoo friend
Cried in chaos in moutains.

and Moomal testifies:

No one is like Rano who surpasses all
He alone succeeded in winning me
Where-ever I turn I hear his call
There is nothing else beside He.

Marui is a bit different. Umar loves her but she does not. She loves her parents and her country. For her, royal robes, ornaments and jewels are nothing in comparison to her parental poor attire. The black strings in her arms are better than the golden bracelets offered by the King who had kidnapped her.

In this chapter there is no apparent hero. In the remaining romantic chapters too the hero is highly spoken of and is super eminent, elevated, exalted, who eclipses and over-shadows the heroine- nay all the human beings.

Besides these romantic stories, Shah speaks of other heroes too. One of them is Hazrat Imam Hussain, the Martyr of Kerbala. Full one chapter has been devoted to him under the caption 'Kedaro" meaning the battle. This whole chapter is very emotional, full of heroic deeds, pathos, warmth and axcitement. Each couplet is not only full of despair, woe and affliction but is at the same time a mark of statesmanship, bravery, courage and chivalry. Latif says:

Brave are those who ride and stride
Forget not friends in the game of swords,
'T's their duty to strike and guide,
Make no difference in peace, War moulds.
He that wears armour in strife
Intends to live and save his life!
The brave is he who uncovered goes,
To die and lie in martyr rows.

For a wounded soldier who is brought back home, Shah says in the words of his anxious wife:

"Fled!" I'd never say, "Died" I would believe
Cuts in thy face I'd lint with sleeve
I'd die of shame if thou hadth in the back
For, bravery you should never lack.

In this and in another chapter Ghatu, "the Diver", there is no question of a heroine. Martyrs in the first and divers in the second are described with an inner meaning of self sacrifice for a greater cause. Speaking of the art of diving and fishing, Shah says:

By holding weak nets you can't catch the whales
Prepare strong ones with hard iron nails,
The sea where you stand is but a shallow shore
The deep ocean, dear! is farther more!

After showing hero as a lover, as a warrior and as a diver,

Shah shows hero as an ascetic hermit or a sage. In two chapters Khahori and Ramkali, he describes the qualities of the faqirs who never sit at one place but roam about in search of Truth, Love and the divine One. Taking the example of faqirs who hunt for food, he talks of those who search something more:

Where there is no trace of a bird, there shines the fire
Who else can light it except Hermit Sire
Who crave for food are saints untrue
Who worship bellies can never reach blue.

There is also a mention of a hero as a philanthrophist. He is Sapar Jam or Sabar Sakhi who is Beli Dhani or the Lord of Lasbella. He is said to be such a generous personality that no one went empty-handed from his door:

Beg at His door,
You will get much more!

In this connection there is a mention of Rao and Lakho also in Sur Dahr who too were chivalrous and philanthrophists. In sur Bilawal, Jam Jakhro has also been shown as great hero. In the same Sur Bilawal there are memoirs of Soomras, Samas and Abras, the chief Sindhi tribes who ruled between 1054 to 1358. It is said that one chieftain, Allauddin Gujar attacked their land. They fought to the last man but did not surrender. Allauddin went back disappointed but as an appreciation of their chivalry, he performed dastarbandi of a minor Soomro boy of the ruling chieftain there. Shah says:

Allauddin came with all his might
None opposed who would bear arrow
Soomrahs shielded, Abros gave up right
Brave were they, but for females did they bow.

A deep study of Shah will enable a student to know that although the Shah's heroes take different names and different roles in life, they are really One.

## SPRING

Spring has come; pearl flowers their buttons disclose,
Sweet amber scents all around, bees hum.
I have met the Beloved, pains are over,
All is happiness.
Spring has come, palms wear garlands round their necks,
Oh sister! Rise and dress, happy spring has come.
Happy spring has come, hills exhale intoxicating airs.
Oh sister! Rise and dress, happy spring has come.

## THY HEART

Let thy heart be as a big, big tree;
Shake it, strike it, it will only scatter
Sheaves, bestow blossoms and fruits, and leaves.
Let fall the axe on it, it doth not cry nor make complaint;
It is no enemy of him who cuts it,
It harbours no ill-feeling, but provides with cool shade,
"Sisters!" says Latif, "Such hearts reach the Holy Presence."

# SHAH ABDUL LATIF'S IMAGINATIVE USE OF SINDHI LANGUAGE

Dr. Ghulam Ali Allana

# SHAH ABDUL LATIF'S IMAGINATIVE USE OF SINDHI LANGUAGE

Dr. Ghulam Ali Allana

Living nations of the world always keep alive the memories of their heroes in various ways- through their speeches, their research works or through their other literary works such as Fiction, Drama and Poems. Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit was from amongst those heroes of the world who was born in Sindh. He was a Universal poet. He has a universal appeal and approach and thus can be ranked with the great poets of the world whom not only the East but even the West feels proud.[1]

The social psychology and philosphy expressed in his poems have universal appeal and appreciation. In view of Dr. H. T Sorley:

> "Shah Abdul Latif must by nature have possessed those qualities of observations, expressions and sincerity of thought which enabled him to put his own ideas of common people amongest whom he lived. His verses can, without exaggeration, be said to have a claim to immortality".[2]

His life and personality are searchlight for our present as well as for our future generations. His poetry and message have that status in the Sindhi language which is enjoyed by the

1. Sorley, H.T., Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi- 110026, 1984, p.240.
2. Ibid.

poetry and message of Maulana Rumi in the Persian language.

Shah Latif was born in 1689 A.D/1102 A.H at the time when the Mughal empire was crumbling and the Kalhoras, a local dynasty of Sindh, were dominant in the political arena of Sindh. Nadir Shah, invaded Sindh in 1739 A.D. when Shah Latif was fifty year of age. He saw the destruction of life and property of his people. He has narrated these events in his poetry.

Shah is the leading literary personality of this age. He was great saint and a poet of this period (1689 A.D-1752 A.D). His poetry reflects not only the cultural and social life of the people of Sindh and its adjacent areas, but it reveals the very soul of the people of Sindh. Shah's poetry is like a diamond with many facets, and it deals with all kinds of subjects, viz: mystical, spiritual, didactic, romantic and lyrical. Shah's poetry has an implicit moral purpose. It delights the mind by its melody. He says:

"I slept and then with me grew
The branching of my loved one's vine."

His poetry is allegorical which describes the characteristic features of rural life, like the coming of monsoon rains. He selects, ordinary folk stories which represent characters of culture of Sindh like Suhni-Mehar, Umar-Marui, Sasui-Punhun, Leela- Chanesar, Moomal-Rano, Noori- Jam Tamachi and uses the characters and main details in those stories as symbols and articulate through them, allegorically those deeper mystical aspects of the spiritual life of man.

Shah Latif was a saint and a sufi. He has expressed his mystic thoughts through the medium of poetry. He emerged as one of the greatest poets that the world has ever produced. He was a God-gifted poet and a scholar.

Dr. Schimmel, a great authority on Shah Latif, states:

> "Shah's technique consists of beginning each chapter dramatic....., since the contents of the stories were known to every one. The complete transforma-

tion of the folk tales into symbols of mystical experience stated by his great-great-grandfather, Shah Karim, now reaches perfection. Thus Suhni is introduced in the moment of drowning in the Mehran to break the boat of the body means to find out union with God, in the Ocean of the Soul as the Islamic mystical poets, headed by Attar and Rumi have always preached. Similarly Sasui, Mumal, Marui, Leela and so on.. All the simple Sindhi girls appear in Shah's Sindhi sufi poetry so completely different from Persian and Turkish traditions, where the love between the Soul and God is generally expressed in terms of love between male begins. In Sindhi a searching and loving soul is always a woman who yearns for her Divine-bride-groan for her eternal husband. In order to find him, she takes upon herself incredible hardship swimming through, crossing a desert with bleeding feet, she has only one goal, to be re-united with God; the Beloved has elected her at the day of Primordial Convenant".[1]

Shah Latif was not imitator of Maulana Rumi or Hafiz or Al-Bistami, he has actually expressed in his own language the ideas that were current through out his time. He is absolutely original in his ideas which he has collaborated in a simple and appealing language. He believes in the permanence of the human soul.

Shah Latif is primarily a poet of love; a poet of poor people. His human love was transformed into love of all humanity and love of God and in consequences, he transformed the characters and details of the popular folk-tales into symbols and expressed through them allegorically those deeper mystical aspects of spiritual life of man which constitute the essential part of his poetry; For instance he says:

پل پل پور هزار، مون کي سندا سڃٽين،
تيئن وَهَن اکيون، جيئن سي کوهيءَ ٽار،

1. Schimmel, Dr.

سڃڻ سانگ سندائيا، هُٹا جيءَ جيئار،
ٻاجهائي ٻهيار، مٺي اکڙ آئيا.

It means:

Every moment a thousand pangs
With which my heart to beloved bangs
My eyes weep and shed copious tears,
As a woman, when bad news she hears,
Hope, O' Beloved, resured
And my life's course correct
The loved one once again
Has come with me to remain.[2]

پلي کي پڙنرن، جي واس وٺڻ آئيا،
تني کي ڪڙنرن، ڏنا هنڌ هين ۾.

It means:

Welcome, Welcome, you buzzy bees
Who buz and perfume squeeze,
The lotus gives them her face
And in her heart finds them a place .[2]

In view of Dr. Sorley:

"Shah is at his best when he is painting in vivid language the delight of rain falling on barren land and is drawing therefore the lesson of goodness and generosity of God; or when he is depicting the sorrow of the crane divorced from the flock of cranes, left alone in the marsh, when its companions have flown away, and the fowler's net threatens the straggler with destruction. Or he is in his most effective mood, when describing the feeling of abandonment felt by

1. The English Translation is rendered from Mr. G. Allana's Book, Four Classical Poets, P-

2. Ibid.

the woman, separated from her lover, on the distant bank of the river, she will never cross and hearing the sounding of the tinkling buffalo bells that comes from the further shore".[1]

His worldly love was a blessing in disguise. He literally went into the wilderness in search of truth; he lived in the company of Jogies, Samis, Faqirs and Kapris; roamed about from place to place and from region to region; travelled long distances in every direction; visited in their company many of their places of pilgrimage, such as 'Girnar' 'Lahot-la-Makan', 'Shah Bilawal Noorani', 'Nani at Hanglaj' etc. He initiated in the mystery of truth, Beauty and goodness of these God-intoxicated people, found the truth in and about himself as he says:

وڃين ڇو وڻڪار، هت نہ ڳولين هوت کي،
لکو ڪين لطيف ڇڏي، ٻاروڇو ٻئي پار.

Why do you roam about in desert and jungles
Oh! Latif
Your beloved is not concealed anywhere
Look into your ownself
And you will find him settled there.

Latif is a poet of common man- the villagers, the peasants, the shepherds, the craftsmen, the camel breeders, the spinners, the weavers and the block printers and so on. They recite his verses, enjoy them and sing them.

Dr. Trumpp Says:

"Lovely camel driver in the sandy desert and afflicted herdsman behind the crooked bough which represents a plough, knows whole rows of these poetic verses by heart and sings them to pass time in their monotonous melancholy air".(1)

Shah Latif speaks of barren lands, mountains of sand dunes,

1. Sorley, H.T., op. cit. p-244

on which a solitary manical woman runs to and fro; he goes for his illustrations not to the halls of the Princes and Kings, but to the hamlets of the poor; they are simple but sincere, pathetic and moving. His personal contacts with simple sons of the soil, who live in far flung villages of rural Sindh- the agriculturists, the artisans etc- he describes their hopes and aspirations, their joys and sorrows and their loves and hates which he fully displays in his poetry.

Other popular features of Shah's poetry are, that he depicts the nature and its manifestations obtaining in the valley of Sindh in a most vivid and detailed manner.

The listeners of his poetry enjoy the description of the scenery of his country, particularly those of river Indus, the glassy surface of lakes like Kinjhar, the barren ranges of hills like Pub mountain, Ganja Takar, only when they understand and enjoy his expressions. He describes different scenes of nature. He is master in describing the scenes of clouds in different forms accompanied by flashes of lightening and followed by rainfall and its effects on the people, animals and land.

Shah Latif is as much in the tune with modern times as it was with his own times and conditions(2). All classes of people, the high and low, the urban and the rural, the Hindus and the Muslims, enjoy alike his immortal poetry.

It is difficult to isolate from each other, the history of Sindh, its traditions and culture, and the life of Shah Latif because Shah Latif and Sindh are inseparable. The one can not be understood without the other. Latif is the torch-bearer, of the Indus - Valley, and a great benefactor of Sindhi Language, Literature and Culture. He, as a matter of fact, gave new life to Sindhi Language. He is actually the builder of Sindhi Language, literature and culture. As already said elsewhere, he visited every nook and corner of Sindh and therefore has used in his verses the language which was commonly practised by the people of different areas in their colloquial language. Not only that but he minted many simple words and formed many

1. Trumpp, E., Dr. Introduction of Shah jo Risalo compiled by him.

2. Muhammad Yakoob Agha, Shah Jo Risalo. P-11

new complex and compound words by prefixing and suffixing bound forms to simple words or free forms. He coined not only words but he minted many new phrases, idioms, sayings and proverbs, thus he gave thousands of new words to Sindhi Language and infused a sort of a new blood to the language. Now it is our duty to undertake research work on this aspect of Shah Latif. Although Mirza Qalich Beg, Dr. Gur Bukhshani, Dr. Daudpota, Kako Bherumal, Hakim Fateh Muhammad Sewhani, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Shahwani, Kalyan Advani and others have contributed very valuable material in this field but still much needs to be done and it is a long way to go for accomplishing the goal.

The language in which he composed his verses has now become classical language. He had the knowledge not only of Sindh, Sindhi language, people of Sindh and their culture, but he knew much about the history, the geography, languages and cultures of neighbouring areas like Jesalmir, Jodhpur, Bekanir, Katch, Kathiawar, Junagarh, Lasbella, Qallat etc. Dr. Sorley states:

> "Shah Latif was the first great exponent of the imaginative use of Sindhi Language. His achievements took place in the days when Sindh was still medieval in outlook".[1]

He composed his verses in the language of masses. The language of the Risalo is throughout exquisitely beautiful, vigorous, forcible and sublime. His diction is on the whole pure Sindhi. For this reason, too, his poetry penetrates deep into the hearts of the Sindhis and carries them away. They feel themselves at home with him. He is the admiration and pride of all.

As already stated earlier, Shah had sound and extensive knowledge of every dialect, idiolect and colloquial language of Sindh. His remarkable mastery over its techniques, his eloquence, and the self-evident elasticity and richness of his vocabulary may be gauged, as stated by Agha Muhammad Yakoob from the following facts (1):

1. Sorley, H.T. op Cit., P-206.

(a) His use of synonyms has been remarkably rich and frequent as instanced below:

(i) For the Sindhi word ministrel he has used the following words:

جاجڪ، مڱڻهار، عطائي، پان، چارڻ، راڳي، راڳائي، پارٽ ۽ ربابي.

(ii) For liquour he has used the following words:

ڪڪوه، شراب، سرو، مَروه ۽ منڊ

(iii) For arrow he has used the following words:

تير، ڪان، ٻاڻ، بان، سر، ٽنگر، سيلو، ميلو، لوري، لوهه، ڪرڪ ۽ پيڪان

(iv) For camel he has used the following words:

اُٺ، ڪنوات، ڪرهو، ليڙو، نانگو، ڳنگو، مَيو، چانگو، چانگل، ڏاڳهو، بُور، ناقو، تودُو، موڏو، روڏو، گورو، شتر ۽ جهاز.

(v) For boat of various sizes he has used the following words:

ٻيڙي، دنگي، پاکڙي، مکڙي، ليڙو، ٻيڙو، تراز، جهاز، جهاج، غراب، چلر، چَرُ، هوڙاڪ، نيه ۽ وڏوندڙئي.

(vi) For mother he has used the following words:

آيل، امڙ، اَمڻ، جيجان، ماءُ، مادر ۽ ماتا

(vii) For crow he has used the words, such as:

ڪانؤ، ڪياتو، ڪانگ، ڪانگڑو، ڪانگل، زاغ ۽ غراب

(viii) For a brave person he has used the words as given below:

جُنگ، ونڪي، سڏرُ، ويڑ، ڪوپو، مهائي، بانڪو، مَل، ڍگ، راوت، بورائو، سائو، جودُو، سورهه، جهونجهار، چانگ ۽ پاونگ

1. Muhammad Yakoob Agha, op. cit., P.23

As explained earlier, Shah Latif was so eloquent in the language of the land that he coined thousands of simple words and formed another thousands of complex and compound words by prefixing and suffixing bound forms to the simple words, thus the vocabulary of Sindhi language was increased to such an extent that it became much easier for the men of letters who came after him to express their ideas in poetic prose and poetry. Some of the words he minted or formed by himself are given below:

(i) Simple words cointed by him [1]:

لوھ For Arrow

گنگو For Camel

نيرُ For Sea

ڪڪ/تُرھو For Float

ڀانھن For wife

ڀيٽ/وَئي For Grave

ڏيئو For guide and so on

(ii) Complex words formed by him:

ڪيڙائو For Sea-farers

Similarly

ٻٽارو، ڀانھوئي، ڪُھيلياڻي، آموٽ، ڏُنڙ، سُٽڙ، ڪُوڙيوين، سُوڙو

(iii) Compund words as found in Risalo:

ٻُڙي For an Oyster

Similarly

رتَ ورنو، تن طيب، پَبَ ڏٺي، ڪلمي گو، وَڏوڙو، پَرَ جَھلو.

1. Muhammad Yakoob Agha, op. cit., P.23.

(iv) Shah Latif formed many antonyms by adding prefixes or suffixes to simple, complex or compound words, for example:

| Words | Antonymus | Words | Autonymus |
|---|---|---|---|
| پَڄُ | اَيَڄُ | ڪاڄ | اَڪاڄ |
| تانگھ | اَنانگھ | موٽ | مَموٽ |
| واٽ | ڪُواٽَ | ٻيلياڻي | ڪُٻيلياڻي |
| ويڇ | ڪُويڇ | وڙيون | ڪُوڙيون |
| ٻڌي | اَٻُڌي | اُميد | نااُميد |
| | | سار | اَسارَ |

(v) Shah has used many words to replace the original words, opposite words or forms; for instance:

| Original words | Antonymus by Replacement |
|---|---|
| وِهَڪ | اُيَڪ |
| سَلوڻي | اَلوڻي |
| اُلهڻ | اُبهڻ |
| ڏَتڙ | اوتڙ |
| انتها | ابتدا |

(vi) Shah Latif was fully aware of phonetic and phonological changes and their peculiarities in Sindhi phonetic system; for instance:

(i) احد احمد پاڻ ۾ وچان ميمَ فرق
آهي مستفـــرق عالـــم انهـــيءَ ڳالھ ۾

(ii) آءُ ڪي ڪَريان پيرَ، ڪ ڪڙهان ڪيچ ڏٽين لَءِ.

(iii) ڪڙ پڙ سندانِ، ڪڏهه پڙ ڪيچ ڏٽين لَءِ.

In these verses 'ڙ' 'ڙھ' are phonous which give seperate meaning of the words. ڪڙھ،ڪڙا

There are a very considerable Arabic phrases and sayings, Quranic verses and Ahadith احاديث used by Shah Latif in his Risalo. Lilaram Watanmal has done commendable work on this aspect of Shah-jo-Risalo. He (Lilaram) has tried to select all of the verses of the Holy Quran, Ahadith, Arabic words, phrases and sayings in his book.[1] In view of Agha Muhammad Yakoob:

> "Shah Latif, the poet, was a student of the Arabic language. He had studied the Quran thoroughly and with the aid of his knowledge of the Arabic language he had grasped its meaning as well. He used to recite it regularly. It is said that he had even memorized the Quran. He had the heart of an Arab for it. Thus he was quite conversant with the Quranic provisions. He has quoted 35 verses of the Quran in the Risalo. Simultaneously he had adequate knowledge of the traditions. He had quoted 24 traditions. All the Quranic verses and the traditions have been very appropriately quoted in the Risalo and that is a proof of the poet's great learning. Mirza Qalich Beg also was of the same opinion".(2)

During Shah Latif's time, the Kalhora ruler's court used the Persian language for official purposes. Their mother tongue was Sindhi but Siraiki language was also commonly used. Arabic was the medium of religious teachings, but Sindhi was also being used as medium of religious education in Deeni

1. Lilaram Watanmal Lalwani, The life, Religion, and poetry of Shah Latif, the greatest poet of Sindh, Karachi, Sindhi Kitab Ghar/Indus Publications 1985, vol: II, PP. 1-141.
2. Muhammad Yakoob Agha, op. cit., P.16

Madrasahs. Lot of books were written and translated into Sindhi for the adults to learn Islamic principles through their mother tongue. Persian was mostly used as the medium of literary expressions. Most of the books on histroy, criticism and other forms were written in Persian. Most of the prominent poets composed their poems in Persian. Men of letters wrote both in Arabic and Persian. Makhdoom Muhammad Hashim Thattavi, Makhdoom Muhammad Moeen Thattavi, Makhdoom Abul Hassan, Mir Ali Sher Qan'o and many others were stalwart of Arabic and Persian literature. Sindhi language, too, was developed very much for religious education.

But as already said, Shah Latif was the poet of common people. He, therefore, is the dominating personality of Kalhora period. One can not deny one main point that is that the influence of Arabic & Persian was so stronger and dominant that even Shah Latif could not save himself from this wave and has used a lot of Arabic & Persian words in his poetry. Some of the words of Arabic and Persian used by him in his Risalo are enlisted below for example.[1]

(i) Arabic words:

ارواح، آذر، اعراب، اخراب، احقاق، واحد، اجلس، أثبات، ابتدا، انتها، عبد، اعليٰ، اكبر، اصغر، اعراف، اظلام، للماس، المَلَمَ، العصر، أُلفت، اسم، ظلم، أمت، أمانِ، انواع، احاطو، جامع، اسدالله، آذقو، جَبّار، حباب، جابر، ثنا، تكبير، تسليم، حرمت، حجرات، حجّر، حُباب، جوع، جليل، رفاقت، رعد، ذوالفقار، دَخان، خِلوت، حيدر، ضايع، صلوات، صمد، رقيب، عجز، عاصي، عارف، طهورا، طاماعو، قلوب، قصر، عدم، عرفات، عُريان، عميق، عليم، عليل، كفار، كلاب، كثرت، ۽ كبريا وغيره.

(1) Lilaram Watanmal, Op. Cit., Vol:II, PP. 2-41

(ii) Persian words used in Risalo:

آندوه، آندام، آرايس، آگاه، آسير، بوده، باک، بازنده، پيزا، بيخود، بيباک، پند، پَرورَ، پُر، ترس، بيخود، داد، خوشنود، حمامُ، چنگُل، چشم، پيزار، رندُ، ربود، راهَ، دُئي، داوَر، زود، زردي، رهنما، شبان، سياهي، سزاوار، سرگ دان، کشتبان، شمشير، سکم، کنيزک، کمربسة ؛ کمتر وغيره

He has not only used the words of Arabic and Persian languages but has also used many phrases and sentences of Persian in his verses; for example:

بده ساقي بخيز
زاغ گفت فهميدم
بيائيد بنشنيد
سر قدم يار فدا شرم باشد

Shah being the poet of masses, has used the words of Arabic, Persian and other languages in Sindhianised form as pronounced by his people in their colloquial pronunciation. His Risalo is full of words as such; for instance:

پيئي، اُٹ گئي، لِم، ديکي، آوَنگ، ہه کول، ہهون، جاءُ، جهپ، مِساوي، بريان، همارو، فقير اندا کام، بکاءُ، جُل، پاس، هيهات زاغ، لولي، دلق، کُنار، آوِي، ويکڻ، غزاب، بان، ميڏا، گام، قضاک، نوم، اِجلنس، عاق، لوڱڏ، هردو، زاف، جوع، تشنگي، مُوءَ، سگبال، کمئر، وسي (وسيع) جونک، رجات، ڏلنگي، آجکو، گربال، گريب، کڻڻ، کر، شومت، جنبور، جماتي، دوربي، مجاجي، پاڇاهي، بدا، گمن، روگ، ميزل، مزاک، دُرس، انوا، جاک، اِنام، ساکر، ساهوکار، حيات، حياب، مزمان، جانار، بنيان، تاراجي، کَـي، ککوه، کـير، کانڊ، کنون ؛ گرڙڻ وغيره

There is a very considerable sprinkling of Arabic phrases, Quranic verses and Traditions in the Risalo, as already stated. They cover a good portion of stanzas as quoted by Agha Muhammad Yakoob and Diwan Lilaram Watanmal.[1]

The Language of his poetry, as already said, is classical. Some of the words used by him in his Risalo are now no more used anywhere in Sindh It is often difficult to understand their meaning and explain them to others. He has used the Lari dialect of Sindhi language but most of his criticts and compilers have tried to change the language of his verses into the dialects which they (compilers) spoke, with the result that they have made Shah's words and his Language more difficult and complicated. Some of the words used by Latif are now obsolete, and are no more spoken anywhere in Sindh. Such words and phrases are:

Unlimited

وَڃُ، جهونجهار، آتِ، ماڪر، وِيڙ ڪي ويڙ،

پَهڪار (a confident of frined) أَپَڪَ، اَيَڇ، ڏوٽا،

ڪارهين (disease) ڏُٹار (blood) روگ

ڪُهيري (A place where there is no way),

پارانپو (message) پاندپ (Chieftain)

پرٹيائي (A washer woman) چڱير (A chief)

ٹڱي (a baffalo) توپ (support)

ڪرڳل (a slave's slave) باڏهوٹي(a beggar) ٻاٹ.

پٹوار، ڪرڪ

Shah Latif was well versed in every aspect of the qualities, characteristics and beauty of Sindhi language. He has beauti-

1. Agha Muhammad Yakoob, Op. Cit. P-25 Also See Lilaram Watanmal, op. Cit. Vol: II PP. 2-41.

fied his language by using figures of speech, such as: تشبيه (Simple), اسقاره (Metaphor), تضاد، (antethesis) تجنيس حرفي (alliteration), مجاز مرسل (synechdoche) ايهام (pun), تضمين، تلميح and so on. He has used the verses from the Holy Quran and احاديث as تلميح and تضمين respectively. His Risalo is full of similes, mataphors for instances:

(i) جهڙا پانن پن تهڙيون شالون متن سائيون.

(ii) جر ۾ سپون جيئن آهن ابر آسري،
اسان سجڻن تيئن، رهيو آهي روح ۾.

(iii) سارنگ سائي سڻ، جهڙي لالي لاک جي.

(iv) نهائين سائي سڻ، جهڙي لالي لاک جي.

The examples of antethesis (تضاد) are given below:

(i) سو هي سو هُو سو اجل سو الله،
سو پرين سو پساه سو ويري سو واهرو.

(ii) سوئي عين عذاب، سوئي راحت روح کي.

Following are the examples of pun (ايهام)

(i) جتن کر جتن جو آيا کي ايذاءَ.

(ii) جاهڙ اندر جيءَ ساهڙ ڏني ساه کي
ساهڙ چڙي نه ساه جي ساهڙ ساهڙ ريءَ
ساهڙ ميڙ سميع تي ساهڙ چڙي ساه جي.

(iii) ور ۾ کونهي ور ڏيرن ور وڏو کيو.

In these verses there is Pun upon the words, ور&ساهڙجاهڙجتن
Shah Latif, although has used many Arabic and Persian words in his poetry but instead of using the words such as شمع،پروانا،ماه،لقا he has used the words commonly spoken

which were very dear and near to his people. I do not agree with some of the critics of our modern literature who claim that the most common Sindhi words for beloved, dear ones or sweet heart such as سانورا بانورا،منڙا،سائين etc etc have been for the first time used by our modern poets. I would say that Latif is modern in every period. He was considered as a poet with modern approach during the seventeenth and eighteenth century A.D. He is modern with his ideas and study of Sindhi society and culture during contemporary period of history and I dare say that he has capabilities of leading the men of letters during twenty first century.

When we study the poetry of Latif, we can find that Shah has never used any Persian or Arabic words for his beloved, sweet heart but I quote his verses in which he has used different words for his beloved, friend, mother, husband and brave man etc., For example he has used: سائين،پرين،سُهڻا،سپرين،ساجن، سڄڻ،منهن موچارا، جاني،يار

for beloved ديولڻ،ديولياڻ،لالڻ.

These words are used in the following verses:

سڄڻ

(i) اندر روح رهيام، سڄڻ اولتون ڪري.
(ii) سڄڻ ياد پيوم، جاڙ جيان ٿي جيڏيون.
(iii) سڄڻ سانوڻ مينهن جيئن جهڪن پاسي جهوڪ.
(iv) سڄڻ سان نه پيٽ، ڳجهه ڳرهيان ڪن سين.
(v) آءٌ سڄڻ لهه سار، وڃ وڪوڙي آهيان.
(vi) آگم ڪيو اچن سڄڻ سانوڻ مينهن جيئن.

ساجن

(i) ساجن سپ چمار، آءٌ گولي ٿي گذاريان.
(ii) ساجن سويلو، پيچ پني ۽ گهر آئيو.
(iii) ساجن سپاهي آءٌ اوهان جو آهيان.

سپرين

(i) هينڙا ڪرپ مرڪيج ، سڳهو ملندءِ سپرين.
(ii) سنگهارن شرم ، رک منهنجا سپرين.
(iii) محب منهنجا سپرين ، آڻيندءِ الله.
(iv) جهڙا منهنجا سپرين تهڙا ميگهملهار.
(v) وڃ مر ڦوڙاءِ ، ايڏي سفر سپرين.
(vi) ماڻهو گهرن مال ، آءٌ سپ ڏينهن گهران سپرين.
(vii) نهائين ءَ ڪان نينهن سڪ منجهان سپرين.
(viii) آءٌ ساهڙ منهنجا سپرين پرتان پيريري.

سهڻا

صورت گهڻو سهڻا ، تاڻا سندءِ ٿو وهَ.

پرين

(i) سُرهي سيج پاسي پرين ، مرپيا مينهن وسن.
(ii) اسان ءِ پريَن شال هُون برابر ڏينهڙا.
(iii) پکي آءٌ پَريَن تون ، لهِ منهنجي سيد سار.
(iv) جي پرين هُڙا ڏور ، سي مون کي مينهن ميڙيا.
(v) جي جاني اندر جيءَ ، سي پرين پيهي گهر آئيا
(vi) پروش ٿيم پراڻ ، پرين وس نه پنهنجي.
(vii) سندي سڪ پرين ، لوڪ ڏٺي نه لهي.
(viii) پل پل مر پليانس ، پل نه رهي پرين ءَ ري

پِريَم

(i) پريم تنهنجا پار ، ڪهڙا چئي ڪهڙا چُنان.

سائين

(i) سائين ءَ جو سوڳند ، ساجن سنيهان سُهٽو.
(ii) سائيم سدا ئين ڪريم ، مٽي سند سڪار.
(iii) الله سائين ، سائين ، پونِ ڏريَنئون مر پاهين.

لالڻ/لالن

(i) رها جو ڪي رتڙي، لالڻ مون لاءِ.
(ii) لالن جنين لوءِ، سي اوڳائين نه اکيون.
(iii) لالن تو لاءِ ڪيڪاريم ڪرن ڪي.

ديوليو/ديولياديول

(i) آيل ديولي سانڀ، اچي ته جهيڙيان.
(ii) ديول ۾ ڪٽي ٻانهڙي، پرين ۾ ڪٽي پانڌ.
(iii) ديوليو ڏيل مرمون، ڪانڌ ڪميٽي آميان.
(iv) ديولي ڏيلياس تيس ڏهاڳڻ ڏيهه ۾.
(v) سر لوهيڑا ڳيا، ڪُسَر سنريا،
آن يئن وسريا، ديوليا! ڏينهن اچڻ جا.

دلبر

(i) دل جو دلبر هيڪڙو گهٽا تان نه ڪجن،
(ii) دلبر هن دنيا ۾ ويچي رهندو واس.

جاني

(i) جي جاني اندر جيءَ، سي پرين پيهي گهر آئيا.
(ii) جاني آيو جوءِ ۾، ٽيا قلب قرار.
(iii) جانب تون جيڏو آهين مٺان شعور مرسين.

دوست

(i) اڄ سو جڙيم جوڙ، دوس پيئي در آئيو.
(ii) ڪَر مَر ڪامي، آءٌ ڏيندي مر دوست جي.
(iii) چن چڏيندي س ڪينڪي، دوست اوهان جو در.
(iv) دوست مٺا دلدار عالم سڀ آباد ڪرين.

سيڻ

(i) سيڻن ري سيد چئي روح نه رُچن رنگ.

Shah Latif has used the following words for mother:

آيل، جيجان، ماءُ، امڙ.

امڙ (i) امڙ ڪوءِ گهروءِ، مونجهان ستڙو ويچي نڪريو.

ماءُ (i) ماءُ وهاٽو ور، ڪڻ پٽراڻي پانهنجي.
(ii) ماءُ منهنجو من، جام پسندي ئي وتيو.

جيجان (i) جيجان مرگياڻي ٽيان، مونکي جَهل مَرَپاءِ.

آيل (i) آيل ڪريان ڪيئن، ويو وڻجارو اوهري.
(ii) آيل ائين ءَ مَرَيان ءِ، ڪ آءٌ جيئندي اُنري
(iii) آيل ڏولئي ساڻ، اچي ته جهيڙيان.

Simpaly he has used جوڏو، بانڪو، وَر، ڪانڊ، and جهنجهار for her husband who is a brvaeman for instance:

ڪانڊ (i) ڪانڊ مينهن ۾ ڏڪڙا آءٌ سڪيندي سونهان
(ii) ڪانڊ تنهنجي پانڊري ءَ منهنجي سيءَ مران
(iii) آءٌ پنهنجو ڪانڊ لو ڪان لکي رائيان
(vi) ڪر ڪويرو ڪانڊ، مون نماڻيءَ جي نجهري

وَرُ (i) تاريءَ تنهن تران، جيئن ورو جهائيءَ وارِيو.
(ii) جيئن تون قائم ڪانڊ، تيئن آکيءَ وَرَ! وِلهي نه ٽيان.
(iii) ڪانڊ ٻين ڪيترا، مون ورُوڏيءِ وَٽ
(iv) مون ور تون ئي تون تو وَرَ وهون ڪيتريون.
(v) وَرَ ۾ ڪونهي مور، ڏيرن ورو ڏو ڪيو.

جنگ (i) الا ! جُنگ جيئن، آ جهي جنين گهارٽن.
(ii) جُنگ، جڪري ڪي ٻئي چڱايون چت ۾.

Shah Latif is very pathetic, moving romantic and emotional in expressing the feelings and emotions of his heroines. For instance his heroine expresses for her beloved:

(i) آيل ڏولئي سان ڀاچي تہ جهيڙيان.
(ii) اُتر ڏي آراپ، ڪالهو نڪر ڪونج ڪري.
(iii) آءٌ انهين جي آهيان، توٽي مون نہ مچين.
(iv) توري ءَ ڳالهڙيون ڪنهن سان ڪنيدس آءٌ وَرَوا گهورائي.
(v) جي ڏسڻ ۾ ڏيسار، سي اُڏامي آڻ پرين.
(vi) جي ليلائي نہ لهين تان پڙ ليلائيج،
آسر مَ لاهج سڃڻ ٻاجهند ڙ گهٽو.

As already stated, besides Arabic and Persian words Shah Latif has used many words, phrases, sayings and proverb of Balochi, Siraiki, Rajisthani and Kachi languages in his poetry. Dr. Sorley states:

"There are certain features of the Risalo which make it desirable to consider the possible influence of Balochi language and Balochi poetry".(1)

In Sur Desi, Shah Latif has used many words, phrases and sentences of Balochi language. Diwan Lilaram Watanmal Lalwani has tried to study the words and phrases of Balochi language used by Latif. Mr. Watanmal has explained the meaning in his book (2). Mr. Lalwani has selected the following examples of Balochi words and phrases which were used by Latif in Sur Desi. For example:

بروڙا زابات جن جي ٽانگو روان شيشي

(1) Sorley, H.T., Dr. Op. Cit, P-246
(2) Lilaram Watanmal, Op. Cit., P-91

In this line برو means 'go'

بروڻازا means get up and go

ڪانگوروان means 'In what direction shall I go?"

شيشي means what do you say?

Mr. Lilaram explains the emaning as under:

بروڻازاڪانگوروان شيشي means what do you say? They were saying get up and go? which direction I shall go?

Mr. Lilaram Watanmal explains that:

"The poet has made Sasui utter some detached expression or portions of sentences spoken in her presence by her lover, Punhun's Balochi relatives.

ڏين پارسيون پاڻ ۾ ايزا بليستي

It means, here, they were talking in Persian I could only understand they were urging Punhun to leave me.

Similarly in the line:

پنهون پر سيستي ڪج پيادي ۽ جي پنڌ ۾.

here پرويشي means he who does kindness/or he who patronizos.

The meaning of the whole line is:

Oh! Punhun be kind and merciful with your belvoed who is running by foot behind the camels.

In another line:

برو بيگرد بامَ بليخا ڪامَ پروڙي مامَ

Mr. Lilaram explains that:

"Sasui heard one of Punhuns relations saying to the others that they should go away with Punhun at once, as he (Punhun) is intended to take the woman (Sasui) alongwith him. She then

says in Sindhi that although she heard all this, but she did not then undersand the meaning there of.

Similarly Shah uses the sentence: مناگستي مولڙئي

Which means 'He call me a slave'.

There are many other examples which need explanation and deep study. It is a very interesting topic which needs our attention.

Shah-jo-Risalo invites the attention of those who are not only interested in his poetic form but there is lot of material on history, culture, anthropology, ethnology, sociology, linguistics, history of commerce, economic conditions of Sindh of that time.

His poetry, in short, is a rythemic creation of beauty and gives us impressions, institutions and appreciations of Truth. When we read it, it extends our vision beyond the material realities of life.

# SHAH ABDUL LATIF BHITAI

Ali Ahmed Brohi

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"Occasionally", says the Italian historian Vasari, "Heaven bestow upon a single individual, beauty, grace and ability, so that, whatever he does, every action is so divine, that he distances all other men and clearly displays how his genius is the gift of God and not an acquirement of human effort or art."

Men saw this, in Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, Sufi Saint of Sindh and one of the greatest mystic poet the world has known, whose poetic abilities were so extra ordinary, that he could, through his song and poetry, capture the heart and imagination of every Sindhi generation for all the time to come.

How this remarkable man succeeded in accomplishing all this?

That such a man should have emerged in the eighteenth century life of Sindh is, by itself, a remarkable fact indeed. He has not only articulated the deepest aspirations and institutions of the soul of Sindh, but has successfully become the mouthpiece of its destiny. Neither in the Sindhi Language of his days, nor in the cultural formations which constituted his mental environment, was there any thing so favourable, as to have brought about the growth of poet of his eminence. He speaks from heights hitherto unscaled by the mere mortals, and if he owes a debt to any book or man, it is only to the Holy Quran and to Muhammad (God's peace be upon him) for verily, more than any thing else, he is the commentator of all that the Holy Quran teaches or Islam stands for.

It must clearly be understood that Latif is not a poet in the

conventional sense of that term; since he never wrote poetry. His method of expression was more direct. All that one discovers in his Risalo was sung by him to the accompanishment of musical instruments, and those distant admirers of his, who used to collect at Bhit, from diverse parts of Sindh, just to listen to his song - to be inspired and uplifted by it. Latif like Shakspeare and Goethe, takes up ordinary tales that were known to the people of his day and renders them in glorious verse and employs them as parables for the purpose of revealing the hidden side of life's beauty and power.

*Latif* was an unusual child. He spent days by himself besides flowers birds and beasts in the courtyard of Halla Haweli. He loved solitude, a trait he inherited from his father *Shah Habib*. He often left his hearth and home in order to live in fellowship with nature. He wandered about in the open. Once he was found sleeping, by his father, in a hallow of an old tree. At another occasion he was located in a sand dune lying in dazed stopar for three consecutive days. Incidently a shepherd saw him lying in that state, and informed his anxious father *Shah Habib*, who rushed to the spot and brought him home. But he could not remain there for long, and one day, disappeared again from his village without informing any one, as was his habit.

It so appeared that a secret chord was touched within him and a slumbering sympathy awakened into life as soon as he stepped outside the human habitations, into the secluded valleys and the haughtly-headed hills, as if, those inanimate objects appeared to him alive, as if, those masses of brute matter were endowed with sense and thought. He found in himself an upsurging desire which his previous experiences could not satisfy.

He chanced to join a company of wandering *Jogis* and *Sanyasins* who were often seen frequenting themselves the places of veneration and worship in far flung areas. The first stop of the caravan of these semi-naked ascetic was Ganjo Takar, a prominent lime stone hill, near the present city of Hyderabad. There is no mention of Hyderabad in *Shah-jo-Risalo*, and rightly so, because this city came into existence about seven-

teen years after Poet's death. He refers to the temple of Kali on the Ganjo Hill in Sur "Khahori." As is customary with *Jogis*, Latif wore ocurecoloured (yellow)robes. The party trudged along the weary way from Ganjo Hill to Kolachi (now known as Karachi) and visited many places of historical and legendary interest on the way, such as Hellaya Hill. On it, stood a royal pavalion over looking the Kinjhar lake. In company of these pilgrims he must have also witnessed the fishermen and women at work, on the banks of the enchanting lake.

Thereafter he visited Thatta, a large and rich city with a palace of the Nawab in it. The city hummed with life. The narrow city streets were often crowded with people of all sorts, since Thatta in those days had a flourishing trade with the east and west besides being an excellent and prosperous agricultural base.

The next place of the visit was Bhanbhore the City of Sasui-Punhun fame. The poet was reminded here of Sohni and Sasui and their indomitable love for Mehar and Punhun respectively. At Karachi, he saw the notorious Kolachi-jo-whirl-pool which had taken the toll of six brothers of "Moriro" the fisherman. The poet alludes to the deadly whirlpool in his Sur *"Ghatu."*

Shah Latif and his companions were heading for "Hinglaj" an ancient shrine about 120 miles away to the west of Karachi in Lasbella territory, in South Balochistan. The Shrine is dedicated to Amba, Parvati or Hingula Devi, the consort of Lord Shiva. Hinglaj happens to be a celebrated place of pilgrimage originally called "Nania" of Greeks and Hinglaj Devi of Hindoos, in consequence of being one of the fifty one *"Pithas'* or spots on which the disserved limbs of Sati or Durga Devi were scattered. Muslim also pay their tribute to the Devi as Bibi Nani. In the pre-partition days large batches of pilgrims from all over India flocked to Hinglaj for pilgrimage.

Shah Latif and his yellow clad companions travelled through Habb River to a succession of rocky gorges in the Pub mountains. The Poet knew that Sasui of Bhanbhore had crossed that difficult terrain long before him, and he visualised the

whole drama linked with her life re-enacted before his eyes. In his Risalo, he alludes to Khariro, the place between the Habb river and the vinder rivulate, where tax was collected from the pilgrims by the then Lasbella Ruler. Last leg of journey to Hinglaj across the *"Harho"* mountain was arduous. But the recompense by way of mental peace one had in the cave of Hinglaj was immense. The visitors, as a homage poured milk over the symbolic stone representing Amba Parvati or Nani Higlaj. Here Shah Latif came to know of the methods of self discipline and about the Kundlani Chakra, or curled up centre which when awakened enabled the mystic to reach full consciousness of the Creator. The poet refers to, the mind concentration in a purely poetic or non-technical manner when he talks of his eyes trained enough to concentrate on love, in the first few "baits" of the Sur ASA. He says:-

> Should my eyes see any thing other than him.
> I would pluck them out and throw them off as morsels at the crow.

Lateron Shah Latif was to return to the peaceful atmosphere of Hinglaj a second time also.

On his return from Hinglaj to Karachi he separated from the wandering mystics and by way of Manghopir travelled to Lahut, via "Vankar" besides the Khirthar Range in the north east of Lasbella. The Khirthar is the main source of the Barran river, which in its course of 100 miles, waters an area of 1300 Square miles and falls into the Sindhu River below Kotri.

While in Lasbella, Shah Latif visited Lahut a rugged ground in the heart of Pab mountains. The visitor undertook the rough descent in the Lahut cave and witnessed the rock mass projected in the shape of a cow's udder secreting milk drop by drop. By the advent of Shah Bilawal with whose name is associated a dargah at a short distance from Lahut, called Jeay Shah Noorani. Lahut means "nonexistence" in metaphorical sense very much like "Nirvana" the ultimate goal of Bhuddists. Journey to Lahut La-makan, inspired Shah to pay a second visit to Hinglaj.

Shah Latif is known to have visited Hinglaj once more, and

again in the company of Sadhus. After his return to Karachi the travellers went to Debal Kot of the "Leela Chanesar" folk tale fame, and many other places in Lar Lower Sindh. Shah happened to meet many a learned enlightened men in Thatta. Among them Makhdum Muin (d.1748) deserves special mention for it was he, with whom Shah Abdul Latif had pretty long discussions on the nature of mystical experiences.

It so appears, that Shah Latif while travelling and listening to the mystic, was going through the ordeal of contemplative thought process. He was struggling constantly between giving in wearily and going on translating the spiritual knowledge into action. It was an incessant fight between hopelessness and faith, between resignation and the belief in a higher justice and higher necessity. His continuous efforts to face reality were bringing new glimpses of truth almost every day, and thus he arrived at the most important stage, as to how to act in conformity with truth. No teacher and no study could have given him that last realisation.

Shah understood at last, what it meant not to force events but to let them solve themselves. It was not evasiveness nor was it fatalism, but merely trust in the inevitable victory of truth in the Power of God. It was the admission of the superiority of the divine method over even the cleverest method invented by the human brain.

He came to discover that God acts from within us, though we find it difficult to locate him. There is only one answer to this God's most evident instrument within us, is, our conscience. Whenever our intellect is unable to point out the way, we must listen to our inner voice, i.e. our conscience. It is the controlling station for actions directed by us and as a power station, only when the decisions don't depend on ourselves. According to Shah the conscience is the guardian of the every best within us.

While in Lasbella, Shah heard about the benevolent Ruler "Sapar" who in the past had bestowed a gift of hundred horses on a minstrel, though he (the minstrel) was lame physically and limpid in his musical notes. The poet allegorises the episode of Sapar Sakhi's benevolence in his Sur "Pirbhati."

At, Thatta, Shah Latif ferried across the Sindhu and reached Sujawal and Mughar Bhain (Mughul-bin) in the Jati Taluka and thence proceeded to Kot Lakhpat (Kutch). In those days one could go in a boat across the salty marsh between Sindh and Cutch, as, influx of an inland sea had not separated Sindh from Kutch. From Lakhpat they went to Madai or Mandvi & thence to Dawarka and Porbunder. Shah's Sur Samundi and Sur Sriraag seem to be product of his intimate acquaintance with the high sea of that time. In both of these Surs, Shah refers to two historical facts one about the trade of Sindh with far off ports such as Srilanka, Khathiawar, Bengal and the places on the coastline, and the other about the Philangi (Frank-Frangi) sea pirates operating on the Arabian sea.

From Porbunder Shah appears to have gone to Jhunagadh where he learnt about Rai Diyach and his palace on the Girnar Hill. The Girnar's highest peak Gorakhnath "Sikhar" named after Gorakhnath in his Sur Ramkali. From here he proceeded to Khambat or Combay, a place between Sabarmati and Mahi rivers in Gujrat.

On their return, they went to Nangar Parkar (Thar) and saw the Karoonjhar (or Kalinjar) hills. Shah Abdul Latif was particularly interested in revisiting Malir a place in Thar, for which Marui of the "Umar Marui" folk-tale had yearned very much when in Umerkot. While in Thar, Shah Abdul Latif observed the "Thari" way of life so thoroughly, that his "Sur Marui" seems to have been created by a man born in that region. Shah Abdul Latif, before he could think of settling any where for a longer time had many miles to go, and, as if it were, a promise to keep with Momal of Ladano (Jaisalmer). He now seems to have parted with the Jogis on a good understanding and resumed his journey to Jaisalmer either all alone or with a passing-by caravan. He, however, remained a life-long admirer of the Jogis with whom he had wandered for about three years in the Greater Sindh of the ancient times. But he came across a few charlatans, too, in the garb of Jogis and was critical of their ways. The Risalo bears a testimony to his unerring faculty of making distinction between two sets of Jogis, one Nuri, i.e, the enlightened, and the other Nari, i.e., the con-

demned to the fire of hell.

Main sites visited by Shah Bhitai during his wanderings at different periods of life in Thar, Kohistan and Central Sindh, besides those of Lasbella, Balochistan and Bharat, are listed below:

**Sindh**

Malir, Bhanbhore, Nangar Thatta, Kinjhar, Kak, Ganjo Takar, Bhit, Kirar, Kalachi, Dhat, Daraza, Jhok, Lanwari, Manghopir, Bulri Shah Karim, Tarai, Kotri Kabir, Umerkot, Halla, Pir Patho, Balyar, Malir, Patihal Badami, Kacho and Bhalwa.

**Lasbella**

Hinglaj, Lahut, Hub, Pab, Gorakhnath and Aghor.

Balochistan

Kohiyar, Wankar, Vindur, Ketch, Goondar and Kalat.

**Bharat**

Cutch, Buj, Jaisalmer, Jhunagarh and Por Bunder.

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# SHAH:
# POET LAUREATE OF SINDHI

Karim Bakhsh Khalid

# SHAH:
# POET LAUREATE OF SINDHI

Karim Bakhsh Khalid

In Sindhi, as in other languages, poetry preceded prose, and until lately occupied the foremost rank. One of the earliest known works in Sindhi poetry is the Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif published in specially designed letter type for the first time in 1866 by Dr. Ernest Trumpp. It is the magnum opus of the Sindhi literature and contains a variety of poems, lyrical, romantic, epic, elegiac and didactic. Shah Latif may justly be reckoned, in every sense, a universal poet. His poetry is steeped in sentiments of higher pantheism throughout, and contains a very mixed philosophy, a combination of the vedantic and monotheistic schools of thought. His poetry is the delight of all those who can understand it. There exist in Sindh a number of legends and traditional tales of time-honoured antiquity, full of great pathos, and exhibiting sublime instances of womanly tenderness and fidelity, and of manly personal devotion and self sacrifice, which have been familiar to generations of Sindhis. Round these have been woven by Shah Latif all his power of spiritual exposition and poetic imagery of thought and diction. His Risalo is divided in different Surs (Tunes). The popular stories form an excellent background of several Surs. In these and other Surs, Shah Latif has also given masterly descriptions of rivers and mountains, of forests and deserts, of battles and homely scenes. He has also described the ironsmiths, goldsmiths, jewellers, potters, buffalo-keepers, the nomads of Thar and Parkar, the aquatic birds, and

the women at the spinning wheel with wonderful precision. The similes of Shah Latif are simple and taken at first hand from nature. For instance he compares the head-dress of Mumal 'the heroine of one of the folk-tales and her sisters to a rose and leaves of Pan (betel-leaf).

"They are clad in robes red as the rose,
Green as the betel-leaf are the shawls they wear".

He compares the blood-stained teeth of Imam Husain son of Hazrat Ali to a pomegranate flower:

"His beard was besmeared with blood,
and his teeth became red as pomegranate flower".[1]

The advent of Shah Latif was not an insulated incident in the field of Sindhi poetry. Although he stands head and shoulders above his predecessors and contemporaries both in the exuberance of his thought and versatility of his genius, he is considerably indebted to them in the poetic field. The vehicle of his muse, the bayt or dohira, had been fashioned out by his forerunners and had imbibed much of their inspiration. Shah Inayat of Jhok Sharif, an elderly contemporary of Shah Latif, was to him what Marlowe was to Shakespeare. His poetry is even richer in old pure Sindhi words, though it does not bear that stamp of uniqueness and possess that fluency and lusciousness, which the verse of Shah Latif does in abundance, It need hardly be said that Shah Karim, Lutufllah Qadiri, Shah Inayat and other early poets paved the way for the supremacy of Shah Latif.

Shah Latif has a universal appeal and he can be ranked with the greatest poets of the world. His poetry breathes a spirit of calm and divine content. He is not exaggerating when he says:

What you think to be ordinary couplets are really divine verses,
They guide one to the borderland of the Beloved's abode.

**Aesthetic Sense**

His poetry is like a diamond with many facets and treats of

1. Bherumal Mahirchand: Sindhi literature And Its Pioneers. Published in the Sindhian World, Karachi, February, 1940.

all manner of subjects- mystical, spiritual, didactic, romantic and lyric. But in all these forms, the poet's mind is attuned to his Maker, to whom all things ultimately return. It is instinct with the pangs of separation, the yearning of the loving souls, the heart's desire to be one with the Infinite and is patriotic to the core. It depicts the natural beauty of Sindh's earth and skies, and describes the majesty and awe of its mighty river. Apart from its edifying content, it rings true of the aesthetic sense and is replete with all the charm of imagery. It is rendered all the more melodious by the rhythmic footfalls of alliteration, which never cloys. It is also the repository of the Sindhi language and so long as it lives, Sindhi language and literature will also live.

With Shah Latif the couplet attains a perfection scarcely matched by any later poets who have tried to imitate him in this genre of poetry. Shah Latif was also the originator of another species of verse, viz. the Waee or kafi (ballad) which was further elaborated by his successors and became highly artistic in the hands of Ramadan (the Potter), Ahmad Ali, Nur Muhammad, Misri Shah and others.

**Age of Giants**

Shah's age, like the Elizabethan period in English literature, was an era of giants, who distinguished themselves in various other kinds of poetry particularly religious and mystical. The blank verse introduced by Pir Muhammad Lakhwi, was made popular by Makhdum AbdulHasan (d.1165 A.H), Makhdum Muhammad Hashim (d.1174 A.H) and Makhdum Abdullah Mendhiro. As this crude form of verse lends itself facetiously to lines rhyming in a, it was imitated even by inferior poetasters. Makhdum Ziyaudin's religious poetry (d. 1171 A.H.) which consists of strophes with different rhymes is very rugged and tasteless, while that of his disciple Makhdum Muhammad Hashim rises to the heights of sublimity and pathos in the introduction to his Qutul Ashiqin (Food for Lovers) although his description of the apostolic miracles all rhyming in a, is insipid and falls flat on the ear. Similar compositions by Pir Muhammad Ashraf (d. 1277 A.H), Miyan Abdullah, Sayyid Harun and Miyan Iso are not without tender feeling. They, are

full of devotion to the Holy Prophet who is the Beloved par excellence of early Muslim poets. The long Trih-akhri poems (i.e., poems, of which each section begins with a letter of the Arabic alphabet) of the last three poets are particularly fine on account of the variety of their themes, which are superbly expressed. Makhdum AbdulRa'uf of Hala Old, who died just one year after Shah Latif, was probably the first poet to have composed Mawluds (exalting the birth of the Holy Prophet) in accordance with the canons of prosody. [1]

One question, however, arises in our minds: Why is it that this saintly bard with all his mystic visions and extremely inappreciable Sufic thoughts became the beloved of the rustic villagefolk who cannot even distinguish one letter from the other what of understanding his ideas. The answer lies in the fact that he used the common folklores and romances as the object to explain his theme of mystic and divine love. The people of Sindh had heard and loved these legends from their early childhood. When their contents were turned into poems and set to music, to be sung to their hearts' content, they accepted them with eager delight and admired the poet for doing it. Nearly all the legends popular in those days have been versified by him. The love-tales of Hir Ranjho, Sasui and Punho, Suhni and Mehar etc. serve his purpose to express the separation of Lover from the Beloved or God.

**Exquisite Poetry**

The foremost among the essential qualities of poetry is sincerity, without which there can be no truly great poetry. Even if for the purpose of dramatic expression the poet creates and assumes the character of another: it must be a sincere creation and sincere assumption. Shah Latif's poetry is truly great as we never feel a lack of sincerity in his compositions. Our hearts melt out pain when Sasui cries amidst the sand dunes and mountain peaks:

"My cries of grief, will kill me,
Loved one, come thou back to me.

1. Dr. U.M. Daudpota: Survey of Sindhi literature. Published in the Sindh, People and progress, Karachi, 1954.

Come near, Beloved, go not far away,
Return, Mid mountains giver of life, I die."

And our hearts rejoice with Suhni when she says:

"With arrow that hath pierced my heart
My herdsman lover sends me joy.
The bells that make my senses start.
The gladness do my soul employ.

In him many silent centuries of Sindh find a voice, and in whose verses, it is impossible not detect the music and ecstasy of sublime adoration.

"Permeated with the freshness of the country air and the sweet charms of rustic life and diffused with a religious love, mysticism of a divine nature, the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif is for all people and all ages. Its thought provoking, exquisite verses make the intellectual highbrow lower his head in awe and admiration while its simple charms and lyrical quality hold the heart of a rustic Sindhi." Shah Abdul Latif, the Poet Laureate of Sindhi language, is the enlightenment, the solace and the glory of Sindhi People.

# THE ROMANCES OF RISALO

Sabiha Hasan

# THE ROMANCES OF RISALO

Sabiha Hasan

Romances are a combination of fiction and facts with overtones of Love. Infact they are the legends of love and chivalry belonging to the period when printed books were rare and imaginative literature had not yet produced novels. Romance was the predecessor of our present day facile and absorbing novels. Today, the word "romance" reminds us of fantastic stories, high passions, soaring imagination and most of all a super human hero. But there was a time when romances had a tremendous popularity and were listened to with avid interest in kingly palaces as well as village hutments. In Europe wandering minstrels and Court poets sang the songs of chivalrous knights, handsome princes and the virtues of their beautiful beloveds. Arabs sat around the fire sipping coffee and listened to these songs and stories of love, war and bravery. And in the deserts of Sindh under the mantle of star studded nights people sat and listened with awe and interest to these romantic legends immortalized for them by their Shah Latif. This was the Middle Ages. People travelled with caravans and at night sat around the caravan fires and related the stories of their regions and thus these romances and legends used to reach every part of the country.

In Europe this age romance gave way to novels and drama with the coming of printing facilities and popularity of printed books. But in the East romance held its sway a long time and its simple people still listened to them with a curious in-

terest. From the land of Arabs came legends of Laila Majnu, Kalila and Damna; Iran had its Shirin Farhad and Nusherwan; Heer and Ranjha, Sohni Mehewal, Mirza Sahiban were the products of Punjab. The region of Sindh had its share in these regional romances. There is a very good reason for the life and immortality of these Sindhi romances, they were taken up and made into beautiful songs by a poet whose golden poetry will always live in the hearts of the learned as well as the illiterate village folk who were his people. Shah Abdul Latif, the great poet of the region of Sindh selected these romances to convey the depth of emotions and the love of the eternal in his sufistic style.

**Folk Songs**

Romances of every country live through its folk songs, ballnds and legends. The region of Sindh is agricultural one and its people live in small towns and villages. Civilization and progress comes to them in a very sketchy form. Education is not universal and people are unaware of the most of the problems of the new world, its cold war and nervous hysteria. They live out their peace-full existence working hard in primitive conditions during the day, and enjoying their innocent pastimes in the evenings. These people are fond of music and when the Sindhi night cast its magic mantle their hearts are filled with happiness at the sound of a melodious voice singing the old romances which their fore-fathers heard before them for ages past.

Like Sasui and Punhu, Sindhi romances are well known in every corner of this countrv. But for the Sindhi speaking people Shah Abdul Latif has turned their songs into a priceless treasure. Every romance in some part or the other, has become an instrument in Shah's hand to express his sufistic thoughts. In fact Shah's 'Risalo' contains even some Panjabi romances like Heer Ranjha and Sohini Mahewal. There are six well known romances connected with the Sindh region and Shah's 'Risalo' includes almost every one of them. The main theme of all these romances is love. Indeed, what else can there be in a romance except the unbounded happiness and deep sorrows of love. Romances usually are in the form of songs but they are

not always sung by a poet like Shah Abdul Latif.

Romances are not merely a fiction of pure imagination. Usually there is some factual basis for them. Shah Abdul Latif's every romance belongs to a particular period in history and its characters were living people who knew how to live and die for love and were aware of its greatness. This characteristic sometimes enveloped these people in an aura of spiritualism and imortalized their love.

**Sasui-Punhu**

The tale of Sasui and Punhu belongs to the period when Islam was gaining foothold in Sindh region. This is the most famous of all Sindhi romances and apart from Sindhi literature it is found in Persian, Baluchi, Punjabi, Siraiki and Jataki as well. In the reign of Dilu Rai, a beautiful daughter was born in a Brahmin family. The happiness of the parents was short lived, for the sooth-sayers predicted that the girl will marry a Muslim. This was nothing short of death to them. The Brahmin parents put the girl in casket and left it to the mercy of the furious waves of the Indus river. The casket was found by a childless Muslim washerman who brought her up. This girl, called Sasui by her foster parents grew up to be a rare beauty and as young girls are wont to do, fell in love with the Baluch prince of Kech Makran after hearing about his courage, handsome manliness. Punhu was no better, he also did not wait even for the traditional "first sight" and fell in love with the stories of Sasui's matchless beauty. At last he arrived in Sasui's village Bhanbhore and on meeting her he loved her more. He married her against the wishes of his father who was however determined to save his son from the clutches of the love for a poor girl and sent his six sons to bring him back. Punhu's brothers gave him some opium by fraud and took him away on fast camel. Next morning when Sasui did not find her husband beside her she was plunged in a deep abyss of sorrow. Crying for Punhu she came out in the desert to find her beloved husband. But on her long way in the desert she perished. Punhu also came back to his Sasui but when on the way he found Sasui's grave he was so grief-stricken that he asked God for death and died then and there. Shah Latif's poems on Sasui and Punhu

deal only with the time when Sasui discovers the absence of Punhu and goes forth in his search.

'Strengthless, feeble, weak, without a guide,
I shed nears for my husband. From mine heart
I pour love's tears forth.
Come near, Beloved, go not far away.
Outworn she raised aloft her arms and cried
Amidst the desert waste: My cries of grief,
Will kill me, loved one, come thou back to me.
Come near, Beloved, go not far away.
Return. Mid mountains, Giver of life, I die".

**Umar-Marui**

The tale of Umar Marui is a very popular one among the Sindhi speaking people. This is not a mere tale of love, it is a short story of the beautiful daughter of a poor goatherd of Malir,[1] who was taken away by Umar Soomro, the ruler of Umarkot. Shah's poems on this legend are about Marui's longing for her homeland and people. They are about her patient waiting for her kinsmen to come and take her away from the imprisonment in a tower in Umerkot. After a year they came and Marui succeeded in tricking Umer in running away with them and was united with her Maru beloved, Khet.

"O Lord, by thy will this decree,
With her Marus that Marui be.
Life engoaled was the fate that I took,
That I should live miserable here.
"Body here, soul with Thee", Saith the Book.
She turns her face towards Malir,
Outwearied standing: yet retains
The blanket that the Maru gave.
Beware, O Soomro, not with chains
Enshackle thou a virtuous slave.
Mine heart is Maru's, his heart's mine.
My face, O Summro, then
May sullied stay, lest he should say

1. Asmall village in Thar

'Thou didst go mid stranger men
To wash it clean'. And now I go,
From thee having trafficked the tears that flow.

**Leela Chanesar**

The romance of Leela Chanesar is another absorbing tale. Infact it is one of more interesting ones for the lack of highly imaginative ideals and for it portrays common emotions, human mistakes and weakness. This is a story of the eternal triangle of love: two women and one man. It concerns the ruler of Dewal Kot who was famous for his handsomeness and bravery. This brave ruler was a slave to his wife Leela's angelic beauty and virtues. This handsome couple was living a life of love and happiness, but a Hindu ruler's daughter Kaunru came in between. Beautiful and proud Kaunru decided to win the handsome prince Chanesar. She came as a servant to Leela to gain her end and showed a most beautiful necklace to her. Jewellery is a woman's weakness and the necklace was so exquisite, it could be everybody's weakness. Leela was prepared to give anything for it. But the only price Kaunru asked was a night with Chanesar. Leela thought one night would not count and her Chanesar would always be hers. When Chanesar came to know about this translation, in anger and sorrow he went to live with Kaunru as a revenge and Leela was sent to her village. Shah's 'Risalo' contains poems about Leela's grief. She complains:

"How comes it thus that thou dost spurn
The thought, Chanesar, from thy mind
of them whose vitals thou hast pierced,
O Dasro Prince? Speak comfort kind.
Thou art my Lord and I have need
Of thee. O friend, expose me not
To people's scorn. My husband, Love,
Drive me not off. I humble am."

In the end she asks for pity:

"O friend, I cannot bear the taunts
You flung at me obliquely.
You've many wives but as for me

You are my only husband."

This romance ends in the characteristic tragedy of Sindhi romances when Leela dies, in the arms of Chanesar, overwhelmed with the happiness of knowing that she is forgiven and loved still.

**Momul-Rano**

Another romance taken up by Shah is that of Momul and Rano. Inspite of the eastern atmosphere, Momul Rano's romance with its beautiful and clever heroine and brave, careless and jealous lover, resembles European medieval romances in some details. Rano was a Rajput prince who left his beloved Momul only on mere suspicion and jealousy. This baseless suspicion and agonizing jealousy is a characteristic of European romances. And as usual Rano realizes his mistake after the death of heart broken-Momul. Rano also dies on the funeral pier of Momul full of contrition on his grave mistake.

"Lo! dawn has burnt the lamp of night
And set day's first streaks in the sky.
Come back, O Mindhro prince, I pray
For Allah's sake, come back. I die.
In search of you I sent the crows
Of Kak upon their way to fly."
"Had you not been my husband, Spouse,
Perhaps you'd roused me while I slept
A little, and by morning known
The truth the sleeping woman kept."

**Sorath-Rai Diach**

Sorath and Rai Diach, though a less well-known romance is still a pathetically beautiful tale. King Rai Diach had given his head for the sake of a promise to Bijal, the flute player. The poems on this romance deal with the pathetic plaint of Sorath, the wife of Rai Diach. In this romance there seems to be more of poetic imagination than facts but then no romance is complete without some poetic license.

**Nuri- Jam Tamachi**

The last romance is that of a Samo Prince, Jam Tamachi and a

fisherman's daughter Nuri. Samas ruled Sindh after the decline of Soomros. They reigned for a period of about two centuries from 1351. Jam Tamachi was the second of the Samo rulers. He married a fisherman's daughter Nuri who was more beautiful than any high born princess. Jam Tamachi made her the senior queen. This romance has more facts for its basis than any other.

All these romances are not only literary gems due to Shah's poetry but they are also sung every-where there are Sindhi knowing people. In the arid desert of Thar one can listen to them, arising in melodious "Rag" set by Shah Latif. In the ancient gardens of Thatta people gather around the wandering minstrels who sing them on their "Ek Tara". Shah has set a "Rag" for every romance and they will be sung as long as the music lives.

# SELECTION FROM SHAH JO RISALO

Sirajul Haque Memon

## SLECTION FROM SHAH JO RISALO

Sirajul Haque Memon

(1)

Thy boat is afloat in the mid ocean,
It may sink or survive;
The sails, woven by such devoted craftsman,
Have, alas, been burnt to ashes,
Those whom you thought would lead you to safer shores,
Are no more, no where, in sight,
The pirates have taken over the oars,
And yet, where the Colossus of the past failed,
You, with courage born of self reliance and confidence,
Can reach the shores of safety.

(2)

Silently crying are the mountain and the agony,
Whom could they tell, the bond between them?

(3)

If I die, yearning for the motherland,
I ask but only a single favour,
Let my grave be among the graves of my own people,
Let the shrubs grow in the land of my fore-fathers
And be burnt like incense for oblation,
I shall live immortally in death
If my mortal remains are taken to my mother-land!

(4)

The Visionaries seek the destination which is
unseen, unheard of,
They move mountains with their bare bodies
Their Wisdom is their labour of love,
Which makes their existence limitless.

(5)

How foolish to die of thirsts,
When thy home be on the river bank,
The beloved is co-existent with one's "self",
If only one seeks in earnest,
They know not their self,
Who cry like the lost ones!

(6)

Let the complacent ones not fancy going on the path
I have chosen for my self,
It is only those with bleeding hearts
Who can traverse the mountains
(In search of the beloved - Punnoo) !

(7)

Thy fellow travellers have taken-up their haver-sacks,
The way-farers too have loaded their burdens,
But your eyes are still heavy with somnolence!
Even thy neighbours have unfurled their sails
in the limitless ocean.
The wharf too calls! it is your turn
But you are still asleep and complacent!
Did you not hear the challenge?
Sleep not, my friend, beyond recall,
Did you not hear the cry of your destiny?
Listen to being alive so that you may last,
Those who forget the murmur of the walls
do so at their peril.