# Kashmiri Poets & Poetesses



**Mystic Trends in Kashmiri Poetry** 

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## Kashmiri Poets & Poetesses

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## 1 Introduction

Kashmir, which is known as the 'paradise on earth', has been the abode of eminent scholars, savants, historians and poets, like Bilhan, Mamatachary, Anandavardhana, Gunaverman, Abhinavagupta, Jonaraja, Kalhana, etc. These luminaries had mastery over Sanskrit language. During the Muslim rule, Persian became the court language. Kashmiri scholars did not lag behind in acquiring mastery in this language also and produced scholars and poets like Gani Kashmiri, Munshi Bhawani Dass Kachroo, Hyder Malik Chadura, Narayan Kaul Ajiz, Muhammad Azam Didmari, etc. Besides them, there were saints and poets who preferred to use their own Kashmiri dilect for conveying their messages and thoughts. These included both men and women. Most prominent among them were Sheikh Noor-u-Din Noorani, Lal Ded, Rupa Bhawani, Habba Khatoon and Arinimaal.

## 2 Mystic Trends in Kashmiri Poetry

#### Dr. Krishna Raina

**Ours** is a great country. We have had for centuries a great history, the whole of the East reflects our culture. We have to present what India taught right from the Mohenjo-Darro and Harappa times. These are the precious words of Dr S. Radhakrishnan. Kashmir is the most important part of this great country with a rich geographical, historical, cultural and literary background. It is known as a famous seat of learning. Kalhana has given us the first chronological order of the kings of Kashmir and thus Rajtarangini is the first history of Kashmir written in the 12th Century.

Kashmir is supposed to be the originating center of human culture, and it is popularly known as the Paradise on Earth. Kashmir is famous for its Pratyabhijnya system of Kashmir Shaivism which has given radical revisions of Indian Philosophy. Pratyabhijnya Philosophy is the main contribution of Kashmir to Indian philosophy. Shri Somananda was the originator of this philosophy and Utpaldevak Abhinav Gupta and others were main expounders of this philosophy. Buddhism has also a long history in Kashmir. The great Buddhist Council was held in Kanishka's time near Harwan, known then as Kundala-Vana-Vihara. Kashmiri scholars have written much about Buddhism and have translated many works. Indian Literature without the contribution of Kashmir would be hollow. Kashmir has produced scholars of Sanskrit Kavya Shastra: Vamana, the founder of the Riti School and Udbhatta, the teacher of different theories of Riti; Rudratta, Ananda Vardhana, Mamatta and Abhinavgupta, Kayyatta, Ruyyaka and Mahima Batta-all were Kashmiris. Anand Vardhana is the founder of Dhvani School and Mammatta of Rasa School. Abhinavgupta's doctrine is that Rasadhvani is the soul of Literature. Patanjali was also a Kashmiri. Thus Kashmir has given a lot to the Indian Poetics and Literature. Kashmir has produced many Sanskrit scholars and mystics. The cultural life of Kashmir has had the impress of great mystics.

The main language of Kashmir is Kashmiri. It is said that it is a mixed language and the greater part of its vocabulary is of Indian origin and it is allied to that of Sanskritic-Indo-Aryan languages of Northern India.

Kashmiri poetry begins with the works of great mystic poetess Lalleshwari of 14th century. Her Guru was Siddha Srikantha and she learnt yoga from him. Lal Ded propounded the yoga philosophy and high moral truths in Kashmiri verse. These are called Lala Vakh or sayings of Lal Ded. These sayings are the gems of Kashmiri poetry and true knowledge of yoga. These are deep and sublime. She was influenced by Kashmir Shaivism and Shankracharya's Advaita Philosophy. Lal Ded's God is Nirguna. She wanted to make Shaivism easy for common man. She says that one who thinks himself not different from the other; one who accepts sorrow as good as pleasure; one who frees himself from duality; he and he alone tells the beads of Lord of the Lords-Almighty and this is the basic thinking of Shaivism. She held a key to many mystic truths. The following stanza illustrates her deep mystic thought:

"So my lamp of knowledge afar, Fanned by slow breath from the throat of me. They, my bright soul to my self revealed. Winnowed I abroad my inner light. And with darkness around me sealed, Did I garner truth and hold Him tight." (Translated by Sir Richard Temple)

Lal Ded thinks dissolution of 'self' (Aham) essential for Realisation. According to her, Sadhaka has to reach that mental attitude where there is no difference between 'Him' and 'self'. She says one who considers his own self and others alike ends the distinction between 'I' and 'you', who treats days and nights alike, who is above sorrows and pleasures, can only realize God in his ownself. According to her, differentiation between the human soul and Divine-self was Zero. Lal Ded is the first woman mystic to preach medieval mysticism in Kashmiri poetry. She used metaphors, riddles and other mediums for her expression.

Like Lal Ded, another mystic poet of Kashmiri language is Nunda Rishi, who is known as Sheikh Nur-ed-Din alias Sahajanand. His father, Salar Sanz was influenced by Sufi Saint Yasman Rishi, who arranged his marriage with Sadar Maji. The child of this couple, Nunda Rishi is the great founder of Rishi line of Kashmir. Jonaraja refers to him as Maha Nurdin-the chief guru of Muslims-but the saint poet always refers to himself only as Nunda. He preached to subdue the five senses and control Kama, Krodha etc. He has given much importance to yogic practice- breath control for communion with God. Nunda Rishi favoured good action which is the secret of happiness in the world. He preached a disciplined life like this:

Desire is like the knotted wood of the forest It cannot be made into planks, beams or into cradles; He who cut and telled it, Will burn it into ashes.

He considered rosary as a snake and favoured true worship:

Do not go to Sheikh and Priest and Mullah; Do not feed the cattle or Arkh or leaves; Do not shut thyself up in mosques or forests; Enter thine own body with breath controlled in communion with God.

Rupa Bhawani was the second great mystic poet of 17th century. She had a great and deep experience of ups and downs of life. The worldly sufferings showed her the path of spiritual life. Her spiritual 'Guru' was her father Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar who initiated her into the mysteries and practices of yoga. She gave rich mystic poetry to Kashmiri language. In her poetry, we can find the influence of both Kashmir Shaivism and Islamic Sufism.

'Selflessness is the sign of the selfless; Bow down at the door of the selfless. The selfless are of the highest authority, The kings of the time and the wearers of the crest and crown.

These lines show her spiritual understanding. According to her dissolution of self is essential for Realisation. Rupabhawani was a great preacher of yoga. She describes her yogic practice. The different stages of 'yoga' and awakening of Kundalini has been described in the simple language of common men:

I dashed down into the nether regions and brought the vital breath up; I got its clue out of earth and stones; Then my kundalini woke up with nada; I drank wine by the mouth, I got the vital breath gathered it within myself;

This great mystic poetess had experienced the truth and then explained the same. Such mystics had real experience and not a bookish one. That is the reason why this mystic poetry in every language is considered great after so many centuries.

Pt. Mirzakak of eighteenth century was a great mystic poet of Kashmir. I have seen three manuscripts of this poet at Hangalgund which is 13 miles away from tourist resort, Kokarnag. There are some supernatural stories also related to this great poet. According to Mirzakak, 'Brahma' is one and invisible. He is the aim of 'Prani'. According to him 'He' is 'Ram', 'Shyam' and everything. 'His' abode is universe.

Tas naav Shyama Sunder Gharu Chhus zagi andar, Nebar naav voochhi zi andar Bhajan kar Ram Ramay.

'Self' and 'Praan' are both Brahma. He creates, nourishes and then becomes Rudra:

Praan Brahma laagith paida chhum su karan Praan Vishnu laagith rachan dam ba dam Ram Ram Praanay Rodur laagith soruy chhum galan Pran hastoneste pran bood nabood dam ba da Ramay (Manuscript)

We can find our goal with 'Omkar' . Mirzakak has given a fine metaphor that Omkar is arrow, worldly man is bow and our target is Brahma.

Om gav kamanay Jeev zaan teeray Nishana Brahma

Om is real man, Om is the light. It is past, present and future. It is the God of Gods:

#### Om gav aadi purush

Mysticism is in broader sense as old as man hut it is with man in this scientific century also. Pandit Zinda Koul is known as 'MasterJi' in Kashmir. His school is that of Lal Ded, Rupabhawani and Mirzakak. According to Shri B.B. Kachru, he is a mystic by temperament and naturally he could not stand the 'material fret' of his own generations. He sharpened his intellect to reflect the knowledge of truth and dialectical doctrine of Vedanta. Although mysticism was out of tune in the age of 'Master Ji ' but the mystic approach is present in his poem. He believes in 'Karma' theory and yearns for salvation. Human salvation is more in the hands of man than in the hands of God. According to MasterJi, God is besides oneself.

He unknown and unseen Quietly listens, sitting by.

This is the basic idea of a mystic who believes in oneness. The poet wants to search 'Him' in another spiritual world:

Where all have a living faith in God-One loving Father, Lord of all-Where ghosts, given and spirits dark Hold no sway over men's mind.

For Master Ji God is Love and he wants to understand the world through the lover's eye. In 'Hymn to Love' poem, he describes:

O Remover of world's darkness.
Thou art the source of light and withal my own true self.
Let me see thee shine in all these modes
Initiate me into the philosophy of atonement.
Remove from me this duality.

For the poet like Sumitranandan Pant, change is the process of life. Sorrows and happiness are the two sides of this life coin. End is the beginning of the new. In this poem, 'Ah this world ' Master Ji says that one thing alone makes life monotonous, therefore, darkness and light are natural and important:

If the Lord had not made Death, If the hell of life were to continue, Providence would not deserve our thanks We should overwhelm it with complaint.

For Master Ji the the power in man is nothing but 'His' Shakti. One can only face the ups and downs of this world with the grace of God. We get inspiration from that eternal truth which is Supreme. Man is always longing for something unknown but that noble self is manifest in man's own self. Longing for unknown creates mystic attitude for ages.

[Courtesy: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture, issued by Parmanand Research Centre, Srinagar]

## 3 Four Famous Poetesses of Kashmir

#### Jawahar Kaul Ganhar

Kashmir, which is known as the 'paradise on earth', has been the abode of eminent scholars, savants, historians and poets, like Bilhan, Mamatachary, Anandavardhana, Gunaverman, Abhinavagupta, Jonaraja, Kalhana, etc. These luminaries had mastery over Sanskrit language. During the Muslim rule, Persian became the court language. Kashmiri scholars did not lag behind in acquiring mastery in this language also and produced scholars and poets like Gani Kashmiri, Munshi Bhawani Dass Kachroo, Hyder Malik Chadura, Narayan Kaul Ajiz, Muhammad Azam Didmari, etc. Besides them, there were saints and poets who preferred to use their own Kashmiri dilect for conveying their messages and thoughts. These included both men and women. Most prominent among them were Sheikh Noor-u-Din Noorani, Lal Ded, Rupa Bhawani, Habba Khatoon and Arinimaal.

Lalla Yogeshwari or Lel Ded and Rupa Bhawani are famous for their spiritual eminence and truth to their devotees and the people. As against these two saint-poetesses, Arinimaal and Habba Khatoon are famous for their love lore and romantic poetry.

Lal Ded and Habba Khatoon belong to the Pampore area of the Valley, which is famous for its saffron cultivation, while Rupa Bhawani belongs to Srinagar city and Arinimal to village Palhalan. These poetesses were married but their married life was not happy and blissful. They were ill-treated by their husbands and mothers-in-law. Another common trait among these great poetesses is that whatever they have said or sung is in their mother-tongue - Kashmiri.

#### 3.1 Lalleshwari

Lal Ded was a saint-philospher, born in the middle of the 14th century of the Chnstian era, which was a period of political and religious turmoil in Kashmir. Her parents lived near Pandrenthen Sempore, which is about 5 miles away from the capital city of Srinagar. She was married at an early age to a Brahmin boy in village Pampore. She was maltreated at her in-laws. Her mother-in-law always starved her, but she never raised the finger against her. It is said that once there was going to be some feast in her home. While fetching water from the river, she was told by her friends: "You must be having lavish dishes at home tonight"? Lalleshwari replied: "Whether they (in-laws) slaughtered a big sheep or a small one, Lalla always has a stone for her dinner" (a practice with her mother-in-law of putting a stone in her thali and covering it thinly with rice to look it like a big heap to others).

Lalla left her home and became a yogni. Her guru was Sidha-Bayu, an eminent scholar (of Sanskrit literature) of the time. She learned yoga and meditation under the guru and later on she excelled her guru. She had an opportunity to meet the Sayeds who came from Iraq. She had long discussions and frequent arguments with them on religion, etc. She fills her teachings with many truths that are common to all religious philosophies. All religions were to her merely paths leading to the same goal. She never differentiated between a Hindu and a Musalmaan. Her vaakhs (poetry) lay more stress on recognising one's ownself, which is the true knowledge of God. She says that the cause of all our troubles is ego, which must be renounced. One must be moderate in food or drink. Overeating, she says, will lead us nowhere, while not eating will give rise to conceit. She has said that if one cannot realize God in this life, how can one realize Him after death.

Many myths, legends and miracles are woven round her name, which indicate the reverence in which she was held by Hindus and Muslims alike. The famous Patron saint-poet of Kashmir, Nund Rishi of Chrar-e-Sharief held her in high esteem and reverence. Her vaaks are commonly sung in Kashmir by all communities and have passed from generation to generation.

#### 3.1.1 Lal Ded Hospital

It is said that Lal Ded lived a long life, preaching her gospel of love, brotherhood, unity and tolerance. and roamed within the Kashmir Valley. She was equally claimed both by Hindus and Muslims as their own at the time of her death. When the winding sheet was uncovered from her body, only a few flowers were seen on the bier to the pleasant surprise of all. After her death there was no monument in her memory. But it was only in 1981-82 that a women's hospital in Srinagar was named after this great saint-poetess as the Lal Ded Hospital, which was inaugurated by the then Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. In Pampore town, there is a pond, known as Lala Trag after Lal Ded. This is the only place which is associated with her name till date.

It goes to the credit of this yogni who spread and preached the message of non-violence, simple living and high thinking as long back as the fourteenth century and thus became Lal Moj or Lal Ded both for Muslims and Hindus.

### 3.2 Rupa Bhawani

Rupa Bhawani was born in 1624 A.D. to a pious scholar, Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar, who lived in Mohallah Khanaqahi Sokhta near the present Safa Kadal. The girl born to him was named as Rupa. It is said that Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar used to perform parikrama of Hari Parbat daily and praying to Goddess Sharika. Due to this Bakhti and Sadhana to MataJagatAmba, the girl born to him was angelic in appearance.

In childhood, she was reared up with a lot of love and affection. At an early age, she was married to a learned youngman of Sapru family. But her marriage like that of Lal Ded did not last long. She was teased by her mother-in-law and by her husband also. It is said that her spiritual pursuits and meditation were not liked by them. As the marriage proved unhappy, she renounced the wordly life and became a yogni. She studied vedanta, yoga and other Hindu scriptures under her father who was her guru too. She wandered at a number of places in the valley and had discussions, etc, with Yogis, Sadhus and Darveshs.

It is said that Rupa Bhawani had during her life- time performed a number of miracles. Eyesight was restored to a person by her. Through her mere glance, a major fire was extinguished in village Manigam, near Lar in the present Srinagar district. Besides Srinagar, she did meditation at Waskura and Chashma Shahi, a beautiful place near the present Raj Bhawan. At these places, she held spiritual discourses and attracted devotees among both Hindus and Muslims. Being yogni, she was the mother to all, irrespective of caste, creed and religion and loved them all as her own children. She was revered as a manifestation of Goddes Sharika as her father was a great devotee of Her. She had faith in the Supreme Lord as the sole master of all creation.

Rupa Bhawani was well-versed in Sanskrit and Persian languages, but she used Kashmiri as the medium for expressing her thoughts and teachings, known as shruk (shalok). A Muslim faqir (saint) of her times, Shah Sadiq Qalandar, had great regard and admiration for her. He recorded her death, etc. in a Persian chronogram.

Rupa Bhawani left her mortal remains in the winter month of Magha Saptami of Krishna Paksha (January) at the age of about 97 years. Kashmiri Pandits in the valley have great respect for her. For the last more than 370 years, they are keeping a tast on her death anniversary, which is known as Sahib Saptami, as a mark of respect to this great soul.

Ashrams were built at Waskura, Manigam, Safa Kadal and other places by her devotees. A big hawan used to be performed on her death anniversery by the Rupa Bhawani Alak Sahiba Trust. On this occasion, Muslims of the area used to sell flowers, Kand (sugar candy), milk, etc, to the devotees. But due to the rise of militancy in the Kashmir Valley, no such ceremony takes place now in Kashmir at present since 1989-90.

To keep her sacred memory alive after the mass migration of Kashmiri Pandits in February-March 1990, the Pandits have constructed an ashram at Jammu near Talab-Tillo. The annual hawan is now performed here in which Kashmiri Pandits in large numbers participate.

#### 3.3 Arinimaal

Arinimaal was born in eighteenth century to a Kashmiri Pandit family at village Palhalan in the Baramulla area. At that time, Kashmir was ruled by Pathans (Durrani dynasty). During this period, Kashmiris were subjected to the worst rule that the valley has ever witnessed.

It is said that Arinimaal was married in her childhood to Munshi Bhawani Dass Kachroo. Bhawani Dass was a respected person in the Afghan court. Jumma Khan, then Governor of Kashmir from 1788 to 1792, was less harsh than other Pathan rulers and he respected scholars and patronised the men of learning. By dint of hard work and intelligence, Bhawan Dass acquired mastery in Persian. Afghan dignitaries and officials were surprised over his calibre and erudition. He was a poet in Persian language. His Persian poems entitled "Bahar-i-Tavil" is considered a major contribution to the Persian language. He wrote under the pen name of "Naiku".

The early period of Arinimaal's married life was happier one. But these days did not last long. Her husband who was an important person in the Darbar fell into bad company and deserted her. Due to this, Arinimaal's heart broke and became dejected and forlorn. Possibly due to this painful separation, she must have taken to poetry.

Arinimaal sang of love, beauty and sorrow. Her poetry speaks of agony, dejection, pathos and disappointments. Her poetry melts the people's hearts. Through her poety, one comes across how she loved her husband. After separation, she returned to her parents' house who were kind and sympathetic towards her. The people of the village used to cut jokes at her expense. But it did not change her. It is said that, at an advanced age, Arinimaal took to the spinning wheel and spent her days in the hope that one day her love (husband) will return.

After some time, Bhawani Dass realised that he had been unkind to his wife. He decided to be with her again. He proceeded towards her village, and when he reached Palhalan, he saw that she was being carried for cremation. And it was too late.

There is no monument or anything of that sort in her memory in Kashmir but through her poetry she has become popular and continues till today.

A few years back, RADIO KASHMIR broad- casted a play on her. Besides, DOORDARSHAN, Srinagar, had also made a tele-film on her.

It may be mentioned in passing that my preceptor and eminent scholar, the late Shri Janki Nath Ganhar, used to refer to me to some literary talks he had with the great Kashmiri poet, the late Master Zinda Kaul, who had told the latter that many of the verses attributed to poetess Habba Khatoon actually belong to Arinimaal. Now it is for the eminent scholars of Kashmiri literature to delve deep into these questions and come to correct conclusions.

#### 3.4 Habba Khatoon

Habba Khatoon was born in the middle of sixteenth century to a poor family in village Chandhar near Pampore. Her original name was Zoon (the moon). From her childhood, she was fond of singing. At a very young age, she was sent to madrassa (school) where she was taught Persian and also studied holy Quran. But her first love was poetry. Her parents were not happy over this and got her married to a village boy. He did not like her singing, etc. He used to feel ashamed to know that her wife was being admired by villagers. He advised her not to sing, but she did not stop singing. Relations between the husband and wife became strained. Her parents and in-laws pressed her a lot not to indulge in this hobby and behave like other girls of the village. But she ignored all advice.

It is said that one day she was plucking flowers in the fields and was deeply absorbed in her singing. At the same time, heir-apparent to the Kashmir throne, Yusuf Shah Chak, was passing by. He was thrilled by her singing. He enquired about the singer. When he met her, he was bewitched by her beauty. He craved to make her his wife. The prince then got her divorced from her first husband and married her.

The second marriage proved successful for some years and during this period she gave more time to her poetry and singing. Her fame as a poetess and musician travelled far and wide.

These happy days did not last long for her. Akbar, the Mughal emperor of India, annexed Kashmir to his empire in 1548 A.D. Yusuf Shah Chak was taken a prisoner and sent to Bihar. This separation caused great and unendurable pain to her and she became almost mad with grief. It is said that she left the royal palace and wandered aimlessly at various places of Kashmir. During her wanderings, she had been to Gurez a village on the bank of river Kishen Ganga in the Baramulla area. In this village, she spent some time near a small hill, which is known as Habba Bal (Hill of Hahba Khatoon) even today. The last days of her life were full of sorrow and suffering. It is said that she finally settled down near present Pantha Chowk where she passed her last days and lies buried there.

On her life, DOORDARSHAN had made a TV film and a number of dramas, both on radio and theatres, have been played. In 1988, a famous film director from Bombay tried to make a feature film on her but, unfortunately, it did not reach completion. To honour this Kashmiri poetess, a ship named as Habba Khatoon was commissioned into the service of the country by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, another illustrious daughter of Kashmir.

Source: Koshur Samachar

## 4 Ksemendra

## 4.1 Ksemendra - The Peoples' Poet

#### Prof. K. N. Dhar

Sanskrit poets and literary luminaries have been often accused of oriental hyperbole. It may be conceded that by and large such devotees of Muse did indulge in some kind of exaggeration which became naseauating at times; such kind of poetic fancy becomes pronounced when they had to extol their patrons, heroes or even their beloveds. Kings whose munificence made such kind of poets as mercenaries, so to say, have been equated with the lord of the gods - Indra, while they bad no intrinsic merit of their own. People at large have been by-passed and no direct reference has been made to them. Even the prince among poets Kalidasa has revelled in the description of Raghu or Dilipa but has forgotten altogether his snbjects over whom they ruled. Aja sheds torrents of tears for his beloved wife Indumati, but not a single drop has been reserved for the underdog whom he exploited to live in luxury.

Happily for us, a Kashmiri Brabmin "Ksemendra" by name has striven to wash off this stigma attached in general to Sanskrit poets and has tried his versatile pen on the people in general. This is not a mean achievement in the context of the standards and norms of poetry-writing prevalent at that time. Even the Rhetoricians had laid it down that the hero of a Mahakavya should be a god, saint or a man of exceptional attainments. To rise in revolt against such time-honoured conventions needs self-confidence of highest order. Ksemendra did not err in his duty towards his brethren and though being a rebel did initiate a very healthy trend in the sanskrit literary tradition. He made heroes and heroines of ordinary mortals in flesh and blood - the courtesan, the clerk, the miser and many others culled from ordinary life. He did not believe in portraying the ideal, at the same time not being averse to it. He in a most realistic manner could feel the ground underneath his feet. The throbs, sighs, sobs, joys and sorrow of the man in the street have been woven in dexterous verse pulsating with innate sincerity by him only to point out that the distance between the "ideal" and the "actual" needs to be bridged, and perfection being an adage only found in text books on morality, approximation to that ideal should guide us as to the inherent merit or otherwise of the people of whom he was one.

In an extant reference to Ksemendra found in Kalhana's Raja Tarangini, his talent as a poet has been praised but his acumen for historicity played down:

#### <verses>

"Because of somewhat carelessness, not a single fraction of the Ksmendra's Nrpavali is free from blemishes, even though it is the work of a poet."

Kalhana having seen the "list of kings" could glean mistakes in it from the point of view of a chronicler, but unfortunately this book was lost to the posterity, hence no judgement whatsoever can be passed on it except relying on Kalhana who acknowledges Ksemendra's right to be a poet. However, in the Colophon to the 'Samaya Matrika', Ksemendra has written that he finished that work during the reign of Ananta in the 25th year of the Laukika era. Again in "Suvratta - Tilakam" he reiterates that he wrote in the reign of king Ananta and finally in 'Dasavataracaritam' he says that he finished this assignment in the reign of Kalasha, son of Ananta, the year being 41 Saptarsi era. So it is abundantly clear that he did at least see the rule of two kings- Ananta and his son Kalasha. Again in his 'Bharatamanjari' he has alluded to his being the pupil of Abhinavagupta from whom he learnt Alamkara Shastras. The date of this shaiva philosopher and commentator - Abhinavagupta cannot be later than 1014 A.D. because he wrote his bigger commentary on the Pratyabhijna Darshana in 1014 A. D. At that time Ksemendra studied at his feet. So we can safely assume that Ksemendra must have been born at least 20 or 25 years before this date so as to develop his comprehension in receiving the tuition from Abhinavagupta. Hence his date of birth c n roughly be placed in the last quarter (towards its end) of the 10th century. His explicit mention of Ananta and his son Kalasha only might give some clue as to his death or retirement from creative literature. He does not mention any other king after Kalasha which proves that he was not destined to see the reign of the successor to Kalasha. The year in which he finished the "Dasavatarcaritam" has been given as 41

Saptarsi era which corresponds to 1066 A. D. After this date he either sought respite from literary pursuits or was cut short in life by death. He went to Tripuresha mountain for spending his old age there and probably breathed his last at the Ashrama he had built over there. King Kalasha reigned from A.D. 1073 - 1089 and it can fairly be assumed that Ksemendra cast off his corporal frame after A D. 1066 and not in any case later than A.D. 1089. Between these two limits his date of death can be cogently placed. This Tripuresha or Tripureshvara was held in great reverence in olden days as Kalhana alludes repeatedly to it for its sanctity. King Avantivarman also passed his last days on this Tirtha. Nilamata purana also mentions it as a place of piligrimage. This has been identified as 'Triphar' on route to Mahadeva shrine, some 4 miles from the headworks of the present 'Harvan' to the North-East A stream known as Tripuraganga is still visited by the piligrims going to Mahadeva which flows close to modern Triphar. Even though it has lost its fame now, yet Shrivara has mentioned about a 'Annasattra' started by king Zain-ul-Ab-Din (Bud Shah) at this Tirtha. This may be the permanent 'Langar' of those days started for feeding the needy and might prove that during the Muslim rule also it had retained its renown as a holy place.

Ksemendra unlike other Sanskrit poets does not feel shy of publicity. In the colophons of his various works he acquaints us fully with his lineage; piecing together all these facts given by the author himself, we can conveniently build his family tree. His grandfather's name was 'Sindhu' being the son of 'Narendra' a minister of Jayapida, grandson of Lalitaditya.

He was a very strong and benevolent king of Kashmir and was named Vinayaditya also especially on his coins. His father's name was Prakashendra. He seems to have been born in affluence as the family surname of 'Indra' most eloquently testifies to. His father was of very liberal disposition and made handsome gifts to Brahmins. He subscribed to Shaiva cult hence installed many Shiva lingas at Svayam near Nichihama in present Handwara Tehsil, and spent some 25 lakh rupees for endowment purposes. Like his father Ksemendra also built an Ashram at Triphar and retired there in his old age. His son was 'Somendra' and being talented like his versatile parent wrote an introduction to the "Avadana-Kalpalata".

Fortunately for us, the family tree of Ksmendra unmistakably illustrates that this family had preference for Sanskritic names and not local names, whose meaning at present cannot be made out like those of Kalhana, Bilhana and Mamatta, etc. "Khema" in Sanskrit means "eternal happiness" and Indra means a "lord". So the name taken together means "Lord of eternal happiness, which he really was, as his compositions fully portray. He did not confine this happiness only to himself but dispensed it profusely among his fellow-countrymen by composing humorous skits and witty character sketches in "Deshopadesa" and "Narmamala". He lived perfectly up to his name.

His versatile genuis has flowered in many directions. Dr. Keith called him a polymath while Dr. Stein' has appended the epithet polymister with his name. This tribute goes a long way in establishing that he did not confine himself to a single form of literary expression but tried his pen over many other forms with equal force and effect. However, in all humility he calls himself 'Vyasadasa' the servant of Vyasa of Mahabharata fame. Knowledge has given him humility in every sense of the word. Even though like Vyasa he was a prolific writer, yet he refrains from equating himself with him; he does scale the virgin heights of literary expression, yet does not boast about this but ascribes it to the blessings of Vyasa whose slave he becomes willingly. The ego in him remains subdued as should be the case with every literary giant.

However, it is to be conceived rightly that though Ksemendra's father was a devout Shaiva and he himself received tuition from Abhinavagupta - a Shavitie stalwart - yet he got converted to Vaishnavism by the efforts of Somapada. It also seems that he had more respect for this Somabhagvata than even for Abhinavagupta. Moreover, he kept his mind open and studied Bhuddism also. Perhaps his awake intuition first of all thought of including Buddha among the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Some faint echoes of ridiculing Shaivism can also be gleaned from his compositions especially in 'Deshopadesha' and 'Naramamla'. But despite all his flirations with Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Bhuddism, he was a firm believer in the religion of Shrutis (Vedas) and Smritis.

Before we proceed to discuss his literary acumen as a polymath, it seems pertinent to refer to a controversy raised by Prof Peterson regarding the identity of Kesemendra and by mistake confusing him with Kshemraja - the renowned commentator of Shaiva lore. However, on second thoughts he revised his earlier opinion, and in this way the dust raised by this confusion got settled. Perhaps this wrong inference is due to the fact that both these Kshemaraja and Ksemendra acclaim Abhinavagupta as their teacher. Ksemendra has provided a veritable hint as to his real identity as much as he prefixes the epithet "Vyasadasa" invariably with his name while Kshemaraja does not have any such appellation. The latter is silent about his pedigree but the former has written profusely about his lineage. Hence it can be easily understood that the two have had separate identity.

Broadly speaking Ksemendra's immense literary activities can be divided into four distinct traits:

- a) As a condenser of very lengthy epic -literature and other religious Kavyas.
- b) As a Historian.
- c) As a satirist.
- d) As a writer on Rhetorics, poetics and metres.

Under the first head, his summaries of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Brhatkatha of Gunadya, 'Deshavatarcharita' and 'Baudha-vadanakalpalata' are note worthy.

By epitomizing the Brhatkatha written originally in paishachi, he did a great service to the literary tradition of Sanskrit literature. The original having been lost, but Ksemendra's translation into Sanskrit has served admirably to retrieve that irreparable damage, and so he is looked upon as the originator rather than the translator of this famous story-literature. Soma Deva Bhatta also prepared a second version of Brhat Katha in Sanskrit after him which proves that this kind of literature on the pattern of Arabian Nights had become very popular with the people.

Brhat Katha Manjari deals with amors and heroism of various kings especially the king Udyana. It has nineteen Lamabakas (cantos). The poetry employed is not of high order and in the words of Dr. Buhler may be called "verified prose". Ramayana Manjary and Mahabharata Manjari are obviously the shorter versions of Ramayana and Mahabharata - the epic literature of India respectively. In the latter a glaring omission is perceptible. He has altogether omitted the chapters 342-353 of the Shanti Parva. On a perusal of the Ramayana Manjari it is quite clear that he follows Valimiki in a most faithful way and has even alluded to minor incidents be it by a single phrase or a single sentence. So, how this striking omission can be explained? Perhaps in the eleventh century the Shantiparva did not form the part of Mahabharata and might have been interpolated subsequently.

One fact comes to surface while discussing the Manjari literature of Ksemendra. He retains the original name of the text he has chosen for being summarized and appends the word 'Manjari' to it. "Manjari" might mean a sprout, cluster of blossoms, a flower-bud or a creeper. In this way he has very intelligently suggested that his smaller edition is like a creeper to the original and imposing tree of Ramayana, Mahabharata etc. He has like a deft gardener prunned the extraneous and redundant foliage around these trees and carved out of these a cluster of blossoms, even though smaller in volume, but all the more prettier in appearance. As a translator of Brhat Katha, his translation from Paisachi into Sanskrit was definitely subservient to the contents of the original. He could not take any liberty with it; with such shortcomings even, Ksemendra's mastry over Sanskrit is unblesmished. So it is wrong to judge his poetic prowess from his "Manjari" literature. His independent works only can be the touch-stone to test his talents as a poet. We will come to this point later.

Baudhavadana-kalpa-lata', is a collection of Jataka tales. On the authority of the poet's son "Somendra" Ksemendra composed only 107 Pallavas (chapters), to which his worthy son added one more, making it the auspicious number of 108. Unfortunately the first 40 Chapters of this compendium were lost but luckily were retrieved from its Tibetan translation, when Shakya - Shri a Kashmiri Pandit presented a copy of it to the Lama of Tibet in 1202 A.D. He got it translated into Tibetan some seventy years after i.e. 1272 A.D. Ksemendra also acknowledges the debt of one 'Virya Bhadra' an authority on Buddhistic texts who assisted him in composing this treatise.

"Dashavatarcharita" as the name suggests contains anecdotes regarding various incarnations of Vishnu; though Ksemendra does display a rare kind of ingenuity in dealing with this religious topic, yet it cannot be termed to be his original work; first 9 cantos are definitely derived from Puranas. Novelty of conception is discerned in the 7th canto wherein "whole of the Ramayana is narrated with Ravana as the central figure". The result is quite happy and vividness of description adds to its charm. This novelty of conception is further more witnessed in his extolling Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu. The inherent attitude of an Indian thinker believing in synthesis is seen at the work here. Herein the Hindu view of life assimilating all that is good from any source whatever, has come in handy to the poet. So, the rebel against Hinduism as such - the Buddha has been admitted to the fold of Hindu pantheon which proves not only the catholicity of Hindus but also their wakefulness.

When the symbol of revolt-Buddha was equated with Rama, Krishna etc. the edge of proselytisation started by his followers got blunted. The wind was taken out to their sails, not by force, not by persecution either, but by owning him. In this way Hindus got one more incarnation and propitiated him in the form he detested the most. His followers definitely stood to lose in the bargain while Hindus gained everything - their culture, their way of thinking remaining in tact. Impercetible erosion took place in the other camp and consequently this very religion had to either get amalgamated in the Hindu fraternity, or live in self-exile.

As a historian no estimate of his can be built as his "Nrpavali" (the list of Kings) has been lost even though Kalhana did consult it for writing, his Tarangini. However, Kalhana has not been fair to him. He admires his acumen as a poet, but derides it as a historian. However, it is to be conceded that Kalhana while enumerating the sources of the historical data on which he built his cbronicle, does mention his "list of kings" which must have commanded some respect in his time, and to justify the writing of his "Tarangini" pointed to the defects in the former "Nrpavali". In this connection it is to be remembered that even though Ksemendra undertook to write the "list of kings" but his heart definitely lay with the underdog. So he treated it in a slip- shod manner. In course of time, Nature respecting his conviction, consigned the book to some forgotten corner, hence was lost. His innate progressive outlook would have compiled a "Janavali". The "List of people" instead of "The list of kings". Perhaps to atone for this omission he wrote a number of books which do definitely come under the caption "Janavali". Royal patronage he did not want as he was sufficiently affluent himself, so could not bring himself to cater to the moonish caprices of kings.

Kalavilasa may be considered the best work from the fertile pen of Ksemendra. This book consists of ten cantos and in the very first canto "Muladeva" the arch cheat is introduced and the rest of the book is devoted to the tips given by him to his pupil Chandragupta the caravan leader's son. Each canto deals with vanity, greed description of courtesans, the character of the clerk, arrogance the description of Music, description of various cheats, and lastly exposition of all the arts. As is clear from the titles of cantos, the poet does not refrain from exposing the weakness inherent in the society at that time. The cheats, courtesans, Kayasthas and goldsmiths epitomizing the deceit in themselves corrupt the society with the aid of vanity, greed and arrogance. His play on the word ('mud') arrogance which was spelt as ('dum') restraint in the Krta - age deserves mention. In Kali - age the sequence of syllables has changed places 'dum' becoming 'mud'.

Moreover, useful information about the currency in vogue at that time is also given in this book. While describing the character of miserly trader he calls him a a thief in broad day light. Having plundered the customers by guile or flattery during the day, he very reluctantly parts with three cowries for house-hold expenses. It seems clear that the cowries were in use as a medium of currency in his time - and that also of the lowest denomination. He calls cowries as a (Shvetika) being of white colour also. Narrating the novel deceptive ways of gold smiths who have faulty balances for weighing gold and possess sixty four arts of cheating the people, he alludes to their birth, and says that they were previously nibbling at the Meru mountain as mice and cursed by gods for this insolence were born as goldsmiths on this globe.

The title of this composition means the charm or pastime of arts- the art of deception, cheating, entincing, seduction, and robbery etc.

About the depraved woman, he has this castigation:

#### <verses>

"Eluding her own husband like a fawn, tasting the hospitality of another tree (not her own husband's), by nature a low-born vamp, displays false coquetry, crooked she-serpent, can be faithful to none".

In the same vein the prostitute is condemned as

#### <verses>

"In this way, having many hearts, many tongues, many hands, and many tricks of seduction, in realily without truthfulness; no body can know the prostitute in essence."

About the innocence of men he has this satirical compliment:

#### <verses>

"The astrologer calculating in the sky as to when the moon will enter its sixteenth mansion, does not know anything about his wife who is attached to the amors of various serpents (bad charactered men)."

The Kayastha (the scribes clerk) who held very important post in old Kashmir and like a 1eech drank the blood of people has not escaped his chastisement.

#### <verses>

"The handwriting (of Kayastha) is crooked, (fradulent, so that the actual entries made into his books are not deciphered) looking like the snares of the death-god. The Kayasthas sit on the file of the birch bark (files) like serpents in a charmed circle (drawn by a conjurer)."

Samayamatrika may be also called the finest composition from the versatile pen of Ksemendra. Herein the poet lays bare the seductive amors of prostitutes and their enticing acumen. In the colophon to this book the poet calls it ('subhashitam') by which its didatic import is suggested. The caption of the book a compound consisting of ('Samaya') time and ('Matrika') mother, when taken together, may mean the "mother of the time" in that age. It was not the chaste or the virtuous lady but the ensnaring vamp - the prostitute who ruled over the hearts of men. The times were not in any way flatteringly punctuated with piety but besmeared with sinful conquetries of the prostitutes; by bringing them to the fore and also alluding to their ghastly end, the poet does reform the society. Some critics have found Ksemendra guilly of low-taste, vulgarity and only narrating the bad points in the society. However it is to be remembered in this context that Ksemendra in the first instance does not claim to be a religious preacher. He writes what he actually sees and feels. If the society was rampant with vulgarity, low taste and other evils, how could the poet be blind to these? The degradation in the society could not have remained hidden even if Ksemendra had tried to make the use of "idealistic" rather than the "realistic" approach to life. The filth and the mud in the society would after all raise its head had Kesmendra covered it with the sweet smelling roses of his imagination even. By screening these from public view would have all the more multiplied their intensity, hence by portraying these, the society at large hanging its head in shame, could have thought of reform in right earnest. Hence the poet's intention is to reform and in no way to present the deformation of society. Hence the use of the ('subhashitam') at the end of book is quite justified. Negatively if the darkness is explained in full detail, the positive reaction to it would be light, more light. As the litle of the book suggests, it is a compound of 'Times' and 'Matrika' (mother) object of respect. In a sarcastic manner the author wants to convey that the harlot is the "mother of the times" or more respected and sought after individuals in the society, while actually the Matrikas should have been propitiated. The moral and mental fibre of the people at that time was so base that instead of engaging themselves in "Matrika Pujananam" they wasted time and money in enjoying prostitutes. Hence in the very beginning of this treatise, Ksemendra very rightly says:

<verses>

Moreover, towards the end of this composition Ksemendra himself justifies the title by saying:

#### <verses>

"In course of time (by the curse of the time) that (Kankali) - the mother was transformed into an artificial beauty by Kalavati, associating this treatise with her name, I, Ksemendra has arranged it (into cantos)".

This book also furnishes geographical data about the old salt route (salt has been always imported into the Valley) and a hospice named 'Panchala-Dhara-Matha' on it. Later on this very route and hospice were rennovated by the Mughals connecting the Valley with the plains via Pira-Panchal range. This book of verses is divided into eight cantos (Samayas). Herein the initiation of one 'Kankali' into the hierarchy of prostitutes and her various sojourns have been described. The agent for introducing her to a senior-intrade grown up lady- hence unmarkatable is naturrally the hair-dresser- among men the barber (hair-dresser) is the most wicked.

Charucharya is actually a century of verses in Aaushtubha metre. According to the author the main purpose of writing it is to teach law and polity by way of a moral couched in the first line of the verse and followed by an illustration in the second. The illustrations are mainly drawn from epics and Puranas.

'Deshopdesha' contains updeshas (advice) in eight cantos regarding his innate feelings about the customs and notorious characters in the society. In the opening verses of this book the author craves for the indulgence of the readers in not construing any other meaning into his use of biting sarcasm, but only to bear with him, because he would like to reform the society through this medium:

#### <verses>

"Being ashamed very much and not goaded by the defects (in the society), it is my attempt to reform the people through mirthful laughter."

The characters he has chosen for his chastisement are the the villian, the miser, harlot, the bawd, the sexy rogue; the Gouda students having come to Kashmir for receiving tuition and the old man's marriage etc.

The harlot epitomizes in his words: -

#### <verses>

"In her speech honeyed-sweetness, in her heart the blade of a razor, the prostitute is like a sharp edge of an axe ready to cut at the roots of her paramours."

Even though being at the right side of sixties, she polishes her face with beauty - aids like a girl in teens, verily at the commencement of the iron age, she must have taken nectar along with crows.

About the foreign students especially from Gauda Pradesha (Bengal), he has this left-handed compliment:

#### <verses>

"He demands more vendibles, but gives very little as the price, so the vendor in the morning stands before him like a local Kali (to recover the balance)."

Presumably the student given to vile practices could not be coaxed into paying the actual price being under the influence of liquor on the preceding night. He would have cooked up a brawl and even wounded the vendor with his knife.

Moreover, the pscychology of a miser has been graphically woven by him in these words:

#### <verses>

"The miser seeing a relation of his having come to his house of his own will, under the excuse of an altercation with his wife vows not to take anything."

When the host is observing a fast, moreso under protest, how could the guest expect hospitality there. So, he takes up to his heels and in this way, the miser gets rid of him. Furthermore, Ksemendra tries to philosophise on his over-all behaviour:

#### <verses>

"The dry-as-dust miser's words can never be sweet. How can be loveliness on his face when there is no salt even in his house-hold."

Herein, the poet has played on the word 'salt' which in its abstract form may mean beauty also.

In this way, he has not spared any such despised character in society.

The Kashmiri Bhatta (Pandit as known now) having fallen from his high pedestal and addicted to vice has been painted by him as

#### <verses>

"The initiated Bhatta (Kashmiri Brahmin) bent upon taking liquor, being addicted to Vamachara by which the pride of his own clan has been set at naught, with a plate of fish in his hand, approaches the house of his teacher (for reading scriptures)."

This description of a Bha!tta very lucidly brings home to our mind the levity obtaining in the highest caste at that time. Having forsaken the right path of worship and taking to Vamachara, he has to observe the 'panchamkaar' (five MS) rule, and is so bashless that he does not care two hoots for the prestige of the community to which he belongs.

The old man's infatuation for a young girl has been very aptly summed up by the author as follows:

"The old man begs for a virgin (in marriage) like a miser for wealth." The undertone in this simile is purposely condensed by the author by comparing the lust for a virgin of a dotard with the lust for money by the miser - who will never use it but simply keep it imprisoned in his coffers, only to feed his eyes upon.

'Narma-Mala' or a garland of humour and wit is actually a complement to the 'Deshopdesha.' It is divided into three Parihasas (Jokes). The main target in these is the Kayastha- clerk- who is painted most black. He revelles in dismantling temples, teasing Brahmins, and encouraging bribery. His life full of vice lands him into the prison ultimately, and all his ill-gotten riches and property are confiscated. His end is most tragic.

The "Then" and "Now" of the Kasyastha has been very wittily condensed in the following verse:

#### <verses>

"(In former days) his wife used to drink the begged scum in a broken and second-hand stone bowl. She now takes the musk-scented wine in silver goblets."

Under the fourth head, Ksemendra as a rhetorician and writer on poetics and metrics composed Kavi Kanthabharana (The necklace of a poet) and Auchitya Vicharaeharcha (an account of propriety) and Suvratta tilakam (the crest of good metres) deserves special mention. As the titles of these compositions reveal, the first is a short treatise on the making of a poet for which divine as well as human effort is necessary. The second declares the "propriety' as the soul of poetry. The age-long predominance of Rasa (sentiments) has been subordinated by him to Auchitya (propriety). The third obviously is a work on metres. Twenty four metres are described, discussed and illustrated by him in all.

Besides these, a host of books on other subjects has been ascribed to Ksemendra. Late Pt. Madhusudan Kaul Shastri enumerates as many as thirty one compositions from his versatile pen.

However, to build his towering image as a peoples' poet, only such uncontrovercial treatises as have been classified under different heads earlier, are sufficient.

Without mincing words, it would be expedient to judge him as a poet first and afterwards the subject he chose as a vebicle for his poetic talent will merit discussion. The most accepted definition of poetry from Eastern point of view is by Kavi Raja Vishwanatha when he says that even a single sentence containing Rasa (flavour or sentiment of relish) may be called poetry. Futher to pin-point the importance of Rasa he defines it as which tinkles or which is relished is called Rasa. With other constituents such as

'embellishments', 'qualities', etc, Rasa is acknowledged by one and all as the soul of poetry. Herein obviously the emphasis is on the content of poetry.

Ksemendra himself defines poetry as containing "Auchitya" propriety. According to him propriety has been defined as:

"An embellishment is a real embellishment when applied at the proper place, and Gunas (merits) are actually merits when they up-bold the norms of propriety. So it is clear that Ksemendra does not subscribe to Rasa theory of poetry and makes bold to give his own definition. He actually makes the poetry purposeful. Furthermore in a poetic composition when different Rasas (sentiments) are intermixed propriety alone can preserve their flavour, if this kind of discretion is not employed, then the composition would only be a counter-feit mixture of sentiments. The author lays emphasis on the existence of propriety in each word, sentence, figures of speech, verbs, syntax, gender, number, adjective, tense and even on other outer limbs of poetry (Kavyangas) i.e. environment, time, intuition, thought and nomenclature.

Therefore the difference between the Rasa school and the definition of poetry given by Ksemendra is that the former is subjective in essence and the latter is objective in comprehension. The Advocates of Rasa did definitely include propriety in merits and impropriety with blemishes.

But Ksemendra like a realist does mark the frontiers between the two, because his judgment is objective. Before testing his merit as a poet by his own standards or by Esstern norms of criticism, it will be feasible to define poetry and also the making of a poet from western point of view also.

Wordsworth defioes poetry "nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth." Herein this celebrated poet under-lines the truth which should deserve to be the subject of poetry. Another famous poet Shelley while defining poetry in a general way takes it to be the expression of imagination. Coleridge makes it as anti-thesis of science having for its immediate object pleasure not truth. Herein the emphasis is laid on the pleasure which should flow from a poetic composition. Thomas Carlyle declares poetry to be "musical thought". This definition is perhaps in consonance with that given by Dr. Johnson when he says that "poetry is metrical composition." Both these definitions pertain to the form of poetry-other than prose. Edgar Allan Poe also echoes the same feeling when according to him poetry is "the rhythmic creation of beauty."

W. H. Hudson sees poetry "as an interpretation of life through imagination and feeling."

However, from the perusal of all these definitions it is clear that poetry as such is a metrical composition pulsaling with imagination and feeling its goal being to interpret the truth or to provide pleasure. In this way the form of poetry being musical and metrical and its content either the truth or the pleasure, have been properly and proportionately located. By comparing this definition with that of the Indian critics it is patent that these are in line with the protagonists of 'Rasa' theory which definitely tinkles the emotions. With regard to Ksemendra we have to note the didactic import in his poetry which he proclaims from the house-top. Therefore, the question arises whether a poet can be a moral teacher. He has to translate his feelings and emotions faithfully as they ooze forth in his heart and to preach morality through this medium is justified or not. To this knotty problem Sir Philip Sidney provides a cogent answer. In his "Defence of poetry" he says that a poet is a 'maker'; the Indian counter-part being 'Srishta' having the same meaning. So, it can be safely inferred that the poet does not express what already exists, but he invents - precisely the 'ideal' for the imitation of the reader in general. He (Sidney) further contends that the world created by the poet is surely better than what exists reality. In the same way fiction sounds truer than the fact. The contention of Sir Sydney to put squarely is, that poet is actually a moral teacher, but Ksemendra while admitting this in toto, does not believe in his painting the ideal and thereby reform the 'actual'. He would like to proceed from the 'actual' like a revolutionary and would like the reader to assess for himself 'what should have been' from 'what it is.' What he preaches on Morality is simply suggestive and not direct. Perhaps his approach is more realistic than Sir Sidney who would like us to go to the 'Real' via 'ideal'. Ksemendra believes in treating the 'Real' with its imperfections, and all the time beckoning us

in undertones, and not directly, to have an eye on the 'perfect ideal'. "What should not be" can be very efficiently emphasized by "what actually is."

His conviction about the function of propriety in poetry comes to his succour in this dilemma. Propriety according to him is nothing but a real representation of life as it obtains. Had he painted it otherwise, it would have amounted to impropriety. Hence his candid portrayal of society is an illustration of propriety in its all shades of meaning. He would not like to pass on a counterfeit society for a genuine one. He believes in calling spade a spade and not confusing dross with gold. While discussing the attributes of a poet, Ksemendra in his 'Kavi Kanthabharna' has unambiguously laid down that a poet-in-the making should not seek the guidance of a logician or a grammarian because they hinder the flowering of good poetry. He is alive to the fact that good poetry should in no case get fettered in grammatical technicalities or the mental drill of logicians. It should flow like an uninterrupted stream. Moreover, he even goes to the extent of saying that a poet - in-the making "should neither go a - begging nor stoop to vulgarity in his narratives". His imaginative faculty should not be wanting in anything and should not fall below the established norms of good-taste. So, it is clear that Ksemendra as a teacher on poetry and also as a poet does strike a happy mean between the precept and the practice; for this he has chosen the vehicle of satire.

A satire has been defined as a piece of writing which ridicules the follies and wickedness of mankind, of a class of people or of an individual. As has been made clear in the preceding pages his emphasis is on the individual - different units of society who are a veritable cancer for its healthy growth. Hence his chastiment pulsating with sarcasm and irony does not border on vulgarity. It is a faithful representation of life. It can safely be asserted that his poetry is not a revolt against life in any sense of the word. The moral standards as should have been existent in the society - which actually are not there - form the dirge of his poetical compositions. Like Mathew Arnold he believes that 'poetry is at bottom a criticism of life.' Morality and ethical values do form an inextricable woof and warp of the texture of society, hence the poetry of revolt would be revolt against life itself. So, he does not revolt against it, but lays it bare with pungent sarcasm and seemingly 'Mirthful laughter', only to relieve its grim effect on his readers.

In the same way Ksemendra's poetry cannot be a accused of being- the poetry of paradox. In a paradox the self-contradictory or absurd element is somewhat more pronounced than the truth it contains; our poet does not believe in the 'parodoxical' approach to poetry, but in its stead, prefers the direct approach which is easier to comprehend. He does not want us to solve riddles or puzzles.

Hence it is clear that his 'satire' does not subscribe either to 'revolt' or to 'paradox', in their stead, he transfers his innate feelings to the reader without any pretensions whatsoever.

It has been contended that satire is best suited to prose. In it the appeal is made to reason, judgement, "it cannot be heightened by being garnished with an appeal to emotion". However, our poet has employed the more difficult medium of poetry, hence his task to produce the desired effect is more arduous than those of the prose-writers in this field. Perhaps for this very reason some critics bave called his poetry as versified prose. As has been shown earlier, this is sheer injustice to our poet. Like a true satirist he has to subjugate his emotions to the compelling reality around him. The wings of his imagination do get clipped consequently, so his poetry may not touch the high water-mark of Kalidasa - who has no such shortcomings and his emotions are free to take any direction whatsoever. Even then Ksemendra has yoked his poetic prowess admirably well to the exposition of the real by contrasting it with the ideal. For a satirist the method of contrast is indispensable. He may feel piqued at times wilh the gulf between the real and his dreams, yet his anger has to be screened under a mask of 'Mirthful-laughter' as Ksemendra would say himself. The satrist has to don the mantle of a moralist though he may not like it. His insistent backoning to to ideal - appealing to the sense of right and wrong - unconsciously bestows on him the status of a moral teacher. He cannot escape from it. Hence, in his poetry the aesthetic content is naturally subserveint to the moral one. Even having such discomfitures for the full flight of his imagination, Ksemendra has tried his hardest to introduce aesthetic pleasure into it according to his own norms of propriety, as discussed earlier. His satire does show the poet in him. His compositions are even now relished with the gusto of a lyric vibrating with emotions and have never been treated as codes on

Morality. Perhaps this popular reaction to his satire is a sufficient compliment to his genius as a poet of no mean order.

The very first verse of samaya Matrika introduces him as a poet by his own right:

#### <verses>

"He who has conquered three worlds by his exciting, stormy, yet formless weapons; I salute him the flower-bowed cupid, for his surpassingly wonderful prowess."

Whenever his imaginative faculty is not under the curbing thumb of content, or is free to take strides at his own will, he deffnitely touches the high water mark of poetic fancy. The poet in him remains subdued not that he lacks proper imagination, by the compelling nature of the subject he has chosen, and the vehicle of shloka metre which cannot admit of any elaborate treatment because of its comparative shorter span. His vocabularly is so rich that he looks like a living Dictinary; hence he could readily and easily weave a particular situation or feeling out of the inexhaustible fund of words at his command. Words flow from his pen spontaneously and at times he does not feel diffident to use the local Kashmiri words also, perhaps to give his compositions a native colouring and flavour: "The flute-player has the Veena and the "tumbak" on his shoulders".

To make its Kashmiri usage more emphatic, he also uses the word 'Nara' with it. In this context many such Kashmiri words even the idioms can be gleaned from his works e.g. 'Tala' in the sense of Sanskrit 'palater', Gharaghara, reprenting the roaring sound of clouds in Kashmiri. Not only this but even the Kashmiri colloquial taunts and abuses have also been reproduced by him faithfully in sanskrit.

To crown all? his similies and other, figures of speech are not only apt but also homely. He does not believe in ethereal poetic fancy but has emply drawn from daily life. His personal experience and observation make his diction all the more realistic. His delineation of nature:

#### <verses>

"The starry night keeping vigil having become disgusted with the fatigue caused by its sporting with the white rays (off the moon), gradually gets emaciated, being annointed with the mornig dew, as if with perspiration."

Describing Moonlight the poet portrays a bewitching scene with its enthralling effect with the help of very simple words:

#### <verses>

"The lord of the night (the moon) a white parasol of cupid, the unblurred mirror made of crystal for the lady of "space", the white Tilaka of the damsel of Night, shone resplendently."

While describing the beauty of the city (presumably Srinagar) he has to say:

(In that city) where the musical notes of the pretty swans is all the more made sweeter by their devouring flesh lotus-stalks, which (musical notes) getting diffused in the lotus-groves sound like the jingling of anklets of goddess Lakshmi.

About the content of Ksemendra's writings, we have made it amply clear that he chose the ordinary man or woman with his or her all weaknesses as his subject. The choice of such a subject was in itself revolutionary at that time when fixed norms were laid in this behalf by the Rhetoricians. Ksemendra not only rebelled against such hackneyed, standards but provided his own thesis for Rhetorics and criticism in 'Auchityavicharacharcha' and ' Kavikanthabharna'. He showed the path to progressive trends in literature in those hoary times when dogmatic approach was the order of the day. Some ten centuries after him the humanily woke to the necessity of ushering in progressive outlook in literature, more especially after the Russian revolution of 1919. In a way Ksemendra combined in himself the characteristics of a prophet and a poet. He brought down the poetry from the ethereal heights to the matter of fact and real dimensions.

The style which he employs deserves some mention before we close this paper. Style is defined as a mode of expression and we shall have to examine as to how Ksemendra acquits himself in this field. We know already that he uses very simple words, avoids lengthy compounds and ambiguous epithets. His appeal is direct. He does not believe in traversing zigzag when shorter routes are available; with the use of simple straight and chiselled words he produces the maximum effect. This is his immortal contribution to Sankrit literature. He lives to the maxim propounded by Coleridge "best words in best order" by any standards whatsoever. Moreover, the mode of expression he employs has his own indelible imprint on it. Regarding this trait in style J. Middleton Murray has observed "A style must be individual because it is the expression of an individual mode of feeling." Some sixty years after him another Kashmiri Soma Deva Bhatta also tried his pen on epitomizing Brhatkhatha; it can easily be understood from the comparison of the two that Ksemendra has his own style which could not be imitated by Soma Deva. His own Kashmiri Retotician Vamana, a protaganist of Riti School has said:

#### <verses>

#### "Riti is a special arrangement of words; Riti is the soul of literature."

Ksemendra's writings do possess the "special arrangements of words", he does not waste a single word, but knows fully well "that these are two edged tools, if not used well, these can bite" as very aptly said by Anthony Trollope. Ksemendera's mastry over the language is perfect. He very prudentially uses a particular word to project a certian context and meaning. His selection of words is superb. T.S. Elliot has said "The poet has not a "personality" to express but a particular medium", which obviously connotes style. Ksemendra's style is neither artificial nor wanting in anything. It is to quote wordsworth - "Man speaking to man?" and to make this definition more representative, Ksemendra added the words "about the man" to it.

These words represent Ksemendra in all his shades. In his prolific writings he performs the mental surgery of the Man, locates the disease and points towards its eradication. He with child-like innocence and simplicity employs the most direct language only to talk to man like a man, because his aim is to beckon to him:

#### <verses>

"Alas, seeing always the deer in the trap in the jungle, even then the deerlings get into the crooked snares."

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

## 4.2 Ksemendra - A People's Poet

#### Pradeep Kaul (Khodballi)

Kashmir has since very early times been called "Sharda Desha" or the Land of Goddess Saraswati. Kashmir's contribution to the Indian thought has been of immense artistic, esoteric and aesthetic value. In the field of poetry Kashmir produced great Savants who were not only revered in Kashmir but accepted as authorities outside as well. Mammat's 'Kavya Prakash' still remains the most authentic and authoritative work on poetics in the whole gamut of Sanskrit literature. Whereas Kashmir produced people of great eminence it also gave to us a poet par excellence in Ksemendra.

Ksemendra flourished in the last quarter of tenth and first half of the eleventh century. He was a near contemporary of the great Abhinava Gupta. Ksemendra himself acknowledges to have been instructed in 'Alankar Shastras' by the great Acharya. 'Alankar Shastra' pertains to ornamentation of poetry. Ksemendra is a poet of excellence blat what makes him even more important and relevant is his concern for the downtrodden, the common man, the unlettered, the courtesan etc. In a bold but lucid way he lays bare the social evils and rampant corruption in those times. The exploitation of the oppressed by the elite,

exploitation of the scribes ('Kayasthas') and bureaucracy finds ample space in all his works. His heart seems to cry in pain upon seeing degeneration acid exploitation all around.

Ksemendra's works and literary activities are spread over many diverse fields. He is a summariser of the great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. He is an adopter of 'Brahatkatha' of Gunnadiya. He is a commentator on 'Dashavtarcharita' and author of 'Baudvandana Kalaplata'. In depiciting his family tree with an exact sense of chronology so lamentably absent in majority of Indian and his contemporaneous writers makes him very valuable. He is a tireless satirist. He also wrote important works on poetics and rhetorics.

Ksemendra's important contribution to the Sanskrit literature has been his rendition of Gunnaday's 'Brahatkatha' in Sanskrit. Gunnaday was an author from Frontier provinces who had originally written 'Brhatkatha' in 'Paischashi' language. It is highly probable that 'Paischashi' was the early corns of modern Pushto language now spoken in North West Pakistan and Western Afghanistan. Some scholars are of the, view that Gunnaday wrote in Paishachi of Vindhyas. By rendering 'Brahatkatha' into Sanskrit as 'Brahatkatha Manjri' he helped to save 'Brahatkatha' for posterity. 'Brahatkatha Manjri' is in verse and describes the lives, campaigns and amorous dalliances of various kings especially of King Udyana. He summarised Ramayana as 'Ramayana Manjari' and Mahabharta as 'Mahabharta Manjari'. The thing of curious interest in 'Mahabharta Manjari' is that the author has not included 'Shanti Parva which forms an important part in the present rendering of Mahabharta. How could a poet of such high merit and eminence make such serious omission is a matter to be pondered upon. Ksemendra was not only author of Hindu lore. He also wrote many works on Buddhism. In 'Baudvandana Kalaplata' he compiled Jataka tales. This work is a collection of 107 chapters (Pallavas). 'Baudvandana Kalaplata', it may be added is still considered an important work by Buddhists. In Tibet it is available in an interesting form of Tibetian woodcuts. This work has been translated in Dogri and other languages also.

What makes Ksemendra a poet of different class and calibre is his work 'Kalavilas'. This work is divided into ten chapters or cantos. Each canto is devoted to a person who is present in every society and every epoch. In 'Kalavilas' a super cheat Muldeva instructs his pupil Chandergupta in all subtle and salient traits which a super cheat is supposed to master. Ksemendra with wit and wisdom describes the inner weakness of man and society. With wonderful insight he describes the courtesan, the clerk, the gold-smith etc. Kalavilas makes him a total poet. This is why it seems that Ksemendra is as relevant today as he was in his times. He uses Parihas (jokes) to depict the various characters of his times in his work 'Narma Mala'. In 'Narma Mala' he vehemently attacks the clerk (Kayastha). Kayasthas, were in those times very powerful and in a way represented the corrupt official machinery of those times. Kayasthas were sucking the blood of the ignorant, poor people. The role of Kayasthas has attracted the attention of Kalhana also who has written about their dirty role in the society. He says that Kayasthas sit on files like coiled serpents. His handwriting is crooked and deliberately illegible to escape the notice or inquiry of any person of consequence. After amassing illgotten wealth Kayastha's wife drinks wine scented with rare musk who previously would relish to drink scum, with equal intensity.

Ksemendra is critical of misers. It seems that our people's poet had an intimate knowledge and understanding of human psychology. He has with sheer penetrating insight portrayed the decadent values and human failings of his times in simple but effective words. With heavy heart he describes the fallen virtues of 'Bhatta' (Pandit). He describes him as a liquor addict who though initiated (with Yagnopavit) is now completely overpowered by Vamachara. Unabashedly the 'Bhatta' proceeds towards the house of his Guru with a plate of fish to learn scriptures.

From the fertile pen of Ksemendra has come up an interesting work of 'Samaya Matrika'. Literally 'Samaya Matrika' means the mother of the times. A cursory peep into the title would suggest that by 'Samaya Matrika' our author points towards Goddess Shakti or her various forms. In this case it is not so. Here by 'Samaya Matrika' the author means the all powerful, disarming courtesan or harlot. With rare and vivid description he describes the super seductress 'Kankali'. Ksemendra described Kankali's heroics and triumphs over men of all classes and inclinations. 'Kankali' the courtesan has studied the psychologies of her prey and with relish prays upon hunt. She has been immortalized by the author for she is no ordinary

vamp but one who is not only a subtle wooer but a patient psychologist. By depicting these characters Ksemendra earnestly wishes to reform the degradation in the society. He wishes every member of the society to behave in an upright manner. This seems to be one of the compelling reason why he wrote another work 'Auchitya Vicharcharcha' which is a work on propriety. The author was bestowed upon with a great sense of history. After reading his works one is able to know everything about the period he lived in. He has preserved some thing novel and precious for us which would have been wiped out otherwise. In a way Kshemendra was a bright social scientist of his time. He was a perfectionist who with his immense talents wrote on diverse subjects with equal authority and finesse. Ksemendra was a poet who belonged to the people We all should read the works of this peerles ancestor of ours so that we understand his works and through them get a glimpse of his turbulent times (which seem so similar to the present times) and benefit from their study.

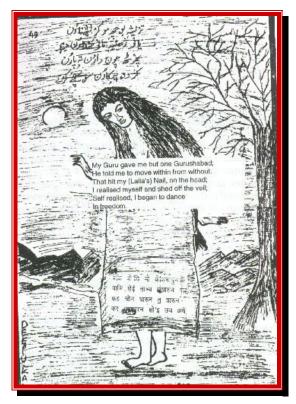
Source: Vitasta

## 5 Lal Ded

**Kashmir** has produced many saints, poets and mystics. Among them, **Lal Ded** is very prominent. In Kashmir, some people consider her a poet, some consider her a holywoman and some consider her a sufi, a yogi, or a devotee of Shiva. Sume even consider her an avtar. But every Kashmiri considers her a wise woman. Every Kashmiri has some sayings of Lalla on the tip of his tongue. The Kashmiri language is full of her sayings.

Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims affectionately call her "Mother Lalla" or "Granny Lalla". She is also called "Lallayogeshwari". Some people call her Lalla, the mystic.

It is said that Lal Ded was born in 1355 in Pandrethan to a Kashmiri Pandit family. Even as a child, Lalla was wise and religious-minded. When Lalla was twelve years old, she was married. Her in-laws lived in Pampur. The in-laws gave her the name Padmavati. Her mother-in-law was very cruel. She never gave her any peace. It is claimed that her mother-in-law used to put a stone on Lalla's plate (tha:l). She would then cover the stone with rice so that people would get the impression that Lalla had a plateful of rice. Lalla would remain half fed, but would never complain about her mother-in-law. Her father-in-law was a good man and he was kind to her, but her mother-in-law made her miserable. She would even speak ill of Lalla to her husband. Poor Lalla knew no happiness either with her husband or with her mother-in-law.



On the couch I lie
In vacant or Pensive mood
They flash upon my inward eye
which is the Bliss of Solitude
- Wordsworth



A rare sketch of Lalleshwari Courtesy: J. K. Mirza 'You paint what you paint and the viewer must take his own interpretation.'

When Lalla was twenty-six she renounced the family and became a devotee of Shiva. Like a mad person, she would go around naked.

She became a disciple of Sidh Srikanth. She would only keep the company of sadhus and pi:rs. She did not think in terms of men and women. She would claim that she had yet to encounter a man, and that is why she went about naked. But when she saw Shah Hamdan, she hid herself saying: "I saw a man, I saw a man."

Why is Lalla so famous in Kashmir? She was illiterate, but she was wise. Her sayings are full of wisdom. In these sayings, she dealt with everything from life, yoga, and God to dharma and a:tma:. Her riddles are on the lips of every Kashmiri.

The exact date of Lalla's death is not known. It is claimed that she died in Bijbehara (vejibro:r). People like Granny Lalla do not really die. Lal Ded is alive in her sayings and in the hearts of Kashmiris.

The sayings of Lalla number around two hundred.

#### 5.1.1 Five Sayings of Lal Ded

1

By a way I came, but I went not by the way.
While I was yet on the midst of the embankment
with its crazy bridges, the day failed for me.
I looked within my poke, and not a cowry came to hand
(or, atl, was there).
What shall I give for the ferry-fee?
(Translated by G. Grierson)

11

Passionate, with longing in mine eyes, Searching wide, and seeking nights and days, Lo' I beheld the Truthful One, the Wise, Here in mine own House to fill my gaze. (Translated by R.C. Temple)

Ш

Holy books will disappear, and then only the mystic formula will remain. When the mystic formula departed, naught but mind was left. When the mind disappeared naught was left anywhere, And a voice became merged within the Void. (Translated by G. Grierson)

IV

You are the heaven and You are the earth,
You are the day and You are the night,
You are all pervading air,
You are the sacred offering of rice and flowers and of water;
You are Yourself all in all,
What can I offer You?

V

With a thin rope of untwisted thread Tow I ever my boat o'er the sea. Will God hear the prayers that I have said? Will he safely over carry me? Water in a cup of unbaked clay, Whirling and wasting, my dizzy soul

#### Slowly is filling to melt away. Oh, how fain would I reach my goal

(Translated by R.C. Temple)

Source: An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri

## 5.2 Lalleshwari - Forerunner of Medieval Mystics "Her sayings echo and re-echo to this day"

#### P.N. Kaul Bamzai

As in the rest of India, the middle of the 14th century was a period of religious and moral fermentation in Kashmir. Buddhism had practically disappeared from the Valley, though we find mention of Buddhist priests and viharas in the later Rajataranginis. Tilakacharya, described as a Buddhist, was a minister of Zain-ul-Abidin. Most of the Buddhist theologians and saints finding the Valley uncongenial, had left for Ladakh and Tibet. The long period of political instability which followed the peaceful and enlightened reign of Avantivarman (855-83 A.D.) was responsible for the ossification of the predominant religion, Shaivism, into elaborate and complicated rituals which dominated all social and cultural activities. Shaktism, born of the love for Durga worship, had degenerated into grotesque forms of rites and ceremonies. Vaishnavism was not a strong element in the religious fabric of the Valley, but in the 11th century it received further nourishment from the teachings of Ramanuja who travelled all the way from Madras to Kashmir to fight Shaivism at its fountain-head. And with the destruction of temples and images by several Hindu kings like Harsha, as well as by Muslim zealots, Hindu worship was driven to the seclusion of the home or of 'natural' (Svayambhu) images - rocks, or ice formations, or springs. Sanskrit became the domain of the learned few, the common man having taken to a form of Prakrit which though retaining its essentials, was yet wholly different from the 'Language of the Gods'.

#### 5.2.1 Impact of Islam

In this troubled period of political uncertainty and changing social values, the people of the Valley were subjected to the impact of Islam. From a close contact between the two religions and their deep influence on each other, there resulted the evolution of what may be called Medieval Reformers or Mystics.

For more than two hundred years Islam had, in central Asia and Persia, been similarly influenced by the teachings and dogmas of Mahayana Buddhism and Upanishadic philosophy, resulting in the emergence of a cult of Islamic mystics. Fortunately, the new religion entered the Valley in this form, being carried there by enlightened Sufis like Bulbul Shah. With their humanistic approach to religion, they found a ready and sympathetic response from the Kashmiris, already permeated with the teachings of mystic saints and "seers".

For, it was during this period of religious fermentation that a need had been felt for a new approach to religion embracing all creeds and castes appealing to the 'heart' rather than the 'head'. Thanks to its rich religious and philosophic traditions, Kashmir rose to the occasion and produced a number of mystics and saints who by their teachings and their lives of complete self- abnegation were the living embodiments of true religion and morality.

#### 5.2.2 Mother Lalla Appears

Foremost among them was the great mystic "seer", Lalleshwari, popularly known as Lal Ded (Mother Lalla), who profoundly influenced the thought and life of her contemporaries and whose sayings still touch the Kashmiri's ear, as well as the chords of his heart, and are freely quoted by him as maxims on appropriate occasions. She was born in about the middle of the 14th century of the Christian Era in the time of Sultan Ala-ud-din. Lall's parents lived at Pandrenthan (ancient Puranadhisthana) some four and a half miles to the south-east of Srinagar. She was married at an early age, but was cruelly treated by her mother-in-law who nearly starved her. This story is preserved in a Kashmiri proverb: Whether they killed

a big sheep or a small one, Lalla had always a stone for her dinner - an allusion to her mother-in-law's practice of putting a lumpy stone on her platter and covering it thinly with rice, to make it look quite a big heap to others. And yet she never murmured.

Her father-in-law accidentally found out the truth. He got annoyed with his wife and scolded her. This incident invited more curses on Lalla. Her mother- in-law poisoned the ears of her son with all sorts of stories. Ultimately, the anomalies and cruelties of wordly life led her to renunciation and she discovered liberty in the life of the spirit.

She found her guru in Sidh Srikanth, whom she ultimately excelled in spiritual attainments:

Gav Tsatha guras Khasithay Tyuth var ditam Diva The disciple surpassed the Guru: God grant me a similar boon

She pursued Yoga under Sidh Srikanth, until she succeeded in reaching the 'abode of nectar'. But she did not stop there. All around her was conflict and chaos. Her countrymen and women needed her guidance. She had a mission to perform, and well and effectively she did it. Her life and sayings were mainly responsible in moulding the character of her people and setting up tradition of love and tolerance which characterises them even today.

#### 5.2.3 As Wandering Preacher

Eventually she gave up her secluded life and became a wandering preacher. She led a severely ascetic life, clad in the bareness of one who had forsaken comforts, and by example and precept conveyed her teachings to the masses. Like Mira she sang of Siva, the great beloved, and thousands of her followers, Hindus as well as Muslims, committed to memory her famous Vakyas.

There is a high moral teaching which Lalla demonstrated when during her nude state a gang of youthful rowdies were mocking her. A sober-minded cloth vendor intervened and chastised them. On this she asked the vendor for two pieces of ordinary cloth, equal in weight. She put them on either shoulder and continued her wandering. On the way some had salutations for her and some had gibes. For every such greeting she had a knot in the cloth, for the salutations in the piece on the right, and for the gibes in the piece on the left. In the evening after her round, she returned the pieces to the vendor and had them weighed. Neither had, of course, gained or lost by the knots. She thus brought home to the vendor, and her disciples, that mental equipoise should not be shaken by the manner people greeted or treated a person.

So that her teachings and spiritual experiences might reach the masses, she propagated them in their own language. She thus laid the foundations of the rich Kashmiri literature and folklore. More than thirty per cent of the Kashmiri idioms and proverbs derive their origin from her Vakyas.

### 5.2.4 Spiritual and Philosophical Vakyas

These Vakyas or sayings are an aggregate of Yoga philosophy and Saivism, expressive of high thought and spiritual truth, precise, apt and sweet. Her quatrains are now rather difficult to understand as the language has undergone so many changes, and references to special Yogic and philosophic terms are numerous therein.

Some of these sayings have been collected and published by Dr. Grierson, Dr. Barnett, Sir Richard Temple and Pandit Anand Koul and apart from the consideration that they explain the Saiva philosophy of Kashmir through the Kashmiri language, they exemplify the synthesis of cultures for which Kashmir has always been noted.

Lalla fills her teachings with many truths that are common to all religious philosophy. There are in it many touches of Vaishnavism, the great rival of Saivism, much that is strongly reminiscent of the doctrines and methods of the Muhammadan Sufis who were in India and Kashmir well before her day, and teachings that might be Christian with Biblical analogies, though Indian's knowledge of Christianity must have been very remote and indirect at her date.

Lalla is no believer in good work in this or in former lives, in pilgrimages or austerities. In one of her sayings she criticises the cold and meaningless way in which religious rituals are performed:

God does not want meditations and austerities Through love alone canst though reach the Abode of Bliss. Thou mayst be lost like salt in water Still it is difficult for thee to know God.

All labour, to be effective, must be undertaken without thought of profit and dedicated to Him. Exhorting her followers to stick fast to ideals of love and service to humanity, paying no thought to the praise or condemnation that might follow from their observance, she says:

Let them jeer or cheer me; Let anybody say what he likes; Let good persons worship me with flowers; What can any one of them gain I being pure?

If the world talks ill of me My heart shall harbour no ill-will: If am a true worshipper of God Can ashes leave a stain on a mirror?

She is a strong critic of idolatory as a useless and even silly "work" and adjures the worshippers of stocks and stones to turn to Yogic doctrines and exercises for salvation:

Idol is of stone temple is of stone;
Above (temple) and below (idol) are one;
Which of them wilt thou worship O foolish Pandit?
Cause thou the union of mind with Soul.

She further castigates the fanatical followers of the so-called "religions" in the following apt saying:

O Mind why hast thou become intoxicated at another's expense? Why hast thou mistaken true for untrue? Thy little understanding hath made thee attached to other's religion; Subdued to coming and going; to birth and death.

But Lalla is not a bigot; she constantly preaches wide and even eclectic doctrines; witness the following and many other instances: "it matters nothing by what name the Supreme is called. He is still the Supreme;" "Be all Lhings to all men;" "the true saint is the servant of all mankind through his humility and loving kindness," "It matters nothing what a man is or what his work of gaining his livelihood may be, so long as he sees the Supreme properly."

She puts no value on anything done without the saving belief in Yogic doctrine and practice, one of the results of which is the destruction of the fruits of all work, good or bad. The aspirant should try to auain perfection in this life. He only requires faith and perseverance:

Siva is with a fine net spread out
He permeath the mortal coils
If thou whilst living canst not see
Him, how canst thou when dead
Take out Self from Self after pondering over it

She is a firm believer in herself. She has become famous and talks of the "wine of her sayings" as something obviously precious, and alludes often to her own mode of life, fully believing she has obtained Release:

I saw and found I am in everything I saw God effulgent in everything.

#### After hearing and pausing see Siva The House is His alone; Who am I, Lalla.

The removal of confusion caused among the masses by the preachings of zealots was the most important object of her mission. Having realised the Absolute Truth, all religions were to her merely paths leading to the same goal:

Shiv chuy thali thali rozan; Mo zan Hindu to Musalman. Truk ay chuk pan panun parzanav, Soy chay Sahivas sati zaniy zan.

Siva pervades every place and thing; Do not differentiate between Hindu and Musalman. you art intelligent recognise thine own self; That is the true acquaintance with God.

#### 5.2.5 The Great Mystic

The greatness of Lalla lies in giving the essence of her experiences in the course of her Yoga practices through the language of the common man. She has shown very clearly the evolution of the human being, theory of nada, the worries and miseries of a jiva and the way to keep them off. The different stages of Yoga with the awakening of the Kundalini and the experiences at the six plexi have been elucidated by her.

Much can, indeed, be said on her work as a poet and more, perhaps, on her work in the spiritual realm. But at a time when the world was suffering from conflict - social, political and economic - her efforts in removing the differences between man and man need to be emphasised.

The composite culture and thought she preached and the Orders she founded was an admixture of the non-dualistic philosophy of Saivism and Islamic Sufism. As long back as the 13th century she preached non-violence, simple living and high thinking and became thus Lalla Arifa for Muhammadans and Lalleshwari for Hindus.

She was thus the first among the long list of saints who preached medieval mysticism which later enwrapped the whole of India. It must be remembered that Ramananda's teaching and that of those that came after him could not have affected Lalla, because Ramananda flourished between 1400 and 1470, while Kabir sang his famous Dohas between 1440 and 1518, and Guru Nanak between 1469 and 1538. Tulsidasa did not come on the scene till 1532 whereas Mira flourished much later.

Source: Koshur Samachar

## 5.3 A Tribute to Lalla Yogeshwari - Pride and Soul of Kashmir

#### P K Kaul

Man's preoccupation with acquiring and adding to his material comforts has assumed such proportions that his belief in God and his native divinity are dismissed as primitive, irrational and unscientific sentiments. He marches through life deeply committed to his material well-being and as deeply indifferent to and ignorant of his spiritual needs. Through its continual contact with the phenomenal world the mind, thus, keeps our consciousness tethered to the physical plane, identifying the material world outside, instead of the Self within, as the main focus of attention. We identify ourselves as mortal bodies with great gusto and, unfortunately, ignore the immortal Life-Force, which brings this otherwise corpse of a body alive and gives it meaning, with extreme neglect. In spite of being the repositories of the priceless gem, we masquerade as beggars, unable to keep pace with our desires, associating ourselves with death rather than life and seeking tinsel and trash in the ever changing material world which is never likely to give us anything better than decay and death. This is typical of life in the current Kali age which is

characterised by the decline in morality, prevalence of falsehood and upsurge of selfishness, greed and hatred.

Whilst going through the literature available on the life and times of Lalla Yogeshwari, one of the greatest apostles of light and love that Kashmir has known, who was equally revered by Hindus and Muslims alike, I was deeply touched by the profundity of the spiritual truths enshrined in her wise sayings urging mankind to recognise its divine heritage, to give up the frivolities of material existence and rise above hypocrisy and sectarian bigotry. Marvelling at the sweetness and sublimity of her timeless utterances suffused with great tenderness and love, and reflecting upon how she would have reacted to the quality of life today, I was inspired to pen down, following in her style, the following eight verses as a tribute to the memory of that great yogini:

1. Yottaani pozz pazzay, tottaani aalam dazzay, Pazzarich pritchagaar kaansi no wannay; Apazuk vodbav gatchaan hani hannay, Pazzaruk moll na-ba chhui kuni kannay.

What a great pity that we wake up to the Truth only when it is too late! No one seems to be the least bit inclined or disposed towards acknowledging the Reality or seeking the Truth in time. As falsehood and untruth appear to flourish by and by, Reality and Truth, as surely, recede beyond reach and recognition.

2. Assalichi ropayi no chhui kanh ti pritchaan, Khotchi ropayi ho bisyaar sood meilaan; Pozz chhonaan apuz yasla vopdaan, Buthi buthi dith-ti-no paayas pyavaan.

Recognising the Truth (immortality of Atma, the Life-Force) has gone out of fashion; the blind worship of untruth (identity with the body-mind complex) is seen to reap rich dividends. As the Truth gets devalued, falsehood gets up-valued exponentially. Even though it brings us nothing but grief and unhappiness yet, strangely, we seem unable or unwilling to alter our course towards self- destruction!

3. Choora akh wuchhum watta paanchh meinaan, Khevaan chavaan ta taav taav karaan; Dalimati magazav watti watti pheiraan, Hairaan ta wairaan, saar na-kenh soaraan.

A thief I saw roaming the five streets. Mind which is nothing but a bundle of thoughts and desires is the thief referred to. It reaches out, makes contact with and enjoys the objects of the world, through the five senses of touch, taste, sight, sound and smell. It gathers unto itself the impressions from these objects forming veil upon veil of ignorance. Since the objects are not permanent, the impressions gathered therefrom cannot be lasting either. They are but passing shadows without any substance and are therefore referred to as ignorance. Having lost its marbles, this thief (mind) bis wallowing in sense pleasures, completely baffled and bewildered and utterly ruined with nothing to show for its troubles.

4. Beni-boay maij-ta-mole yem thov na vannay, Assalich wath su-no vuchhi kuni kannay; Dara dara darbadar pheri kanni kannay, Sahaz kar vechaar nata kyah bannay.

He who does not heed the counsel of wisdom (from his well-wishers), he who does not respond to the prompting of his inner conscience and use his powers of discrimination, he will never find himself treading the path of Truth. From door to door and pillar to post (enjoying one desire after another, yet never satiating the hunger) will he find himself wandering aimlessly and unfulfilled. Contemplate this truth with due diligence, otherwise you might as well give up any notion of redemption.

5. Hess ta hoash dallimit, annigatti wallimit, Bar mandinen ho choor chiiy farimit;

#### Kaam kroodh loobh mooh chovaapaerfalirnit, Zinda paanas chhiy morada jaama gandimit.

You seem to have taken complete leave of your senses and allowed yourself to be enveloped by darkness (of ignorance). Under the cloak of this darkness with which you have chosen to wrap yourself, you have enabled the robbers to gain entry even in broad day-light! In consequence, desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy, the six deadly foes, are enjoying the freedom of the house with absolute impunity and robbing you of your peace and tranquillity. Remember! The Life-Force (Atma) never dies, the body-mind complex, no better than a piece of meat in a butcher's shop, is never alive; what a pity then that you should parade the precious immortal Self as the lifeless mortal body!

6. Tchu kus ta ba kus, hu kyah ta yi kyah, Apazui aalam rozavun kati kyah; Fungaryomut chhukh, taaras dikh kyah, Swopna-maay chain maali, gaj gah chhu kyah.

Who are you and who am I? What is that and what is this? Questions such as these only underline the apparent diversity and manifoldness of the manifested universe and ignore the all important underlying unity and oneness. Since the universe is changing, inconstant and transitory, how can it possibly fit the definition of the unchanging and eternal Truth? Ask yourself, what aspect of the universe composed of the five primordial elements will endure and last? Having squandered all powers of discrimination in subservience to the unruly mind, you have rendered yourself bankrupt and become destitute; what O what fee will you render to redeem yourself with? Wake up to the real isation before it is too late that what you behold through the five senses is nothing but a grand illusion, a dream, however well designed, well laid out and real it may appear to be.

7. Azapa Gayatri manas laya annay, Mana choor dalli-bhramma teli hani hannay; Catta chali gaash yiya, pozz ada nunnay, Soo-Ham dui chalith akui AUM sunnay.

Let your life breath dance to the tune of He am (So-Hum) and I am He (Hum-Sah). Only taming it thus can the flippant mind be trained to gradually rid itself of its delusion, and only thereafter will the dark clouds of ignorance lift, letting in the light of wisdom and experiencing the effulgence of theAtma. And then, in time, will even the duality of He and I dissolve, yielding place to AUM, one Truth, One God.

8. Woth zuva beh traav, praan mo raavraav, Somana maali huend mokhta mo chhakaraav; Bhakhti-bhaav praavith agyaan chalaraav, Aham gaal, Meuon traav, sahaz prakaash praav.

Wake up therefore and stir into action O slothful ignoramus! Squander not the precious gift of life, cast away not before the swine tne pearls of wisdom, waste not your breath and effort; seek out and secure the lamp of faith and devotion and with the help of its light dispel the darkness of ignorance. Get rid of the notion of 'I and Mine' and, through the dissolution of the thinking and the calculating mind in the supreme effulgence of the Atma, earn the right to proclaim the victory of Truth over falsehood, of Light over darkness, of Life over death. As a tribute to our beloved mother Lalla, it is my earnest hope that, in spite of the trying times we find ourselves in, we do not lose the true perspective on life, but live upto her ideals and make our sojourn on earth a worthwhile pilgrimage.

Source: Koshur Samachar

## 5.4 Lalleshwari - An apostle of Human values

#### Prof. K. N. Dhar

Cultural heritage of acountry borrows measured sustenance from the philosophy of life nurtured inch by inch, by its denizens from the time, man awoke to the consciousness of self and spirit. It may well be called the culmination of quest of man from finite mooring, to infinite dimensions. At the same time, this search of man for finding his feet on the spiritual plane, can in no way be the last word on this subject, since such pursuits are cumulative in character and content. This edifice comes into being brick by brick, hammered into proper shape by savants and saints from time to time. However, it calls for reinterpretation every day in and out, so that the erring human being, with all his frailities, in not derailed into the abyss of animality. Perhaps this is the veritable theme of the famous word of Lord Krsna in Gita "when vice prevails and virtue dwindles, I resurrect my own being for profferring refuge to the virtuous and annihilating vice completely; thus re-extablishing human values in every age". In our happy valley Lalleshwari most charitably projected such human values, so dear to Kashmiris from the dawn of history. An irrefutable proof of this attitude of concilliation instead of confrontation can be gleaned from the pages of Nilamata Purana wherein Lord Buddha has been acknowledged as an incarnation of God Avatara. Buddhism, to speak squarely, was essentially a revolt against Brahmanism, yet the catholic Brahmin with his proverbial forbearance did not use the same language or adopt the same attitude as the Buddhists had employed with respect to Brahmanism. The healthy approach of Kashmiri Brahmins was never negative in essence but purely positive. So, we can safely assert that Lalleshwari, a vigilant sentinel of Kashmiri culture displayed highest magnitude of courage and foresight in those not very auspicious times beckoning man not to discriminate on the basis of religious labels:-

#### <verses>

# It was actually the continuation of that Catholic attitude of mind displayed by Kashmiris from times immemorial.

However, time does not maintain a uniform tenor or temper. It is at times moody and capricious; and when the political map of Kashmir was redrawn in the fourteenth century by the induction of sultans over the Kashmir scene, this accomodation of head and heart received a jolt. Kashmiris became oblivious of their pristine past; present consequently got divorced from it, mutilating its brilliant face and its attendant decorum. During those unsavoury and all the more unpalatable times, Lalleshwari fortified to her marrow by the innate strength of her conviction, rose to the occasion and strove hard put to an end to this dismal era of persecution and vandalism. In this crusade her tools were not abjuration but affirmation; bitterness changed hands with sweet and more persuasive compromise. Having elected to tread this path of self-suffering, she became a model for millions of her country-men to abjure the mundance and propitiate the sublime. It was no less than a miracle by which the sufferings of the people lost their sting and they learnt to bear up with these with stoical resistance. They were exhorted to rise above the self and reach up to the super-self at which stage pleasure or pain have no relevance or meaning. Some say it was self-deceit, fleeing from the actual life, rather self-forget-fulness to feel shy of the stark realities of life. The most apt answer to this faulty assertion is provided by ever-awake Lalleshwari herself in these words:-

#### <verses>

"Some may heap cavil on me, even some may curse me; They may say whatever they like to say. Some may worship me with the flowers of inherent cognition; yet I do not feel ruffled with this kind of impeachment or praise, since I am concerned with my own self and do not grudge what others have to say about me."

Muslim rule over Kashmir, for reasons obvious, sounded the knell for the use and propagation of sanskrit language. Bilhana, the famous lyricist of Kashmir had once boasted that, "In their household the Kashmiri women even speak sanskrit and prakrit as fluently as their mother-tongue." It was now an old wooden story. However, a bridge was to be built between the present and the past for which sanskrit had been a very potent instrument; but the general public had lost contact with it. Persian was the order of the day in

its stead. So, Lalleshwari chose to speak to the people in their own idiom; hence Kashmiri became the vehicle of her message. In this way, she did not only make her message more intelligible and comprehensible to the masses, but also achieved the purpose of bridging the gulf between the past and the present. Present is an improved version of the past providing the base on which future can be built. In her time the friction between the past and the present was the loudest; hence, she like an expert alchemist, by her healing touch saved Kashiniri culture from being eroded and bruised. Her clarion call to assimilate human values in thoie dark days won for her the esteem and acclaim of Hindus and Muslims alike and the edge of ruthless proselytisation got blunted. It was no mean achievment on her part in uniting the lost children of one God, when every effort was being made to segregate them from each other. Her message was so universal and appealing that the tallest of Muslim Reshis of Kashmir Sheikh Noor -ud -Din Noorani made her his ideal and expressed what he owed to her in these words:-

#### <verses>

"That Lalla of Padmpur (Pampur) was fortunate enough in gulping the ambrosial nectarine draughts; thereby she won our adoration as an incarnation of immortal Divinity. Benevolent God, grant me also such a boon."

Lalla's message couched in quartrains called 'Vaks' is very simple and straight bereft of any curves or terseness. It is actually an exhortation to man to indulge in self-cognition. It is a readymade manual on self-education and consequent self-consciousness.

#### <verses>

"I felt fatigued by imessant self-search, thinking that no body could partake of that hidden perceptive knowledge; I, ultimately got immersed into it and could find admission to the Divine-bar; therein the goblets are full to the brim, but none possesses the nerve to drink these."

Mental drill is preamble to self- consciousness. At that pinnacle of self- discipline mind gets tamed automatically effortlessly:-

#### <verses>

"The steed of mind gallops through the sky, encompassing this whole universe. During the twinkling of an eye it can traverse millions of miles. He, who is proficient enough to put it on rails by controlling its reins, check its wayward demeanour by clipping its wings in the shape of mastering his own inhalaton and exhalation can attain the stage of self-cognition."

Worship, in the words of Lalla connotes self- introspection. It has nothing to do with external paraphernalia:-

#### <verses>

"Mind is the flower-seller and faith the flowers. Worship should be undertaken with the offerings of mental equipoise. Shiva is to be given a bath of tears. Incantations are to be recited in silence, without making a show of these. In this way only self-consciousness can be awakened from within."

According to Lalleshwari a realizer has to hammer out his mental attitude on these lines:-

#### <verses>

"He, who considers his own self and others as alike, abjures distinction between 'l' and 'you', He, who treats days and nights alike; is undisturbed by pleasure or pain. He, whose mind is bereft of duality, whose heart beats for all alike; only such a realizer can perceive the highest of preceptors-Shiva."

But, that shiva is within the self of the realizer, as inseparable from it as the smell from the flower. Immanence is self and transcendence is super-self-shiva in the language of Kashmiri monistic Shaivacharyas:-

#### <verses>

"Why do you beat your breast for nothing? If you possess unwavering intelligence, you shall have to seek Him from within, Shiva is seated there and searching Him from outside will be of no avail. Do believe my word, baked with self-perception."

Without beating about the bush, it can be safely asserted that Lalleshwari's forte was Kashmiri Shaivism. This concept of Kashmirian philosophy actually revolutionized the age-long attitudes of man, more so of the Brahmins, It advocates a caste-less society as also abhorrs Kitchen-puritanism. Hindu society ailing through its own defective approach, justified such a kind of major operation for instilling evergreen health into its rusty veins. Shaiva scholars of Kashmir diagnosed the disease rightly and prescribed such an elixir for its longevity which defied the time with its nihilistic redclaws. Had not this philosophy of life been at hand to the Kashmiris at that dismal hour of history, no Hindu worth the name, would have survived in the Land of 'Kashyapa', alien culture would have made an easy morsel of him. Lalla's Vaks, are actually a Kashmiri rendering of shiva sutras; When this philosophy was born, no such predicament was there, as was faced by Lalleshwari in her own times later on. At best, shaivas had to contend with the Buddhists, whose attitude was also home-spun and not foreign in any way; Hence, Lalla had to reclaim the lost faith of her brethren, provide a viable alternative to the enticements an alien faith was offering to the people at large; and at the same time, in performing this double duty, she had to be always cross-fingered, not invite the wrath of the rulers. It definiltely goes to her credit that while discharging her mission, she did not make a single enemy out of the other camp. To crown all, her message did cut through the man-made barriers of religions, Hindus as well as Muslims became her votaries with equal gusto. Her appeal was humanistic and not sectarian. Her approach was of positive affirmation and not of negative abjuration; consequeatly it multiplied her friends. Her ingenuity in steering safe between the two antagnostic factions is unsurpassed. She was instrumental in replacing call to steel by call to human conscience, consequently changing sourness to sweetness:-

#### <verses>

"We, human beings, did live in the past and we alone will be in the future also. From ancient times to the present, we have activised this world. Just like rising and setting of the sun, a usual routine, the immanent Shiva (jiva) will never be relieved of birth and death."

Lalleshwari did not preach any hard and fast religion, she even disdained ritual. She projected a way of life quite in harmony with our cultural traditions, in which a happy amalgam was made of what was good in Buddhism, Hinduism and even Islam;-

#### <verses>

"That transcendental- self may assume the names of Shiva, Visnu, Buddha or Brahma; I am concerned only With their efficacy in cutting asunder my worldly affections, which might be accomlished by any one of these."

Therefore, it follows from this, that she was not dogmatic or rigid either. She welcomed the healthy wafts of wind coming from any direction wlktsoever, anointing her body and soul with chaste Divinity. She always kept the windows of her mind open, rejecting what was mundane and assimilating the sublime:-

#### <verses>

"The Super- Lord is supervising His shop with personal care. All the aspirants are eager to take away wares of their liking. Whatever, you would elect to buy, does not admit of any intermediary; It is to be earned by your own effort, since the shop is devoid of any hinderance and even a watch is not kept over it."

This is the acme of Lalla's message. Man has been exhorted to seek his own self front within, without any external aids. Self-effort is precursor of self- education finally culminateng in self-conscionsness - Shiva - as she calls it.

As long as the silvery bellows of the Vitasta maintain their rejuvenating rhythm, as long as the virgin snow on the Himalayan heights retains its unblemished splendour and stature, the exquisite 'Vaks' of Lalleshwari soaked to the full in the inherent values of Kashmiri culture and human understanding will go on, unimpeded of course, in providing dignity to man to recognize his own self and not to run after deluding shadows; since the culture of a land never dies, the message of Lalla portraying meaningfully the humanistic attitudes ingrained in our culture, will never grow stale. Its fragrance and flavour are evergreen.

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

## 5.5 Key to the understanding of Lal Ded - (Part 1)

#### R. N. Koul

#### 5.5.1 Introduction

It is common knowledge that Lalla Ded (1320-1389) lived in the fourteenth century. This was the most unfavourable time for the cultivation of mystical powers lying dormant in our beings. The Happy Valley was passing through traumatic events of political and religious turmoil. Sandwiched between the two extremes of orthodox Brahmanism and aggressive Islam (due to some fanatics) there emerged a tradition or 'cult' engendered by Hindu mystics and Muslim sufis of the time. It was in reality the resurgence of an indigenous tradition of the unique Kashmiri psyche known for its tolerance, secularism, universal brotherhood and love, in short, of humanism. In this synthesis of cultures Lalla Ded was destined to play a leading role. Her special contribution to this synthetization was to give it a mystical content. She was closely followed by Sheikh- Noor-ud-din (1376-1438). Both, she in her vaakh and he in his srukh emphasized the importance of over-coming the senses and the wavering mind and concentrating on Sadhana (meditation) as a means to attain salvation, the merging of individual soul with the Universal Consciousness. It really meant the realizing of the Divine in one's own being. This tradition of mystic ecstasy was continued, enriched and strengthened by later mystic poets and poetesses like Rupa Bhawani, Parmanand (1791-1874), Shams Fakir (1834-1904), Abdul Ahad Zargar and a host of others.

The secret of Lalla Ded's perennial appeal lies in her power to translate into metaphors and symbols the longing of man to know ('the burthen and the mystery'), to feel, at least vicariously, one with the infinite, the supreme power that inheres in all things. Her outbursts are clothed in her verse-sayings so succinctly and yet so communicatively that these have continued to hold us as if under a spell. That charm and that appeal are like Keats's "magic casements" to make the Solider- Scholar Temple utter:

Thine is a- song that enslaveth me, Son of an alien kin and clime.

Shiekh Noor-ud Din wrote:

The Lalla of padmanpur-She drank her fill of divine nectar, She was indeed an avatar of ours, Oh God, grant me the self-same boon.

Shamas Fakir has this to say:

Lalla merged her prana in the Transcendent. While she went to bathe At the sacred shrine of shurahyar bank, With a leap into the water She swam across to meet her God. Lalla Ded's perennial appeal stems from the fact that she spoke in the idiom of the masses, the vernacular kashmiri and not in Sanskrit. She in fact, became the founder of modern Kashmiri, the Kashmiri that with slight changes down the years, continues to retain the infrastructure of Lalla's making.

But the essentiality of Lalla Ded's appeal lies in her mystical experience or anubhav clothed in nearly intelligible languages. Thoughshe did not give rise to any order as such and did not present any systematized philosophy, yet the direction of her sayings in unmistakable, an ethico-mystical message is inescapable. There is a method in her 'madness' or personal ecstasy. She lays down a moral code and prescribes rules for attaining spiritual salvation.

The present article is an attempt to explain, in as simple a manner as humanly possible, the technique Lalla Ded followed to reach her destination: discovering the Supreme residing in the depths of her own soul. She adopted the theory and practice of Trika 'Sastra' called Kashmir Shaiyism. The technique has a physiological mystical content. It adopts the Laya Yoga though other yogas exist like Hatta Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bakhti Yoga. In kashmiri the Laya Yoga is called the kundalini Yoga. According to this yoga there are six Cakras (Chakras) or centres of Cosmic power in the human body. The Kundalini Sakti is supposed to lie coiled round the svayambhu (the genital part) at the muladhara Cakra. This Sakti is roused through yogis exercises or mantras and brought up through the six circles to the highest centre, the Sahasrara, the abode of Siva. A kind of mystical bridge is established to help the Kundalini Shakti to reach this highest point. There exists a nadi (in the abstract) called Sushumna nadi which enables the practiser to reach this seat of Siva and enjoy the mystical taste of nectar oozing from Shashikala, Digit of the Moon. To understand it better one has to become more familiar with Kashmir Sahivism. Parmasiva is the highest metaphysical principle of this system. It has two aspects: one, the static, the eternal changeless and Pure Consciousness, two, the dynamic, the one in constant flux. The first is named Siva, the second Shakti, the two being one and the same. Man's spiritual goal is to establish identity of the two in his own being. This effort is obstructed by the power of the senses and the waywardness of the mind over our higher existence. The world is like a magnetic illusion and the bold of the senses is so strong that man lives many lives to seek their satisfaction. And the most formidable task for the seeker of the Infinite according to the Laya yoga is that he has to die (control his/her senses) and know the Supreme Self while alive. The mind can be controlled through the vital energy of consciousness centered in the body in the form of Susumna nadi, the uneven movement of prana and apana is brought to a uniform rhythm by breath control. The Susumna nadi extends from the muladhara at the base near the rectum right up to Sahasrara in the crown of the head along the spinal cord. It is through this subtle mystical corridor that Kundalini Sakti rises upwards to meet her consort Siva in that thousand-petalled lotus of Sahasrara Within these two extremes are six centres of energy cilled cakras or lotuses. These are:

- 1. Muladhar at the base of the spinal cord.
- 2. Suadhishsthana at the base of the reproductive organ
- 3. Manipur in the region of the navel
- 4. Anahata in the region of the heart
- 5. Visudha near the throat
- 6. Ajna between the two eyebrow

There are two other nadis running parallel to the Susmna. These are ida and pingla. Prana flows through the former while apana flows through the latter. The two breaths are kept in perfect balance through the practice of yoga. All the channels (nadis) join at the two eyebrows' junction; this point is called Triveni, symbolic confluence of Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati. The Rundalini Sakti which normally lies dormant is awakened by yogic exercises and it then cuts its way through the six cakras to meet 'her' consort Shiva in Sahasrara, Prana goes upwards while apana downwards. To attain spiritual goal, man has to control five pranas, ten indriyas and their controller, the wavering mind. This is done through abhyas or yoga practice. Prana rises at the heart and ends at a distance of twelve fingers from the nose. To attain absolute control, the mystic syllable OM is repeated with rise and fall of breath as it travels through - subtle channels another mantra is called hamsah. This mantra enables the yogis to concentrate. At each of these

points there occurs a split second in which prana remains still. It is this interval which brings the seeker to the abode of Siva. The unstuck sound of anahata or OM coincides with hamsa. There is complete merger of man's soul with Universal Soul; then there is an ecstatic revelation that the two are in reality one:

Through the central channel of Susumna
I reached the sanctum sanctorum of my own soul
And lo! I beheld Siva and Sakti sealed in one.
Feeling ecstatic I reached the nectar-lake of the mystic moon
Apparently dead, I am now really alive.

The same anubhawa is expressed in another telling vaakh:

I held firm the reins of the horse, my mind,
I controlled well the pranas coursing through the ten nadis;
Then did the nectar of the mystic moon
Melt and flow, suffusing my whole being,
The mind thus curved,
My void merged with the void of pure consciousness.

Thus Lalla Ded, without rejecting the flesh altogether but accepting it only as a necessary evil, found her spiritual salvation within her own self.

I discovered the Lord Within the walls of my own soul.

**Note:** The author has consulted many books written on Lalleshwari especially those of Jaya Lal Koul and Nil Kanth-Kotru.

Source: Patrika

## 5.6 Key to the understanding of Lal Ded - (Part 2)

#### R. N. Koul

'Lali me nilavath tchol no zah'

#### 5.6.1 Life and Legend

It is not only natural but almost imperative to blend fact with legend when dealing with the lives of saints or mystics. Miracles become integral parts of their messages or of their personal experiences. Even if no miracles occur, it is sometimes necessary to invent some in order to brighten the halos round their heads and then great saints, mystics and prophets become God's instruments to bring under discipline the moral and spiritual and even secular lives of men and women living on this planet of ours. These miracles become proofs of their spiritual powers or of their powers of endurance and self-restraint. Divested of these their lives become dull studies and their messages fail to convince the masses.

Little is historically known about Lalla's life. She lived in the fourteenth century (1320? to 1389?) as the oral tradition declares. She was born and brought up in the reign of Alau-ud-Din (1344-55) and died in the reign of Sultan Shihabud Din (1355-73). Her name is first mentioned in 1654 by Baba Dawud Mushkati in his Asrarul-Abrar (The secret of the Pious). Then followed her mention in Waqiate Kashmir completed in 1746. Some names testify to her life and to her miracles. Her vaakhs too furnish some internal evidence to her existence and to some of the hardships she had to undergo. That her immediate successor, the mystic Sheikh Noorud Din Noorani (1377-1438) should mention Lalla's name in one of his outbursts confirms her existence. It is said that she fed the newly born babe (Sheikh Noorud Din) at her motherly breast and that he became her disciple in the mystic lore and experience.

Hence it follows that the legends that are associated with her name are things taken for granted by the people. In all hagiologies, whether written or handed down through tradition, it is that the miracles associated with a saint assume greater significance. In fact though never verified these miracles establish

the greatness of these aints in peoples' hearts. In this no rational analysis can be offered. The 'bluish something' as Gandhi called Lord Krishna lifted the hill Goverdhan on His little finger; Hanumana brought an entire mountain from the Himalayan ranges to the southern shores of Bharat; Christ walked the waves and brought the dead to life. And Lal Ded remembered her past janamas (lives) as a woman giving birth to a son, in another janama getting born as a filly at village Marhom. The filly died and was reborn as a pup at Vejibror. There a tiger killed the filly in the disguise of a pup. This was verified by Lalla's guru Sidha Shrikanth. All the cycle of birth and death was repeated the seventh time at Pandrethan. She was born at Sempore near Pampore and at the age of 12 was married to Nika (Sona) Bhat of Drangbal near Pampore. Her vaakhs tell us of Lalla Ded's belief in transmigration of the soul. She refers to her herself having witnessed the whole valley being changed into a vast lake from Hannukha in the northwest to Konsar Nag in the south of Kashmir. Was she alive during the period when the valley was Sati Sar?

But it is after her marriage that more miracles and legends begin to gather round her life. Born and brought up till her marriage in an atmosphere of leaming that she obtained in her parent's home. Lalla became a mistress of the spiritual lore, of the Bhagwad Gita, of tantric practices prevalent at the time, especially of Trika Shastra or what is Popularly known as Kashmir Shaivism. She had learnt and imbibed certain spiritual sadhanas before she was locked in marital relationship with Nika Bhat. In picking up Laya Yoga, the inspiration and guidance of Sidha Mol, her family guru, must have been extra-ordinary indeed. In those days girls were married even before they attained puberty and the marital communication took place when the girl had advanced far beyond her teens. It is therefore safe to assume that at her inlaws' Lalla continued her Sadhana. In those days the atmosphere at the in-laws for a maiden daughter-in-law was naturally conservative and extremely orthodox. And it must have been particulary suffocating for the spiritually and aesthetically sensitive Lalita, who had now become Padmavati. Her beloved was Sankara, and estrangement between the husband and wife must have surfaced much earlier. The villains of the peace must have been

- (i) the malignant and proverbially harsh mother-in-law and
- (ii) Lalla's own sadhana which must have made her averse to sensual indulgence. The mother-in-law's behaviour has given rise to another legend. The father-in-law is generally generous and of caring nature whereas the mother-in-law is only practising the persecution she herself must have home at the hands of her own mother-in-law. And the son is always led by the nose by the mother acting as the wire-puller at the 'puppet show'. The story goes that Lalla's mother-in-law would invariably conceal a stone (nilavath) beneath the small fare of rice that was Lalla's share. And she gulped down the little rice without any grumbling. Had she complained, she would have been shown the door. Hence Lalla moans- they may have mutton, but for Lalla the stone is the only fare.

We can imagine how Lalla's endurance must have exhausted the vindictive powers of her mother-in-law. She took recourse to other more reprehensible tricks. It was Lalla's habit to rise early go to the ghat with an earthen pitcher under her arm and before collecting water, she would spend time on ablutions and yogic exercises like breath control etc., while going across to the temple of Natakeshaw Bhairaw. The mother-in-law had insinuated to her son that Lalla was not faithful to him. And on one fine morning another miracle occurred. Her husband waited for Lalla to return, with the firm resolve to shove her out of his home. He had his diabolical form and his stick behind the door. As Lal Ded approached, Nika Bhat struck the pitcher. It is believed that the pitcher broke into pieces but the water content remained intact in a frozen state. Lalla filled each household pot with water till not a drop more was needed. The broken pitcher was flung outside where at once a fresh water spring appeared. This spring is now dried up but to this day it is called Laila Trag (trag means "pond"). As the historian Pir Ghulam Hassan has stated, this spring went dry in 1925-26.

The miracle of the pitcher turned out to be a watershed in Lalla's relationship with her in-laws and in her much more important relationship with the Supreme Consciousness. By this time most probably she had still to receive the 'word', the occult, rather cryptic or esoteric light from her guru as to what course she should adopt to know the Eternal in her own Self. She left her in-laws for good and took to wandering as

an ascetic, a sanyasin in search of Enlightenment. The story goes that she wandered almost naked like a mad person who does not care for any formality of dress. The legend goes that her lul or belly protruded forward, bent itself to cover her private parts. People therefore forgot her original maiden name of Lalita (shortened to Lalla in Kashmir) and began to call her Lalla Ded/Lal Ded, the granny with the belly dangling down. This is surely hearsay and cannot be reconciled to the fact that she was christened Lalita. Muslims later on claimed her conversion to Islam and called her Lalla Arifa. But the reality is that all kinds of stories and legends grew up as time massed on and threw a pall of obscurity on the period during which she lived her life. Yes, for her the Hindu ritualistic system became meaningless to find the Source in her own body. Distinctions between religions and castes became redundant for the mystic of Lalla's stature:

#### <verses>

The Lord pervades everywhere, There is nothing like Hindu or Musalman; (All distinctions melt away) If thou art wise, know thyself, Seek the Lord within.

The legend of the belly bulging downwards appears to be mischievously invented because if Lalla Ded were moving naked in the streets how could she have incarnated herself as the Muse of knowledge or, more precisely speaking, as the Muse of Poetry. If true, the legend confirms her miraculous powers.

And finally the legend associated with her mahasamadhi, getting freed from the mortal coil of her body and getting blissfully merged with that which shall last for ever-the Infinite Soul, Lalla's Siva. When claimed by both the Hindus and the Muslims alike, Lalla performed a postmortem miracle. There arose a flame of light from her dead body and without anyone realizing what was happening, it vanished into the void

#### "shoonyas shoonyaa meelith gav"

Many such miracles are associated with the mahasamadhis of saints and mystics or even prophets. Christ's body left the Cross and ascended as if divinely winged to the abode of the Lord to be resurrected again. Sant Kabir's corpse proved mystically elusive to the Muslims and to the Hindus who were fighting each other to claim it for their distinctive funeral rites. It is said that Mira Bhai's soul merged with the idol of Ranchodeshji making the body invisible. Lalla Ded is said to have attained Nirvana in 1389 or so. But her metaphors which clothe her mystical practice in the form of vaakh continue to inspire mankind.

[The author, Prof. R.N. Kaul, former Principal, is one of our veteran scholars of English and a fine writer, well-known for his book on Shiekh Mohd. Abdullah. He lives in Jammu.]

#### Source: Patrika

## 5.7 Lalleshwari - Bio-Data and Background Information

#### P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)

## Lalleshwari (1320 AD - 1390 A.D) Born at Pandraethan Village (ancient Puranadhisthana)

**Lalded** was married at the age of twelve to one Pandit boy at Pampore (ancient Padmanpora) where presumably she was renamed Padmawati, as per the Kashmiri Pandit tradition, by her-in-laws.

Ref: Nunda Reshi's Shruik:

The Lalia of Padmanpora,
Gulp by gulp Amrit who drank,
who saw Shiva face to face everywhere:
Grant me too that boon,
O. Lord Shiva!

C/p Tran (JLK P. 88)



The Hindus called her Lalleshwari and the Muslims Lalla Arifa. But both endearingly called her Lal DED (Grandmother or Grandma). This is certain and continues as such to date.

Note: Lal in Kashmiri means an unnatural growth internal or external, bodily projection. Lalla's belly had grown like a hanging lump of fleshy cloak down to her knees.

In the absence of authentic historical records there seems to be much confusion about the exact dates of her birth and death. According to Noor Namas and Reshi Namas she was born sometime between 1300-1320 A.D. and died round about 1377 A.D.

The renowned, modem historian Sh. P.N. Kaul, Bamzai, puts it in the middle of the 14th Century. Some put her year of birth as 1335 A.D. and Prof. C.L.Sapru locates, her date of birth in 1360 A.D. These sources and recently, "Kashmir: Behind the Vale". record her year of demise as 1377 A.D.

One is unable-to recollect the dates recorded, if any, in a persian booklet (Issar-ul-Ibrar) which I had studied, with the help of a Persian knowing friend, long ago, as desired by J & K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages to focus attention on the vegetarian aspect of the most popular Kashmiri saint, Nund Reshi, whose shrine at Chrari- Sharief is thronged by devotees, both Hindus and Mulsims, everyday and who is said to have been her spiritual heir.

According to these conflicting, approximative presumptions, the date of Lalla's demise, 1377 A.D. coincides with the year of birth of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani Thus the contention doesn't seem to stand on firm ground and is self-contradictory. As is well known, both Lall Ded and Nunda Reshi were, quite discernibly contemporaries for quite sometime. After extensive study and intensive research work, in 'LAL DED 1973 Prof. J.L. Koul opines that the dates of birth and death of Lalleshwari was some time between (B 1317-20A D ) & (d 1387-90 A D ) These dates seem to be in consonance with Circumstantial evidence and hence more authentic and nearest the truth.

Extensive and intensive research work by youthful scholars in collaboration with experts is the need of the hour to arrive at logically and correct dates of birth and death of both Lal Ded and Nund Reshi.

#### 5.7.1 MATRIMONIAL RELATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Lal Ded could not be and was no exception to the common lot of womanhood, the world over in general and Indian womenfolk in particular. Her mother-in-law, perhaps as a means of cathartic projection of her own experience, often incited her son against his wife. Being unintelligent and too dull to observe and appreciate the nobility of Lalleshwari and the divine sparks in her, he would thoughtlessly slight and perplex her. Lal Ded remained ill--treated and ill-fed despite the family control of her affectionate father-in-law.

Lalia's hypocritical mother-in-law was cunning and tricky. She would usually place a large round shingle underneath the cooked rice in her plate at lunch and dinner-time to display her deceptive affection for Lal Ded and, at the same time, to show to others how hefty the latter was. Lalleshwari would always finish eating quickly the scanty rice, wash her plate and the pebble and deposit them at their specified places before attending to other chores.

She would not utter a word of protest, much less complain against such a strange way of ill-treatment, but take every care to sheild her husband as well as mother--in-law and their honour.

Once, while carrying a pail of water on her head from a brook, Lalleshwari was intercepted by her husband. He fell upon her, breaking to pieces the earthen pot with a rod. The pieces fell to the ground but the water remained frozen pitcher shaped at its place. After filling all the vessels at home, she asked her stunned mother-in-law if there were any other vessels to be filled. On getting a negative reply, Lalleshwari threw the remaining water out at a place which later came to be known as Lalla-Trag (marsh) It has dried up since.

Such a particular aspect of self-denial, patience, self discipline and forbearance are unparalleled in human behaviour.

However, once on a festive occasion while filling a pitcher at the river ghat, she was asked by her girl friends what the festivity and merriment at her home was all about. She said

## "Whether they slaughter a ram or a lamb, Lalla will never miss her shingle".

The allusion to her routine travail is reflective of the stress of circumstantial exasperation seeping into her delicate demeannour and ticking her divine leanings. This led Lalleshwari slowly and steadily to resort to secret spiritual practices deep sadhana and yoga in seclusion. A highly talented and reputed scholar yogi of the time, Sidha Sri Kanth (Seddha Mol) of Srinagar became her guru.

"He whose senses are under control attains the status of a place of pilgrimage", says Abhinav gupta.

Accordingly, Lalleshwari lived a life of purity guided by the discipline of the doctrine and principles of yogic philosophy. Her experiences matured, knowledge deepened and transformed the ascetic in her into a yogini of the highest order". Says Yoganandaji Maharaj. "Lalleshwari is the supreme mistress of Yoga "Thus, purified by the crystal clear waters of Vedanta, it seems, and drinking the milk of Upanishadic thought, she invigorated and revitalised the Trika-Philosophy, the three fold science of an individual, his immediate and remote environment in the universe, pervaded by the supreme energy in its totality (To use Swami Laxmanji's interpretation).

Says Lalleshwari:

Shiva's present everywhere.
Where lies the creek to distinguish
Between a Hindu and a Mussalman?
Quick witted if you are,
Recognise yourself and realise God!
- Commentary on Lall Vaakh No 1

Lord Shiva is almighty all pervading, Omnipresent Omniscient and exists in the very electric charges pulsating in the nucleus of even the smallest atoms of matter and seeped in all that exists universally in material or immaterial substances, perceptible or imperceptible to bodily senses or special sensations as well as in the mystries of emptiness or the secrets of the Wilderness of the Void in boundary less space crowned by a bejewelled emerald blue skies presided over by the model of sobriety the Puran-Mashi full moon that shine and emit serene soft light to dispel and twinkle off the dreadful darkness of gloomy nights and lulls us to a pleasant, dreamless sleep after scorching summer days. And the glaring bright sun, projects forth warmth bearing light to sustain biological life and causes phenomenal, natural changes in the atmosphere, hydraulic cycles as well as physico-chemical actions and reactions, continental drifts and storage of energy in various forms, known or unknown, all for uniform benefit of life on earth without any distinctions or discriminations of any kind what-so-ever.

Lalleshwari's concept of Shiva's universal presence or Omniscience combined with the qualities of eveness, truth, goodness and beauty enjoin upon us to follow her didactic message of imbibing the qualities of impartiality of judgement, indiscriminating attitude towards all, equality, equanimity, love and affection for the socio-economic, socio-political as well as socio-cultural and religious harmony. Hence she says,

"Shiva is Omnipresent Distinguish not between a Hindu and a Mussalman"

For they say. 'Love begets love', and may I add 'Evil begets evil'.

And the latter is too contagious to control and disturbs the mind, raises tempers, causes tensions, leading to violence that becomes a perpetual source of turmoil and threat to life and property—a life of chaos and Vagrancy.

How apt is the age-old Kashmiri saying.

I bought nettle transplanted it, But-alas! I myself became the first Victim. of its painful pricks.

Hence, the truth of Shiva is Omnipresent (Omniscience). Distniguish not between a Hindu and a Mussalman!

Note: Besides its other interpretations, this Vaakh reflects the ethical and metaphysical aspects of her systematic spiritual life.

C/P JLK 57 NKK 57

C/P Parallel NSP No One P.P. No. 1/

## 5.7.2 Guru Shishya Discussion

The following discussion between the Guru and his disciples should be of interest to the reader:

Once, Lal Ded's husband approached her guru, Sedha Mol, requesting him to help make Lal Ded return home, The guru agreed and the discussions that took place included an interesting interlogue.

Husband:

No light equals the light of the sun, No pilgrimage is there like the one To the Ganga No relative excels a brother, and No comfort is there like that of a wife!

#### Sedha Mol:

No, light parallels the light of One's eyes; No pilgrimage is there, like The one, on one's knees. No relative's better than one's own pocket, and No comfort is there, like a warm blanket:

#### Lal Ded:

There is no light like
The knolwedge of ultimate TRUTH,
No pilgrimage, like the one
of the love of the Supreme,
No relative like the Lord himself,

## 5.7.3 Commentary to Lalla Vaakh

- a) Unlike the English word 'Nude' equivalent to the English word 'naked' which is used in Kashmiri in multipurpose senses.
- i) Without normal apparel
- ii)Scantily dressed
- iii) Sparsely apparelled
- iv) Unmindful of dress worn by lady irrespective of the normals of time.
- b) Likewise the Kashmiri word is double meaning equivalent to roaming about or dancing.
- c) Kashmiri phrase 'nangai natchun' apparently seems to be current rumour for common people like us.
- d) Despite the popular notion of the vertically downward projection of Lalla's belly into a fleshy lump to cover her private organ may or may not be a fact. For, in the light of her spiritual perfection, it seems controversially irrational and incongruous. For, her short or affectionate pet name of address and the surrounding neighbourhood must certainly also have been 'LALA' (or 'LALAl' etc. in feminist accent) and the same probably followed her in her in-law's house.

The inspiring que of my interpretation came from Prof. J.L. Koul's scholarly book 'LALDED' of 1973. For, for her Gurus 'Gur-Shabad' i.e. her Gurus' advice

"Draw within from without, tickled Lalleshwari's' spiritually susceptible inclination and she at once by a reflex action withdrew from without to merrily delve down deep into the domain of her choice to probe into the depths of her inner soul. Absorbed thus she roamed about the depths of her soul in relation to her body and the super soul called Almighty Lord. The process advanced in a happy concentrated mood in dancing and treking to reach and analyse the truth of ultimate reality of the focus of the energy of the energies of which only a few of such energy rays are known to us in the form of heat, height, etc. In this way she almost became one -with the Lord of the Universe the source of eternal dynamism of the Universe."

Hence the rumour of is simply a misnomer.

And, no comfort like

The fear of God:

C/P & contrast LAL DED by JLK published by Sahetya Academy of 1973 page 18.

## 5.7.4 The Turning Point

Lalleshwari's bubbling desire of spiritualism and her innate leanings towards the spirit, had drawn her to a high ranking, reputed Sadaki and realised Yogni by Guru Sedha Mol as said before. He administered her with his Guru Shabad- (Guiding directive). This ultimately Proved to be her fuming point.

Says Lalleshwri.

My Guru gave me but one Gurashabad; He told me to move within from without. That hit my (Lalla's) Nail, on the head; I realised myself and shed off the veil; Self realised, I began to dance In freedom.

C/P JLK 21, NKK 21 or 3(a)

My Guru whispered into my ear But one Guru Shabad; He asked me to seek myself Within myself, not without, The magic worked, I become free and. Began dancing in Blissful Boom:

What use to me are
Those fives, tens-and elevens
Who lick cooking kettles and go away
If we gather together and pull
The same rope, in the same direction,
Then, how can a single cow
Elude eleven of us?

Thou are the sky, the earth and air, Thou the day and night; Thou art the grain, flowers and sandalwood, Thee, the water, universe, all; Then what remains to adorn thee with O. Lord?

C/O JLK 70, NKK 70.

No need's there of garden, flowers Oil lamps, water or sesamum: He, Go with faith and Bhakti Heartily trusts his Guru's word. And, of his oven volition, Contemplates on Shiva, He'll do what he says With easel

CIP JLK 67, NKK 67

With a florists heart and Abiding faith,
Offer Him thy flowers of Bhakti:
In bone with sacred Mantras use A 'Naeri Kalush' to pour the nectar of Obeisance on Him;
Thy mute prayers to Shiva'll thus Heed, thy Soul:

C/P Vaakh No 6,7,11 Shruk No Poem i/10, IV 4 XV (15,6)

C/P JLK 69, NKK 69.

Note: The two Vaakh, 6&7 and, the chronology of her existence testify to her being the pioneer and forerunner of the Bhakti movement of India.

Salvation 'Id I obtain Even while living A Social life, day and night: Ever beloved of the gods are Those, that live for others (OR Those That are selfless:)

C/P Shruk No 4,5 Poem No Xl/3

C/P JLK 110, NKK 110

Exhausted I was, seeking myself Within myself; Co'cooned around me was The secret of mystic knowledge Tended and rocked it till I attained my goal: Found I there, pitchers and pitchers Of nector but, --- no drinkers

C'P JLK 99 NKK 99

Thou art within me And without: I contemplated, scanned and Analysed myself and thee:

A century later, Sant Kabir gave vent to a similar spiritual experience in one of his dohas:

The more you observe the red glow-Of my red pearl, the redder (beloved ) It becomes; I went to see the redness, And, I too fumed red

A double century later, Mira Bai burst into song:

None but Girdhar Gopal Is mine,

Thus she too bathed in the sun-shine of one God.

Century after century from 14th century onwards, Lalleshwari and Nund Reshi were followed by Ramanands, Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mira Bai all, high-ranking saints of the Bhakti Movement. While Tulsi Das (contemporary of Akbar) composed Ramayana, Mira Bai took solace in Lord Krishna who was her Girdhar Gopal.

However, the honour of being the first scribe of the Kashmiri language in the form of Mahany Prakash, goes to Shitikanth. Lalleshwari is credited with laying the reinforced concrete basis of the language by her dextrous coinage of apt idioms and proverbs to infuse life and dynamism into it from its very infancy. The language, thus enriched and ornamented by lively idiom pregnant proverb, depth of philosophical thought and messages of social welfare and peace, became the main vehicle of communication of ideas among the Kashmiri people.

Her cryptic, terse sayings still continue to enliven scholarly discussion and resolve social problems.

## 5.7.5 Votary of Vegetarianism and critic of animal sacrifice

O, you dull pandit, you offer
A living ram to a lifeless stone,
It 'li cover you in woollens.
And shield you against cold;
It'll feed on water and natural grass,
And crumbs:
Who has advised you to sacrifice
A live-lamb as an offering
To a dead rock?

C/P JLK 65. NKK 65

The stone that forms the temple and the prayer hall,
The very same stone forms
The sanctum sanctorum.
And the rolling mill:
Shiva is hard to reach,
Take the cue:

#### C/o JLK 66,NKK66.

## 5.7.6 Commentary for Vakayas No 11, 12

As a Shaivite, mistress yogni, the Divine for Lalleshwan is NIRANKAR formless, limitless, boundless, timeless, changeless, non conceiveable (mentally or physically), non--confined to any place and yet, not non-existent anywhere, either. To her, God is one absolute Truth, infinite and Omnipresent, all pervading. She has realised her inner sun and moon in objectless, self-consciousness, vacuum, nothingness (void, emptiness and essence of cosmic consciousness.

Lalleshwari is firm on NIRGUNA aspect of goodhood, without any attributes, qualities, objectives or "person-ifications such as, God is gracious, merciful, just or great, as against its complementry SAGUNA counterpart, wherein visual or verbal images are used as catalysts of concentration on the focussing object, both as mental or material images so usually used by the followers of different religious sects in one form or the other as rightly noted by the author of "Negationism in India", by an European scholar.

But all such limiting boundaries thin out and vanish automatically as a sadakh draws within from without, probes his innerself and is self-realised. Refer to L.V .44 etc. and Vaakh Trio	(a) Specific :1/57. (21/89).22/118. 27/127. 30/130. 30-A/130. 35/84. 37/58(44/134) (45/133). 51/103.54/102. 55/112.
Lalded by JLK 1973.	(b) 13/116.28/24. 29/7. 32/14. 33/68. 34/69. 40/113. 46
NKK 1988	(c) 5/70. 9/99. 10.23/1
N. Reshi	1.2.6.21. etc.
P. Poems	1st/4,5,9,19,25,.etc.
European authors	"Negatonism in India" Pages 154 to 165 (only photostat copy of these pages available with me).
Kalyan Kalpataru,	1993 (Pages 555-557.571-72)
The Journal Of Poetry Society India 1993, Vol 3, No.1 Page. 27	Whereas saguna form of worship may appear to be analogous to a growing infant or child seeking sustenance and shelter from and rushing to his mother's lap for consolation and comfort, in NIRGUNA. A Yogi seeks liberation of his soul from boundage, to become one with the. Supreme Soul.

On studying L.V. Number 11 and 12 along with L. V. Number 1,3,5, 6 one gets the impression that Lalleshwari abhors the grotesqueness and irrationality of animal sacrifice in which, a living lamb is killed as an offering to a non-living stone idol, the focusing object of worship or likewise, the depletion of aesthetics in and, irreverential installation of the focusing symbols do not seem to be in good taste.

Lalleshwari was a thought provoking saint-poetess, profound Shaivite philosopher. deep thinker, creative artist and the builder of the Kashmiri language. She has been and still continues to be an unmatched sage,

seer, sadakh par excellence. As such she relieves in nirankari Divinity and nirguna type of worship and Sadhana as observed above. She is a ruthles critic of ritual religion and, worship too. And yet, says she:

With a florist's heart and Abiding faith Offer him the flowers of BHAKTI.

#### 5.7.7 IMMORTALITY AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF EQUALITY

Shiva is omnipresent, Distinguish not between A Hindu and a Mussalman

We existed ever before and'll exist for ever; We permeate all, did so earlier and'll Continue prevailing all, for ever; The immortal soul shuttles between life and death, The sun ceases not rising and setting. nor is it destroyed: Siva ceases not coming and going:

#### C/P JLK 116, NKK 116.

Thus does this versatile genius of a Yogni and poetess of eminence communicate her enlightened experience on the path of self-recognition and the 'thrill of self consciousness' and widening vision to quote late Swami Laxmanii.

Hefty eating in quick succession'll
Lead you no where:
Meagre eating or non-eating'll
excite your ego;
Be moderate in food and
moderate you'll be in everything.
Sustained moderation'll open the doors of
Warm Welcome for you;

#### C/P JLK 27, NKK 270

- i) According to Washington report 4 (INA) from the National Institute of Aging, Baltimore, less eating prevents incidence of aging by controlling against diseases.
- ii) Also read L.V. Number 41.

Sadhana without the purity of spirit in action has no meaning for Lalleshwari, Sadhana, without the removal of the cloak of evil, bears no fruit, Lalleshwari skilfully conveys the ticklish message by blaming herself rasher then others in the matter (C/P also Vaak.h No. 48)

Learning by rote, my tongue and palate Dried.
That thou art my destiny.
I found not the right way
To act and reach thee.
Telling the beads,
My thumb and finger
Wore out; and yet, my friend
I couldn't get rid of
The duality of mind:
C/P JLK 44 NKK 44

**Note**: A Persian couplet quoted in the preface comfortably comes to my mind again right now saying There's no righteousness except in the service of man.

And respect, for all life: Spiritualism doesn't establish itself by telling the heeds, prayer and kneeling alone: Nor does it impress by donning A Hermit's robes

#### 5.7.8 MULTI FACETED PROFUNDITY OF LALLA'S VAAKHS

Lalleshwari seems to have delved deep into the realms of her self-consciousness guided by sparkling rays of the inner, master Sun, which reveals the ultimate Truth, gifts one with the right choice of inspiring words of wisdom that kill all evil and pain, of every kind, cool and compose the soul and delight the mind with intuitive foresight and divine discrimination and discernment.

Let the reader relish and estimate for himself/herself the sweetness of expression and profundity of divine, social and cultural message in the foregoing and the following Vaakhs of Lal Ded.

Underneath your very feet. is A concealed ditch, And you are dancing over't Tell me dear, how does your Mind allow it? How do you like it? Your life long collections, all You have to leave behind Tell me dear, how Do you relish your food?

Ref. Trans (JLK3) NKK3.

The flesh of my feet stuck to The Tracks only one showed me, the only One path to the only ONE Even if those, that hear this May go mad: From hundreds of path., Lalla Chose only but one:

Ref. Trans (JLK 87 NKK87)

## 5.7.9 The Finale:

Towards the late seventies or eighties of the fourteenth Century A. D. Lalleshwari is said to have gone to Bijbehara town in Anantnag district in South Kashmir. There, her soul said to have left her physical body to merge into the Supreme Soul

A dispute is said to have arisen between the Hindus and the Muslims, the former wanting to cremate the body according to Hindu rites wereas the latter wanted to bury it according to the Muslim, code. For she was the grandma Lal Ded for all irrespective of creed or status in life.

Appreciating the sentiments, the siprit of the yogini is said to have asked those present to bring two large washbasins. The body is said to have sat inside one and inverted the other over her head. Thereafter the body is stated to have shrunk slowly till the two washbasins overlapped. After sometime of those present are said to have ventured to remove the upper washbasin. They found there nothing but a liquid formation. Half of the liquid is said to have been taken by the Hindus for cremation and the other half by the Muslims for burial adjacent to the local Jama Masjid.

An analogous episode is said to have repeated itself more than a century later on the demise of Sant Kabir. After a similar dispute over the mode of disposal of the body, the, saint's corpse kept in the coffin is said to have turned into flower-petals, half of which were cremated by the Hindus and the other half buried by the Muslims.

For the present, it will be enough to conclude the discussion with a quotation from a modern scribe, Fida Mohd Husains, recently published book entitled. . "The Beautiful Kashmir Valley" published by Rima publishing House New Delhi. I quote.

"The earliest Kashmiri work is MAHANAY PRAKASH written by Shati Kanth. Lalleshwari composed her philosophy in the language of the people, she expressed her spiritual and mystic experiences in Kashmiri. Her songs became popular and the people committed to their heart and passed on from generation to generation.

To crown all, her message did cut through the man-made barriers of religions. Hindus as well as Muslims became her votaries with equal gusto. Her appeal was humanistic and not sectarian. Her approach was of positive affirmation and not of negative abjuration.

Lalleshwari did not preach any religion, she even disdained ritual. She projected a way of life quite in harmony without cultural traditions, in which a happy amalgamation was made of what was good in Buddhism and even Islamic.

Her Clarion call to assimilate human values in those days won for her the esteem and acclaim of Hindus and Muslims alike and the edge of ruthless proselytisation got blunted. It was no mean an achievement on her part in uniting the lost children of one god. Her message was so appealing that the tallest of Muslim Rishis of Kashmir Sheikh Noor-Ud-Din Noorani made her his ideal and expressed what he owed to her in these words:-

"That Lalla of Padmpur was fortunate enough in gulping the ambrosial nectarine draughts; thereby she wojour adoration as in incarnation of immortal Divinity. Benevolent God, grant me also such a boon."

Source: Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat

## 5.8 Lal Ded and her Vakhs

**Lal Ded** was born in 1326 A.D.(approx.) 669 years ago daughter of a Kashmiri Brahman named Cheta Bhat near Pampore, Kashmir, based on majority of evidence. She is believed to be a Parmahamsa by her devotees. Studying Her works one is convinced that She is indeed a Parmahamsa.

Rupa Bhawani (1625-1721) regarded her as a supreme guru: Lal man Lal paramagwaram

Parmanand (1791-1879): Unique in her yoga of dwadashanta mandala, Realizing anahata, nada-bindu and Om, Lalleshwari attained to the Supreme Ananda.

The books that will be used are:

- 1. JK: Lal Ded by Jayalal Kaul, Sahitya Akademi, Rabindra Bhavan, 35 Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi-1, and as reference,
- 2. BNP: The Ascent of Self by B. N. Parimoo, Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-7.
- 3. NKK: Lal Ded Her life and sayings by Nil Kanth Kotru, Utpal publications, Rainawari, Srinagar, ISBN81-85217-02-5. He has the same number of vakhs in the same order as JK. Also, his vakhs are in Devnagri script which is then transliterated in English by us.

The order of the Vakhs are from Jayalal Kaul's (JK) book (1. above) and only one line of the original 'Vakh' is given by JK with the English translation of the entire verse is what is written here. In few cases the translation is from other authors, in which case it will be pointed out. The rest of the Vakh is by either BNP or transliterated from Devngri script given by NKK.

There are three teams of authors that JK gives which have verses that are concordant with all his 138 verses:

AK: Lalla yogishwari, Anand Kaul, reprint from the Indian Antiquary, Vols. L, LIX, LX, LXI, LXII.

LV: Lalla-Vakyani, Sir George Grierson and Dr. Lionel D. Barnett Litt. D.(R. A. S. monograph, Vol. XVII, London 1920).

WC: Vaakh Lalla Ishwari, Parts I and II (Urdu Edition by A. K. Wanchoo and English by Sarwanand Chaaragi, 1939).

Lal Ded was far above the realm of being a Realized Soul. This is why a title of a Parmahamsa is just a word or a phrase being used to understand where She is coming from.

For the pragmatic thinkers among us please consider this question for it will tells you about Lal Ded.

It is a fact that Lal Ded did not say these Vakhs for the sake of preaching, or taking the position of a teacher or one sermonizing us. She would often speak to Herself and teach Herself as will be clear from the Vakhs. Applying the usual Vedantist reasoning Who is the Speaker of the Vakh and to whom? In many ways She answers this question Herself in Her last Vakh.

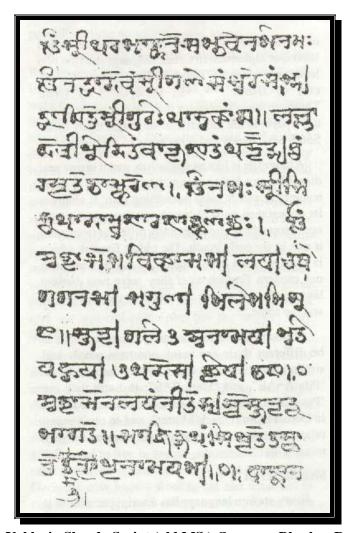
138. last vakh of JK (Kaul) 138. of NKK

yi yi karu'm suy artsun yi rasini vichoarum thi mantar yihay lagamo dhahas partsun suy Parasivun tanthar

Whatever work I did became worship of the Lord; Whatever word I uttered became a mantra; Whatever this body of mine experienced became (\*yih yath lagyam dehas paritsay) the sadhana-s of Saiva Tantra illumining my path to Parmasiva.

\* refers to the second line in this Vakh (verse) with reference to Lalleswari Vakyani, Rajanaka Bhaskara, 60 verses translated into Sanskrit.

Also, this tells us that people of her stature are born with Self awareness only a little rubbing is needed for them to manifest their Divinity. I believe that They are Put in such a position for the benefit of humanity at large.



Lalla-Vakhs in Sharda Script (old MS.) Courtesy: Bhaskar Razdan

Since I do not have as yet these references please try to cross check the Kashmiri with the translation and transliteration. Note the sound A is equal to the stressed sound on a is equal to aa, eg., naavi=nAvi=boat.

## 5.9 Vakhs

#### 1. of JK 4. or p.206 of BNP

Ami pana so'dras nAvi ches lamAn Kati bozi Day myon meyti diyi tAr Ameyn tAkeyn poniy zan shemAn Zuv chum bramAn gara gatshaha.

With a rope of loose-spun thread am I towing my boat upon the sea.
Would that God heard my prayer and brought me safe across!
Like water in cups of unbaked clay I run to waste.
Would God I were to reach my home!

<u>Note:</u> She compares Herself with unbaked clay which slowly wastes away all that one has earned, easily mixing with material nature rather than being above it or in control of it. Thus, She pleads with God with pique in heart to take Her across the sea to Her real home.

#### 2. of JK 14. of BNP

La'lith-la'lith vaday boh vAy(bo dAy\*)
Tseyta muhac peyiy mAy
Roziy no pata looh-laengarac tshAy
Niz-swarup kyAh mothuy hAy

\* is by JK

I will weep and weep for you, O Mind; (my Soul) The world hath caught you in its spell. Though you cling to them with the anchor of steel, Not even the shadow of the things you love Will go with you when you are dead. Why then have you forgot your own true Self?

Many of the Buddhist symbols and ideas will show up in these verses, 'Vakhs'. The idea of Buddhist clinging appears here. Recall that Kashmir was one of the major centers from where Buddhism spread through out Asia.

Reminds me of a story I read on the net some time ago. A Zen master is asked what is the secret of his success. After much persistence by the student, one day the master asks him to get a thick long steel chain and he demonstrates to his student by trying to chain himself to a huge pillar. The student does not understand, the master explains; stop clinging to the world like this demonstration.

Note that the true Self is the Reality only one has forgotten It. By not clinging to the unreal or that which is not permanent does the true Self dawn upon us.

#### 3. of JK

tala chuy zyus ta pyattha chukh natsaan vanta mali man khit pachan chuy soruy sombrit yati chuy machan vanta mali anna khit rotchan chuy

There is a yawning pit underneath you, and you are dancing overhead.

Pray, Sir, how can you bring yourself to dance?

See, the riches you are amassing here, nothing of them will go with you.

Pray, Sir, how can you relish your food and drink?

Parmahamsa RamaKrishna says that God which has cast a net in the ocean of the world is waiting to draw the net anytime, this is how He Plays this Game of Maya. He says some fishes by nature are so clever that they are never caught in this net. They are the nitya siddhas. Naradh is an example of this. The class which Lal Ded is referring here is the worldly class who hide deeper into worldliness, i.e., in the mud with the net and all. To wake these people up Lal Ded has really addressed this Vakh #3 to them. It is not just enough to understand or be aware of the problem we humans face but also to feel this reality so much that it is difficult to swallow any food or drink. This kind of renunciation can be sensed in the next few versus as well.

#### 4. of JK 4. of NKK and 17. of BNP

hacivi haa'rinji pyatsuv kaan gom abahak chaan pyom yath raazdhaana alanjz bhag bazaras kuluph rous vaan gom tirith rous paan goam kus maali zaana A wooden bow and rush grass for an arrow:
A carpenter unskilled and a palace to build:
A shop unlocked in a busy bazaar:
A body uncleansed by waters holyOh dear! who knows what hath befallen me?

#### 5. of JK and NKK 16. of BNP

aayas vate gayas naa vate suman satha lusum dho vuchum chandas har no atha ath nav taras dim kyha bha

By the highway I came,
But by the highway I return not.
And so I find me still on the embarkment,
not having gone even half the way,
And the day is done, the light has failed.
I search my pockets but not a cowrie find:
What shall I pay for the ferry fee?

Just as in any field of study without putting effort one cannot expect to get results. Vivekananda says it took Him a life time of practice to gain the little he learnt. The problem is to separate the real from the unreal, who we truly are from what we are not, keeping the inner peace and equanimity all the time. The consciousness has as if got mixed with what one is not. Parmahamsa RamaKrishna Says keep churning the buttermilk until butter is formed and it floats but does not get mixed with water. After reaching this state does one see that what we are not is also a part of that Self. This can be done either through bhakti, jnana, raja, or karma yoga.

#### 6. of JK 60. of BNP

Kyaah kara paantsan dahan ta kaahan, Vakhshun yath leyji yim karith gay; Saoriy samahan yeythi razi lamahan, Ada kyaazi raavhe kaahan gaav

Ah me! the Five (Bhuta-s), the ten (Indriya-s), And the Eleventh, their lord the mind, scraped this pot\* and went away. Had all together pulled on the rope, Why should the Eleventh have lost the cow? (Why should the soul have gone astray?)

\* This me, this ghata (in trika Saiva terminology, the individual person, his living body.)

Lal Ded is showing us how to control the mind. If one feels for the Lord by all the senses (five of them) and by their five activities (total 10) as well towards the Lord, automatically giving the Lord control over the 11th the mind. This should remind you of Arjun and Lord Krishna in the Chariot with five pair of horses. I feel, the same is achieved by chanting where one does not distinguish between the Lord and His Name and also one ignores or weeds out all other unnecessary thoughts (Teachings of Lord Chaitanya Maha Prabhu 500 B.C.) Parmahamsa RamaKrishna also says purify your mind and you shall see God/Self as you see me but only more intensely.

#### 7. of JK 7. of NKK and 78. of BNP

atshyan+ aay ta gatushun gatshe pakun gatshe then kyho raath yor aya turiy gatshun gatshe khenata khenata kheneta kyha For ever we come, for ever we go; For ever, day and night, we are on the move. Whence we come, thither we go, For ever in the round of birth and death, From nothingness to nothingness. But sure, a mystery here abides, A Something is there for us to know. (It cannot all be meaningless).

+Variation atshan ay (Bhaskara): We have become emaciated with age and have to depart. Nothing endures.

The nothingness in verse 7. is the concept of Shunya of Lord Buddha. Here, Lal Ded tells us that God/Bhagvan/Self exists and all this is not a meaningless journey.

#### 8. of JK 19. of BNP

aayas kami dishi ta kami vate Gatsha kami deyshi kava zaana vath; antidaay lagimay tate, Chanis phookas kanh ti no sath.

Whence I have come and by which way, I do not know.
Wither I shall go and by which way, I do not know.
Were I to know the end of it all And gain the knowledge of the truth, (it would be well, for otherwise)
Life here is but an empty breath.

## 9. of JK 2. of BNP

gaattulah akh vuchum bwachi suu'ty maraan Pan zan haraan Pohani vaava laah Neyshibodh akh vuchum vaazas maaraan Tana Lalla bha praaraan tseyneym-na praah.

I have seen a learned man die of hunger,
A sere leaf drop in winter wind;
I have seen an utter fool beat his cook
(who could not make a toothsome dish).
Since then I, Lalla, anxiously await
The day when the lure of the world will fall away.

## 10. of JK 10. of NKK

da'mi dithu'm nad vahavu'ni da'mi dyuthum suum na'th tar da'mi dithu'm thr fuwalwani da'mi dyuthum gul na'th khaar

Now I saw a stream flowing; Now neither bank nor bridge was seen. Now I saw a bush in bloom; Now neither rose nor thorn was seen.

#### 11. of JK 11. of NKK

da'mii dhitthu'm ga'j dazu'vu'nii da'mii dyuthum dh'ha na'th naar da'mii dhitthu'm Pandavan hu'unz ma'ji da'mii dhitthu'm kraji mass

Now I saw the hearth ablaze, Now I saw not fire nor smoke. Now I saw the Pandava Mother, Now she was but a potters' aunt

#### 12. of JK and NKK 94. of BNP

tsAmar cha'tu'r rath siihAsan aahlad nAtiya-ras tuula-paryankh, KyAh mAnith yeti sthir Aswani? Kawa zana kAsiy maranann shaenkh

A royal fly-whisk, sunshade, chariot and throne, Merry revels, pleasures of the theater, a bed of cotton down-Which of these, you think, will go with you when you are dead? How then can you dispel the fear of death?

#### 13. of JK and NKK 95. of BNP

kyAh bo'dhukh muha bhava-so'dri dare Swoth lUrith peyiy tama pankh; Yama-bhAth karanay kali choradAre, Kawa zana kAsiy maranann shenkh.

Why have you sunk deep in the sea of the illusory pleasures of the world? Why have you pulled down the high-banked road which could have led you safe across? The dense darkness of tamas surrounds you now, and, at the appointed time, Yama's apparitors prepare to drag your body bleeding to death. Who can dispel your fear of death?

#### 14. of JK. 15. of BNP.

haa tsitta\* kava chuy lo'gmut parmas\*\* Kava goy apazis pazyuk broent, Dushibooz vash kooranakh par daramas Yina gatshana zyena-maranas kroent.

Why do you dote upon someone, my Soul, who is not your true love?
Why have you taken the false for the true?
Why can't you understand, why can't you know?
It is ignorance that binds you to the false,
To the ever-recurring wheel of birth and death, this coming and going.

\* & \*\* lit. citta, individual consciousness, the self, drunk with wine offered by another, not produced or brought by oneself. Fig. used for man infatuated with someone other than his wife or his true love; here the unreal, not the true Self.

## 15. of JK.

haa manshi kyaazi chukh vuthaan s'ki lavar

O man, why do you twist a rope of sand? You cannot tow your boat with it.

# What God has written "in karma's line"# Cannot be altered or reversed.

#'Karma'is the word in the original. God decrees reward or punishment not arbitrarily as one's 'fate', but according to ones karma. Ceremonial rites, pujas and yajnas and the like are 'rope of sand' and will not avail to change what God has decreed; for man must take the consequence of karma.

However, if one is repentant of ones mistakes and does not repeat them then the prayers (japa) have the power of reducing the effect of karma to a large extent. The role of an umbrella (prayer) in the scorching sun is an example and karma being reduced to a pin prick instead of breaking a leg is another. A Vedantin like Swami Vivekananda would say 'you are It' nothing can touch you so be brave and face your karma by watching the external as one watches a movie.

16. of JK., 16. of NNK (to be filled)

#### tsarman tsa't.ith ditith pa'ny paanas

What was it you had sown which should have borne a rich harvest? You had but tanned a carcass hide, shaped and stretched it taut on pegs, (Your only care your own body which you pegged to the bonds of desire). But counsel to a fool is labour lost, Like a ball thrown at a big-sized pillar, rebounding but not hitting the mark; Or fruitless as feeding a tawny bullock on sweet molasses, And expect a yield of milk from him.

17. of JK, 17. of NNK (to be filled)

niyam karyoth garbaa

In your mother's womb you vowed not to be born again.\* When will you recall the vow?

And die, even while alive (to all desire, and be released from birth and death)\*\*; Great honor will be yours in this life and greater honor after death.

\*. A common belief that a child resolves thus in his mother's womb. \*\*. cf., The Gita, V. 23.

18. of JK and 2nd quatrain in 9. of BNP

muddas gyaanu'c kath no va'ny-ze Kharas gor dina raaviy doah. Yus yuth kare su tyuth sware Krere Karizina panun paan.

Impart not esoteric truth to fools, Nor on molasses feed an ass. Do not sow seed in sandy beds, Nor waste your oil on cakes of bran.

19. of NNK (to be filled)

da'chinis o'bras zaayun zaanahaa

I might disperse the southern clouds, I might drain out the sea, I might cure the incurable sick, But I cannot convince a fool.# #. In this and other vaakhs, Lal Ded is remonstrating with herself, her foolish mind, rather than admonishing others.

Note that once a certain habit has been formed it becomes a part of the involuntary mind to make such a foolish mind to change its bad habit is not easy. The mind loves to travel in the channels it has already created. How can such a mind reflect that his true self is "God Himself"?.

20. of JK, 20. of NNK (to be filled)

ttyotth mo'dur tay myuutth zahar

What is bitter at first is sweet in the end,
What is sweet at first is poison in the end.\*
(To everyone is given the choice)
It all depends on the effort put in,
and the unflagging determined will;
For whoever strives must soon arrive at the city of his choice.

\*. cf., The Gita, VIII. 37-38.

21. of JK, 27. of BNP

gwaran vo'nam kunuy vatsum Neybra doupanam anndaray atsun; Suy gav Lali mey vaakh ta vatsun, Tavay mey hyotum nagay natsun.

My Guru gave me but one percept:
"From without withdraw your gaze within And fix it on the Inmost Self."
Taking to heart this one percept,
Naked I began to roam.\*\*

\*\*. natsun, pherun, to wander, roam (see supra, p. 12). cf. LV., 94, to dance.

22. of JK, 25. of BNP and NKK

raajas baa'j ye'my kartal paa'j Swargas baa'j chiy taph tay daan; Sahazas baa'j yami gwarakath paaji Paapa-pwanni baa'j chuy pananuy paan.

He who wields the sword a kingdom gains; Paradise is gained by penance and alms. Follow the Guru's word and gain True knowledge of the Self within. Of his own virtue and his sin Man himself surely reaps the fruits.

23. of JK. 24. of BNP

naaba'dy baaras attagand ddyo'l gom Diha-kaan hol gom hyaka kiho; Gwara sundh vanun raavan-tyuol pueom, Pahali-rost khyuol gom hyaka kiho.

The sling of my candy load has gone loose, (and it galls my back); My body has bent double under its weight\*; how shall I carry the load?

The word of my Guru (that I must lose the world to gain my soul), Has been a painful "loss-blister"\*\* for me.
I am become a shepherdless flock, ah me!

\* LV, 108. Var., My day's work has gone awry. \*\* The loss has been painful, as a blister.

#### 24. of JK, 26. of BNP

gwaras pritshom saasi latte Yas na ke'nh vanaan tas kyaah naav: Pritshaan pritshaan thachis ta luusas, Ke'nh nasa nishi kyaahtaam draav.

A thousand times my Guru I asked:
'How shall the Nameless be defined?'
I asked and asked but all in vain.
The Nameless Unknown, it seems to me,
Is the source of the something# that we see.

# This creation, universe.

25. of JK, 11. of BNP

zanam praa'vith vyabhav no tsonddum Luubhan bhuugan baram na pray Somuy Ahaar suetthaah zonum, Tsolum dwakha-vaav polum Dai.

In life I sought neither wealth nor power, Nor ran after the pleasures of sense. Moderate in food and drink, I lived a controlled life, And loved my God.

26. of JK, 3. of BNP

Ayas ti syo'duy gatsha ti syo'duy Se'dis hol me karem kyaah Bo'h tas aahsas Agarai veyzay Veydis ta veyndis kareym kyaah.

I came straight, And straight I shall return. How can the crooked lead me astray? Surely, no harm can come to me: He knows me from the beginning of time, And loves me.

27. of JK, 80. of BNP

khyana khyan karaan kun no vaatak Na khyan gatshakh ahannkari: Saomuy khey maali saomuy Asakh Sami khyana mutsaranay barnyan taari.

By pandering to your appetites, you get nowhere;
By penance and fasting, you get conceit.
Be moderate in food and drink and live a moderate life,
The gates of Heaven will surely be thrown open wide for you.

28. of JK, 5. of BNP

tsaalun chu vzmala ta trattay Tsaalun chu mandinyan gattakaar Tsaalun chu paan-panun kaddun grattay Heyti maali santuush vaati paanay.

Patience to endure lightning and thunder, Patience to face darkness at noon, Patience to go through a grinding-mill --Be patient whatever befalls, doubting not that He will surely come to you.\*

\* Var., He will provide for all your wants.

29. of JK, 22. of BNP

tsala tsitta vwandas bayi mo bar Chon tsinnth karaan paana Anaad, Tsey kawa zananiya khyod hari kar Kival tasunnday taaruk naad.

Have no fear, O restless mind, The Eternal One takes thought for you. He knows how to fulfil your wants. Then cry to Him alone for help, His Name will lead you safe across.

30. of JK, 30. of NKK to be filled

khyath ga'nddith shami naa maanas

The joys of palate and fine apparel bring man no lasting peace.
They who give up false hopes and don't put trust in the things of the world, Ascend, unafraid of Death's terrors by scriptures told;
For having lived contented lives, they are not debtors of Desire.\*\*

\*\*And do not have to settle accounts with the cruel debt-collector Death.

31. of JK, 31. of NKK to be filled

kandyav karak kandi kande

O embodied One, dote not upon your body thus, embellishing it, adorning it, providing luxuries for it.

Even its ashes will not endure.

32. of JK, 32. of NNK to be filled

swamana gaarun manz yath kande

Should you, in this body, seek
The Supreme Self that dwells within,
Greed and illusion soon removed,
A halo of glory will surround
this very body of yours.

33. of JK and NKK, 81. of BNP

yava tuu'r tsali tim ambar he'taa bwachi yava tshali tim Ahaar ann; Tseyta swa-par veytsaaras peytaa, Tsentan yi dih van-kaavan This counsel to the body give, O Soul\*:
Wear only such clothes as ward off cold;
Eat only to satisfy your hunger;
Devote yourself with all your heart
to the knowledge of the Supreme Self.
Consider this body to be food for the forest ravens.

\* LVRB: tsitta dehas vaan kyaa van. cf. Var. LV, 28: tsentan yih van-kaavan, consider this body meat for jungle crows (translation of this line in Vakh above by BNP).

34. of JK, 34. of NNK to be filled

#### treshi bwachi mo kreshinaavun

Let not your body suffer from hunger and thirst, Feed it whenever it feels famished. Fie on your fasts and religious rites; Do good: therein your duty lies.

#### 35. of NNK to be filled

#### atha ma baa traavun khar baa

Do not let loose your donkey\*\* lest he damage others' saffron fields; For none will bare his back to suffer sword cuts and blows for you.#

\*\* Your mind, # Punishment for the damage done.

36. of JK, 83. of BNP

ye'my luub manmath mad tsuur morun Vata-naash maerith ta logun daas; Tamiy sahaza Ishwar gorun, Tamiy soruy vyendun saas.

Who slays the highway robbers three, Greed, Lust and Pride, And yet, in utter humility, serves his fellow-men-He truly seeks out the Lord, disregarding as worthless ashes all other things.

37. of JK, 82. of BNP

maarukh maarabuuth kaam kruud luub Nata kaan barith maaranay paan; Manay kheyn dikh swaveytsaara shamm, Vishay tihunnd kyaah-kyuth doar zaan.

Slay the murderous demons, Lust, Anger and Greed; Or, aiming their arrows at you, they will surely shoot you dead. Take care, feed them on self-restraint and discrimination of the Self; Thus starved these demons will become powerless and weak.

38. of JK and 7. of BNP

gaal ga'ndiy-nyam bol pa'diy-nyam Dapineym tiy yas yih routse, Sahaza-kusamav puuz karineym, Boh amalloun ta kas kyaah mvotse

They may abuse me or jeer at me, They may say what pleases them, They may with flowers worship me. What profits them whatever they do? I am indifferent to praise and blame.

#### 39. of JK and 6. of BNP

A'saa bol pa'ddiy-nyam saasaa Mey mani waasaa khiid na heaye; Boh youd sahaza Shankar-bakts aasaa, Makris saasaa mal kyaah peyye

Let them mock at me and call me names. If a true devotee of Siva I be, I shall not feel distressed nor hurt. Can a few ashes a mirror befoul\*?

\* The ashes serve rather as polish

40. of JK and 10. of BNP

muudh zaa'niith pa'shith ta ko'r koul shrutuvun zadd-ruupi aas, Yus yih dapiy tas tiy boz Yuhoy tattvavidis chuy abhyaas.

Though you are wise, be as a fool; Though you can see, be as one blind+; Though you can hear, be as one deaf\*\*; Patiently bear with all you meet, and politely talk to eveyone. This practice surely will lead you to the realisation of the Truth.

+ lit. one-eyed, \*\* Var., dumb, but Bhaskar (LVRB) "zo'r ta ko'l", (deaf and dumb): "shrutvaa sarvam shrotrahiinena bhaavyam."

#### 41. of JK

#### manasu'y maan bhavasaras

Ocean and the mind of man are both alike:
Under the ocean's bottom lies
the destructive fire, vadvaagni#;
And in the breast of man doth rage
the fire of wrath.
When the fire breaks out, its flames
of angry, abusive words,
sear and scorch and burn.
But if one ponders unruffled and calm,
and weighs the words, though angry they be,
They have no substance, no, nor weight.

# Vadvaagni which, according to legend, would destroy the whole world if it were to burst forth from under the ocean.

#### 42. of JK and 23. of BNP

rut ta krut soruy pazyam Karnan na bozun, achin na baava, Oruk dapun yeli vavaondi vuzeym Ratandip prazaleym varzani vaava.

Ill or well, whatever befalls, let it come.
My ears will not hear,
My eyes will not see.
When the Voice calls from within the inmost mind,
The lamp of faith burns steady and bright even in the wind.

## 43. of JK and NKK (to be filled)

#### mandachi haa'nkal kar tshe'nyam

When can I break the bonds of shame? When I am indifferent to jibes and jeers. When can I discard the robe of dignity? When desires cease to nag my mind.

## 44. of JK and 10. of BNP, (to be filled from NKK)

muudh zaa'niith pa'shith ta ko'r

I have worn out my palate and tongue reading the holy books,
But I have not learnt the practices that would please my Lord.
I have worn thin my finger and thumb telling the rosary beads,
But I have not been able to dispel duality from my mind.

#### 45. of JK and 91. of BNP

avyastaa'ry pothyan chii haa maali paraan Yitha tota paraan 'Raama' panjaras; Gita paraan ta hiitha labaan; Param Gita to paraan cheys.

It is easy to read and to recite; It is hard to practice what one reads, And, reading seek out the Self within. By constant practice, not by books, Conviction grew in my heart Of God. Who is Consciousness-Bliss.

#### 47. of JK and 92. of BNP

Parun polum apuruy po'rum Kesara vana volum rattith shaal, Paras prounum ta paanas polum, Ada gom moluum ta zinim haal.

I practiced what I read, And learnt what was not taught. From its jungle abode I brought the lion down as I a jackal would; (From pleasures of the world I pulled my mind away). I practiced what I preached, and scored the goal.

#### 48. of JK and 86. of BNP

hyath ka'rith raaj pheri-naa Dith karith trapti na man; Luub veyna ziiv marina, Ziivanatay mari tay suy chuy jnaan.

You will not know peace of mind if you a kingdom gain,
Nor will you gain content or rest if you give it away.
Only the man, free from desire, will never die.
Only he has true knowledge
Who, though alive, is as one dead, dead to all desire.

#### 49. of JK and 85. of BNP

yi yi karu'm kara pyatrum paanas Arzun barzun beyyis kyut. Antih laagi-roust pusharun swaatmas, Ada yuuri gatsha ta tuury chum hyout.

I have to suffer the consequence of whatever I do, even if I work for others' gain. But if, with mind from attachment free, I dedicate all works to God, It will be well for me wherever I be, here and hereafter.

## 50. of JK and NKK (to be filled)

kava chukh divaan anine ba'tash

Why do you grope thus like the blind?
Pray, doubt not what I say to you:
If you are wise, enter within
And see the Lord Himself is there.
You need not search Him here and there.

#### 51. of JK and 84. of BNP

pavan puu'rith yus ani vagi Tas baovi na sparsh na bwachi ta tresh Ti yas karun anti tagi, Samsaaras suy zeyyi nech.

He who can direct his praana aright, is not troubled by hunger or thirst. And he who can do this unto the end is born fortunate\* in this world.

\* LVRB. "samsaare saphalam asya jiivitam" (His life here has been fruitful).

#### 52. of JK and 30. of BNP

tsitta twarug gagana bramavon, Nimishi aki tsandhi yuuzan lach; Tseitani vagi bavdhi ratith zon Praan-Apaan sondaarith pakhach.

The steed of mind speedeth over the sky,
And, in the twinkling of the eye,
A hundred thousand leagues traverseth he.
Yet a man of discrimination can control
the curvetting steed,
And, on the wheels of praana and apraana, guide
his chariot aright.

## 53. of JK and 79. of BNP

tsyath amarpathi tha'vy-ze, Ti tra'vith lagi zuure; Tati tsa no shinkyzi sannda'ri-ze Dwadashur ti kwach no muure.

Keep your mind intent upon the path that leads to immortality. Should it stray from the path, it will fall into evil ways. Be firm with it and have no fear; For mind is like a suckling baby, which tosses restless even in its mother's lap.

#### 54. of JK, (to be filled from NKK 54.)

kus mari ta kasuu maaran

Who dies? Who is slain?
He who forsakes God's Name,
And gets involved in worldly cares.
It's he who dies. It's he who is slain.

55 of JK

Gwarashabdas yus yatsh patsh bare

He who has faith in Guru's word, And with true knowledge for the rein guides aright the seed of mind, And holds his senses in control, 'Tis he enjoys the peace of mind. He will not die, nor be slain.

56. of JK

grratta chu pheraan zere zere

Sure and steady the mill will turn once you propel the wheel.
Mind is the pivot, it should know how best to turn the mill.
And once it turns, it will grind fine,
And grain will find its way to the mill.

#### 57. of JK, 57 of NKK and page xviii of BNP

Shiv chuy thali thali rozaan Mav zaan Hyound ta Mussalmaan Trukhay chukh ta pananuy paan parzaan Ada chay Saahibas zanni zaan

Siva abides in all that is, everywhere; Then do not discriminate between a Hindu or a Mussalman. If thou art wise, know thyself; That is true knowledge of the Lord.

#### 58. of JK

mithyaa kapatt asath trovum

I renounced fraud, untruth, deceit;
I taught my mind to see the One
in all my fellow-men.
How could I then discriminate
between man and man,
And not accept the food offered to me
by brother man?

#### 59. of JK

muudddo kray chay na dhaarun ta paarun

O fool, right action does not lie in observing fasts and ceremonial rites. O fool, right action does not lie in providing for bodily comfort and ease.\* In contemplation of the Self alone is right action and right counsel for you.

\* Var., in observing the Five Fires (Pancaagni).

#### 60. of JK

maa'rith paants buuth tim phalha'ndy

First feed the Five Bhuuta-s+ on the grain and cates of self-awareness; Thus fed, offer these fatted rams as sacrifice unto the Lord. Then you will know, O restless one, the abode of the Supreme. Ceremonial rites and pieties will cease to be binding on you; And even the 'left-handed'# practices will bring no harm to you.

- + The five bhuuta-s, mahaabhuuta-s, are the five factors constituting the principles of experience of the sensible universe, viz., solidity, liquidity, formativity, aeriality and vacuity.
- # Reference to Vaamamaarga ritual.
- 61. of JK and 13 of BNP

vwath rainyaa artsun sakhar Athi al-pal vakhur heyth, Youdvanay zaanakh parma-pad aksher Hishi Khaosh-khvor keytha-kheyth.

Lady, arise and prepare for worship with wine and flesh and cates. If you know the changeless Supreme State (of Parmasiva), Take and eat them in the company of fellow Tantric adepts. (It matters not if, violating custom, you practice "left-handed" rites.\*)

\* The rites of Kaulacaar, a Shaakta cult. The last line is not clear and two variants are given with two different interpretations. The one within brackets is given by Grierson; the other, preceding it, is given by Anand Kaul, and this I think is the better interpretation. The last line (see AK, p.17) being "he' shikhar khe' shikhar hyath". Reference is to Cakrayaag of the Kaula-s. Wine meat and cates were used in worship as symbolic for man's passion, desires and sensual enjoyments; and these too were offered as sacrifice to the Divine Mother.

62. of JK and NKK and 63 of BNP

gyaanamaarg chay haakavaa'r Dizeys shama-dama kreeyi panni, Lama chtrrak posh pranni trakiy vaar Kheyna-kheyna mwatsi vaaray cheyn

The pathway of Jnana is a kaiyard;
Fence it with self-restraint and pious deeds.
Then let the goats of former karma
browse in it and fattened be
as animals fit for sacrifice
at the altar of the Mother.
(Goats of past actions and their fruits
slain in sacrifice,
leaving no karma behind),
The kailyard of karma thus browsed away,
you gain release.

Many complain about bad thoughts, effects of bad karma, etc. Elaborating Mother Lal Ded's effective solution given above to these problems, one can let the thoughts come and go, you just stand back and laugh at it as it is not a part of you. You are He. Don't act on these thoughts. If a cloud of bad thoughts appear then right action is needed to counter them. Get up and do a pious deed, e.g. the least you can do is starting writing on why these clouds of thoughts are wrong and bad for you, i.e., applying the fire of knowledge and discrimination and continue until you would have overcome this dark cloud of thoughts, other means of nullifying the dark clouds such as getting your frustrations out, e.g., by going for a long walk etc, are also useful. The great Yogi Pathanjali says you need right action to counter wrong action and mere right thoughts wont do you any good to counter wrong action. These counter effects have to take place, each at their proper level of existence: thoughts, words and deeds (action). Swami Vivekananda ji has said watch your thoughts they form your words, watch your words they form your action, watch your action they form your character.

63. of JK and 34 of BNP

shishiras vuth kus ratte Kus bavke ratti vaav Yus pantsh yindray tseylith tsatte Suy ratte gatti rav Who can stop the eaves' drip during the frost?
Who can hold wind in the palm of his hand?
Who can see the sun in the darkness of night?
He who holds his senses under control,
Can in the dark catch hold of the sun,
(Can see the Light in the darkness of the soul).

64. of JK

shiil ta maan chuy pony kranje

Like water in a colander are name and fame: they do not last.

Whoever in his fist can hold\* a storm, Or tether an elephant with a hair of his head, (Whoever controls the storms in his breast, Or tethers the wild elephant of desire), 'Tis he whose name and fame endure.

\* lit., like a wrestler, a strong man.

65. of JK and 93. of BNP

laz kaasii shiit nivaarii Trana zala karaan aahaar; Yih kami vvopadiish koaruy huutt batta, Atsiitan vattas satsiithan dyun aahaar.

It covers your shame,
Saves you from cold,
Its food and drinkMere water and grass.
Who counselled you, O brahmin,
To slaughter a living sheep
as a sacrifice
Unto a lifeless stone?

66. of JK and 55. of BNP

diiva vattaa divur vattaa Peythha bvona chuy ikavaathh: Puuz kas karakh huutt bhattaa, Kar manas ta pavanas sangaatth.

The idol is but stone,
The temple is but stone,
From top to bottom all is stone.
Whom will you worship, O stubborn\* Pandit?
Let praana and the mind unite
(as an offering to your God).#

67. of JK and 56. of BNP

kush posh tel diiph zal naa gatshe Sadbhaava gwara kath yus mani heye, Shambhuhas swari neyth panani yatshe, Suy dapize sahaza akriyi, na zeyye.

<sup>\*</sup> huutta, adjective, is probably from Sanskrit hatth, akin to Hindhi hatthi and huudd. cf., LV, 17, learned, # Reference to yogic praanaagnihotra.

He does not need the kusa grass, nor sesame seed;
Flowers and water He does not need.
He who, in honest faith, accepts his Guru's word,
On Siva meditates constantly,
He, full of joy, from action freed, will not be born again.\*

\* Var., LVRB, 45: say da'py-ze sahazaakriye (His is the true worship of the Lord) is the better reading. 68. of JK and 71. of BNP

kus push ta kwasa pushaa'nii ? Kam kusam lagizeys puuze ? Kami sara goadd dizeys zaldani, Kava sana mantra Shankara swaatma vuze.

Who is the florist, who the flower-girl?
With what flowers should He be worshipped?
In what water should He be bathed?
With what mantra should we awaken Shankara,
Who abides in the Self?

## 69. of JK and 72 of BNP

man push tay yatsh pushaa'nii Bhaavaki kusam lagizeys puuze, Shisharas goadd dizeys zaldaani, Tshwapi mantra Shankara swaatam-vuze.

Mind is the florist, Devotion the flower-girl, who bring flower-wreaths for Him. He should be worshipped with the flowers of faith, And bathed in the nectar of the Mystic Moon. Silence is the mantra that awakens Him; (And, in the deep stillness of the mind, He wakes up in the inmost Self).

## 70. of JK and 57 of BNP

gagan tsu'y bhuutal tsu'y, Tsu'y chukh deyn pavan ta raath, Arg tsanndun, posh poyni tsu'y Tsu'y chuk soruy ta laagizi kyaah?

Thou art the earth, Thou art the sky, Thou art the air, the day and the night; The sacrificial corn Thou, And unction of the sandal-paste. Thou art the water, Thou art the flowers, Thou art all these and everything. What may I, in worship, bring to Thee?

#### 71. of JK and NKK, and 54. of BNP

dwaadashaanta manddal yas diivas thaji Naasikaa pavan Anaahatta rav; Swayam kalpan anti tsaji. Paanay su Diiva; ta artsun kas ? He who knows the Dvaadashaanta Manddala\* as the abode of God,
And knows the constant Sound# that is borne upon the praana rising from the heart to the nose,
All vain imaginings flee from his mind,
without effort, naturally;
He knows no God other than the Self,
nor need he worship any other god.

\* 'mandal': orb, disc, sphere, of 'dvaadashaanta' or locality of it; 'dvaadashaantah', a measure of twelve fingers; literally, the end of twelve fingers, here the distance found by measuring. Cf. aadikotih: hrdayam, antakotih: dvaadashaantah; tayoh praanollaasavishhraantyavsare cittaniveshanena parishiilanam- PR, pp. 88-89, 135. The praana starts at the point of hrdaya (praanollaasa) and ends (vishhraanti) at dvaadashaanta, i.e., at a distance of twelve fingers from it. Also called anatahdvaadashaanta, i.e., the heart, and baahirdvaadashaanta, twelve fingers' distance from it. See also Svacchanda Tantram (KSTS, 38) p. 65, verse 111; and Vijnaana Bhairava (KSTS, 8) verse 49, 51, # Sans. anaahata, the eternal sound, self-created, the mystic syllable OM.

72. of JK and 28. of BNP

akuy Omkaar yas naabi\* dhare Kumbhay Brahmaannddas sum gare; Akh suy manthr tseytas kare, Tas saas manthr kyaah kare.

He in whose navel constantly abides none other than the One Omkaar, Who builds a bridge between his own and Cosmic Consciousness#, By making mind one with this mighty spell-What need has he for a thousand other spells?

# Brahmaanda, lit, Brahma's egg, the universe, used also of brahmarandhra in the crown of the head. Lit., a bridge between the manipura cakra and brahma-randhra, with Omkaar as the mantra; fig., between kumbha(ghatta, the individual) and Brahmaanda, the Cosmic Whole. Var. LV, 34: For whom the kumbhaka exercise formeth a bridge to the Brahma-randhra.

It is said that no mantra is complete without OM in it and the practice of the mantra OM on your own without a Guru is discouraged.

73. of JK and 12. of BNP

Shiv vaa Keshava vaa Zin vaa Kamalajanaath naamadhaarin yuh, Mey abali kaastan bhavaraoz, Su vaa su vaa su vaa suh.

Shiva or Keshva or Jina,\*
Or Brahma, the lotus-born Lord,
Whatever name He bear,
May He remove from me
the sickness of the world!
It may be He or He or He
(For He is One though called variously).

\* The Buddha. In later Sanskrit literature "Jina" is used for the Buddha.

74. of JK and NKK, and 32. of BNP

<sup>\*</sup> naabi: navel, cf. "paraavaak mulacakrastha, pashyantii naabhiisamsthitaa..."

Lal bo luutshu's tshaanddaan ta gaaraan Hal mey kormas rasanishiti; Vuchun hyotmas taari diientthmas baran Meyti kal ganeyam zi zogmas tati.

I, Lalla, searched and sought for Him, And even beyond my strength I strove. Finding His doors bolted and barred I longed the more; And firmly resolved, I stood just there with longing and love, Fixing my gaze upon His door.

#### 75. of JK and NKK

lolu'ki vwakhli vaa'linj pishim

In the mortar of love I ground my heart, I parched and burnt and ate it out. Thus, all my evil passions removed, I sat serene and unperturbed. Yet still I doubt if I can know Whether I shall die or I shall live (and find release from birth and death).

#### 76. of JK and 36. of BNP

sahazas sham ta dam na gatshi Yatshi no praavakh muktiidwaar: Salilas lavan zan miilith gatshe, Toti chuy durlabh sahaza veytsaar.

Not by ascetic practices is the Self realized; Nor by desire\* can you gain the Portals of Release. In contemplation you may be absorbed as salt in water, Yet hard it is for you to gain the true knowledge of the Self.

#### 77. of JK and NKK

zanu'ni zaayaay ru'ty tay ku'tiy

Plump and comely were they born, Causing their mother's womb great pain; Yet to the womb they come again. Siva indeed is hard to reach; Pray, heed the doctrine this teaches you.\*

\* that is, take a lesson from this and reflect upon it.

#### 78. of JK and NKK

ywasay shiil piitthas ta pattas

Itself a part of the rocky earth,
It is the self-same stone that makes
A pavement, seat or pedestal,
Or a mill-stone for a grinding mill.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.

The obvious doctrine this teaches us is that our true self is the spirit, which is all pervading like the stone in earth which has assumed various forms, shapes and sizes.

#### 79. of JK and NKK

#### rav mata thali thali taa'pytan

Will the sun not shine on all alike But give heat only to holy lands? Will Varuna\* not visit all homes alike But visit only the homes of the good? Siva indeed is hard to reach; Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.

\*The god of water.

80. of JK and 29. of BNP

zaanahaa' naaddi-dal mana ra'ttith Tsattith vattith kuttith kaliish; Zaanaha ada astah rasaayan gattith, Shivachuy kruutth ta tsen vopadiish.

If I knew how to control my naaddi-s,\*
How to sever them from the pull of desire,
How to bind them to the inner Self,
How to cut the bonds of sorrow,
I should have known how to compound
the Elixir of Life.
Siva indeed is hard to reach;
Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.

#### 81. of JK and NKK

#### yihay maaira-ruup pay diye

As mother a woman suckles a baby, As wife she dallies amorously in love, As maayaa she takes one's life in the end-And yet in all these forms a woman she. Siva indeed is hard to reach; Then heed the doctrine this teaches you.

#### 82. of JK and NKK

Shiv chury zaa'vyul zaal vaahraa'vith

Like a tenuous web Siva spreads Himself, Penetrating all frames of all things. If while alive, you cannot see Him, How can you see Him after death? Think deep and sift the true Self from the self.

#### 83. of JK and 48. of BNP

tuu'r salil kho'tt taa'y tuu're Heymi trey gay byon-abyon veymarsha; Tsetani rav bhaati sab same, Shivamay tsraatsar zag pashya.

<sup>\*</sup> The tubes through which the vital airs circulate of which the principal ones are ten, cf. dashi naadi vaav, the vital airs of ten naaddi-s, Infra No. 91.

When water freezes in the cold, it turns to snow and ice.\*
Reflect, O man, that one becomes three different things#;
And when the sun of pure Consciousness shines, The world of living and lifeless things, the universe and whatever exists, are, in the Supreme, seen as one.

\*SSV, p.98, lines 4-5, jala himan ca yo veda, #byan: maayaa (multiplicity); byanaabyan: vidyaa (unity in multiplicity): abyan: Shakti (unity). Or, respectively, idam idam, aham idam, aham.

84. of JK and 61 of BNP

ase pwande zwase zaame Neythay snaan kari tiirthan; Vahari vaharas no'nuy aase, Nishi chuy ta parzaantan.

Laughing sneezing, coughing, yawning, Bathing in sacred pools, Going about unclothed throughout the year\*, He is about you all the time-In all these forms recognize Him.

VAR. LVRB nonuy aase: He is to be seen in all these activities all the year round. He is close to you as yourself, "pashyaatmadevam nijideha eva." Also see KSTS 8, sloka 118. "kshutaadyante bhaye shoke ... brahmasattamayii dashaa, taam tatra tatra avasare vimarshya..."

85. of JK and 45. of BNP

baan go'l tay prakash aav zuune Tsaendr go'l tay mo'tuy tseyth; Tseyth go'l tay keynhti na kune; Gay Bhoor Bhwaah Swaah veysarzith keyth.

The sun sets, the moon begins to shine\*; The moon sets the mind alone is left; The mind dissolved, nothing remains; Earth, atmosphere and sky# depart, (And in the Supreme are absorbed).

\* Praanaa the sun moving upwards, apaana the moon moving downwards. Cf., "praanaatmaa ravih uurdhva-mukhatvena caran; taalvaadi-aatmani antare sthitah; candrah apaanaatma adhomukhatvena..."-Tantraaloka (KSTS 36), Vol. IV, pp. 26-28, # Bhuuh, Bhuvah, Svah.

86. of JK and 37. of BNP

mal vwandi zolum jigar morum Teli Lal naav draam Yeli dali travimas tati.

I burnt the foulness of my soul, I slew my heart, its passions all, I spread my garment's hem, and sat just there, on bended knees, in utter surrender unto Him. My fame as Lalla spread afar.

87. of JK

latan hund maaz laaryom vatan

The soles of my feet wore off on the roads while I wandered in search of Him.
Then lo! on a sudden, I saw
That He was all and everywhere,
I had nowhere to go in search of Him.
This was the Truth of a hundred truths.
Whoever learn of it, will they not wonder?
Will they not be mad for joy?

88. of JK and 35. of BNP

po't zuuni vo'thith mo't bolanovum Dag Lalanaovam Dayisannzi prahe; Lali Lali karaan lal vuzunovum, Miilith tas shrotsyom dahe.

In the last watch of the moonlit night, remonstrating with my wayward mind, I soothed my pain with the love of God. Gently, gently, accosting myself, "O Lalla, Lalla, Lalla", I woke my Love, my Lord and Master, In whom absorbed, my mind was cleansed of its defilement by the Ten.\*

\* The ten indriya-s, dahe, five organs of sense and five organs of action. Var., dihe: Even my body was purified.

89. of JK and 41. of BNP

tanthu'r gali tay manthu'r mwatse Manthr go'l tay mwo'tuy tseyth, Tseyth go'l tay kehhti na kune, Shuunyas Shuunyaah miilith gav.

Let go the sacred tantra rites\*,
Only the mantra sound remains.
And when the mantra sound departs,
Only the citta is left behind.
Then lo! the citta itself is gone,
And there is nothing left behind;
The void merges in the Void
(the silent citta in Pure Consciousness.)#

\* cf., LV 11, texts, holy books, # LVRB 11, drashttaa shishyate citsvaruupam: For "shunya goes to shunya", see chapter 5, supra, p.82; shunya is not emptiness.

90. of JK and 43. of BNP

luub maarun sahaz vyatsaarun Dro'g zaanun kalpan traav; Nishi chuy tay duur mo gaarun; Shuunyas Shuunyaah miilith gav.

Realization is rare indeed: Seek not afar, it is near, by you. First slay Desire, then still the mind, giving up vain imaginings; Then meditate on the Self within, And lo! the void merges in the Void. (The citta merges in the Cit.)

#### 91. of JK and 42. of BNP

tsitta-twarug vagi hyath ro'ttum Tseylith milavith dashinaaddi vaav, Tavay Sheyshikal veyglith vatsham; Shuunyas Shuunyaah miilith gav.

I reined in the steed of the mind, And, by constant practice, brought together the praana-s coursing the ten naaddi-s. Then the nectar of the Mystic Moon flowed down, suffusing my whole being, And the void merged in the Void, (The stilled mind merged in Pure Consciousness).

#### 92. of JK

sa'ts-sas na saatas pa'ts-sas na rumas

On nothing else I built my hopes, In nothing else I put my trust-My vaakh\* brought me the wine I drank, My vaakh gave me the strength to seize The darkness that within me lurked. I rolled it up and knocked it down, And tore it to pieces (dissipating the darkness of my soul)

\* Verse-sayings of Lalla.

93. of JK and NKK, and 38. of BNP

she' van tsa'ttith shashikal vuzu'm Prakrat hu'zum pavana saeti; Lolaki naara vaolinj buzam, Shankar lobum tamiy saeti.

Cutting my way through Six Forests\*, I came upon the Digit of the Moon+. By means of the practice of praanaapaana#, The world of matter shrank for me. Then roasting my heart in the fire of love, I found my God.

\* LV: Cakra-s. LVRB: "kaamaadikam kaanena shattkam etat", i.e., kaama, krodha lobha, moha, mad and ahankaara, + Sahasraara (top of the head), #lit., pavan (vital airs); but see LV: "by controlling my vital airs..."

94. of JK and 53. of BNP

Omkaar ye'li layi o'num Vuhay ko'rum panun paan; Shu-vt travith sath-marg ro'tum, Teyli Lal bo'h va'tsas Prakaashasthan.

When I became one with the Supreme Word\*, My body blazed as red-hot coal+, Then I gave up the Path of the Six#, and betook myself to the straight true Path^, Which led me to the Abode of Light. \* Aum, +Such blazing is an actual experience. It does not mean burning out impurity or selfhood, # "SSaddadhva" six paths according to AAnavopaaya of Trika Darshana, viz varna, mantra, pada, kalaa tatva and bhuvana, ^She has now taken to the Shaambhavopaaya, the straight easy path which requires no rigorous saadhana. PR, pp. 20 & 83 (sukhopaayameva), for Var., see LV. 82.

95. of JK and 67. of BNP

he gwaraa parameshwaraa Baavtam tseyyi chuy antar vyo'd; Dwashavay vo'padaan kanda-puraa Huh kava turun ta haah kava to't?

O Guru, you are as a god to me, Tell me, you know the secret truth. Both Praana-s rise from 'Kandapura', the "place of the Bulb", the navel region, Why is haah hot, why is huh cold?

96. of JK and NKK, and 68. of BNP

naabisthaana chay prakrath zalavu'nii Brahmasthaanas shishirun mwakh, Brahmaandas chay nad vahavani, Tavay turun 'huh','haah' gav to't.

At the navel region is the Place of the Sun, Where Prakriti glows as hot as fire; From here hot breath rises to the throat. At the crown of the head is the Place of the Moon, From here cool nectar down the naaddi-s flows, Thus haah is hot, and huh is cold.

97. of JK

Lal bo draayas lolare

For love that would not let me be, I, Lalla, set forth in search of Him. And toiled and toiled for days and nights. Then lo! the most auspicious moment of life-I saw the Pandit in my own home.

98. of JK and 33 & p. 204 2nd Vakh in BNP

dama dama ko'rmas daman aaye\* Prazalyom daph ta naneyam zaath; Andrium Prakaash neybar tsho'ttum, Gatti ro'tum ta karmas thaph.

Gently, gently, I trained my mind to suspend its processes and thoughts.#
Then (in the windless calm), the flame of the Lamp, shining steady and bright,
Revealed my true nature unto me.
In the dark recesses of my soul+
I seized upon Him and held Him fast.
Then I diffused the inner light,
(and within, without, all was Light).

\* & # Var., LV. 4"slowly, slowly, did I stop my breath in the bellows-pipe (of the throat)" damaadam ko'rmas daman-haale, + Gatti, "in the darkness itself." Better reading LVRB: svasmindehe (in my ownself)

#### 99. of JK and NKK, and 46. of BNP

tshaanddaan luutshu's paa'ny paanas Tsheypith Jnaanas votum na kuuntsh (kaanh); Lay karmas ta vatsas alsthaanas, Bari bari baana ta cheyvaan na kuunh (kaanh).

Searching the Self, I wearied myself;
For none by searching ever gained
The secret knowledge beyond the mind.
I stopped searching, and love led me
to the Tavern\* door.
There I found wine jars aplenty,
But none desiring to drink from them.

\* 'al-thaan', the abode of amrita (nectar), of the Supreme, which is also in the Self of man though he wearies himself searching Him everywhere else.

100. of JK and 51. of BNP

makuris zan mal tso'lum manas Ada mey labam zanas zaan, Suh yeli dyuuenthhum nishi paanas Soruy suy ta bo'h no kea'h

Foulness from my mind was cleared as ashes from a mirror,
Then recognition of Him came to me unmistakable and clear.
And when I saw Him close by me,
He was all and I was not,
(and there was nothing else).

101. of JK and NKK, and 96. of BNP

karu'm zu' kaaran tre' ko'mbith\* Yava labakh paraluukas annkh Vo'th khas Surya-manndal tso'mbith, Tavay tsaliy maranun sheynkh.

Do away with karma-s two# and causes three+, and you will be honored in the world to come. Arise, ascend and cut through the Sun's orb^, and you will overcome the fear of death.

\* Var., LV, 75:"by practising kumbhaka yoga.", # Good and bad, + The three mala-s, impurities, that bring, viz., aanavamala, of finitude; maayiyiimala, of multiplicity; kaarmamala, of resultant pleasure, and pain from karma, ^Surya-maddala, through which the soul has to pass on its way to the Supreme; the Kundalini has to cut its way from Muulaadhaara through Manipua, the seat of Agni, to Sahasraara, the seat of the Moon, the abode of Siva.

102. of JK and 97. of BNP

gyaanu'ky ambar puu'rith tane Yim pad Lali dapi tim hreydi annkh; Kaarana Prnavaki layi ko'r Lalle Tseyth-iyoti kaosan maranun sheynkh

In the robe of Jnaana clad, On the tablet of her heart engraved the words that Lalla spoke, And by means of the mystic syllable OM, Lalla merged in her 'Cit-Jyoti', The luminous light of pure Consciousness; And thus dispelled the fear of death.

103. of JK and 100. of BNP

shuun-yuk maa'daan ko'ddum paanas, Mey, Lalli, ruuzam na bwad na hosh; Veyzay sapanis paanay paanas, Ada kami hili+ phoal Lalli pamposh!

I traversed the vastness of the Void alone, leaving behind me reason and sense, Then came upon\* the secret of the Self; And, all on a sudden, unexpectedly, In mud+ the lotus bloomed for me.

\* lit.. I became a confidente of my Self, + Kashmiri hyal, dirty ground, covered with litter, mud, dirt used as manure. Or, variant, hil, an aquatic weed abundantly growing in Dal Lake. Figurative: What was valueless (my body or myself) became precious and a thing of beauty and joy.

104. of JK and NKK

#### samsaaras aayas tapasii

A tapasvin into the world came I, And Bodha illumined my path to the Self.\* Alike for me is life and death: Happy to ]ive and happy to die, I mourn for none, none mourns for me.+

\* Var., LV, 35. Also LVRB, 34. "praaptaa vishuddham sahajam prabodham", where sahaja as an adjective qualifies prabodham, + lit., I die for none, none dies for me. Cf., Utpala's Siva Strotavali, xiii. 3: ... tishttatah satatam arcitah prabhum jiivitam mrataam athaanyath astu me".

105. of JK and NKK

Lal bo draayas kapsi poshici sa'tsu'y (LV, 102 & 103)

Hoping to bloom like a cotton flower, I, Lalla, set forth in the colourful world. But soon the cleaner and the carder came and gave me hard knocks and blows. Spun into a gossamar yarn by a woman spinner on her spinning wheel, I was helplessly hung upon a loom, and given more knocks from the weaver's broom.

Now turned into cloth, I was dashed and dashed by the washerman on the washing-stone. Then into a large mortar made of stone, he threw me, and with his grimy feet, rubbed me with fuller's earth and soap. The tailor now worked his scissors on me, and cut me with care, piece by piece. Thus was it that I, Lalla, at last entered the High Estate of God.

106. of JK and NKK

raaza-hams aa'sith sapudukh ko'luy

Thou wert a royal swan once, now turned mute\*.
Someone, it seems, has run off with something of thine.
When the mill-stone stopped, the grain channel was choked with grain,
And away ran the miller with the grain.

Note a royal swan is also a syomble of a parmahamsa: God in human form having all human qualities and God awareness, \* at seeing something that has struck Lalla dumb. Lalla has seen, but she cannot describe what she has seen. Has she had a glimpse of vishvaruupaa, the Cosmic Form, its indescribable splendour and awe, so that she, who was vocal till now, cannot speak? That something has taken away her powers of speech (SLK, p. 65). cf., LV, 8

107. of JK and 62. of BNP

prathu'y tiirthan gatshaan sa'ny-yaa'sy, Gwaaraan Swadarshan myul; Tseyta parith mo nishpath aas, Denshakh duure dramun nyuul.

The pilgrim sannyasin goes from shrine to shrine, Seeking to meet Him who abides within himself. Knowing the truth, O soul, be not misled; It is distance that makes the turf look green,

108. of JK and 76. of BNP

kandyav geh te'zy kandyav vanvaas, Veyphoal, man na rattith ta vaas; Deyn-raath gaenzarith panun shwaas, Yuthuy chukh ta tyuthuy aas

Some leave their home, some the hermitage, But the restless mind knows no rest. Then watch your breath, day and night, And stay where you are.

109. of JK and 77. of BNP

kalan Kaalazaa'ly yo'dvay tse go'l, Veyndiv geyh vaa veyndiv vanvaas; Zanith sarvagath Prabhu amol; Yuthuy zaanakh tyuthuy aas.

Should you destroy vain imaginings, desires, which form the very web of time;
Should you realize the Lord, all-pervading and yet untouched and pure,
You may live the life of a householder,
Or a hermit's life in a hermitage,
living the truth that you have known.

110. of JK and 75. of BNP

Shiv Shiv karaan hamsa-gath so'rith Ruuzith veywahari deyn kyoha raath Laagi-rost yus man karith Tasi netyh prasan Suura-Guruunaath. Constantly invoking the name of Siva, Meditating on the Way of the Swan\*, From attachment and duality set free -Such a one, even if busily engaged in the affairs of the world, both day and night, Wins the favour of the God of gods.

\* Mystic name for "Soham" (I am He) which reversed, becomes "Hamsa" (Swan), sometimes used to denote Paramasiva.

#### 111. of JK and 87. of BNP

kenh chiy ne'ndriha'tiy vudiy, Keantsan vudeyn neysar peyyiy, Kenh chiy snasn karith aputi, Kenh geyh bazith ti akryiy,

Some though asleep are yet awake; Some though awake are yet asleep; Despite ablutions some are unclean; Despite householders' active life, Some, by their actions, are untouched.

#### 112. of JK and 88-A. of BNP

zal thamuno hutva turnavano Uurda gamano par-varzeyt carit kaattha deni dwad shramanaavano Anti sakalo kapatth careyth.

To stop a running stream, to cool a raging fire, To roam the skies on sandalled feet, To milk a wooden cow -All this is fraud and jugglery.

#### 113. of JK and 59. of BNP

yath saras\* sarpho'l na ve'tsiy, Tath sari sakalay poani ceyn; Mrag, sragaal, gannddi, zalhasti, Zeyn naa zeyn ta toutuy peyn.

To the lake\* too small even for a mustard seed, All living beings come to quench their thirst; And into it, as soon as born, keep falling, falling, Deer, jackal, rhinoceros, sea-elephants and all.

\* Of earthly existence, as against the Eternal.

## 114. of JK and 58. of BNP

tre'yi ne'ngi saraah sa'ry-saras, Aki neyngi saras arshas ja'ay; Harmukha kaunsara\* akh sum saras, Sati neyngi saras Shunyaahkaar.

Three times the lake overflowed its shore; Once its waters and the sky did meet From Haramukh to Kaunsar\* in one vast sheet. Seven times I saw the lake vanishing in the void. I remember having seen, in former lives, through aeons of time, These dissolutions of the worlds and their rebirth.

\* From Haramukh mountain in the north to Kausarnag in the south.

#### 115. of JK and NKK

mad pyuvum syanda-zalan yaitu

However many parts I played upon the stage, However often I quaffed that wine, the water of the Syand\*, However many lumps of human flesh I ate, Yet I am the same Lalla still. What profiteth it all to me?

\* A tributary of the Jhelum in Kashmir. Note that eating the human flesh is a part of sixty-four main Tantric Sadhana. The idea is to get rid of vritti's (habbits of the mind) such as attachments to ones body, etc. I have no practical experience with such eating but see Sri Ramakrishna the great master by Swami Saradananda, translated by Swami Jagadananda. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mayapore, Madras.

#### 116. of JK and NKK

a'sii aa'sy ta a'sii aasav

In time past, we were; In time future, we shall be; Throughout the ages, we have been. For ever the sun rises and sets; For ever Siva creates, dissolves, and creates again.

#### 117. of JK and 49. of BNP

dyan tshe'zi ta razan aase, Bhuutal gaganas kun vikaase, Tsaendar Rahu-grras maavase; Shiva puuzun gav cita-aatmase.

When the light of the day is quenched in the darkness of the night,
The earth extends to meet and dissolve in the ethereal sky,
And (on amaavasya\*) all is blank and dark eclipse.
But (strange!) Raahu, the Demon of eclipse, is swallowed by the New-born Moon.
The illumination of Cit-Atman is the true worship of Siva, the Supreme.

\* On the amaavasya of solar eclipse, Raahu is supposed, by popular tradition, to swallow the sun. But, says Lalla, that the seeker who treads the path has the experience of the manifested universe, the sun and the sky and all the worlds, vanishing and becoming one with the unmanifested all-pervading Akshara. There, for the moment, it seems to be "dark, irretrievably dark" in the great Void; but soon it is lit up by the New-born Moon, the Paraa-Samvit, which is the illumination of the Higher Consciousness revealing the abode of the Supreme Siva.

#### 118. of JK and 52. of BNP

tsidaanandas gyaanaprakaashas, Yimav tsyuun tim zivantay-mukt; Veyshmas samsaaranis paashas, Abodhy gaenddaah sheyth-sheyth dith.

They who have known the Supreme Self, Cidaananda Jnaanaprakaasha, (compact of the Bliss of Pure Consciousness and Light of Knowledge Absolute) - They are the Jivan-mukta-s (who, while alive, have found release from ever-recurring birth and death). The ignorant add knot to knot, in hundreds, to the tangled web of samsaara, its recurrent birth, its recurrent death.

#### 119. of JK and 69. of BNP

kus dingi ta kus zaagi? Kus sar vatri teliy? Kus Haras puuzi laagi? Kus Paramapad meliy?

Who dozes off? Who is alert?
What lake constantly oozeth away?
What should be offered in worship to God?
What supreme station should one gain?

#### 120. of JK and 70. of BNP

man dingi ta akul\* zaagi, Daddiy Sar pancayaendi vatri teliy, Svaveytsara poani Haras puuzi laagi, Paramapad tsiitnaa Shiva meliy.

It is the mind that dozeth off:
It is the Akula\* Transcendent that is ever alert.
The mighty senses are the lake
constantly oozing out,
constantly filled again.
The constant awareness of the Self
is worship befitting the Lord,
And Sivahood the supreme station
man should gain.

\* Paramasiva beyond the Kula, the thirty-six Tattva-s, the universe.

#### 121. of JK and 65. of BNP

Shiva gur tay Keshav palanas Brahma paayreyn vavlaseys Yuugi yuuga kali parzaaneys Kus Diiva ashwavaar peytth ceyddeys?

Siva is the horse, Vishnu holds the saddle, And Brahma the stirrups. It is the yogi who, in the light of his yoga, knows Which god can mount the horse?

122. of JK and 66. of BNP

anaahata kha-swaruup shuunyaalay Yas naav na varan na guthr na ruup Aham vimarsha Naada-Binduy yas voan, Suy Diiva ashwavaar peytth ceyddeys (khotus).

He who is the eternal 'Anaahata',
The ever-unobstructed sound of OM;
Whose is the all-permeating form
of the etherial sky;
Whose dwelling\* is the vast transcendent Void;
Who has no name, caste, gotra, nor form;
Who is Pure, Undifferentiated Self-awareness;
Who is "Nada-Bindu", the Logos and the Light+ He is the God Who mounts the horse.

\* Or, perhaps better, who is the abode (ground, home) of, + The Sound and the Dot, mystically represented by the semicircle and the bindu (dot) of the anunasika of the Syllable OM as it is written. By an extension of meaning, nada-bindu or, in the Agama-s, more precisely, Nada-Vindu (Nada representing Shakti and Vindu, Siva) represents the ultimate Supreme, Paramasiva.

#### 123. of JK and NKK

kunyar-ay bozakh kuni no rozakh Would you understand what Oneness\* is ? It has turned me into nothingness. Though He is One, Alone, and All, Yet I am caught in the War of Two+. Though He has neither colour nor form, Yet I am caught in His wondrous forms#.

\* Unity of Existence, + Duality, # Multiplicity.

124. of JK and NKK

rangas manz chuy byo'n byo'n labun

He is in myriad colours and forms\*, Seek Him out. Patiently suffer whatever your lot, And happy be. Anger and hate and enmity, You must destroy. All this done, though hard it be, Behold thy God+.

lit., rangas manz, on the stage of the world where the play is going on, 6. lit., Siva

125. of JK and 98. of BNP

dishi aayas dash dish tiilith, Tsalith tsottum shuunya ada vaav, Shivay dyuu'tthum shaayi-shaayi miilith Sheyh-ta-treyh traopimas ta Shivay draav.

I roamed the ten directions and pierced the wind and the void.
I closed the nine gates of the body and shut out the Thirty-six \*.
Wherever I looked, I found the Lord, Within, without, and in the Void+.

\* The 36 tattva-s (literally, thatnesses) the categories or principles from Paramasiva to the earth, according to the Trika Saiva cosmology, + Within the mind, in the world outside, and in the Impersonal Transcendent.

126. of JK and NKK

tana mana gayas bo tas kunuy

I turned to Him heart and soul, And heard the ringing of the Bell of Truth. There, in dhaarana, fixed in thought, I soared the Sky and the Region of Light\*.

\* lit.. had the experience of Aakashaand Prakaasha. Lalla heard the ever-unobstructed (anahata) sound of OM (The Bell of Truth); and, in her deep concentration. became absorbed in the Impersonal Transcendent (the Sky, the Void). But she went beyond, ascending to the abode of Paramasiva who, according to Trika Darshana, is both Prakaasha and Vimarsha, Light and Self-Awareness.

127. of JK and 64. of BNP

a'ndariy aayas tsa'ndru'y gaaraan, Gaaraan aayas hiheyn hih; Tsay hay Naaraan, tsay hay Naaraan, Tsay hay Naaraan, yim kam vih?

I searched within for the Mystic Moon, For like seeks out the like. Thou art all this and this and this; There is none else but Thee. What then is the meaning of Thy sport, Of Thy creation's wondrous forms?

128. of JK and 21. of BNP

yimay she' tse' timay she' me', Shyaamagala tse' byoan taotthis, Yuohay beynabhid tse' ta me' Tsa sheyn\* svaami boah sheyyi+ mashis.

O Lord of the Dark Blue Throat, I have the very same Six Thou hast. And yet, estranged from Thee, I suffer misery. There surely is this difference: Thou art the master of the Six\*, By the Six+ I have been robbed.

\* Sovereign power, omnipotence, omniscience, All-inclusiveness, eternality, All-pervasiveness (that is, in Trika: maayaa shakti, sarvakar-tritva, sarvajnatva, puurnatva, nityatva, and vyaapakatva respectively), + The six kancuka-s, coverings of limitation, viz., maya, kala, vidya, raga, kal, niyati.

129. of JK and 20. of BNP

Naatha! na pan na par zonum, Sadai buudum yi kwa dih; Or (Sadai budum yiko dih); Tsa boah, boah tsa myul naa zonum, Tsa kus boah kwasa chum saendiih.

Lord, I did not know who I was, nor Thou, the Supreme Lord of all. I knew only this body of mine always\*. The relation between Thou and me, That Thou art I and I am Thou and both are one, I did not know. (But now I know), To ask: 'who art Thou, who am I?' is doubt of doubts.

\* sadaa'y bodum yiikuy deha (LVRB, 7) but cf.,... yi kwadeha, LV, 7: "Continually have I mortified this vile body."

130. of JK and 44. of BNP

Lal bo tsaayas swaman baagabaras, Vuchum Shivas Shakht miilith ta vaah ! Tati lay karmas amritsaras, Zinday maras ta me' kari kyaah.

I, Lalla, entered by the garden-gate of mine own mind,
And there (O joy!) saw Siva with Shakti sealed in one;
And there itself I merged in the Lake of Immortal Bliss.
Now while alive I am unchained from the wheel of birth and death,
What can the world do unto me?

#### 131. of JK and NKK

tsu'y diva gartas ta dharthii srazakh

Thou dost pervade all shapes and forms, Though breathest life into all frames, The whole creation hums with Thy silent sound\*. Who can measure the Immeasurable, O Lord!

\* The Anaahata naad, the AUM.

#### 132. of JK and 74. of BNP

par ta paan ye'my so'muy mon, Ye'my hyuuh mon deyn kyoha raath, Ye'mysay adway man saopun, Tamiy dyuu'thuy Sura-Gurunaath.

He who regards himself and others alike, He who regards alike both day and night, He whose mind is free from duality -He alone hath seen the God of gods.

## 133. of JK and Vakh 1. p. 204 BNP

abhyaa'sy savikaa'sy layi vo'thuu, Gaganas svagun myuul samitsratta, Shunya gol Anaamay motuu, Yuhoy vopadiish chuy bhatta.

By oft-repeated practice, the wide expanse of manifested universe is lifted to absorption; And the saguna world, of forms and qualities, merges in the vastness of the Void with a splash of water on water falling; Then the ethereal Void dissolves, and the Ineffable Supreme alone remains. This, O Bhatta\*, is the Truth to gain.

\* The Kashmiri Pandit (Brahmin) is often so called.

134. of JK and 40. of BNP

Vaakh, maanas, kwal, akwal naa ate, Tshwapi, Mudri ati na praviish; Rozaan Shiv-Shakt na ate, Mvatiyay kuanh ta suy vopadish.

Here there is neither word nor thought, Transcendent nor non-Transcendent here. Vows of silence and mystic mudra-s cannot gain you admittance here. Even Siva and Shakti (Tattva-s) remain not here. The Somewhat that remains is the Truth to know and realise.

135. of JK and p. 200 Vakh b. of BNP

tsu' naa bo naa dhey naa dhyaan, Gay paanay Sarvakrya mashith: Anyav dyuu'thukh keyenhti na anvay: Gayi sath layi Par pashith.

Here there is neither thou and I,
No "postured thought", nothing to contemplate,
Even the All-Creator is forgot.
The ignorant blind\* cannot see
the Ineffable Supreme hard to know.
But the pure, the wise, having seen+
merge in the Supreme.

- \* Var., LVRB, 59: "anya dyuthukh ..." (They) saw Other than all these, the Absolute, the Relationless (Ananvaya) "kentsh na anvay".
- + sat: the whole objective universe. Var., LVRB: The good become absorbed in Him.See LV, where sath is said to mean `the Seven Worlds'.

136. of JK and 50. of BNP

paanas laa'gith ruudukh me' tsu', Me' tse' tshaaendaan luustum doah; Paanas maenz ye'ly dyuu'thukh me' tsu' Me' tsu' ta paanas dyutum tshoah.

Thou wert absorbed in Thine Own Self, hidden from me; I passed whole days in seeking Thee out. But when I saw Thee in mine own Self, O joy! then Thou and I disported ourselves in ecstasy\*.

\* cf., LV, 44: "The second meaning" given there is what the words cannot bear, however much their meaning may be strained.

137. of JK and 101. of BNP

tsyath no'vuy tsa'ndrama no'vuy, Zalmay dyuu'thum navam no'vuy Yana peyttha Lalli me' tan-man no'vuy, Tana Lal boah navam navay cheys!

The citta, the mind, is ever new,
The ever-changing moon is new,
And ever new the shoreless expanse
of waters\* that I have seen.
Since I, Lalla, have scoured my body and mind,
(emptied it of dead yesterdays
and tomorrows unborn),
I live in the ever-present Now,
(and all things always are to me)
for ever new and new.

\* zalamay, Sans. jalamaya, Grierson (LV. 93) explains it as a "waste of waters" at the time of pralaya, destruction of the Universe.

Therefore, "the universe itself". It may rather be the shoreless ocean of existence or of Reality. Whatever the exact meaning, Lal Ded speaks of her complete transformation and `renewal'.

Interestingly, the same New Mind here when it is in its deluded form is also referred to as water of a lake which constantly oozes out, see JK Vakh 120. By constant tapasya the same mind is transformed so as to be able to see this new shoreless expanse of waters, Parmahamsa Ramakrishna says one sees the Reflection of Him in a Pure Mind.

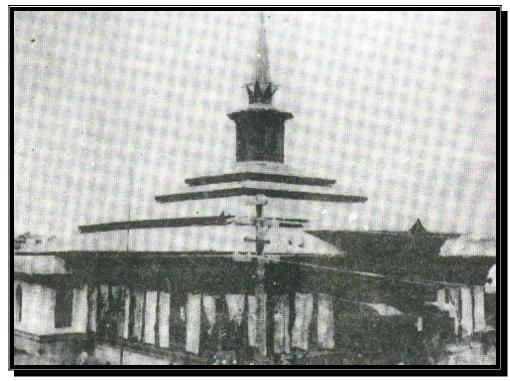
138. of JK and NKK

yi yi karu'm ko'rum suy artsun yi rasini vichoarum thi mantar yihay lagamo dhahas partsun suy Parasivun tanthar

Whatever work I did became worship of the Lord; Whatever word I uttered became a mantra\*; Whatever this body of mine experienced became+ the saadhana-s of Saiva Tantra illumining my path to Paramasiva

\* cf. SSV, III, 25-36: sharirvrttirvratam (26), kathaa japah (27). (For such a one the normal daily routine of his becomes a vrata, that is, religious vows, etc (26), and whatever he says becomes the recitation of a mantra), + LVRB, 58. "yih yath lagyam dehas paritsay". For Var., LV, 58. See KT, IX. 23, "...yatra yatra mano yaati tatra tatra samaadhayah (wherever the mind goes there is a samaadhi for it).

## 6 Nund Reshi



Ziyarat-i-Chrar-e-Sharief (Supply of photograph by courtesy of Sh. Moti Lal Saqi)

**The** Nund Reshi's Ziyarat at Charri-Sharief, Budgam District Kashmir, is his self-choiced place of final repose for eternal rest after his soul left his body to reside and flew in space, to find his place of honour like Lall Ded as models of global humanism.

True to the core, they are practical messengers for equality of the human race along with life in the biosphere.

Hence the Ziyarat has duly become one of the most frequented place of pilgrimage in Kashmir for all sections of people irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

# 6.1 Poetry of Shaik-ul-Aalam

#### Moti Lal Sagi

In the realm of Kashmiri Literature Shaik-ul-Aalam is second to Lal Ded only. His poetry is considered sacred by the common people. Mussalmans of the valley have great respect for his *Shruks*. His *Shruks* and other longer poems are quoted from the pulpit in the religious sermons enjoyed and adored by the literate and illiterate equally, irrespective of their faith or religion. A number of his verses are quoted in day-to-day conversation by the common people and such verses have attained the status of proverbs, wise sayings and parables.

Shaik-ul-Aalam's poetry is the spontaneous expression of his spiritual experiences and observations. He, in fact, has poured his very soul in his verses. His poetry reveals the grandeur of the saint as a great soul and poet of high order. There is no contradiction between the patron saint and poet Shaikh. When we examine his poetry in detail and depth, it is impossible to understand the saint and his Rishi order unless and until his poetry is understood. He made his poetry the message of his faith, love and brotherhood, peace and respect for all creeds and beliefs, but his message has not injured or diminished the quality and grace of his Shruks and longer narratives. Here we come across a perfect blend between his gospel and

poetry. Such complete blend is hardly witnessed, which speaks of his poetic genius and complete grip on the art of versification. Like a master mind he has converted his feelings, experiences and observations in living images and word pictures.

His poetry is the harbinger of a new mystic order the neo-Rishi order of Kashmir which has hardly any parallel. This mystic order has absorbed all the good and noble principles of different prevailing faiths. As regards his 'Rishi Order' there is no recorded evidence or source other than his poetry available to understand its basic principles or tenets.

Junior contemporary of Lal Ded, Shaik-ul-Aalam was in many ways very close to her. His sources of inspiration remained almost the same which nourished the ideal world of Lal Ded. He too preached non-violence, and adopted the way of asceticism. There is much more resemblance evident in their poetry; difference if any is in thought content, presentation and execution of the theme. But form is the same. The poetry of Lal Ded and Shaik-ul-Aalam is complimentary to each other.

The poetry of Lal Ded is termed as Vakh and that of Shaik-ul-Aalam as 'Shruks' in Kashmiri. The Vakh owes its origin to Sanskrit 'Vakhya' and the Shruk, is, in fact the Prakrit form of Sanskrit 'Sholok'. In Sanskrit both these words have nothing particular to denote as independent forms of poetry. In Kashmiri both the words refer to particular genres used for rendering the mystic experiences in poetry.

Like Vakh most of the Shraks are four line stanzas and their rhyme scheme is as follows:

Though independent of foreign influence Vakhs and Shruks have of-course something in common with Hindi Doha and Chau-Paei and Rubai. How and why our ancestors classed and divided the poetry of these two epoch making personalities as 'Vakh' and 'Shruk' is still a problem to be resolved

The poetry of Lal Ded and Shaikh represent the phases of Kashmiri language when it was thriving in the lap of Sanskrit culture. It belongs to that bright period of our language when Kashmiri could easily bear the burden of philosophy and communicate its essence to the readers. It was not the beginning of a glorious chapter of Kashmiri language and literature, but the end.

After Shaikh and his contemporary Avtar Bhat there is a complete break for a long period. It is worthwhile to say that while Shaikh-ul-Aalam's *Shruks* represents the language of the common man, Avtar Bhat's verses represent the language of the elite of that period. There are references in books at some literature was produced in the intervening period also but nothing has come down to us. Actually this period of Kashmiri History was a period of chaos and civil unrest. Every now and then kings were installed and deposed. Later on when Habba-Khatoon (16th Century A.D.) appears on the scene we see a complete, rather drastic change in the form as well as thought content of Kashmiri poetry.

In Persian Rishi Namas it is recorded that one of the disciples of the Shaikh, Kati Pandita compiled his poetry in the form of a book but this manuscript is not traceable. Historians have written that court poet of Budshah - Milla Ahmed translated the poetry of Shaik-ul-Aalam in Persian but this version too is not available now. It was the result of reverence of the people for Lal Ded and Shaik-ul-Aalam and established sacred oral tone of their poetry that some people had committed it to memory and this tradition continued for centuries together. Finally the 'Vakhs' of Lal Ded were written down with their Sanskrit commentary in late 18th Century. The Shruks of Shaik-ul-Aalam were collected and written down in 19th century by Baba Kamal-Ud-Din, Mir Abdullah and Baba Khalid in their respective Rishi Namas; Rishi Nama of Baba Nasib-Ud-Din Gazi was written only 190 years after the death of the saint and contains only a few *Shruks*.

Baba Davood Muskavati's 'Asrar-ul-Abrar' provides the reader with some details about the wanderings of the Shaikh. So far as his poetry is concerned Muskavati has provided nothing to satisfy our craving.

The compilers of Rishi Namas have rendered a great service to Kashmiri language and literature by recording the *Shruks* of the Shaikh for the posterity. Otherwise Shaikhs' poetry must have been wiped out for ever, but at the same time they have left out a sizeable portion of Shaik's poetry which they refer to as Shamskriti (poetry in Sanskrit) and 'Gouri' (poetry in the idiom of Pandits) because all such poetry was beyond their comprehension. As such the poetry of Shaikh is invaluable linguistically also. The study of

his 'Shruks' proves beyond any doubt that Sanskrit was a dominating force in the 14th Century A.D. in Kashmir. It enjoyed the royal patronage of some Mussalman kings also and was replaced by Persian in 15th century during the kingship of Budshah (1420-1470). The word hoard of Shruks owes much to Sanskrit. Most of the spiritual and technical terms, besides some, 'Tatsam' and 'Tad Bhav' words have been borrowed from Sanskrit besides, a host of words and technical terms in their Prakrit form. He has enriched his poetry with epic and Puranic allusions and mythology. We frequently see words and terms 'Giana Dhyana', 'Krodha', 'Bal', 'Bhag', 'Lobha', 'Siva', 'Chitta', 'Kivala', 'Panthan', 'Punya', 'Diva', 'Bandhana' etc. used in their original meaning in his poetry. We rarely come across a Persian word or phrase in his real Shruks which is enough to prove that during his life Persian had yet to make a mark on the life and culture of Kashmir.

Thus we come to the conclusion that Shaik-ulAalam's poetry thrived in such a background which was illuminated by Sanskrit culture and thought. It is close to the Sanskrit Kavya tradition and has a direct link with Sanskrit. His 'Shamskriti' and 'Gouri' poems would certainly open new vistas of understanding and would unfold many hidden realities about 15th century Kashmiri but all the poems of this class are lost for ever.

Shaik-ul-Aalam is the father of narrative (Nazam) in Kashmiri. He enriched the Vatsun also, which we for the first time come across in the poetry of Lal Ded. Some of the longer poems of the Shaik are more revealing than his *Shruks*. It is he who paved the way for the forthcoming mystic poets and provided them with the fund of words and technical terms which served them as chariots for the revelation of their mystic experiences. From Souch Kral (19th century A.D.) to Ab. Ahad Zargar (died 1984) all our Sufi poets have derived inspiration from him and have been influenced by him. He has recorded almost all the details of migration of his great grandfather and his settlement in Kashmir. He has openly recorded that he is a Mussalman as his father embraced Islam at the hands of Syed Hussain Simnani at Kulgam.

He craves for that what was attained by Lal Ded and cries :-

"That Lalla of Padmanpora drank ambrosia in gulps. ' She saw Shiva all around her, in each and every object, oh God bestow me with such eminence."

His poetry has a cooling and soothing effect, with something deep, something peculiar to communicate. It has a glow of spirituality around it and a keen reader gets lost and is absorbed in it. One feels refreshed after reading or listening to it. Every time its recitation has something new and novel to convey. The spontaneity of the Shaik's poetry is like that of a mountain stream which has a powerful gush-and makes its way through the stone beds and hard rocks. The saint has used the languages in such a creative way that every word and phrase bears a fresh look, attains new dimensions of grace and meaning. His poetry is not confined to the mystic experiences alone. Sometimes he comes out of his mystic world also and talks of life. His longer poems are the word picture of the society of the age and unveil the inequality, injustice, tyranny and social disorder in such a way that a sensitive person can hardly control his tears.

In one of his longer poems 'God has nothing to do with all this' he reveals:

"There are people who have hoarded enormous quantity of food grains.

Food grains of various tastes and colours.

There are people who long for a morsel of food.

Their infants wail and weep of hunger.

This state of affairs is man made and man created. God has nothing to do with all this."

Commenting on the cruel behaviour of men Shaikul-Aalam says:

"They will cut the throat of that very cock.

Who calls them to prayers.

They will simply weigh him for their own ends. I beseech I may not be born among such people Oh! God."

At the same time we witness the all pervading dread of death in his poetry:

"One can not escape death and its blows.

Noble souls are being swept away every now and then."

Shaik-ul-Aalam always stressed the unity of man. Man in his eyes was the symbol of the divine. To serve the mankind is the noblest service and way to God:

"Why are you bent upon to create hatred amongst them. They are the descendants of one and the same mother, serve to the best of your capacity Mussalmans and Hindus. If you follow this path God will bestow his grace on thee."

Throughout his pious life Shaik-ul-Aalam fought against the bigots and bigotry; because in his opinion bigotry was the very negation of truth, and was against the fundamental dictums of evey religion. Bigots have nothing to do with the real nature of religion because all the religions teach tolerance and respect for other's creeds. Bigots simply create an atmosphere of hatred and

disagreement and thus pave the way for their ends. They pretend to be learned but their attitude exposes them at every step. They learn only to attain worldly fame and have no liking for attaining the divine. Addressing the bigots the Shaik says:

"You have crammed the books only for worldly ends. Your learning never prevents you from your bad deeds. You always think in terms of trapping each-other Your contention is wrong, for you consider. Yourselves to be amongst the chosen. I foretell with authority that you will not reach the goal."

In the poetry of Shaik-ul-Aalam there is no dearth such *Shruks* which contain the essence of Vedanta. In one of the Shlokas of 'Bhagvat Gita' Lord Krishna says :

"It is desire, it is anger Born of Rajujana All consuming and most evil. Know this to be the enemy on earth" (Gita A-3 S-37)

Shaik-ul-Aalam says:

"Desire, pride and greed overwhelmed you. It is the burning inferno before your very eyes."

At another place he says:

"If you are under the fury of God.

Do not try to avoid it.

If he puts you to a hard and fast test.

Consider it to be the source of comfort.

If you do this you are sure to be a chosen one."

In Gita Lord says:

"Satisfied with whatever comes unshaked, beyond the pairs of opposites. Free from envy, balanced in success and failure. Acting he is not bound" (Gita A-2 S.12).

Shaik-ul-Aalam reveals the nature of ultimate thus:

"It was there from the very beginning. It will always remain there. Meditate upon the ultimate. All your doubts will fade away. My inner self, beware."

The dictum of Gita runs thus

"Never the spirit was born, The spirit shall cease never, Never was time it was not. End, beginning are dreams."

Shaik-ul-Aalam says:

"Who saw him face to face, Who follow his path, Those who concentrate and meditate upon the ultimate. They alone find an easy path to him."

Addressing Arjuna, the Lord says:

"Oh! Arjuna, He who acts me, depends upon me. Devoted to me, gives up attachment, is without hatred towards any being, reaches me."

Great personalities are mirrors and in a mirror everybody is bound to see his reflection. Shaik-ulAalam one of the noblest of Kashmiris is one, in the fraternity of great Indian sages and saints like Tulsi Dass, Tuka Ram, Sur Mass, Mira Bai, Guru Nanak, Nama Deva, Bhagvat Kabir and others. Shaik-ul-Aalam commands a place of respect and reverence as a great saint and a great poet. In fact Shaik-ul-Aalam is one of the foremost makers of our language and literature.

Source: Vitasta

# 6.2 Nunda Rishi - "Subdue the five senses to attain the supreme Siva"

#### J. N. Ganhar

**Sheikh Nur-ud-Din**, endearingly and in veneration called Nunda Rishi, has left an indelible mark on the thinking and culture of all Kashmiris. The great sage was one of the twin stars of medieval Kashmir along with Lalleshwari (Lal Ded) with whom he shared the intensity of mystic experience whose profundity remains unrivalled to this day.

Sheikh-Nur-ud-Din lived from 1378 to 1438 AD. His 600th anniversary celebrations understandably led to a welcome revival of interest in all that he said and stood for. Much useful light has already been shed on some hitheno little known facts of his life and work. But, in the absence of any contemporary records about him, there remain cenain important questions to which correct answers must be found to enable a balanced appraisal of his marvellous achievement which has left such a deep impress on the people of Kashmir and their behaviour and thinking. It is proposed to refer to some of these here in the hope that scholars and researchers, who have made this branch of investigation their chosen field, may address themselves to the task of finding answers to them.

#### 6.2.1 Crucial Period

Nunda Riyosh lived in one of the most crucial periods of Kashmir's long and chequered history. But beyond a solitary line in a chronicle of his time, we have no contemporary record about his life or wadc. Cenain details in this behalf have come down to us in various Rishinamas or Nurnamas. But these, as Amin Kamil, an eminent poet and critic, points out, greatly differ from one another. In the profusion of miracles and magical deeds ascribed to him, some important details about his life and work have dropped

out. And in the words of the eminent poet and literary historian, the late Abdul Ahad Azad, "greater reliance has been placed in them on imagination than on historical facts." His verses and Verse-sayings, known as Shruks in Sanskrit and what they regarded as Pandits' language, have been competely left out by authors of Rishinamas and Nurnamas, because they were beyond their comprehension.

## 6.2.2 Mixing of Facts

The first Rishinama or Nurnama that has come down to us was written about 200 years after his passing away. Inevitably, there has been a lot of mixing of facts and fresh light needs to be shed on many "unclear" events and episodes in the story of his life and the cobwebs that have gathered around many others need to be cleared.

Take, for instance, his name itself. His is the rare example of a person who is known by a number of names - Nunda Riyosh or Nund Rishi, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din and Sahazanand. The great Sheikh's spiritual eminence and moral rectitude have also justly won him the designation of Sheikh-ul-Alam from his compatriots, and even his one-time opponents ultimately felt constrained to acknowledge him as "The Light of the Faith" or Nur-ud-Din. But was he named as such, i.e. as Nur- ud-Din, at his birth, or did he come to be so known only after Mir Mohammad Hamadani, son of the great Mir Syed Ali Mamadani, recognised him as such?

In this connection it might at once be pointed out that the contemporary chronicler, Jonaraja, refers to him as Mala Nurdin, "the chiefest guru of Muslims". But the saint-poet always refers to himself only as Nanda. And this is the name by which he has most commonly been known till today. Could it be that Nurdin was an appellation conferred upon him later by vinue of his spiritual eminence?

Nund Rishi's parents were named Salar Sanz and Sadra Maji. While there is some difference of opinion about his father's name, Sadra is clearly derived from Samhdra Ha two sons, prior, to her marriage with Salar Sanz, bore the non-Muslim names of Shush and aandur. Was Sahazanand also born before her marriage. The Sheikh's wife 'Zai Ded' also bore a clearly Hindu name. She too might have been a Hindu originally.

## 6.2.3 Closest Disciples

Of the sage's four closest disciples two appear to have borne Hindu names originally, Baba Bam- ud-Din (Bhuma Saad or Sahi) and Baba Zain-ud- Din (Ziya Singh or Jaya Singh). Similarly, of the rishis mentioned by him before his time, two at least, Zankar and Palasman, might well be the illustrious Janaka and Palastaya.

There has been a galaxy of Muslim saints and sages and some great ones among them commanded the respect and allegiance of vast numbers of Hindus also. But they have notbeen known by Hindu names among their non-Muslim followers. Sheikh Nur-ud-Din alone enjoyed this rare distinction.

According to the known facts of his life, the sage started life normally; he married and had two issues. But what he saw going on around him made him intensely sad, and he lost interest in life as normally lived. So he took to caves and solitary places for severe penance and meditation. According to Dr. Sufi, "he felt disgusted with the ways of the world, and deciding upon renunciation, retired to caves for meditation at the age of thirty", and "lived for twelve years in wilderness." In his last days, Dr. Sufi adds, the saint sustained life on a cup of milk a day. Finally, he goes on to add, the sage "reduced himself to water alone."

#### 6.2.4 Renunciation

Dr. Sufi quotes Baba Daud Khaki for the statement: "In addition to leading a retired life, he was one of those who continually fasted". Like the pious among the Hindus, "he had given up eating flesh, onions, milk and honey for many years," i.e., he had given up all animal food besides onions, as has been the wont with the Hindu saints and sages. Elsewhere, the eminent histarion remarks in passing that "Islam does not countenance the enervating type of Tasawwuf which Iqbal too condemned in the first edition of Asrar-i-Khudi..."

Of Yasman Rishi, at whose hands Nund Rishi's parents are stated to have been converted to Islam, Dr. Sufi has this to say: "He travelled far and wide. Later, he lived mastly in forests. His daily food was a cup of wild goat's milk...." Significantly, no one is mentioned in connection with the initiation of Sheikh Nurud-Din.

Kashmir witnessed the worst type of religious persecution in the time of Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413 A.D.) and his successor, Ali. Under the influence of outsiders and at the instigation of his minister, Suha Bhat, who had renounced the ancestral faith, the king, accarding to Jonaraja, "took delight, day and night, in breaking the sacred images" and temples. The Sheikh lived during this period when the very identity, the Kashmirian-ness of Kashmir, if one may use that expression, was at stake and in danger of being destroyed. Imbued as he was with the glarious traditions of his motherland, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din could not but be very unhappy about it.

#### 6.2.5 One God

God is one, all religions are in their ultimate essence one. What is needed is a life of piety and purity, no matter what faith one follows. The prolonged course of penance and meditation, upon which he embarked, had convinced him, apart from his spiritual attainments, of the truth of this fundamental basis of a good life and this also provided a solution to the riddle of his time. He seems to have realised that Kashmiris' precious heritage, so dear to him, which was sought to be destroyed by outsiders, could be saved only by a happy "marriage" of the best in the old and the new, in the union of the Hindus and the Muslims into a common brotherhood, in their co-existence and cooperation and not in confrontation. That is why he again calls upon the people, especially those who came from outside and the zealots among the new converts, to live together in unison, so that God Himself would rejoice. He called upon them to subdue the five senses, and get over the evils of Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha and Ahankara to achieve the highest to make union with Shiva (as he puts it) reminding them that mere lowering of the fleshy body would not save them. He calls upon the people not to go to priests and Mullahs, not to shut themselves up in places of worship or forests but "to enter thine own body with breath controlled, in communion with God".

Again and again he stresses the need for unity among Hindus and Muslims; God Himself would rejoice, he adds, if this happy consummation came about. It was for views such as these that Sheikh- ul-Alam came to be designated Alamdar or standard-bearer of Kashmir.

But enlightened views such as the faregoing could not endear him to the outsiders most of whom were interested in getting hegemony over this beautiful land and possession of the Kashmiri grandees' estates and properties. We know it from the contemporary historian, Janaraja, that Mala Nurdin, as he calls him, was imprisoned and put under restraint during Ali Shah's time. And Amin Kamil tells us how the Rishinamas reveal that outsiders were opposed to him and harassed him in many ways. But little daunted, he pursued his enlightened course, as though to justify his title to being called Alamdar of Kashmir and all that it had stood for at its best.

#### 6.2.6 Eminence

The Sheikh's spirtual eminence and his humanistic philosophy made him the idol of the people of Kashmir. They flocked to him and some of them modelled their very lives on his pattern. These latter who came to be known as Rishis, after him, were of great help and assistance to him in the stupendous task that he had undertaken.

Rishis were by no means new to Kashmir. Rishis and Munis had been known among the Hindus from hoaly andquity. Kalhana mentions some well-known Rishis like Vishwamitra, Vasishta and Agastya in his Rajatarangini. He describes a Rishi as "a treasure of asceticism". The term Rishi should by no means have been uncommon in our saint's time also. In fact, he describes the person at whose hands his parents received the Islamic faith as a Rishi.

## 6.2.7 Self-Abnegation

But the Rishis of those days, though they commanded the respect of their fellow-beings and outsiders for their simplicity, spirit of service and self-abnegation, were not rated high in the matter of knowledge of the Islamic faith. Jehangir, for example, says in his Memoirs: 'Though they have no religious knowledge of learning or any sort, yet they possess simplicity and are without pretence....'

In organising the new Order, Nund Rishi had before him the example of the Buddhist Sangha, which for centuries before the advent of Islam had been such a prominent feature of the religious and socio-cultural landscape of the Valley. And like Buddhist monks, the Rishis also did not many; nor did they eat flesh. Like them again, they would not revile those not of their faith, and lived simple, frugal lives and tried to be a source of benefit to the community at large. For this reason, the "Brotherhood of Rishis" may well be considered to be a descendant of the Buddhist Sangha or a Buddhist Order of Monks.

In this connection, a most interesting fact that has come to light is recorded in Baba Khalil's Rishinama. In this work the author has ascribed a 2,500 verse Sanskrit work, Buddha Charita, to Nund Rishi. According to Baba Khalil, the work was composed by him on his re-emergence from a 12-year sojourn in a cave at Kaimoh on the ninth of Chaitra, a very sacred day in the Hindu calendar, both in Kashmir and the rest of India.

## 6.2.8 Wrong Assessment

Since Baba Khalil was not conversant with Sanskrit, he has not been able to correctly assess the nature of the work or what it actually was. In truth it must have been the well-known Buddhist work, Buddha Charita, which the Kashmiri savant kept with himself in his seclusion. And when, after he had found answers to the riddles and questions that had made him resort to severe penance and meditation in a cave, he re-emerged into the work- a-day world, the great work on the Buddha's life and philosophy was with him. In this connection it is interesting to note that another great work, Yoga-Vasishta, was the solace of Sultan Zain-ul- Abidin (Bud Shah), the noblest ruler that Kashmir has ever known, in the closing embittered years of his life.

Source: Koshur Samachar

# 6.3 Nund Reshi - (1377-1442 A.D.) Bio-Data and Background Information

#### P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)

**Nund** Reshi was the founder and most popular saint of the Reshi cult of Kashmir. Whereas Hindu scholars call him Sahazanand because of his Hindu ancestry, but of -late muslim theologists describe him as Noor-ud -Din Noorani or Sheikh-ul -Alam (the light of religion and the Sheikh of the world). But as the darling of all Kashmiris, irrespective of caste and creed, and as per his own repeated reference, as Nunda he was endearingly called Nund Reshi. His pious memory still continues to be cherished by this nomenclature.

His ancestry according to records, is traced to the Thakur Rajputs of Ujain where from they are said to have migrated to the Kishtwar township of Jammu and settled there. Later, after their banishment from Kishtwar, his parents, Salar Sonz and Sadara (later called Sadar Moaj) crossed into the Kashmir Valley and finally settled in a village of Kulgam Tehsil called Khehygam Jagipora. Nund Reshi was born in this village but brought up in another village of the same tehsil, called Mynoh Katymukh.

Sahaz Quasum of June 1991 records his original name as Nanda, according to what it says was the saints own statement One of his shruks, quoted elsewhere in this book, confirms this fact. His father Salar Sonz, took up the job of a night watchman. On his usual rounds of the village, one night he is said to have overheard a conversation between a childless hindu saintly couple:

"Swami Ji, we are getting old and we have no child, I wonder what'll happen to us when we become weaker and weaker with the growing age.

God is with us, dear, why do you worry prematurely?

What'll become of us when we are too weak to earn our livelihood. What if, we fall ill.?

"Never mind, God is merciful, almighty and all providing, if one of us dies, who'll look after the other, think about our precarious condition, Swami Ji? Pray, do something."

"My darling, I have had a strange dream last night, it revealed that early before dawn tomorrow, two exquisite bouquets of flowers will bloom out of the nearby spring, one after the other, it is a good augury" What then, Swami Ji? How can it be a good augury for us? interrupted his wife.

"Any woman who sees, smells and picks the first bunch of flowers before the other bunch grows up, will give birth to a son who will turn out to be a great saint. Any woman who spots, smells and carries away the other bunch will get another son who will also become a saint."

Hearing this conversation, Salar Sonz cut short his nightly rounds and rushed back home. He apprised his wife Sadra Moaj of the Sadhu's dream, forecasting the birth of two saints. Salar Sonz accompanied Sadra Moaj immediately to the Spring. They remained awake there till the appearance of first bunch of flowers.

No sooner did the beautiful flowers shoot up above the surface of the spring water than Sadra Moaj waded in sniffed it and carried it home.

Later when the Sadhu's wife went there, she got only the second bunch, both gave birth to a son each in due course. The former grew to become the peoples darling saint, known by different names, Sahazanand Noor-Ud--Din Noorani, Sheikh-ul-Alam and popularly as Nund Reshi.

The latter became Buma Reshi of Bumzoo village, a kilometre away from Mattan township in Anantnag tehsil

#### 6.3.1 Post Birth Divine Feed

All attempts by parents of Nunda and the neighbours to feed the infant were resisted by the new-born. The struggle continued for three days. The parents felt dejected and dismayed.

Then, all of a sudden, Lalleshwari (Lal Ded) happened to enter the room she took the infant in her lap, kissed him, put him on to her own teets and whispered the following into his ear:

If thou were not ashamed of Being born, Why are thee Ashamed of feeding at Thy mother's breasts?

The baby is stated to have responded immediately and behaved as a normal baby.

Evidently, he seems to have preferred to wait for a spiritual feed prior to physical nourishment as preordained. Nothing but spirituality was practiced by him all through his life. As expected Nund Reshi lived a life of complete self-abnegation and renunciation, feeding purely on a meagre, vegetarian diet, herbs or a cup of milk, if and whenever offered to him by the village women.

Nund Reshi spent a full twelve years in meditation inside a cave at Khimoh where (according to M.L.Saqi's Edited "*Kuliyat-i-Sheikh-Ul-Alam*," 1985 and, A. D. Majoor's thesis, Nund Reshi) he is said to have written a 2,500 verse life story of Gautam Buddha. But, only three verses of this are said to be existent. The story is said to have been translated into Persian by a bilingual sanskrit scholar.

#### 6.3.2 The Controversy

There is much confusion among scholars about the precise dates of birth and death of both Lal Ded and Nund Reshi They are, however, agreed on the contemporay nature of Lal Ded, Nund Reshi and Budshah' i. e. 14th and 15th centuries, Nund Reshi's poem quoted by G.N Gowhar in his book 'Sheikh Noor-ud-Din' records only the life span of 65 years, without mentioning any dates. However, S/Shri Amin Kamil, Saqi, Majboor, Ganhar, Pushap, Rehbar and Bamzai and T.N. Kaul Journalist could be trusted with the work of removing the confusion. Some writers record only of the two dates while others age only.

A tentative, bird's eye-view of the dates by modern scholars brought upto date, (as given in the table below) may facilitate their further research work:

#### 6.3.3 Research Work

S. No.	Date of Birth	Date of death	Life Span	Origin	Brought up to date by
1.	1356AD	-	-	Dand Mishkit	M.J. Akbar
2.	1377AD	1442AD	65 Years	-	(June 1991)
3.	1677 Bik	1777 Bik	100 Years	-	S. N. Koul
4.	557 Hijri	842AD	85 Years	-	A.D. Majboor
5.	1377AD	1438AD	61 Years	-	Kashmir Behind the Vale
6.	1378AD	1438AD	60 Years	-	J. N. Ganhar
7.	-	-	65 Years	-	Nund Reshi's Poem quoted by G.N Gowhar
8.	779 Hijri	-	-	Kuliyat-i Sheikh-Ul- Alam-1985	M.L Saqi JK Academy of Art, Clture & Languages

#### Note:

- 1. Nund Reshi's age, according to his poem and as calculated from Sahaz Quosum is the same ie 65 years.
- 2. Again according to Sahaz Quasum the year Lalleshwari's death, and year of birth of Nund Reshi coincide though they evidently were contemporaries for quite some time.

#### 6.3.4 Eco-Scientist

Nund Reshi's pithy saying 'Food will last as long as forests last" is a clear indication of his innate foresight and intuitive knowledge. He uttered these words six centuries ago even before the present concept of ecological balance was born and the U. N. Plans turned into hectic efforts for maintaining the environmental balance and upholding the eco-system. This conclusion however, does not and should not be misunderstood to mean any disregard for such earlier knowledge or practices whatsoever, and wherever they might have existed even much before that time.

For Nund Reshi, as for others, forests temperate the climate, help cool the atmosphere and maintain the parabolic cycle of water, clouds, rain and snow, rivers, lakes and oceans. For him the forests and the undergrowth check the rapid flow of rain water down the slopes, enabling it to seep in, only to reappear in the form of springs elsewhere. They make the snows melt gradually by regelation, keeping them clod and frozen and thus, ensuring a regular supply of water all the year round.

Thus they help in irrigation and food production and other modern medical, industrial and technological pursuits.

Thus as the saint-poet conveys in his important message, that cultivation and supply of good material, so essential for the existence of life, depend on plants of which forests are a part. If the forest areas are denuded gushing rain waters would erode the slopes and soft areas. Much land would be lost and also the grain. Hence the truth of the saint's pithy saying.

#### 6.3.5 As Democrat and Botanist

Born in rural atmosphere six hundred years ago Nund Reshi while giving a sermon to the village folk, cautioned them, on moral and ethical grounds, against damages to or destruction of plants in general and herbal plants in particular. For he is believed to have pointed out that plants are living things which are born, grow and die in due course. He says:

"Let us avoid harming plants in any way as far as possible. Let us not unnecessarily trample over green grass. For, each plant has a purpose in life and use for others."

The rural folk, took no time to understand the true purport of the sermon. But they seem to have been quick to point out to the saint that they were squatting on the green turf which had lost its lush greenery and turned dull whitish under the pressure of their body weight and deprivation of light and air.

Acknowledging the truth of their argument, Nund Reshi is believed to have sat on a big rock in meditation for twelve years, thus accepting the verdict of the people as an unparalleled democrat and a botanist by instinct. The honour of being an instinctive democrat and botanist of Kashmir goes to him indeed.

Source: Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat

## 6.4 Nund Reshi's Shruiks - (Translated)

#### P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)

#### 1. OMNIPRESENCE AND ALL PERVADING NATURE OF GOD

He, who was here, is also there; He's in possession of house everywhere He's the Pedestrian, and He the Ruath, (old type of vehicle ) He's all in all; invincible and obscure!

**Note:** The sufi concept of the Omnipresence and all pervading nature of God is analogous to the science of totality or KULA system of Kashmir Shaivism in essence wherein TRUTH OF TOTALITY shines everywhere. According to this mystic experience and knowledge, there is no creek left anywhere to distinguish between man and man or any other form of life.

C/O Lalla Vaakh No one, 35

#### 2. SELF REALISATION:

He's beside me and I'm beside Him,
Blissful I feel with Him,
In vain, I went a—seeking Him
In strange lands, for
My Friend Himself graced me in my own House!

Note: C/P Lalla Vaakh No 3&8,35

#### 3. SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND SHARING PROSPERITY AND PAIN.

Mere chanting of "Shiva, Shiva "
Won't awaken Shiva.
Ghee you'ld consume in
Kangri fire
Feed on ghee and
Be strong or
Give it to other,
Should you not need it.

Note: C/P Lalla Vaakh No. 4, 48 & Preface.

4. RELIGION IN ACTION: Feed the Hungry, if you can, Ask not the caste of the naked: Gain a thousand times The virtue, Nor would you ever lose it, Dear brother, Nunda!

Note: C/P Lalla Vaakh No. 49 and preface

While infusing a spirit of humanism and social good into his people Nund Reshi lays stress on need-based and not to creed, colour or language based sympathy. A man's inner sun should shed its lively light equally on all rich and poor, yellow or green, living or non living alike.

5. Within the cluster of rills was lost, A sparkling spring;
A saint was lost amongst
A gang of thieves;
Amidst a family of duds was lost,
A learned Pandit Guru;
A gorgeous swan was lost,
Amidst a flock of crows!

#### Comments

The most probable allusion of the saints, among others, is to the group who, according to legend, had become thieves under the stress of adversity. But the saints' inborn divine disposition wouldn't keep him in tune with them. Unlike Vaimiki, celebrated author of Ramayana, who was a robber before becoming a saint of high order and poet of eminence, Nund Reshi was born with the Moon of Divinity shining within him.

As a child he was once forced by his colleagues to break into a house at night to collect a booty of precious articles but to their amazement he stole only a mortar from the kitchen in order not to make his victim suffer too much . Again, the barking of dogs pricked his conscience and awakened his soul. Thenceforth he is said to have embarked on the spiritual path in seclusion.

6. Bathe out of sight,
Meditate in secluded isolation,
Be regular in action don't forget,
But---- out of sight;
Should you forget, you'll regret!

C/P LV No. 7

7. Should you not shun inner anger, How can you, your external wrath? Unless you cleanse you inner mind You'll lead an ostriched life!

C/P LV No. 38

8. You gave sugar to sugarcane, And honey to the honey bee You gave grapes to The winding vine: You gave the deer stag The forest green: Such are your godly gifts!

9. You've to bear lightning and thunder, Tornados and storms at mid-day; You've to bear with lifting mountain weights, You've to bear with your palm aflame, You've to pass through a rolling mill, You've to tolerate eating poison and fire!

#### C/P LV 34

Note: This trio of saint poets, like all others of the international tribe of saints, clearly hints at the hurdles faced by them in their search after mysticism and god realization.

10. Fear, attachment and violent thought, I shunned, For a whole life-time, I followed But one path, and then, Bathed in the waters of contemplation, I walked to a sojourn In blissful seclusion!

#### C/P LV 17

11. He who sits in vigil
At His door,
To him, He 'll offer
His own sherbet (Medicine);
His devotees are different but,
Only with one prayer;
He, whom He blesses,
Will prosper!

#### C/P LV---, PP---

12. Avariciously, I filled my belly -----draped the devilish frame Of my long cage! Robbed off was, I even Of the ever-withering leaf: Sinned I and earned The vice!

13. O self, lend ear to
The gossip that's going on;
This's the knell of
The warrants of death!
A day before like a lamb
They'll take you to the butchers,;
With a tuft of grass, they'll
Lure you on to the grave!

14. Should you have a friend, Sacrifice yourself for him. From time to time, a friend Is a breezy dawn! Earth, earthly be, free from Birth-Re-birth; What need remains for Protective defence?

What need remains To fear fate?

15. What catch will a crow, show
To the lion of the jungle?
How can dhup (incence) surpass wine,
In fragrance?
What light can a candle
Show to the moon?
What a salvation will Shiva give
To a-----

**Note:** Wine refers to the intoxication of the light of the inner moon of self consciousness as pet Lall Ded's inner vision and that of sufis of wine like Maulana Rumi, Pammanand and other mystic saints.

16. Death's a lion. How can you escape him? From a flock of sheep It 'll pick you up like a lamb.

17. A blonde I, dressed and combed,
Became a queen of beauty:
Bewitched my youth was by flowers.
Frozen as snows on mountains
I was and
Blown off by WULAR wind; (biggest lake in Kashmir)
Divested by robbers, I was
In dazzling bewilderment:
Ruffled my half-cooked rice became
By bran and husk
While a poor man's day
Passed for a year.

18. Yee alone, O Deva, are the need Of the hour, To set the earth a-right in beauty? Yee alone, the shadow of skeletons: Yee alone awaken Without the tolling of bells; What's virtue and what vice?

**Note:** The idea conveyed is that God alone is dispassionate and responds to plaints and prayers of his devotees in whichever way they approach HIM.

19. Shiva 's there, spread with A fine net:
That's Death and
That's Pilgrimage!
Should you not die while living,
How else can you, when dead?
Recognise self from yourself
By contemplation.

20. Straight I came and, Straight I'ld go, What harm can the crooked do To a straight man ? I fully recognized and Merged with Him there

# What can the recognized do To the recogniser?

C/P L.V. No. 3

#### 6.4.1 21. ARADANA

**Introductory:** Sages and seers are scientists in the spiritual and mystic fields whereas, scientists are spiritualists in the scientific field. Their work is guided by certain individual principals, aims, and objectives. Both observe, firm hypothesis, experiment and come to natural conclusions by pragmatic experience, one, in the confinement of the laboratory and the other in the calm seclusion of nature, under the guidance of a Guru.

Whereas one, experiments with materials and energy, the other probes the transcendental and mysterious in a more subtle way, purely in the mental laboratory using its peculiar tools of energy and contemplation,

Nund Reshi, like other saints, gives vent to what he aims to achieve in his spiritual exercise in this invocation. He observes strict discipline, renouncing all pleasures of life till he blooms and achieves perfection in the domain of godly life.

Naturally he rises to the status of the most popular saint alongwith his contemporary, Lall Ded. Both guided, the modes and ways of cordial conduct of all kashmaris for more than six centuries to date. No wonder therefore, that Budshah, the great king of Kashmir, took pride in giving shoulder to Nund Reshi's dead body, when he left for eternal abode. Like Lalleshwari, Nund Reshi self addresses this message, of inclusion of high standards of spiritual conduct, humanism and desirable social behaviour in man as if he himself was not a symbol of good qualities and virtues.

a) That Lana of Padmanpora
Gulp by gulp who nectar drank,
And saw Shiva face to face everywhere
Grant me that boon, O Deva!

b) The speaking damsels of Loka—Bhawan And the dumb socio—human ones, Took flight with birds; Grant me that boon, O Deva!

**Note:** The girls wholeheartedly helped others and served birds with grains before their spiritual flights.

c) Janak Reshi of Dandakvan. Living on herbs, wild fruit, was A perfect Bhakta, a pearl among devotees! Grant me that boon, O. Deva.

**Note:** Janak Reshi of Handwara jungles lived on herbs and wild fruit. His was a perfect, realised soul.

d) That Miran Reshi of Reshivan, Who fed a thousand people And created an averse free atmosphere: Grant me that boon, O Deva:

e) A shephered followed rams. T hat very moment He was beckoned off And flew to the Heaven At Harmukh: Grant me that boon, O Deva:

**Note:** A pious shephered, while grazing his flocks of sheep and goats on the HARMUKH slopes, had face to face Darshan of Shiva and merged with him!

f) You blessed the sadhu at Ishabar, He recognised you and served you. Blessed you, also Rugzal?` The pashmina—seller: Grant me that boon, O Deva I

Note: i) Refers to an ancient gyanyogi sadhu of Ishabar near Nishat Garden.

- ii) Rugzal replaces Rukhsonjahai as suggestd by J&K Academy of Art, culture and languages commentator.
- iii) Refers to a Pashmina trader who after renouncing the world achieved self realisation.
- g) That wise, hunch-backed, Kubza.

**Note:** Refers to hunch backed Kubza of the Ramayana.

h) You blessed Sadhwani, the vapbodh, He drank the milk of intimacy I In full, You blessed Shethi Srikantha, The sidha; Grant me that boom, O Deva!

Note: Refers to Sadwani who was blessed with Lord Shiva's Darshan at the foot of Shankaracharaya hill.

Refers to Yogi Rajsidh Sri Kant of Srinagar, Probably Lall Ded's Guru.

References quoted above by courtesy of Sahaz Quasum June'91.

i) In time should I act for my future; Maybe, it may bear fruit; Meekly'ld I exhort Him; Maybe, He may bless Nund too! Grant me that boon, O Deva!

#### 6.4.2 VEGETARIANISM

22. As stated elsewhere, Nund Reshi respected all life as himself. Even on his death bed, he simply could not be persuaded into fish-eating to revive his fast -deteriorating physical condition. (Ref.

He was a strict vegetarian as is clear also from his own shruk quoted in "Kuliyate-Sheik ul Alam." Quote from Fida Mohd Hushain's book." The beautiful Kashmir Valley" published by Rema publishing House New Delhi. "Sheikh Noor-Ud-Din gave his mystical experiences and teaching in the Kashmiri language. Khawaja Habib-Ullah Naushari in 16th century composed his poems in Kashmiri."

My darling, why should you poach on fish My darling understand this truth Those, who deavour the living To nourish their own lives Would feed on the poison of sin!

Ref. L.V. 11.

#### 6.4.3 23. DOES WRATH BECOME A MUSI IM?

a) Does wrath behave a Muslim? Should you display anger, you'll Jeopardise your purpose. Wrath'll prove to be a robber Of your treasures! Does wrath become a Muslim?

b) What happened to him who Was deposed from his heavenly, throne?

Numbness overtook that Muslim and. He fell a victim to the devil: and Hid in a boat man's ..... Does wrath become a Muslim?

c) Should you peep into the Veiled harem of strangers, It'ld be like showing A red rag to the bull, Causing hue and cry, din and noise! Does anger become a Muslim?

(d) Study daily, the Quran, The lighthouse that'll Scare away the devil in you: Does wrath become a Muslim?

(e)The Lord'll Himself accompany The guest; Give something in His love and, Remember, what you give to others Will remain in store for you: Does anger become a Muslim?

(f) In a far off field,
They 'll leave you buried and,
Rot'll your flesh, and organs too,
Underground and
You, Yourself will have to be
Answerable for your own deeds,
Does wrath become a Muslim?

#### 6.4.4 24. HE, WHO PLOUGHS THE FIELD, REAPS THE CROP:

- (a) Be conscientious in doing your duty, man, Plough the field, to harvest the crop In autumn and. provide for Your comforts in the cold month of magh: He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!
- (b) Blind is the spring, keep't in view, Be quick to collect the material of Seed, and store's at home: Don't you lag behind, for The spring is elusive, man; He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!
- (c) Lend no ear to falsehood now,
  Winter lies ahead, and freezing cold
  Daughters and daughters-in-law, children
  And grand-children regard him, who
  Ploughs the field and reaps the crop:
  He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!
- (d) Deluding is the hunger; Yoke it to the plough, Scare't away.with the whip of fasting; Thus wouldn't it hinder the polughshare: He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!

- (e) Keep the kit trim and your ploughshare; Attend to your ablutions, it's dawn, The usual time for prayers. Shun listlessness, caste and pray: He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!
- (f) Full of weeds is your field, Enter with determination and deweed it Bend you must in blazing heat To deweed your field: He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!
- (g) Devote your time to Islamic work: Shun lassitude, Kalima's the lighthouse of Your knowledge at home: Duly attend to daily "Nimaz" pilgrimage and Graceful alms-giving: For, He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!
- (h) Many times, the seed is the ear of crops: Many times more though latent, is CORDIALITY. Still more beneficial is contemplation of God: He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!
- (i) Beware of the watchman:
  Day by day, He counts the stockpiles:
  Truly fear the Landlord;
  He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop:
- (j) The king of fate, pounces on the crop: Rise with confidence and show...... The attainments of your endeavour: And when, the king's gone, Contemplate on" What He said ": He, who sows the seed reaps the crop!
- (I) They'll force him divide bagfuls of crops And make him, sort out grain by grain. Reaping, collecting, separating, winnowing, They'll induce him to weigh the harvest; He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop
- (m) With the display of a sword,
  To begin with, they'll warn him against
  Irresponsible sloth, listlessness, and
  Ask him to be careful in future:
  God forbid, maybe, they'll get him lashed too:
  He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!
- (n) Slowly, imperceptibly, life has waned, O you, unmindful fellow, haven't you Realised the truth by now? Look, how you have robbed your own self: He, who ploughs the field, reaps the crop!

(o) Don't you be too fond of glamourous mansions Elegant ZOONA DUB (well decorated verandah) For,

None but you have to account for your deeds: What use's preaching to the unwise?

He, who sows the seed, reaps the crop!

(p) You careless man, realise yourself You 'll reap here, what you've sown there, They'll weigh all sins and virtues: He, who ploughs the field, reaps the crop!

(q) Take the mukkadam (headman) to plead your case Before the king of kings: Nund Reshi knows well the Landlord: He, who sows the seed, collects the fruit!

**Note:** The poem is multi meaning, Two of them at least, are conjugate: Whereas one reflects on the political conditions of the time, the other refers to the kingdom of God.

C/P Parmanand's Karma Bhoomika

## 6.4.5 25. WHAT HAVE I GAINED AFTER BIRTH?

(a) With full settlement, I had come
On business to the world;
Lured on the way I was
In the market place:
Behold how I bore with
The master mind:
What have I gained after I was born?

(b) Why did I overhear my friend At HIS house? Who'll keep that laughing Joker In good humour? Virtuous is my mind but Plenty of sins have I gathered: What have I gained after birth?

(c) Spanned has the thread of My necklace of pearls:
Consumed by fire
Have been all my gains
Reduced to dust or consigned to flames
Has been all my wealth:
What have I gained after birth?

(d) My living body fell here in chaos, Good it is to sacrifice it for the times: Wouldn't it honour the Lord? What have I gained in life?

(e) Originally crooked Couldn't reach the source How I tried to uphold the dignity of My home: Keep in fear of HIM, O thee rider and pedestrian: What have I gained in life

(f) Peddlers are on the move From city to city:

Isn't it time for you
To burn in the fire of hell?
Kneeling low, Nund Reshi prays and
Exhorts the Lord in all humility:
What have I gained in Life?

# 6.4.6 26. Bear with: As you sow, so shall you Reap

(a) Bear with the calls from the compound, friend. Respond to your inner voice:
As you sow here, so shall you reap there.
Sow and reap, sow and reap.

(b) "Occupy the grave" does the blonde; Nought's mine: Sow and provide for food here. If only, For fear of harm to the heart: Sow and reap, sow and reap.

(c) Theists and atheists will be questioned; Contemplate on the Prophet and the Lord, Smash the spear and the Gurza; (Lethal weapon of Hanuman) Sow and reap, sow and reap.

(d) When the case reaches the divine court. There,
From whom can we hide our untruth?
Beware! none but you, yourself'ld have to
Bear the consequences of your deeds:
Sow and reap, sow and reap.

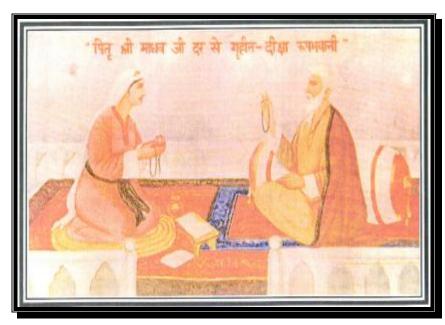
(e) Virtue and vice'ld they weigh there, brother. Think ahead, of life there Lest your gains turn into losses, Sow and reap, sow and reap!

Source: Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat

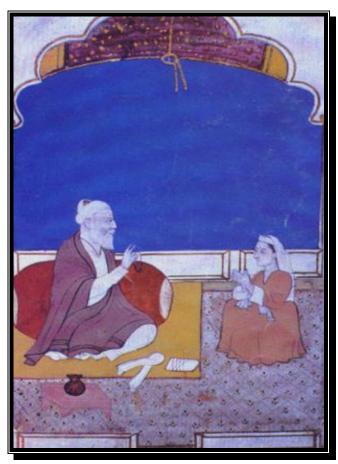
# 7 Rupa Bhawani



Rupa Bhawani (1620-1720)



Roopa Bhawani (Alakheshwari) and her Guru (father) Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar



Roopa Bhawani (Alakheshwari) and her Guru (father) Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar. (painting Courtesy of: Koshur Samachar and Shri C. L. Dhar, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi, India)

# 7.1 Rupa Bhawani

**Rupa Bhawani** was the second great mystic poet of 17th century. She had a great and deep experience of ups and downs of life. The worldly sufferings showed her the path of spiritual life. Her spiritual 'Guru' was her father Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar who initiated her into the mysteries and practices of yoga. She gave rich mystic poetry to Kashmiri language. In her poetry, we can find the influence of both Kashmir Shaivism and Islamic Sufism.

Selflessness is the sign of the selfless; Bow down at the door of the selfless. The selfless are of the highest authority, The kings of the time and the wearers of the crest and crown.

These lines show her spiritual understanding. According to her dissolution of self is essential for Realisation. Rupabhawani was a great preacher of yoga. She describes her yogic practice. The different stages of 'yoga' and awakening of Kundalini has been described in the simple language of common men:

I dashed down into the nether regions and brought the vital breath up; I got its clue out of earth and stones;
Then my kundalini woke up with nada;
I drank wine by the mouth,
I got the vital breath gathered it within myself;

This great mystic poetess had experienced the truth and then explained the same. Such mystics had real experience and not a bookish one. That is the reason why this mystic poetry in every language is considered great after so many centuries.

# 7.2 Roopa Bhawani in Kashmiri Language and Literature

# Dr. A. N. Raina 7.2.1 SANSKRIT

In Kashmir, poetry has ever been true to religion and thought. In early times Sanskrit was the Language, mainly Musical. It was the voice from the depth of heart, not a verbal exercise, tinged with any affectation but a simple and sincere expression of thought and knowledge preserved for the good of mankind. It was the glorious age of this language in Kashmir when scholars and researchers dived deep to unearth the treasures by the giant intellects whose characteristic zeal for divine wisdom enabled the preservation of knowledge and spiritual experience.

#### 7.2.2 SHAIVISM:

It is believed that phonetic distortion and decay in Sanskrit gave rise to Apabhramsha followed later by Prakrit. Kashmiri emerged as a language towards the close of the 14th Century when it assumed some form in its original base of Sanskrit. Till then Shaivism had expressed itself as the doctrine of Self recognition. The doctrine had made an appeal with its love and devotion regarded as the two main planks of this faith. Giant intellects like Abhinava Gupta, Utpaladeva, Kshemendra and other seers and scholars had enriched this thought and culture with their admirable contributions. As a doctrine of soothing thought Shaivism inspired love and affection in human hearts discarding all the painful and tortuous methods of seeking God. This soothing faith found a wide appeal across the Himalayan frontiers into Tibet, China, Kabul, Kandhar and Bactria. Intensive intellectual activity covered a vast field of literature in Philosophy, Poetry, Chronicle writing and rhetorics. Kashmir was not a forgotten land of mountains intellectually and spiritually isolated but an illumined literary heaven shedding light of knowledge and wisdom across its Himalayan borders.

# 7.2.3 ISLAM

With the coming of Islam, Hinduism come under the influence more refreshing and deeply protestant. Islam, it is to be admitted, gave a jolt to Hinduism in its spiritual slumber of ages. The Buddhism with its

virtuous path for life had discarded the fighting element in man. However, the onslaught of Islamic faith could not alter and dive deep into the philosophic and spiritual attainments of Hinduism. May be Islam in its beginning resorted to force but, as time passed force created a subdued apathy in hearts. Passion, rage, and physical conquest made no appeal to people and failed to overpower the good in man. The result was the reflective minds dominated head and heart imploring the need of some sort of spiritual discipline for the daily conduct in life. It was this feeling that stimulated into a rational view when Sufism emerged as a doctrine of oneness based on tolerance and unity. It was a healthy approach to religions based on essential unity for human happiness. A harbinger of peace Sufism or mysticism served Islam in the real sense of the term.

# 7.2.4 KASHMIR

Sanskrit suffered change and what followed is known Apabhransha that followed Prakrit. Philologists traced the merger of languages in time and in Kashmir both Apabhransha and Prakrit ultimately merged into Kashmiri - the modern Kashmiri of Lal-Ded.

Kashmiri, it may be mentioned developed as a language, not as a dialect. It emerged in a scientific manner well rooted as it was in its antecedent Sanskrit. Within the Panjal ranges and Kajinag mountains Kashmiri became the mother tongue of those peace loving inhabitants who steadily settled to an appreciation of regular phonological correspondences of certain words and syllables which indicate common roots. Sounds may have suffered a little change here and there in certain positions to a degree but the identity was retained. To mention some of the basic words at a glance still in common use among many are Prakash, Sumran, Shabd, Rishi, Sunder, anand, Samaya, Prabhat, etc.

Koshur as Kashmiri is called belongs to the Dardic group profoundly affected by the Indo-Aryan spoken Sanskrit and during over two thousand years a part of the "Sanskrit Culture World" it was Yogeshwari Lalla (Lal Ded) whose Vaakh laid a sound foundation of this language. Her Vaakh passed from mouth to mouth in the beginning. Her four-line stanza Vaakh in Kashmiri poetry forms the base of modern Kashmiri. Her verse was uttered with all seriousness saturated as it is with philosophic thought to be pondered over and not only sung and enjoyed. These stanzas became food for deep thinking and in the words of Lal Ded herself "My Guru gave me but one precept - from without withdraw your gaze within, and fix on the inmost self."

It is necessary to mention here that her Guru "Siddha" had an important place in her spiritual attainments.

Philologists may have taken pains to study the original form of Kashmiri but the conclusion is accepted by all that Bhaskara's Lalla-vaakh in Sharda script is to be taken as authentic in modern Kashmiri.

It may not be a digression to say that language has its own rhythm of origin and growth. Time punctuates its pulsation. Nature provides elements for its enrichment. It is then that a language assumes its form. It enters deep into human mind. Some believe, may be rightly too, that the origin of a language is always divine. It flows out or even sprouts forth from the depth of soul destined to be its progenitor. So has it been with Kashmiri also.

#### 7.2.5 LAL-DED

Lal-Ded the well known saint-poetess irradiated a deep and impalpable influence with her verse during the 14th century. Her verse had a transforming power of engendering purity and human brotherliness.

Her message found the response among the people irrespective of caste and creed. Her sayings established a tradition of harmony and tolerance which is our priceless heritage. There is not a Kashmiri, Hindu or Muslim, who had not some of her Vaakhs at the tip of his tongue. Her Vaakh or pithy poems containing spiritual experience documented in a form which is of immense value to the seeker. These are inspired speech.

Undoubtedly the progenitor of modern Kashmiri Lal-Ded is the first among the moderns not only chronologically but in modern quality of interrogation and expostulation, to her poetry. Her poetry comes alive for us even today.

The close of the 14th century brings to end the age of Yogeshwari Lalla. Till then her Vaakh had established itself and spread like fire in the valley of Kashmir. A climate of modern Kashmiri had covered itself the entire mind and senses of people who readily accepted this Shaiva-Mystic whose minstrel wanderings earned for her the name of divine Mother.

# 7.2.6 NUNDRISHI

It is time to see how after Lal Ded followed the line of Sheikh Noor-ud-din, reshi of Chrari-sharif in his Shrukhs educating spiritually the people of Kashmir for over fifty years (1377-1438 A. D.), in a simple vernacular. The theme, form and tone, was essentially that used by Lal-Ded in her Vaakhs. Of literary interest these pithy verses formed the correct coin of common speech. It is true that Persian influence intensified, but it also is true that interests widened towards a humanist awareness. The modern Kashmiri was taking birth towards an enlightenment and understanding. New words bring new life and standard of literary language develops towards a form of linguistic discipline. By the close of 13th century the age of Yogeshwari Lalla and Nundrishi come to close. Till then her Vaakhs and his shrukhs had established as a corrective for human mind and intellect.

## 7.2.7 RUPA BHAWANI

By the first water of the 18th century when Rupabhawani passed away (1721 A.D.) Kashmiri language had undergone considerable change during about three centuries since the time of Lallashwari. With the coming of many Iranians from Iran where persecution by Timur drove away rich crop of scholars and seekers. Essentially these Savants after finding an asylum the happy valley of Kashmir ushered is that branch of Islamic mysticism known as Sufi-cult. And when Rupa Bhawani appeared on Kashmir scene a synthesis of Hindu and Islamic mysticism had already come to birth. In the back drop of this harmonious attitude to life Rupa Bhawani became its vocal interpreter. She became a seer for search but she was Search for herself having attained perfection from her very birth. Rupa, a spring of spiritualism, was destined to attract people from all faiths. Rupa's life reveals a course of events divine indeed but destined to fulfil a purpose. There was spiritual illumination as it were from her very birth. Faith moves mountains as such the palatial house of Pt. Madhojoo Dhar, acquired a sort of divine dimension. Rupa Bhawani will live so long as her verse is there. It is therefore, imperative that her Vaakhs be understood to the extent possible. In this respect a word about her verses will be to the point. Admirable as the attempt of Sh. T. N. Dhar, who brought out a volume on "Life, teachings and Philosophy of Rupa Bhawani" in1977 is one cannot but value this attempt as a contribution to the literature and language of Kashmir. Any attempt as a critical study of her divine verse depends on a careful study of her text prepared by this studious researcher.

That Rupa was light herself, there is no doubt about it. Her utterances are saturated with wisdom, divine learning nothing unusal about her, spiritual experience and attainments. She admits herself to be the spark of great Brahman destined to proclaim "Soham". This message was readily accepted by the Hindus and Muslims alike. It is here that mention of Sufi thought seems necessary.

It has already been mentioned that many Iranians had come to Kashmir and there was an effective influence of Sufism here. These Sufi Saints like Shah Sadak who tried to measure his spiritual strength with Rupa Bhawani made him accept her superior attainments when Shah Sadak spent years in penance in upper Lar. The reply of Rupa Bhawani to Shah Sadak was "Surat-ma-zeth". By this time cultural mingling had effected itself and spiritual contacts had brought about identical views and approach to the quest of spirit. Hazrat Hashimbin-Mansoor had already declared "Analhaw" in 1900 A. D. The thesis his book "Kitabul Tawasoon" was "I am truth, God".

In Kashmir the times had changed since the day of Avantivarman (855 to 883 A. D.) of Utpal Dynasty, remembered even today with his temple at Awantipur. His court was adorned by two eminent poets Ratnakar and Anandvardhan. The modelling and drainage system and the drudging of the Jhelum mouth at Baramulla was taken up by Suyya the founder of Suyyapur (Sopore). It may be of interest to mention that the Tantrics opposed to the Brahmins were again in power for some years but rebellion and the economic devastation brought misery to the people. The Rajput of Lohar Dynasty ruled Kashmir like the

rest of India for more than a century when Kshtriya rituals entered the Brahamnic cult. As is common with despotic rule the whole period suffered from murders, suicides, corruption-material and moral- a record of which has been prepared by Kalhan Pandit who followed in the 12th century in the reign of Jayasinha. The mysticism from Iran was a slow but soothing stream aimed at raising up of moral and spiritual values and oneness of God. Therefore, Kashmiris readily accepted it in all its traits in which the Reshi order of Nundrishi was also contained. So Kashmiri thinking evolved out of a happy amalgam of Sanskrit, Buddhist and Islamic values.

Now is the turn of the text of Rupa Bhawani's verse, in diction, style and cumulative expression.

### 7.2.8 STYLE

We owe it to a Brahmin Pandit Kesho Bhat of Rainawari Srinagar, who prepared the text of the Vakhs of Rupa Bhawani originally in Sharda, seen and revised by late Pandit Hara Bhat Shastri before these were published by Kasho Bhat himself. "These Vaakhs of the Divine Mother do not seen to have gained much currency during the last 250 years. There is no record of any writing to show that any attention was paid to interpret these verses". It beggars not for a rise towards climax. The reasons are not far to seek. It required a careful study of the original text now available in a volume. Original to the core these Vaakhs need reading over and over again. This diction requires thought and understanding of a high order for which it is essential to have some basic knowledge of Shastras. Her thoughts as expressed in her verse leave much to ponder over before realising the meaning. Thus there is more than what meets the eye. It is then that a reader becomes aware of the fact that Rupa Bhawani had a Yogic stand, all her own, in the domain of spirit. She is perfect and as such there is no beginning of an idea of philosophy in her verse. Each verse has its own rhythm in thought and its effect in totality.

It is not the earthly verse but an outburst, rushing out of the depth of her soul where senses and mind vanish that void where mystics enter a trance. The gaze is thus deeply within (Antarmukhi)

#### <verses>

In such a state of concentration there is the bliss of union with the Infinite. The translator has however taken pains to explain the subtle principle of Muladhara in these ten verses strewing the refrain for clarity and concentration. It will be no digression to say that the physical span of Rupa Bhawani's movement has not been beyond ten miles from Srinagar and its environs within the Hariparbat side of the Anchar Lake with its mountain amphitheatre with the Lar area where Shah Sadiq lived at a higher elevation. Rupa Bhawnai settled here for her meditation at Vaskur. The famous shrine of Rajni Devi at Tullamulla is situated in this area. Shankaracharya hill and the Mahadev Peak look over this region.

# 7.2.9 COMPARISON

It may not be fair to weigh words of Rupa Bhawani and compare these with other poets of Kashmiri. There being nothing very common in vocabulary, such an attempt will lead us nowhere. In thought, however, Rupa Bhawani states her Yogic preparation with that of Lal Ded. Accepting like Lal Ded the guidance of Guru before whom ego vaxes with divine logic, one attains the state of divine union. A close study of the Gita and the Vakkhs will reveal an identity of views. Here again Gita (iv,46) be referred to for each shape of experience in the practice of Yoga. Well-versed with the Yogic technique of Lal Ded, Rupa Bhawani explains how unity of self with the supreme self required "Anugraha" to free the spirit off the shackles of matter. In this respect Rupa Bhawani does not go beyond the teachings of Gita.

#### <verses>

Does this form the basis of her miracles? Well versed in Spand Shashtras as she was, it may not be easy to appreciate the verses that follow the verses of Ist canto. It requires spiritual intelligence to follow the Vakkhs in the second canto (113 verses) in which the great union is propounded. Rupa Bhawani is above the experience of pleasure and pain. The translator has rightly remarked that "The truth of developing inward vision through these utterances can be understood by the practice of Yoga". The purpose of Yoga is summarised thus:

#### <verses>

# "World teacher, ever in service, worthy of infinite worship."

While going carefully through the words in Sanskrit and sound close to each other in meaning Kashmiri similar or identical may appear, but no separate word in Kashmiri is either attempted to be searched or found. It is not the homophony of words, but the regular phonological correspondence of words and syllables indicating common roots.

Modern Kashmiri bears no resemblance with the language of Rupa Bhawani and no amount is worthwhile to make such an attempt. New words brought new life to this language and in keeping with the traditional cultural mingling the Kashmiri got enriched. Its vocabulary depending on its prefixes and suffixes enabled a new coinage of words. The sweetness of Kashmiri poetry is due to that mystical quality of individual coinage making it fit for poetry. There is no abuse of foreign words. They are set well in sound and meaning.

There is nothing beyond God in Rupa Bhawani's verse. And if life aims at aimless journey one wonders how in a mysterious wandering one can get peace of mind.

The third canto signifies perfection exclaiming "I am that great Brahman". Such verse, to be intelligible, needs grace of God (Anugraha). Since Samadhi comes in it so it becomes an exercise in yoga that for perfect to a degree far beyond is not within comprehension. It appears that no effort is made by Rupa Bhawani to make herself intelligible to the non-sanskrit speaking people. Reason is not far to seek. Gushing out of wisdom in Sanskrit completely annihilates environmental consciousness which is an attempt at a low level to that of bliss of Heavenly peace, the domain of Supreme Brahman. "Greatest miracle of biological power is the development of speech in man which finally developed into power of writing," Very rightly remarked by Shri T. N. Dhar, at page 156.

Coming to the 4th canto of Vaakhas it ends the divine message being the last. Her spiritual quest is an open penance aiming at spiritual unity. Renunciation leaps to actual attainment. "Having nothing yet hath all" is often quoted. It applies to the teachings of Rupa Bhawani. To give up worldly pleasures for some time never means complete renunciation. It is a period of penance a sort of spiritual preparation aiming at purification of the devotee. She depends on wisdom enshrined in the Vedas to give up duality. Respecting tradition, custom and kinship, she only bridged the gulf with yoga. Samadhi she stresses, siddhi, skill, prosperity, gush out from the source. Personality is to be, free from decay and death.

# 7.2.10 CONCLUSION

Linguistically speaking Kashmiri appears not to have emerged as an accepted mixture of Sanskrit and Persian words as is proved to be later in the middle of the 19th Century. In the time of Rupa Bhawani whatever the reasons, the diction in her verse shows no synthesis of, Sanskrit and Persian. Assimilation appears to have taken along time as her verse is not even a half baked mingling of words from Persian. it is not easy to erase her contribute on to Kashmiri language. Had it not been for her rich verse (about 150 verses) to Kashmiri literature-"obscure and obsolete" verse as mentioned in haste by some critics - the poetess may have left little impression on Kashmiri. This is not to be forgotten that the verse of Rupa Bhawani is to be studies in isolation and not as an evolutionary wave in the synthesized current of Kashmiri. A recluse as she was her spiritual domain was a divine Kingdom of her own, unconcerned with the people around her. *Source:* Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

# 7.3 The Life of Devi Roop Bhawani

#### Aparna Dar

[ This is an account of the life of Devi Roop Bhawani who was born in Srinagar on Jyaistha Paurnamasi, AD 1621. She was a fully illumined soul who because of her divine nature was said to have been born of the elements of Divine Mother. The author of the article is a lecturer at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur]

In the early seventeenth century, a Kashmiri Pundit named Madhav Joo Dhar lived in Srinagar. Madhav Joo was of a deeply religious and philosophical temperament, and his daily life was conducted in an impeccably religious spirit. He worshipped the Supreme Being (Ishwara) in the form of the Divine Mother Sharika (Durga).

In Srinagar, there is a hill known as Hara Parvat or Sharika Parvat where the Goddess Sharika is worshipped since ancient times. Legend relates that, long ago, some demons troubled the local people, who prayed to Goddess Durga for protection. She took the form of a Sharika (Maina) bird and dropped a large chunk of earth on the entrance to the cave of the demons to seal them inside the hill. She then took Her abode on the hill to ensure that they did not escape. This gave the name Sharika Parvat to the hill. The Goddess is represented there by the Sri Chakra (a regular geometrical mystical pattern) in sandy rock, which is annointed with red lead (sindur). The deity is also called Chakreshwari. Regular worship has been offered at this shrine for centuries.

To this shrine of the Divine Mother Sharika, Madhav Joo came every day to worship in the auspicious hour of Brahma Muhurta (pre-dawn). He would chant Her Holy Name, with his face glowing with devotion and his entire being absorbed in Her worship. For hours he would be so transported, the fire of devotion lighting up his entire being with Divine radiance. Thus did this devotee of the Divine Mother pass his days.

It is said that on the first day of the Navaratri (the nine days dedicated to the worship of the Divine Mother Durga) in the month of Ashwin, in the year 1620, Madhav Joo arrived for worship at midnight, to uninterruptedly worship on this most auspicious occasion.

He commenced his worship and, with all reverence and attentive detail, he glorified the Supreme Goddess, his heart filled with adoration. When his worship was complete, the Divine Mother is said to have appeared before him in the form of a radiant girl child.

On seeing this divine child, Madhav was so filled with intense joy and bliss that he lost all consciousness of his external surroundings, and tears of joy and devotion flowed from his eyes. He understood that the mother of the Universe, Mahamaya, was Herself in front of him in the form of this child.

Thereupon he worshipped the girl, placing flowers at Her feet and incense before Her. With fatherly love he offered Her sweets. The Mother was pleased with the simplicity and love of Her devotee, and granted him a boon. Madhav requested Mother, 'Since you have appeared before me in the form of a child, take birth in my house as my daughter.' The Divine Mother granted the boon and vanished. So goes the legend of the birth of Roopa Bhavani.

In the following year 1621, in the month of Jyeshtha, on the Poornima Tithi (full moon), in the early morning a daughter was born to Madhav Joo's wife. He named his daughter Alakshyeshvari, which means one who is imperceptible and indescribable; it refers to the Goddess in the formless non-dual aspect.

In her father's house, Alakshyeshvari's years of childhood were passed in the company of devotees. Madhav Joo was held in high esteem, and spiritual seekers came from far-away provinces to meet him. Alakshyeshvari's spirituality blossomed early in these favourable conditions. As she grew older, the spiritual tendencies within her became increasingly manifest. Her father, Madhav Joo, himself became her guru and gave her spiritual initiation. Nevertheless, in accordance with the prevailing customs of the time, her father arranged her marriage to a young man of the nearby Sapru family.

However, Alakshyeshvari's married life was unhappy. Her husband, Hiranand Sapru, totally lacked all understanding of Alakshyeshvari's spiritual nature; and her mother-in-law, Somp Kunj, had a cruel disposition. Alakshyeshvari's life in this house was difficult and joyless. Her mother-in-law was always finding fault with her. Once she accused Alakshyeshvari of going out at midnight, and made Hiranand suspicious of his wife's fidelity.

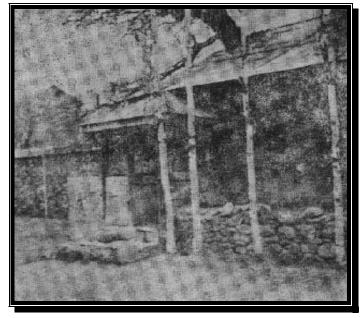
The truth was that at midnight Alakshyeshvari would go to perform her sadhana (spiritual practice) at the shrine of Mother Sharika on Hara Parvat. One day Hiranand followed her to see where she went at night. Alakshyeshvari knew this. When she had nearly reached the shrine, she turned around and asked

Hiranand lo join her. However, as he was steeped in ignorance, he is said to have beheld a vast expanse of water, impossible to cross, between himself and her and, disheartened, he was forced to return home.

Yet another incident is related of her life in her in-laws' home. One day, on the occasion of some festival, Madhav sent his daughter a pot of rice pudding (kheer). Alakshyeshvari's mother-in-law, on seeing the kheer spoke sarcastically, 'What will I do with this small pot of kheer? I have so many relatives; this is hardly sufficient for them.' Alakshyeshvari replied, 'Please give this kheer to as many persons as you like, but don't look inside the pot.' Somp Kunj began to ladle out the kheer and gave it to everyone she knew. But the supply of kheer seemed endless! Finally, furious with anger, Somp Kunj looked inside the pot to find just a few grains sticking to its sides.

The next day at dawn, Alakshyeshvari cleaned the pot, and placed it in the flowing current of the Vitasta river, speaking thus, 'My father is doing his morning prayers (Sandhya) at the Diddmar Ghat. Go and stop there.' The pot floated down the Vitasta river and stopped exactly where Madhav Joo was doing his Sandhya. Madhav picked up the pot and took it home.

Even after seeing such miraculous incidents, not just once, but many times, Somp Kunj stubbornly refused to change her ways towards Alakshyeshvari. Hiranand also remained foolish and ignorant. Finally, when living there became unbearable, Alakshyeshvari left her husband's house never to return. It is said that this Sapru family's fortunes rapidly declined therafter.



The birth-place of Devi Roop Bhawani Navakadal, Srinagar.

Alakshyeshvari renounced her father's home as well, and decided to seek the eternal abode of the Supreme Being. She wanted to become absorbed in sadhana. Seeking a solitary retreat, she selected a location to the north-east of Srinagar, known by its ancient name Jyestha Rudra. Here she did intense tapasya (austerities) for twelve and a half years, and began to glow with the fire of spirituality. At this point, people, attracted by her spiritual radiance, began to come to her in such large numbers that she decided to leave the place for a more solitary retreat.

She moved to a village Mani Gaon, in north Kashmir, on the banks of the Ganges in the foothills of the Himalayas. On festival days many people would gather at Mani Gaon for a dip in the sacred waters. In these beautiful surroundings Alakshyeshvari chose to do her sadhana. On a forested hill-top, far from the village, she made a hermitage for herself. For a long time she remained in solitude, deep in spiritual practices.

It is said that none of the villagers at Mani Gaon knew of Alakshyeshvari's existence, until a certain miraculous incident revealed her presence to them. A cowherd boy used to take his cows to graze at a place which, unknown to him, was close to where Alakshyeshvari was absorbed in meditation. The boy noticed that a beautiful white cow left the herd every day at noon, and later returned on her own accord. One day he decided to follow the cow to see where she went.

Following the cow, he reached a clearing in the forest. There he saw a beautiful woman dressed in ochre robes seated in meditation, her long hair flowing loosely, her face ashine with a heavenly lustre, and her eyes filled with a divine light. The cow, as though under a spell, stopped before the radiant ascetic. The ascetic woman got up and lovingly caressed the cow. The cow of her own accord poured its milk into the ascetic's bowl until it was full!

On seeing this wonderful vision the cowherd boy lost consciousness. When he milked the white cow he found to his astonishment that she gave even more milk than usual.

The cowherd confided his experiences to Lal Chandra, the village head. Lal was filled with reverence and devotion. He visited Alakshyeshvari, and then came daily to serve her in whichever way he could. By this time she had completed another twelve and a half years of spiritual practice in that hermitage.

We will from here refer to her as Bhavani (the Goddess as the power originating the world) or as Bhagavati (the Goddess with the six attributes of supremacy, righteousness, fame, prosperity, wisdom, and discrimination). This is in keeping with the common belief in Kashmir that Alakshyeshvari was an incarnation of the Goddess Durga.

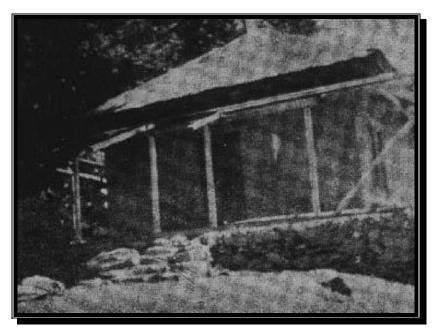
Lal Chandra told the villagers about Bhavani and the miraculous happenings attributed to her. But when she began to receive a great deal of public attention, she left the village, preferring to continue her spiritual practices in solitude. She went to dwell in a hut on the bank of the Shahkol river. Even there she attracted devotees.

Once, a spiritual seeker fascinated by her aura of spirituality asked her, 'What is your name?' Bhavani replied, 'My name is Roopa (one who has realized her own True Self).' The seeker further questioned her, 'Why do you wear this ochre dress?' Bhagavati replied, 'This ochre represents the state of being in which the individual soul has taken the colour of the Supreme Being.'

Bhavani lived for many years on the banks of the Shahkol, absorbed in meditation. Finally, when large numbers of devotees again began to flock around her, she once more moved away to a quieter spot, in the village of Vaskora. Legend says that the Naga, (snake) Vasuki, did his tapasya in Vaskora to attain the Grace of Shiva. When his sadhna bore fruit, he asked Lord Shiva for a boon, 'May I always adorn you as a necklace.' Bhagavati greatly liked this spot and began to dwell there.

Bhavani's grace now began to shower on her numerous devotees. Many miracles are attributed to her. There was a young boy, blind from birth, who served her with great devotion. Bhavani's compassionate heart was moved by his sad condition. She gave him a stick and asked him to dig the earth with it. He immediately obeyed her. Many devotees gathered nearby, watching. Soon water began to appear from the hole that was dug. Bhavani said to the young boy, 'Wash your eyes with the water that has come forth.' As the boy did so, his sight was restored and the crowd of devotees were amazed.

Bhavani had a brother, Lal Joo, who was very devoted to her and took her as his guru. Lal's son, Bal, began to stay with her in her service. Once, Lal requested Bhavani to educate his illiterate son. Bhavani gave the boy a pen and some paper and ordered him to write. Thereupon, miraculously, the boy began to write fluently like a highly educated person. The devotees were overwhelmed by this transformation.



The room in the village of Lar in which she performed her sadhana.

In Vaskora, Bhavani began to give spiritual instruction to Bal Joo Dar and Sadanand Muttoo in the form of poetical verses, called Vakhs. One hundred and forty-five of her Vakhs have been transmitted to us. After twelve and a half years (periods of this length seem to recur in Bhavani's life) had elapsed in Vaskora, Bhavani returned to Srinagar on the entreaties of her numerous devotees, and began to live in Saphakadal.

Many years had elapsed, and Bhavani now yearned to be released from her earthly body. On the Saptami Tithi, in the month of Magha, in the year 1721, Bhavani's soul took flight forever. The legend relates how her devotees, filled with grief, carried her body towards the cremation ground. On the way they met the village head who, on seeing the funeral procession, asked whom they were carrying. On hearing that it was Roop Bhavani, he was very startled, for he had just seen Bhavani walking down the road by which he came! The devotees looked inside the coffin and found nothing there but some alak (locks-of hair) and some flowers. The alak are even today worshipped with great reverence.

Although she is not with us now, Roopa Bhavani's Vakhs ate so vibrant with her presence that on reading them one feels that she is very near, giving knowledge to her children with powerful words of renunciation, and dispelling ignorance with the weapon of Eternal Truth. May she guide us on the true path of knowledge, towards the Divine Light. (Courtesy: Prabuddha Bharata)

The author writes: The first volume in English on Divine Mother Roop Bhavani was Sri Trilokinath Dhar's pioneering work (Rupa Bhawani - Life, Teachings and Philosophy) published in 1977 by All India Saraswat Cultural Organization, Srinagar. However the present author has obtained the Vakha of Devi Roop Bhavani and her life history from Sri Roop Bhavani Rahasya Upadesa (1977) published in Hindi by Sri Alakh Sahiba Trust, Srinagar. Further, she has gained an insight into the legends relating to Sharika Bhagavatiand Her Peetha at Hari Parvat from Bhavani Nama Sahasra Stutih by Sri Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal' published from Ramakrishna Ashram, Srinagar. *Source:* Koshur Samachar

# 7.4 Rupa Bhawani - "Mother Sharika assumed human form for her devotees"

# M.L. Bhat (adapted from SANTMALA by Dilbar Kashmiri)

**Rupa** Bhawani (Samvat 1681-1771), daughter of Pandit Madho Joo Dhar of Khanqahi Sokhta (Safa Kadal), Srinagar, shines as a bright star in the galaxy of mystic saints and sufis who have adorned the firmament of the Reshiwari (Kashmir). Rupa Bhawani's descendants, from her paternal side, called Sahibi Dhars, have carried her message and memory forward. They have been observing her nirvaan ceremony

with great piety and devotion to this day both at Safa Kadal, the place where she was born and also attained nirvaan, and at Waskura in Baramulla district which the graced for many years after the initial tapasya at Khanqahi Sokhta, Wusan near Ganderbal, Manigam in the same area, and Chashma-i-Sahibi, adjacent to the renowed Chashma-i-Shahi on Zabarwan hills in Srinagar district.

# 7.4.1 The Legend

Legend, both oral and recorded, has it that Pandit Madho Joo Dhar, himself a devout Devi-Bhakta, performed Parikarma of Hari Parbat regularly for years, come summer come winter, praying to the Mother to fulfil his aspirations. The Mata, pleased with his devotion, appeared to him one day saying "speak out your wish". Madho Joo, prostrated himself at the Mata's feet, imploring," Great Mother, Creator of the entire Universe; you are so kind to me, I wish you are born as my daughter". The wish as granted, and Rupa Bhawani graced Madho Joo Dhar's home on Zaishta Pooranmashi in Samvat 1681.

Brought up with affection, and respect, Rupa Bhawani was married to a learned youngman, Pandit Hiranand Sapru, at an early age with great pomp and show. Roopa Bhawani was, however forced to forsake Grihast as her in-laws, including Pandit Hiranand, could not reconcile to her spiritual bent of mind and the meditative spells she had got used to at her father's abode.

# 7.4.2 The First Miracle

Her estrangement with the in-laws accentuated after a miracle which her mother-in-law failed to comprehend. It is recorded that at a special yagnya performed at the Sapru's place, the kulguru of Dhar's could somehow not give a satisfactory account of his capabilities. Not that he was not learned, but the other Brahmins present made fun of him. He could not put up with this. Feeling humiliated, he wanted to leave unnoticed without partaking of the prashad. And that is why and how the Mata's first miracle took place. While the kulguru was trying to get away, he was accosted by Rupa Bhawani. She requested him not to go away like that. "It is not appropriate to go away without taking food" she told him adding "you, Sir, seem to be very tired. Why don't you have a bath in the river (Vitasta) and feel fresh and then take food?" The kulguru could not refuse. He had the bath as advised, and while coming back he was accosted againg by Rupa Bhawani. She gave him a full glance, welcoming him to the dinner. This glance transformed lhe Brahmin into a well-versed and confident guru. Bowing to the Bhawani, he partook of the food, and after that recited a full poem in praise of the Mother spontaneously, winning applause from one and all, including those who had tried to humiliate him only a few hours earlier.

This miracle of the Bhawani invited strong reaction. Her mother-in-law got infuriated, she provoked her son and made it impossbile for Rupa Bhawani to live in her house. And this brought about the Sanyas of the Mata. She returned to her father's place, bared her heart to him. Consoled and encouraged by the father Rupa Bhawani started her meditation in right earnest. However, finding regular meditation somewhat difficult in a grahast, she shifted to Wusan, Manigam, Waskura, Chashma- i-Sahibi, etc. in that order, creating ashrams at every spot holding spititual discourses, attracting devotees, Hindus and Muslims alike, and performing miracles. A real sanyasin, she was the mother to all irrespective of caste or creed.

The great old chinar tree on the bank of Sindh river in Manigam, the culmination of a half-burnt branch planted by the Mata with her bsnign hands was, till some year back, standing as a mute but living witness to her spirituality. A devastating fire in Manigam was extinguished by her through a mere glance. Fish cooked for Shivaratri in the house of Pandit Lal Chand in Manigam started crawling over to the wall when it was learnt that the fish had been cooked in spite of her presence in the house. A potter's son got his eyesight back on completing the digging of a well at Waskura at her bidding. A shankh-shaped spring in Chashma-i-Sahibi appeared in the Zabarwan hill area when Rupa Bhawani shifted there, giving the hillock its name.

Mata Rupa Bhawani attained mahanirvaan at her father's place, where she spent her last days. It was the Saptami of Magha Krishna Pakshya in Samvat 1777. The day is since known as Sahib Saptami, observed by all the Hindus in Kashmir.

# 7.4.3 Mahaniryaan

On hearing that the Mata had breathed her last, Muslims of the locality demanded her burial according to Muslim rites as she was to them the Rupa Aarifa, a Muslim divine. They sought and obtained orders of the then Moghul Governor of Kashmir, and also any assistance to force the issue on the Mata's kith and kin and the large number of the Hindu devotees. Perturbed, her brother Pandit Sansar Chand Dhar prostrated himself at the feet of her mortal remains, requesting her to intervene "to save me from embrrassment which would for ever stick to the clan as a black spot". Lo and Behold, the Bhawani resurrected herself, and addressed all those present, including Muslims. To her brother, she said "stand firm by what you want to do and God will help you. Offer some bread and shirni (sugar balls used in Kashmir on impartant occasions) to the Muslim brethren and bid them good-bye."

Sansar Chand and others did as they were told. Completing all the rituals, the body was taken to the cremation ground on the usual woodan plank bedecked, of caruse, to suut the occasion. But when the time came to place the body on the funeral pyre, it was only the shroud and a few flowers. Rupa Bhawani had merged with the Supreme, Mother Sharika.

Source: Koshur Samachar

# 8 Habba Khatoon



Habba Khatoon

# 8.1 Habba Khatoon

# Braj B. Kachru

Lal Ded contributed the vaks of devotion and wisdom to the Kashmiri language. Habba Khatun, on the other hand, sang songs of love and romance.

Habba Khatun was born in the village of Chandrahar in the sixteenth century. In her earlier days, she was called Zoon (the Moon). She grew up in the midst of the saffron fields and in the shade of the chinar trees. She was not raised as a typical peasant girl. She had learnt how to read and write from the village moulvi. At an early age her father married her to a peasant boy. But this illiterate peasant boy could not keep Zoon happy. He could not understand the longings of her heart. Just like Lal Ded, Zoon also was sad. Lalla became desperate and left her home. Zoon divorced her husband and started singing songs in Kashmiri.

Zoon used to sing in the shade of a chinar tree. One day Yusuph Shah Chak was out hunting that way on horseback. He happened to pass the place where Zoon was singing under the chinar tree. He heard her melancholic melodies, and went to look at her. He was stunned by her beauty. As soon as their eyes met, they fell in love. Later, Zoon and Yusuph Shah were married. She changed her name and became **Habba Khatun**.

Habba Khatun introduced lol to Kashmiri poetry, lol is more or less equivalent to the English 'lyric'. It conveys one brief thought. It is full of melody and love.

Habba Khatun kept Yusuph Shah under her control. The couple was very contented, and Yusuph Shah became the ruler of Kashmir.

Their happiness did not last long. Akbar came into prominence in Delhi, and he called Yusuph Shah there. In 1579, Yusuph Shah was compelled to go to Delhi. In Delhi, Akbar arrested him. He was kept in prison in Bihar. Poor Habba Khatun was separated from Yusuph Shah. The songs of Habba Khatun are full of the sorrow of separation. It is claimed that Habba Khatun introduced the 1ol into the Kashmiri (language) After her came **Arnimal** who also sang mournful lyrics.

# 8.1.1 A Song by Habba Khatun

Which rival of mine has lured you away from me? Why are you cross with me? Forget the anger and the sulkiness, You are my only love, Why are you cross with me? My garden has blossomed into colorful flowers, Why are you away from me? My love, my only love, I think only of you, Why are you cross with me? I kept my doors open half the night, Come and enter my door, my jewel, Why have you forsaken the path to my house? Why are you cross with me? I swear, my love, I am waiting for you, dressed in colorful robes, My youth is in full bloom now, Why are you cross with me? Oh, marksman, my bosom is open To the darts you throw at me. These darts are piercing me, Why are you cross with me? I have been wasting away like snow in summer heat. my youth is in its bloom. This is your garden, come and enjoy it. Why are you cross with me? I have sought you over hills and dales, I have sought you from dawn till dusk, I have cooked dainty dishes for you. I do all this in vain! Why are you cross with me? I shed incessant tears for you, I am pining for you, What is my fault, O, my love? Why don't you seek me out? Why are you cross with me? The shock of your desertion has come as a blow to me, O cruel one, I continue to nurse the pain. Why are you cross with me? I have not complained even to the spring breeze That is my agony. Why have you forgotten me? Who will take care of me? Why are you cross with me? I swear by you I do not go out at all, I don't even show up at the spring. My body is burning, Why don't you soothe it? Why are you cross with me? My hurt is marrow deep; I did not complain. I just wasted away for you. I have suppressed endless longing, Why are you cross with me? I, Habba Khatun, am grieving now. Why didn't I ever greet you, my love?

The day is fading and I keep recalling,

Why are you cross with me?

Source: An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri by Braj B. Kachru Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois Urbana, Illinois 61801 U.S.A. June, 1973

# 8.2 Habba Khatoon

# Philomela of Medieval Kashmir

#### Prof. K. N. Dhar

The cultural heritage of Kashmir is as rich as it is varied. This mental child of 'Kashyapa' has been the recipient of fondest love and bountiful benevolence from Nature and has consequently enthralled the whole world by its superb physical charm from times immemorial. To crown all, this physical grandeur has been very usefully groomed by Kashmiris in weaving the rainbow. Coloured texture of mental and spiritual attainments. In many respects they have been pioneers in evolving a cult of philosophy in tune with their environment and called it as 'Shaivism'. A galaxy of rhetoricians have taken pains in prescribing norms and standards for making the literature in general and poetry in particular more acceptable and representative. To say squarely, not a single branch of literature has been left out by these savants without their impress and alchemic touch.

Not only this, Kashmir has been the testing-ground of three universal religions of the world-Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The traits of all these religions have fused into the attitude of a Kashmiri like milk and candy; and it is no surprise that though bearing Hindu or Muslim or even Buddhist names, a Kashmiti even to-day in actual practice is a living embodiment of Buddhist compassion, Hindu tolerance and Muslim zest for life. Therefore with such a Catholic background, secularism to a Kashiniri is not a political expedient but an article of faith ingrained in his blood from the hoary times to the present day. 'Kalhana' in his monumental History of Kashmir 'River of Kings' has not mentioned even one Communal trouble between the Buddhists and the Hindus when a voracious race was in progress between their respective adherents to make theire own tenets popular and thus steal march over other faiths. In contrast to this, Buddhist Kings have donated large sums for the erection of Hindu temples and shrines and vice versa. Religious battles have always been fought here on paper, in a more rational way, or through dialogues which never left bad taste in the mouths. During the Islamic period Sultan Zain-ul-ab-Din Badshah in an admirable way and forsooth like a Kashmiri to his marrow renovated demolished Hindu places of worship and even started 'Langars' at Places of pilgrimages for feeding the hungry and the devout. 'ShriVara' in his 'ZainaTarangini' has mentioned such 'Satr' or Langars, one of which was located at the foot of Mahadeva mountain.

In this way, when in the 14th-15th century an alien culture knocked at the mountain-doors of Kashmir for being shown in, the values cherished by Kashmiris all along had already prepared a hospitable ground for its happy welcome. The puritanic prosletyzing tenacity of Islam in the absence of any mentionable reaction on the part of Kashmiris compellingly changed to more logical and rational methods. In this political and religious upheaval, long-cherished secular outlook of the faith of the people would have received a jolt, but at this juncture literature came to our succour.

At the confluence of Hindu and Muslim cultures 'Laileshwari' or 'Lalla- Deda' stands like a collossus beckoning people to eschew differences of colour, creed or faith and yoke themselves to attain Identity with Him-- the All-pervasive Transcendental Force called God as such, Therein all are equal, the worldly appellations drop down like slough from a snake. The pursuit of mundane is an exercise in futility; Therefore the goal should be beyond mundane-materiality; It is no use counting mile-posts of material gains or losses and getting lost in its maze; the eye should be on the destination-- the real and permanent.

For reasons obvious, the social fibre of the Kashmiris was also undergoing transformation at that time and the present could not have been in any way palatable to the denizens of Kashmir at large; so like an awake

artist 'Lalla' dismissed the present as trash and ushered in spirituality in its all shades 'Being' was replaced by 'to be'. By borrowing sweetness from the 'unknown' 'Lalla' virtually transformed the frustration or people into the hope to live with ever -appetising gusto. 'Lalla' could not help striking a happy compromise between Kashmiri shaivism and Islamic sufism. It was in tune with the times. To quote Dr. Sufi 'Even long before the formal conversion to Islam, Islamic sufism had already entered tho valley." Cultural conquest is always a pre-requisite to any other kind of conquest. A Kashmiri by nature tolerant and catholic kept his windows open for inhaling the fresh air of sufism. He even assimilated and owned much of it what was good and rejuvenvating.

But, by the time Habba Khatoon's inebriating imagination began to find words, this climate of spirituality and mental drill had become suffocating and even stale in the context of fast changing economic conditions and human values; emphasis on individual instead of on the society had become the accepted norm of public relations and thinking. The extrovert attitude yielded place to introspection. So, the poet in these changed environs harnessed his imaginative faculty to interpret his or her own feelings; Hence, Habba at the very outset of her poetic career rebelled against the prevalent standards of poetry-writing. Textbook idealism is not found in the dictionary of her pulsating emotions. She did not also try to bridge the distance between the ideal and the real. Her substantial contribution in this domain is to interpret her life as it was and not what it should be. Total absence of didactic content in her poetry (what ever is available to us) lends support to our belief, that she always believed in translating her feelings without any redundant appendages of ideal, faithfully and with sincerity of purpose. Her poetry consequently is a happy blend of sweetness and pathos. She has preferred to live in the present, past was beyond her reach and future out of her comprehension.

Kashmiri nation at that time was groaning under internal exploitation and external aggression. The last indigenous ruler of Kashmir Yusaf Shah Chak personified in himself levity and depravation in every sense of the word. "His own Subjects being fed up with his way-ward conduct had to invite the mughals to get rid of such an incapable and debauche ruler," Writes Dr. Sufi in his 'Kasheer'. His regal writ could not run outside his palace where passion and carnality were reigning supreme. This trait of inviting aliens to redress their troubles is not new to Kashmiri character at all. Kalhana has alluded to this many times when the natives falling foul with their rulers invited the neighboring Kings of Lohara (Lorin) and Parantosa (Poonch) to sit on the throne of Kashmir. The great queen 'Dida' herself belonged to Lorin and installed her brother Jayasimha as the king of Kashmir just before her death. So, the Mughals who had vulturous eyes on Kashmir already, but their incursions bad been thwarted by Kashmiri twice before, exploited such a situation to their fill. This was a welcome addition to their diplomatic bag of conquests. Yusuf Shah at last awoke to find his own people arrayed against him. The Mughals arrested him and forced him to live a life of solitary confinement at a remote village in Bihar outside Kashmir, where he ate his heart away in sole distress and breathed his last. It has been contended by some overzealous Kashmiris lately that uprising of Yusuf Shah against the Mughals symbolized the urge of Kashmiris to fight external domination. Unfortunately, the contemporary historical evidence of this period does not, in any way, confirm this view, however laudable it may seem to be.

Moreover, the famine of 1576 A.D. due to the untimely snowfall multiplied the miseries of the people. The devastating effects of this unprecedented famine persisted for full three years and Kashmiris passed their days on starvation level more or less. To this injury insult in the shape of 'Shia-Sunni' troubles was added. Sectarianism became pronounced and it let loose all the evils which nurture and sustain it. In such a disappointing state of affairs, the poet naturally has to close his eyes against all that is happening around and in self-deceit revels in the fanciful panorama of his heart. Habba could not afford to be an exception to this Universal truth. Hence her love-poems do breathe an atmosphere of total self-absorption being blind and deaf to the environmental vissicitudes. These may well be labelled as throbbing vibrations of self-immersion but not self forgetfulness. Her ego is always pronounced in each line of her verse.

Unfortunately for us we are actually at sea about the life of this Nightingale of Kashmir. No authoritative contemporary record has been unearthed so far to test the veracity of the popular tradition which associates Habba with Yusuf Shah Chak. Moreover, we have no hesitation in doubting the credence of the

contemporary records as the History writing even to-day is not free from strings of pressures and pulls. During the rule of the English the events of 1857 have been mentioned as Mutiny, and those very events under the Indian rule have been treated as war of Independence; A dispassionate account of historical events devoid of personal projections is rare even to-day when every man proclaims that he is free and has been given every opportunity for independent thinking and expression of opinion thereof. In those hoary days, when history was compiled at the behest of the king, perhaps in proportion to the munificence the ruler lavished on such mercenaries, distortion of historical facts has always come in handy for the rating clique and its sycophants. In the same way, there is a thin line between aggression and liberation; In such a dilemma the verdict of people should have been the guiding principle for us all, but wherefrom it is to be made available?

Moreover, the evidence of the historical data which is still in manuscript form and has not undergone the acid test of public opinion cannot be relied upon. In Kashmir even to-day people who enjoy leisure and have aptitude are given to record their own experiences in which casual references to rulers have also been made in Sanskrit, Persian or Urdu; but for reasons obvious these cannot be termed as histories as such. Perhaps every Kashmiri house-hold having mentionable literary background of any order can boast of such perional record. By no stretch of imagination these can be treated as historical evidence worth quoting. Therefore, the chronicles written to order or as a product of personal caprice have no place in literary or purely historical criticism, Kalhana has not mentioned the great Shaiva philosopher Abhinavagupta even once. Does it follow from it that Abhinavagupta was not a historical personality at all?

In the face of such scanty historical material at our disposal, we have perforee to fall back upon the popular tradition which in unequivocal and unambiguous terms has all long associated Habba with Yusuf Shah. In the reconstruction of histories of literature the tradition has played no mean part. This kind of unbroken evidence casnot be dismissed as cheap and unreliable altogether. The tradition passes from generation to generation by word of mouth. If in literary criticism this had not been taken cognizance of, then the religious lore of entire humanity would pass on as forged; Actually the case is reverse of it. Tradition has all along held the vedas, the Bible and the Koran as the most respected and the most genuine of all the available literature that has come down to us by the word of mouth. Tradition embraces in its ambit the force of public opinion which cannot be disregarded at any cost. Public opinion in its turn breeds sentimental attachment, and this sort of living testimony is far superior to other media of evidence. Perhaps this irresistible public opinion forced the later Persian chroniclers to make a mention of Habba though two centuries or more after her death. The reasons for maintaining Sphinx-like silence regarding 'Habba' by the contemporary chronilcers may be attributed to the aversion Sunni scholars bad for the wayward behaviour of a sunni girl in consenting to become a 'Keep" to Shia Yusuf Shah. The Shias on the contrary did not like to tarnish the image of the shia king Yusuf by making a mention of his licentious disposition towards Habba. The Hindu Historian could not afford to offend these both sects hence sat on the fence. Therefore, instead of adopting an iconoclastic attitude a critic should own a positive outlook and respect the tradition and the sentiments of people from which he cannot alienate himself. Later skt chroniclers i.e JonaRaja or Shrivara have not mentioned 'Lalla' at all though being her contemporaries, yet the popular tradition has had her day in as much as 'Lalla' lives before our mental eyes even to-day. Historicity in ordinary and unsophisticated parlance connotes systematisation of facts, values, tradition and outlook. Therefore, the role of tradition can in no way be under estimated.

When the dust of such controvercy had settled down, Birbal Kachru and Hassan Khohyami, the first chroniclers in this field, thought it fit to mention her by name. Both these historians have given an account of 'Habba' though in a slip-shod manner; but piecing the incidents together we can build her personality without any fear of contradiction or historical irrelevance. According to them "Habba" was the scion of a well-to-do peasant family living at Chandrahara, a village near the famous Saffron fields of Pampur. She had been married to Aziz Lone one of her collaterals. The proverbial animosity between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law dampened the marital relations between Habba and her spouse. She was forced to live with her parents. 'Habba' at such a tender and impressionably age could not recover

from the rebuff she received at the very threshold of her conjugal life. Her despondency flowed out in the form of poetry pulsating with unartificial fusion of sound and sense. He fame reached the amorous ears of Yusuf Shah, who admitted her to his harem as a 'Keep', and did not allow her the status of a queen. Both the chroniclers are punctillious about using the phrase "sharing the same bed," about her.

Further, Mohammed Din 'Fauq' and Abdul Ahad Azad have provided us with her actual name 'Zoon', as faultless as the moon. Mahjoor has also accepted this name without a murmur. 'Habba Khatoon' presumably a more respectable mode of address than 'Zoon' must have been bestowed upon her when she joined the harem of Yusuf Sbab in keeping with the royal ettiquette. There should be no surprise, or eybrows need not be raised when a Kashmiri lady is supposed to have two names. In olden days, Kashmiri girls after their wedlock earned a new name in their inlaw's house. This custom has persisted with Kashmiri Pandits even now.

A section of popular belief ascribes her home to Gurez where a contiguous mountain and a spring are named after her.

Internal evidence as culled from her verses confirms the first view:-

#### <verses>

"My parental home is situated at the tableland of Chandra Hara."

Her another name can be inferred from this:-

#### <verses>

"I am bemoaning my lot in Plaintive cries, the Moon (Kashmiri Zoon) has been devoured by an eclipse."

Shri Amin Kamil's well-edited booklet containing only twenty songs is the only authentic source material available to us for commenting upon Habba- Khatoon's poetry; however, in addition to these, Kashmiris ascribe many more poems to her and these have been printed. As long as an anthology of all her available songs is not compiled and given the seal of an authoritative edition, we have to confine our comments to these twenty songs only. Interpolations will be there, more essentially so, her extraordinary popularity has been a bane for the original texts composed by her. The more popular a poet, the more danger is there of interpolations creeping into his compositions and after the mischief has been done it seems very dificult to distinguish gold from dross, and often dross passes on for gold.

'Habba' is very proud of her lineage:-

#### <verses>

"My parents brought me up with fondest possible care; A host of maid- servants was at my beck and call. I could not fore-see that the dreams nourished by me would be shattered to the ground. No body's youth with childlike innocence should go unrewarded like that of mine."

'Habba' testifies to her being very well-read:-

#### <verses>

"My parents sent me to a distant school for receiving tuition. The teacher there beat me with a tender stick mercilessly and ignited a fire within me; No body's youth with child-like innocence should go unrewarded like that of mine."

She did not ignore the religious education also:-

#### <verses>

"I committed thirty 'Siparas' of the Holy Quran to memory in a single sitting, faithfully adhering to the diacritical intonations; yet the valentine punctuated with love could not be read with such facile speed. What will you gain by my passing away."

She has woven the scene of her marriage in these words:

#### <verses>

"My parents blessed me as a fortunate daughter, and beckoned to me that the in law's were waiting in the compound for taking me away. My silver- studded palanquin had golden ear-rings hangingdown on all sides. Alas! innocent youth of any body, with child-like innocence should not go unrewarded as that of mine."

But all this pomp and splendour could not pacify the wrath of her mother-in-law:

#### <verses>

"The mother-in law grabbed me by my hair, which stung me more than the pangs of death. I fell asleep on the supporting plank of the spinning wheel, and in this way, the circular wheel got damaged. I cannot reconcile myself with the atrocities of the inlaws, O! my parents, please come to my rescue."

Habba unfolds her love for her husband like this:-

#### <verses>

"I have been waiting for long with extreme patience for you - O! my love (or Aziz) do not be cross with your moon (zoon)! I have adorned myself lusciously from top to toe; so enjoy my youth as lively and inviting as a pomegranate flower."

But Aziz did not relent and Habba bad to experience the pangs of forced widowbood:-

#### <verses>

"I am on pin-pricks for want of an avid response to my love; my bubbling youth is on its ebb. My awake parents, do read in to the hint I have dropped."

The stings of separation from her husband in her prime-youth can better be imagined than described. Perhaps her beiog on the brink of human patience can justify her consenting to give company to Yusuf Shah Chak. She could not wait for legal or other formalities involved in sharing his bed. This might seem not very laudable, yet it is true of every maiden who is a slave to her senses and whose warmth of love has all along remained unrequitted, moreso, it is all the more pronounced in the case of a lady who would like to wreak venegance on the callous society not reciprocating her sentiments, no matter if she loses ber identity in this bargain.

For the span of years in which Habba lived, no cogent authority is available. Mohd Din 'Fauq' and in his foot- steps Abdul Ahad Azad have given her life span from 1641 to 1552 A.D. on the authority of 'Tarikh Baharistan Shahi.' But on close examination Shri Amin Kamil refutes this and says that these dates are nowhere found in this chronicle. However, her association with Yusuf Shah can give us a clue as to the years in which she was still alive. The reign of Yusuf Shah has been determined as 1579-1585 A.D.; so we can safely assume that during these years at least Habba was living. Akbar annexed Kashmir in 1585 A.D. imprisoned Yusuf Shah and externed him to Bihar; so, when her paramour Yusuf tell on bad stars, Habba must have eaten her heart away in disgust and dismay. This was the second rebuff she received at the bands of the Destiny, and this impulsive Lady unresponsive in love, unaccepted by the society still did not own defeat. She created an exuberant world of her own, punctuated it with her emotions resonant with the dirge of what she had got and what she lost. She lived in her thoughts, so to say.

Such a state of mind is a fertile ground for the induction of Romanticism. Habba deliberately ignoring the less pleasant side of her life indulged in dreamy habit of mind. Romanticism is the acme of poet's independence of feelings; under its spell he refuses to be bound by conventional restraints. A romantic poet has either the nerve to rebel nor the will to compromise with his environment. Unmindful of what is happening around him, he delves deep into the inner most recesses of his heart and without fear or malice pours out his felings as they ooze forth. Such a poet is incapable of clothing his emotions with artificial adorations. Romanticism may thus he called the highest water-mark of poet's individual thinking.

Habba may be called the harbinger of such kind of poetry in Kashmiri. She is the originator of popular love-lyrics in Kashmiri literature. However, her love is earthly; she could not rise above it; Her passionate love has its source in the enjoyment or senses and not their denial in any case. She does not feel fed-up with sensual pleasures, but at times would like to revert to these with ever-increasing appetite. She cannot reconcile herself with the sour-truth of being a widow who has perforce to abjure sensuality. She would not like to show herself off as a pious lady either, under the cover of so-called piety myriad sins do thrive when a woman is not mentally ready to own a salutary course of life for herself. Her poetry, therefore, is a candid expression of her feelings which has immenseley contributed to her popularity. She does not like to play hide and seek. Her appeal is straight and unsophisticated.

Habba's forte is love-in-separation. She has not sung even a single verse eulogizing the munificence of Yusuf Shah when she was in her company. In the words of Kalidasa 'Separation chastenes love,' Hence, Habba like a born-poet selected 'separation' for her treatment of love. Her verses throughout waft an air of restlessness and not contentment; Calm Composure and resignation to be in turmoil to fate are absent in her poetry. She seems sit cross-legged, She believes in winning love by bodily excellence alone:-

#### <verses>

"I will apply on my body of spotless silvery sheen, the greasy whiteness of milky creams; I am imnmensely enamoured of thee; I will anoint myself with scented sandal-water. MY love! I will relish to be your slave."

Even though Habba has repeatedly and even lustily made a call to flesh only, yet her songs reverberate an aroma of lasting flavour; though these songs may sound as sensual to a moralist, yet 'Habba' has made no secret of her sensuous attitude to life. She has all along wanted to drink deep at the fountain of life without any saintly pretensions. Therein her moral-courage shines the best. Her voracious hunger in this respect seems unsatiated. To her present holds the mirror to what she lost and what she had gained. Her songs are a lament in every sense of the term. She is firm-footed in her convictions and does not vacillate. This is perhaps the most glaring trait of her poetry. She has no concern for morality or ethics in the sense that she would not elect to be a preacher: She revels in being always loud. She revels in being immersed in her imagination only, yet her ego is always loud. She is not shy of parading her beauty and is rather conscious of it also. Even though she has paid a heavy price for it, still she has no regrets in this behalf.

Habba's refrain is love wedded to pathos; consequently she has kept the windows of her mind shut and her heart is only wide-awake in emitting and receiving images from her fancied dreams. The pathetic content of her poetery is all the more aggravated by the elusive nature of her ideal which has consequently earned for her the epithet 'Nightingale' of Kashmir most squarely. She does not subscribe to the view that "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." In the absence of any appropriate and meaningful response to her simmering emotions, she has opted for self- suffering, telling beads of her tear-drops. Be it Heemal, Arnimaal or Habba Khatoon, it is the Kashmiri woman bemoaning her lot in pathetic plaintives, the common subject with all these, the victims of the conspiracy of circumstances. Habba Khatoon essentially is a typical example of such a woman who cannot make any kind of compromise with life. In this predicament she could have turned a rebel, but, she instead of it, becomes a martyr by consent. This is exactly the most salient feature of Kashmiri womanhood. Towards the closing years of her life, Habba does express her remorse for not compromising with the life as it is, but fashioning it according to her imagination; none the less in the same breath she admits that missed opportunities need not be recalled. She does indicate the 'Achilles Heel' of her personality-to rule only and not to get ruled:-

#### <verses>

"I, Habba Khatoon, is definitely sorry for not adapting myself submissively to the moonish caprices or my lover. I do recaptulate those missed opportunities, but it is now too late to atone for these; therefore, You, my lover! should not be cross with me."

A sense of guilt seems to haunt this love-lorn lady, but at the same time her self-willed nature dismisses this weight on her heart by taking refuge under the excuse that race is already run. This subdued expression of penitence does portray her loud thinking in unguarded moments, but like a wakeful artist, she cancels it in the second breath. She does not flop, as the idiom goes.

Habba's songs are musical in essence and pathetic in spirit. She has also been acclaimed as a melody-queen of Kashmiri poetry. Her popularity is also due to the fact that her songs are not only a replica of Kashmiri sentiments but also a potent vehicle of Kashmiri music. Her originality in this sphere is undisputed. Even though she has appropriated a sizable chunk of Persian words and Persian similes, yet she has refrained from owning Persian code on metres. She has in their place introduced home-spun Kashmiri melodies pertaining to rhyme and rhythm in her quartrains.

Therefore, her songs self-contained in each quartrain can be more profitably compared with the 'Vaks' of Lalleshwari or 'Shruks' of Nund-Reshi from the style-point of view only. These cannot be classed under 'Gazal' or 'Nazam' of Persian metries, despite the fact that Habba has a tendency to repeat refrains.

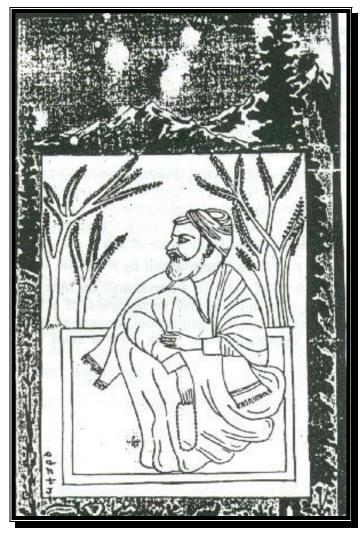
Therefore, it is not without reason that 'Mahjoor'- the doyen of Kashmiri romantic poets, has dealt a dig at one of his celebrated predecessors- Rasul Mir in this pregnent verse, for not paying well-deserved compliment to Habba Khatoon:-

#### <verses>

"Rasul Mir of Shahabad has profusely alluded to the moon of Qandhar; Why has he been averse to the moon (Zoon, Kashmiri) of Chandrahar?"

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

# 9 Swami Parmanand



# Swami Parmanand

(1791-1879)

Philosopher Poet of Kashmir

My thanks and gratitude are due to Sh. M. L. Kaul,
President Kashmir Pandit Sabha of Bombay and Sh. P. N. Wanchoo
for the supply of a photostat copy of my article and
portrait published in the souvenir of MILCHAR of 1973

# 9.1 Parmanand and his 'Krishna Leela - "Contentment leads to perennial joy"

#### Moti Lal Khar

The cultural life of Kashmir has had the impress of great mystics. Often we witness a happy blending of poetry and mysticism in it. Among these mystics a prominent place goes to Parmanand, the great saint-poet of southern Kashmir.

Pandit Nand Ram, Parmanand being his penname, was born in 1791 A.D. in Seer Village near Mattan (Martand), one of the famous holy places of India. Both his father, Krishna Pandit, and his mother, Saraswati Devi, were of religious bent of mind. Child Nand Ram got his education in Persian, the court

language of Kashmir those days, in his own village. He also learned Sanskrit from Sadhus who used to visit and stay at Martand temple. Nand Ram was a precocious child and his teachers and schoolmates were greatly impressed by his sincere devotion and inborn knowledge about spiritual matters. He attained mastery over Persian and wrote verses in that language under the pen-name "Gareeb".

# 9.1.1 Early Life

After his schooling, Parmanand was married to Mal Ded, a girl from his own village. She was an ill-tempered lady, yet the tolerant nature of the saint took it in its stride. His father was a Patwari in Mattan village and after his death Nand Ram was offered his father's post. A Patwari was looked down upon by people in those days. Parmanand had no aptitude for this post, but compelled by circumstances he had to accept it in order to sustain himself and his family.

#### 9.1.2 Meditation

Parmanand was greatly influenced by the scenic beauty of his village and its surroundings. He would be found sitting under a tree absorbed in deep meditation. He would compose verses in Kashmiri there and then. Unlike other Patwaris of his time he never accepted bribes. On the contrary, he would at times pay land revenue from his own pocket on behalf of poor peasants. Being bold and frank, Parmanand made sarcastic remarks in his verses about the then despotic rule even at great risk. He was put to severe hardship by his officers to whom he would never bow or flatter. But by God's grace he escaped dismissal or incarceration. Like Guru Nanak Dev, Parmanand spent all he had to feed Sadhus to the great distress and chagrin of his wife. Parmanand's poor wife often rebuked him for not caring for his family.

Seeing this non-attachment to the things of the world even at a young age, people living in the locality came to realise that Parmanand was born to fulfill a definite purpose and held him in high esteem. After he left his job, devotees would arrange for the maintenance of his family. Especially his Muslim neighbour, Salah Ganai, the headman of the village, stood by him through thick and thin, knowing the worth and merit of Parmanand.

The devotional songs of Parmanand are on the lips of all Kashmiris. His poetic collections are available in both Devanagri and Persian scripts. Master Zinda Kaul, the famous poet of Kashmir, who edited the poetic collections of Parmanand was very much influenced by his poetry. Pandit Narayan Kaul, and his beloved disciple-poet, Pandit Laxman Bhat of village Nagam, also have edited some of his collections. Parmanand was an eloquent and a gifted poet endowed with a forceful style. His devotional songs and hymns in praise of Lord Krishna are to this day on the lips of every Kashmiri. His Sudhama Charactar is regarded as one of its best Kashmiri renderings. His spiritual hymns and Leelas are recited in temples and on marriage ceremonies or on festivals such as Janamashtami or Shivratri. His style is direct and effective.

# 9.1.3 Philosophy

Parmanand's philosophy is best depicted in Karam Bhoomika where he says that the highest good is only attainable when the self is subdued and that perennial joy is the reward obtained by the mastery of one's own self. To overcome one's own self, according to him, is to wage the toughest war in the battlefield of life and to subdue one's own self is the noblest of all victories.

Religion for Paramanand was not mere ritual and formal worship but something far more fundamental and a matter deeply connected with the soul. In the poem, Amarnath Yatra, he describes the different paths and stages an aspirant has to pass in spiritual Sadhna or practice. Most of his poems are allegorical. His poem, Radha Suamber, is his masterpiece and is regarded as one of the most precious contributions to devotional literature. To read Parmanand or listen to his Leelas is to live through a religious experience which gives Param- Anand: eternal bliss.

#### 9.1.4 Fascinating

Parmanand's poetry testifies to a fascinating kinship between mystics all over India. His writings provide convincing proof of the universality of the concept that Truth is one, though sages call it by drfferent names. In his famous poem, Shiv-Lugan, Parmanand propounds the unity of the One and the many. The

infinite and the finite are absolutely identical, according to him. In another poem, The Scenes of the Tree and its Shade, he says that God is attained by merging the finite with the infinite. He asserts that by getting freedom from our wordly fetters we can attain salvation.

Parmanand was loved and adored by Hindus and Muslims alike. Salah Ganai gave him succour in his old age, when Parmanand's kith and kin had died before him, leaving him all alone. He had no son or daughter of his own. At about 90, this great mystic poet died in 1879 A.D. Pandit Laxman Bhat wrote his death date in his elegy in which he lamented, "The singing nightingale of the garden became silent making the garden desolate".

Source: Koshur Samachar

# 9.2 Parmanand - (1791-1879)

# Prof. P. N. Pushp

**Parmanand** rose to enviable eminence not only as a saint, but also as a poet articulating spiritual insights. Born in the family of a village Patwari he was named Nanda or Nanda Ram, and his persistent endeavour transformed him into Parmanand (*Parma Ananda, i.e. Supreme Bliss*) His father, Krishna Pandit, belonged to the village Seer, about three kilometers away from Mattan where he was working as Patwari. His mother, Sarswati, was a pious lady thoroughly conversant with the spiritual heritage of the community, despite her illiteracy.

Parmanand received his formal 'schooling' in a Maktab where he was given a smattering of rudimentary Sanskrit with a working knowledge of the Persian courses deemed essential for a prospective patwari. Persian was, those days, not only the language of administration but also the language of cultural transmission of even the Sanskritic lore, including religion and philosophy, astrology and ritualistic tracts. Parmanand availed of this traditional facility too as is obvious from the copy of the (Persian) Upanikhat left by him. Yet, it was the live contact of Nand Ram with the saints and spiritual aspirants at Mattan and around that deepened his longing for self-realization not withstanding the demands of his profession, and the resentment of his ambitious wife Maalded. She was the daughter of a successful patwari and naturally expected her husband to make hay while the sun shone.

Parmanand braved the stress and strain of the times, and persisted in his Sadhana under competent guidance of a genuine Paramahamsas. His admirers like Saleh Ganai, the Zailder of Mattan, looked after his material needs and provided him a congenial atmosphere for spiritual preoccupation, so that he could articulate his aspiration as well as realization. In his utterance we therefore, find the unfolding of a variety of spiritual layers. During the Amarnath pilgrimage days he had witnessed the multidimensional manifestation of spiritual quest at Mattan and had realized the need to "proceed from the (external) cave to the personal cave (within)' and to face the selfless Self, meditate on the Sahaja (In boro Truth)." The interplay of the individual Soul and the Cosmic Soul was for him a Leelaa (sport of the Spirit) which he presented variously in his verse, particulary in his three Leelaa poems, Shiva-Lagan (Siva's Wedding), Raadaa-Svayamvar (Radha's Choice of Her Own Man) and Sodaam-Tsareth (Sudama's Story).

The allegorical nuance has all through remained unobtrusive yet significant, within the convincing depiction of personal and interpersonal contours of social behaviour such as: parental solicitude to see the daughter suitably married away, and the girl's ambition to secure the boy of her own choice Parmanand has thus achieved remarkable success weaving the Pauranic legends into contemporary realities of pervasive import artlessly harmonized with the allegorical significance, such as in the following rendering:

"Gokul is my heart wherein thrives the pasture of your kine; O Lord, shining in consciousness! Mindways are the Gopi's running reckless after you;

# maddened by the call of Krishna's flute, Losing sentience and feeling, forgetting self and non-self...."

Parmanand's Raasleelaa (in his Raadaa Svayamvar) symbolizes the universal dance of cosmic consciousness, integrating the secular with the spiritual:

"Wandering all around they find him at no point, they hear from far away the flute alone.

None plays there with anyone else, none but Krishna there; Krishna alone, cowherd lads and lasses, men, women, none is there who is not He
.... Trees and plants and stones with eyes agape unravel secrets of the inner depth."

The Shiva-Lagan, similarly signifies the union of Shiva and Shakti at both the immanent and the transcendental levels; while the Sodaam-Tsarete reflects the unshakable ties between the Oversoul and the individual soul, in the ideal friendship of Krishna and Sudama. Similar concern with the essential rather than the ephemeral reverberates in the smaller poems of Parmananda, and quite a number of them sound as spiritual rhapsodies over-flowing with spontaneous lyricism. He left the Kashmiri language positivity richer than he had found it.

Source: Koshur Samachar

# 9.3 Swami Parmanand and his Poetry

The Famous Saint poet and Philosopher of Kashmir

# P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)

**With** the mystic sayings of LAL DED based on her Yogic experiences and the didactic ones of NUND RESHI begins the history of Kashmiri literature through one Shieti Kantha's book "Mahanaya Prakash" existed a couple of centuries or two before.

Whereas LALLA remains unparalled upto date in her mystic sayings, yogic practices and depth of thought in the whole field of Kashmiri literature, NUND RESHI and PARMANAND are the undisputed topmost Rishis of the Religious philosophical thoughts of their respective cults. All the three are held in high esteem by the Hindus and the Mulsims alike in Kashmir for their unity of purpose and divinity of nature.

PARAMANANDA is said to have been served and generously financed by one Salih Ganai, the Vilage Moqdam (Nambardar) after the former resigned his post of the Village Patwari.

Born of Saraswati Devi, (goddess of eloquence and Wisdom also is called by the same name) wife of Krishna Pandith (Svamina Bharadhvaja) in 1791, in the Village SEER near Mattan, he was brought up in that rustic atmosphere and educated in Persian up to the elementary stage according to the prevalent custom. Inspite of this handicap, however, he wrote Poetry in Persian early in life under the poetic title of GARIB. During his tenure of office as the Village Patwari of Mattan, his father had transcribed a big MS of MAHABARATA into Persian which is said to be well preserved upto date.

From a portrait of his, drawn by one of his disciples Narayan Muratgar, it seems that, at the age of three score years and ten, he still enjoyed robust health and wore gray hair above his broad forehead and a long nose on his ruddily face between two bright eyes. His large head appears to be sitting on his broad shouldered trunk over a thick neck

Parmanand of Seer Village really became a tender hearted saint-poet and rose to be a Seer of Wisdom with satire and humour. Married to his elder, childhood -playmate, Malded early in boyhood, his wife, being harsh, was a contrast to his poetico-philosophical genius. She continued to Lord over him throughout his life.

His father died and he succeeded him as the village patwari of Mattan at the age of twenty five years. It is here at Mattan that Parmanand must have read his father's transcription of Mahabarata in Persian, and himself transcribed in his own beautiful hand the Persian translation of the UPNISHADS made under the supervision of Prince Dara Shikoh under the title of UPANIKHAT. It is here at this All India Tirtha of Martand that Parmanand is said to have listened to the discourses of great Sanskrit scholars on Shaivism and Vedantic Philosophy and heard stories of Bhagvata and Puranas as well sayings of LALLA and NUND RESHI. He is said to have been a regular listener to the recitation of Granth Sahib by a Sikh Sadhu at Martand. His family Guru and his (guru's) son. Pt. Atma Ram are said to have given him descriptions of KUNDALINI yoga or Shat Chakra in addition to what he had learned from his father, Krishna Pandith whom he calls his father and his guru.

Lord Krishna is my guru, and He is my dear father.

The vast universe is his body. And He is its soul.

Krishna Pandith is Paramanand's father and Nand that of Krishna Himself, feeling one with the Lord, he playfully and yet reverently and endearingly addresses Him and says.

If Krishna is my father, And Nanda that of Thine, How are we related then Thou can't alone decide;

Parmanand visited some of the contemporary Muslim Faqairs like Wahab Sahib of Khrew and Sadhus like Pt. Tika Ram, a Persian writer of religious philosophy living in his neighbourhood, and one Pt. Nidhan Kak of Bijbehara. Once he is said to have remained closetted for months in his own house, with one Swami Atma Nanda, a sanyasi Parmahansa from Benares, busy in yogic practices and religious contemplation.

He was once invited by Pt. Nidan Kak to give a sitar (Madham) recital at his house at Bijbehara. The musical concert went on throughout the whole night. Most of the listeners were overpowered by sleep one after the other. The master singer rose to the heights of ecstasy and vibrated the quiet atmosphere with wave after wave of devotional songs which found him virtually merged with the Divine spirit. Nidan Kak closely followed and appreciated the music of his songs, but he too was soon found sleeping for a while. During these sweet moments of his sleep he is said to have seen RADHA and KRISHNA sitting in either arm of the sage smiling. Immediately he awoke and bowed in reverence to his honoured guest, musician and saint-friend-Parmanand. Thereafter the two became more intimate and the former often visited him, walking the whole distance of eight or nine miles from Bijbehara to Martand with offerings of humble rice cakes. The latter took these as sacred Navid and distributed small pieces of it amongst his disciples and friends alike.

Parmanand had a marvelous command over his language. He could write in a highly philosophical tone in Sanskritised Kashmiri as well as in a pure unadulterated one as and when he wanted to. There was an exuberance of apt words and thought processes at his command. And he could wield his pen on either in any manner he liked. He is said to have at once responded to the complaint of his saint friend, Wahab Sahib of Khrew about his Sanskritised language, by dictating, on the spot, a poem for him in pure Kashmiri, to his companions.

Nor was Parmanand not affected in choice of language, by his discourses with the pilgrims to Mattan. He wrote many songs and bhajans in a mixed Panjabi-Hindi language. He is also rightly regarded as the first Hindi writer of Kashmir though the saint poetess, Rupa Bhawani, had already broken the ice in this direction by making a smaller beginning much earlier.

The natural phenomena of his environmental surrounding as well as the experiences of his profession as Patwari, and village life all have had their share of impact on his character, mode of expression and his precious expositions.

The most authentic research scholar, a confirmed authority on Parmanand is Master Zinda Koul Sahib, of revered memory, who is also popularly known as Masterji. He groups Parmanand's poems into five divisions according to their sublimity of thought as follows:-

- (1) Litanies to gods and goddesses in which the poet meekly pleads for mercy for his sins and lapses.
- (2) Karamabhomika & Amarnath Pilgrimage containing his most numerous references to yogic practices
- (3) Three longest poems of his namely.
- (a) Sudama charitra depicting the mutual love of Sudama and Sri Krishna,
- (b) Radha Syayamvara with the central theme of mutual love of Sri Krishna, Radha and the Gopies.
- (c) Shiva Lagana culminating in the Re-union of Shiva with Uma. These three long poems symbolise the boundless love of God for the human soul and the love and aspiration of the latter towards God.

One cannot but agree with Masterji that Parmanand is at his best in expressing his unfettered flow of love with all his heart and soul to God especially in the form of Radha and Krishna LILA, Hence the name for all devotional songs as observed by Masterji.

- (4) Didactic Poems laying stress on the Sadhana or preparations and purifications necessary for the attainment of Janana e.g. control of senses, quietude and concentration, Vairagya as well as Bhakti and surrender to God on the part of aspirants to spiritual fife.
- (5) Vedantic and philosphical poems of matured wisdom stating therein the Siddhanta or ultimate Truths of Vedanta-Aparoksha, Darshan Sahaja -Vichar, "Tar ivam asi". Anirvachaniya Maya etc.

Here, according to Masterji, Parmanand rises above external exercises and pranabhyasa- even above the sadhanas of Shama and Dama, not to speak of Dana, Tirtha-Yatra, Homa and Vedantic rituals, and these poems of his read like the meditations of a Jivanmukhta.

Herein below I venture to quote specimens from the poems of each of the five groups mentioned above with their English renderings, as my limited mental faculty in this direction understands them, by way of illustration before the article is concluded.

#### 9.3.1 THE RELEVANT OUOTATION

Thou blessed mother of the universe. Shed thou Thine haloed light on us. And merge our finite into Thine infinite For, are we not sparks of Thy light?

Reinforce thy field of action with
The spirit of duty and devotion,
The seeds of contentment will then grow
And bear the fruits of external bliss.
Harness the oxen of Twin-breath
To plough the field day and night.
Lash them on to work hard
With the Kumbaka whip;
Arise awake and work, on to see.
That not a patch remains unploughed.
Sow thou the seeds of contentment
To grow the Crops of bliss!

(a) Sudama, the Jiva, friend of the Lord arrived Thither went God Sudharshan to receive him And Sudama, the Jiva resigned himself to His care!

- (b) Rukhmini takes, Radha to her Palatial home And Lord Krishna, Sudama, the Jiva to His!
- (c) Parmanand will only relate, what is happening; Shiva will free the Devi of her ego and pride. And the story is long enough wherein Sati gallantly, meekly and innocently Consumes herself in the fire;
- (d) Presently was heard a sound; It was the musical flute-call of His (Lord Krishna) Though the note came from afar, Yet it seemed to come from near by Allured by the musical note, the daughters Rushed out bewitched and, The mothers followed;
- (e) None but the Lord (Krishna) is seen there, He is seen alone making love with Himself, None but he, and he alone Is seen all around;
- (f) The Gopies of my mental dynamics (Flashes of my desires, aptitudes and likings) Are absorbed in Thy thoughts and, Maddened by the bewitching lure Of the sweet call of Thy flute, they Overcome the innateness of The pulls and counter pulls Of the senses and, Forgetting their self and non-self, they Run to Thee, O Lord, Follow Thee and seek Thee and Thee alone;

# 9.3.2 (iv) ABSTRACT TRUTHS REVEALED: (Vedantic and Philosophical Poems)

- (a) To die while living is a gamble, It is to forget the-self.
  And seek the Truth It is to study
  And contemplate on The innateness
  Of actions and feelings.
- (b) Some may call it Shakti (energy) Some Shiva.
  He is born of nothing nor Is his existence dependent on Cause and effect;
  During day, and at night, he Is all bliss and,
  All light and light;
- (c) He is all above duality, There is no I or you or he in Him, He is, because He is; And all that, which Appears real Inspite of being.

# Unreal, Also is He;

## 9.3.3 THF FND

Towards his last days, Parmanand contracted fever and yet sat on his seat as before. At last he directed his disciples to keep by his side on the last day of his life. He sat, as usual, in Sidhasana, uttered 'OM' and, something was seen bursting forth through his large skull and, peacefully flying off in all its glory. Thus was this great Soul taken back by the Lord to the heavens whence he had come, never to return.

- 1. His dates of birth and death are recorded as (1791--1885) in "Hindi in Kashmir" by the writer P.N. Razdan; With encouraging comments by Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee the then Chairman Sahitiya Academy New Delhi and others.
- 2. (1791-1879) in Parmanand by Prof. S.K. Toskhani.
- 3. (1846-1934 S.M) in Parmanand by Master Zinda Koul who quotes the same lines of a poem in Persian by Lakshman Bulbul Nagami as quoted by Shri Toskhani in his book on the saint.

Source: Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat

# 9.4 Parmanand's Philosophy Parmanand's Poems Translated

# P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)

**According** to Pt. Shiv Ji Krandigami (Kashmir)) in Koshur Samachar of March-April 1992 Yoga is not anything on the earth, or big-sphere. If it is anything, it is a bond between the body and the soul, as also the connecting link between the soul and the supreme Soul. Oneness, integration and kinship i.e. undistinguishable dissolution with the INFINITE.

Obstructions to the dissolutions are: Lust, desire, anger, attachment, conceit, ego and mansar. One's success in yoga subdues these obstructive enemies and brings them under one's grip and control. Thus, rising above egoistic-self and conceit, a Yogi finds his spiritual path smoothened to become one with the "TRUTH OF TOTALITY.

Swami Nand Ram Parmanand seems to have attained Param Anand (Supreme bliss). The poetic exposures of his experiences in the spiritual field depict his closest intimacy verginy on oneness with the all pervading, supreme energy (PURASHA) called God and symbolized by names like Krishna Murari, Murli Manohar, Shiva Shamboo and like forms of endearing address such as expressed in:

#### 'Slaves shine that we are, why don't thee listen?'

Though Parmanand's poems are often profusely interspersed with references to Lord Krishna, holding HIM closest to his bosom, yet he is by no means separate from Lord Shiva or Brahma, the three, apparently finite, are "Formless". Limitless and Infinite" Pt. Shiv Ji Krandigami says that Parmanand found no conflict between external life, as a social being, internal contemplation and spiritual pursuits. The two can co-exist with advantage.

C/p Vaakh Number 8. Shruk Number 4.

His statement finds corroboration in the fact that Parmanand often went into socio-religious and philosophical discussions with all India Pilgrims who frequented Mattan every year

There are also others like Pt. M.L. Koul who contend that Parmanand believed in freedom from worldly fetters to facilitate Salvation.

But one thing is certain that he was not at ease with his life- partner who, as a housewife, always pestered him to replenish his own house.

Lord Krishna is my guru And He is my dear father The vast universe is his body And He is its Soul

Krishna Pandith is Parmanand's father and Nand that of Krishna Himself feeling one with Lord, he playfully and yet reverently and endearingly addresses Him and says.

## 9.4.1 AMAR NATH YATRA

Is a long multi-meaning poem, deeply mystical in nature, by implication. It is also reflective of the hurdles, a Sadakh, saint or sufi has to face in his spiritual pursuits. Besides laying stress on the absolute truth of oneness of the Supreme Energy, he says that this unlimited oneness assumes finite forms under different nomenclatures in different countries and climes whereas one is representative of the other. Amamath Yatra or Kailash perceptable or the imperceptable objects are ultimately one and the same Supreme Energy. Comparing the Amar Nath cave with the hollows inside the human body, he associates the stages of the actual yatra (pilgrimage) with the traditional stages of Kundalini from Muladhara to Sahasrara at the crown of the head. And so, he suggests going within from without n Sadhana in consonance with his two predecessors, Lal Ded and Nund Reshi

Muttering the Mantar; "Shiva, Shamboo"
Meditate on the Lord with a calm mind;
Inside the cave of human body, lies
The truth' contemplation and
The lingam of eternal bliss;
On the throne of my heart,
He sat calm and composed;
What if, people may say that
We slept atop KAILASH there?

#### 9.4.2 SHIV LAGAN

Affirming the universality of the ultimate Truth of Totality in this popular, thought provoking poem Parmanand corroborates the concept of oneness of all that is finite, with the infinite as propounded by Lal Ded.

#### 9.4.3 RADHA SWYAMVARA

Is an excellent specimen of devotional, literature of all times and climes, as far as my impression be faithful to me after having read the poem in the early forties half a century ago. Neither the book nor the poem is available here at Jammu presently

Jubliant outburst on the birth of Lord Krishan;

The gloom of darkness has vanished on thy birth Long live Devkinandna jai, Jai Jai Devkinandna,

Tributes to Pamma Sadha Shiva:

In blissful bloom's Parma Sadha Shiva Truth, contemplation, bliss And currents of science.

Invoking his Guru:

Reveal to me too, thy knowledge, my Guru, and Make me drink the Amrit With the light of thy Gyan, O. my Satguru. (Practical experience).

## 9.4.4 TRINITY ASPECT

Despite all this single minded devotion to Lord Krishna, however, Parmanand does not ignore the Trinity aspect of the Almighty as per the Hindu tradition as elsewhere. To conclude, he sees the three; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in one, Parma-Shiv. His Kashmiri poems, replete with absorbing reflections of divine sentiments and devotion, pin-pointed his philosophy which gives him an unique place of pride in Bhakti and Philosophical literature all over the country.

# 9.4.5 Closetted with an Indian Non-Kashmiri Saint:

Once a pilgrim-saint, visiting Mattan spring, accompanied Parmanand to his home. Both remained closetted there inside a close room for a couple of months or so. The two remained busy in Sadhna without disturbance of any sort whatsoever.

After the tryst of deep meditation (Yoga) the two emerged out completely changed, looking younger and robust as if by 'Kaya Kalap'. This reminds one of 'Kaya Kalap' of Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, in the thirties of this century. Despite his cutting short the prescribed period, he looked twenty years younger after emerging from the ordeal, for the better.

#### 9.4.6 GOKUL IS MY HEART

Introductory to the Poem:

Parmananda is essentially a devotee of Lord Krishna despite his deep interest and devotion to the Trinity aspect of Godhood:

Brahma, the Creator

Vishnu, the Preserver and

Maheshwar, the Destroyer

who on ultimate analysis dissolve into the single, ONENESS-concept of God

The Poem, "GOKUL's HREDAY MEON' (Caption mine) is a mirror of Parrnanand's devotion to LORD KRISHNA;

- (a) Lord Krishna's Gopies are Parmand's nervous system and the nerves, both sensory and motor nerves, arising from it. They govern his five senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight. He finds them magnetically attached to and dancing, like gopies around the musical FLUTIST LORD.
- (b) The sensations of fever, pain and hunger etc. keep hinged to and moving about Girdhar Gopal.
- (c) His instincts, innate feelings and emotions like love and hatred, grief and joy, happiness and sorrow, anger, pugnacity and wrath, are intently focussed on his COW BOY.
- (d) His logic and philosophy, reasoning and judgement, intelligence and wit, fair-play and justice, pity and compassion revolve about the central axis of Krishana Murari.

Thus is Parmanand's very being deeply absorbed and ever remains a constant participant in the struggle that goes on within, illuminated by the Divine light as Lord Krishna guides Arjun in the 18-day Mahabharata war between Pandavas, and Kaurvas at Kurukshetra.

The Poem "GOKUL IS MY HEART" is replete with vivid reflections of observations made here. Our sensory nerves and sensations are as mobile and frisky as Gopies like, will-of-the wisp.

Gukul's My Heart, There's......

# 9.4.7 GOKUL HREDAY MEON

1. Gokul is my heart where here's thy milk shop.
Recollect and contemplate I
The lure of thy flute,
And the haloed Light,
O, Lord, my God;
My senses are thy Gopies, who

Run after thee: Mad after the sweet call
Of thy flute-tunes;
Unconscious of strangers
And the self,
Dead are their nerves!

- 2. Hand in glove with thee, they
  Dance in the dancing ring
  Where Vyas and
  Narad, too, are present
  In obeisance;
  Where Radha, in submission
  Is telling the beads
  "Radha Krishna Radha Krishna";
  Gods and Godesses also keep
  In attendance there
  Waiting and pining
  To meet- THEE....;
  Weeping and singing,
  They tire not!
- 2. Flowers take colour and bloom At the sight of thee, and, Wear a smiling face, as thee! Soothed and solaced, as they feel In the magnetism of thy Presence; Garlands would we thread For thee and, shower thy path With colourful petals!
- 3. Omnipresent that
  Thou art indeed, and yet,
  Separate art not thee from
  Mundane life;
  Though thy Maya, shadows us out
  From Thee!

or

In love for thee, I see you
Everywhere and yet,
Separate aren't thee
From Mudane life;
In elusive Maya, thou seem to be
Out shadowed from us;
C/P L.V. No. One, N. Shruk No. One.

7. In thy illusive void
And unlimited existence
Thou looketh like the starry dome
That serene light:
The sublime Vision!
Thou god of gods, and
Life of the living!

6. As one conceiveth, so one Seeth thee.

Pray grace me too With thy Darshan, O, Narayana! Too impatient am! To wait any more!

7. "As one wisheth, so one geteth The fruit of Karma." Sayth thee, O. Lord, The giver of all! All, "give and take", is Thy own Maya, and yet, Why is man jealous of man?

- 8. The wise forgive the unwise and, Suffer no loss for it!
  O, yee unwise, realise that Right action is more precious than Empty prayer!
- 9. Could I? i would proclaim
  The truth but,
  None being receptive'
  Whom should I reveal
  My heart?
  Singular truth seeps only
  Into deep, sober minds!
- 10. Does a sun-and-moonless earth Sparkle?
  Or would a godless soul halved be?
  A godless life is no life:
  Garlands would I offer HIM Without fail,
  Would that He were ever
  To remain before me!
- 11. Slaves shine as we are,
  Why do not thee
  Accept our plea?
  Shouldst thou treat shine own
  As strangers?
  Aren't we suppliants at thy feet,
  Seeking Compassion?
- 12. Dumb of tongue, how can I speak? How does one understand The depth of feeling of another? One, who realises the truth, Why's he unable to reveal it To others?
- 13. Even on bitter weeping, Too atrophied's my tongue To utter a cry! Friendly He's not as Elusive He is Injured is my liver and The wounds don't heal!

14. In search of HIM, I go
From country to country, but
Not a trace of HIM, I find anywhere.
I wait and wait, yet
He doesn't oblige!
Too weary are my feet:
I weep and weep......and,
My tears fill pails deep!

15. Greatly complex is god's Maya. Too many embark on fathoming The mystery, but Realising the truth once. They lose the thread, Time and again!

16. Wary aren't we in varied play, I would pray to Thee, O, Narayan! All too suddenly Be consistently in play with me:

17.0, Krishna, Thou seeth us sin, Pray wash off our sins, Unwise that we are:
Be merciful now that
We acknowledge our lapses!
...... strain.

18. None comprehendth, Bhagwath Mazda
To everyone
It is like the one.
As one conceiveth it
To be!
Unmindful of egoistic self and,
Regardless of "You and I"
Come let us accept it
s we conceive it

19 He, who isn't born of anyone, And, of whom none is born, Whom the living precisely know is such: One, who knows, contemplates And yet, Few know him thus!

20. A mere figment of immagination too He is not . for, With four VEDAS, He Reaches where ever necessary, And with his thousand tongues, Even Sheshnag also is Dumbfounded!

21. To one, He grants to the extent Of one's devotion and desire

......
I surrender to Thee, that Thou art my own!

22. Leaving behind all their wealth, They die.
Blessed are those who have none: Pray I to Thee,
O, Lord, my God,
For contentment and,
That II be millions and billions
For me!

23. Let my mind be dyed in composure And that 'll be my wealth and pelf. Quench my search for Truth And, Divine knowledge: Always to find Thee In my company!

24. Magnanimously, the Lord Was heard saying:
"All the virtuous suppliants Whose hearts bubble with The love of right action.
Are ferried across great spans By the Ferryman!
Of His Own!

25. No one, awake and God- conscious, Is without Him: He is the speaker and, The listener, all by Himself! He is the force behind Every action and, Every action is His doing!

26. Sweet as honey, in speech We approach Thee, With love and affection: For identification! Ever thinking of and concerned, Are we about Him as, He is we and We are He!

27. Parmanand is blessed with
The bliss of Param Anand (Supreme bliss)
As, smeared is he and his
Every nerve with
Lord Shiva's balm of ashes!
For:
RADHA is his mother and
Lord KRISHNA,
His Father!

#### 9.4.8 GOPIES, LIKE, FAIRIES DANCE

- 1. Let us form a ring
- 2. Flowers would we offer In prayer: Trust we not The strangers!

- 3. Jostled with Him in dance
- 4. Pearls for tears, They shed ! In measured steps and, rhythmic movement
- 5. Receptive mind's and shaky feet, He may Stabalize!
- 6. Bewitched by the bright lamp The butterfly O, When'll we be mad after The madman (The Lord!)
- 7. Bare-footed in woods in blazing heat and Blistered over-----Hot roads
- 8. How hard is to Speak the Truth (This much) revelation Even after self -realisation The desire to probe, What else is said", Still persists!

And dance like Fairies bright

Lord Krishana to awaken From Slumber! And dance like Fairies bright.

Solaced and soothed is He And dance like Fairies bright!

Piles of emeralds they build!

May we dance like Fairies bright.

Induce compassion in Krishna, It may! And dance like Fairies bright

Dances around and Gives its life in the dance!

And merge like it with Him.

In the ecstasy of the dance Around Him! Weary and Exhausted'ld those Krishna Bhakhta become May we dance like Fairies bright! Who has's been blessed with The Parma Ananda?

And dance like Fairies bright!

#### 9.4.9 REVEAL TO ME THY......

- 1. O, Keshav, may thee not Put me to shame, now that I'm already grey haired! Pray reveal to me, Thy godly grace!
- 2. Waning is my youth
  Prompt me on to the right path
  Otherwise, helpless, I might be
  Misled!
  Pray, hold my hand in old age
  Lest I should go astray
  Reveal to me, Thy godly grace!
- 3. Too distant yet, seems to be
  My goal Lord,
  Pray, don't yee frustrate
  My mission!
  Was I born to
  Grope in the dark?
  If, it was so,
  What use is my life?
  Mayst Thee not screen me off
  From bewilderment and perplexity?
  Reveal to me, Thy godly grace?

- 3. Withered in my youth, don't yee Disenchant and disillusion me! Should I contemplate on my birth, What have I gained in life? Free me from shackles of evil That might evoke public redicule Reveal to me, Thy godly grace!
- 4. A mountain have I to climb.
  Let the day not end
  Nor the sun set !,
  Where'll I ascend? and
  Where descend, back and forth, back and forth?
  Guide and steady me
  Mayst Thee lead me on thy path:
  Reveal to me, Thy godly grace!
- 5. Don't yee rock me to slumber At early dawn, nor Waylay me in broad daylight! Shed Thy serene light, O, Kamadeva To dispel my evening darkness! Reveal to me Thy godly grace!
- 7. In the name of Shri Ram, Lead me on to destroy Lanka the Evil, lest It should induce in me Sleepy negligence: Awaken me from my Kumbakaran's Proverbial sleep Reveal to me Thy godly grace!
- 8. In Thine Testing Pool,
  Make me wash my heart and soul,
  Now that I've fully
  Surrendered and pinned all my
  Hopes on Thee!
  Free from wavering and want,
  Dejection and despair: always
  To keep me company and,
  Never to part for a moment!
  Reveal to me Thy godly grace!
- 9. Make me not drink the intoxicating drug
  Of attachment and desire.
  Pat me, when I say,
  "I" am Thee!
  Make me weigh,
  In the balance of my mind,
  All.that I hear!
  Reveal to me Thy godly grace!
- 10. Gradually, open my bud to bloom:

  PARAM ANAND\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parmanand!

  Intimate me with

  The secrets of transcendental mystery!

  Thou, Thyself art the People and.

  The people's mouth-piece,

Don't yee single me out!
Reveal to me Thy godly grace!

#### 9.4.10 IN SEARCH OF HIM

1. Shower on HIM' the flowers of love; Form a ring and dance and sing:

2. As vigilant as Bulbul,
With Oriole's soul,
The tree of contemplation
Has begun to bloom:
Keep on waiting,
For HIS message!
Forrn a ring and dance and sing!

3. Feelingly, BUMBUR, went (drove) Into seclusion
Deep into the flower garden and,
Started buzzing unto HIM:
"Guon, Guon, Guon ":
Form a ring and dance and sing!

4. Gather slowly, yee girl friends, One by one, to Shower Petals of Bhakti On HIM'.whom They call Nand Lal! From a ring and dance and sing!

5. Lured by that inner Moonlight, He entered within! Amrit was born in His graceful presence: May He offer us too A peg of Shyam Sundara's Divine wine! Form a ring and dance and sing!

6. Enjoy the charm of Achcha Posh (a wild flower)
Now that SPRING is come!
Bulbul is on the move
In gardens!
Leave thorny thistle:
Ego, desire and, attachment aside
Form a ring and dance and sing!

7. He, who saw that lovely bird, Right in his presence, Come with a necklace of Pearls To adhore HIM: The VISION, unwittingly pushed off In a moment, A year that passes by!

8. With the gain of Practical knowledge Make amends, and Take care of yourself:
Concentrate on the currents of

Contemplation Understand, if life is or Isn't transitory! """strain

## 9.4.11 IF THE LORD......

- 1. Whence'll a Bhakta be gifted with Love and Dedication, if The Lord, in whose quest, He has embarked, doesn't Bless him with what he Asks for?
- 2. Blessed is he, who is experienced!
  Devoid of sight, what use is
  A lamp to the blind, in darkness?
  Only he sees whom,
  He Asks to open his eyes!
  If the Lord...........
- 3. Wide open are the doors and windows Of HEAVEN!
  Protecting your eyes, enter
  And just, dance therein!
  What can he do, whose
  Bloom of youth is too withered
  To enjoy the fruit?
  If the Lord........
- 4. Who's there that has understood The ways of fate and The decrees of God? Who's there that has been able To reveal the mystic secrets and, To whom? The winds in the rough seas Won't ferry the boat across!
- 5. Bereft of his own, is he,
  Whom gods don't give:
  A cringing miser accumulates,
  Nor has he enough to eat!
  How can cooked rice depict to him
  The process of steaming food?
  If the Lord......
- 6. We destroy what we achieve ourselves By jealousy and enmity!
  Do the times deserve
  Such dispensation?
  If one gets entangled in he maze of wrong action,
  What complaint can one make
  Of what hinders one's path?
  If the Lord................
- 7. Parmanand, tell us of Sudama's: Would buds open on rotten trees,

Dry and dusty?
Pray,
Restore glow on Autumn Brown!
If the Lord......

#### 9.4.12 MAKHAN CHOR

- 1. Light dispelled darkness On thy birth! Jai Jai Jai Devki Nandanai!
- 2. O. Yee smiling son of Vasudeva's,. On gazing at Thee, again and again, What recognition Could he retain of Thee? Born, and gone to Nanda goor's that Thou were, O. Aka Nanda Jai jai jai ............
- 2. JAMUNA was anxious to touch Thy feet in reverence, Selflessly with love, O, Balagopal! That's why, its waters Rose higher and higher Jai Jai Jai......
- 4. Not knowing that the supreme King Had descended to the earth, In person, Yashodha Mata Blamed Thee of pilfering milk: At this, thou opened, Thine mouth And showed her the Universe therein! Jai Jai Jai......
- 5. Bodh Bror\*, the milk thief Began to crawl, and The milk maids from all sides, Came running, to see Him Break their pails, one by one: Thuck, Thuck, Thuck! Jai Jai Jai......
- \* (One of the notorious thieves of Kashmir who mewed, like a cat to cause deluge in their victims)
- 6. Watching and scanning Thine pranks thus, They understood shine Omnipresence!
  But, who could reveal Thy secret nature?
  None but one Shukdevni could
  Do so!
  Jai Jai Jai......
- 8. Narada, the world teacher and Swami; Even him, the Supreme spirit too,

Penetrated into the interior of inner-self: Loves and regards him but, Keeps an eye on and, ever continues Keeping him under watch! Jai Jai Jai.....

8. With His varied attributes, varying ways, Varied facets, moods and modes, On gazing at which, again and again, Even NARADA too was puzzled, and Perplexed!
Jai Jai Jai.....

#### 10. Missing

- 11.He's the earth's impressive border! He, the beauty and fragrance of flowers, Grandeur of gardens, sweetness of ... Oriole notes and, musical as bulbul's Jai Jai Jai......
- 12. To whom even great
  Yogis squalled not
  In contemplation,
  Wealth of knowledge, helps not in
  Making friends!
  Can the eyes bear the glare of
  His glowing glamour
  Jai Jai Jai......
- 13. O, Yee, Gopinath of the Gopies, Waiting I'm at Thy door, A helpless soul!
  O, Madhav, Yadavni's darling!
  Jai Jai Jai........
- 14.I know no Mantar, Tantar or Peath! In the vast bivouac of life:
  Where's the bund and,
  Where the ford?
  Ferry across, my boat now that
  I'm telling the beads on Thy name!
  Jai Jai Jai......
- 15. Unlettered I am, In devotion and prayers, Nor can I recite Sahasranama! Sudama, with a handful of baked flour Have I come to Thee! Abashed and sweating, I am And repentant! Jai Jai Jai.......
- 16. Overwhelmed by a sinful life, Far-off from celibacy that I am, a cursed soul! Who else other than Thee Can do Justice with compassion To this abject wretch, Parmanand

Who lay prostrate at thy feet-Jai Jai Jai :.

# 9.4.13 KEEPING THE VOW

#### **COMMITMENTS:**

**Note**: Despite his ever, absorbing concentration in Sadhana, meditation and contemplations Parmanand did not differentiate between the worldly and spiritual spheres of action; much less, advocate negation of social contract as in material life.

Hence his advocacy of maintaining a balanced coordination of social, moral and spiritual life.

Not withstanding the fact of harsh bully of a wife that may fall to one's lot, one should abide by one's marital commitments neither more nor less.

1. Bear with the harshness of your Destined conjugal life: Neither more, nor less!

2. With the tickling of contemplation 'II.

Ooze out" Abi-zam-zam" (Amrit) by Zekhir: (loud chanting in quick succession)

From the springs of the heart!

After Shirin did Farhad

Sacrifice his life:

Bear with the harshness of

Conjugal life,

Neither more, nor less!

3. Should you toil till,

The fallow land,

Teased and tossed about would you

No longer, be, for

Your past lapses:

Wait not but,

Self-till the waste lands:

Keeping your promises.

Neither more, nor less!

4. Harvesting, O, you grower,

Beware

Of tussle, jealousy and turmoil!

Control emotions and abstain from

Infectious enmity!

Harvesting, O, you harvester,

Cherish'ld you, the joy of

Achievement! S

ick to your worn,

Neither more, nor less!

5. Far from malice and anger,

Pay off your dues (revenue)

In the following meadows, and

Await your calm and peace!

Walk in step and at ease.

Sure, you'll reach your goal!

Keep your balance in your promises,

Neither.more, nor less!

6. Melting the steel of ego and conceit,

Mould it into ornamental border:

Firmly hold and, keep your calm: Waste not a moment, Run to master Khar. Keep your word, Neither more, nor less!

7. Had thought I, that
Wahab would appreciate
My plea and,
Give me a healing touch:
But those, whom gods love,
Are called from above!
Stand by your word,
Neither more, nor less!

8. What reply can I give
To the promise, I have made?
Time is slipping by and,
The Sun is about to Set!
Compassionate towards me
Would He be......
Nor would He look to my lapses!
Keep your vow in view.
Neither more, nor less!

9. Clean hearted is a free soul, But Parmanand is wanting In faith and love: Pray appreciate his plea and, Grant his prayers! Be true to your commitment, Neither more, nor less!

#### 9.4.14 SOCIETY AND SPIRITUALITY

- 1. O, yee, immortal soul, elusive's the world Entitled you are to become Adi-Deva With free ferrying across the ocean of life (Bawa Sara) Contemplate on Truth, friend Contemplate on Truth!
- 2. OMKAR's the first and last word,
  The perennial, primeval sound:
  The conscious or unconscious basic sound of meditation,
  Focus attention on contemplation,
  Focus attention on contemplation
  Focus attention on contemplation.
- 3. Before or after, it's the destiny That shapes our ends, "To move back or go forth" is not Within your ken. Kith and Kin, father and mother Who'll endure and help you? Think friend, think. Do good, be good, friend Do good!
- 4. Dependent on others in childhood You are, O, you unlettered:

Blind in lust in youth; and Worried of listlessness in old age: Be good and do good to others Do good to others.

5. Useful's audience with the wise Thence free you are to ruminate Over the precious words of wisdom: Sit in meditation and you'll find Him Ready to receive and welcome you, And, bless you with His August Presence!

6. Attachment is like a breach in the Bund Of river Sindh, as Sense organs, of bodily calm Those, who have crossed the Ocean of life, are Autars or incarnations of the Lord! Control the senses, and servants of yours, They'll be! Celebrate Dussehra, Celebrate Dussehra!

7. Having found the pearly necklace of Bhakti,
Free you are to wear it!
Who forbids you?
Who approves it?
You are all in all,
You are all in all!

8. Even a grain wouldn't you get
Though brimful the stores are, and
Wide open that your watering mouth is!
Exhausting the fruits of fate,
Scared you would be
Of the turn of events that be
In the queue of grinding mill,
In the gueue of grinding mill!

9.Who's employed and who unengaged?
Perplexed and puzzled, in vain, you are:
Control your mind that's
What the vedas say.
That is the key to success.
That's the way to succeed in life!

10. Superb green is self-renunciation.
"Shiva, Shiva" mutters itself, the cataract:
Calm, composed and selflessly, should you sit, and
Blessed you'll be to see the sight:
Tranquil, quiet Shalimar!
Tranquil. quiet Shalimar!

11. Subedar of the mighty city; He's With powers of freeing you from Lust, duty, action or meanings or Liberation He's the Lord, He's the Lord' Have a chat, share discussion with Him; Share discussion with Him!

12. They call me Parma Anand
A social being though I am,
With the same duties and functions
As a common man.
Knowledgeable about the Devas,
He's the master of the three worlds:
All powerful! All Powerful!

### 9.4.15 YEARNING FOR LORD KRISHNA

People consider Parmanand as a staunch devotee of Lord Krishna. But his poems on and repeated references to Lord Kirshna include Lord Shiva, the omnipresent, and to Brahma at times, make it manifestly clear that he sees, the three, in one as the ultimate TRUTH as per the Hindu doctrine. Shiva, to Parmanand, as to Lal Ded and Nund Reshi, exists in every nook and corner, compound and element as well as the smallest atom and, energy of all sorts which keep the universe going.

- 1. Shri Shyam Sundara, the sweet flutist, Ethereal, eternal flute-player! Know not, Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwar Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist! (Lord Krishna, to Parmanand being three in one)
- 2. O, Keshav, Keshava,
  Soft, feathered fan, we'll use
  In Obeisance and prayers to Thee
  O, Shiva, I see you everywhere or
  (Shiva, the omnipresent that thou art)
  Reshis found Thee not, anywhere,
  O, Bishambara!
  Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!
  C/P LV. Number one, N.Sh. Number
- 3. O, thee, the source of seven seas, Who hast ferried those that Have landed across? Fourteen jewels, hath thee, Turned out to be, O, Shridhara! Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!
- 4. Taking Thee for a child among children. We play together with Thee, all Elegantly draped, groomed and Well decorated-O, Rethendar! Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!
- 5. O. Thee Shankara in reality amongst Angelic fairies, Fragrant garlands we have Woven for Thee! Gandharvas sing for Thee, O, beauteous Lord Krishna! Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!
- 6. East, West, South and North
  Eager eyes gaze with anxious looks:
  Our eyes swollen in the gazing
  Listless, motionless and numb,

In waiting with focussed minds! Ethereal eternal, sweet flutist!

7. Weeping and filling
Pools with tears,
We are:
Hearth thee not these implorings?
Light's bedimming on pillars:
Haunting pangs are deepening!
Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!

- 8. Tumbled down, we have, but Stone-hearted have Thee become! Havn't we bedecked Thy path With our eyeballs clean? Grace us with Thy presence before it's Too late to save our face! Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!
- 9. Cows and calves have stayed back, With faith in Thee! In faith, they have stayed back, It seems! Would that we would go Home Along with them all! Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist! C/P L.V. 23.
- 10. The biggest ocean of mercy is OMA to us!
  Aren't you the gainer, and We, the losers?
  Lord god, the grace of thy Darshan Would satiate our Craving!
  Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!
- 11. When the errands from Gokal Came, saying:
  Searching Him all around,
  They found Him not anywhere!
  "Re-searching Him again
  In and outside Gokal"
  They began a new!
  Ethereal, eternal, sweet, flutist!
- 12. Seeking thee we go
  From jungle to jungle with faith
  In Thee! Grace us with Thy presence
  And, we'll hold thee to our bosoms!
  O, Jasudha Nandana, darling son
  Of Vasudeva!
  Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!
- 13. Parmanand speaks strangely: Naked Thy have come, and All Naked'ld they depart: Parmanand'll use his own Measuring rod to check

Something ! Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist !

or

Paramanand talks in riddles: Craving they came and, Craving departed! Using his own measures, will He verify something; Ethereal, eternal, sweet flutist!

## 9.4.16 LOVE AND Supreme Sada Shiva

Here this poem makes it manifest that while Parmanand is so absorbed in the blissful aura of Lord Shiva, the supreme Sada Shiva, almost to the limits of trance, he urges people not to be mad after caste and creed in the quest for godliness and godhood, brotherhood and love. Nor does he ignore the scientific of observation and experiment to arrive at conclusions in the spiritual field.

1. In a superbly beautiful pose, Sweet as honey, is Supreme Sada Shiva...... Truth, consciousness, bliss And, vibrations of science!

2. Thy gift of eight fold Sidhis Verily is Millions and trillions for those hat have chunk Thy Amrit Gulp by quip, O, Thee Creator of all life! Truth, consciousness, bliss And, vibrations of science!

3. How I kubza, wish to be
Ever busy singing hymns unto Thee!
Fill Thy oceans of wisdom
Into my tiny pail!
Grant me the tongue that be
Ever vibrant in song unto Thee!
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And, vibrations of science!

4 Diminished has all hope and trust Of my only Hope, O, my only Hope! I have resigned unto Thee O, Shiva, I have pinned All my hopes on Thee! Truth, consciousness, bliss And, vibrations of science!

5. Self with self has to meet, Hast a play to play, And comments to make! Dumb-founded, we become as Gold emerges Purified from burning fire! Truth, consciousness, bliss And, vibrations of science!

6.With the banishment of ego, Will vanish conceit:
Thence flows clear knowledge That kindles the lamp of Krishna consciousness for Ethereal flights!
Truth, consciousness, bliss And, vibrations of science!

7. Only he, who pines for Him, Will be pined for by Him; Only he, who desires to receive HIM Would verily be welcomed by Him! Yearning to see Him, in good faith Let's await His Arrival! Truth, consciousness, bliss And vibrations of science!

8 Love only begets love, Love alone is fondled mutually Love, only the LOVE I Cherish And rock in the cradle of my lap! Truth, consciousness, bliss And vibrations of science!

9.None is devoid of love,
Only love eliminates all-evil
Let's dispel darkness of the devil
With the light of Love!
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And vibrations of science!

10.Listen to LOVE that is sung
In Bawan! (Mattan Spring)
Only love equals fourteen pilgrimages
To Bawan!
That sparkling love, would!
Swing in gentle breeze!
Truth, consciousness, bliss
And vibrations of science!

11.Love has led the world to
Merriment and boisterous dance;
Brimming with love are my
Blood vessels and nerves!
Would that Love would lead me to
Param Anand (Supreme Bliss)-!
Truth, consciouness, bliss
And Vibrations of science!

12.Parmanand, listen to
God's miraculous, mysterious ways:
Come, shed all castes and creed,
Don't be mad.
Listen to me;
Why then, this hue and cry?
Truth, consciousness and bliss
And vibrations of science!

## 9.4.17 O, THEE, THE CROWNED FLUTIST

- 1. Puzzled! I wonder, royal Flutist, Thou brusheth off the strains of Trials and tribulations of life, O, Thee, the crowned Flutist!
- 2. Shuttling between birth, rebirth,
  A dreadful, dark shadow of drabness:
  How blinding dark is moonless fortnight!
  Else, on the ethereal path,
  What'll I reveal, what conceal?
  O, Thee, the crowned Flutist!
- 3. Crooked and dingy is the load of sin, And loose, the sling, On my back are twigs and the lamb, and Eleven paths leading to the ghat! (destiny) Obstructive, destructive, are the senses And, the mind wavering and weak! What'll I reveal, what conceal? O. Thee, the crowned Flutist!.
- 4. The sword of Death hangs
  On my neck!
  And, too frightened, I am
  Or else, at the opportune moment,
  I sit posing calm!
  Opened I, the decree of Death
  And, presently He changes
  The decree!
  What'll I reveal, what conceal;
  O, Thee, the crowned Flutist?
- 5. Devalued got the pearls in My state of distress:
  The youth in bloom's robust but The merchandise raw!
  With the fading glow of youth Ostriched gets old age!
  What would I reveal, what conceal?
  O, Thee, the crowned Flutist!
- 6. Missing
- 7. What I sowed, grain by grain,
  Will I reap ear by ear.
  How devotedly would I plant (or "How I missed my aim, fumble to say!)
  I fumble to say.
  Grind you in the grinding Mill,
  They'll
  Don't you cut your lips
  In repentance!
  What'll I reveal, what conceal?
  O, thee, the crowned Flutist!
- 8. Duds destroyed this My tree of business: Laying a tie to foresee My immediate future: For sure, the tie, again and again

Turned against me
What shall I reveal, what conceal?
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist!

9. How deep in sweet slumber is
This household: still
You can see, how indifferent to wrath,
I have ever been....else,
Why should it have been, just
The opposite of what it was yesterday?
What shall I reveal, what conceal?
O, thee, the crowned Flutist!

10. Neither at home, nor with elders Was I aggressive, ever; Much less did I know, How to complicate matters Struck by lightning and thunder was I By self-destructive wrath! What shall I reveal? what conceal? O, Thee, the crowned Flutist!

11. Ferry me across the bivouac of life, anyhow Or else, I may drown!
Asking for different things at different times Disgusted and dull, I've become:
Praying to Thee for all things together,
Thou too fulfill my desires in full together!
What would I reveal, what conceal?
O, Thee, the crowned Flutist!

12. Parmanand, listen to and Contemplate on Flute tunes always Be ready with all that you possess. The Flutist and the ash-bismirched Still continue to be your concern. What shall I reveal? what conceal? O, Thee, the crowned Flutist!

## 9.4.18 GLUED TO THY DARSHAN

Parmanand and the blissful godly light are one and the same thing for him as he conveys in this poem. If ever, he tends to lose touch with this inner light of his own, he feels that self is protesting to self. He pleads for their reunion into one single entity and thus, they remain glued to each other in perfect blissful harmony.

1. Bindraban itself has become a Paradise! Where, in which of the woods, hast He Chosen to stay?

2. With closed fists I had
Arrived from there, but
Opened both my hands here!
Opening their hands, they repented!
Bindraban has turned into a Paradise!
Where;\_\_\_\_\_ in which woods, hast He
Chosen to stay?

3. In quest of Thee
I had come here from there!
Would Mahakaal spare anyone
Whom would the hands of Death
Leave behind?
Bindraban has turned into a Paradise!.
Where\_\_\_\_\_ in which woods hast He
Chosen to stay?

4. For a few days feasting I've come:
A rich place for mad merriment's
This world!
What's there to give and what to get?
What's to be carried along?
Bindraban has turned into a Paradise!
Where------in which woods, hast He
Chosen to stay?

5. Glistens He in the livers of the living: Said a being from his heart: I saw, what I was told! Glued, to Thy darshan. I would ever like to be! Bindraban has turned into a Paradise! Where, in which woods, hast He Chosen to stay?

6. With the intensity of love, I would Sacrifice myself, as a moth, On the burning candle! With the sickle of vairag, lead me to Renunciation.... or else, Arn't thee mad of mind? Bindraban has turned into a Paradise! Where in which woods, hast He Chosen to stay?

7. O, Thee, my very life,
Tell me,
At every, early dawn,
"Who ever can overcome
The angel of DEATH"?
Does he ever sit to rest anywhere?
Bindraban.has turned into a Paradise!
Where \_\_\_\_\_\_ in which woods, hast He
Chosen to stay?

8. Peevishly, "Parma-Ananda" has parted In protest against himself! Pray exhort him back home, Chanting "SUHUM" moment by moment! Bindraban has turned out to be a Paradise! Where, \_\_\_\_\_in which woods, hast He Chosen to stay!

# 9.4.19 GURU'S AMRIT

In this poem, Parmanand appeals to his Guru to equip him with full knowledge (Gyan) and, ever to be as near him as possible, to guide him with the torch of his spiritual experience.

- 1. May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom To make me drink the Amrit of knowledge: My Sat Guru, take me out of Darkness into light!
- 2. To begin with, mayst Thee make me
  Contemplate on my Sat Guru!
  Moment after moment, would I
  Pine to kneel before Thee!
  Day and night, not for a moment
  Would I suffer separation from Thee
  May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
  And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge!
- 3. My Guru, solve the problems of my life
  Now that I am born!
  Humble me not among saints;
  Subdue the thieves of
  My emotive senses by
  Strengthening the power of my will!
  May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
  And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge!
- 3. Subduing my emotions, break the lustful elephant
  Of my pugnacious conceit
  Guide me, only on one
  ............ of the eleven paths!
  Keep me not off from
  The word, SUHUM
  (I m Thee).
  May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
  And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge
- 5. Make me wash myself clean
  In the Sheshrum Nag lake;
  Look not at my sinful life!
  Ferry me too across, as Thou did
  Mohini Sada Guru.
  May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
  And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge!
- 6. Moment by moment, let me
  Meditate on Thee
  Make me think of and do, only that
  Which's right to think and do!
  O, Kamadeva, Shyam Sundara
  Let me not come and go
  Come and go (Shuttle between life and death)
  May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom
  And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge!
- 7. O, Bishambara, grace me with Thy presence Stay awhile. isten to my tale: Revive my old memories! May Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge!

8. Grace me with Thy presence in graceful garlands And, show me Thy haloed aura, luster light! My day has passed by, mayst Thee not Make me wait any longer! Mayst Thee open Thy august mouth of wisdom And make me drink the Amrit of Thy knowledge.

#### 9.4.20 IN REVERENTIAL PROSTRATION

- 1. At Radha's, Radika's of Sri Krishan Muraryi's feet, Would we kneel in reverence and, Lay prostrate!
- 2. Riding a "Garuda", Sri Krishna Maharaj Looks like a grand, green Parrot! Childlike smatterings of His, hear O, Ye, Wild mynas! In reverence, would we kneel and, Lay prostrate at Their feet.
- 3. Sweet flute-notes would restore to us, life, Should Krishna Murari play on His flute: Thus'ld lighten the load of sin On the earth! In reverance'ld we kneel and, Lay prostrate at Their feet.
- 4. Gathered together, Devies and Devatas, all, Kneeling low in humility, are Submitting their pleas before Him: "Be compassionate to us, O, Thee, the merciful!" In reverence'ld we kneel and, Lay prostrate at Their feet.
- 5. Gala guests, rajas and princes, from all sides. Have arrived riding, Horses, elephants and rathas: Vimans they've bedecked For Thee, the Rajkumaries! In reverence'ld we kneel and, Lay prostrate at Their feet.
- 6. Listening to their words in attention, Thy hands are still in henna! Sparkling bright that Thy pearls are, Who hast fished them out of the sea? In reverence'ld we kneel and, Lay prostrate at Their feet.
- 7. Parmanand turned gray while waiting For Thee, for too long!
  Pull him on to the Supreme Self:
  Radha Krishna alone'll listen to
  Every plea through every window!
  In reverence'ld we kneel and,
  Lay prostrate at Their feet.

#### 9.4.21 KARAMBHOOMI

A philosophcal Kashmiri Poem:

- 1. Reinforce the field of action with The spirit of duty and devotion, The seeds of contentment will then grow To bear the fruits of eternal bliss. Harness the oxen of twin-breath To plough the field day and night, Lash them on to work hard With the kumbaka whip Arise, awake and work on to see That not a patch remains unploughed.
- 2. Make use of the yoke of love
  To plough the field,
  With the help of a long handled block of patience
  Crush thou the hard lumps of earth,
  Lest any moisture of malice remains inside
  Sow thou them the seeds of contentment
  To grow the crops of bliss.
- 3. Smoothen thou the drains and raise their bunds With a heedful mind,
  Cut an outlet and place a blockade against
  The stream of current to make water flow
  Into the field with equanimity and ease,
  Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment
  To grow the crops of bliss.
- 4. Spring is but a passing phase of short-lived beauty, glory and joy, Lose thou not a moment of this chancing phase. Do not wait to sow the seeds of action and work for happiness to result. These seeds of contentment will then Grow the crops of bliss.
- 5. Do not thou wait to work on each of the four corners of thy field Repair thou thy leakages all with The wet rods of contemplation.

The wet rods of contemplation. control thou shine indriyas (senses) to Kill these rats of destruction and, The seeds of contentment will then Bear the crops of bliss.

- 6. With single minded labour of love the fields Will grow refreshing green by deweeding and, Ripen fruit with finishing-water of Tepa (meditation) And then, the composure of mind will bring forth Blossoms of lotus expanses. Sow thou then the seeds of contentment and, Reap the harvest of bliss.
- 7.Overcome thou shine own avarice and greed lest They should gnaw away the ripened fields. With the feelings of love and affection, keep Ungrudging watch over them day and night

Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment To yeild you a harvest of bliss.

8. And as it begins to bear fruit then,
The time for merriment is come.
Reap thou it with the sickle of renunciation (Vairag)
And put it aside in tufts to collect.
Seek thou then the help of shine kith and kin
And make it into bundles.
This then is the fruit of contentment
Growing into a harvest of bliss.

9. Then tie it with ropes and carry it on To collect it in heaps;
Next call thou all shine friends, kith and kin To carry it on with you
And when you collect it with love and devotion, It will bring you peace, plenty and good.
Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment To yield you a crop of bliss.

10. Pile up thy bundles with clear detachment To build up one big heap; Then will thou, unmindful of praise or blame Attain shine nirvaana goal and, Enter the realms of happiness true. Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment To grow the crops of bliss.

11. Beat thou ears of corn on the logs of meditation; Separte out the grain and then, Remove the husk to sift out Sound grains of realization. Doing this, weigh thou the grain In the scales of thy pious heart. Sow thou again, the seeds of contentment To repeat a harvest of bliss.

12. With the hands of renunciation let The corners be beaten aright; Sift out and gather coarse and fine grain Each in a separate heap. Keep up your wits and watch lest Thou should face thy negligence. Sow thou then, the seed of contentment To yield thou the fruit of bliss.

13. Then weigh thou shine harvest and, Store it in separate heaps, Collect it in 'Sohum' measures To pay off your dues.
Lighten thou shine burden by Carrying it to Khanabal.
Sow thou the seeds of contentment To reap the crop of bliss.

14. Wih prayer and deep meditation Carry it on to the ghat, P addle on shine boat in

The calm waters of devotion.
Relieve thyself of the burden and enjoy
The refreshing breeze of Mansbal.
Sow thou the seed of contentment
To gather the crop of bliss.

15. Now pass on the goods to. the owner Nor should you deprive the tiller.
After all from whom will the balance be due? For whom should the excess be saved?
Sow thou then, the seeds of contentment To reap the harvest of bliss.

16. Sift out some good grain and Deposit it for seed;
Sow the seed again grain by grain When the spring comes.
This good deed will yield
Newer and ever newer fruit.
Sow thou the seed of contentment To reap the crop of bliss.

17. Become thou the enjoyer of yoga And shunt off your feelings of duality; You are given the name 'Sadhu' And a Sadhu you should become, Sow thou then, the seed of contentment To grow the crop of bliss.

18. Thine Guru's word will redeem thou
From the cycle of life and death;
Take thou shine past Karma as
The store of your fate (Prarabdha).
From a knowledge of Karma Kanda
Will spark off the lightning flash.
Sow thou then, the seed of contentment to reap the crop of bliss.

19. Then with the angelic light of Suhum Thou w'It be enlightened to be Unmindful of the problems of Honour or dishonour.
And thus wilt thou attain Eternal bliss.
Sow thou the seeds of contentment To reap the crop of bliss.

20. Parmanand was a Zamindar.
Paying off his debts, he
Was no more subjected to insults
And reminders to pay back dues.
He was relieved of the burdens and
Anxiety of changing his rented house (freed from
The cycle of birth and death
Day in and day out )
Sow thou the seed of contentment
To yield a harvest of bliss

Source: Gems of Kashmiri Literature and Kashmiriyat

# 10 Krishna Joo Razdan



Krishna Joo Razdan

# 10.1 Razdan Sahib's Puranic Picture Gallery

Krishna Joo Razdan's "Maharaja Mahadevun Che Chhui Saal" is a superb Puranic picture gallery. In this devotional lyric cosmos is the studio-cum-exhibition hall, Lord Vishnu is the model and Krishna Joo Razdan, incognite as Narada, is the inspired literary painter. The bard's devout imagination, telescoping Lord Vishnu's variegated associated exploits, objectified them on literary canvas. Like impressionistic painters, Krishna Joo paints diverse fleeting associations conjured up by his unique model. Each quatrain in the lyric is a picture-frame exhibiting two or more pictures. Here the model remains unaltered but there are constant changes in the perspective.

Narada, journeying through the vast cosmic expanses, informs Lord Vishnu about developments in the celestial regions. He invites Lord Vishnu to Lord Mahadeva's marriage. Krishna Joo Razdan, incognite as Narada, paints ingratiating memories associted with his unique model. In the incarnation as Lord Rama, Lord Vishnu showers bounteous love upon Mother Sita. By quickening up the associated memories of the readers, Krishna Joo conjures up the picture of Lord Rama and Mother Sita enjoying perfect conjugal bliss.

#### 10.1.1 Radha-Krishna Deep Love

He juxtaposes with it a picture depicting deep love between Lord Krishna and Mother Radha. In the same frame he fits in the portrait of Lord Krishna lifting the Goverdhan mountain to protect the cows, cowherds and calves against the torrential rain sent by jealous Lord Indira to lash the Gokul landscape. Next Krishna Joo paints Lord Krishna enjoying butter offered with love by Ma Jessuda. He conjures up infant Krishna with butter-besmeared mouth and face playing pranks about Jessuda. Alongside with this picture is placed the picture of Kubza whose hunch is set right as she unhestitatingly applies sandal paste to Lord Krishna's forehead meant especially for Kans, the king of Mathura. This is followed by a suggestive painting of Sudama offering Lord Krishna rice chaff to eat.

Shrimad Bhagwatam mentions that Sudama was one of the dearest boyhood friends of Lord Krishna. One cold rainy evening he was munching some grains. On enquiry he attributed chattering of his teeth to intense cold. This false statement subjected him to perpetual penury in his later life. Once he is directed by his wife, Sushila, to seek help of his boyhood friend who is now the king of Dwarika. In the royal place, Sudama is received very warmly. Lord Krishna himself washes clean his tired feet. Sudama has brought for Lord Krishna some chaffy rice. The Lord enjoys a handful of the offering of love. He is

prevented from enjoying more by Rukmini. She fears that the kind Lord will bestow everything upon Sudama rendering his own person and family impecunious. This incident too is the content of a picture in Razdan Sahib's picture gallery.

# 10.1.2 Bhagwatam & Ramayana Juxtaposed

Sugreve, the king of Kishkindha, is driven out of his capital city by his unrighteous brother Bali. Along with his faithful lieutenants, he retires to a hilly eminence where Bali is destined to die under a curse pronounced by a sage. Lord Rughvir befriends Sugreve and, after killing lascivious Bali, he places upon his head the crown of Kishkindha. Vibhishana, deserting the camp of his demoniacal brother Ravana, joins Lord Rughvir in Kishkindha. He is enthroned in exile as the king of Lanka. Bali Dhaanay, the demon king, is bestowed the underworld for his generosity. These three Puranic episodes are held by a single picture-frame forming the fourth quatrain of the poem. Feeling envious of the tremendous popularity of Lord Krishna, Lord Brahma, the god with three heads, hides away all his calves and cowherd companiuns in a cave. Lord Krishna creates all the stolen creatures himself. This abashes Brahma. Lord Krishna forgives Brahma's insolence. Krishna Joo paints this episode without going too deep into its ontological implications. He feels ecstatic while painting Lord Krishna dancing with the gopis. Devki, the dear sister of Kansa, is married to the Yadhava prince Vaasudev. When the newly wedded couple are driven towards Vasudev's country, the elements predict Kansa's death at the hands of Devki's offspring. Thereupon, Kansa imprisons Devki and her husband. He assassinates Devki's six babies in succession and Lord Krishna, the seventh, is spared by divine intercession. As Lord Krishna grows up, he kills Kansa for the restoration of moral order. Leaving his foster mother, Yashodha, in Gokul, he comes to Mathura. At the request of Devki, he brings to life the six children which she has lost. These children later become Gandharvas. This Puranic episode forms the sixth picture-frame in Razdan Sahib's picture gallery.

On the completion of his education at Sandipini's hermitage, the guru asks his illustrious disciple to bring to life his son drowned in a naval tragedy. Lord Krishna jumps into the sea and retrieves alive the son of his guru. Krishna Joo paints this episode in the seventh and the eight quatrains which run into each other In shrimad Bhagvatam there is mention of Shankhasur. This demon unleashes terror and unrighteousness all around. When pursued by superior righteous strength, he hides himself in the vast conch shell which forms his abode. Lord Krishna jumps into the sea and challenges to a battle the demon who has been perpetrating horrible atrocities upon the devout. Shankhasur is killed and his conch shell, called Panch Janya, becomes a coveted possession of the yaadavas. This episode too is the content of one of the pictures lightly sketched by Krishna Joo.

## 10.1.3 Spirituality in Devotion

As the Pandavas are befriended by Lord Krishna during their exile, they recognize the essential divinity of their kinsman. They start supplicating before him in deep devotion. This is resented by a contemporary prince, Shishupal, who regards Krishna nothing better than a common cowherd. Shishupal nourishes grudge against Krishna also for eloping away with his sister Rukmini, Lord Krishna, the merciful, forgives Shishupal's impertinence a number of times. He cuts off Shishupal's head with his rotating disc (Sudharshan Chakra) as the latter persists in pouring forth abusive language. This cpisode too forms one of the painted canvases in Krishna Joo's vast picture gallery.

With his carnal passions perfectly under control, Lord Krishna dallies with 16108 ladies and maidens. Razdan Sahib paints this fact with light verbal strokes. Lord Krishna's separate dalliance with each gopi is an objectification of the essential oneness of God. Lord Krishna sows rubies from a string which, first changing the sapling, develop into sizeable trees bearing rubies on boughs and branches. Collecting these rubis the messenger from Radhika grows quite rich. In this picture-frame, Razdan Sahib also includes the spectacle of a pearly shower sent by Lord Shiva to lash the Kashmir landscape. At the end of the frieze, Razdan Sahib juxtaposes the portraits of Lord Vishnu and Lord Mahesh with their divine consorts Laxmi and Gauri.

# 10.1.4 Razdan's Perpetual Struggle

Spiritual progress enjoins an arduous effort. Spiritual bliss and enlightenment are realizable only through constant meditation and assiduous observance of high psycho-physical discipline. This is manifest from Krishna Joo Razdan's all devotional lyrics. We observe him as a seeker constantly seeking to realize Brahman. Sometimes, he is a dualist with an impersonal concept of God. Soon he becomes a dualist with a personal concept of God. Again he feels that Advaita Vedantic monism is the highest truth. The bard's imagination, surcharged with devotional ecstasy, keeps shifting constantly from one point of view to the other. He is obviously living the experiences which he is communicating through his devotional lyrics. Being a true devotee of God, he feels divine contemplation an existential indispensability. He is painfully conscious about the dwindling numbers of Kashmiri Pandit community. He fears its complete extirpation due to the prevalence of numerous social evils.

Razdan Sahib is proud of Kashmiri language which is the principal medium of his poetic expression. He regards it dearest to the Mother Goddess. He is convinced that salvation for Kashmiris is attainable only by singing praises of the Mother Goddess in Kashmiri language. Razdan Sahib's poetry objectifies his perpetual struggle for comprehending the mysterium tremendum enveloping man all around.

# 10.1.5 Subjective Idealism

Idealism is the school of philosophy which regards God or Brahman as the ultimate reality. This Philosophy is the bed-rock of all religions of the world. Some philosophers believe that man and God are essentially one. God is attainable by directing sense perceptions inwards towards the self. This is the cardinal viewpoint of subjective idealists. Essential Brahminism too is subjective idealism. There are other idealists who, recognizing the existence of God, consider Him an entity separate from man. For them, God directs the course of nature. He is an entity outside man. Man is answerable for his actions to God on the day of resurrection. This type of idealism is called objective idealism. It is the main philosophic content of the religions like Islam and Christianity.

In some of his lyries, we observe Razdan Sahib marshalling the basic postulates of objective idealism. There are others in which subjective idealism is the poet's predominant philosophical preoccupation. He discerns greater rectitude in the subjective philosophical postulates. In one of his poems, he advocates observance of Islamic practices for the enjoyment of spiritual bliss. Razdan Sahib's lyrics objectify the great bard's patient perpetual struggle for comprehending the mystery of existence. He perpetually investigates the validity of polytheistic and monistic religious concepts. He is sometimes a polytheist objectifying his devotion separately for Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. In such moods, Rama and Krishna are two different incarnations. But at the same time, he regards all the principal gods of Hindu pantheon a single entity. God appears to him permeating every cosmic object around. In the concluding couplets of Maharaja Mahadevun Che Chuui Saal, he reveals his belief in the essential monistic nature of God. He longs for the realisation of the eternal truth of advaita vedantic monism and desires to realise his essential oneness with God.

#### Source: Koshur Samachar

# 10.2 Achhe Posh Gav Lachhi Novuy Heth

# Prof. Kanhaya Lal Moza

**Achhe** Posh Gav Lachhi Novuy Heth is a superb devotional lyric in **Pt. Krishna Joo Razdan**'s *Shiva Pranae*. Here the immortal Kashmiri bard rapturously celebrates Uma's union with Chandrachud. The beautiful flowery metaphors illustrate the saint-poet's deep devotion for Lord Shiva and his Divine Consort, Shakti. The fragrant lyric scintillates numerous flowery hues and tinges. The poetic artifact reveals unique sensitivity of the great devotional poet's visual and olefactory perceptions. Into the flowery fabric Razdan Sahib entwines some eternal idealistic verities. The lyric, as a whole, reflects the unique sancity of Kashmin Hindu wedlock. The predominant mood objectified is devotional repute and ecstasy.

Shiv Pranae is transcreation of Shiva Mahapuran. This devotional literary work opens with the saint-poet's invocation of Lord Ganapati to bless him with the talent for narrating the story of Shiva's union with Shakti. According to the poet, Lord Ganesha, the Onkar-shaped omnipresent god, is the bestower of all kinds of boons. A habitual contemplation of his divine form, dispelling impediments, blesses a devotee with the kinds of successes. Wearing pearly necklaces, he commands Lord Shiva's Rudra legions; he is the vanquisher of Lord Indra and Lord Vishnu, the god with a trunk and a single tusk is the dear son of Shiva and Shakti; he is invited before all gods to bless sacrificial fires, he is the principal attendant of Adi Shakti; the god with four arms, wears red garments and holds his court at Ganpatyar; he carried his four weapons in his four hands for the destruction of demons and maleficent giants.

Pt. Razdan Joo prays to Lord Ganapati to destroy our ignorance with his single tusk which he uses as a stylus and to destroy our'sins and wrath with his axe and other weapons. Lord Ganesha, the infallible dispenser of justice, is worshipped at all holy places before his elder brother, Kumar Kartikeya. This invocation, replete with rich mythological allusions, has been an important item in the devotional repertoire of all Kashmir Hindus for the last several decades.

The invocation of Lord Ganapati is followed by thanksgiving to Sad Guru. For Razdan Sahib, Sad Guru is none other than Lord Shiva himself. He prays for the nectar of bliss and light amidst enveloping gloom. He longs for the realisation of Shiva amidst the trammels of the illusory cosmos. Through the exercise of temperance, he desires liberation from the shackles of lust, wrath, avarice, pride and possessiveness. The practice of evil deeds has obliterated from the poet's vision, co~itenmenl, thoughtfulness, dharma and divine contemplation. He earnesly desires being ranked amongst saints who attained shivahood through intense sadlma.

Pt. Krishna Joo believes that spiritual bliss is realizable through the exercise of Yogic discipline.

He longs for the revelation of the truths enshrined in the Upanishads. He craves for the attainment of Brahmanand. He is conscious of the fact that contemplative concentration is realizable through rigid Yogic discipline through which he seeks divine grace for the purification of his mind and soul. He prays for Lord Shiva's grace in directing his sense perceptions of the eternal truth of Advaita Vedantic monism. The poet is perpetually conscious about the essential divinity of man.

After the invocation of Lord Ganesha and thanks giving to Lord Shiva, the saint-poetnarrates the story of creation as enshrined in Vishnu Puran. According to hirn, Onkar is a symbolic representation of Lord Shiva from whom' illusory cosmos has originated. Cosmic illusion gave birth to Lord Vishnu, Who created Lord Brahma. The entire universe and all life were created by Brahma's will. Brahma created Dakhshiprajapati whom he tutored in all kinds of wordly affairs. DakUshipr.ljapati whom Razdan Sahib calls Brahamrishi, a venerable Taporishi and the king of the gods, begot a large number ot' daughters, one of whom was Uma. The poet considers such a parent, who begets a daughter like Uma, blessed by Lord Shiva Himself. Urna is given away in marriage to ash-besmeared Shiva who is the master of the cosmos. Dakhshiprajapati gives away the remaining 27 daughters in marriage to Chandrama and invites all his relations and friends to participate in these matrimonial festivities.

At this stage of narration, Pt. Razdan Joo ceases to be an omniscient narrator. He sketches lightly the tedium of straight and horizontal narration. His Dakhshiprajapati is a typical Kashmiri Hindu deeply steeped in devotion. He is enjoying a beatific experience because Shiv Nath has become his intimate relation incognito as Dakhshiprajapati. Razdan Sahib feels his being blossoming like a lotus. The mendicant friar, with the Ganga flowing down his hair, has married his daughter. He decides to feed him with boiled rice, butter-milk and sugar-candy. He is convinced that the mystery surrounding Shiva is impenetrable. Shiva's camphor-frame exudes poignant aroma. He is Himself Brahma, Vishnu and the Supreme Being, an ocean of knowledge and the mystery of Onkara. It is through the non-dualist attitude alone that He can be realised. Throughout Shiv Pranae, we observe narrative omniscience beautifully punctuated by dramatized narration.

Pt. Krishna Joo Razdan celebrates the union of Shiva and Shakti in his Achhe Posh Gav Lachhi Novuy Heth. This lyric is one of the most superb achievements in Kashmiri language. Here Shiva is

Chandrachud appearing in dark fortnight and Uma is Param Shakti; here Shiva is Lachhinov and Uma is Achhe Posh. With the union of Shiva and Shakti, spring stalks the earth afresh and the cosmos blossoms like a lotus. Here the immortal bard luxuriates in cataloguing flowers. Among the Kashmiri saint-poets, none has made a comparable brilliant use of this technique for the objectification of his devotion. He resorts to a superb metaphorical use of flowers. Uma is Arni Posh and she is carried away by Shiv Ji who is Neov. Like a typical Kashmiri Hindu bridegroom, Shiva is greatly respectful towards Uma's parents. He carries away Uma after seeking the blessings of her parents. Shiva is Gloab; he is Sombul. Uma is Aarwal; she is Yemberzal. Razdan Sahib constantly enjoys the vision of Uma-Rudra. He supplicates before Lord Shiva for a boon of spiritual bliss. In spite of being a master of fabulous treasures, Shiva enjoys being clad sparsely. These persons need no ornaments upon whom the Creator of the universe showers His own bounteous benedictions. Being free from avarice, the material wealth has absolutely no significance for Shiva. He is the creaser of both Brahma and Vishnu.

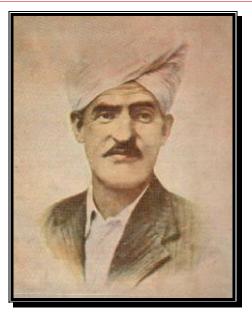
Razdan Sahib is convinced that spiritual progress is realizable only through regular Yogic exercises. The number of such exercises is very vast but an aspirant needs to practice only a few of them. Achhe Posh Gav Lahhi Novuy Heth is an inspired lyric which cascades forward like the waters of a mountain fill. It exudes the aroma of flowery vernal Kashmir landscape. He imparts superb pictorial touches to the short poetic artifact. The poet's love for Shiva rises to the level of God-intoxication. His Shiv Ji is a cliff supporting the crescent moon, he is vernal Neov; he is Golab, and he is Symbul. For him Uma is Param Shakti, she is an Achhe Posher she is Arni Posher she is Aarwal and she is Yamberzal. All these flowery metaphors conjure up before readers the celestial couple - Lord Shiva and his divine consort Gauri. Lord Shiva is the creator of the cosmos; He is the bestower of respectability; being free from greed and avarice, material riches have absolutely no significance for him. He supplicates before Lord Shiva for spiritual enlightenment, leading to the attainment of salvation. Through a figurative use of Kashmin, he objectifies his intense love for God.

Just as there are physical phenomena, in the same manner there are mental phenomena. Both these types of phenomena are apodeictic realities. It is erroneous to extol one set of phenomena at the cost of the denigration of the other. Rational living consists of a simultaneous recognition of the importance of both these types of phenomena. With the modem man's ever-increasing interest in physical phenomena, we are likely to overlook its importance. This is the tragedy of modem civilization. For rejuvenating our springs of bliss, we will have to cultivate afresh the desire for enjoying it. Just as reading about philosophy can never be a substitute for reading philosophy, in the same manner, reading about philosophy can never be a substitute for reading poetry. Great devotional bards like Pt. Krishn Joo Razdan can be best appreciated only through first-hand experience.

(Prof. Moza teaches English in the Gandhi Memorial College, Bantalab, Jammu.)

Source: Koshur Samachar

# 11 Mahjoor



Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor (1885-1952)

**Mahjoor** has a place of honor among the poets of Kashmir. He is especially noted for two things. First, he introduced a new style into Kashmiri poetry. Second, he introduced a new thought into Kashmiri poetry.

Mahjoor wrote poems of freedom and progress in Kashmiri. These songs awakened the sleeping Kashmiris. He came with a new voice and a new (literary) form.

Mahjoor was a poet of 1 ove and communal harmony. In his earlier days, he used to write only love poetry, but (later) he also wrote forceful poems about freedom.

Mahjoor's real name was Ghulam Ahmad. But as a poet, he adopted the pen name 'Mahjoor'. He was born in eighteen hundred and eighty-five in Metragam. He has written poetry in Persian and Urdu as well.

Mahjoor worked as a patwa:ri: (pathva:r') in Kashmir. Along with his official duties, he used to write poetry in Kashmiri. Mahjoor had his first Kashmiri poem published in 1918. After this, he composed poetry only in Kashmiri. His songs became very popular. He wrote on such topics as love, communal harmony, and social reform, and also wrote on the plight of the Kashmiris. He wrote about youth, the flowers of Nishat Garden, a peasant girl, a gardener, the golden oriole, and a Free Kashmir. At that time, such songs were unknown in Kashmiri poetry. It was Mahjoor who gave these to us.

Mahjoor was sixty-seven years old when he passed away in 1952. The death of Mahjoor was a great loss to both the Kashmiri language and (Kashmiri) poetry. But, Mahjoor's songs are still on the lips of every Kashmiri. Through these songs, his name will live forever.

#### Source:

An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri by Braj B. Kachru Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois Urbana, Illinois 61801 U.S.A. June. 1973

#### 11.1 Poems

### 11.1.1 vanta vesiye bewaafaayee shavaye dildaar chha.....

O friend, should one, as beautiful as the moon, Delight in breaking hearts by playing false in love?

He plunged into my heart his pointed dart, Showing no more pity than a swordsman in war.

He shot me from afar, but how could I hide the wound? O how beautiful he is, but how cruel his sport!

O archer! Was the forked shaft that pierced my heart Tongued with fire, or dipped in the deadliest venom?

What's sliding down his robes may be coils of snakes, Tresses of hyacinths, or meadows where bulbuls sing!

Lovers in mortal pain take heart when they behold Those twin breasts - an elixir for ailing souls!

He slipped out by subtle stealth, but I'll seek him out In his favourite haunts - Pari Mahal, Telbal, Dal or Shalamar.

My lot is tears! Leaving me lonesome and broken, he's gone! Who knows where ? - Prang or Brang or Drang or Kotahar!

Who has appeared at break of dawn, rattling at the door? A thief or a drunk - or could it be sweet-throated Mahjoor?

# 11.1.2 Ioli manz bo karay goor goor.........

I'll rock you in my arms!
O my pearl, do not forsake me.

Your beauty's rising fame Filled me with a mad longing To beg at your door.

Just one glance from you Sent me into love's consuming flames, Like one tumbling down the skies.

O ravishing moon, don't hide yourself! I pray some oid job tempts you out, So that we see your radiant form.

How much like Sheereen or Badwaljamal, Or a hourie emerging from Paradise, With pearls gleaming on a swans's neck!

At dawn you came to the purling stream, With beauty's noose slung on your arm, And trapped the thief of love!

I'll lie in wait for you in the deepest woods, Kneel at your feet under the jessamine bush -My Forest of Najd and Mount Sinai!

Mahjoor is languishing for your love, And shall offer whatever you ask.

**Pray you too show equal faith!** Source: The Best of Mahjoor

# 12 Chakbast

## 12.1 Chakbast

# A Scholarly Poet And A Great Reformer

# Dr. B. N. Sharga

Whosoever takes birth on this mother planet has to go one day, but some people are remembered even after their death for their deeds and their valuable contributions for the welfare of the mankind. Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast was one such personality whose name is still taken in high esteem by the lovers of Urdu literature all over the world for his soul-inspiring compositions. Some Urdu critics even compare his poetic genius to that of Allama Iqbal and place him on the same footing.

This great Urdu poet, scholar and social reformer of the 20th century had a humble beginning. He was born in 1882 in an ordinary middle class Kashmiri Pandit family in Faizabad and had his early schooling there. The name of his father was Pandit Udit Narain Chakbast. Later on, this Chakbast family shifted from Faizabad to Lucknow and settled down in Kashmiri Mohalla where there was a big concentration of Kashmiri Pandit families in those days. The ancestral house of Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast was situated at a stone's throw from the historic haveli of Kaul Shargas, the traditional Wasikedars of Oudh, whose family was the first to settle down in Kashmiri Mohalla in 1775 when Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula shifted his seat of government from Faizabad to Lucknow.

Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast made Lucknow, the city of Nawabs, as his real "Karma Bhoomi". He was a man with a vision. His elder brother, Pandit Maharaj Narain Chakhast, was an executive officer in the Lucknow Municipal Board in the beginning of the 20th Century. Chakbast did his B.A. in 1905 and L.L.B. in 1907 from Canning College which was at'filiated with Allahabad University at that time and subsequently became a practising lawyer.

He started writing poetry from a very young age and generally his poetic comrositions used to be very short, crisp and meaningful. He always used a very simple language in his Urdu compositions and used to describe the complexities of life in the shortest possible sentence in plain words. His style of writing can be judged from the following Urdu couplet in which he described the meaning of life and death in a most scientific manner:

Zindagi Kya Hai, Anasir Mein Zahoore Tarteeb; Maut Kya Hai Inhi Ajza Ka Pareshan Hona.

Life is an arrangement of senses in a proper form whereas the disintegration of this arrangement of senses is death.

Chakbast was a highly sensitive poet and was very emotional by temperament. He wrote a number of articles on topics of social relevance in various reputed Urdu journals of his times which were all widely appreciated. The collection of his poetic compositions is known as 'Subah Watan! Its latest edition was published about 10 years back by his granddaughter, Ms. Uma Chakbast, which was released by the then Governor of U.P. Shri Usman Arif, who was himself a renowned Urdu poet.

The fast changing social scenario had a great influence on the life of this sensitive Urdu poet who took up social reforms in his community as a mission in those days when the members of his own community were practising very rigid social customs and traditions.

After the 'excommunication' of Mohan Lal Kashmiri in 1834 from the Kashmiri Pandit community for undertaking extensive tours of the Arabian countries and later on the excommunication' of Pandit Bishan Narain Dar for undertaking sea voyage against the wishes of the community, and after his return to Kashmiri Mohalla in 1884 from England, by orthodox Pandits forced the broad-minded and well-educated members of the community all over North India to start the process of bringing certain reforms in the biradari so that it could move with the times and the community could be saved from its complete disintegration due to outdated beliefs and conventions.

There was already a sharp division in the community into the Dharam Sabha and the Bishen Sabha over this most sensitive issue in Kashmiri Mohalla in those days.

As Kashmiri Mohalla of Lucknow was the nerve centre of the activities of the Kashmiri Pandits in the first half of the 20th century, naturally the Kashmiri Pandits living in this locality took up this challenge and in 1872 Shri Sheo Narain Bahar probably for the first time started a caste journal Mursala-e-Kashmir to bring social awakening in the community through his forceful writings in this journal. He was ably assisted by Shri Shyam Narain Masaldan and Shri Srikishen Tikoo in this stupendous task.

After the death of Shri Bahar, Pandit Brij Narain Chakbast became the main architect of this movement of bringing social reforms in the community. Chakbast established a 'Kutubkhana' (library) of rare Urdu and Persian books and manuscripts in Kashmiri Mohalla exclusively for the Kashmiri Pandit boys and used to guide these young boys of the community in different disciplines so that they could become good citizens of the country.

Chakbast used to organise all-India Mushairas almost every year in Kashmiri Mohalla on a big plot of land adjacent to his house in which famous Urdu poets from all over the country used to come to recite their compositions.

Chakbast also established a very meaningful organisation with the name Kashmiri Young Men's Association to propagate his revolutionary ideas among the youth of the community through this body. Probably Chakbast was the only Urdu poet who had no "Takhallus".

Unfortunately, this great visionary of the 20th century died in 1926 at the prime of his youth. After his death, his friends and admirers formed a Chakbast Memorial Trust to keep his legacy alive. At present, Shri Ram Nath Mattoo who retired as Chairman of the Income Tax Department is the president of this charitable trust which gives stipends to the deserving Kashmiri students and financial assistance to the economically weaker Kashmiri widows and destitutes.

Source: Koshur Samachar

# 12.2 Chakbast

## The Poet of Patriotism

#### A. N. D. Haksar

**Few** remember today the remarkable contribution of Kashmiri Pandits to the development of Urdu literature. Ratan Nath Sarshar was the pioneering novelist of Urdu, and Daya Shankar Naseem a famous composer of masnavi poetry. But the foremost Kashmiri name in Urdu letters is that of Brij Narayan Chakbast, the firey poet of patriotism. Considered in his lifetime a compeer of Iqbal, Chakbast died young before he could attain the celebrity of his great contemporary.

Chakbast was among the founders of a new school of Urdu poetry which blossomed in the first quarter of the 20th century. In his obituary published on 24 February 1926, the daily Leader of Allahabad called him "one of that small band who have helped to revolutionise the ideals of Urdu poetry."

Traditional Urdu poets at the turn of the century, the Leader wrote, "were content to play with words and compose sugary verses of lady-like prettiness." But Iqbal and Chakbast "treated their muse like a queen, not like a tinseled courtesan." Under the influence of nationalism they "transfigured patriotism into song."

Apart from its nationalist inspiration and break from the tradition of stylised ghazals and qasidas, the new school also reflected a deep understanding of Western thought. A contemporary connoisseur, the distinguished jurist Tej Bahadur Sapru, described Iqbal and Chakbast as "men who have tasted of the best that English literature has to give us, and yet retained their love for their own literature" in expressing "some of the deepest thoughts and the subtlest of emotions which have stirred the minds of their countrymen during their times."

Comparing the two poets, Sapru wrote, "if Iqbal is more spiritual and mystical than Chakbast, that is probably due to his philosophy of life - on the other hand if Chakbast is more elegant in form, and shows greater pathos, if he appeals more to human feelings than to intellect, it is because of his environments in Lucknow."

Nationalism was a potent factor in moulding both poets, apart from the inspiration of natural beauty and the impress of faith and philosophy. The Hindi poet-historian R. S. Dinkar later wrote that Iqbal's poetry evolved from nationalism to pan-Islamism, but Chakbast remained a poet of patriotism to the end.

The resounding strains of Chakbast's hymn to the nation Khak-i-Hind (Dust of India) evoke the same mood as Iqbal's well known Tarana-i-Hindi (Song of India):

Hubbe watan samaaye, aankhon men noor hokar Sar men khumaar hokar, dil men suroor hokar.

May love for country pervade you, becoming light of the eyes, exhilarating the mind a intoxicating the heart.

But the hymn was also a stern warning: Kuchh kam nahin ajal se khwabe garaan hamara, Ek leash bekafan hai Hindostan hamara.

Our deep slumber is no less than death. Our India has become a corpse without a shroud.

Chakbast's patriotic fervour found its finest expression in his elegies on the deaths of national leaders. The marsia or elegaic ode was a speciality, of Lucknow steeped in the Shia Muslim tradition of mourning the martyrs of the historic battle of Karbala. The cadences of the classical compositions, of Anees and Dabeer found a secular resonanance in Chakbast. He wrote on the death of Bal Gangadhar Tilak:

Shor-i-maatam na ho, jhankar ho zanjeeron ki, Chaahiye quam ke Bheesham ko chitaa teeron ki.

This is no time for loud lament. Let there be the clash of chains. Like Bhishma, the patriarch of the nation deserves a funeral pyre of arrows.

It is hard to imagine an Urdu poet writing with such passion about a leader from Maharashtra today. But the liberation struggle had given a burning sense of unity to Indians of those times. On the death of another great Indian from Maharashtra Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Chakbast wrote:

Janaazaa Hind ka tere dar se nikalta hai, Suhaag qaum ka teri chitaa pe jalta hai.

It is India's funeral procession which goes forth from your door. It is the nation's fortune which burns upon your pyre.

Chakbast also dedicated a poem to Mahatma Gandhi who was still working in South Africa at the time:

Fida watan pe jo ho, admi diler hai woh, Jo yeh nahin to faqat haddiyon ka dher hai woh.

The brave man is one who is devoted to his homeland. Otherwise he is only a pile of bones.

Nationalism was only one theme of Chakbast's poetry. It equally drew inspiration from human sensibilities. His dirge on the demise of a young relative contains the oft quoted lines on youth snatched away by death:

Khil ke gut kuchh to bahaare jaanfizaan dikhlaa gaye, Hasrat un ghunchon pe hai jo bin khile murjhaa gaye.

Some flowers blossomed and displayed the living splendour of Spring. But we long for those buds which have withered without blooming.

Chakbast's talent was already in full bloom when he died at the age of 43, felled by a paralytic stroke in a railway compartment while travelling to his home in Lucknow. Though he had eloquently mourned others, his own view of death was deeply Philosophical, as expressed in another much quoted verse:

Zindagi kya hai, anaasir men zahoore tarteeb, Maut kya hai, inhin ajazaan ka parishaan hone.

What is lift but a manifestation of order in the elements. What is death but the very same elements scattering once again?

It was a view derived from India's ancient philosophy, which has never been interpreted in Urdu poetry as appositely as by Chakbast:

Ain kasrat men yeh wahdat ka sabaq Ved men hai, Ek hi noor hai in zarra-o-khursqhed men hai.

In essence this is the lesson of unity in the Vedas. There is but one light which manifests in the sun as well as in the atom.

A successful lawyer in professional life, Chakbast was born in the small Kashmiri Pandit community settled in Uttar Pradesh. Though he lived and worked for most of his life in Lucknow, he recalled his ancestral land with passionate pride. In a poem on Kashmir, he wrote:

Chhoote huey is baagh ko guzra hat zamana,
Taaza hai magar iski muhabbat ka fasana.
Aalam ne sharaf jinki buzurgi ka hai maana,
Utthe they isi khaak se woh aalime daana.
Tan jinka hat payvand ab is pak zameen ka,
Rug rug men hamaari hai ravaan khoon unhi ka.
Haan, main bhi boon bulbul usi shadaab chaman ka,
Kis tarah na sarsabz ho gulzaar sukhan ka.

Much time has passed since we left this garden. Yet our love for it is fresh as ever. From its dust arose men of learning and thought whose wisdom was esteemed by the world. Their bodies are now joined to this sacred soil, but their blood courses through our every vein. I too am a nightingale from that garden full of blossoms: how can the flowers of my poetry not bloom?

Chakbast's path breaking poetry was published after his death in a collection entitled Subah Watan, which deserves to be brought out again in these days of fading national fervour. So does Bahaar Gulshan Kashmir, the monumental anthology of Urdu and Hindi poetry by Kashmiri Pandits, which is also a testament of their contribution to the literary life of India.

**Note**: A. N. D. Haksar is a former diplomat who was Ambassador of India to various countries in Europe and Africa. Now devoted to writing on foreign affairs and literary topics, he has also translated various Sanskrit classics, the latest being a new rendition of the famous Hitopadesa in prose and verse (Penguin, 1998)

Source: Vitasta

# 13 Abdul Ahad "Azad"

# The poet of tomorrow

#### Prof. K. N. Dhar

**Physical** exuberance of Kashmir is as inebriating as its mental excellence. Herein, we find a happy compromise between the prowess of body and ingenuity of mind; To speak squarely in Kashmir, we witness a living example of superb soul enshrined in a superb body. Nature has been luxuriant here in weaving a dexterous tapestry of rainbow-colored flowers stretching over miles after miles. The jingle of babbling brooks endows it with undying seraphic music. Taking a cue from this physical enimence, Man here has not lagged behind in providing a meaning to his land of buxom youth.

Man, here has always tried to replenish this physical eminence with his inquisitive mind ever-ready to bridge the gap between his own self and the opulence around. Hence, here in Kashmir, we perceive a veritable equation between Man and his environ.

Therefore, to derive inspiration from amiable surroundings as also to groom it purposefully with the richness of mind over here, Man has provided a silvery tongue to this arresting panorama of enticing youthfulness; The result has been exhilarating poetry vibrating with the heartbeats of Nature and Man alike. So, it does not sound as an exaggeration when Bilhana-the celebrated lyricist of Kashmir Christenes his homeland, Kasbmir, as the 'land of Divine Speech,' from whose womb saffron and poetic prowess have sprung up as real-brothers." Right from the day, when Man planted his feet on this land, his mental exercise has never cooled its heels. It has been a continuous drill; Man, as such, could not afford to be anything but a poet in such an inspiring and soothing climate. Tools for scaling such virgin heights were already there; it was now left to Man to use these for his edification. The denizen of this fairyland took this challenge in fight earnest and a galaxy of philosophers, chroniclers and poets have shone an its firmament. In modern times 'Azad' has very laudably and all the more, very loudly beckoned to man to derive inspiration from the evergreen nature around him, and consequently tame his animality to reach upto such heavenly heights. He, essentially, is a poet of human values bemoaning the shortcomings and inhibitions under which Man is constrained to count his days; but at the same time, inspring him to know his own self as well its his compatriot, which only can usher in an era of mental peace and worldly affluence for him. He has not woven songs of sorrow, but has always wafted an aroma of optimistic rosy future through his pulsating imagination. He has consequently opted for finding an asylum in the future, disdaining the unpalatable present. He may, therefore be called a poet of morrow.

It might well be contended that this kind of ostrich-like behaviour on the part of the poet may sound as self-defeat and hence is a left-handed compliment. Herein, it can be said very conveniently that 'Azad' did not at all shut his eyes towards the present red in tooth and claw; he did not also own self-deceit--a salient trait of Romantic poets. He was very sure of the ground under his feet, but at the same time, he presaged a meaningful future for the Man, though himself living in the present. He was essentially a poet of Man unscreening his wants and aspirations, unveiling the satan underneath his fair complexion, portraying most pathetically the man's dilemma being ground under the weight of exploitation and oppression and to crown all his faulty attitude of dividing man and man on the basis of religious beliefs. These all stigmatic characteristis of a mentally sick man were obviously unbecoming of him- the crown of creation. Therefore 'Azad' an everawake artist could not all the time afford to deride him, cultivating in him a sense of irreparable frustration, and bluntling his initiative. As his ardent votary, he tried to instill fresh hope in him for bettering his present and on its contours build a happy future. He, therefore, strove hard to keep the spirit of Man alive and kicking. The distance between the actual and ideal was to be smoothened by the Man himself. In utter frustration and inner turmoil, be would never rise to the occasion, bence the need to sustain his hopes holding out economically secure, fraternally amiable, socially agreeable and politically undominating future to him, This, in short, is what 'Azad' strove all his life to accomplish. In all fairness to him, it cannot be dubbed as self-defeat or self-deceit, it is self-education and self-discipline. 'Azad' would never like Man to bite the dust, but rise above it, so that a future comfortable in every

respect would be guarranteed for him, This kind of attitude is the forte of all poet-philosophers for them shadow has never been a substitue for substance.

'Azad' is inherently possessed of uncommon consciousness of head and heart. He has never elected to go into the shell like other Kashmiri Romanticists. Instead, he has tried to analyse Man in every sense of the word, bereft of any curves or blind alleys. His approach is direct, therefore sparing us the fatigue of fruitless kite-flying in respect of the essence contained in his poetry. We are saved the embarrassment of solving puzzles and conundrums, rack our brains in interpreting his message and derive inferences intervowen in his poetry throbbing with life. He most canadidly asserts that his propitiation of the Muse is only a medium to focuss attention on Man. In this field, he wears his profession on his sleeves:-

#### <verses>

"O! Adorer of religious values, you have opted for puritanic religosity; And I have elected for my own faith. You resign yourself completely to the steadfast faith in God, and my aim is to propitiate Man."

In other words, the poet begins with the real and does not get lost in the maze of ideal. Man was made after the image of God; he is a macrocosmic representation of his microcosmic spirit. Therefore, to propitiate Man is actually to adore God. Azad believes in the affirmation of life and not in its negation. For him Man is not a solid bundle of flesh and blood only, but a manifestation of undaunted vigour and unvanquished spirit. He may have forgotten, or even obliged to forget such sterling qualities for the timebeing, for which he is not only to blame; Azad's poetic fervour has tried to re-kindle that dead spirit in him. It is awakening Man to his stature:-

# <verses>

"This world is a thorn of unfulfilled ambitions in my garden; And the world- beyond is a blot of scare and fear on my skirt. Therefore, I owe it to Man to usher in a new- spring and bring back blossoming health to this garden of his; So that Man like the flowers will attain full bloom therein."

It can be conceded forthwith that 'Azad' has no pretensions for being a spiritual preacher. He is mainly concerned with the material well being of Man. He does not make tall claims for reforming the spiritual attitude of Man. He does not go beyond the material contentment of Man, He makes him conscious of his rights and obligations, but does not dabble in awakening him to spiritual consciousness alone. He has concern for him on the material plane only. A hungry man is always an angry individual.

When this anger against the society has made him unbalanced, he can in no way harness his faculties to reach up to the subliminal heights. On the other hand, if he gets two square meals without any fuss or friction, he can usefully yoke his mind to achieve self, consciousness and consequent self-realization; Stuck up in the mire of material insecurity, his yearning for spiritual edification will be an exercise in futility. Self-consciousness presupposes mental peace and equilibrium. If it is denied to Man, how can we expect him to engage himself in self- search. He has his frailities, be is not a super-soul adept in self-denial. He would like to have his minimum wants satisfied, hence abjuring world is foreign to his genius in these circumstances. He is weighed down so much by the oddities of life, that he is always nursing a cramp in his back. With this physical and mental ailment, his soul does receive bruises, hence is incapable of unfolding its wings, without mincing words, 'Azad' has elaborated his point of view in this behalf, in these words:-

# <verses>

"O God, I do not yearn after riches and gold, but would implore you to show me such a world in which Divine obedience is to remember God within always, but not to pray to Him everytime for the fulfilment of each and every want."

He would like Man to be self- reliant, architect of his own fate. He has to put in efforts incessantly for making his life self-dependent and not to look to God for making him materially secure always. Relying

on the Grace of God will naturally breed indolence in him and mar his initiative, which 'Azad' would never allow. God's blessings are reserved for those who help themselves. For him the religion of Man is straight- forwardness wedded to truthfulness. Hypocrisy degrades Man:-

### <verses>

"Even though holding rosary in his fingers (A Mussalmaan), or donning the sacred-thread around his neck (A Hindu), such a human-being is diffident to speak the truth, can well be called a 'Peer' among his flock, or a Brahmin among his tribe."

According to 'Azad' be does not deserve the title of Man. He deludes people by his outer appearance and exploits their credulity. He is an imposter and and a pretender. He lacks courage to call the spade a spade. It would be better to quote the exact phrase used by 'Azad' in this respect:-

#### <verses>

"Nature bad brought you to life simply for dissemnating love; instead of it, O! Man, you converted your religion and faith into a lucrative trade, a veritable device for minting money."

The poet in 'Azad' is an indefatigable crusader against inequality between man and man in terms of his religious beliefs, creed, social injustice and political exploitation; but at the same time, he does not subscribe to the theory of total annihilation as propounded by Marxists. He advocates the view of total upliftment called 'Sarvodaya' in Gandhian parlance. He does not borrow foreign tools to make social order viable, but prefers to remedy the ills rampant in Man and his society by home-spun prescriptions. He is enamoured more of Gandhi than of Lenin or Marx:-

### <verses>

"Even the ferocious torrents can be arrested and tamed, if the man plunges himself, with out any fear, into the turmoils and tribulations of life and does not sit on the fence. This very trait of self- suffering is discernible in Gandhi--the Head of our Family, and is completely absent in alien people and their idealogy."

'Azad' is alive to the fact that independence of India and that of Kashmir is in the offing. It is a writing on the wall. At that hour of political emancipation, our leaders shall have to undergo an acid test. If they choose the line adopted by our erstwhile rulers, the English, then this freedom will have no meaning. It will mean only change of masters. Indigenous political power cannot be a synonym for corruption, but should in its stead goad man on to sublimity. Political leaders should personify detachment, never feel intoxicated by the power they are supposed to wield- a mandate and a trust from the people. It has often been seen that the man loses his head at this time of his political elevation and paradoxically enough uses the same power given to him by the people, ruthlessly against them. Therefore, he cautions the future rulers of our land in these words:-

### <verses>

"The foreigners have now bolted away after doing a brisk business here. It is the turn of our own kin now, but they also appear to me as the shrewd tradesmen presiding over their business-houses. O! Sylvan pine tree, who does nurse you?"

Their tricks of trade to exploit innocent people are enumerated as under:-

### <verses>

"These enemies of healthy social order screen away the truth the people by invoking religion, authority, God and His Godliness and even destiny."

Even though 'Azad' was not destined to witness the era of independence in its fullness, but how prophetically he has pin-pointed the behaviour of our rulers to be. He could smell future in advance. In this predicament, the people have no choice but to opt for slavery once again. The self-centred leadership

has monopolized all the fruits of freedom, these have not been allowed to trickle down to the nasses at large. Being disillusioned, the man would like to revert once more to foreign domination. The so-called love and concern by which these leaders swear is nothing short of opium mesmerizing the thinking and vision of the people, so that the unbridled rule of these Political jugglers is perpetuated uindisturbed:-

### <verses>

"That poor soul can never think of detached behaviour of fearless self-denial; He, who is devoid of his mental as well as physical balance, and to crown all, has planted his feet on the pedestal of authority endangering his equilibrium all the more, that so called concern for the weal of man as prefossed by such leaders actually dopes the dauntless spirit of man, denying him to keep his bead high, and forces him to bite the dust."

'Azad's' conviction in Hindu-Muslim amity and consequent Solidarity is marrow-deep. He abhors division of man into parochial nomenclature. Human beings have one and only one religion that is living up to human values. The fruits of hardwon freedom should not be frittered away on Hindu-Muslim squabbles. Humanity need not be sacrificed at the altar of communal freny:-

#### <verses>

"Those who call Hindus and Muslims as brothers, hand and glove with each other, are strictly guided by the tenets of the vedas and the Quran; they have no other Holy Book for preaching this enlightenment. If God had to segregate nations and creeds from each other, then He would have provided them with separate earth and Sky."

The children of God share the bounties of the earth together; They are uniform in body and soul. Why should their thinking get muddled?

<verses>

"I, as a frailman, took into account only the negative aspect of life- the turmoil of the waves, friction and even man- handling, The postive phase of life is contained in the maxim unity amongst Diversity; But, I only paid beed to the brewing of quarrels and the subsequent bad-taste these leave in the mouth. Had there not been oneness of Man how could such ignorant people pull on with those gifted with reason? For me, life is a continuous journey to reach up to that ideal."

After going through the entire poetie prowess of 'Azad' this inference is irresistible that his attainments as a celebrated Kashmiri poet were not a matter of days; It took him years after years to find his feet and thus project his message through rhyme and rhythm. Thus, we can glean three patent stages in his poetry from start to the end, in which his heart- beats have built inch by inch the premise on which his innate imagination indulged in playful sport. The first stage may well he termed as the period of initiation; Herein the poet has tried to harness his talents in translating his emotions, feelings and experience. This is the first attempt, hence cannot be free from shortcomings. His poetic fervour at this time was greatly influenced by the current Persian trends in vogue in Kashmir. It is more or less a Kashmiri rendering of Persian songs replete with the symbolism of 'Gul' and 'Bulbul'! Not only the content of his poetry is inspired by persian 'Gazal' but even the form, the phrase, idiom and even vocabulary has been borrowed from it. In this behalf, it may be said that 'Azad' could not gather moral strength to rise above the taditional trends current in Kashmiri poetry till then. He could not also afford to plough a lone furrow and extricate his poetry from the traditional stamp of Persian Muse. Therefore, his poetry at this stage could not be expected to touch the highest water-mark of independent thinking:-

### <verses>

"I became fully intoxicated after gulping down the wine of love, even bordering on lunacy; This, I drank at the tavern of Love, one goblet after another. He filled my heart with inebriating warmth of love to the brim, so that not a niche was available there to lend car to worldly advice. I experienced a very thin line between my life and death, presumably having lost my head by excessive indulgence."

This kind of qensual and sensuous poetry is not actually in the grain of 'Azad', but he feels compelled to toe the line his seniors had earmarked for themselves. Even the Persian vocabulary has been freely used by him, which to speak the least, has shorn the wings of his inherent imagination. At times, such Poetry sound as versified prose wafting the flavour of Persian propensities:-

#### <verses>

"The heart, the life, the love and the reason-The four bloodsuckers, in their own way, torment the helpless and abject feverish sentiment of irrestible call of flesh."

In this stanza only 'chhi' and 'Nali' are pure Kashmiri words, the rest being Persian; such artificial poetic constructions, initial attempts of a novice, can be profusely multiplied.

'Azad' has very sincerely confessed that at the initial stage of poetry-writing, 'Mahjoor'; the Doyen of Kashmirs lyricists, was his mentor. He used to get his poetic compositions revised and corrected by him. We can very safely assert also that at this time 'Mahjoor' was also his model. 'Azad' has at times composed his own verses on the pattern used by 'Mahjoor'; such Poems even though not imitations strictly speaking, are actually the models before him for undergoing, constant drill to catch up with this 'Master of Kashrniri Muse'. For example, 'Mahjoor' wrote the famous poem is "karo bulbulo deedaari gul" "O Buibul steal a glance at the flowers," and 'Azad' like a faithful apprentice composed a poem with the caption "vuchh bulbulo darbaari gul" "O, Bulbul witness the Durbar of flowers." The construction of verses, their meter, and the content are exactly similar. In the same way, 'Mahjoor's' famous romantic poem "baagi nishat ke gulo" "O Flower of Nishat Garden, come unto me with exquisite fund of coquetry," has been rendered by him into his own picture-poetry like this "baagi naseem ke gulo" "O flower of Naseem Garden, come unto me with captivating babblings of a child."

However, after such a brief honey-moon with this kind of poetry, on which Mahjoor's influence was the loudest, 'Azad' was successful in carving out an exclusive experimental ground for his independent thinking, totally divorced from the tradition and any extraneous influence. It may well be called the stage of experimentation,

'Azad' was rebel and a reformer at the same time. His imagination pregnant with new values revolutionary as well as altruistic could not remain tethered to the hackneyed norms of poetry for long. The force of circumstances, brought out the real poet in him which was in content and form home-spun and handwoven, so to speak. After undergoing excruciating travails of labour-pain, when there was a twilight engulfing him disturbing the exact equation between his head and heart, in the second stage of his potic fervour, his imagination got chastened, and his vision was divested of faulty aberrations. He located his goal with meticulous ingenuity. He was no longer a dreamer weaving reveries of sound and sense, but a vigilant sentinel of human values. He chose to discover Man, and his environment contaminated with contradictions. To him love, was not a sentimental frenzy now but milk of human kindness saturating meaningfully every phase of life with its attendant vissicitudes:-

# <verses>

"Love robs even high-statured seers given to penance, and also the well- read matters of knowledge; It tarnishes the innocent and flower- bedecked bodies of fair-maidens. At the threshold of Your Youth, you erred in selecting opulent people as your companions, perhaps not knowing that even the kings have been reduced to abject penury and those who used to give change hands with receiving alms."

This is actually the hard core of life and 'Azad' is now fully groomed to analyse it. For him poetry is a potent vehicle to unravel this bitter truth of life. It is neither jugglery of words, nor an expedient to indoctrinate people:-

### <verses>

"Taking bold of a pen and to write from beginning to the end cannot be called a pleasing composition. It is nothing but gold-coating on brass, simply to cheat the innocent people."

'Azad' is now alive to the fact that beauty has its limitations; ugliness cannot be termed squarely as its antonym. These are actually states of mind, a very thin line dividing these. In the context of changing values, beauty and ugliness can become complementary to each other, as the sun and shadow in actual life. So, the poet has to proclaim:-

### <verses>

"To the wise love is self-suffering, wrapping their boney skeleton underneath their garments. People with diverse intellectual dimensions call these either devices for minting money, or highway robbery; only a few can read true 'leadership' into it."

True leadership worships service before self. It has to set an example for others to follow. 'Azad' displaying courage of highest order took up the challenge of the time, its stresses and strains, its demands and obligations most seriously-:-

### <verses>

"Having fully felt the pulse of this age, 'Azad' is now composing these songs in which the 'Flower', the Bulbul, the wine, and their unquenching thirst are totally absent. Can this kind of poetry commend itself to poets?"

'Azad' changed the entire fabric of Kashmiri poetry, its woof and warp. He deviated from the age-long tradition. With eyes wide awake, he metamorphized the content as well as form of Kashmiri poetry. He is alive to the fact that this sweeping change will not earn him laurels for the present, because it will be lacking in the taditional attributes. He bemoans the content of Kashmiri poetry in these words.-

### <verses>

"Was it befitting on your part to have bargained your faith and world for fleeting sentimentality. You were actually nursing with love those flowers which had lost their fragrance. It was not becoming of you."

This attitude of the poet heralds the third epoch of his poetry. Herein his imagination has become fully baked, his outlook completely changed and his nerve surprisingly enough quite strong to defy the tradition and usher in a new way of life. He has evolved a method of sweet persuasion punctuated with direct approach. He beckons to Man:-

### <verses>

"O Dullard! you bemoan your lot, and blame your destiny least knowing that this heaven or hell is the outcome of your own actions."

Then what should be the attitude of a perfect Man according to 'Azad':-

### <verses>

"If you are very soft, lying flat like the earth, the world will trample you and also heap indignities on you. If you act like steel, then remember, one day will come, when you might have tamed lions by chains even, yet this very trait of yours might also turn the steel in you into a dagger or a sword."

The attitude of Man should be middle of the road, neither too soft nor too hard. In being too soft, there is every apprehension of losing the image, and in being too hard there is every chance of using that very steel against the people which had earlier shielded them from tyranny and oppression. Therefore, Man has to tread his ground very carefully, paving a rewarding path between these two extremes. He has to apply reason, the guarded treasure of his, and not get blinded by animality:

### <verses>

"O Man, you were supposed to be the lighthouse of innate reason, but you acted like a contagious fire. You have brought discredit to humanity in the most callous way."

Man was modelled by Nature to share the common weal and woe of his co-brethren; but he reppropriated to himself all the good things of life and thus starved his fellow-beings:-

### <verses>

"Nature had uncovered all her treasures for your free use. You had to share these equally with others; but you elected to become their sole guardian-cobra."

His clarion call to awaken Man to his duties is quite understandable in the background of communal disharmony, exploitation, tyranny of foreign rule, appalling inequality and monstrous behaviour of Man having lost his moorings. His nature-poetry should also be construed in that very perspective. He most consciously injects love of motherland and humanity into the dead veins of Man, bringing him back to robust health; Love for land and love for man are the two most predominant ingredients of Azad's poetry:-

#### <verses>

"The sweet warbling Bulbuls and cukoos girdle round my motherland dissemmating love and harmony. The flowers of this fairyland hold cups in their hands; How auspicious and thought provoking is my land of birth!"

In the very second-breath, he weaves this arresting panorama of bountiful Nature:-

#### <verses>

"The 'Dal lake' with its full-grown crop of lotuses is steady and silent, as if to preservo its ego of immensity, Nevertheless, tho violent water-falls rush down from the hill-tops in frenzied ecstacy; How auspicious and thought-provoking my land of birth is?"

His lovo for Man with unparalleled catholicity can be conveniently inferred from this verse:-

# <verses>

"You proclaimed yourself to be the pillar of religious obligations in terms of Hindus and Muslims; Actusly you were least concerned with it. Seeing your actions, the entire humanily is in consternation."

The religious labels dividing Man from Man have no relevance to the demands the universal values of brotherhood are making at present. This kind of inconvenient luxury is out of date now. We had to pay through our nose by this artificial division between the sons of the same soil in the days of yore. This lapse needs to be rectified now:-

# <verses>

"It is verily the man who constructed the temples and who also laid the foundation of 'Kaba'. Therefore, O you believer in the Quran, what fault do you find with the Gita."

Change is the sauce of life, monotony its poison. 'Azad' has explained this universal truth like this:-

### <verses>

"What is life? It is a folic depicting change. Oneness of God was the harbinger of oneness of His creation; The unity of Man is the consummation of that oneness. The real purport of life is continuos turmoil, and the essence of turmoil is change."

This is the message of 'Azad'; continuous struggle against odds. Actually life had never been a bed of roses for him. He could only get a petty pittance of Rs. thirteen per month as a teacher. Dospite this economic discomfiture, be never grumbled. He could hardly keep the wolf out of the door, yet he was more keen to drive away the wolves of exploitation, social inequality and political aggrandisement. His poetry is not individualistic. It is the dirge of the underdog scattered over length and breadth of this globe. He does not weave his own sighs into heart-rending poetry, but laments the woes of Man-a fallen angel. He would like to rehablitate him, restore his pristine glory. Self is absent throughout his poetry. He sings

for whole humanity. His entire poetry is a saga of human consciousness; He does not pretend to be a preacher, a mystic, or a romanticist. He is the conscience-keeper of man.

Even though, the present, he was destined to face, was thoroughly unpalatable, yet he disdained it only to build a rosy future out of it debris. Ignoring his own to-day-inhospitable and discomforting, he, like a valiant crusader only looked towards the bright to-morrow, when Man would recognize his own self and get rid of all the ills which irk him at present:-

#### <verses>

"The revolution in the thinking of Man will bring back to life the doped Bulbuls, the flowers- gardens will be in fall bloom. Those who are bereft of head and heart will be looked after by this sweeping change."

But 'Azad' died a martyr to his own idealogy; burning love or humanity consumed his blood every day in and out, and at a comparatively younger age of forty five he had to drop down his mantle. His 'to-day' was physically over; he had discarded it mentally since long, so it made no worthwhile difference to him; Yet his 'morrow' dawned with all the brilliance he had endeavoured all his life to bestow on it. The poet in 'Azad' can never die because his imagination is wedded to the immortal human values; The soothing touch of his poetic-alchemy will resurrect him in the morrow-the vocal champion of which he was throughout.

He is, to speak precisely, a poet of to-morrow. He only feigned to count his breath in to-day, actually his heart lay in the day following. Therefore, it was not without meaning that 'Mahjoor' his tallest senior, mentor and model paid him this glowing tribute:-

#### <verses>

"Oh! 'Azad' has concealed himself from this world; or the cup of life has eluded him. 'Mahjoor' would like to unfold his heart over his death by saying that the sweet-throated Bulbul has opted for silence."

Source: Glimpses of Kashmiri Culture

# 14 Shamas Faqir

# Religious Mysticism: Some Observations on the Poetry of Shamas Faqir

# Prof. A. N. Dhar

[With the advent of Islam in India, Persian studies gained popularity among the literary sections of the society, that included the Hindus and the Muslims alike. This led to an interchange of concepts from Vedanta and Sufism between the two communities. The Bhakti movement in India provided an additional stimulus to this process of interchange. The mystical poems of Shamas Faqir, the Sufi poet of note from the valley of Kashmir, exemplify this cultural synthesis in a remarkable way.

Mystical poetry in Kashmiri (spoken by the natives of the valley) has a richness and variety of its own, traceable to the mingling of several cultural streams. This intermingling is specially noticeable in the poems of Shamas Faqir, a spiritually enlightening study of which is presented below by the author].

In this paper, I propose to discuss the religious mysticism with particular reference to Shamas Faqir, noted Sufi poet of Kashmir. We notice a pervasive mystical element in his lyrics (composed in Kashmiri) that is Sufi in content and inspiration, compatible with Islam and, at the same time, comparable in significant way, with other varieties of religious mysticism. In the introductory part, I shall first touch upon religious mysticism in general at some length and then give a brief account of Sufi mysticism in its bearing upon the poetry of Shamas Faqir.

Mysticism, of all shades, is not to be seen as something remote from religion. Essentially, it is a correlate of religion. The term 'religion' is generally taken to mean the observance of belief, which is commonly identified with mere ritual. The mystic, however, does not rest content with the bare externals of religion. He seeks to attain an intimate, loving relationship with the Divine - involving a personal 'encounter' aiming at 'union'. He is at once drawn to the ultimate Truth by a passionate curiosity and an ardent love. His pursuit, therefore, inevitably involves the religious feeling at its most intense. In this respect, the great mystics of all times and climes are closely akin to the very founders of various faiths.'

From the biographies of the renowned mystics of the world, supported by what has come down to us in the form of their sayings and writings, we gather that while some of them remained mostly absorbed in contemplation the majority also practised love and piety as the benefactors of mankind in general. Unlike religious zealots, tied to this or that creed, they quietly pursued their own ways (as lone adventurers) though they continued to stay within their traditions. Only a small minority of them chose to dissociate themselves from orthodox creeds, asserted their freedom and even professed heretical views. Some of these unfettered mystics, like the Persian mystic Mansur-al-Hallaj, had to pay a heavy price for their non-conformist views. The example of William Blake, poet and visionary, also comes to mind here as a unique mystic whose bold and unconventional pronouncements were not palatable to the orthodox Christians.

Across cultures, mysticism shares universal characteristics despite the variety it comprehends. That explains why the religious mystic is tolerant and accommodating as far as his attitude to other faiths is concerned. As the mystic advances in the spiritual path, whatever his affiliations, he realizes that all religions are one in essence and lead to the same goal. We, in India, are proud of being the inheritors of a rich culture, presenting a fine synthesis of diverse strands. The Hindu ethos itself has been largely responsible for this synthesis, conducive as it has been to free inquiry into the nature of Reality or Truth, and consequently to the flowering of the mystical sensibility.

The country has built up a rich mystical tradition going back to the Vedic times, which later absorbed the influence of the Sufi mystics (who in turn were themselves influenced by the cross-cultural interaction on the Indian soil). Having had a steady growth over centuries, our mystical literature involves a wide range of approaches to Reality. This is consistent with our cultural diversity. Of these approaches, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana are specially characteristic of Hindu mysticism. Interestingly, they correspond to the types of spiritual life respectively termed practical, devotional and philosophical mysticism by Christian scholars.

Another feature that is specially common to Christian and Hindu mysticism is the theme of love between God and the soul conceived as a spousal relation. Interestingly, this theme has been elaborately dealt with in our literature devoted to Krishna and the gopis. In fact, across cultures, human love has been a dominant motif in poetry of all hues including the mystical. Most mystics have looked upon earthly love itself as the root of spirituality, having in it the potential of transfiguring into divine love. This theme has been dealt with in a variety of ways in mystical literature throughout the world.

One more related feature common to most varieties of mysticism is the mystic's account of his advancement in the spiritual path - of the various states he experiences and the stages he goes through until he attains his goal. In Christian mysticism, the spiritual 'journey' is depicted as consisting of three distinct phases - called the Purgative, Illuminative and Unitive stages of the Mystic Way. The corresponding concept in Hindu mysticism is that of 'Ascent of the Self', particularly stressed in Kundalini-yoga. While mystical union is conceived in the Hindu scriptures, including the Upanishads, as the complete merger of the individual soul with God, for the Christian mystics it implies the soul's experience of the constant presence of God. We find parallel - if not identical - accounts of the Mystical Way and all that it involves in Sufi Mysticism, too.

Islam, as a world, religion, has laid utmost emphasis on the oneness of God. Thus thoroughly monotheistic, it has also stressed God's transcendence and man's creature-hood. This is something that does not seem compatible with mysticism - a dimension of religion that stands for an intimate relationship with the Divine. In actual fact, however, Islamic worship does not ignore the immanental aspect of God, including man's innate divinity. Those who uphold the Sufi path as the "mystical dimension of Islam" assert that in the Koran itself there are several passages which affirm God's immanence and quite suggest the possibility of a close communion between the Maker and man. It is on this account that they justify the doctrine of Irfan or Marifat (spiritual gnosis) as also the practice of Mahabba (the Way of Love).

As the spiritual offspring of Islam, Sufism had its fine flowering on the Persian soil. The Sufi orders that grew up in Persia and other Islamic countries evolved approaches that were mutually coherent and also consistent with the essential spirit of Islam. Eschewing 'high and dry intellectualism', the Sufis, like the Christian saints, practised poverty and penance, preaching their doctrine through love and gentle persuasion. Although Islam does not encourage monasticism or renunciation of household life, many Sufis spent their lives as wandering faqirs. The Sufi way had its impact not only on the Muslims themselves but it impressed the devout in other communities as well, leading to a healthy interaction and mutual accommodation, a thing borne out by what happened significantly in India. The receptiveness of the indigenous culture, specially characteristic of the Hindu ethos, and the liberal attitude of the Sufis have both contributed, in no small measure to the composite culture that continues to be our rich legacy.

Islamic mysticism in its literary form, largely Sufi in content and inspiration, found its adequate development in classical Persian poetry. The Persian poets showed remarkable ability in using the language of human love to convey mystical concepts related to the Divine. The terminology of erotic love, particularly used in relevant context, enabled them to give a hint of the 'rapture' (wajd) the mystic experiences within the deeps of his soul. The Persian lyric, called the ghazal, evolved as an appropriate form in their hands for unfolding experiences profound and esoteric in nature, rooted in their mystical craving for union with God. Maulana Rumi, the supreme exponent of the Sufi Way, and other poets like Attar, Saidi, Hafiz and Jami, wrote excellent poetry using highly suggestive images charged with significance, which gave superb expression to the theme of divine love. The profane and the sacred are seen to intermingle in Sufi poetry as they, for example, do in the metaphysical lyrics of John Donne. Written seemingly in a voluptuous vein, they evoke and suggest what touches our inmost Being.

With the advent of Islam in India, Persian studies gained popularity among the literary sections of the society, that included the Hindus and the Muslims alike. This led to an interchange of concepts from Vedanta and Sufism between the two communities. The Bhakti movement in India provided an additional stimulus to this process of interchange. The mystical poems of Shamas Faqir, the Sufi poet of note from the valley of Kashmir, exemplify this cultural synthesis in a remarkable way.

Mystical poetry in Kashmiri (spoken by the natives of the valley) has a richness and variety of its own, traceable to the mingling of several cultural streams. Its growth began in the fourteenth century with the famous woman poet and saint, Lal Ded. It was in her time that Sufism first came to Kashmir through Muslim saints and mystics. Consistent with her Saivite background, Lal Ded, in her vakhs, neither characterizes the world as illusory nor recommends external renunciation. She looks upon the objective universe as the Swarupa Itself (the Real Form) that parallels the Sufi view of the physical world as Wahadatulwajud.

The great Muslim saint, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Rishi of Chrari Sherif (Kashmir), revered by all communities in the valley and popularly called Nund Rishi, is believed to have been blessed and directly influenced by Lal Ded. This is confirmed by the reverential tribute he paid her in one of his shruks (slokas). Mystical in thought and aphoristic in form, his shruks have impressed and influenced both the communities, Hindus and Muslims, in Kashmir as the vakhs of Lal Ded. Accordingly, in the mystical poetry that was produced mostly in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries (after a long gap, following the two saints), we notice an interfusion of parallel literary motifs and images drawn from diverse cultural sources. This intermingling is specially noticeable in the poems of Shamas Faqir (AD 1843- 1901). It is also to be seen in varying degrees in the poems of a number of other Kashmiri poets.

No authentic biography of Shamas Faqir, with full details about his life including what his literary antecedents were, has been compiled so far. What has, therefore, to be depended upon most in this context is the text of ninety-six of his poems included in the anthology of Sufi poems in Kashmiri brought out by the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar. The perceptive reader can gather many facts and draw useful inferences from them about the life and literary background of the poet.

As we gather from the scanty biographical information available, through his upbringing at home and later under the influence of several seasoned teachers, Shamas Faqir was drawn towards divine contemplation during his early formative years. He got connected with the Qadri Sufi order and thereafter, around the age of twenty-five, he went to Amritsar in pursuit of spiritual knowledge. Here he came into contact with an accomplished Master, under whom he got fully conversant with the Sufi doctrine and practice. On his return to Kashmir, he got married and had four children. Yet he remained well set on the spiritual path and lived throughout in the true spirit of a Sufi saint.

An intensive reading of Shamas Faqir's poems reveals a lot to us about his religious background and the literary sources that must have inspired him. This in turn enables us to appreciate better his communicative skill as a mystical poet, precisely the tools he used to articulate his perceptions and experiences. As we get familiar with the linguistic tools and the kind of imagery he employs, we conveniently judge for ourselves the main sources of his inspiration.

Thus the poem 'Nat', the first in the group of his poems available, indicates immediately that he is a devout Muslim, well acquainted with the teachings of Islam based on the Koran and also with the life of Prophet Mohammed. The poem 'Merajnama' that follows recounts the story of the Prophet's spiritual journey to the abode of God. In a number of other poems there is unmistakable evidence of the poet's awareness of the Mystic Way - of the steps and stages leading to Union that the Sufi Masters are believed to have gone through.

To the discerning reader, Shamas Faqir's description of the Sufi path must appear suggestively similar to the spiritual 'adventure' given in other varieties of religious mysticism (including Hindu and Christian mysticism). In several poems, he makes use of the via-negativa and via-affirmativa approaches in his accounts of the Divine. Each of these approaches to Reality involves a characteristic language use, which the poet accomplishes so well; sometimes we find the two approaches deftly interwoven in the same poem. In quite a few poems, we come across direct allusions to the Persian mystic, Mansur-ul-Hallaj, and the doctrine of An-ul-Haq (I am Truth) that he boldly preached.

The Sufi concepts offana (annihilation), baqa (continuity), the terms zikir (remembrance of God) and fikir (contemplation), the symbolism of the 'diver' in search of 'pearls', the images of zulf (seductive curl) and khal (the mole on the cheek of the Beloved) are seen to recur in many a poem. The imagery of jam (wine

cup) and mai-khana (wine house) associated closely with makhumur (the 'intoxicated' mystic) is also recurrent in Shamas Faqir, linking him with his distant predecessors, the Persian Sufi poets, in the background. It is they, in fact, who were the first to make innovative and creative use of language in starting the vogue of this imagery. At places, Shamas Faqir speaks of his experience of the inward music of the soul, of the 'vibrant string within', that reminds us of anahata (unstrung sound) mentioned in Surat-Sabda Yoga.

A striking feature of Shamas Faqir's poems is the diction: using largely the Kashmiri idiom current in his time, he also employs words from Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. He can bend language to his needs, blending harmoniously words from diverse sources together - an achievement creative in a high degree. In some poems particularly, we notice that he makes a consistent use of terms (and related concepts) derived from the Hindu Sastras (including both Vedanta and Saiva texts) with remarkable ease and facility.

As examples we may mention terms like zagrat (wakefulness), sopan (dream), sushapt (deep sleep), turya (superconsciousness), terms relating to the four elements including pavan (air) and akasa (ether), words like soham (He am I), sunya (void), rav (the sun), shiv (Siva), anand (bliss), om, raza honz (King of swans). He handles the vocabulary and the related concepts so well that the poems acquire a distinctive Hindu tone. Of such poems the one that specially comes to my mind is titled 'Pad' (the first of the sequence). The interfusion of two cultures is indeed very conspicuous in the Sufi poet.

Several lyrics of Shamas Faqir centre round the theme of the mystic's quest for the primal cause of this universe. As an illustration, the lyric titled 'Agur Kami Manz Drav' repeatedly poses the question, 'what is the fountainhead of the stream?', which serves as its refrain. Here is my translation of some significant lines of the poem (attempted to convey the essential meaning):

Day and night does Pavan flow Through the four Bhavans non-stop; Whence did it come And whither did it go? It was even (all of one hue), Whence did the stream come forth?

He who owns the sea Is the Lord of water, The river issued from the drop; To get to the meaning, Sacrifice yourself first;

....

O Shamas, to attain gnosis, Throw open your heart's door; Sun-like, roam the sky through (To fathom the Secret); What is the fountain-head?

We can see that the poem poses vital and thought- provoking questions regarding the First Cause. It instructs the seeker to pursue the spiritual journey inwardly to realize the Self. This would naturally call for annihilation of the little self. The answer to the imponderable question regarding the source of the Cosmos is provided through the intertwined images of the 'drop' and the 'river'. They parallel the images of the bindu and the sindu given in Hindu mystical literature, conveying what Swami Ram Tirtha does equally aptly through the phrase 'Infinite in the Finite'. In the concluding lines, that lay stress on cleansing the heart as a means to inward transformation, the tone of the poem changes as the poet addresses his own self. Without sounding the didactic, the changed tone stimulates self- introspection in the reader/listener.

The Persian Sufi poets have often used the word rinda in their lyrics. It refers to the true lover, a liberated soul (not tied to this or that school). With its rich associations, it has been absorbed into Kashmiri

mystical poetry and has by now got into common usage among the Kashmiris. It occurs frequently in Shamas Faqir's verse too. One poem titled 'Rinda Sara Ho Sapdi Kunu Ye' is specifically addressed to the rinda. This is how the poet instructs the aspiring gnostic:

O rinda, in order to realize the One, Learn to die while still alive.

Emphasis is laid in the poem on self-conquest as being the stepping stone to advancement in spirituality. Whether we call the aspirant a yogi or an arif, his sadhana has to consist in 'cleansing of the doors of perception', which involves a disciplining of the mind and the senses. He has to be discriminative and mentally alert throughout. Shamas Faqir is explicit about this quality required of the true aspirant:

Seemingly blind, look keenly for What you seek, O rinda! Sifting the pure grain From the impure, Winnowing the grains a hundred times Will reveal the Precious One to you.

The poet draws our attention to the strenuousness and pains involved in the spiritual effort, in these lines:

Break the stones at the dead of night,
To take away the Gem guarded
by the cobra;
Feed the burning lamp
with your blood,
Eat up your own flesh;
Thus will you, O rinda, realize the One.

Special stress is laid in the closing lines on belief and divine grace:

Believe before you verify, That's Shamas Faqir's gospel; When you get the 'Word' As a God-sent gift, O rinda, you'll realize the One.

In one particular poem titled 'Walo Mashoka Deedar Hav', the poet employs 'dark imagery' throughout, from the beginning to the end, and mentions 'black light' specifically in these lines:

The Elixir of life is hidden in the dark, The light divine is dark, too; Light itself is grounded in darkness, Pray, meet me Beloved!

This poem reminds us of the images of 'darkness' that are so recurrent in St. John of the Cross, especially in his poem titled 'Dark Night of the Soul', there is a close parallel between the Christian concept of 'divine dark' and what Shamas Faqir conveys through his images. Similarly, the names of Hindu divinities such as Krishna, Shyama, Kalaratri, Megashyama, suggest 'the night of the great release into the oneness of Self', which is dark only to the senses, not to the spirit.

The 'human form divine', in its feminine aspect, is celebrated conspicuously in the poetry of Persian Sufis. Parallel motifs and images are seen to occur in both Hindu and Christian mysticism. The form functions as a wisdom figure, which is, in fact, a recurrent image in literature. It is also identifiable as the 'theophanic figure through whom the manifestation of God takes place'.

Shamas Faqir too follows this Sufistic tradition as a poet. In several poems, he introduces a lady as embodying 'Beauty' and 'Truth', but the images of woman that he employs do not suggest the flesh. In one such poem title 'Rov', the feminine form, described as 'ashqa sondar', recalls the Greek goddess Aphrodite. Her physical graces are rendered in fine detail - red lips, charming teeth, incomparable mouth

(dahan), seductive locks (resembling coiled snakes) and the like. All these images are loaded with mystical significance in the Sufi tradition.

Another such poem of deep import, addressed throughout to a woman hailed as the 'esteemed lady', is titled 'Manareniye Pan Badlav'. It makes an elaborate use of the symbolism that we especially meet with in Christian mystical writings - depicting the soul as the spouse of God. In the poem under discussion, the 'honoured lady' is cautioned not to be remiss in 'throwing the precious stone away'. She is advised to undergo 'alchemical' transformation to deserve the rare gift and the elevation that she seeks as her goal - which is nothing short of Union with the Beloved.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate that as a Muslim poet writing in Kashmiri, Shamas Faqir is outstanding in his grasp and assimilation of many mystical concepts and images that occur in the sacred Hindu texts. He owes this assimilation not only to his contact with the co-existing Hindu culture of his time but also to his own receptiveness and openness of mind. After Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Rishi of Chrari Sheriff, it is he (before others followed them) who paid glowing tributes to Lal Ded in a poem wholly devoted to her, titled 'Zan Mila Nav Bhagvanas Sooty'. The poem shows how high he held her in his esteem, how familiar he was with her story and how thoroughly acquainted he must have been with her vakhs. His poems deserve to be read with care, as a source of delight and spiritual instruction.

# [Courtesy - Prabuddha Bharata]

- 1. William James, The Vaneties of Religious Experience (New York: The Modern Library, 1929), p. 31.
- 2. Saiyid A.A. Rizvi, A History of Suf sm in India (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Pub., Pvt. Ltd., 1978) vol. I, p.18.
- 3. See A.J. Arberry, Sufism (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1950; rpt. 1956), pp. 17, 27.
- 4. See Cyprian Prince, O.P., The Persian Sufis (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964), p. 28.
- 5. Quoted in B.N. Parimoo, The Ascent of Self (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2nd rev. edn., 1987), p.6 (footnote no. 2).
- 6. See Motilal Saqi, ed., Kashmir Sufi Shairi (Srinagar: J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 311-439.
- 7. Onwards also, I have quoted a few more passages from Shamas Faqir's verse (rendered into English by me for illustrative support).
- 8. Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal', tr & annotator, Indrakshi Stotram (Srinagar, Kashmir: Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, 1995), p. 38.
- 9. E.B. Greenwood, 'Poetry and Paradise: A Study in Thematics', Essays in Criticism, 17 (1967), p. 19.

Source: Koshur Samachar

# 15 Avatar Bhatt

**Avatar Bhatt** (15th century) was a court-poet to King Zain-ul-Abidin and a noted scholar of Sanskrit and Persian. He is known for his work Banasur Katha (The Story of the Demon Banasur), a long narrative poem of haunting beauty which is valued, apart for its poetic merit, for the light it sheds on the state of the Kashmiri language in the 15th century when it had just emerged from the Prakrit-Apabhramsha stage to assume its modern form.

# 16 Mahmud Gami

**Mahmud Gami** (1765-1855) introduced in Kashmiri the Persian forms of the masnavi and ghazal. He is noted for his work Yusuf Zulaikha, a poem which is a major contribution to Kashmiri literature. It is the first and the most popular masnavi in Kashmiri. It comprises 700 verses and has also been rendered into the German by the famous 19th century European scholar Fredrich Burkhard.

# 17 Maqbool Shah Kralawari

**Maqbool Shah Kralawari** (1820-'76) was educated in Persian literature and is considered as the finest lyricist of the 19th century Kashmir. In his Malanama, he lacerated the 'mullahs' for being hand in glove with the ruthless landlords but masquerading as the defenders of virtue and the redeemers of the poor. On the other hand in his Grisynama he exposed the foibles and frivolities of the landless peasantry reduced to sub-human condition.. However, his creative genius reached its apogee in Gulrez (Scattered Flowers). It is one of the best mathnavis (descriptive poem) of the 19th century.

# 18 Rasool Mir

# The Poet of Bubbling Love

Dr. R. L. Bhat

Tha-rah tha-rah chham ma-rah sha-yad shar meh ji-gu-rook drav-nai Khosh yi-von nunda-bon, ve-si-yae Myon dil-bar aav nai

I am all ashake, I may die/my heart's wish has seen no fulfillment that lovely, pleasing, my heart throb/he hasn't come, ah Dear!

Rasul Mir, that skilled decanter of love, has a raging controversy shrouding his age. The local traditions recorded in 1940's of by Ab Ahad Azad, spoke of a death in his prime. Folk history has it that, Mahmood Gani predicted his youthful death (Amis Chhi jan-h-margi handi koder). His poetry, its fervent youthfulness, its vibrant tenor, its tone of hearty yearning, its pristine emotions, all point to a poet, untouched by the cares of decaying age. Rasul Mir was said to have been alive in 1855 AD when Mahmood Gani passed away and died a few years before-Maqbool Shah Kralawari (d.1874). Accordingly his demise was reckoned between 1867-1870). Rasul Mir was thus said to have lived between 1820s and 1870s. Mr. Teng in his Kuliyati Rasul Mir, refers to a document, in revenue records at Anantnag, which bears the signature of Rasul Mir, as Nambardar and is dated 5th of April 1889. On this basis, Rasool may have lived into the last decade of 19th century. That is as close to factual certainity as researches have gotten to.

For the rest, there is his poetic legacy, and, ah again oral traditions. Oral traditions say, Rasul Mir was tall, handsome fair complexioned person, and sported moustaches that tapered far into the face. He was graceful, fashionable fellow, with a youthful heart that throbbed with love, love, and lots of love.

Yi chho Rasul Mir Shahabad Doo-rey Tami chho trov-mut lo-la du-kaan Yi-vu aash-qow che-vu tor-re tor-rey Mai chho moor-rey la-la-vun naar.

This is Rasul Mir, at Shahabad, Doru. He has opened a love-kiosk. Come ye lovers, drink free cup. Love's fire burns me deep Love, is the waft and whoop, the craft and creed of Rasul Mir (He lived love, sang love, and lives for his love-ful passion).

Love, the first strings of human heart that present the whole universe as an undulating poem. Love is the creed, beloved is the god and lyrics rush forth in bubbling streams to worship the deity. Singing, sighing and singing again they cascade over the expanses of life, in undating it in its fervor.

Ze-h posha tu-l-i maeni aashq-a mas-jid husn imam ta-th Tsa-ae bae-ng-i shu-baan mokh-ta-e da-ae Ch-e-i yous-faen-i chae-lee My Loves' mosque, is an edifice of just two petals, Love is the preist there, Ye pearly one art the caller there, Ye, who hath the Yousef's grace.

Mir's beloved is grace personi fied Zeh posha tu-l (two petals, mere) the being of his, object of love, is characteristic of Rasul Mir's' dainty love. Love, flowers, passion and fragrance, the eternal inciters of life and beauty, are a recurring motiff in his poetry.

Posha mal chham posh-a tu-l dda-ae lo-lo Rinda posh-a-mal gin-da-ney dra-yi lo-lo My beloved (Posh-a-mal) is but two and a half petals; lo, the gay love goes out to frolic.

Ga-ts-ta ve-si-yeh an-tan asta lo-lo He-ai mai kaer-i-mus poshan dasta lo-lo

Go ye my friend, fetch my lover here, A Jasmine, I have woven garlands for him

Veer-nag-h ba nae-rai aa-ga-yey Achwal-ki posh shae-re la-ga-yey

Vach-a-manz-a-lis ma-nz rachh-a-th dachh. mooriyey

Va-lai kastur-re-yey, paer mai tra-v neer-i-yey

Veer-nag, I'll go to usher thee, Thy brow I'll deck in flowers of Acha-bal/Yeh, vine I'll twins thee to my breast/come ye kasturi, don't roam the meadows free.

The weaving green of vast meadows, the dancing hues of wild flowers, the crystal springs singing their purity out, the free birds singing ditties to the air: Kashmir is land that is made for love, passion, a life lived through the heart. It is a wonder that this land had to mouth through painful centuries of love-less self-denials, monastic seclusion, dark corners of incisive introspection which is called the path of realization, or sufism.

The Kashmiri literature, (as much of it as is available) opens with Lalla. Lalleshwari was a saint, who saw the world as a beast's burden. Lalla lived in the turbulence that was the beginning of Muslim Rule in Kashmir. Nund Reshi followed her, in her footsteps, in a slightly different direction, he was a preacher, who preached the new religion and won converts. His was a Muslim enthusiast living with Buddhist monastic principles, with the zeal of early Buddhist proselytizers, with similar end and results. That was the 14th century, the first Muslim century of Kashmir. Love, was an abhorrence. Faith was all, the beginning, the continuance, the end of life. Except for the interregnum of Buddh-shah, the reigns were harsh 'Jehads', against the populace or rival lords. Life was a persecution, living a hard duty, if not a curse. The language, the idiom, the thought and idea all were being transformed to correspond to alien ideals. It was a turbulence where you held your body in two hands, and heart kept pumping frantically under sweeping waves of adrenaline induced by terror. Poetry if any, was a recluse, hidden behind drab walls. Else, it was employed to trans-create Persian fables into heavy persionised Kashmiri for the benefit of converts to firm them in their new faith. Heart was out, for hearts sing free. Kashmir lay in double bonds. The fanatic zealots were out to stifles any free cries. The despots were prowling to cage gay voices.

It took two centuries to breed Habba Khatoon. Habba was swiftly carried to the chak palace. Akbar's taking over released her from there, to sing over the saffron fields of Pompor, yearning for her lover, who could not have been Yousef Shahi Chak. A century after Habba came Mahmood Gani. Gani was prolific, too prolific. He introduced Kashmiri to Persian verse-form Ghazal, in a heavily Persianised tongue. Be times he took whole verses from Persian masters and re-laid them with a Kashmiri interjection here, a connective there, a pronoun at other places. Still, he wrote some memorable prices. And he wrote a lot. From masnavi, to gazals, to dainty Kashmiri vatchun, on to pieces dipped in Sofi lore, Gani, lived to be ninety and filled a thick Kuliyat. The one published by Cultural Academy runs to 560 pages, of closely written script!

Gani was a gifted poet, a master versifier, in love with Persian. His bequeath was distilled by Rasul Mir, who loved with heart, lived with heart, and sang from a love-ful heart. To a notority'

Rasul yud-vy gun-cha laban pailth teh-h chhok badnaam Kho-sh ro-z aashaq kar tse Naa farmaan dapan chhi.

Rasul, even though you are infamous for your love of tulip lips, be happy, for seldom do the lovers complain of thy in-attention.

Love was the task to which Rasul applied himself with abandon. Love, and beloved, a total world, with neither time nor space for the mundane.

Mae-nzi nam-nae van-d-sai bo

Ha-tt-i Koi rath tor-ri lo-lo Sarva ka-math kam-deev myon Ja-ma chhis ka-for-ri lo-lo Zar vanaan ehho-ee Rasul Mir doori shah-baad ddoore lo-lo

For her hennaed naib I'll give, pot-fuls of blood from under my throat, that tall beloved of mine, is attired in robes of scent Rasul. Mir is crying his heart, away, far in Dooru, oh love

Tanha chon-e dar zulf girf-taar myonui dil Dar halqa yo-hai sil-sil-h don aal-man aa-mai

My heart is not the love one, caged in that love/This is way, the path through which, not one but two worlds've gone

Chhus koba hus-nuk roae, abroo taq bar taq Dar ra-hi aashq sajda ra-va don bu-mun aa-mai

That face is the kaaba of beauty, her lashes layered over and over. In the path of love, it is meet to bow to those two brows

Gul ro-ae ra-tah-hath na-la dev dilas tselem daag Rasul-h tse rus khar mae bar farsh-i suman aamai

Ye tulip faced, thee I'd hold, by neck to heal my pain/sans thee, Rasul the flower bed, is a thorny seat for me

Kama-kus ja-ma-h paerith che-ti-yey Sheeri lae-gith gul-i a-naar Veeri ta-san-zi nae-r-e mati-mati-yey Vanta la-ti-ye, tas mae-ni jar.

White are the robes, my Kamdev wears. His brow is adorned in flowers red, His path, I'd take in drunken stupor, go, tell my love of my pangs

Nae-li sho-bee ta-sa var-dan, bae-li Khorda sae-li-yey Vae-li kan chie zaeli waen-kan saeli vodd-ni tac-li-yey-lo

Bride's robes, would suit thee well, Ye, my beloved of short years/Thy braids of hair, thy ear rings/peep from beneath the gossamer cover

Yae-ri laa-gov maeri man-zi zaar boj-tai hen-zi-yey Nae-ri san-zi-yey mae-lh vuchh-ney pher-vai. Tel-baeliyey-lo

Come let us be friends, ye lovely beauty, listen to my laments, oh Henzi, come to see the mela and, we shall roam through Telbal)

The object of Rasul's love is said to have been a Hindu belle of his village. Tales of their having gone to the same mak-tab, and fallen in love have been woven. His poems of love, will yield a thousand tales of prolicy dalliance and passionate love, with little effort. Probably, such soul-full poetry is not possible without a passionate love. You have only to read Mahmood Gani, to know the bubbling heart in Rasul Mir's lyrics. Henzi-yani, Hindu girl, is an unmistakable refrain in Rasul Mir's Poems.

Raza hen-zi-ya-ni naaz kyah anzni gardan Ya illa-hi chesma bad-a nishi rachh-tan Ga-tsi kam kyah cha-ni baar-ga-hi lo-lo Rinda poshamal gindi-ney dra-yi lo-lo

How graceful the swans neck of henziyani looks, spare her from evil eyes, my Lord, Thy bounty, that won't lessen, O God, Lo, the love goes on a frolicly outing

Whether the love was reciprocated or not is lost, like the details of Rasul Mir's life, in the depths of past lost to us. It is also not clear whether the mentions would point to a specific person or an idealization of female beauty in the form of a Hindu-maiden (God lenons, they are beauty itself) Raza Henz-yan, passes into Kongi, into Poshmal, Soundermal, Padmaeni, Kostouri, Kongi Padmani, take the primal place, for full lyric 'Kongi

haav-tai paan. Bo veer-na-gai he-mai za-gai La-gai mot gaer zaan Pooli to cheena-gund kya drengi, Kongi haa tai paan.

I'll look for you at Veernag, in the garb of an unknown mendicent, at Pooli, cheeni-gund, Drengi. Give me a glimpse, Kongi

This is a virtual topographical map of the area, where Rasul Mir lived. The compiler of Q. Kulyati Rasul Mir has avered that Poshmaal too is a probable name of the Henziyaen. Rightly so. And so are Sondermaal, Kastour, Padmaan, Shama, which repeatedly occur in his verses.

Gul zun bae tse-nai jama tse-ttith nae-rh ba-ba-zaar Padmaeni aa-shaq chh-us tse pa-th bad-naam niga-ro

Like a tulip, my robe I'll rent, and come forth; O Padmani, I'm thy loved, infamed by my love

Madno Padmaani mo dim dalai Mad-h chhas az to tai ada-h no var Aadan ba-jey va-da na dda-lai-h Hain-tse-i-h ko-tah tsa-l-h bo

My love, spurn not this Padmani, now for another occasion is not meet. My primal mate, my word I won't break. How much shall I bear, ye pretender

Dil nith mae jaanus ma zaag Shama Soundri paa-mun mai laag Ram-nae-gr-i tsaar-thai veer nag

My heart you've taken, trap not my body, O beautiful Shama, expose me not to..... I look for you at Veernag through Ram Nagri

Of course, all these proper nouns can be interpreted in adjectival sense, which every name in reality is Shama Sundri, can be dusky, Soundri, beautiful Shama, or a dusky beauty. And that point needs be made about, about Rasul Mir. For Rasul Mir is a poet of love, a poet par excellance even without any enchanting tales appended to him. He lives his heart out in love-ful lyrics, weaving patterns of beauty in the nunees of emale form and adornments, wringing out a resonance from every listening heart.

Tse yi-vaan roshe chhok-na-t-h ho-she dda-la-yo madno Be-h rivaan sor-ma chesman sor-m-h chha-lae-yo madno. You stay away, my angry love, and here I sink from senses dear; My tears flow and wash all kajal from my eyes dear

Me-hn eu-than tso-r-ri dil, mas-toor-i kor-tham hoo-ri k-soor Bad-nus soor ma-lai, door tse-la-yo madno Kha-ttith see-nus-andar na-lae ra-ttith Shama Sunder Jama zan sar-va-ka-dus paan va-lae-yo mad-no.

My heart you stole, and left me a maiden. With a blot in Ashes I'll smear myself and wander away,dear

Thee I'll hold by neck, and squeuster away in heart like robe I'll cling

Mot gom yaar farzana vesi-yey Kot gom tee kar ba zan-h vesiyay Pan-ai chho Yousef pa-nai zu-lai-kh-ah Panus chho aashaq paa-nai vesi-yey

My wise lover is enchanted; whence gone, how'd I know' He is Yousef, himself is Zulaikhah; a lover he is undo his self, my dear.

Rasul Mir's object of love, is an idealization rooted in the world of sights, smells and tastes. His flowery aspect is as enticing as the exuded fragrance is invigorating.

He t-h masval, bai yimberzal, bar-r-h gai tse kun v-e-e-chhaan Chesm-h si-yah ro-kh vo-zae-lee Jam-h che-ti-yey latiyey

Jasmine, Iris narcissus too, looking at thee have withered away/Thine eyes are black, face is red and

robes are of the whitest hue

Aash-q-h tab s-o-n bhargi la-lus, yaam hae-vi-th man-zi num Aar-h-val chh-ey la-lae-na-vaan Na-ra-ta-li-yey lati-yey

Loves fire bored into the poppy, the moment they he-nnaed hands it saw. The wild rose is nursing its boils from burning, dear

The beloved is seen in a floral mien, or else as an ethereal beauty fashioned of the most sublime things around. It is a portraiture that'd brook no reservation for love, because it is formed of a bubbling love, seeking an end and fulfillment in form. Beauty reaches divinity as it progresses to perfection.

Aash-q-h pae-chaan chho-e arg-vanun manz Ka-teh-h zoon zan don shah-maar-unmanz Naq-shi chee-nus zu-naar nachli-ye lo Bosh hus-nuk ro-zi na kae-li-ye lo.

Like an Ivy caught in violets, a full moon trapped by pythons two; or a beauty of China wearing the sacred thread

Gum-h shab-num gul ro-kh-us Zan chhi arq daa-n-h tus Zooni pai-tth taa-ru-kh pa-kaan

Kari ro-gun dur-dan.

Like dew on a flower, are the drops of sweat on her face, or else starswalking over moon, that my high-necked love

Vuch aafta-bun chon tsan-dan mokh te dolus rang Gae-j Katch-h ta-vuy zoon chhus sar-saam nigaa-ro.

The sun spied thy...Chandan face, and lost color/the moon there upon has been jaded and looks pale

Kad chon alif, laam zulf, meem da-hn chhoe Por akli sabaq shakli alif laam ni-gaa-ro.

You are talllike alif, thy locks are long like laam, and thy mouth is meem itself; from thy form came all knowledge, in shape of alif-laam

Some where these heady portraits of the lover and beloved mingle into one whole. Kashmiri Gazal, says Abdul Ahad Azad, is a female seeking the lover, who is male. In Persian from where Kashmiri gazal derives its inspiration, the object of love is a male sought by a male singer. In Rasul Mir, the singer changes from woman to man, the poems, and the elements of female beauty get mixed with distinctly male attributes producing a bivalent image. Azad calls it a defect of conception. This defected concept,' runs in the Kashmiri gazals from Mahmood to Gani to Mahjoor. It certainly mars a distinctive characteristic of Kashmiri gazals, that set it apart from Persian and its offspring Urdu gazal. This trait has been preserved in female poetesses alone, like Habba and Arnimaal where there is no confusion. Rasul also gets into the gazal a boldness that is characteristically masculine. Thus:

gom ha-n-kli, dr-s-h go-m b-rai Ts-us gom va-li-nja yaar ma aam Tae-mi door see-n-h tai mae da-ri na-rey Van-tai vesi-yey konai aam

The (door-) chain clanged the door was pushed my heart leapt, was my lover come' His chest he proffered and I my arms. Tell my friend, why didn'; the come

Zae-li dda-bi be-hi-mai ki-n-h rang-h la-rey vo-th ve-s-e yaa-rus prae-ng voth-rar Kai-n-h nai mang-sai shong-sai la-rey Van-tai vesi-yey kon-ai aam

Would he grace in the balcony, or sit in the painted room' Arise, my friend, spread his bed. I ask for little, but to lay be his side. Tell, my friend why didn't he come

Chum kha-f-h laa-rai pa-ta-h la-yey bron-ttha na-lus thaf Da-maa-n-h ra-tt-ai ma-h-sha-rai baal ma-ra-yo

He is angry, him I'll chase, by collor I'll catch hold of him/on dooms day, I'll hold thee by thy robe; without thee, here I die

It is a practice in Kashmir, for every poet even a singer, to have a spiritual preceptor, a peer. Rasul Mir is said to have had any peers. Rasul Mir sported majestic moustaches, which went tapering across the lip ending in a flowish. Some devotees, it is said, raised some religious objection to Rasul Mir's moustaches 'well ask him on the morrow' said the peer. At night, the devotees, it is said, saw in their dreams the peer himself with similar moustaches. Tuswof, does not alloy Rasul Mir's' poetry, Unless, of course, you twist and tear it out of context and 'discover' 'hidden meanings'. But Rasul Mir is an ardent lover, and on that plane, love becomes devotion, godhead.

Rasul chho zae-nith deen-o-maz-hab rokh te zulf chon

# Koh zani kya gov kufur to Islam niga-ro

Rasuls, knows thy locks and looks is a fine faith. How'd he know what is kufur, and what Islam, dear.

That is Rasul Mir bold beautiful poet of exquisite love. Singer of fervent lyrics. The breath of vibrant air, that sent its freshness over cobwebs of cloistered verses. Almost single handedly, he turned Kashmiri poetry into a bubbling love, gushing forth helplessly, sincerely, fervently. As it should in a vale of beauty

Zae-li vae-nkan bae-li yeli lagi shu-maar Pachh lag-nus gae-nz-ra-nus lachh tai hazaar Ami Sha-yi no mok-lan pa-yi lo-lo Rind-a posh-maal ginda-ney dra-yi lo-lo

When count is taken of thy braids, lacs of fortnights it'll take. Once begun there is no escape from there. Lo, the gay love goes out to frolic

Poetry is, needlessly, harangued by analysis and postmortems, split as under to gorge out philosophies, burdened with the weights of duty and messages. Poetry is a communion of hearts. Pure and simple with or without the appeals and advocacy's, philosophies or campaigns. There reigns Rasul Mir Supreme unmatched. A master singer of heart

Ruslan ta-a-zh kitaab, yi vaen-nai cha-ni ga-mai Ani kus taa-b-i jawab chav mey jam-i ja-mai

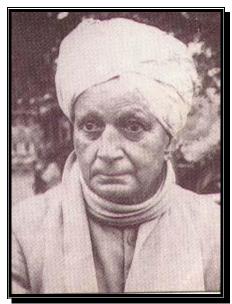
This new volume Rasul has sung in thy pang, who' dare to rebut come, hand me another cup'.

Source: Kashmir Sentinel

# 19 Samad Mir

**Samad Mir** (1894-1959), known for his outstanding work *Akanandun* (The Only Son), continued the Sufi-mystic tradition in Kashmiri poetry in the 20th century. Samad Mir has used the folk tale of *Akanandun* to give expression to his own mystical ideas and present a synthesis between *Tassavuf* (sufism) and *Trika* (Shaivism). He has translated spiritual experience into poetry.

# 20 Pandit Zinda Koul



**Pandit Zinda Koul (1884-1965)** 

# 20.1 Pandit Zinda Koul

# Braj B. Kachru

**Pandit Zinda Koul** is a well-known poet of Kashmir. In Kashmir, his students and friends used to call him 'Masterji'. He came to be called 'Masterji' because he used to teach many Kashmiris, both in school as well as at his home. He died in Jammu in the winter of 1965.

In the beginning 'Masterji' did not write in only Kashmiri. He wrote poetry in Persian, Hindi, and Urdu, as well. Masterji's poetry has been published in all these four languages. However, he made his name by writing in Kashmiri.

His well-known book in Kashmiri is Samran. It was first published in Devanagari, and later the government had it printed in the Persio-Arabic script. The Sahitya Academy of India gave Pandit Zinda Koul an award of five thousand rupees for this book. Masterji received this award in 1956.

Masterji had to face many difficulties in his life. He was a school teacher for a long time. After that, he worked as an ordinary clerk.

Masterji started writing in Kashmiri in 1942. In his Kashmiri poetry, he has written primarily on devotion and peace. His poetry was greatly influenced by Lal Ded and Parmanand.

Masterji composed poetry only for (his own) pleasure. Those who know say that Masterji's poems in Kashmiri were better than those in Hindi and Urdu. Masterji translated the poems of the famous Kashmiri poet Parmanand into English. These poems have been published in three volumes. Kashmiri poetry suffered a great loss upon Masterji's death.

# 20.1.1 Compulsion (majbu:ri)

# by Zinda Koul 'Masterji'

One would cry and not restrain the tears, But crying is of no avail, Shedding incessant tears is of no avail, And knocking one's head against boulders is of no avail. And knowing that there is none to heed, Why this urge to plead! Why dash darts into the void! Mere compulsion! Mere helplessness! The body is consumed minute by minute, suppressed by hunger and thirst and cold, chained by ailments and kith and kin depressed by constant worries and woes. And once these worries cease to exist, the body is tempted and lured by numberless temptations. The restless mind is without any peace for something has obsessed it. Without the encounter with the Good, Without the realization of the Good, The mind is searching for something lost like a person drunk in sleep. More affliction of desire and body! Our ears have heard, Our hearts have believed. that sometime, somewhere, someone caught a distant glimpse of Him. We pine for Him; we long for Him, For we think he is sulking from us hiding under the bushes. Indeed, love is a painful obsession! l ask The one who is hidden far and away, The one who gives us a deaf ear, Does he ever enquire how we are? Does he ever recall where we are? Does he ever ask himself. "I wonder what is the lot of those Whom I put in the dismal dark, Whom I let loose Over the hills, over the streams, over the woods?" Indeed, beauty has no compassion! We could argue, "Why expect love from the loveless? Why expect fruit from a willow? If you do not know his whereabouts, How can you plan his search?" But heart will not retract the steps For how can one chain the air! For how can one blame the heart! Love is not a child's play! It is the sound from within; It is like the fragrance of the musk. The musk deer hunts over hills and dales looking for something that is within him. The heart is like the musk deer, searching without that which is within. The fragrance of the dear one pulls him out with eyes shut and hands down. He is playing the game of hide and seek, appearing here and appearing there.

Once the moth has seen the lamp afar, how can it stand still?

It must chase the light with frenzy (Even though the light is not seen).

It must tear through the seven robes of wisdom. Beauty is not mere enchantment!

Mere compulsion! Mere helplessness!

Mere affliction of desire and body!

Indeed love is a painful obsession!

Indeed beauty has no compassion!

Love is not a child's play!

Beauty is not mere enchantment!

### Source:

An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri by Braj B. Kachru Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois Urbana, Illinois 61801 U.S.A. June, 1973

# 20.2 Intuitive Mysticism of Masterji He rejected the dross and assimilated the pure

# Professor Kashi Nath Dhar

Mysticism is a continuous exercise in self- realization. It is an incessant mental drill in which the self and the super-self are fully identified. In Kashmir from the hoary times to the present day, this urge of the soul for becoming one with the super-soul has been always emphasized. Monistic Shaivism, as propounded in the 'Shiva Sutras' of Acharya Vasu Gupta, and later interpreted profusely by Abhinava Gupta, is the first mile-stone; of the human spirit on its pilgrimage to self-consciousness in Kashmir. The Kashmiri version of Persian Sufism has also influenced the Kashmiri thought to a large extent. This veritable quest for self-education and self-discipline is therefore not at all foreign to the mental fiber of a Kashmiri. It is in his blood. Lalleshwari and Nund Rishi (14th Century AD) epitomized this mental trait in their Vakhs and also gave it the most homely and appropriate expression in Kashmiri, pure and simple. Till then either Sanskrit or Persian ruled the day in this field.

This torch of interrogation and consequent self- satisfaction, the hallmark of mysticism, was kept alive by- a host of Kashmiri thinkers like Parmananda, Rupa Bhavani, Gobind Kak, (Vanapoh), Shamas Fakir, Ahmed Rah, Samadmir, Shah Ghafoor and others and its virgin heights were admirably scaled by these stalwarts.

In mysticism two distinct trends are discernible. The first, born of experience, is termed as 'revealed' and the second, attained by intellect, is named 'intuitive'. The goal of both these media is the same; firstly, locating clearly the frontiers between the immanence and transcendence, and finally, fusing these into each other. The acme of such intellectual pursuit is rising above the Finite and getting closer to the Infinite as speedily as possible, thereby minimizing the distance between the two. In Islamic Sufism also, similarly, two forms of mystic exaltation are noticed, abnormal and supernormal. Ibni Farid calls these respectively as intoxication and sobriety of union. It can therefore, be said safely that intuitive mysticism is a non-stop intellectual process and is more arduous than the revealed for reasons obvious.

In this context of mystic discipline, Masterji has earned by his own right a prominent place in the galaxy of such thinkers who churn their intellect incessantly and groom it to explain the ideal spurning the actual. This should not be treated as self-deceitÑfleeing from the life in all its naked realities instead of facing it with courage and patience. Masterji did not forget life around him, he did not abjure life even though it

was always bitter to him. He was a civil servant by profession but a Savant by nature. As long as he remained in -government service, he acquitted himself very well with undivided dedication to his profession. He drank at the fountain of life most voraciously. He wore his profession on his sleeves, so to say.

Perhaps, this acute sense of responsibility to his profession ignited the first spark of the mission he had to undertake in future. This formative period in his life ushered in the mental ferment which is so necessary for reaching the mystic plane. It is the moment of self-forgetfulness when the 'actual' with all the teeth is incapable to bite; the soul commences its flight to touch unknown horizons and the body has no meaning at this stage.

Masterji's life was no bed of roses. It had nothing palatable to offer to him, it only enabled him to keep the wolf from his door. He never lived in affluence. The cruel hand of death snatched away his dearest son; he had to fend for his widowed daughter-in- law and her children. He did not succumb under the weight of such calamities. He fought his life's problems in the most detached manner conquering these bit by bit, never losing hope. These came as a blessing in disguise and made a mystic of him, not out of spite for life, but for making it more meaningful.

Masterji was a profound scholar of Persian. He could not escape the influence and impact of great Persian mystics like Shams Tabrez, Maulana Rumi, Hafiz Shirazi and others. He had fully assimilated all that they had to say. The echo of Shams Tabrez's 'Man tu Shudam, tu Man Shudi' can be unmistakably understood from his verses also.

Masterji built his personality brick by brick. The foundation for this was provided, by the Hindu mystic lore especially by the Kashmir Shaivism. Vedanta and the Upanishads also acted as the cementing link to make it more broad-based. Both are portrayed most eloquently in his 'Sumaran'. Masterji's intuitive mysticism is a happy blend of Hindu mystic thought and Islamic Sufism. He toiled hard to attain to that plane of self-consciousness where the material contours melt away before the effulgence of the 'spirit'. A hand-to-mouth living gave him the required tools for rising above it. Erudite scholarship in Persian and Sanskrit opened for him the vistas of mystic exuberance achieved by a host of his predecessors. Selfdiscipline in the case of the first and self-education in the case of the second, are in themselves a worthy preamble to self-dependence, and this in its turn paves the way to self-consciousness. Masterji's unambiguous attitude to mysticism is of synthesis in which intuition and intellect form the woof and the warp. The didactic content is, therefore, somewhat subdued in his poetry. He does not claim to be a preacher. He only unravels the conclusions that he has arrived at in life. He does not even analyze these but only clothes these in most pulsating words as they ooze forth. The intensity of feelings does not afford him even a breathing time to ruminate on what he has written or expressed. He goes on serializing his heart-beats most candidly. His approach is suggestive and not direct. His innate introspection rejects the dross and only assimilates the pure - the yard-stick for it being his unerring intellect. So 'Sumaran' is a codified version of his feelings and not a treatise on morality or ethics. His poetry is clear and more intelligible than that of Lalla or Nund Rishi, because his discriminating intellect has an edge over their onrushing experiences by which they feel overwhelmed. Masterji is always sure of the ground under his feet.

Masterji was a conscious artist like Goswami Tulsidas who without mincing words beckons to us in undertones, by implication, to make this life a veritable bridge to the life-beyond. He makes a happy compromise between the self and the super- self, matter and spirit, enjoyment and renunciation, intellect and intuition. He does not leave us guessing. That is, perhaps his most substantial contribution to our unbroken heritage of mysticism.

Source: Koshur Samachar

# 21 Dina Nath 'Nadim'



Dina Nath 'Nadim' (1916-1988)

# 21.1 Dina Nath 'Nadim'

# Braj B. Kachru

The death of Mahjoor and Masterji closed one phase of Kashmiri poetry. With Nadim's poetry, a new phase was introduced. Some people claim that Kashmiri poetry is currently passing through an era which may be termed "the Nadim era".

Nadim was born in Srinagar in 1918. He grew up in poverty. His father died when he was a child, and his mother raised him by herself. His mother had a great influence on him. She was illiterate, but very wise. While working at the spinning wheel, she would recite Lal Ded's sayings to Nadim.

Nadim pursued his studies in great poverty and hardship. He received his B.A. degree in 1943 and obtained his B.T. degree in 1947.

From his childhood, he was interested in politics, freedom and progressivism. He was deeply influenced by the ideas of Bhagat Singh. His poetry is full of these ideas. The following is illustrative:

Burn and burn like a colorful field of la:liza:r!
Roar and roar like a waterfall!
You are fire
A furious fire of burning youth
Come out
And cross the hills and dales
Raise a storm!
Be a storm!

Another specimen is:

Why should the share of a laborer be taken by a capitalist?
Why should a honey bee circle the flowers and take away their honey?

Nadim introduced various poetic styles into Kashmiri. He was the first Kashmiri poet to write in blank verse, bi g'avini az, "I Shall Not Sing Today", is a good example of it.

In the beginning, Nadim composed poetry in English, Hindi, and Urdu. But then he wrote only in Kashmiri. Nadim used the Kashmiri language in his poetry with great grace and craftsmanship. He depicted the beauty and the poverty of Kashmir in all of his poetry. The following is an example:

A lost stray cloud Floating aimlessly with the moon As if a beggar woman holds a leftover lump of watery rice In the corner of her headcover.

Nadim has also composed poetry in the folkstyle. In these folk poems, he has portrayed the dreams and longings of Kashmiris. The following is illustrative:

ya: sa:hi hamda:n,
ya: sa:hi hamda:n.
Are we human?
Who says human!
The winter is ahead of us
The pocket is moneyless
The hovel is roofless
And the law is chasing us
Do you care?
I don't care!
ya sa:hi hamda:n,
ya: sa:hi hamda:n.

For several years Nadim taught at the Hindu High School. After independence, he was appointed the Assistant Director of Social Education. In 1971, the Russian government gave him the Nehru award. He has also been a member of the Sahitya Academy. He has travelled to Russia, China, and some other countries as well, Nadim has been greatly influenced by communism and by progressive writers.

His poetry has contributed to Kashmir's struggle for freedom. Nadim also wrote the first opera in the Kashmiri language, entitled, bombir ti yembirzal "The Bumblebee and the Narcissus".

Nadim has greatly influenced the young Kashmiri poets of today. Kashmiri poetry is still going through the Nadim era.

# 21.1.1 The Song of a Boatwoman from Dal Lake

by Dina Nath ' Nadim '

I got these crisp and fresh from the dal hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy! These are tiny eggplants, and these are round gourds, hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy!

These are peppers, and these are brinjals.
The brinjals are like pitchers of wine banging their heads in this boat of mine. hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy!

The crisp bundles of radishes are glittering in the shade of weeds,
The red marsh turnip is blushing like a blushing beauty as if the dawn has blossomed into flowers.
hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy!

May dust fall on you! Stop it! You have taken enough now. I know, dear lady, I cannot blame you, for the high prices are crushing us all now.
Let me go!
Come on, lend me a hand with this basket
I really must go now.
hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy!

What can I tell you, dear lady,
My child was born only last Thursday.
Though I didn't feel up to it, I dragged myself out
and left my little one behind.
It was painful to leave him away from me.
hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy!

My little one!
My little one is pale like a radish,
My little one is pale like jasmine,
My little one is naked and nude, shivering and cold
like a lump of ice.
My little one is crying and crying,
the tears roll down from his eyes
like drops rolling down from lotus leaves.
hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy!

My little one's nose is like a lotus seed,
Just like his father's nose;
My little one's face is tiny,
just like his mother's face.
To us both he is like a lotus,
sprung from the mud of dalay hay.
hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy!

Lo' I seem to hear a baby cry; Lo' I seem to feel a sensation in my breast. My heart doesn't seem to be here now, Dear lady, I must really go now. hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy!

# Source:

An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri by Braj B. Kachru Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois Urbana, Illinois 61801 U.S.A. June, 1973

# 21.2 Dina Nath 'Nadim'

# Braj B. Kachru

Epoch-maker and trend-setter in Kashmiri poetry and prose, Dina Nath Kaul Nadim was born in March,1916 and paseed away on April 8, 1988 We cherish his memory and as a token of our respectful homage to this great literatuer and a lovable human being, we reproduce here this article authored by Prof. Braj B Kachru, an America based linguist/scholar.

This article had appeared in the quarterly journal Kasmir (August, 1988) published from Ontario, Canada. It was made available to us by Shri M L KAUL, the former Gne. Secy and present Vice President of AIKS, for which NAAD is thankful. - Editor

The Renaissance of Kashmiri literature as of several other Indian literatures, is closely linked with post-independence literary activities. The political events in Kashmir, especially the 1947 attack, resulted in the mobilization of Kashmiri writers and other artists in defense of their valley. The first onslaught came around October 22, 1947. In response, the Cultural Front was hastily organized. For the first time artists were assigned a role in a period of turmoil and aggression. The Cultural Front had three units for writers, actors and painters. These units played an impressive and unprecedented role in keeping up public morale by taking the message of secularism, communal harmony and patriotism to the people in their own language in both rural and urban areas.

The establishment of Radio Kashmir on July 31, 1948, provided a daily forum and great opportunity for the use and development of Kashmiri language. Radio Kashmir used Kashmiri - until then generally called a "vernacular" - in a variety of new contexts. The implication of the new roles for the language was that creative writers seriously attempted those literary forms which had been neglected earlier, for example drama, short stories and discursive prose. Until this time the main literary form was poetry and the dominant themes were nationalism (defined rather narrowly), Kashmiri identity, and religious harmony, In 1958, the Jammu and Kashmir Academy for Art, Culture and Languages was founded; it provided further encouragement.

It was during this unexpected political turmoil in the otherwise calm valley that Dina Nath Nadim (b. 1916) came into the limelight. He has remained in the forefront of the Kashmiri literary scene ever since.

In the not-so-uncommon Indian tradition Nadim's mother had a significant influence on his growth as a poet, especially after his father Pandit Shankar Kaul died when Nadim was only eight years old. Nadim's widowed mother would sing the Vaks of Lalla and would recite Lilas of other poets and an occasional composition of her own to the boy and his sister. Her repertoire of Kashmiri poems was large since she originally came from a village Muran where the oral tradition of poetry was part of the culture. Nadim was educated in local schools with intermittent breaks. He matriculated in 1930, received his B.A. in 1943, and earned a Bachelor of Education degree in 1947.

There is no published collection of Nadim's work; indeed, he is somewhat indifferent about assembling one. (SHIHIL KUL - a collection of Nadim's poems has been published since, for which the poet was honoured with Sahitya Akaddemy Award-Ed.). Most of his poems were either presented in poetic symposia (musha'ira or kavi sammelan) or published in local journals. The total number of his poems is around one hundred and fifty including those in English, Hindi, and Urdu. Like his predecessors and some contemporaries, his decision to write in Kashmiri was a late one. Nadim's poetic career did not really start until late 1930's; before that he had composed some poems in English. Between 1938 and 1946, he wrote mainly in Urdu - and some poems in Hindi - under the influences of the Kashmiri Pandit poet Brij Narain Chakbast, Josh Malihabadi and Ehsan bin-Danish. This was essentially a period of apprenticeship under the ideological influences of Hinduism, Sufis and Khayyam. Nadim was trying to discover himself and his linguistic medium. He finally selected Kashmiri for, as he has said, "my mother tongue has greater claim on me."

This realization resulted in Nadim's almost exclusive concentration on Kashmiri. He had written his first Kashmiri poem in 1942 on "Maj Kasir" ("Mother Kashmir"), an appropriate topic for a time when Kashmir was passing through a critical phase with the mass movement slogan "Quit Kashmir" challenging the established Dogra dynasty. A handful of Kashmiri writers were expressing political sentiments ornately embroidered with gul-o-bulbul imagery, but Nadim did not become fully part of the movement until 1946. It was then in a musha'ira (poetic symposium) organized by a fellow poet, Arif, that Nadim read the poem Sonth ("The Spring"). Then followed Aravali Prarakhna and Grav ("A Complaint"): poems of patriotism, revolution and freedom. Here he is asking the kinds of questions which members of the progressive writers movement were already asking in other parts of India. Consider, for example

Why should the share of a labourer be stolen by a capitalist?

# Why should a honey-bee circle the flowers and take away their honey?

This theme was not new for Indian poetry but it was new for Kashmiri.

The next phase came suddenly and unexpectedly in 1947 and 1948, when Maharaja Hari Singh left the state destitute at the time of Pakistan instigated invasion. This attack mobilized the Kashmiris, and writers and artists organized themselves under what was called the National Cultural Front.

Nadim was in the vanguard of the group. A withdrawn and soft- spoken figure, he was the life of mushairas and rallies, reading poetry of protest, revolution, and reassessment. These themes demanded new poetic forms and an extension of the earlier stylistic range of Kashmiri.

The borders of the state had turned into battle fields; the poets turned to patriotism, and poetry was used as an awakening call to Kashmir's youth. Here Nadim was again in the forefront. Even the titles of some of his poems are suggestive of turmoil of the period, for example, Tsi Mir-i Karavan ban ("You Become the Leader of the Caravan"), Naray Inqalab ("The Call for Revolution"), Me Chu H'ond ti Misalman beyi Insan Banavun ("I have to turn Hindus and Muslims into human beings again"), Servani Sund Khab ("The Dream of Sherwani"), and Pritshun Chum ("I Must Ask"). Although a translation cannot convey the flow and force of the original, the message of this period was

Burn and burn like the colourful field

of lalizar!

Roar and roar like a watertall!

You are fire

A furious fire of burning youth.

Come out

And cross the hills and dales

Raise a storm!

Contrast this with the melodious folk style which has a carefree lilt as it expresses underlying discontent:

Ya Sah-i Hamdan!
Ya Sah-i Hamdan!
Are we human?
Who says human?
The winter is ahead of us
The pocket is penniless
The hovel is roofless;
And the law is chasing us
Do you care?
I don't care!
Ya Sah-i Hamdan!

Ya Sah-i Hamdan!

The experimentation and searching continued, both for suitable poetic forms and for an ideology. Like many of his contemporaries, Nadim also joined the Communist Party. His elder contemporary Mahjur had already become a "fellow traveller."

In 1950 Nadim provided a contrast with the traditional Kashmiri poetic forms by introducing blank verse in Bi G'avi ni Az ("I Will Not Sing Today"). This new poetic form caught the imagination of Kashmiris literate and illiterate. Other poets, considering it an emancipation from rigid formal poetic constraints, soon followed this style. Rahaman Rahi's G'avun Chum ("I Have to Sing") clearly shows Nadim's influence. Not only did Bi G'avi ni Az demonstrate that blank verse could be used as an effective poetic form in Kashmiri, but in that poem he also showed his subtle feeling for an appropriate lexical choice, and for the proper blend of sound and sense. This effect is created neither by Persianization nor by Sanskritization; rather, he firmly established the process of Kashmirization:

Bi g'avi ni az ti k'azi az chi jangbaz jalsaz

# hol gandith Kasiri m'ani zag h'ath.

Nadim included Jungbaz and Jalsaz because these words have been nativized and are an integral part of Kashmiri vocabulary. He chooses native collocations and embeds them in new contexts, e.g., holgandith, zagh'ath, ayigrayi. But it was the musical lilt of the poem which made it irresistible to Kashmiris; never before had their language been used with such alliteration and lexical dexterity:

bi g'avi ni az su nagmi kanh ti k'azi az - ti k'azi az be vayi jayi jayi tapi krayi zan b'ehi zag h'ath karan chi ayi grayi yuth tsalan yi m'on bag h'ath...

I will not sing today, I will not sing of roses and of bulbuls of irises and hyacinths I will not sing Those drunken and ravishing Dulcet and sleepy-eyed songs. No more such songs for me! I will not sing those songs today. Dust clouds of war have robbed the iris of her hue, The bulbul lies silenced by the thunderous roar of guns, Chains are all a-jingle in the haunts of hyacinths. A haze has blinded lightning's eyes, Hill and mountain lie crouched in fear, And black death Holds all cloud tops in its embrace, I will not sing today For the wily warmonger with loins girt Lies in ambush for my land.

Another stylistic innovation, in the form of the dramatic monologue, came in Trivanzah ("Fifty-three"). These innovations excited the younger writers; slowly Nadim's spell spread, and the Nadim Era was born. Nadim's political activism continued during this period. He was active in defence of world peace, and was elected the General Secretary of the State Peace Council (1950). He participated in the Indian Peace Conferences of 1951 and 1952. His pacifism is based on his "hope of tomorrow," which he expresses in Me Cham Ash Paghic ("My Hope of Tomorrow:):

I dream of tomorrow
When the world will be beautiful!
O how bright the day, how green
the grass!
Flowers paradisal, earth aching
with joy,
And dancing tountains of love
in his breast!
The world will be beautitul!
A rare confluence of happy stars!
wim my eyes sparkling wimout
collyrium.
Rose-red nipples, breasts swelling

### with milk

The world will be beautiful!

His peace is not abstract and incomprehensible. Rather, it is related to day-to-day emotions, the return of "my love" for whom

When me soft dark comes, I'll be a
Heemaal
Bursting with love, waiting behind the
shrubs.
He will be late, but I will be Patience.
I have a rendezvous!
And
They say war is breaking out,
But surely not tomorrow
When my husband is coming!
It can't break out tomorrow!

While these are "political" poems with a socialist background, the themes have been personalized. The result is that, even as "political pieces," they do not sound like slogan mongering.

Another poem of this period, Dal Hanzni Hund Vatsun ("The Song of The Boatwoman from the Lake Dar'), displays exquisite sensitivity in the selection of typically Kashmiri diction and awareness of appropriate style shifts. In Kashmiri poetry Gris' Kur ("The Peasant Girl") had been seen earlier as a personification of Himaal of Heaven or a "Caucasian Fairy," to whom flowers would whisper and bulbuls would sing. But now, for the first time, a Kashmiri boatwoman becomes an object of an intense poem. A dal hanzan' selling vegetables is as much a part of Kashmir as is the Sankaracharya temple of Srinagar; but a haazan had never been viewed with such pathos before, and with such close analysis of emotions. Nadim re-created the reality which had previously escaped the poets' eye.

I got these Crisp and fresh from the Dal Hay valay, come and buy! hay valay, come and buy! These are tiny eggplants, and these are round gourds. Hay valay, come and buy ! Hay valay, come and buy ! These are peppers, and these are brinials. The brinjals are like pitchers of wine banging their heads in this boat of mine. Hay valay, come and buy ! Hay valay, come and buy ! The crisp bundles of radishes are glittering in the shade of weeds, the red marsh turnip is blushing like a blushing beauty, as it the dawn has blossomed into flowers. Hay valay, come and buy ! hay valay, come and buy!

IV May dust fall on you! Stop it! You have taken enough now. I know, dear lady, I cannot blame you, tor the high prices are crushing us all now. Let me go! Come on, lend me a hand with this basket, I really must go now. Hay valay, come and buy! Hay valay, come and buy ! What can I tell you, dear lady. My child was born only last Thursday, Though I didn't feel up to it, I dragged myself out and left my little one behind. It was paintul to leave him away from me. Hay valay, come and buy ! Hay valay, come and buy ! My little one! My little one is pale like a radish, My little one is pale like a jasmine. My little one is naked and nude shivering and cold like a lump of ice. My little one is crying and crying, the tears roll down from his eyes like drops rolling down from lotus leaves. Hay valay, come and buy ! Hay valay, come and buy! My little one's nose is like a lotus seed, iust like his father's nose: My little one's face is tiny, just like his mother's face. To us both he is like a lotus, sprung from the mud of dalay hay Hay valay, come and buy ! Hay valay, come and buy! Lo! I seem to hear a baby cry; Lo! I seem to feel a sensation in my breast. My heart doesn't seem to be here now. Dear lady, I must really go now,

In 1953 Nadim's experimentation took a different from; he wrote the first opera in Kashmiri, Bombur ti Yambirzal ("The Bumblebee and the Narcissus"). The theme depicted the ultimate triumph of good over evil. The interpretations of this opera were appropriate to the time: "exposing and defeating the conspiracies of Storm and Autumn against the Narcissus and the Bumble-Bee, who with their fellowflowers symbolize the people and their aspirations for a spring and its joys". This opera was an instant

Hay valay, come and buy! Hay valay, come and buy! success. But Nadim's experimentation with poetry continued; in Lakhei Chu Lakheun ("Lakei Has a Mole"), for example.

There was a period of four years during which Nadim composed sonnets following both the Petrarchan and Shakespearean conventions. In them we again find selective diction, suggestive imagery, and delicate linguistic craftsmanship. Consider for example, this translation of Zun Khats Tsot Hish ("The Moon Rose Like a Tsot'):

That day, the tsot-like moon ascended behind the hills looking wane and worn like a gown of Pampur tweed with a tattered collar and loose collarrevealing sad scars over her silvery She was weary and tired and lusterless as a counterfeit pallid rupee-coin deceittully given to an unsuspecting woman labourer by a wily master. The tsot-like moon ascended and the hills grew hungry. The clouds were slowly putting out their cooking tires. But the forest nymphs began to kindle their oven tires. And steaming rice seemed to shoot up Over the hill tops. And, murmuring hope to my starving belly. I gazed and gazed at the promising sky.

In the 1960s, after trying new forms such as free verse, the sonnet, etc., Nadim came back to the native folk tradition, and the well-established Vak form which had reached its culmination in Lalla. In recent years Nadim has been experimenting with poetic compositions which he terms zit'nl ("fireflies"). In this new form he is following the Japanese haiku style, comprising seventeen syllables in three lines with 5, 7 and 5 syllables each. The Japanese originally used the haiku for objective descriptions of nature or of the seasons; it was intended to evoke an unstated but definite emotional response. Later its range was extended, but brevity and suggestiveness remained its main marks. In Zalir'Zal ("The Cobwebs") Nadim introduces pointillism or neo- impressionism. In some sense this is also present in zu'nt composition. Nadim's dexterity in stylistic innovation and the freshness of his themes helped him to steal "a march over the predecessors and contemporaries." His technique is simple: he seems lo use words rather as clever children use marbles with intriguing combinations and creative effects in a seemingly effortless display of craftsmanship. One is left wondering, why could not I think of that". Not many of Nadim's contemporaries could think of comparable devices, which explains why as his contemporary Lone says, they "were not only influenced by Nadim, but also inspired to write in his vein. Some of them went to the extent of copying his style while some adopted his themes in their poems."

The secret of Nadim's art seems to lie in his intuition for an effortless use of a limited but highly appropriate vocabulary, a keen ear for the sound and rhythm of his native language, and, above all, an artist's instinct for combining all his formal apparatus in fresh imagery. For example, in Iradi ("Determination"). Nadim handles an old theme with new lexical cohesion and effect. Iradi certainly is

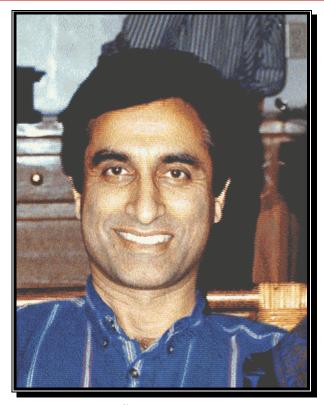
not his best poem; indeed, it may even be called a propaganda piece. But even in this poem one marks extremely effective lexical alteration, re-duplication, and alliteration. It is his use of such devices which separates Iradi from poems written on such patriotic themes by other Kashmiri poets.

This craftsmanship is more fully displayed in poems such as Lakhei Chu Lakheun ("Lakhei Has a Mole"). Nabad ti T'athvani ("Rock Candy and Worm-seed"). In Iradi, the key lexical items seem to be vozul (red) and vusun (warm). Around these two words Nadim develops lexical sets of nouns and verbs, choosing members for each class with his eye on the total semantic effect. Nouns convey movement, turmoil and commotion; verbs connote sacrifice and martyrdom (e.g., fida gatshun, jan d'un, dazun). Consider, for example, the nouns avlun, jamun, jos, malakh, nar, tufan, vav, and vuzimali. Nature seems to be a party to this outward commotion and inward determination with veezimali (thunder) providing signs and bun'ul (earthquake) indicating restlessness. Reduplication further enhances this effect (e.g., vusunvisun, vozulvozul, yi avlun, yi avlun, tavay tavay). We have already seen suggestive imagery, a typical Nadimian device, in Zun Khats Tsot Hish.

Nadim has passed through many stages, and at each stage he has engaged in distinct thematic and stylistic experiments. That process still continues; so does the Nadim Era.

Source: Naad, All India Kashmiri Samaj

# 22 Subhash Kak



Subhash Kak

**Subhash Kak** has been called India's leading expressionist poet. He is the author of two other books of poetry *The Conductor of the Dead and other poems* and *The London Bridge and other poems*. His poems have appeared in leading journals of Hindi and English poetry in India and the West.

# 22.1 The Kashmiri Poet of Louisiana

# **Anwar Shaikh**

**Emotion** is the basic characteristic of a poet because a good verse cannot come into being until he feels a touch of excitement. Though emotion is one of the three groups of the phenamena of the mind, that is, cognition, will and feeling, it is the exuberance and refinement of feeling, which gives birth to tasteful and elegant poetry. However, nature has been generous to Subhash Kak of Louisiana; he originally comes from the Valley of Kashmir, whose natural scenery testifies to the fact that the Creator made this tract of land with the materials, which may be termed as marvel, mystery and munificence. This young man's poetry is not only enriched with the same elements as the soil of his motherland, but he is also a scientist. Though cognition is not an essential part of poetry, his scientific endowment serves as a bridle to the stallion of his emotions and he gallops at a majestic pace instead of going wild.

Subhash possesses the virtue of couching simplest situations in the manner that is creative and elaborate. This is what elevates him as an expressionist: his style makes the dull night fulgent with moonlight, renders the silent streams sing with ecstasy and induces the sullen birds soar higher and higher in search of satisfaction. There is a deja vu in his art, which makes the reader feel vaguely that he already knows it, though it is the first time he has read it. This is the suggestive power of Subhash, a kind of artistic telepathy.

A true poet is recognised by the reminiscences of his homeland when in a foreign country. This is an expression of his nastalgia, the evidence of his love and loyalty to his past. In his highly moving poem "My Father in Hawaii, " one finds the stunning imagery of Kashmir rolled into the Hawaiian landscape bursting with beauty, bliss and beatitude. His descriptive mastery creates an aura, which exhibits the smiling of buds, colours of a rainbow and melodies of the chirping birds associated with the immortal Valley where he was born and grew up.

The fluency of his verses clearly demonstrates his natural aptitude for poetry. He does not seem to be forcing himself to write a couplet or a stanza. Once he is moved by the effect of an event, it is the ethos of the happening that uses Subhash as the mouthpiece for its expression. No wonder, he has been called "the leading expressionist poet of India" by the National Herald.

The term "Expressionism" is used to describe an artist's deepest feelings. It is this characteristic of Expressionism, which earned the Expressionist drama of Germany the description: "drama of the soul." One can visualise Subhash's soul moving through his verses with hope and desire, yet the Lord Kama cannot be seen anywnere with his erotic arrows in search of pretty damsels. His passion is pure and pious, bordering on perfection, and not touched by the pollution of puerility. The "Inner Sarasvati" clearly demonstrates that the thirst for his ancestral values is being quenched by the genetic stream of enquiry quietly chanting praises of the Lord.

Subhash Kak has to his credit, another two books of poetry, namely "The conductor of the Dead" and "The London Bridge, " but here we are talking about his work: "THE SECRETS OF ISHBAR." This anthology comprises thirty- two poems and spans over sixty-two pages. It is available from:

VITASTA, B- 36 DDA Flats, Saket, New Delhi 110017, INDIA.

Source: Liberty, Vol. 4, Issue 14 Oct-Dec 1996

# 23 Lalita Pandit



Lalita Pandit

Lalita Pandit is a Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin -La Crosse where she teaches courses in Shakespeare, Literary Theory, International Studies in Literature, and general writing and communication courses. Her published books include, *Criticism and Lacan: Essays and Dialogue on Language, Structure, and the Unconscious*, edited with Patrick Colm Hogan, published by the University of Georgia Press, 1990; *Literary India: Comparative Studies in Aesthetics, Colonialism, and Culture*, edited with Patrick Colm Hogan, State University of New York Press, 1995; *Comparative Poetics: Non-Western Traditions of Literary Theory*, edited with Patrick Colm Hogan, Special Issue of College Literature. 23. I Feb., 1996. Pandit is an associate editor of the journal *College Literature*.

Pandit is currently working on putting together a volume of essays, with Patrick Colm Hogan, on Rabindranath Tagore. It is based on papers presented at the International Conference on Tagore's work, *Home and the World: Rabindranath Tagore at the end of the Millennium*, that took place at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, September 18-22, 1998. Pandit was one of the organizers of this landmark conference that was mentioned in *India Abroad*.

Pandit's published essays and book chapters include "Dhvani and "the full word": Suggestion and Signification from Abhinavagupta to Jacques Lacan" (1996); "Non-Western Literary Theories and What do with Them" (1996); "Patriarchy and Paranoia: Imaginary Infidelity *Uttaramcarita* and *The Winter's Tale*" (1995); "An Interview with Anita Desai" (1995); "Caste, Race, and Nation: History and Dialectic in Rabindranath's Gora" (1995).

Four of Pandit's Hindi poems, "Devsar main Dhu:svapna," "Vismriti," "Vairagya," "Samay aur Surya," were published in *Vishva Viveka*, 7: 3, 1998 (an International Hindi Magazine From USA).

Over the years, Pandit has presented numerous papers at national and international conferences on subjects as diverse as Shakespeare, African Authors, various Indian Authors, and on theoretical subjects. She is currently working on a book manuscript titled "Comparative Dramaturgy: Indian Aesthetics and Shakespearean Drama." Pandit has been awarded a research grant and a sabbatic leave grant to complete this project.

At the coming year's conference of the Asian Studies Association of America, Pandit is planning to present a paper on Shankaracharya's and Lalleshvari's devotional poetry. At the Tagore Conference mentioned above, she presented a paper, "Romantic Love in *Gora*: Tagore's uses of Shringara, Bhavana,

and Rasadhvani." Pandit is also currently working on a long overview essay on all the scholarly work done on Shakespeare's influence on James Joyce. This essay will be included in an Internet publication, an Overview of Influence Studies of James Joyce's Work. In addition, Pandit has an essay forthcoming, "Anti-Colonialist Agon and Fashioning of Female Identity in Bessie Head's *A Question of Power*," in *Keepers of the Flame: Power, Myth and Cultural Consciousness in Ethnic Female Identity*, eds. Sondra O'neale and Cynthia Tompkins, Wayne State University Press, 1998.

Pandit's published work mentioned above has received numerous highly positive reviews in scholarly journals in the US, in France, and other places. For example, Martha Ann Selby, in a review in the *Journal of Asian Studies* (56: 2, May 1997), says about Pandit's authorial contributions to *Literary India*: "the volume's co-editor, Lalita Pandit, is the true star of the collection," "this is comparative literature at its very best." The same reviewer refers to Pandit's interview with Anita Desai as " a superb interview," and calls it "the very soul of the book." *Comparative Poetics: Non-Western Traditions in Literary Theory* was one of the three finalists for the Council of Editors of Learned Journals' Best Special Issue Award for 1996. One of the judges made special mention of the essays on Indian/Kashmiri (Abhinavagupta's and Anandavardhana's) aesthetics. He/she said, "this issue will certainly become an important scholarly resource in the future. I was especially impressed by contributions of Hogan, Pandit, and Heidinger" (Dec. 1996).

# Sukeshi Has A Dream

Sukeshi has a Dream and Other Poems of Kashmir is part of a larger poetry collection, about to be submitted to presses. The genesis of this volume has to do with Pandit's years of intense engagement with teaching literature and literary aesthetics in a cross cultural context, and her theoretical interest in the science of Aesthetics. Above all, this collection owes its existence to Pandit's strongly felt need for creative expression in the face of a violent erasure of the Past: Historical and Personal.

Poetic metaphor holds contradictory states of mind together. Poetic logic is paradoxical. Lyrical Poetry evokes the unspoken by inventing a speech pattern, a voice, a consciousness. It transforms the ordinary into something rare. Working on these poems has been an intensely joyful experience for Pandit, even when the content of many of these poems is sorrowful. Poetry converts sorrow into joy, loss into gain, past into present and future, history into myth, the private into the public.

# 24 Maharaj Kaul



M. Kaul

**M.** Kaul, who was born in the beautiful Vale of Kashmir in northern India,is an engineer by profession. He has written many articles and poems that have been published in periodicals in the U.S. and India. His main interests are in science and philosophy. He is currently engaged in writing a book on human culture and is planning a sequel to Meditation On Time.

He makes his home in upstate New York.