

**SHAH ABDUL LATIF  
AND  
HIS SUFISTIC THOUGHT**

*with*

Special Reference to Rumi  
(Thesis)

*by*

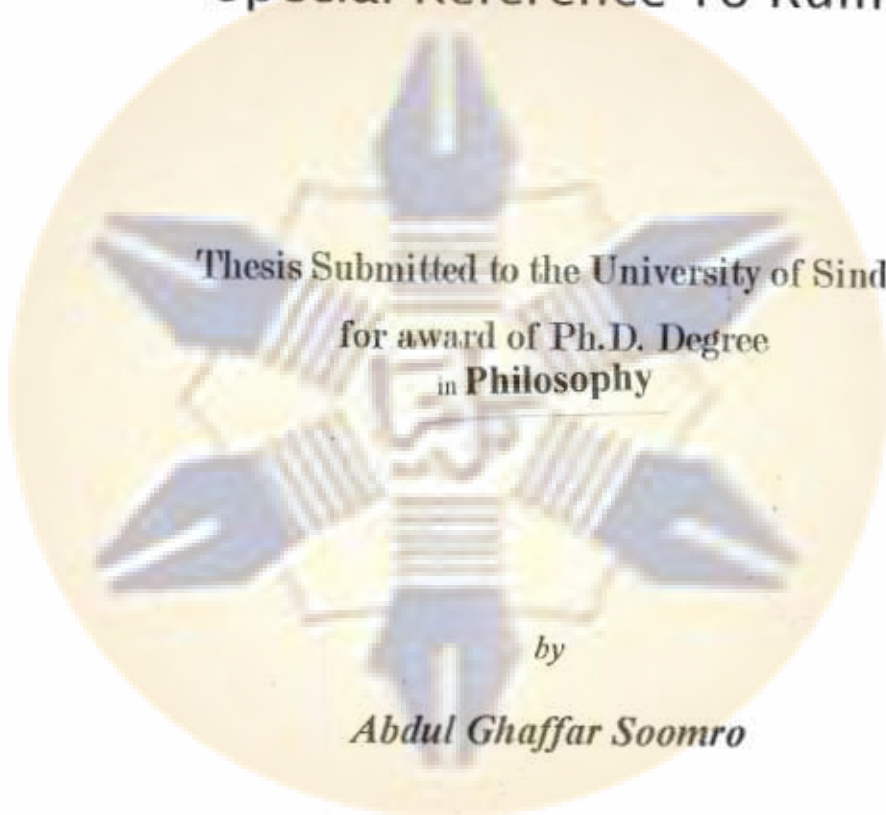
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**Gul Hayat Institute**

# SHAH ABDUL LATIF AND HIS SUFISTIC THOUGHT

*with*

Special Reference To Rumi



Thesis Submitted to the University of Sindh  
for award of Ph.D. Degree  
in **Philosophy**

*by*

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The present study was undertaken in response to the deep sense of admiration and appreciation for the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif, the great saint-poet of Sindh, whose poetry over the last two and a half centuries has left an indelible impression on the thought-pattern of the people of Sindh. The necessity of such a study has been felt in view of the increasing attention which his poetry received in the recent past both at the national and international level. In fact his is the universal message containing high ideals and human values which are likely to appeal to the enlightened people of the society at large in future. Every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive and authentic account of the life and thought of the great-Sufi poet.

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As a civil servant who was given permission with the undertaking that I will not be granted study leave for this purpose, it has been but a labour of love which has consumed most of my leisure time during the last six years.

In my present endeavour I have immensely benefited from the able guidance of my supervisor Dr.N.A.Baloch, who himself has been the life long scholar of Shah Abdul Latif. It was but due to his paternalistic attitude and persuasion which made my task easy and palatable.

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## SUMMARY

### Justification

Shah Abdul Latif (1690-1752) was the greatest poet that Sindh has ever produced. His compendium of poetry commonly known as *Shah jo Risalo* or 'the message of Shah; contains more than three thousand verses and is comparable to any classic of the world literature. Shah Latif was not only a great poet but a great musician as well, and it was the ideal confluence of poetry with music that made his poetry popular and immortal amongst the populace of Sindh. Indeed it is the natural combination of poetry with music that establishes him amongst the truly great artists of the world, whose realm of influence is increasing day by day.

Shah Latif flourished in the first half of the eighteenth century Sindh, which period per se was very productive and rich from literary point of view. But the legacy of Shah Latif remains unsurpassed and unparalleled on many accounts. It was the rare quality of his poetry that permeated the hearts of the masses on one hand, and on the other attracted the attention of scholars not only from within the country but also from the outside.



The two most notable scholars of present century H.T. Sorley and Allama I.I.Kazi undertook major study of Shah Latif along with translations of his poetry into English and they presented worthwhile analyses of his art. Indeed, both arrived at almost the similar conclusions. Sorley in his comparative study of the thirteen great world poets in the '*Musa Parvagens*', observed that Shah Abdul Latif was superb amidst all these poets. Allama Kazi keeping in view the fundamental principles of literary criticism, while appreciating the art of Shah Latif, declared him as one of the greatest poets of the world. Both these scholars, have, however judged the work of Shah Latif purely from literary point of view. Their main objective was to appreciate the calibre of the poet as an artist by undertaking the comparison with the other great poets of the world on similar criteria.

It may be pointed out that both Sorley and Kazi in their most valuable studies and made some significant observations, in respect of the thought contents of the poet, but they did not go into details as it was not their priority. In his masterpiece 'Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit', Sorley remained contented with the remark 'Actually it would have been enough for the author of the Risalo to be familiar with the *Masnvi* alone'. Similarly Allama Kazi once remarked 'what was said about Rumi is

in all accuracy and exactitude applicable to the divine expression of the poet', (Shah Latif).

The appreciation of Shah Latif's poetry from literary point of view was more than adequately covered by these two great scholars; but there remained a definite need to undertake a systematic study of the thought of Shah Abdul Latif particularly with reference to Rumi, who, in the words of Nicholson, is the greatest mystic poet of Islam. In fact both Sorley and Kazi had underlined the need for this kind of study. They had also drawn attention towards the unsatisfactory life account of the poet and in this regard complained about the scarcity of source material on his biography. Thus there was a fuller justification to provide an authentic biographic account of the poet.

### **Biography**

Accordingly, a detailed biographic account based on the latest research has been presented in the first chapter. This has become possible as new research material supported by authentic evidence has been made available through the researches conducted by Dr. N.A. Baloch. Field visits were also undertaken which further confirmed the results arrived at by him. One of the two most perspicuous



The second most important fact worth consideration has been the time period which Shah Latif spent during travelling. Hitherto almost all the biographers without any exception would confine it to three years and that also with 'Yogis' only. According to the internal evidence of the Risalo, and the external evidence which has been available in the form of traditions with the faqirs and followers of Shah Latif in Sindh and the adjoining areas across the border in the present day India, this period was definitely far more than ten years. Moreover, it cannot be confined only to the company of the yogis. The minute observations of the poet regarding geographic parts of Sindh and Baluchistan such as Kohistan, Kacho, Thar, Sea coast, Las Bela, Kech, Hinglaj coupled with his perfect knowledge about the varied professions of the people suggest that he spent good number of his life in the wanderings and peregrinations. Dr. Baloch has mentioned a number of places and sites across the border which were frequently visited by Shah on account of his disciples or faqirs in the Jat community, who have been actually the followers since the days of Shah Karim.

Next under the topic 'Settlement at Bhit', the probable years of his shifting from Kotri Mughal has been cited. It was during this period that is somewhat more than ten years, that Shah Latif after the death of his father

assumed the mantle of spiritual leadership. As to how he conducted the daily affairs and what was his daily schedule, who were his colleagues, how much time did he spend in the prayers and in exclusion, all these matters have been fully explained in this and the subsequent chapter 'last phase of life'.

A separate chapter 'Muse at Bhit' has been exclusively devoted to highlight the contribution of Shah Latif as founder of the new music tradition in Sindh. His comparison in this regard with Amir Khusro would be worthwhile. Qalich Beg was the first scholar who drew attention towards this fact and tried to show how the music of Shah Latif was related to the Indian music. Here we have benefited from the research of Dr. Baloch who have conclusively established that Shah Latif was the founder of a different music tradition which was purely indigenous and locale in its colour.

Under the topic 'Relations with the Rulers; it has been discussed that Miyan Noor Muhammad, the ruler of Sindh could hardly reconcile with Shah Latif. It was, however, his son Miyan Ghulam Shah who, as per the famous legend was born with the blessings of Shah Latif, displayed the most reverential attitude. This was further vindicated when after the death of the saint-poet he got

the mausoleum constructed, which is a fine specimen of architecture of that time.

### **Sufi Tradition in Sindh**

The other most important aspect which, has so far remained neglected by the research scholars is that of the development of the Sufi tradition in Sindh prior to Shah Latif. Even no effort was made to study the '*Bayan ul Arifeen*', the *Malfuzat* of Shah Abdul Karim, the great-great grand father of Shah Latif and point out as to what extent it influenced or help mould the makeup of the mind of Shah Latif. The *Bayan ul Arifeen* which is in Persian and was reported to be the constant companion of Shah Latif has not so far been published as a full text. However its first ever translation by Dr. U.M. Daudpoto in an abridged form which covers hardly one-third of the material of the original book, stands published containing all the Sindhi verses recited by Shah Karim.

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In this chapter, besides the survey of the great Sufi saints in chronological order over the last millennium, development of Sufi thought has been traced with special reference to the Sufi orders, *SuAarwardy*, *Qadri* and *NaggsAbandi*. It has been observed that so far as the local Sufi tradition is concerned, Shah Latif owed much



to Qazi Qadan (d.1551), Shah Karim (d.1611) and Shah Lutfullah Qadri (d.1679). In this regard for the first time passages from the '*Bayan ul Arifeen*', have been quoted which, were probably the source of inspiration for Shah Latif. This was possible because of the access to the original Persian text of the '*Bayan ul Arifeen*' transcribed in 1258 AH, personal copy of which was lent by Sayid Ali Mir Shah of Juna, District Badin.

### **The Sufi conception of love and Rumi as Preceptor**

'Shah Abdul Latif's mysticism is essentially love mysticism with a religious significance', was remarked by Sorley. Sufis all over the ages have spoken the language of love and they have evolved their typical conception of love. The classical texts on *Tasawwuf* abound in these definitions. It is in light of these definitions that the problem of love in the poetry of Shah Latif has tackled. It has been explained that the conception of love with Shah Latif is generally the same as that of the Sufis in general, but it bears strong similarities with the conception of love propounded by Rumi. How far Shah Latif was inspired by Rumi, this has been discussed in chapter IV 'Rumi as Preceptor'. In fact, Rumi was the singular poet whom Shah Latif quoted or referred to as authority in the Six verses, which are to be found in Sur Kalyan. Accordingly, the conception of love has been discussed under five main

headings: (a) Love as affliction (b) Love as fire (c) Love as physician (d) Love as wine (e) Divine Love, under chapter V.

It would not be out of place to mention here that so far the basic tenets and maxims of *Tasawwuf* are concerned, the writer has quoted and relied upon the fundamental texts such as '*Kitab al Luma*', '*Kitab al Ta'rif*', '*Kashf-al-Mahjub*', '*Risala Qushairy*', '*Al-Ghazali's Ihya*', '*Tazkirat al Awliya*' and '*Awariful Maarif*'.

### The Sufi Path

*Tasawwuf* mainly deals with the subject of man-God relationship. This is the subject matter of what sufis call the *maqamat* or stations and *Ahwal* or states. The stations are generally described as the essential stages of the progress of human soul, and this progress is likened to a travelling on the path, also called the 'Sufi Path' or *Tariqat* or *Suluk* in the terminology of sufis. Shah Abdul Latif was fully aware of the distinctions between stations and states on the path, as it is evident from these lines.

حاصل جان نہ حال صوفی جم سداشین  
گوئہی سنین قال، وٹون کمن وچاشون  
Call not yourself a Sufi,

unless you have attained Hal.

They utter not a word,

Who are lost to every thing.

Abu Nasr Sarraj (d.378/988), the author of earliest surviving treatise on **Tasawwuf** in Arabic '**Kitab al Luma'**', has identified (a) seven stations which are (i) conversion (ii) abstinence (iii) renunciation (iv) poverty (v) patience (vi) trust in God (vii) satisfaction; and (b) ten states which are (i) meditation (ii) nearness to God (iii) love (iv) fear (v) hope (vi) longing (vii) intimacy (viii) tranquillity (ix) contemplation (x) certainty.

Under chapter VI, have been discussed the main five stations (i) Repentance (ii) Patience (iii) Gratitude (iv) Tawakkul (v) Poverty which are easily identifiable in the poetry of Shah Latif. It is with reference to these stations, that Sasui and Suhni represent the complete model of **Salik** or Traveller, **talib** or Seeker, the exact appellations with which Shah Latif has alluded to them.

Like all great Sufi masters Shah Latif assigned prime importance to **Shariat** for the conduct of man, but he simultaneously advised to adopt **Tariqat** or Sufi Path in order to gain the **marifat** or gnosis of God. All this has been explained in the following lines.



ڪر طريقت تڪپوءِ شعريت سڃاڻ  
هينئون حقيقت هيرتون ماڳ معرفت ڄاڻ  
هو ٽيڄ تابوئي ساڻ، ته پس ڪان پالهور هين.

Proceed on the path of '*tariqat*'  
Recognise the limits of '*SAariat*'  
Acquaint your heart with '*Haqiqat*'  
Identify your goal as '*Marifat*'  
Be in touch with the proof (Guide)  
So that you go not wayward.

**Aa'rif**s or Gnostics are the mystics who have attained the Hal or who have been bestowed with **AAwal** or states. This is so because according to the sufis, Stations are to be acquired through personal effort and endeavour while states are gifts depending not upon the mystics but upon God. Shah Abdul Latif has frequently referred to such mystics in Sur Ramkali and Sur Aasa. The yogis of Ramkali are but the gnostics. In fact the symbolism of Yogi for gnostic seems to have entered in Sindhi poetry with Qazi Qadan followed by Lutfullah Qadri, who were basically religious scholars and divines.

The following lines from Ramkali refer to the various states of such gnostics:

هونا طور سينا، سندا سناسين  
 سجدي ۾ سيد چڻي گوڏا گوڏارين  
 فڪان قاب توپس اوڏني، تانا ننگا ائين غن  
 گل من عليها فان، باقي ڪين. ڪين  
 الله ولي الذين آمنوا يخرجهم من الظلمات تا اهتري پر ڀرن  
 خر موسيٰ صعبا، تا جوگي جنگ چلن  
 ما راع البصر اهتري روشن رون  
 شاهد و محبوب هو اتي آڏ سين  
 بي بصر بي سمع بي وصال و هن  
 بي بهشي بي ينطق تا اهتري چال چلن  
 سيد چڻي سندن تون گل پچين توڪهتري.

The knees of the ascetics are mount Sinai.

'These half clad are always on knees' in prostration.

'And it was bows length or less' - thus the naked bow down.

'Everything perishes' so they render themselves naught

'God is friend of those who believe and leads them

from the darkness to the light', this is their belief.

'Moses fell down swooning' but stalwart ascetics stand burning.

'The eye did not rove not did it turn away' such is their position.

The ascetics attain contemplation of the beloved then and there.

He sees by me, he hears by me, he unites me, this is how they sit.

And he walks by me, he speaks by me-such walking they go.

Sayyid says; How can you know about them.

(Sur Ramkali.)

## The Unitive State

The final chapter deals with 'the unitive state' as experienced by the mystic while going through the **Fana** or annihilation and **baqa** or persistence in God. Shah Latif has referred to these states in the following verse:

ہیٹان اگبی جی ہیا، جگ جگ سی جین  
موتی گین مرن، مرنا اگبی ہی مٹا۔

Who lived before their living was  
From age to age will live for aye.  
They will not die again who died  
Before the dying came to them.

(Trans. Sorley).

Rumi has referred to these gnostics in these words:

پیرایشان اندکین عالم نبود  
جان ایشان بود در دریائی وجود  
شستہ زین تن عمرها بکن اشد

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The Pirs are they whose spirits, before this world exist,  
were in the sea of (Divine) bounty.

They had lived many lives before coming into this life.

(Masnvi: Vol-II-168-170)

It is at this stage that the man who attains such status transcends his finitude. To what heights the man gets exalted are really a legion, infinite and too many to comprehend. Shah Latif has beautifully summed up the whole idea in the following verse:

نڪا ابتدا عبد جي نڪا انتها  
جن سچا تو سڀرين، سي وڃيڻ کي ويا۔

No beginning or end has this servant  
These who knew the beloved crossed all limits.

(Sur Kalyan).



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# CHAPTER - 1

## FAMILY LINEAGE.

Shah Abdul Latif was born in the year 1102/1690 in a venerable family of Sayyids. This family traced their lineage to one Sayyid Haidar, who hailed from Herat, a town in the present day Afghanistan. He happened to visit Sindh during the last quarter of the 14th century or the end of the eighth century Hijrah. It is understood that he undertook this journey in connection with the impending expedition of the sub-continent by Amir Taimur, which took place in 1398 AD.

Syed Hyder during the course of his travels came to Halakandi in Sindh, situated on the left bank of the river Indus, not far from the present Old Hala. Here his stay prolonged and he married the daughter of Shah Muhammad Halo, the chieftain of Halo community. After about one and a half-year he had to return back as he received the news of his father's death at Herat. His wife was pregnant and she gave birth to a male child, who as per the wish of his father was named Sayyid Ali after the name of his grandfather. Sayyid Hyder himself could not come back and after about three years or so died at Herat.

According to the genealogical table given in the 'Bayan-ul-Arifin'<sup>1</sup>, it was this Sayyid

Ali whose family flourished in Sindh, and Shah Abdul Karim (944/1538-1032/1628) of Bulri, the great grandfather of Shah Abdul Latif was his sixth descendent<sup>2</sup>.

The latest research, however, suggests that Sayed Hyder came to Sindh prior to the campaign of Amir Taimur, and his son Ali was most probably born in the late eighth century or at the most in the beginning of the ninth century Hijrah at Halakandi<sup>3</sup>. Thus Sayyid Ali, who was born at Halakandi may be called 'Sayyid Ali Sindhi', so as to differentiate him from his grandfather Sayyid Ali Herati. Syed Ali attained his youth in Halakandi and was also married in his mother's relatives. After some time he left Halakandi and moved to settle in 'Mut-Halo' village, which as the name indicates perhaps belonged to his father-in-law. This village is said to be at a distance of about 20 miles from Halakandi. At present there are no traces of the old Mut-Halo village excepting that its name in the form of Muthalo has survived in the revenue record. Syed Ali spent greater part of his life here and also died and was buried there.

It seems that by the end of ninth century this family again shifted to another village known as Matiari. Because of these Muthalavi Sayyids, i.e. belonging to 'Mut-hala',



this village also later became known as 'Mutalavi' in Persian record of the time, though the people continued to call it Matiari.

Mir Sangi in the *Lata'if* has recorded this tradition or their shifting from Muthala to Mutalavi (Matiari). "And his ancestors first settled at Halakandi and afterwards they moved from Muthala to Mutalavi" <sup>4</sup>.

It was at Matiari, that our poet's great grandfather Sayyid Abdul Karim was born in 944 AH/ 1538 AD. He was destined to be a great saint and great poet of Sindhi language. The father of Abdul Karim, Lal Muhammad Shah alias Shah Lallah was a known pious man and had many followers in lower Sindh. As such at the time of his death he was at Badin, and was buried in the graveyard of a Suhrwardy saint, Shahabuddin or Shah-badin in common parlance and to which most probably the word Badin also owed its origin. The site of this graveyard is hardly about one and half a mile to the northwest of Badin town<sup>5</sup>.

Shah Abdul Karim was still a child, when his father expired. He was looked after by his elder brother who also got him married<sup>6</sup>. Following the footsteps of his father Shah Lallah, he left Matiari and came to settle at Bulri, 80 miles from his birthplace. The reason

may well have been the persuasion of his father's disciples, who were in great number in the lower Sindh and were multiplying day by day.

According to another tradition Shah Karim came to settle at Bulri as he was advised by one of his well-wishers Makhdoom Nooh of Halakandi (1506-1590 AD), a great religious scholar as well as Suharwardy saint of his times. There is considerable evidence to suggest that Shah Karim had greatest regard for Makhdoom Nooh whom he looked upon as a great sage. Nevertheless it is mentioned in the 'Bayan-ul-Aarfeen' that one Sultan Ibrahim Bukhari was his formal spiritual preceptor, who was a Qadri saint. As per recorded evidence from Shah Karim onwards, this family has identified itself with Qadri order.

Shah Abdul Karim was blessed with eight sons and three daughters. His third son Jalal Shah during the life time of his father had removed himself from Bulri and seems to have arrived in the vicinity of Muthalo where long time back his grandfather Syed Ali Sindhi spent his life. But very soon he was killed by the dacoits in this area while trying to help retrieve the belongings and cattle of a widow of his

neighbourhood. He lies buried in the graveyard of Pir Golo<sup>7</sup>, some seven miles to the north of Bhit Shah. As a result of this incident, his family with his minor son Abdul Quddoos Shah had to return to Bulri, where Abdul Quddoos Shah died at a mature age and was buried in the family graveyard of his grandfather Shah Karim. He was survived by two sons Habibullah Shah and Abdur Rashid Shah. It was Shah Habib, who left Bulri and settled down at Matiari, the village of his forefathers where his first marriage was solemnized from among his relatives. Shah Habib spent many years of his life here, but afterwards he left Matiari most probably due to his wife's death.

According to the reliable oral evidence Shah Habib second time married the daughter of one Urs Dero, who was resident of village Sui Qandar<sup>8</sup>. As indicated by Mir Sangi, Shah Habib after leaving Matiari came over to this area which was not unknown to him as his grandfather Jalal Shah had been in this area long before. It is far sure that Shah Habib after his second marriage from the Dera community settled in the same village of Sui Qandar. The traces of the house in this village, where Shah Habib lived, were extant till 1930 and the local people knew about this house very well<sup>8</sup>. Here two sons one after the other were born to Shah Habib, both were named as Abdul Latif but they

died and were buried in the graveyard of Sui Qandar where their graves are still preserved. <sup>9</sup>

According to the tradition, a great contemporary saint Hashim Shah, who lived at Matiari and was closely related to Shah Habib had blessed Shah Habib and asked him to name the son born to him as 'Latif'. Shah Habib accordingly had named the first two sons as 'Latif' and even after their death, he named the third child as 'Latif'.



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### PLACE OF BIRTH.

Mir Ali Sher 'Qani' Thattvi (1727-1789), who was himself an accomplished poet of Persian and an eminent historian of the eighteenth century Sindh, for the first time provided a very brief narrative regarding Shah Latif at more than one places though he remained elusive about his place of birth<sup>10</sup>. Next was Mir Sangi (1851-1924) who in real sense attempted the first biography of Shah Abdul Latif, though his work commenced when a period of more than one century has elapsed. Mir Sangi belonged to the former ruling family of Mirs of Sindh and he inherited reverence for the saint poet as strong family tradition. During the odd eight years period 1880-1888, he very frequently visited Bhit Shah and established contacts with all those *faqirs*/disciples who were alive at that time. He was assiduous in his efforts to collect all kind of oral tradition and any other relevant information, which in one or the other form was relevant with the life of the saint-poet. Indeed he was the first writer who provided the first hand information regarding the life and character of the poet<sup>11</sup>.

Mir Sangi on the basis of oral evidence collected by him recorded that Shah Latif was born in a small village called Bhaipur,

which was in the proximity of a bigger village Khatian<sup>12</sup>. At another place in the same book he also clarified that Bhaipur was one of the places where the parents of Shah Latif stayed for some time.

During the same decade of 1880's, while Mir Sangi was busy in compiling his book on the life of Shah Latif, a Hindu gentleman Lilaram Watan Mal, by profession a Civil Judge at Hala, felt so much enamoured with the poetry of Shah Latif that he committed himself to writing a book in English on the life and work of the poet which he completed on 14 March 1889 and was published in 1890<sup>13</sup>. Since he was serving hardly at a distance of four miles from the final resting-place of the poet, he would personally visit Bhit Shah in search of the material required for his book. Incidentally his source of information was the same Akhund Ahmadi of Bhit from whom Mir Sangi also had collected much of the information and who was the great grandson of Miyan Noor Muhammad, the teacher of Shah Latif. According to Lalwani, Akhund Ahmadi knew Shah-Jo-Risalo by heart and was repository of many anecdotes and other valuable information, which he had heard from his elders of the family. Lilaram got the genealogical table of the poet's family from him, which he included in the book.



Lilaram as against Mir Sangi has mentioned Hala Haveli to be the birth place of Shah Latif. Further, he clarified that this was an old Hala Haveli which was at a distance of 18 miles from Bhit, and that it was different from the one which existed in his time with the same name at a distance of just two miles from the ruins of the old village of Hala Haveli<sup>14</sup>. It is strange to note that the two contemporaries who were conducting investigation at the same time and whose source of information was also the same person Akhund Ahmadi yet they mentioned two different places as the place of birth.

Mirza Qalich Beg (1853-1929), the most prolific writer of Sindhi language, had the privilege of being in touch with both these gentlemen. He was friendly with Lilaram and indulged in correspondence with him and helped him in writing his book on Shah Latif. From Mir Sangi, he borrowed the material for writing his own book on Shah Latif's biography in Sindhi as well as English. Since he had come across the varying statements about the birthplace of Shah Latif, he on his own tried to reconcile and resolve the issue. He opined that Shah Latif's birthplace was Hala Haveli, a small hamlet in the Southeast of Bhai Pur, not far from it<sup>15</sup>. But this may not be possible, as there is a distance of

more than eight to ten miles between these two places. So we again revert back to Mir Sangi and Lilaram and try to find out if they have provided any further clue or indication in this respect. We have already mentioned Akhund Ahmadi to be the common source of their information. But as admitted by Lilaram, his contact with him lasted hardly for a year, though he took about eight years to complete his book. Anyhow Lilaram has not provided any further hint in this regard. Accordingly the narrative provided by Mir Sangi remains the only account to be further probed into and relied upon. Indeed his approach was more or less like that of an ordinary hagiographer who was interested to collect every kind of information including the minutest details about the life of the saintly character of the poet. In this regard he was so particular that he provided not only the names of the close associates and followers of Shah Latif, but he gave the names of his personal attendants and the duties assigned to each of them. He even went to the extent of mentioning the names of the pet animals who served inside the *Haveli*.

It was again Sangi who stated that the two sons of Shah Habib who died at a very tender were buried in the graveyard of 'Sui Qandar', a place which is now in taluka

Shahdadpur district Sanghar. Based on the clues provided by Mir Sangi the latest research conducted by Dr. N.A Baloch has confirmed the twin facts that Shah Latif was born in a village near Sui Qandar and that his mother was from Dera community the second wife of Shah Habib<sup>16</sup>.

Although Sangi has mentioned once Muhammad Alim Dero to be the maternal cousin of Shah Latif, yet he failed to arrive at the correct conclusion that the mother of Shah Latif belonged to Dera community. Here he seems to have been misled by the stories, which were propagated knowingly after the death of the great poet that his mother was the daughter of Makhdoom Arabi Dayano of Hala. But this is far-fetched story as the said Makhdoom Arabi passed away at least one century before Shah Latif<sup>17</sup>.

Sangi is, moreover, to be credited for having recorded the following chronogram regarding the year of birth of the poet, composed by his contemporary Ghulam Muhammad Shah 'Gada'<sup>18</sup>.



### CHILDHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION.

A strange controversy has raged among the earliest biographers of Shah Latif as to whether he received formal education or not. The main source of this confusion was Mir Ali Sher Qani (d.1789 AD) who himself was the younger contemporary of Shah Latif and alluded to Shah Latif as '*Umimi*'- an Arabic word which means 'unlettered'<sup>18</sup>. This word was construed mistakenly to be equivalent to 'illiterate'. As is well known and it can be argued that the word '*Ummi*' has been most probably used in deference to the personality of Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (PBUH) who has been addressed in the similar words in the Holy Quran. Perhaps Qani used the connotation *Ummi* for the one who receives knowledge direct from God.

However, the myth was clarified by Sangi who clearly stated that Shah Latif did receive some basic education during his early childhood and the name of his teacher was Miyan Noor Muhammad Bhatti, resident of a nearby village Waeen. This village was at a distance of about sixteen miles from Sui Qandar and eight miles from Kotri Mughal, where Shah Latif was born and brought up as a child. Miyan Noor Muhammad Bhatti was very intimate with Shah Habib as such, he was of school going



age, he was engaged as a special tutor/teacher for him. Later on it appears that the relationship of the teacher and the taught changed into permanent friendship. Not only Miyan Noor Muhammad Bhatti preferred to remain throughout his life with his able student Shah Latif, but his succeeding generations also chose to remain with the Sayyid family. Thus from the time of Shah Latif this family virtually became the teacher family of the Sayyids.

'The teacher of the saint poet was Miyan Noor Muhammad Bhatti, hailing from 'Waeen'. One of his descendants Miyan Ahmadi, now aged eighty years is still at Bhit. His knowledge about Shah is unmatched. He is my tutor and guide in Sufism'.<sup>19</sup>

Lilaram who happened to meet Miyan Ahmadi, the great grandson of Miyan Noor Muhammad Bhatti, also confirmed the above version of Sangi in these words:

My special thanks are due to Akhund Ahmadi, the old man of Bhit, whose great grandfather was our poet's teacher'.<sup>20</sup>

At another place he clarifies: -

Akhund Ahmadi's father was Miyan Abdullah, and his grandfather Miyan Mahmud has seen our poet, though the former was but a boy then.

Akhund Ahmadi remembers his grandfather

well and also the stories he heard from his father about our poet.<sup>21</sup>

Both these biographic sources are, however, silent as to how much did Shah Latif learn from his worthy teacher, who proved to be his life long companion.

There is a very popular anecdote quoted by most of the biographers that Shah Latif did not pursue his studies any more after having learnt 'Alif'- the first letter of Arabic alphabet as well as the first letter of the word 'Allah'- the personal name of God Almighty. But all this can be termed as symbolic in presence of the above incontrovertible evidence. In fact it can safely be assumed that as was customary, Shah Latif as a boy learnt the Holy Quran along with some basic Persian and Sindhi, which was considered to be sufficient for the scion of a Sayyid family at that time. Indeed, pursuance of higher religious learning leading to *Farligh-ut-Tahsil* or what may be called a qualified scholastic or becoming graduate of *Madersah* education especially who had spiritual following was quite uncommon amongst Sayyids of those days<sup>22</sup>. It has been rather very typical of Sayyids in Sindh that there have been hardly any qualified *Ulemas* or religious scholars of high status amongst them. As a matter of fact their education in most cases was always confined to

the basic teachings of religion, and at a later stage they were initiated into the traditional Sufi order of the family, say Suhrwardy, Qadri or Naqshbandi. In fact acquisition of limited knowledge was considered to be sufficient so as to be able to guide their followers and to inherit the seat of his forefathers

Although Shah Latif attained some of formal education from his teacher Miyan Noor Muhammad, yet for all other practical purposes his father was his spiritual preceptor. A man of great virtues and piety who according to family tradition inherited the Qadri order from his grandfather Shah Karim<sup>23</sup>. As far the mother of Shah Latif was from Dera community, she is said to be the followers of Suharwardy saints of Multan.

From the early years of his life and onwards it appears that, Shah Latif developed close friend ship with his maternal cousin Muhammad Alim Dero, that is why he afterwards became his life-long associate and the most trust worthy confident. It is in this background that during his later phase of life when Shah settled at Bhit and people had acknowledged him as their spiritual leader, Muhammad Alim used to handle all the matters as if he was his Khalifa. Besides he was made incharge of the Sama as well other important matters at Dargah.<sup>24</sup>



### YOUTH AND SPIRITUAL TRAINING.

When Shah Latif was hardly of eleven years age, Shah Habib shifted from the village near Sui Qandar where Shah Latif was born and came to settle in the village of Kotri Mughal. This village was at a distance of about nine miles in the north of Matiari and nearly eight miles in the east of Halakandi, both ancestral places of Sayyid family. The reason for shifting was probably the persuasion by the Mughal chief Mirza Mughal Beg, who had developed great faith in the person of Shah Habib. The ruins of Kotri Mughal are still traceable at a distance of about four miles to the south of Bhit Shah <sup>25</sup>.

At Kotri Shah Habib concentrated his attention on the mental and spiritual development of his only son Abdul Latif. Probably during this period Shah Latif in his youth accompanied his father and visited so many places which included such historical towns as Hala, Matiari, Bulri and Nasarpur where he must have come across the learned men of his time.

It is interesting to note that Shah Latif right from the young age had acquired strong aptitude towards the silent observation of



nature and great passion for spiritual experiences, including going into seclusion for meditation and observing forty days continuous prayers called *Chilla* in Sufi terminology. At least three such sites are still extant and have been identified so far, where he would go in virtual hiding to undergo meditation for longer duration so as to attain purity of the heart and soul. The first and foremost site is "*Shah Jo Kando*"- a place at a distance of two miles from Bhit, situated on Shahdadpur road <sup>26</sup>.

According to a most significant anecdote, which has come to be preserved by the poetical renderings as well, once Shah Latif was completely under an ecstatic mood and had lost consciousness of his body rather some parts of his body were covered with the sand caused due to strong winds. He was so much engrossed that he did not realize what had happened. Too much anxiety led Shah Habib to follow the tracks and on finding his young son in such a state of stupor, he uttered in melancholy voice:

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" Lo, the wind has continuously blown,  
and covered the limbs of body with dust;"

Shah Latif, who sensed his father's voice, suddenly became conscious and instantaneously replied:

"But my body is still yearning to catch,  
the glimpse of the love".

This can very well be assumed to be the first ever-poetical composition by Shah Latif in his very young age. Due to the frequent visits this site attained familiarity and accordingly is still preserved and visited by the followers as a mark of respect to the great saint.

The second site is known as "*Lal Laun*" or the red tree of tamarisk, which is at a distance of about four miles to the south-east of Bhit. This is an ideal place from seclusion point of view with a cluster of trees on the bank of Sangro stream. Here also Shah Latif used to pray and cogitate, contemplate and concentrate for hours and days altogether. This site has been so famous amongst the people that soon after the death of the saint-poet, a small mosque, a well and some huts were built in its surroundings to keep it as memorial of the great saint.<sup>27</sup>

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The third site is at Bhit Shah where during the later phase of his life a *Hujrah* i.e. special room for prayers and seclusion was constructed. In fact long before Shah came to settle at Bhit he used to visit this place very frequently specially for the purpose of cogitation. This is how he came to like this place

and finally selected it for his permanent settlement. An evidence from eyewitness Qalandar Shoro has been recorded by Sangi that Shah Latif was frequently visiting this site and was found seen immersed in rapture many a time at this place<sup>28</sup>. It may be added here that Bhit Shah is with in the radius of three to four miles from Kotri Mughal, where Shah Latif and his family resided before finally shifting to Bhit Shah. During his young age, Shah Latif was most probably influenced by Sakhi Hashim Shah (d.1120/1708) of Matiari who was closely related with the family and was frequently visited by Shah Habib for exchange of views. Hashim Shah was known for his spiritual powers and on more than one occasion he blessed and prayed for the spiritual progress of Shah Latif in the presence of his father.

Outside the family circle and perhaps the most eminent luminary which seems to have left any impression on Shah Latif during these formative years of life was that of Miyan Shah Inat Rizvi (d.1133/1712), who by descent belonged to the Rizvi Sayyids and was staunch follower of Suhrwardy saints of Multan. He lived at Nasarpur, the most important town of the eighteenth century Sindh after Thatta, which flourished on the bank of the river Indus and was easily accessible for Shah Latif. The deep

imprints of Miyan Shah Inat's poetry both from the view point of form as well as technique, suggest that Shah Latif visited him very frequently and possibly learnt a lot from him. The poetical meetings between the two probably occurred during the years 1122-1133 AH, that is when Shah Latif was in his twenties and Miyan Shah Inat was in his advanced age.<sup>29</sup>

The comparative study of their poetry reveals to the astonishing extent the common usage of idioms and similar kind of expression in hundreds of verses. Against the 22 melodic themes or *Surs* employed by Shah Inat to compose his poetry, Shah Latif composed poetry under 29 *Surs* and of this 20 are common to both.

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### LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

According to the most popular account, which was also rendered into Persian verse by Sangi, when Shah Abdul Latif was in his full bloom, he fell in love with the daughter of Mirza Beg Arghun head of the Kotri Mughal<sup>30</sup>. It was the same Mughal who had persuaded Shah Habib to settle at Kotri Mughal. In fact Mirza Beg treated Shah Habib like his spiritual mentor, as the latter used to visit his family and give benediction and blessings, at the time of any sickness or illness among the family members. Once the daughter of Mirza was not feeling well and Shah Habib was sent for to visit and give blessings. Incidentally, Shah Habib himself was indisposed of on that day, so he sent his son Shah Latif who was in his prime youth. As the legend goes, Latif on coming near the young maiden felt enamoured of her beauty and, as was customary on such occasions, while holding her finger for the sake of blessings, consciously or unconsciously uttered the following words:

"The one whose finger is in Sayyid's hand shall experience no kind of evil"

These words were construed to be an expression of love and were considered to be derogatory by the family of Mirza, who traced

their lineage to the Arghun dynasty, once rulers of Sindh in the late sixteenth century. It was but natural that this incident adversely affected the relationship of Sayyid family with the Mughals, so much so that they thought it wiser to leave the neighbourhood of Mughals and settle at some distance in the vicinity of Kotri Mughal<sup>31</sup>. The following couplet of Shah Latif is most probably reminiscent of this episode.

Latifs departed with bag and baggages,  
though none was grieved at the hands of Habibs<sup>32</sup>

It is evident that Shah Latif has very skilfully used his own name as well as his father's name together. But at the same time he has alluded to the incident of leaving that place in a very subtle manner, simultaneously describing the utter innocence of his father.

As the story goes, after some time, it so happened that the mansion of Mirza Beg was attacked in his absence by the dacoits of Dal tribe and they took away all the valuables of the family. When Mirza Beg came to know of this he along with his associates chased the culprits and on his way he came upon Shah Abdul Latif, who as a matter of courtesy and being neighbourer offered his help in this time of difficulty. But Mirza refused so disdainfully that

Shah is reported to have uttered the following words.

"Oh Beg, you will be no more lord of Kotri  
May be you are killed by Dals."

It so happened that Mirza Beg and other male members of Mughal family were killed in the encounter with the Dals and he was survived by only one young boy named Golo from his family along with the women folk. This ugly incident occurred in the year 1124/1713 when Latif was hardly 22 years old.

Mir Ali Sher Qani (d.1789 AD) the younger contemporary of Shah Latif, has however, alluded to the second part of the story only in which Mirza Beg was killed. He narrated this incident in his famous book '*Tuhfatul-Karim*' which he completed in 1767 AD just fifteen years after the death of Shah Latif. He has further reported that when Mirza Beg was killed by the dacoits in this way, one of the Faqirs of Shah was quoted as having said: " " , which literally means 'he was mean' but by way chronogram giving the year 1124 AH<sup>33</sup>. On hearing these words, Shah forbade him from saying so, instead he advised him to say ( ) i.e. he was one of the Mughals. Incidentally, the value of these words in *abjad* is also the same<sup>34</sup>. From this incident Mir Ali Sher Qani has



inferred that Shah was really a God gifted man as otherwise, how an unlettered or '*Ummi*'- the title with which he preferred to call Shah Latif- could do so!

Almost all the biographers agree on this point that Shah Latif married the daughter of Mirza Beg in the aftermath of above incident. In fact the offer was from the side of Mughals, for the occurrence of the incidence led them believe that their sufferings were due to the indignance of the Sayyids. Her name was Sayyida Begum, as first recorded by Lilaram. This provides the clue that Shah Latif got married at the age of 24-25 years.

Some doubts have been raised about the veracity of the whole incidence of romance as ascribed to Shah Latif. Some scholars have termed the entire love episode as preposterous and pejorative, as it appears to be an abnormal observation of the character which was not expected from the man of sagacious temperament of Shah Latif. Secondly, if the marriage of Latif had been a love affair, at least it was not vindicated by his post-marital behaviour. It has been therefore, concluded that first of all it was not a love affair, and if at all it was, it had not taken place the way it is delineated by most of the biographers<sup>35</sup>.



However, the second part of the story in which Shah is reported to have cursed Mirza Beg is much more important for it is a fact that Mirza was killed by dacoits of the Dal tribe. In fact the tone and tenor of the Sindhi couplet attributed to Shah, clearly suggests that it can not be of Shah himself. As has been mentioned by Qani, when the followers of Shah uttered derogatory words for Mirza Beg, on his assassination, Shah promptly intervened and advised them not to remember him with bad words. So in all probability the Sindhi sentence which was a direct curse upon Mirza, must have been vociferated by one of his followers and not by Shah himself.

In case the first part of this story lacks credibility, what does the second part indicate, which has been recorded by the famous historiographer Ali Sher Qani. The crux of the matter is even if Shah Latif did not curse Mughals himself, why should his followers behave in this manner. This means some thing extraordinary had taken place, which had rather badly affected the relations of the two parties. So there is some definite indication that the incident had occurred, but the way in which it has been delineated is quite exaggerated.

Sangi has recorded yet another anecdote regarding the marriage of Shah Latif with the daughter of Mirza Beg. In his childhood, Shah Latif used to play with bow and arrow, though he never targeted any living creature. One day Mirza Beg visited Shah Habib to seek an amulet for her young daughter who was suffering from eye sore. While the bow was in his hands the arrow went off suddenly from the hands of Shah Latif and struck the amulet in the middle without injuring Mirza Beg. Young Latif was prompt enough to observe; "What is ordained by God, never fails".<sup>36</sup>

According to the symbolism of love, this was but a definite sign of the future romance, which was to take place in the youth of Shah Latif! In fact what can positively be asserted from the whole incident is that an element of love had definitely entered the life of Shah Latif at a very young age and he did pass through the phase of romance and love. Indeed the whole poetry of Shah Latif, which is strongly lyrical in character, and explains the finest and the most intimate aspects of human love is but a great testimony of his personal love experience.

### TRAVELS AND WANDERINGS.

There is hardly any doubt that Shah Abdul Latif was the most widely travelled man. This is abundantly clear from his versatile poetry, which provides innumerable implicit as well as explicit references in this regard. It is, however, for consideration as to how far and wide he travelled and at what stage of life it was most probable for him to undertake such long and arduous journeys. Some writers have asserted that it was certainly before the marriage. Rather the most commonly relied upon tradition is that when his love could not materialize, he set on to travels, and continuously remained away from home for three years or so. Most biographers including Mir Sangi have indicated that Shah was extremely fond of travelling right from younger age and during his prime youth he not only combed the mount Ganjo but the adjoining hilly areas of Sindh.<sup>37</sup> It is on the one end of mount Ganjo that the present city of Hyderabad is situated and most probably it was here that he first came in contact with the wandering Khahori yogis. A number of verses in Sur Khahori mention the 'Ganjo' hill simultaneously communicating the spiritual elevation which the poet experienced over these manner. For example,



"Those who the bare hills came to know  
no more for harvests cared-  
To Ganjo-hills they longed to go  
Lahuties to become."

According to Qani, the fame of mount Ganjo lay in being the final resting-place of many saints and holy persons. Besides, the mountain was one of the halting places for Kanphata yogis. These yogis started their journey from Benaras in the east i.e. *Purlab* and after travelling through the great desert of Gujrat, Kutch and Sindh finally reached Hinglaj, a place some 72 miles in the Northwest of Karachi, in the present day Baluchistan.<sup>38</sup> In fact Ganjo was an important point for breaking journey for these yogis on their way to Hinglaj. The distance from Benaras to Hinglaj could be well over one thousand miles. The entire route was to be covered on foot and obviously with no belongings this was really an uphill task. These wondering yogis used to wear special kind of dress which was of ochre colour, and it is reported that Shah Latif also dressed himself in the same manner when he travelled along with them as the same is still preserved at Bhit.<sup>39</sup> The yogis were known for their strange habits of eating, sleeping and travelling. Shah seems to have developed great infatuation for the yogis as he has dealt with this subject in a detailed



manner. He had observed them from very near and developed intimacy with them to the extent of being one of them. This is reason he speaks in very passionate way about yogis. At one place he has provided an eye witness account of their daily routine for twelve consecutive days.

Before sunset they keep awake,  
At nightfall a snap they take,  
Even though the ascetics be hungry,  
From none they ask for alms in beggary,  
They have not made their stomachs accustomed,  
To eat food, delicious and seasoned,  
These faqirs have begged for a dose,  
Of silence, and there, every need goes.

Hinglaj was one of the most important pilgrimage places for this class of yogis. It was an end point for them in the west. The Muslims, however, knew this place with the name of *Nani* i.e. maternal grand-mother and they had altogether a different notion in this regard.<sup>40</sup> Shah has used both these names interchangeably. According to some biographers a controversy did take place between Shah Latif and the ascetic yogis over the performance of some rites and rituals at Hinglaj. A good number of verses in Sur Ramkali suggest that a time came when departing of ways had become inevitable though much against the wishes of

Shah Latif. Anyhow it is certain that Shah Latif remained in the association of yogis for considerable time. Moreover what is most likely is that he roamed in the company of the yogis and went up to Kutch and Kathiawar Junagadh and Jaisalmer, the adjoining regions and states in the south of Sindh. In Kutch, Shah seems to have visited a number of places, including Narain-sar and Kote-sar, the famous point for ascetic yogis. Most probably he had an opportunity to visit Lakhpur, Halar, Pobandar, Khambhat and Girnar. At mount Girnar, he probably visited the place named after Gorkhnath, the founder of the Kanphata yogis and the disciple of famous Buddha guru Matsyendernath.<sup>41</sup> Mount Girnar is a place historically sacred to Jains, Buddishts and Hindus. Here one could actually come across the naked ascetics, referred to as the *nanga* by Shah Latif in Sur Ramkali.

"The naked nomads had put on the loin of love only  
 They kept themselves unknown and aloof.  
 As they came in the world so they left.  
 Distinguishable they will be in 'Purab'  
 On account of the hair loop on their head."

Shah Latif seems to have had the experience of sea journey also, and the possibility of having journeyed more than once

by sea can not be ruled out. Once he seems to have landed at Purbandar, a port in Kathiawar, having adopted the sea route. Since the voyage must have been extremely full of dangers, he specifically referred to this event in the following verses:

"I have reached the sea shore  
Which I only heard of previously  
I remembered Him not,  
When the people were asleep.  
And plunged the barge into deep waters.  
O, my God, keep this dingy safe from cyclone  
This frail and feeble ship is at your mercy  
Let the company of Syed, land at Purbandar  
safely."

Most of the biographers of Shah Latif have suggested almost the same kind of itinerary and the duration of travelling and wandering has been mentioned to be exactly three years and thereby an impression is given as if Shah did not set his foot out once he had returned from the journey with the Yogis. It is generally surmised by these biographers that Shah undertook upon himself the wanderings in company of the yogis at the age of 21 years that is exactly three years preceding the marriage of Shah Latif.

The fact of the matter is that travelling was a passion for Shah Latif and in

this regard mention may be made of a travelogue of Shah Latif said to have been compiled by his most trusted Khalifo Muhammad Salah, which has however not survived.<sup>43</sup>

The most important conclusion drawn from the oral sources as well as from the internal evidence of the poetry of Shah Latif is that at one time he accompanied the yogis and visited most of their places in the adjoining regions of Sindh and Baluchistan. But his travelling never ended and in fact he continued to visit places of interest on his own.

It is far from any doubt that he wandered extensively in the mountains of Baluchistan and he definitely went up to Ketch and Makran. This journey gave him fullest idea of the practical difficulties experienced by Sasui who had embarked upon this difficult terrain in search of her beloved Punhu-the semi-historical legend of Sindh, Punjab and Baluchistan. About one forth of Shah's poetry deals with Sasui and the inner evidence testifies to his personal travelogue beyond any doubt.

Shah Latif has shown deep acquaintance with the life and culture of the people of the desert of Sindh. The wide ranging perception of his poetry makes us believe that



Shah Latif spent fairly good time in the Thar and Parkar areas of Sindh for in that area and across the desert there was good number of followers in the Jat Community. In fact the route which was normally traversed towards Kutch, passed through the Thar. So it was inevitable for him to stay at different places in Thar and gain first hand experience of life of its denizens. The successive visits rather afforded him many an opportunity to observe the life of its people in its complete variety. The vocabulary as well as imagery employed in 'Sur Marvi' and 'Sur Sarang' carries a numerable instance and minute observations on the life in the Thar, which was possible only when one has undergone through the same experiences.

The recent evidence, which is mainly based on tradition, has further confirmed that Shah Latif visited different parts of Sindh and Kutch more than once. Dr. Baloch has cited at least ten such places in Kutch, which are identified on this account that the same were visited by Shah Latif and are accordingly still preserved by his followers in that area.<sup>44</sup>

- A place called 'Dar' near Lakhpat, where Shah visited his Faqir namely Salaro.
- 'Bhutao'-near 'Pipar' in Taluka Lakhpat, the grave of Faqir Sanwlo Jat is reported to be there.

- 'Asalri', again in Taluka Lakhpat.
- 'Kando', taluka Khahar-this was the village of Wanhyyoon Faqir, who was very intimate and close to Shah
- 'Orearo', taluka Nikhtrano, the village of Faqir Tamachi Nuhrio.
- 'Jarhot', in the taluka Nikhtrano, here resided the khalifa Saleh Faqir Mangrio.
- 'Siraro', taluka Khahero, Faqir Chatto Lakhani Jat belonged to this place.
- 'Baghario', at this place resided the Jeendani Jat disciples of Shah Karim, the great grand-father of Shah Latif.
- 'Aral', taluka Nikhtrano, here lived Shah's Khalifa originally a convert from 'Rebari' tribe of non-muslims.

Probably due to his frequent visits in Jaisalmir Shah Latif seems to have developed good relations with the Raja of Jaisalmir. The ruler was so much impressed by him that after Shah's death, he sent big beating drums as a gift for the Shrine.<sup>45</sup>

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It has been pointed out that even at his later stage of life Shah Latif was in the habit of visiting his followers at distant and far off places. During these journeys, he was normally accompanied by his *Ragai Faqirs* or singer-musicians. The tradition was so firmly

established that after his death these places where Shah used to stay for nights and hold musical sessions, came to be known as '*Shah-Jo-Takio*' or temporary residence of Shah. At least four to five such places are still extant throughout Sindh, one is near Madeji in taluka Shikarpur and the second is in district Khairpur, third in taluka Khipro of district Sanghar and fourth in Thatta.<sup>45</sup>

The last visit after which Shah did not leave Bhit was in 1161 AH, the year in which his bosom friend Makhdoom Muein died, and just after four years Shah himself passed away from this world. According to an interesting episode one evening he told his *faqirs* to accompany him to Thatta to meet his friend Makhdoom Muein. In an exclusive session of music recitals by Shah and his *faqirs*, when the session was at its apex, Makhdoom left for a moment to come back from his house, but he never returned, as he breathed his last then and there.

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As a matter of fact the kind of people and the number of places which are cited in his poetry, and the keen observation which he has displayed about the different geographical parts of Sindh, suggest that Shah spent much more time than what is generally understood. In fact it can safely be assumed that this period was



probably spread over some ten to twelve precious years of the life of the poet. In any case his travelling was not one time episode which lasted for three years as has been generally believed by the common biographers. This contention is rather most plausible for three reasons. First, Shah was fond of travelling right from his young age. Even as a youth he would go into nearby jungles in order to undergo meditation and spiritual experiences. Secondly, after his marriage his wife passed away relatively at young age. Lastly this was possible because when his father died in 1144 AH, Shah was of 42 years age, thus he had very little to bother about his domestic matters. This is how he could afford to be away from his house, and in fact this is the period during which most of his travelling was undertaken.<sup>47</sup>

In so far his wanderings are concerned; he not only travelled within the boundaries of present day Sindh, but also visited the adjoining regions and areas. Of special mention are; in the east he visited Lasbela, in the west he went up to Makran coast, in the north he reached Multan and in the south he trekked the coastal areas of Arabian Sea starting from Thatta and crossing from Lakhpat to Kutch and onwards to Kathiawar.



### SETTLEMENT AT BHIT.

Mention has already been made of the contemplative nature of Shah Abdul Latif right from very young age. Mir Sangi has provided the most authenticated eyewitness account delineating how often Shah Latif was found immersed in divine rapture at Bhit, which was but a cluster of sandhills surrounded by thick jungles and deep waters of the Kirar lake, an ideal place for poetical genius of Shah Latif. Mir Sangi has painted a true picture of the Bhit, as it then existed.

"The Bhit was but a heap of sand dunes, around which water gathered in large quantities, and on each side there was a thick forest'." <sup>48</sup>

Location-wise Bhit was at a distance of about 4-5 miles in the north of Kotri Mughal, where the family of Shah Latif and his father Shah Habib resided. Prior to the selection of Bhit the other two sites viz 'Lal Lau' and 'Shah Jo Kando' were frequently visited by Shah Latif for contemplation and concentration seeking. These two sites of mind were within the circumference of 5-6 miles from Kotri Mughal. Bhit was but the last abode, though it appears to have attracted Shah Latif's attention since the days of his youth. At first he used to come to

this place all alone, just for the sake of meditation in seclusion. This event as stated earlier has been substantiated by an eyewitness account recorded by Mir Sangi. At later stage he started coming at this place along with *faqirs* and associates, spending nights and holding *sama* or musical sittings. This practice seems to have been continued for considerable time so that the people of the vicinity came to know about this, and a time came when the very fact was narrated as a complaint before Miyan Noor Muhammad Kalhoro, the ruler of Sindh.

During this period the most significant incident of singing by one lady singer in the presence of Shah Latif also took place at Bhit. This incident was abruptly reported to Miyan Noor Muhammad, who was in his capital town of Khudabad, which was just at a distance of about 3-4 miles in the west of Bhit and on the bank of river Indus<sup>49</sup>. Noor Muhammad lost no time and immediately took notice of the situation and sent for his functionaries to probe into the matter. They brought the lady before him, probably as a proof of the whole incident. But it so happened that Miyan Noor Muhammad decided to marry the same lady and out of the wedlock was born Miyan Ghulam Shah Kalhoro(d.1186/1773), the most outstanding Kalhora ruler. All the chroniclers have reported

this incident in more or less the same way and the marriage of lady Gulan with the ruler of Sindh has rightly been ascribed to Shah Latif, who after her singing was so much pleased to have blessed her with the words "'Gulan', you will be the wife of the ruler of Sindh'."

Unfortunately, the year of Ghulam Shah's birth has not been found recorded in the chronicles. However, as per historical evidence when Nadir Shah attacked Sindh in 1152 AH, Miyan Ghulam Shah called on him at Larkana as an emissary of his father. This suggests that he must have been born not later than 1135-37 AH. Accordingly the probable years of singing by Gulan at Bhit must be around 1135 AH<sup>50</sup>. This makes it clear that as a youth Shah has been visiting Bhit for the sake of meditation and reflections, but then a stage came when he started coming accompanied with his *faqirs* and this probably coincided with the years 1130-1135 Hijrah.

During this important formative phase of life Shah Latif seems to have selected Bhit as his sanctuary for so many valid reasons. First of all it was not too far from his own village, rather it was conveniently situated in the same vicinity, where he has grown up as a youth. Secondly, he wanted an independent and exclusive place where he could advance and



pursue his incandescent love for music. Lastly, the place of Bhit and its surroundings were ideal in many respects for his temperament. Adjoining the Bhit (Sandhill), and in its foot was a small lake 'Kirar', named so due to abundance of the 'Kirar' (Capparis aphylla) trees, where sufficient rainy water used to accumulate and last round about the year. Thus the site had great appeal for musical and poetical genius of Shah. Moreover it conformed to his idyllic conception of life.

It is, however, difficult to ascertain exactly as to when Shah Latif and his family left Kotri and came to settle at Bhit. Lilaram, who can also be credited for holding independent esquires from the faqirs of Bhit during the years (1887-1889), has stated that Shah Latif could not shift his family to Bhit during the life time of Shah Habib. According to him shifting took place soon after the death of Shah Habib, who died at Kotri Mughal, but was buried at Bhit. But Lilaram has not brought any other convincing evidence in support of his view.

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In this regard Mir Sangi has provided a detailed account rather he has described the whole process as to how and when Shah Latif came to settle at Bhit. He has mentioned how in the first instance an uneven ground was levelled and in this exercise Shah himself participated



and his faqirs also helped him. As soon as the leveling was completed, two rooms were built, one for himself and the other for his father Shah Habib. Simultaneously he started construction of the mosque having three domes which is still extant at Bhit<sup>51</sup>.

From the statement of Mir Sangi it is crystal clear that, Shah Latif came to settle at Bhit, while his father was alive. It is, however, understood that soon afterwards Shah Habib passed away, and therefore he was buried at Bhit. In order to reckon the year of this death Molvi Muhammad Sadiq Naqshbandi composed the following imaginative line in Arabic which by abject gives the year of 1144 A.H. and is inscribed on the facade of the tomb of Shah Habib. "Death is a bridge by means of which a friend meets a friend" <sup>52</sup>. It is significant to note that the word "*Habib*" has been used here in a dual sense. First it is the name of Shah Latif's father and second it metaphorically alludes to God almighty as friend.

In fact the statement by Lilaram that Shah Habib passed away at Kotri is untenable, as in that case there was no reason to bury him at Bhit. It appears Lilaram confused the whole story, perhaps due to the fact that Shah Habib died at Bhit very soon once shifting from Kotri

Mughal had taken place. However, this provides the clue that Shah Latif permanently settled at Bhit the years during 1140-1142AH, that is when he has crossed the age of forty years.

After the death of his father, Shah Latif had to assume the spiritual responsibilities as successor of his father. Shah Habib himself was a Sufi saint of Qadri order, and therefore naturally had initiated his son on the same path, which has been rather the spiritual order of the family since the great grand-father Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri. From age point of view also, Shah Latif must have found himself mentally prepared to undertake the spiritual mantle which his father must have wished to bequeath to him. The most significant aspect of the matter is that on assuming the spiritual cloak of his father, Shah Latif did not adopt traditional approach towards his followers, adherents and disciples. In the words of Mir Sangi:\_\_\_\_\_

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"At the time of initiation, the formal grappling of one's hand was not observed. Rather if any one approached with this intention or requested for blessings, the usual reply was: God Almighty is all-powerful and the wisest of all. Just cleanse your heart like mirror, so that it reflects the beauty and beatitude of Him" <sup>53</sup>.

This is how Bhitshah became the spiritual centre and Shah Latif appears to have assumed the role of an accomplished spiritual mentor and the people at large felt attraction to seek guidance and attain spiritual satisfaction.

Mir Sangi has enlisted as many as twenty nine names of the persons, who were all the time present at Bhit and were in attendance or associated with Shah Latif in one or the other way. A few of them are mentioned here along with the description of their assignment in order of importance.<sup>54</sup>

- 1) Kahlifo Mohammad Alim, the maternal cousin of Shah. He was the incharge of music and *dhikr*. Also the only person authorised to collect the money offered as *Nazrana* and to spend it for the collective use of the *faqirs*.
- 2) Miyan Noor Muhammad Bhatti was the tutor of Shah Latif since his childhood, and he was followed by his son Miyan Wali Muhammad. He performed the *Janaza* ceremonies when Shah breathed his last.
- 3) Fakir Muhammad Rahim Munshi. The work of letter writing or any other

correspondence was entrusted to him.

- 4) Fakir Soomro. He was a learned man and as such his duty was to initiate the novice and guide them for prayers and dhikr.
- 5) Adbul Jameel Unar. He was the incharge of prayer carpet and rosary being used by Shah himself.
- 6) Fakir Inyat Wasan. He was Jat by caste. His duties included to look after the camel used for riding.
- 7) Ahmed Faqir Samo. He was to look after the mare 'Chungal' belonging to Shah.
- 8) Faqir Rehmoon was the cook.
- 9) Fakir Wahyoon looked after the two puppies which Shah came across during his travels.
- 10) Faqir Qasim. His duties included hair dressing.
- 11) Faqir Urs Sand. He was the team leader of the music group. Besides, he remembered the entire poetry of Shah by heart.
- 12) Sayed Naqi Faqir. He was prominent for his sweet voice amongst the singer faqirs.
- 13) Miyan Hashim Ali Rehan-Poto, known



as the nirgthngale of musicians for his best voice.

At Bhit, the life of Shah was characterised by a regular schedule of prayers and complete observance of fasts in the month of Ramzan. Besides, the singing of sufistic poetry accompanied with special kind of music or what can be described, as the 'Sama' was the most distinctive feature of his life. As to what actually did this music comprised, and what were the pre-requisites of it, would be dealt with in a separate chapter. Suffice it say here that the fame of his saintly character and popularity of his immortal poetry grew day by day and very soon it crossed the frontiers of Sindh and reached the adjoining states of Kutch, Kathiawar and Jaisalmir, where Sindh language was understood and held sway.

It is, however, important to note that during this phase of life which covers more than two decades of his life Shah did not confine himself to be an ordinary saint or *pir* but conducted himself as a man of extraordinary abilities and genius.

During this period he undertook upon himself to construct a befitting mausoleum over the grave of his great grandfather Shah Abdul

Karim of Bulri for whom he had extraordinary attachment and love. Shah Latif got himself so much involved in this work that he personally travelled upto Multan to bring the glazed tiles on boats through the Indus for construction work. This may be treated as his outstanding tribute to that reverential personality which had left great impact upon his life and thought especially through the book '*Bayanul Arifeen*', -the hagiographical account containing the teachings and verses of Shah Karim.

Adjacent to the mausoleum of Shah Karim, he planned for a mosque as per Muslim tradition and in the same premises also built a tomb of his grandfather Abdul Qudoos Shah. These works were completed in 1156 AH as the year has been inscribed through a chronogram on the *Kashi* brick in the following words: <sup>55</sup> 'The Shrine of Shah Karim is a threshold for the vision of eternal reality'

This meaningful chronogram was also composed by Maulvi Muhammad Sadiq Naqshbandi, who later composed the chronogram on the death of Shah's father. The above tablet is still preserved at the shrine. The following six lines from the Masnvi of Rumi were inscribed inside the tomb<sup>56</sup>. After these works, Shah paid attention towards the tomb of his

father Shah Habib at Bhit Shah and got the original mosque newly built under his personal supervision in the year 1161 AH. The year of construction and the name of architect Eidan are still intact on the wall of the mosque at Bhit.



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### MUSE AT BHIT.

'He thinks musically, he speaks musically, he acts musically, his very silence is musical'<sup>57</sup>. This is how Mirza Qaleech Beg, the most prolific scholar of Sindhi literature has tried to portray the musical genius of Shah Abdul Latif. It seems Shah Latif had intuitively perceived that poetry without music, and for that matter, music without poetry was hardly of any significance. This viewpoint wrought a fundamental change in his approach towards the treatment of poetry as well as music. The classical Indian tradition of music which was never popular in Sindh, catered only for the needs of a very special class of people having developed the required aptitude for the same, as such it was meaningless for the masses. Similarly mere poetical composition howsoever, lofty ideas may well have been contained therein, sounded very insipid, and there was no much attraction left for the common man.

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Shah Latif like a great sage of his age, perceived that time has come to try a real integration of the poetry and music. This is how poetry and music become synonymous in his art, his poems representing music in words. Indeed he was a composer of the poetry and music at the same time. This was by no means an easy



task, as it dealt with the intermingling of the two diverse currents, which had flown quite separately for over millennia of years in the sub-continent, or if there had been some stray efforts in this regard, they were not a great success. In order to understand the music of Shah Latif a brief background is provided here.

In Sindh as elsewhere, reciting of religious poems or devotional poetry in sonorous voice and generally without the accompaniment of any musical instrument, known as 'Sama' was a common phenomenon at the holy shrines of saints before Shah Latif. But with the passage of time it had become moribund, and had almost lost its appeal, due to the monotonous style of the vocalists and non-observance of any recognized rules of music by the singers. The soul-stirring and awe-inspiring role of such exercise was on the decline, as there was excess of repetition as well as formalism and ritualism. Accordingly a need to revamp and reorganize this valuable tradition was manifest under the changed circumstances. This situation served both as cause and effect of the impetus under which Shah Latif ultimately decided to introduce an element of music in it with a view to revive and refurbish the enervating tradition. He was however fully conscious to ensure that all this conformed to the cultural ethos of the

society. For this purpose, he diligently selected the four-stringed tambourine, originally an instrument of Arab-Persian music tradition, and added one more string to it. The objective was to move towards such a comprehensive system after which there was no need to have accompaniment of any other musical instrument. Accordingly the first such tambourine was ordered to be made at Thatta by Shah himself and it was completed under his personal supervision.<sup>58</sup> Although it is very difficult to ascertain exactly as to why he preferred the Tambourine over all other musical instruments of the Indo-Pak origin, it is highly probable that he got the idea of adopting it from the Masnvi of Rumi. As indicated earlier Shah Latif was fond of the Masnvi, to which he used to listen very regularly. Rumi is all praise for 'Tamboor' instrument when he says:

"This melody is that of heavens which people sing with the help of Tamboor and with their throat."<sup>59</sup>

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In its larger perspective this initiative on his part has been considered as a great step towards the Indian renaissance of music arts after the ubiquitous genius of Amir Khusro(1253-1324 AD) in this field.<sup>60</sup>

Shah Abdul Latif had an impeccable impulse for music, rather as pointed out by Mir Sangi, it was this extraordinary love for music which impelled him to Bhit, and subsequently become the *raison deter* for his permanent settlement at Bhit around the year 1142 AH. At Bhit he ordered for elaborate arrangements to make 'Sama' a regular and permanent feature, for this, timings were fixed with due regard to the observance of the classical tradition of music as well as the daily prayer timings. As a second step, those *fakirs* and disciples who had some inclination towards music were given some sort of training. Tamar Fakir was the leader of these singers and musicians, who soon became expert in singing the poetry in new tunes and new styles as conceived by Shah himself. The five stringed tamboor used by Tamar Faqir is till preserved at Bhit, and as an established tradition it is being successively handed down to the leader musician, who occupies the covetous position. Lately it was under the use of Sayyid Ghulam Shah, who died during the decade of seventies.

It was normally after night prayers that the '*ragai*' faqirs of musicians would assemble at the specified place, knowing their positions and special role assigned to each of them. Usually there used to be two parties



amongst the singers and musicians. On one side in the north, Khalifo Muhammad Alim Dero, the maternal cousin of Shah, along with his party consisting of five to six persons, would take position, and on the other side in the opposite direction, Tamar Fakir would lead his party. The actual '*Sama*' or session of music will commence when Shah himself had arrived and taken his seat in the middle, forming noddle point of the parties. The beginning was to be made with the three rounds of '*Ho Alo*', followed by the recitation of devotional verses from the '*Surs*' of '*Bilawal*' and '*Dhanasari*' by the party of Khhalifo Alim. After a while, the Khalifo would recite loudly and in a very peculiar tone '*Al-Qariat Mal-Qarait*' the opening verse of Surah 101 of the Holy Quran.

Once this party had silenced, this would be replied by the opposite party of Tamar Faqir by repeating the same words, but with a different frequency of tone. These crooning coupled with nuances shall last for few moments, as if the parties were preparing themselves for perfect rendition. Now the fakirs would stand up and shall move step by step in a complete harmony. After having completed one full round and a quarter of it, they will sit facing themselves towards west and there they would perform '*dhikr*' collectively and loudly. This *dhikr*



would be interspersed by the poems of Shah himself or of any other poet having high sufistic connotations. In the end there would be a collective prayer. The music session or '*raga*' which had thus commenced after *Isha* prayers would come to an end any time before morning prayers. Mir Sangi has made it clear that though the musical instrument of the '*Tamboor*' was introduced at the instance of Shah himself, he did not play it with his own hands, nor he touched it for this purpose. Similarly, he never resorted to singing his own poetry. Mir Sangi has illustrated the point as under:

"Indeed it was as per his directive that the instrument of Tamburine was introduced. To start with, he used to strike the nails of one hand with that of the other. This was considered to be the signal for musicians to play up the tune on the Tamburine in harmony with the voice. In short, the saint-poet himself never sang his poetry, nor he attempted the instrument with his own hands".<sup>62</sup>

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On every first Monday of the month, this music event used to be for longer duration. Special arrangement were made for a still bigger show on the eve of Friday night or the night falling on 9th of Zil-Hajj, the last month of Hijrah calendar.

Dr. Baloch has provided the following technical exposition of the actual performance of 'Sama' by fakirs:

"When music begins, the melody of the new Sur(Chapter) is spelled out at a very start, and thereafter when the vocal performance of the 'Wae' composition begins, the rhythmic beats on the tambour with the right hand of the performer provide the necessary 'tal'. Shah Abdul Latif's purpose was to simplify the complicated technique of the 'tal' and therefore he devised (beside the move smooth chherr) two basic rhythmic 'tals' called the 'derhi' (1 ½ time) and the 'due-tali' (the double time), to most of the melodies could be sung" <sup>63</sup>

In nutshell this was the new tradition of 'Shah-Jo-raga' '-' the music of Shah', which was firmly established in the lifetime of the saint poet himself. Since he himself was the founder of this new tradition, it was pursued sacrosanctly by his followers, who took it very seriously. After the death of Shah Latif in 1165 AH the grand tradition has been reverently preserved by his disciples and fakirs who to the exclusion of any other Job specialized in it. Above all not only the music tradition has been vigorously pursued that is on every Friday night the 'Sama' has been held, rather every effort has been made to

maintain the very technique evolved by Shah himself. This makes the institution of '*Shah-jo-raga*' an original contribution and unique in the realm of music in so far as it has echoed for over two centuries in the environs of Sindh.

Of late it has been debated by the scholars as to what extent the new music tradition started by Shah owes its existence to the classical Hindustani music. Whether any other influence is traceable in his art of music. What is the exact relationship of his 36 Surs (melodies) with the Indian classical system? Whether the music employed by Shah has been influenced by Arab-Persian tradition of music which flourished during the hey-day of Mughals? How much this music is derived from folk music? To what extent it can claim to be original? In case of originality, what are the significant innovations, which have also survived and reached to us. In this regard the earlier scholars had created confusion by making sweeping and very general remarks. Considering it to be an outright extension of the Indian music tradition. Mirza Qalich Beg was the first serious scholar who after having tabulated the Indian system of six basic '*ragas*', identified the existence of seven '*ragas*' along with their fourteen (14) derivatives in the musical system of Shah. This means he accounted for just 21 melodies, and

left 15 unaccounted without any indication or identification.

It was, however, with this view in mind that the singing of Shah's poetry was put to test in a systematic manner by the qualified masters of music in Hindustani classical tradition during early seventies. As a result of this analysis following conclusions have been spelled out by Dr. N.A. Baloch.<sup>64</sup>

- i) In all, 36 *ragnis* were selected for performance in the new style under the new music institution. Of these, 30 were used exclusively for singing Shah's own poetry, while six were used for singing other compositions. The selection of just 36 *ragnis* indicates Shah's intention to retain the symbolic continuity of the classical tradition of 6 ragas and 36 *ragnis*.
- ii) In order to call attention to the original Arab-Persian tradition, two melodies entitled '*Yaman*' and '*Hussaini*' were included in this selective pattern of 36 melodies.
- iii) Of the remaining 34 melodies, Shah selected 17 from the domain of the



classical tradition of the Hindustani music, and 17 from the field of popular folk music. Those selected from the high art were (1) *Kalyan*, (2) *Khambhat (Kamaj)*, (3) *Srirag*, (4) *Suhni*, (5) *Sarang*, (6) *Kedaro*, (7) *Desi*, (8) *Sorath*, (9) *Baruva Hindi (classical)*, (10) *Baruva Sindhi*, (11) *Ramkali*, (12) *Bilawal*, (13) *Asa*, (14) *Dhanasiri*, (15) *Purbi*, (16) *Kamod*, and (17) *Basant*.

The actual performance of these melodies indicated that '*Shah's Raga*' had retained *Kalyan*, *Bilawal* and *Khambhat (Khamaj)* in their classical (*Shudh*) form, because these constituted the three basic *Tals* to which also belong some other melodies of this group. However, the remaining 14 melodies of the classical tradition were retained in the form in which they were being sung by the people.

Thus the functional composition of each of these under *Shah's raga* does not necessarily conform exactly to its classical composition.

- iv) The following 17 melodies were selected from the field of folk-music:

- 1) *Samundi* (the tune of the sea-farer's song),
- 2) *Abri* (the tune of waterless desert),
- 3) *Madhoor* (the tune of the song of the helpless one),
- 4) *Khoiyaree* (the tune of the mountaious region),
- 5) *Rana* (the tune of the Mumal-Rana romance),
- 6) *Khahoree* (the tune of the oiling ones),
- 7) *Rip* (the tune of love's heavy burden),
- 8) *Lila* (the tune of the Lila-Chanesar romance),
- 9) *Dahar* (the tune of the devotional songs),
- 10) *Kapaitee* (the tune of the weaver girl's song),
- 11) *Pirbhali* (the tune of the Dawn),
- 12) *Ghatu* (the tune of the expert fisherman),
- 13) *Seenh Kedaro* (the tune of the hunting animals-Lion and eagle),
- 14) *Marvi* (the tune of the Umar-Marvi romance),
- 15) *Dhol Marvi* (the tune of the Dhol-Maru romance)
- 16) *Hir* (the tune of the Hir-Ranjha romance),
- 17) *Karayal* (the tune of the Black swan or of the Park clothed Hunter).

Recently Dr. Motilal Jotwani, an Indian Scholar who is by origin a Sindhi, has more or less agreed to the above conclusion of

Dr. Baloch. He has candidly expressed his opinion that Shah Latif's is essentially a folk music based on same unrigid classical forms. He has further observed as under:

"His *surs* are not the *Ragas* proper. They do not have their essential nature called *Jati*, *Akirti* and *Vyakti*, i.e. Type, Figure and individuality. Unlike the classical *Ragas*, Shah Abdul Latif's *surs* are based on words and meaning the *baitis* and *wais* sung in style which is not at all rigidly classical. They are musical rendering of the sensuousness of poetry. Music of Shah Abdul Latif is expressed through rhythm and melody of words in contradistinction to the classical music which is expressed by rhythm and melody of sounds".<sup>65</sup>

All this proves that Shah Latif, on one hand, was well conversant with the classical tradition of Indian music, and on the other, he had fuller appreciation for the folk music tradition of Sindh. Above all he had natural impulse for music, very much similar to that of his great grandfather Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri, which phenomenon could be explained by the fact of atavism. The next source of his inspiration was certainly the great Persian mystic poet Moulana Rumi himself a musical genius par excellence, who said "Music is the

creaking of the doors of paradise". The striking similarity between the two is that Rumi is also credited for having adopted his own music pattern which later on came to be specified for singing of his Masnvi. The 'Sama' tradition resorted to by Rumi was however, added with what is known as the whirling dance of the dervishes.

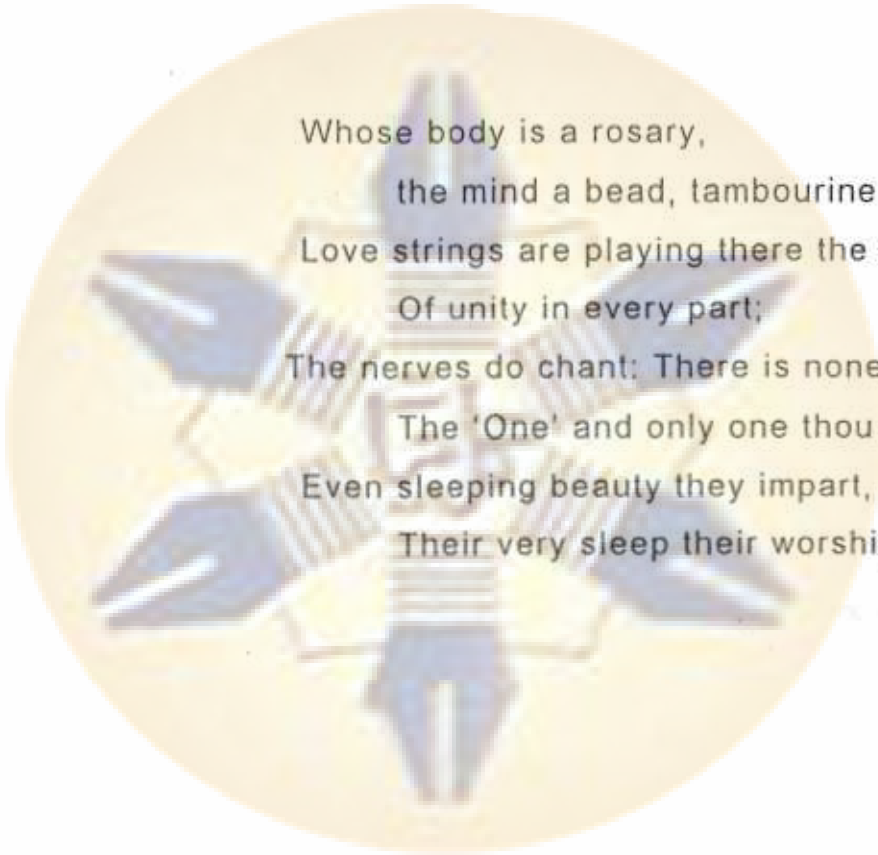
Indeed the music was an inalienable passion for Shah Latif with the result that he had to bear the severe criticism of the orthodox religious scholars of his time, though generally he had good relations with many of them. As a matter of policy he avoided any kind of controversy on this point, rather out of sagacity he pleaded to be apologetic. A delegate of eminent scholars paid a visit to prevail upon him to renunciate the music forever, as it was against the tenets of Islam. It has been reported that when the meeting was over and the scholars were about to leave, a sound of the music instruments was heard from inside though no one played them. How this event actually did take place is not clear but it indicated that it was no more possible for Shah himself or for any of his followers to dissociate from the divinic influx of music. Shah was convinced that he had adopted nothing new, so that he could be blamed as heretic or apostate. Rather he was in



line with such great sufis as Maulana Rumi and Amir Khusro who were the great patrons of music, provided it met certain basic prerequisites of morality and decency and '*Shah-jo-raga*' in all fairness fulfilled these conditions. How the musical genius of Shah Latif was inextricably linked with his poetical genius, has been very beautifully illustrated by an erudite scholar of Shah-Allama Kazi in the following words: "The start was made when some of the musicians present played instrumental music without words from the well-known ragas that were prevalent in the country in those days". He further continues: "The music brought on an ecstatic mood in the poet, so that his poetry was uttered and sung there and then by himself. There was no question of deliberate composition".<sup>65</sup>

In other words his entire poetry originated in an ideal environment of melody and harmony. It is the product of music and profound singing, which is essentially permeated with thematic music. The most noteworthy feature, however, is that the spontaneous music and natural recitative order with which it originated, has mostly been preserved, as it has been successively handed down by one generation of the singers and *fakirs* to others who devoted themselves to the institution of *Shah-jo-raga*,

since its inception around the year 1742 AD. How this has been possible, excepting that his soul and body having resonated with the divine influx of music and harmony. In the words of the poet himself;



Whose body is a rosary,  
the mind a bead, tambourine the heart.  
Love strings are playing there the theme.  
Of unity in every part;  
The nerves do chant: There is none like thee;  
The 'One' and only one thou art.  
Even sleeping beauty they impart,  
Their very sleep their worship is!

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## THE LAST PHASE OF LIFE.

Shah Abdul Latif's last years of life can be characterised with the strong pursuit of music, which mainly comprised singing of the Sufistic poetry, rather it was the main reason which compelled him to settle at Bhit. Music made his life meaningful and systematic due to the regular observance of its timings. Besides, his routine included five times prayers in congregation in the mosque which he himself got constructed at Bhit. Similarly he was very strict in observing fasts during the month of *Ramzan*<sup>67</sup>. His constant advice to the followers to which he himself strictly adhered was to eat less, sleep less, hear less and have lesser involvement in the worldly affairs. He advised for humane and polite conduct and passing ones maximum time in contemplation and remembrance of God Almighty.

His other activities included listening to the *Masnavi Rumi* and the *Bayanul Arifeen* besides the *Holy Book*. These books were his constant companions, and one Miyan Muhammad Salah was assigned the duty to read from these books and explain their meaning in the daily sittings participated by Shah Latif himself. He however, always remained silent and composed outwardly whereas his heart remained attuned with the '*dhikr*' of Allah .

Although during this period of life, Shah spent most of his time at Bhit, yet he continued to visit some of his friends and followers in the different parts of the country. Now he would move accompanied with his '*ragai*' faqirs and other close associates, who were his permanent companions. Due to strong penchant for music; it became customary on such occasions to hold musical sessions and singing which would last up to late night, wherever he stayed, and the places where he camped more than once came to be known as his '*Takios*' meaning temporary residence or resting place to which we referred earlier.

In the annals of Sindh the Kalhora period (1707-1773) is known for much of the literary and scholarly activities and the period of Shah Latif is full with eminent contemporaries with whom Shah Latif was on visiting terms or have had intimacy and exchanged views. The biographers have mentioned a long list of names, through it lacks much of the authenticity.

The most remarkable personality which attracted Shah Latif more than any one else during later phase of life was Makhdoom Muin Thattvi (1095-1161 A.H), who was by far one of the outstanding religious scholars of his



times<sup>68</sup>.

Due to the extraordinary similarity in temperament and thought, Shah Latif and Makhdoom Muin Thattvi, developed close intimacy, and as a result of this they showed great respect and love for each others ideas. Shah Latif who was by nature very fond of travelling frequently visited Thatta and used to be his guest for several days. Makhdoom Muin himself was an accomplished poet of Persian, as is evident from some of his poetry, which has survived. He was a great admirer of music and believed it to be something from heaven. Mir Ali Sher Qani has quoted him as having said:

"Music is the highest ascension for the friends of God".<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps his conviction was translated in to reality when he breathed his last during the music session of Shah Latif.

Mir Ali Sher Qani (d: 1789), in whose life time and in whose home town Thatta, this episode took place, was so much impressed that he made it a point to describe the whole incident twice in his writings. First time in his celebrated work *Tuhfatul-Kiram*<sup>70</sup>, just after twenty years when the memory of this incident was still fresh in the minds of the people of Thatta.

Second time he mentioned this event in his '*Miyar Salekan-e-Tariqat*', an anthology of Sufi orders and their masters with special reference to Sindh. This is how he has described the event and has himself penned it down in *Tuhfat-ul-Kiram*.

'While at Bhit, once Shah Latif felt very enthusiastic and asked his faqirs, let us proceed to Thatta for the last meeting with our beloved friend. On his arrival at Thatta he met Makhdoom Muin who was also eager to see him. After a while as per normal routine the *Mehfil* of music started. When the session of music was at its climax, Makhdoom Muin was found completely absorbed, and in this state of ecstasy, he went inside the room, where he was reported to have expired<sup>71</sup>.

Shah Latif attended the funeral ceremony of his friend, but while coming back in a sombre mood, he vowed not to come to Thatta again, for it was due to the love and friendship of the departed soul that he used to visit Thatta.<sup>72</sup>

There is a further tangible evidence which suggests that Shah Latif held Makhdoom Muin in high esteem and regard. He placed much reliance on his views and opinions and once he sought his opinion. This is evident from

the contents of the correspondence which took place between the two. It also reveals the unanimity of their views and similarity of approach regarding the basic issues of Islamic mysticism. This letter, which is in question and answer form, was addressed by Shah Latif to Makhdoom Muin Thattvi on the subject whether affiliation with any one of the recognized Sufi orders is a must for traversing the spiritual path.

Fortunately this letter as well as the replies given by Makhdoom Muin have survived. In view of the historic importance of this letter the relevant portions are quoted here, as it provides a deep insight into the most important aspect of contemporary 'Sufistic thought' in Sindh.

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### Epistle from Shah Latif.

In the name of God, the most merciful and beneficent.

"What is the opinion of the learned scholars being the focal point for people, regarding the word (*Uwaisi*,) whether it exists in the terminology of Sufis? May God be pleased with them? Further, if it happens to be there, what does it exactly imply? And if '*Uwesi*' is the one who has been endowed with spiritual autarky on his own, then is it not inconsistent with having an external spiritual preceptor?"

Answer: The reply to the first question is, the word '*Uwes*' exists in the terminology of Sufis. Rather it has been widely used by them, as such it recurs in their writings, and this is not a secret to the readers of their books. '*Uwesi*' is a person who is divinely guided and has attained spiritual perfection through the mediation of such people. This is, however, not contradictory to the principle of having an external spiritual guide.

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And there have existed some saintly persons who were very famous on account of their wonderful deeds and supernatural performance, but their relationship is not established in such Sufi orders as Naqshbandi or Qadri. In this case should we treat their methodology as rightful one or the one, which is false and baseless.



'The reply to the fourth question is that thousands of such saints have lived, whose relationship with the famous Sufi orders is not known. All these friends of God passed their life in this world in complete anonymity, but they were saints. Imam Yafai in '*Rauz-ur-Rayaheen*' has mentioned a number of saints whose affiliation with the Sufi orders are also established, but in so many cases their spiritual masters are not known. For example no one is certain about Khawaja Hafiz Sheerazi, as to from whom he acquired the lesson of mystical knowledge. Accordingly in '*Nafhat*' (Maulana Jami) is of the view that this is not the condition for saintliness, and to reproach any one on this account or to underestimate them is to be rather insolent and presumptuous'.<sup>73</sup>

Although the exact background of this letter could not be ascertained, it is rather manifest from the contents that Shah Latif wanted clarification and confirmation of certain basic maxims which has come to agitate his mind due to one or the other reason. The tone of the letter suggests that the objective was to respond to some kind of criticism, which had perhaps been unleashed against him so as to tarnish his image among his followers and associates. It appears that he himself was clear

on these issues but the strategy was to remove the confusion created in the minds of the common people. As a matter of fact Mir Sangi on more than one occasion has mentioned that some of the contemporaries of Shah Latif apprehending his ever increasing popularity, out of jealousy had levelled such objections against him.<sup>74</sup> The other reason could well be that he was not affiliated with Suhwardis, the most popular Sufi order in Sindh to which the Kalhora rulers themselves owed allegiance and it was the order followed by Makhdoom Nooh and his descendants.

Shah was however, initiated in the Qadri order by his father Shah Habib, as pointed out earlier, but again he was not rigidly following all its conventions and practices. For example, his penchant love for music and '*Sama*' must have been an anathema to the orthodox religious scholars. Moreover music was also not generally approved in the Qadri order. In fact this provided sufficient ground to his opponents for criticism and levelling of serious allegations against him. This being the reason that all his biographers have alluded to this kind of criticism in one or the other way.<sup>75</sup>

Indeed Shah Latif as a great sage and mentor, had arrived at the conclusion that though the formal adoption of a Sufi order might

be necessary for an individual especially at the initial stage, it was by no means indispensable. The basic requirement is the true belief in God and sincerity of purpose in life. Human being is the epitome of all creation on earth. He is bound to make progress, provided he pursues the right path. He once remarked in clear-cut terms:

Those who strive and struggle,  
Shall be rewarded,  
Without any distinction of caste and creed.

Finally a word about the poetry of Shah Latif. All the biographers are unanimous on the point that Shah Latif never took a pen in his hand to write poetry. It all descended on his heart when he was fully inspired amid the session of music and singing of Sufi poetry by his companions. His poetry was uttered then and there and it was simultaneously committed to memory by his '*ragai*' faqirs and followers. He never ordered for its writing nor bothered about its preservation. Perhaps he knew that his '*ragai*' faqirs would not only preserve it in a much better way, rather they would propagate it with the help of the strongest medium of the music. This is how he composed more than three thousands *bait*s or say some ten thousands lines of verses. Mir Sangi on the basis of an oral tradition has brought to bear the last



composition of his poetry, which starts with the following verse:

On what account I still survive, without my beloved!

This could well be the last piece of his poetry as it smatters of having fulfilled his terrestrial mission. And as already indicated, the maiden verse, which he uttered, was in reply to his father's melancholy voice, when he was a boy and was completely lost in meditation. This line he uttered when he raised his head out of thick cover of sand.

I live to see the glimpse of beloved.

Between these two verses is ensconced the whole life story and the highest ideal of the great saint-poet. In fact the lives of all great Sufis bear testimony to this principle of love and Shah was no exception to it. His mission was to propagate the ideal of love amongst the mankind, and he knew for sure that the most suitable language for love could be nothing but the music. Shah had, therefore, with all ingenuity chosen music as the most effective medium for his love ideology and the miracle of music brought every kind of people into its fold without discrimination of caste, creed and colour. In fact it can be argued that it was on the



wings of music that his poetry travelled far and wide and gained unprecedented popularity among the masses. Music occupied the position of most trusted companion throughout his life and the music accompanied with his poetry served the purpose of arousing highest human virtues in the listeners.

A few days before his death, like an extraordinary man of spiritual acme, he had perceived that his physical life was about to end. Accordingly he asked for the profuse session of music. It is reported by Mir Sangi that the music continued for three nights and days, and it was on 14th Saffar 1165/1752, when his followers realized that their great spiritual leader had passed away. More than one chronograms were composed to preserve this inexorable date forever. Qazi Ibrahim of Hala immortalized this year of incident as under:<sup>76</sup>

شاہ صاحب ذوالعناقب سیدی عبد اللطیف  
 آن کم قطب وقت خود بردست در مردان حق  
 چون زجام ارجعی مغفور نوش وصال شد  
 گفت مغمور غیب رحلتش 'رضوان حق'  
 1165 AH

### RELATIONS WITH THE RULERS.

The beginning of the 18th century coincided with the decline of Mughal rule in the subcontinent, but in Sindh it heralded the ascendancy of the Kalhoras who finally replaced Mughal governor at the capital city Thatta in 1736. Miyan Yar Muhammad Kalhoro (d.1718) has been justifiably termed the pioneer of the Kalhora rulers. He was succeeded by his son Miyan Noor Muhammad Kalhoro (d.1751). A major portion of the life of Shah Abdul Latif (1690-1751) corresponded with the period of these two rulers. The ancestry of the Kalhora chiefs is traced to one Adam Shah (d.1606) who emerged as a holy man in a small village of Larkana but subsequently increased his influence in the upper Sindh as he was granted Jagir by Khan Khanan. However later on probably due to some controversy when the Mughal administrators at Multan felt that the political influence of Adam Shah was growing day by day and that he could become a threat to the empire, he was ordered to be executed. His tomb is situated on a hill in Sukkur town<sup>77</sup>. It seems that the indirect use of religion for wielding political power which was started by Adam Shah Kalhoro continued in his later generations, atleast for more than a century, though they had to occasionally pay very heavily

for the same. Miyan Din Muhammad, brother of Miyan Yar Muhammad was the third leader of the family who was put to death by the Mughal governors. Despite this, the Kalhora chiefs continued on their struggle and at last Miyan Yar Muhammad Kalhoro was able to get recognition as ruler of the major portion of upper Sindh from Aurangzeb in 1701 AD<sup>78</sup>. He was conferred the title of 'Khuda Yar Khan' and he established his capital at 'Khuda Abad', presently in District Dadu, where he is buried also. Once he had consolidated his position in the Upper Sindh, he set his eyes on the lower Sindh. For this he worked in hand and gloves with the Mughal governor of Thatta, Nawab Azam Khan. Accordingly in the showdown at Jhoke which continued for about four months, Miyan Yar Muhammad took very active part along with the Mughal forces. Rather it was Yar Muhammad who finally effected the arrest of Shah Inayat at Jhok and brought him before Nawab Azam Khan who put him to death in 1131 A.H./1718 AD<sup>79</sup>. Jhok was hardly four miles away from Bulri, which was very often visited by Shah Latif due to his ancestors.

In the perspective of Jhoke episode, it must be mentioned that Shah Inayat (1655-1718), whose ancestors were Langah and had migrated from Multan, was a saint of the Qadri



order having large following in that area. It appears that he had some apprehensions from the Mughal ruler of Thatta and therefore had organized his followers into a combating force to face any eventuality. With the dint of his spiritual prowess he had mustered support of the peasantry of the surrounding area on the promise of extending many concession to them. Any how due to his organized force and the strategy of having fortified himself in the trenches, coupled with the night raids on the enemy, Shah Inayat along with his forces was able to resist the combined armies of Mughals, Kalhoras and others local tribes for four months. By this fight Shah Inayat had exposed himself as a potential threat to the Mughal establishment in Sindh, and this obviously did not suit the long term objective of the Kalhoras who had set their eyes on Thatta as their next target. In fact after the death of Shah Inayat at the hands of Mughal in this manner, the ground was made clear for Kalhoras in the lower Sindh. In the next few years Kalhoras did so many things to win the confidence of the Mughal King at Delhi, with the result that Noor Muhammad Kalhoro was declared as the suzerain of Sindh in 1736 AD<sup>80</sup>.

Since Kalhoras themselves had risen to power through the manipulation of their spiritual leadership, they always remained



suspicious of the similar kind of activities on the part of others. In this background there could be hardly any doubt that Miyan Noor Muhammad who had shifted to a newly established capital was very much sceptical of the growing popularity of Shah Latif who lived at a short distance from this capital city of Khudabad. Mir Sangi has recorded at least three indications, which prove clear-cut animosity of the Kalhora ruler towards Shah Latif. Of the three incidents, the most intriguing one is that whereby Noor Muhammad allegedly arranged poison, which was presented in a very beautiful casket. Shah Latif was saved miraculously as he perceived the danger intuitively and he got rid of it by throwing the same in the river. Second time, Miyan Noor Muhammad Kalhoro gifted an unruly mare for a ride, with the evil design that Shah Latif would not be able to control her and she would cause his death sooner or later. But this tactics also failed miserably, and Shah was not only able to survive but made the mare amenable to control and domesticated it within short interval of time. Third time after having invited Shah Latif, he was left alone with the young beautiful maids, so as to tarnish his saintly character among the people. The following verses might be an allusion to this incident<sup>81</sup>.

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Kak could not hold those wanderers  
 Castles not tempt their mind.  
 No maid or mistresses their hearts  
 With magic strings could bind  
 For ever Lahutis left behind  
 Myraids of maids as these-

However, the most significant event which might have eased the estranged relationship of Shah Latif with Noor Muhammad Kalhora was his son Miyan Ghulam Shah the enlightened and most successful ruler of the Kalhora dynasty. As already stated Shah Latif once blessed a lady singer named Gulan who performed before him at Bhit around the years 1135-1137 AD that one day she will be the queen of Sindh and she would give birth to a son who would excel his father. Indeed it so happened that Miyan Noor Muhammad married the same lady and she bore him a son who was named Ghulam Shah which means 'slave of Shah'. The very name Ghulam Shah shows the extraordinary reverence which Gulan, the mother of Ghulam Shah displayed for the saint-poet, and hence very often she used to pay her respects at the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif.

Mir Sangi has mentioned that she had great role in the construction of mausoleum also. It was her desire that the mausoleum was

constructed so elegant and high that the same could be seen from Khuda Abad, the capital city of Sindh at that time<sup>82</sup>. The ruins of '*Gulan jo Kot*', where she resided are still traceable at the site of Khuda Abad, which is at a distance of 3-4 miles in the west in straight line from Bhit Shah and some two miles from the present town of Hala towards the left bank of the river Indus. It is a veritable fact that the high dome of Shah's mausoleum could be sighted from this place if there is no obstruction to the vision. Second and the most important point to be noted in this regard is the attitude of Ghulam Shah Kalhoro prior to becoming the ruler of Sindh and afterwards, for he evinced the highest regard for Shah Latif throughout his life. In fact soon after the death of Shah Latif in 1165/1752, the beautiful mausoleum was built by Ghulam Shah within merely two years time and it was completed in 1167/ 1754, as is evident from the extant tablet bearing such inscription on the tomb.

One of the great political upheavals which shook the whole subcontinent including Sindh was the Nadir Shah's invasion of Sindh 1152 AH/1739 AD and Shah Latif was an eyewitness to all these bloody events. Miyan Noor Muhammad instead of facing the armies of Nadir fled to the desert of Sindh but he was chased and finally he had to surrender and a



treaty was signed at Larkana whereby Nadir took away his two sons including Ghulam Shah as hostages so as to ensure the payment of an annual tribute of Rupees 12 Lakh from him. It was only after the death of Nadir Shah, that Ghulam Shah returned from Kabul in 1162/ 1749 i.e. just three years before the death of Shah Latif<sup>83</sup>. Miyan Noor Muhammad died in the year 1167/1758 and Ghulam Shah ascended the throne in 1171/ 1758 after the dethronement of his elder brother Murad who proved to be an unworthy ruler. This shows that the work of mausoleum was immediately started after the death of the poet in 1152 AH while Noor Muhammad was still alive and was got completed by Ghulam Shah under his personal supervision.

Although Miyan Noor Muhammad Kalhoro was himself a learned man as would appear from his testament viz. '*Manshoor-ul-Wasiat wa Dastur-ul-Hukumat*'<sup>84</sup>, written during the year 1162-1163/ 1750 wherein he has advised his heir apparent for maximum regard and respect of the religious scholars, yet his behavior as a ruler was dictated by the exigencies of the circumstances. Mir Ali Sher Qani, who truly speaking is the historian of Kalhora period, has very clearly mentioned that Makhdoom Abdul Rehaman of Khuhra alongwith



his companions was assassinated in 1145/1732 by the armed forces of Miyan Noor Muhammad Kalhoro, while Makhdoom and his companions were offering the prayers. The probable reason was that the Makhdoom had effected a local truce between two warring tribes and this was construed to be a challenge to the ruling power in that area<sup>85</sup>. Thus one would not be mistaken in inferring from such incidents that Miyan Noor Muhammad Kalhoro, who was a man of shrewd nature, despite all his ill-will against the saint-poet could not succeed in his designs. It was, however, probably very late when he was convinced that Shah Latif was a man of different nature having no political ambitions at all. Hence his presentation of the Masnvi Rumi as a gift to Shah Latif must belong to this changed phase of life<sup>86</sup>. Shah Abdul Latif passed away from this world in 1165/1751, without leaving any heir apparent. This gave rise to a situation whereby it became difficult to decide as to who should succeed or become *Sajjadah-Nashin*. According to Mir Sangi, Khalifo Muhammad Alim, the most trusted companion and the maternal cousin of Shah Latif, was in favour of Syed Sharif Shah, who was nephew, being the son of a sister of Shah Latif. Some of the followers including Mohbat Faqir and his party were against this proposal. While this controversy was still unresolved, Miyan Noor Muhammad and

Ghulam Shah intervened in favour of Jamal Shah the son of a nephew. He was called through special messenger from Wanga Valasa, a place in present district Badin and was declared to be the successor. "As Sayed Jamal Shah arrived, he was made to wear the titular turban by Miyan Noor Muhammad, and Miyan Ghulam Shah presented a golden sword as *Nazrana*. In this way he became the *Sajjadah Nashin*." <sup>87</sup>

Mir Sangi has further stated that this intervention of the part of the rulers of the time could never find approval of the followers and associates at the *dargah* quite for some time. Rather this caused severe wave of indignation amongst the most trustworthy disciples and Khalifas. It has been reported that Muhammad Alim did not accept Jamal Shah as a rightful heir upto the last moment until his death. Under the circumstances, Kalhoras thought it expedient to provide an escort of armed persons of Salara tribe, for protection of Jamal Shah<sup>88</sup>.

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As to why Jamal Shah was imposed by the Kalhora rulers against the wishes of the *Faqirs*, it may be that they wanted man of their own convenience to occupy this important seat of growing influence. This could just be with the sole objective to allay their far-fetched political fears. Later on however, it was Jamal Shah in

whom Miyan Ghulam Shah Kalhoro confided and spent vast sums of money on the construction of the beautiful mausoleum of the saint-poet at Bhit.



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## CHAPTER-I

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واستاد اوليا صاحب ميان نور محمد يثي  
 واثي والا بوده که جدميان احمد صاحب بوده که  
 در حال بيمکان جنت نشان يث شريف ز به روزگار  
 و برگشته به که دگار و واقف اسرار و گد به درگاه پروردگار  
 و عمده خلفاء لطيف و در نقیصه استاد راقم اثر بوده  
 ست و عمرها هشتاد سال کامل مکمل کرده

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درايا مریاتے اکثر اوقاتے حضرت اولیا  
صاحبہ بذات بابرکاتے سیار بودند و بہ آخر  
عمر بکمانیت شریفے اقامت ورزیدند .

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پیت شریف یک تودہ رنگ بود و جعار طرف  
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الموت جسر لوصول العبيب للقاء الیوب

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ولس را دست مرید نصی کہ دیتہ چنانچہ رواج شدہ است  
کہ اگر کسی ملتبی شد کہ فیض بختد یا دعاء خیر نماشد در  
جواب می فرمودند کہ حق سبحانہ و تعالیٰ ادا نوا توانا تر است . بآنکہ  
سینہ را مانند آئینہ مصفا دارد تا انکسار حسن احسن از خود درآفتد .

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هست درگاہ کہ یسی جلوہ گاہ حق اب

57. Qalich Beg, Mirza. Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai. First published in 1887 and Reprint by Bhit Shah 1980.

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61. Bolach, N.A. Sindhi Mosiqi ji Tarikh. Bhit Shah, 1978. p-167.



62. Sangi, Mir. Lataif-Latifi. Bhit Shah, 1967. p-107.  
 ولواختن طنبور هم بدستور فرموده اولیا صاحب شده - چنانچه  
 حضرت اوشان ناخنهای یک دست بر ناخنهای دست دیگر می زدند.  
 اعی سر انگشتها را بر یکدیگر می زدند و بر آن وزن معنای طنبورها  
 را ساز می کردند. و حضرت اوشان نه گاهی بیت به لایح سر اشیان بر زبان  
 کرامت بیان آوردند و طنبور بجهت لواختن بدست حق مبارک گرفته -

63. Baloch, N.A. Shah Abdul Latif: The founder of a New Music Tradition. Bhit Shah, 1960. p-20.

64. Baloch. Op. cit. Pp-21-22.

65. Jotwani, Motilal. Shah Abdul Latif: His life and Work. Delhi, 1975, pp-86-87.

66. Kazi, Allama. Op.cit. pp-35-36.

67. Sangi, Mir. Lataif Latifi. Bhit Shah, Hyderabad, 1967 p-102.

68. Baloch, N.A Shah jo Risalo Vol-1. Bhit Shah, 1989. p-50  
 & Qani, Tuhfat-ul-Karim, Sindh, 1961, p-154

"His famous treatise 'Dirasat-ul-Labib' (Lessons of Prudence) which is in Arabic, stands published by Sindhi Adabi Board in 1963. He was scholar of great caliber in as much as he had impressed Shah Waliullah of Delhi (1703-1763 AD), the most eminent Sufi theologian and divine of the 18th century Subcontinent, with whom he corresponded frequently".

69. Qani, Ali Sher. Tuhfatul Kiram. Sindhi Translation by Makhdoom Amir Ahmed S.A.B.Hyderabad, 1976.p-564.

70. op.cit.p-561

71. op.cit.p-567.

72. Qudosi, Aijazul Haq Siyar-ul-Aulia, Urdu. Lahore, 1986, p-142.

These kind of incidents are not uncommon in the annals of mystics. For example, Khawaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, *khalifa* of Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri, also went into rapture



and died after listening to a Persian verse from a Qawwal:

*'Those who are smitten with the dagger of acquiescence, acquire new lease of life every moment from the mystery',*

Reports are that after hearing these lines the saint was under the spell of semi-consciousness continuously for four days and finally passed away from this world on the fifth day. He died in the year 1235 AD.

73. Baloch, N.A.op.cit.pp-35-38.
74. Sangi, Mir.op.cit.p-130&p-153.
75. Mirza, K.F. Life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai. Reprint Bhit Shah 1980.p-20.
76. Sangi, Mir. op.cit.p-182,Baloch,N.A.op.cit. p- 156.
77. Mehar Ghulam Rasool, Tarikh-e-Sindh Vol-1 S.A.B. Hyderabad, 1958.p-147.
78. Mehar .op.cit.,p-349.
79. Mehar. Op.cit.,pp-280-281.
80. Sorley, H. T. The Gazeeteer of Sindh. Government of West Pakistan, 1964. p-165.
81. Sangi, Mir. Lataif-Lalifi. Bhit Shah,1967. p-84
82. Sangi, Mir. op.cit. ,p-85
83. Rashdi Husamuddin, Manshoorul Wasiat. Persian. Sindhi Adabi Board,1964.p-12.
84. Rashdi.op.cit., p-13.
85. Mehar Ghulam Rasool.op.cit.,p-412.
86. Sangi, Mir .op. cit. ,p-
87. Sangi, Mir.op.cit.,p-188.
88. Sangi, Mir.op.cit.,p-189.

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## CHAPTER - II

### SUFI TRADITION IN SINDH.

#### Early Arab & Sumra Epoch

Sindh entered the fold of Islam in the first century of Hijrah (93/711) when Muhammad Bin Qasim marched with a powerful army in order to chastise Dahar the despotic ruler of Sindh. Chach, the father of Dahar had maneuvered to usurp power from the Buddhist dynasty by marrying the widow of Rai Sahsi who died issueless in 652 AD. For this and many other reasons, the people of Sindh neither had accepted the Brahmanical rule nor were they favourably inclined to the Hindu religion, and hence the Brahmanical rule over Sindh could not last for more than half a century. There is a general consensus among the historians that at the time of Arab invasion, the majority of the population of Sindh belonged to Buddhism, and they were being discriminated and persecuted on this account. 'The attempt of the Guptas to revive Hinduism in the subcontinent does not seem to have achieved much success in the Indus valley.'<sup>1</sup> This was the main reason which facilitated the conquest of Sindh at the hands of a youngest general Mohammad Bin Qasim, who

was rather welcome by the Buddhist governors at Nirun Kot and Siwistan.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly the people of Sindh seemed ready to accept the change, rather poised to embrace the new faith, which they found more palatable and propitious in-so far as it did not differentiate on the basis of the caste and colour. The large-scale conversion of the local Buddhist population which followed can be ascribed to the inherent factors of the new creed such as equality, fraternity and egalitarianism. Not only this but the synthesis of the two cultures Buddhist and Islamic- so entwined and integrated, fused and merged over a period of time that the product\_ Sindhi Muslim culture came to be recognized with its distinctive ethos and a marked humanitarian attitude towards life throughout the ages.<sup>3</sup>

The direct Arab rule over Sindh which lasted for less then about three centuries (711-1053) inaugurated the new era of very important social and cultural change. During this period the new religion transformed the Sindhi society, and as a result of the interaction Sindh also made valuable contributions to the domain of Islamic learning and knowledge. To quote just one example: *Sidhanta*, the famous book on astronomy was taken to Baghdad in 154 AH,

from Sindh and after its translation into Arabic was named *Al-Sindh Hind*. This was the first ever book on astronomy in Arabic, as even the *Al -Magist* of Ptolemy was translated later on.<sup>4</sup> At the same time Sindh afforded an opportunity to the great savants of Islamic world to come in direct contact with the inheritors of the three great civilizations- the Indus, the Hindu and the Buddhist-which initiated the process of cultural assimilation. 'By the time the Muslim Scholars of Sindhian origin conversant with the indigenous literature had become well versed in Arabic, while those of Arab origin had developed competence in the language of Sindh and Hind'.<sup>5</sup>

Amongst the earliest saints who visited Sindh were the disciples of great Sufi Hassan Al-Basri (d.110/728). But they subsequently sailed off from the shores of Sindh in order to preach Islam in the islands of Indonesia.<sup>6</sup> Shaikh Abu Turab has been regarded as the first Sufi Saint of Sindh and the subcontinent.<sup>7</sup> He was from *Taba Ta'abeen*, one who had seen the companions of the Holy Prophet. He lived during the second/eighth century, which in the history of Islamic Sufism is regarded as the first phase of *Tasawuuf*, mainly characterized by asceticism. It is not known how he was martyred in 171/787, but he lies buried at a distance of ten miles in the southwest of



Thatta. In view of the special reverence which the Samma ruler Jam Juna held for the Shaikh, he got his tomb built with exquisite memoriam composed in Persian, indicating the year of its construction 782/1380, hence the oldest extant Persian chronogram in Sindh.<sup>8</sup>

In the third/ ninth century, which is regarded as the classical period of sufism in the world of Islam, flourished the most famous Sufi Bayazid Bistami (d. 261/875), whose teacher Abu Ali was probably from Sindh. Such reference is found in the 'Kitab-ul-Lumma' earliest Arabic text on Tasawwuf by Abu Nasr Sarraj's (d.378AH). According to Maulana Jami, the great Sufi hagiologist, Bayazid himself admits of having learnt about '*Fana*' or 'passing away of self' from Bu Ali Sindhi and in turn he made Bu Ali understand the meaning of '*Tauhid*' or unity of God.<sup>9</sup>

In the annals of Sindh as well as in the history of Islamic mysticism the fourth/ tenth century is of special significance due to the extreme ideas of Hussain bin Mansoor Hallaj (d.310/922), who is most venerated in Sindh and the subcontinent for his utterance of "*Ana-al-Haq*" i.e. I am the truth. He was Persian by descent and was born in 245/858. In his youth he proceeded to Baghdad in search of

knowledge, where he entered the circle of great spiritual master Junaid, but very soon he became controversial figure, so much so that the great intellectual Sufi like Junaid disowned and discredited his ideas. Being dissatisfied with the Scholastic and Sufistic trends of his time, he undertook to extensive traveling in the far off places of the Islamic world. Accordingly by about 905 AD, he wandered in the plains of Sindh and the desert of Gujrat.<sup>10</sup> Next time when he was at Sus in the vicinity of Baghdad, he was apprehended for his extremely volatile ideas in the year 301/912. For more than nine years he remained in prison due to the acrimonious attitude of Caliph At-Muqtader's powerful vizir, Hamid bin Ali, who was somehow determined to get him executed. Finally he was sent to the gallows on March 26, 922 AD in the presence of a large gathering in Baghdad. One of the many charges against him was his heretic as well as his synergetic ideas. He was also suspected of having secret relationship with the Qaramatians. This might have gained strength from his journey to Sindh as at that time northern Sindh and Multan had become stronghold of the Qaramatins. In this background some writers have opined that Hallaj was the political victim of the circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

Whatever may have been the

reasons for the martyrdom of Hussain, but his slogan "I am the truth" down the ages has inspired a great many Sufis; for some have interpreted it to be the state of complete annihilation or *Fana* and consequential affirmation of the existence of God, whereas for others it symbolizes the highest position which human soul can attain through personal communion with God. It is however, to be noted that the impact of Hallaj on Sindhi poetic tradition has been tremendous and almost all the poets of Sindh have paid rich tributes to him eulogizing him with the name of "Mansoor" meaning victorious instead of his real name Hussain. Amongst the classic Sufi poets including Shah Abdul Latif have sided with Mansoor for unraveling the truth of the truths and remaining steadfast in his ideas against all odds. Shah Latif has made extensive use of the imagery of gallows equating it with perfect love but without mentioning the name of Mansoor Hallaj.<sup>12</sup>

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As pointed out above, during the third and fourth ninth and tenth centuries, Islamic world was in the grip of Ismaili and others schismatic activities and Sindh including Multan and Gujrat were no exception to it. The first Ismaili missionary was Haitham from Yemen who arrived in Sindh in the year 270/883 during the rule of Abdullah Ibn Umar Hibbari. However



it was after about one century in 373/984 that Jalam b. shaiban who enjoyed the confidence of Fatmids of Egypt became successful in establishing him self as ruler of Multan. He destroyed the famous Idol temple at Multan and also shut down the mosque built by Mohammed bin Qasim. The last Habbarid ruler of Mansurah also came under the Ismaili influence.<sup>13</sup> However, the Ismaili rulers suffered great set back first at the hands of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna in 401/1010 and lastly they were swept away by Sultan Muizzudin Muhammad of Ghur in the later part of the 6th/ 12 century.

The Ismaili missionaries were probably the first who adopted local vernaculars to propagate their ideas amongst the masses, perhaps for the reason that it suited their heterodox tenets. Pir Nooruddin (d.1079) who lived in Gujrat has been traced as the first saint. He was followed by Pir Shams Sabzwari (1165-1276 AD) of Multan and his great grandson Pir Sadruddin (1290-1406 AD). Their followers attribute verses to them known as 'Ginan' said to be of spiritual contents but veracity of which has not been conformed.<sup>14</sup>

Notwithstanding Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (d.421/1030) and Sultan Muhammad of Ghur (d.602/1206) defeated the Ismailies on



political front, they were eclipsed by such great spiritual masters as Shaikh Bahauddin Zakria Multani (1170-1267) and his Khalifa at Uch namely Syed Jalal Bukhari (1171-1291) and his son Makhdoom Jehanian Jahan Gasht (d.1384). 'Even along with Sultan Mahmud came a number of Sufis to spread the message of Islam. The first out-standing Sufi to settle in India was Shaikh Safiuddin, Shaikh Abu Ishaq Gazruni's nephew, who died in AD 1035. He made Uch his center of activity and his main concern was to undermine Ismaili influence in the region.' <sup>15</sup>

Different versions have been given by the historians as to how the Sumras, an indigenous stock gained ascendancy to power once the Arab rule declined both at Multan and Mansura by the middle of the fifth/eleventh century. But there is sufficient evidence which suggests that some of the Sumra chiefs were influenced by Ismaili faith.<sup>16</sup> 'The Sumra epoch(1050-1352AD) which is spread over more than three hundred years is significant on many accounts. The Sumra period is particularly important for the spiritual history of Sindh since during the early thirteenth century a number of mystics migrated to the subcontinent, partly, as a result of Mangol invasion into the Middle and Near East which began in AD. 1220'<sup>17</sup>.

Of special mention amongst those mystics who came to Sindh during this period is Usman Marwandi (556/1162-673/1274) popularly known as Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. He seems to have left his birthplace Marwand in Azerbaijan owing to the persecution of Ismailies and came to Sindh via Ketch Makran and finally settled at Sehwan.<sup>18</sup> He was descended from Imam Jaffar Al Sadiq (1148/765) being the thirtieth in lineage. No really authentic account is available regarding his early education and ideas, excepting his spiritual credentials, which are again traced back to Imam Jaffar Al Sadiq. A fourteenth century historiographer has made mention of the fact that Lal Shahbaz visited Multan in the year 662/1263, where he was the guest of Khan Shaheed, son of Sultan Balban and the ruler of Multan. There he participated in the *Mehfil-e-Sama* which was attended by the Sultan himself, Shaikh Sadruddin, (1224-1300) the elder son of Shaikh Zakaria of Multan, and when enraptured they resorted to dancing out of the ecstasy. According to the most popular legend recorded by some hagiographers, Lal Shahbaz had not only close friendly relations with Shaikh Zakaria, but also with Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj Shakar (1174-1266) and Syed Jalal Surkh Bukhari of Uch and that is why they are popularly known as four friends in Sindh and the Punjab.<sup>20</sup> Some writers, perhaps due to the

intimacy which existed between Lal Shahbaz and Shaikh Zakaria have described Qalandar Shahbaz as disciple of the latter. But this may not be correct for the reason that the desiderata of *Qalandar* are essentially different from that of a *Suharwardiya*, rather *Qalandar* itself is a class or a separate category of mystics, who has been dealt with as such by the classic Sufi masters.<sup>20</sup>

The most important phenomenon of the seventh/thirteenth century is that the Surharwardy Sufi order got formally institutionalized and introduced by Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan (561/1172/661/1262) and during his life time became the most dominant Sufi order in Sindh-Multan region. It is relevant to give some biographic sketch of the great saint. His ancestors were originally the Arab Hibbarid rulers of Sindh who migrated from the capital city of Mansura during the fifth/eleventh century when their rule came to an extinction.<sup>21</sup>

Bahauddin was born at Kot Kiror in 566/1170 in the present district Muzafargarh. In his youth he extensively traveled in pursuit of knowledge, performed Hajj and while he was at Baghdad, he became disciple of Shaikh Shahabuddin Surharwardy (539/1145-632/1234) founder of the Surharwardy order and author of the famous classic of Sufism '*Awarif ul Maarif*'. On return to



Multan, his pioneering efforts at propagating his order achieved great successes and not only the masses flocked to seek spiritual guidance but the ruler of the time Sultan Iltumish was also inspired by his divinity, as he honoured him with the title of spiritual head of Islam i.e. *Shaikh ul Islam*<sup>22</sup>. Only time proved that the Shaikh was a great sage of his time and with his innate sagacity, he was able to establish his spiritual dynasty, which has continued to rule over the hearts of millions of the denizens of this region to date. Not only his direct descendents but his Khalifa Syed Jalal Surkh Bukhari, who settled at Uch and his son Makhdoom Jehanian Jehan Gasht also attained great fame and popularity as spiritual leaders in Sindh and the lower parts of Punjab.

It was but due to their constant persuasions, inspiring love of God, and above all the high ideals of ethics, that, these great saints were able to effect large scale conversions. The contemporary histories are full with the accounts of those tribes who either became Muslims or returned to orthodoxy due to their efforts. As aptly observed by a modern scholar, 'The first Sufi order which became established in the regions of Multan and Sindh and whose activities later embraced Gujrat and Burhanpur was that of the Surharwardis. By their close association with the Sultans of Delhi and



by their propaganda they were responsible for destroying Ismaili power by winning over the powerful tribes of the Sumras, the Sammas and the Langhas<sup>23</sup>. The author of "*Tarikh Farishta*" has mentioned the name of the Sumra ruler of Uch, who was among the disciples of Syed Jalal Bukhari. It appears that Bahauddin Zakria and his successors continued to exercise immense influence on the people of Sindh and for this reason all the hagiographers have invariably mentioned him as the greatest saint of Sindh and Multan<sup>24</sup>.

No doubt Suharwardy order gained popularity in Sindh due to the magnetic personality of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakria, but historically it had reached Sindh earlier through the humble efforts of Nuh Bakhari, who is reported to have received mantle of *Khalifa* direct from Shihabuddin Suharwardy at Baghdad. It is related that when Bahauddin was at Baghdad and he sought permission from his spiritual master to leave for Multan he was asked by the master to visit his able disciple at Bakhar in Sindh who, as described by the Shaikh, had brought the lamp and the oil along with him and he had just to kindle the fire in it. Accordingly on return from Baghdad Bahauddin in pursuance of his master's directive reached Bakhar, but the saint had already expired.

Another celebrated saint of Sumra period was Pir Patho, who died in 666/1267 and is buried on the hillock named after him at a distance of about twelve miles in the South of Thatta. According to the *Tarikh-Masumi*, Pir Patho was Khalifa of Ghaus Bahauddin and it was Dodo Sumro who during his visit to Multan in the year 1246-48 AD invited him to settle in Sindh. This is supported by the tradition that during the Sumra reign big beating drums at the shrines of Qalandar Shahbaz and Pir Patho were provided by the Sumras as *Nazrana*. His original name was Hussain bin Rajpar and belonged to Uplan community. According to the anecdote recorded by the author of '*Hadiqa*', one day when Pir Patho was engrossed in his meditations inside the cave of the mount, he was visited by Shaikh Zakria, Qalander Shahbaz and Shaikh Sadruddin. They remained in his company for a while, this inspired Pir Patho to become the disciple of Shaikh Zakaria. On the mount of Pir Patho, another great saint Syed Abdul Hadi alias Jamial Sah Girnari is also buried. He was born at Mashhad in 580/1188 and in his youth performed *Chilla* at the mount of Girnari in Kutch, the site is still famous on that account and is regularly visited by many people. During his last days of life he came to this place where he breathed his last in 642/1244<sup>25</sup>.

Syed Ali Makki, the progenitor of Lakyari Syeds however, came to Sindh in the early fifth/eleventh century, which is early Sumra period. The two earliest *Malfuzat* written in the subcontinent, first of Khwaja Usman Haruni by Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri and second that of Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri by his illustrious disciple BakhtiarKaki, mention of the meeting with Shah Sadar in the Lakki hills who was the grandson of Syed Ali Makki. This meeting took place when Khawaja Moin came to Sehwan in the company of his mentor Khawaja Usman Harooni. This might have taken place in the first half of sixth/twelfth century. The *Malfuzat* of Fariduddin Ganj Shakar also bears reference to Shah Sadar, which speaks of his exalted spiritual status and shows that he lived during the twelfth century.<sup>26</sup>

Shaikh Salamat Mughal Bhin is yet another great name of the twelfth century Sumra period. Some insights into the life account of this saint has become available through his *Malfuzat 'Maqsood-ul-Arifeen'* attributed to his disciple and colleague Makhdum Ari.<sup>27</sup> He was born around 527/1132 and martyred about 610/1212. His mother was from royal Sumra family and was a daughter of Bhanipur. The book mainly describes spiritual flight of the saint



in which he visits many holy places and also meets eminent spiritual personages including Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani (d.560/1166) of Baghdad who admits him into the Qadria order. Although the internal evidence suggests that the compilation is of much latter period, it provides very useful exposition of the terms *Shariat*, *Tariqat*, *Haqiqat*, *Ma'arifat* through which the *Salik* or the wayfarer has to pass so as to attain the perfect purity of his soul. Shaikh Mughal Bhin is buried at Jati in District Thatta, rather the old name of Jati was Mughal Bhin, after the name of this saint. On the basis of the evidence recorded in this *Malfuzat* Shaikh Salamat may be recognised as one of the earliest Qadri Sufis in Sindh who lived during the Sumra period.

According to a popular legend prevalent in Sindh, Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, in one of his journeys visited the hamlet of Rohri on the 15th jamad-u-Sani 498/1105, though this is not supported by any recorded evidence<sup>28</sup>. In commemoration of his visit a '*Takio*' has been established at Rohri, and some personal belongings of the saint are also kept here. A large gathering of the devotees takes place on the 11th of every Hijri month. The Qadri Syeds of Rohri, Ranipur and Gambat also claim their descent from Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani and are in possession of family genealogical tree and



other traditions, but their arrival in Sindh was in later times, not earlier than the eighteenth century.

Syed Muhammad Makki (d 644/1248) the head of Rizvi branch of Syeds also came to Sindh during the late twelfth century. His father Sayyed Muhammad Shuja, originally hailed from Mashhad but while he was at Baghdad he married the daughter of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suharwardy (d 1234). From Baghdad Syed Shuja proceeded to Mecca where a son was born to him and the boy was named Syed Muhammad, who was afterwards known as Makki. Syed Shuja returned to Mashhad and after his death was buried in the graveyard of Imam Musa Kazim. Syed Muhammad Makki, however, came to Sindh and settled at Bakhar, where he passed his rest of the life. He is buried in Sukkur. Syed Makki had two sons, Syed Saderuddin and Syed Baderuddin. Syed Jalal Surkh Bukhari, who later settled at Uch and became one of the most influential saints of Suharwardy order actually first came to Bakhar, where he married the two daughters of Syed Baderuddin one after the other and it was afterwards that he moved to Uch. Due to this matrimonial relation, some other relations of Syed Baderuddin also left for Uch. Syed Murtaza grandson of Syed Saderuddin, however emigrated to Jhansi, where he permanently settled and his family flourished

over there. Some other members of this family dispersed to Thatta, Nasarpur and Rohri<sup>29</sup>. Miyon Shah Inat Rizvi (d. ) the great predecessor of Shah Latif was descendent of this family.



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### THE SAMMA ERA

The Samma period (1352-1520) has been characterised with the exemplary chivalry, munificence and above all the patronage of religious divines and Sufi saints. Most of the Samma rulers were associated with the Shrines and saints of Multan and Uch, and this is borne out by one of the most significant events in the history of Sindh. Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq the ruler of Delhi, in order to chastise his rebellious subordinate Taghi, who had taken shelter with the Sumras of the Lower Sindh marched along with armies from Delhi via Gujrat. The Sultan fell seriously ill when arrived at Saunda near Thatta due to overeating of *Palla* fish and died on March 29, 1351 AD. His dead body was taken to Sehwan and was temporarily buried in the precincts of the tomb of Qalandar Lal Shahbaz. Since Sehwan was under the control of Delhi Sultanate as such Firoz Shah Tughlaq was coronated here as successor to the Delhi throne. In order to commemorate this most auspicious event and to show his reverence for Qalander Lal Shahbaz, Firoz Tughlaq ordered his governor of Sehwan Malik Akhtiar to build the tomb of the saint, which was completed in the year 757/1356. The body of Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq was however, removed after thirteen years in 1364 AD. To avenge upon the Samma

ruler, Firoz Shah Tughlaq (d.1388) attacked Sindh in 1365, but he suffered heavy losses and retreated to Gujrat. The people of Thatta attributed all this to the divinely powers of Pir Patho, and someone composed a verse, so popular that it was recorded by the erudite contemporary historiographer, Siraj Afif<sup>30</sup>.

Owing to the blessings of Shaikh Patho,  
One died, and the other fled.

After two years Firoz Shah Tughlaq once again invaded Sindh with full preparations and this time Sammas were taken by surprise. Finally Makhdum Jehanian of Uch intervened on behalf of the Sammas and for this he had to come all the way to struck a peace agreement between the parties. Again when Jam Tamachi proved insubordinate to the Delhi Sultanate, he was replaced by Jam Juna in 1370, who had the blessings of the great Makhdum<sup>31</sup>.

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During the rule of Jam Tamachi, Shaikh Hammad Jamali an emigrant related on his mother's side to the saints of Uch, firmly established himself at Thatta wielding considerable influence on the Samma clan. Legend tells that it was through his blessings that Jam Tamachi was released from the captivity at Delhi when the latter's mother visited



the saint and begged for his release. It is same Jam Tamachi who later on becomes the hero in the folk romance of Nuri Jam Tamachi, A Sindhi verse is also attributed to the saint wherein he predicted the downfall of Jam Juno's rule and takeover by Jam Tamachi. Jam Tamachi as a token of his reverence for the saint constructed a mosque on the Makli Hill and afterwards in the same premises the saint was buried. After his death, Jam Tamachi along with his beloved queen got himself buried adjacent to the tomb. In this background, a modern scholar has rightly concluded: 'The credit for establishing Makli as a holy place for worship and burial goes to Shaikh Hammad Jamali and his royal devotees, Jam Tamachi and his son Jam Salahuddin. They provided it with the spiritual and architectural magnificence not known to any other place in Sindh'. Today by all accounts, it is probably the largest necropolis in the world <sup>32</sup>.

Shaikh Isa Langoti (d.831/1428) is another legendary spiritual figure of the Samma period, who is famed for having predicted the birth of Syed Muhammad alias Pir Murad (831/1428-893/1487) and for this he left Burhanpur and came down to Thatta. Among the immigrant Syed families who came to Sindh during early Samma period must be mentioned the name of Syed Muhammad of Shiraz and his son Syed Ahmed. Along with Syed Muhammad,

Hafiz Shirazi, the renowned Persian lyrical poet also set out for Sindh but he returned back from Qandhar. In (786/1386) they first came to Sehwan where they established a seminary, but after the death of Syed Muhammad, his son Ahmed moved to Thatta. It was at Thatta that the said Pir Murad was born in 831/1428 and Shaikh Isa Langoti having availed of the blissful look at the young baby died after three days. Syed Ali Shirazi was his younger brother. Pir Murad attained fame on account of his successful proselytizing activities and exerted his independence from the saints of Multan. Pir Murad died in 893/1487 and his mission was continued first by his brother Ali and then by his nephew and disciple Syed Jalal son of Syed Ali. Pir Murad was laid to rest at Makli in separate precincts which came to be known as 'Pir Murad graveyard', and in the same premises is buried Shaikh Isa Longoti. A detailed biography of Pir Murad titled '*Tadhkrit-ul-Murad*' was composed in Arabic by his disciple Shaikh Hussain Safai who died in 931/1524.<sup>33</sup>

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Syed Jalal succeeded his father Sayyid Ali and became the second Kaalifa of Pir Murad. When Syed Jalal died in AH 903, he was followed by his son Syed Ali Sani, who proved to be a Sufi saint of high accomplishment. He compiled the treatise '*A'adab-ul-Muridain*' and passed away at the age of 92 in the year 981

AH. Syed Ali Sani was succeeded by his son Syed Jalal Sani, who according to his contemporary Mir Masum, the celebrated historian, excelled his father in many respects. The Turkhan ruler Mirza Jani Beg married the granddaughter of Mirza Isa to Syed Jalal Sani. It was this Syed Jalal who pleaded the case of Sindh before Mughal emperor Akbar when his army commander Sadiq Muhammad attached Sehwan in 944 AH. Syed Mir Muhammad, who compiled '*Turkhan Nama*' in or around 1060/1651 was an illustrious son of Syed Jalal Sani<sup>34</sup>.

The most interesting phenomenon of the Samma period is in regard to the Sindhi Qawals or singers, who became pioneers of singing Sufi poetry in sonorous and specific tone. Hussain Sindhi Qawal is reported to have attained such fame that he was chosen as leader of the singing party by Shaikh Usman, the Khalifa of Shaikh Rukndin at Multan. Similarly one Sindhi Qawal or Zakir attained the great name for singing in the presence of Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi<sup>35</sup>. The tradition of '*Samanh*' i.e. movement of a group of people in symmetry accompanied with the chanting of *dhikr* i.e. repetition of the parts of *Kalima* by the votaries of Ghaus Bahwal Haq while traveling to Multan to offer their homage at the shrines, also became commonplace during the Samma period.



Since it was a very long journey from Sindh to Multan the parties of followers selected fixed places, where to start, take rest and start again for the destination. The wisdom of light movement of the body coupled with spiritual ones is rather manifest, for break in journey was also very much required. One such halting place, which became famous on this account existed in Taluka Tando Jan Muhammad on the bank of the old Puran up to the very recent times<sup>36</sup>. The author of Tarikh-e-Masumi has given description of the Sindhi 'sama' of those days in the following words:

'A number of people gather at one place. Some of them chant verses, while the rest perform the same in accompaniment. Then some of them get enraptured and go into trance those who undergo ecstatic mood behave like mad and gallop about like horses. The rest who look normal hold them by the waist, forming a line. In this condition they start dancing and make loud ejaculations the echo of which is heard at about a miles distance'<sup>37</sup>.

Jam Nizamuddin, known as Jam Nindo who ruled Sindh from 866/1469 to 914/1508 was the most enlightened ruler of Samma clan. He was a scholarly man with



religious bent of mind and sufistic tendencies. His Persian quatrain has survived which speaks of his mystical temperament<sup>38</sup>.

O you who are called to order of religion (*Nizam-ud-Din*)  
Are you proud that you are called thus?  
If you were to commit an error in enforcing religion  
There is no doubt that you will be called an  
accursed infidel.

A very important event of the era of Jam Nizamuddin is the visit of Syed Muhammad known as Miran Mahdi of Jaunpur. He came to Sindh twice. First on his way to Mecca in 901/1495 and second time on way back in 1504. He claimed himself to be the promised *Mehdi* and on this account he became controversial figure in the subcontinent and was not well come in Sindh. Rather Jam Nizamuddin supported by the religious scholars of the time, who were spearheaded by Makhdum Bilal, expelled him from Sindh for his unorthodox ideas. It is however, important to note that despite his short stay in Sindh, he was able to produce some of his very strong adherents and this included no less a person than that celebrated religious scholar Qazi Qadan who got really inspired by his spiritual eminence. Qazi Qadan who afterwards proved to be the first major Sufi poet in the history of Sindh literature, exercised great



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influence on his successor through his poetry so much so that his seven verses which were often recited by Shah Karim, the great grandfather of Shah Latif were preserved in his *Mahfuzat 'Bayan-ul-Arifeen'*. We shall, however, deal with Qazi Qadan separately.

Makhdum Bilal distantly related to the royal Samma family was himself a celebrated Suharwardy saint. The famous hagiologist Hamid b. Fazlullah Jamali, the celebrated author of '*Siyar-ul-Arifeen*', who visited Sindh during the rule of Jam Nindo, met Makhdum Bilal at Bagban, when the latter was busy in the study of '*Awarif-ul-Marif*', the most celebrated text book for Suharwardy Sufis<sup>39</sup> authored by Shaikh Shahabuddin Suharwardy.

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### The Arghun-Turkhan and Mughal Interlude.

The beginning of tenth/sixteenth century witnessed great disturbances in the central Asia due to the internecine rivalries amongst the descendents of Amir Taimur, which deeply affected Sindh and subsequently the whole subcontinent. In a bid to secure himself from the growing power of Babur, Shah Beg Arghun attacked Thatta the capital city of Sindh in 927/1520 and wrested power from the Samma rulers by killing his ablest commander Darya Khan. In a way he also avenged the death of his younger brother Muhammad Beg Arghun who was killed by Darya Khan in 1490 when the Arghuns had attacked Sibi. Shah Beg tried to pacify the Sammas as he handed back Thatta up to Sehwan to Jam Feroz and kept himself contented with the upper Sindh. While Shah Beg was consolidating his position in the Upper Sindh he had to face resistance from the remaining forces of Samma including sons of Darya Khan, who had mustered the support of eminent Suharwardy saint Makhdum Bilal at Talti<sup>40</sup>. Makhdum Bilal who himself belonged to the Samma clan, had naturally all his sympathies with the Sammas. Makhdum Sahar Lanjar (d.980AH) and Hyder Sanai (d.937AH) Makhdum Ruknuddin (d.949) are reported to be his associates and disciples. The Arghuns sent Qazi Qadan as their emissary for negotiations



and settlement with the sons of Darya Khan, but he was refused to be seen by the other party. The result of the battle at Talti however went in favour of the Arghuns but this created permanent cleavage between the Arghuns and the Suharwardy saints who had large following in Sindh. During the same period Shaikh Ismail direct descendent of Shaikh Zakaria came all the way to meet Shah Hassan at Bakhar in 933 AH so as to dissuade him from attacking Multan, but the latter gave cold reply, and the saint instead of going back preferred to stay in obscurity in the lower Sindh. The other possible reason of misunderstanding between the Arghuns and the local Suharwardies could be that the Arghuns including Shah Beg were impressed by the ideas of Mahdi Jaupuri when he visited Qandhar, whereas the Suharwardis of Sindh spearheaded Makhdum Bilal were strongly opposed to the ideas of Mahdi Jaunpuri.

The Arghuns were succeeded by the Turkhans, who were their distant cousins and belonged to the same Timurid stocks. The Turkhan rule (1555-1592) proved to be the continuation of the Arghuns, rather worst in some aspects. Mirza Isa Turkhan afforded an opportunity to the Portuguese to sack and plunder the city of Thatta in 1556 due to his foolishness. The latter Turkhan rulers Jani Beg

and Ghazi Beg proved somewhat better as compared to their predecessors. However Jani Beg surrendered before the Mughal armies led by Khan Khanan when he invaded Thatta at the orders of the emperor Akbar in 1592. For the next century and up to the beginning of the eighteenth century Sindh remained annexed with the Mughal Empire.

The era of foreign domination which commenced with the Arghun rule in 1522 did not augur well for the people of Sindh on many accounts. Generally speaking the rulers were not sympathetic with their subjects, rather for little in-subordination they resorted to their victimisation and annihilation. The chronicles are full with the accounts of fights, which ensued between the rulers and the powerful tribes of Sindh. Hamayun's defeat at the hands of Sher Shah Suri and his subsequent wanderings in Sindh for more than two years (1540-1543) added fuel to the fire. The Arghun ruler Shah Hassan got completely confused when Humayon, the successor of their erstwhile enemy Babur, along with thirty thousand soldiers found his way to Sindh. Shah Hassan who could not openly refuse entry to Humayon, rather thought of making his stay difficult as far as possible. So he resorted to demoralizing tactics, which included the setting on fire of the fields and

crops, creating shortage of food grains and provisions, evacuating the population from the surroundings. This exacerbated the difficulties of Humayon, but more than that played havoc with the life and economy of the people, who reached to the level of starvation. These circumstances created sense of scare and fear amongst the populace and consequently the religious scholars, saints and Sufis resorted to migrating from Sindh to the adjoining territories like Gujrat and Kutch. One such illustrious family of Shaikh Qasim and Shaikh Tahir left the village Pat in AH 950/1543 AD and came to Ahmed Abad and finally settled at Burhanpur in mohalla Sindhipura. This family flourished at Burhanpur and the most celebrated Shaikh Isa Jindullah who later became famous with the title of '*Massihul Aulia*' was born in 962/1554. When Akbar conquered Gujrat he took the Shaikh along with him to Agra and let him go only when he felt that the later was not happy at Agra. Shaikh Isa died in 1031/1631 and his mausoleum was built by Abdul Rahim Khan Khanan.

In one of his sayings the Shaikh equated '*Sama*' with '*Salat*' or prayer i.e. Assama-ka-Salat. According to his own writing, he was the great grandson of Shaikh Yousuf, the direct descendant of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suharwardy<sup>41</sup>. This Shaikh Yousuf migrated to



Sindh during early Samma period. Some other distinguished scholars and saints of this family whose names have been mentioned by the same author are: Shaikh Tayyib (991/1583), Shaikh Ibrahim Kalhora (956/1549), Shaikh Mubarak Sindhi (998/1580), Shaikh Ibrahim Qari Shattari (991/1583), Shaikh Ibrahim Bukhari (998/1590) and Shaikh Ladho jio Sindhi (1007/1598).

It is not strange to note that when the Arghuns failed to inspire confidence of the local Suharwardy Sufis and saints, they invited the outsiders and provided shelter and patronage to them. As a result of this Khawaja Kamal Din and his son Khawaja Shihabuddin both Naqshbandi by order and descendants of Kahwaja Abdullah Ahrar came down to Sindh and they were given Jagir in Kalan Kot near Thatta<sup>42</sup>. During the same period due to the mounting pressure of Safavid rulers in favour of Shiite beliefs in Iran, some well-known scholars of orthodox beliefs migrated to Sindh. A leading Sufi Shah Manbah, a descendent of Syed Abdul Qadir Jilani migrated from Khurrasan and settled down at Thatta in or around 1522. The famous Abdullah Shah Ashabi who is buried at Makli and belonged to the same lineage also came to Sindh during the reign of Shah Hassan Arghun and most probably on his invitation. He died somewhere before 1093 AH, the date of the



completion when Shah Beg conquered Sindh, came down to Sehwan and spent major portion of his life in ascetic practices at the grave of Qalander Shahbaz. The versatile Mir Masum Bakhari who is the author of "*Tarikh Masoomi*" and the builder of the minaret at old Sukkur was his grandson as the father of Mir Masum, Syed Safai had married the daughter of Mir Kalan<sup>43</sup>. Among other prominent saints who arrived on their own in Sindh during this period, Shah Khairdin Qadri needs to be specifically mentioned. He was born at Baghdad in 911/1507 but spent later part of his life at Bakhar where he died in 1027 AH and is buried in old Sukkur.

It however, appears that for some time the Qadri and Naqshbandi Sufis, because of the closer proximity in their views worked hand and glove and this helped flourish the two orders by leaps and bounds. But finally the Qadris held more sway than any other order in Sindh. Therefore Richard Burton had to say: 'This' Abdul Kadirs' name is, perhaps, greater in Sindh than in any other Muslim country'<sup>44</sup>.

It may be a typical coincidence that while Sindh suffered the most at the hands of the alien rulers during the sixteenth century there appeared a most accomplished and highly esteemed Sufi saint and scholar whose

existence was like a cool breeze. Makhdum Nuh of Hala (911/1506-998/1586), was a unique combination of religious divinity as well as the supreme sainthood. His ancestry can be delineated in two ways. The first through family tree which traces him up to Abu Najib Suharwardy through Shaikh Abu Bakar Kittani, who came and settled at Kot Kiror, the birth place of Shaikh Ghaus Bahawal-Haq. One of the sons of Shaikh Kittani traveled to Sindh and spent much of his time at Bubak. His son Makhdum Fakhruddin Saghir moved from Bubak to Sehwan and from there to Halakandi where his great grandson was born who was named Lutfullah but popularly called Makhdum Nuh.

A collection of his sayings and teachings, which is still in manuscript form, was compiled by his illustrious disciple and Khalifa Bahauddin Godrio, resident of Thatta. It is revealed from this compilation that Makhdum Nuh received his early education from Makhdum Arabi Dayano, a noted scholar and divine of his times, who is buried at Halakandi or Old Hala. Makhdum Nuh used to visit Thatta, the capital city of Sindh, and have had closed connection with many scholarly figures of his time which included Syed Jalal and his father Syed Ali Shirazi. He also acknowledged his indebtedness

to Makhdum Jafar of Bubak an eminent religious divine for having rescued him at a crucial moment of his spiritual life. He is portrayed as the most enlightened and penetrating intellect, best known for his asceticism, which are but the distinctive features of the early mystics of Islam.

Makhdum Nuh is however, distinguished in the history of Sufism of Sindh mainly on two accounts, first his literary activity in Sindhi. Two or three fine Sindhi couplets ascribed to him have survived through his *Malfuzat* named '*Daleel-uz-Zakreen*' compiled by his disciple Haji Panhwar in 1106/1694. Second is his monumental work of the Persian translation of the *Holy Quran*, which is considered as the first ever translation in Persian in the subcontinent<sup>45</sup>.

According — to — '*Daleel-uz-Zakrin*'

Makhdum Nuh was *Owaisi* which means he was not formally initiated in any of the recognized orders of Sufis such as Suharwardy or Qadiri. But being Suharwardy by descent, there is much proximity in his views and ideas when compared with the formal ideas of Suharwardis. This is also perceptible from another treatise named "*Risala Fatahia*" compiled in 1019/1610 by his grandson Makhdum Fateh Muhammad (d. 1030).



This *Malfuzat* also mentions the names of famous disciple and Khalifas of Makhdum Nuh who were recipient of spiritual blessings from him and these include Makhdum Sahar Lanjar, Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri, Bahauddin Dalq Posh, Syed Abu Bakar Larai. The spiritual legacy of Makhdum Nuh has continued uninterruptedly and benefited the people of Sindh and outside for last four centuries, and at present the eighteenth successor occupies the spiritual seat at Hala.

The sixteenth century Sindh produced yet another most famous Sufi saint Mian Mir (957/1552-1045/1635) who commanded the respect of the Mughal rulers and princes alike, and this included Mughal emperors Jehangir and Shahjahan and Sufi prince Dara Shikoh. Dara Shikoh came under the influence of Mian Mir right from his early age and he compiled an exquisite biography of the saint under the title '*Sakeenat-ul-Aulia*' in 1052/1650.

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Mian Mir was born at Sehwan in an illustrious family of the religious divine Kazi Saindino Farooqi, who had married Fatima Bibi, the daughter of great mystic Qazi Qadan. It has been stated that Mian Mir was about one year old when Qazi Qadan passed away. Mian Mir after completing his formal education under the



supervision of his father adopted the spiritual guidance of a Qadri saint Khizr Siwistani.<sup>46</sup>

The exact reasons are not known but Mian Mir right in the throes of his youth left Sehwan for good and came to Lahore. He is reported to have travelled upto Sirhind and also visited Kashmir. At Lahore Mian Mir pursued his further studies under the supervision of Maulana Saadullah. He also seems to have studied the works of great Sufis including Mohiyuddin Ibn-e-Arabi, the thirteenth century Andalusian mystic, who is known for being the great proponent of pantheistic ideas in Sufism. Mian Mir preferred seclusion. Observed abstinence from marriage and was ascetic by nature and liked Sama or singing occasionally. His reputation travelled far and wide and came on the notice of Mughal emperor Jehangir. The emperor thought of coming personally but when he could not do so, he invited the saint to grace with his presence. As recorded in the *Tuizke-Jehangiri*, the emperor was highly impressed by the saintly character of Mian Mir, and despite his strong personal desire to offer some valuable presents to the saint, abstained due to what he perceived to be the will of the latter. He could only present a prayer carpet, which was accepted by the saint<sup>47</sup>.

Shah Jahan also evinced great

respect for the saint and according to Dara Shikoh, his father took him to Mian Mir when he fell ill and was not recovering from the illness. It was due to the blessings of the saint that he immediately recovered from the disease. Dara Shikoh has mentioned in the biography that when he finally made up his mind to be disciple of Mian Mir, the saint had passed away from this world. Hence he and his sister Jehan Ara Begum became the disciples of Mulla Shah Badakhshi, a trusted Khalifa of Mian Mir and this happened in 1050/1640. Mian Mir died at a ripe age after having spent about sixty years of his life at Lahore. The construction of his tomb was started by Dara Shikoh, but before its completion he was assassinated. It was, however, completed by Aurnagzeb during his reign.

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**The Four Great Predecessors- Qazi Qadan, Shah Abdul Karim, Shah Lutfullah Qadri and Shah Inat-Rizvi.**

The latest researches have established Qazi Qadan (1463-1551), as the first great Sufi poet of Sindhi language. This fact, however, went unnoticed by the famous chronicler of Sindh, Mir Masum Bakhri (d.1604), who completed his monumental work *Tarikh Masumi* in the year 1600 AD. According to him he was the leading scholar of Samma period and when Arghuns occupied Sindh it was because of his persuasions that they stopped further killings in Thatta. Soon afterwards he gained confidence of the rulers and tried his level best to avert further catastrophe and hence adopted the posture of an adviser and emissary of the rulers. He was also assigned the job of chief Judge at Bakhar by Shah Hassan Arghun which post he left during the last days of his life when he proceeded to Mecca for pilgrimage, where he died in 958/1551.

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Qazi Qadan in his early career seems to be an agile and adroit religious divine with scholastic aptitude, who believed in the strict and full observance of *Shariah*. According to one version he experienced a cataclysmic spiritual change when he come in contact with

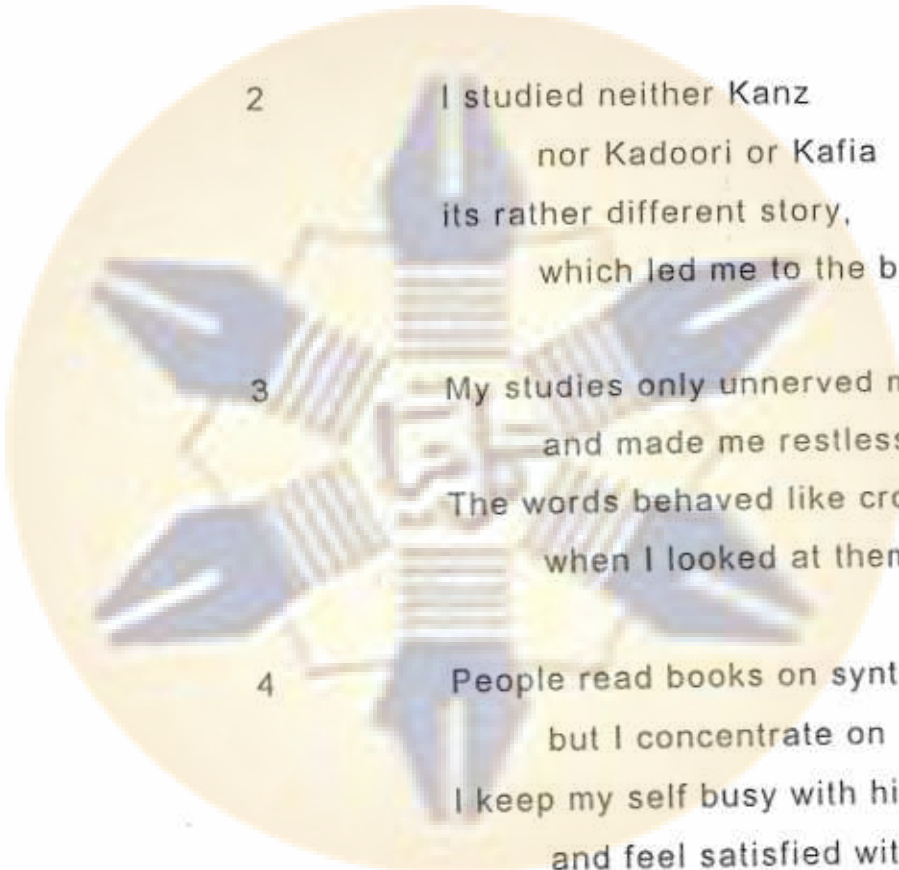
Miran Mehdi Jaunpuri who visited Sindh around 1500 AD. Qazi Qadan became his disciple and this has been confirmed from the Mahdvi sources as well<sup>48</sup>.

But the Persian treatise '*Bayan-ul-Arifeen*', compiled in 1038 AH, which contains the sayings and poetry of Shah Karim of Bulri along with the seven verses of Qazi Qadan, has a different story to tell about his unique and spiritual experience. It has been narrated by Shah Karim that one day when Qazi Qadan entered the mosque for prayer, he found an stranger sleeping in the *Mehrab* with his feet towards the direction of *Kaaba*. This annoyed the Qazi and he went to bring a strip to lash at this insolent person. But it took him with utter surprise when he found his head in the place of his feet. Once again he changed his position but from wherever he took the position he found his dead instead of his feet. On this that recalcitrant person remarked, never mind in what direction your keep your feet, but mind to keep your heart in the proper direction. This made Qazi Qadan a different person and probably it is this incident which he referred to in the following verse.<sup>49</sup>

- 1           The yogi awakened me  
                   while I was fast a sleep,  
           only then I found myself  
                   on the path of beloved.



Because of their immense mystical significance, the remaining, six verses as recorded in the *Bayan-ul-Arifeen* are reproduced as under:

- 
- 2 I studied neither Kanz  
nor Kadoori or Kafia  
its rather different story,  
which led me to the beloved.
- 3 My studies only unnerved me  
and made me restless.  
The words behaved like crocodile,  
when I looked at them.
- 4 People read books on syntax  
but I concentrate on my beloved  
I keep my self busy with him  
and feel satisfied with his words.
- 5 The beloved was within me  
I lost him due to my negligence.  
I unnecessarily looked for him  
in vain here and there.
6. The water has submerged,  
every thing high or low,  
Lo, everything is lost,  
and there is only one to be seen.

7. With 'No' nothing will extinct  
 as 'No' exists not.  
 By God he is always here,  
 nothing is visible except Him.

These seven verses, in a way, represent the quintessence of the earliest mystic thought which was literally bequeathed through the great saint Shah Abdul Karim and from him the same was transmitted as a heritage to later mystical poets. These seven verses are not only indicators of the full fledged spiritual development of Qazi Qadan, but they underline the need and importance of the spiritual mentor, his vital role in leading the disciples on the path of gnosis, the futility of bookish knowledge vis-a-vis the spiritual knowledge to be attained through the spiritual preceptor, and finally the all pervasive unity cognisable through internal eyes. In short these seven verses could be considered as the building blocks which proved to be the corner stones for the future edifice to the Sindhi poetry.

Mir Masum, perhaps for the reason that his interests were mainly historical, though provided somewhat detailed life account of Qazi Qadan wherein he described his other achievements in full, yet he made serious

omission when he did not mention at all that Qazi Qadan was a poet. This fact was however, taken note of by Ghausi Mandvi, a hagiographer from Gujrat in his famous treatise '*Gulzar-e-Abrar*' completed in between 1604-1610<sup>50</sup>. This is basically an account of the saints and Sufis of Gujrat wherein Ghausi not only described Qazi Qadan as a poet of Sindhi language but gave the gist of his four verses which were sung or recited over there in a *Mahfil* of Sufis. Incidentally three verses are the same but one is quite different from the seven verses recited by Shah Karim and recorded by his disciple in the '*Bayan-ul-Arifeen*'. This verse is however found in '*Shah-jo-Risalo*' which reveals Shah Abdul Latif's independent reach to Qazi Qadan's verses<sup>51</sup>.

Also in the sixteenth century we have by providence the saga of Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri (944/1538-1032/1623) popularly known as Shah Karim who was destined to become the great grand father of Shah Abdul Latif and first major poet of Sindhi. Shah Karim from the days of his youth was fond of *Sama* in which he himself used to participate. As stated by his biographer and disciple, he had a very melodious voice and when he used to sing, he would seduce many people around him. At a mature age he was attracted by the spiritual prominence of Mukhdum Nuh of Hala, who was

at a distance of about fifteen miles from Matiari, and it was on his advice that he moved to Bulri a small hamlet on the artery leading to Thatta, Shah Karim died at a ripe age of 88 Years and was buried at Bulri.

It is highly important to note that just six years after the death of the saint, in 1038, his illustrious disciple Mohammad Raza of Thatta compiled the *Malfuzat* i.e. the collection of his sayings and teachings in Persian under the title '*Bayan-ul-A'arifeen wa Tanbeehul Ghafileen*' ('Gnostics' Warning to the Negligent). This Persian work besides providing some insights in to the biography embodies the Sindhi verses composed and recited by the saint-poet on various occasions. In all there are 103 verses, of which 88 are said to be his own composition, seven are of Qazi Qadan, six are of other unknown Sindhi poets and remaining three are in Hindi and as such are of Hindi poets, and one of these bears the name of Hindi poet Saman. The able compiler of the *Malfuzat* has provided translation of all these verses into Persian prose and interspersed are the anecdotes, aphorisms, sayings of the Sufis, traditions of the Holy Prophet and verses from the Holy Quran.



So far as the thought and contents of his poetry are concerned, it is supremely mystical in nature with clear-cut emphasis on asceticism. Here we see fully developed doctrine of *Fana* or passing away in God. Some of the key concepts of his sufistic thought are all pervasive unity of God, know self, superiority of ethical norms, transience of life, primordially of love, self effacement i.e. die before ye die physical death, proximity or nearness to God to be achieved through purgation of heart, vision of God is attainable through the cleansing of eyes and esoteric love. Unity of being, lover and beloved are one and the same phenomenon.

The most outstanding aspect of the life of Shah Karim, which differentiates him from his predecessors is his strong attachment with *sama* which in his case includes both singing as well as listening of Sufi poetry. It is reported that he had inmost aptitude for music from early age which gained maturity with the passage of time. It is on record that once he felt so much attracted by the singing of a professional *Qawwal*, he gave away all his belongings including his dress and the foot-wears and returned himself bare footed. On another occasion after hearing the following couplet, he went into trance for many days altogether.

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Those who have cast their eyes on Malir,  
and are in waiting for their beloved day and night,  
Oh Umer, how will you deal with the sacred,  
feelings of such true aspirants.

Not only this but when he reached home, he gave away all the stored grain as a reward to the singer. He is also reported to have said, some people became scholars, some adopted other professions, but I learnt only 'Sama' and preferred it for my self. He also equated the 'Sama' with the 'dhikr' or the remembrance of God. During the last days of his life, when he has physically so weak that he was unable to come out but he would still sing inside his *Hujrah* at midnight, and the *faqirs* would listen from outside.

Again; it is through the Bayan-ul-A'arifeen that we come across the three Hindi verses, the first one was heard by the saint poet while he was at Ahmed Abad and the second one bears the name of the Hindi poet Saman, a fifteenth century poet. This indicates the earliest rapport between the Hindi and Sindhi poets, which continued through the times of Shah Latif in whose Risalo, verses of the famous Hindi poets could be found under the Sur *Bairag Hindi*.

This is how the form if not the contents of the Hindi poetry came to influence the Sindhi poetic tradition in its formative phase and there is no exaggeration in subscribing to the view that the classical Sindhi poetic tradition accepted the maximum influence of Hindi tradition.

A careful study of the *Bayan-ul-A'arifeen* also draws our attention towards the fact that Shah Karim was knowledgeable person though he would not advise for the study of rigorous books on Tasawwuf such as '*Fusus*' and '*Lam'at*'. Once he consulted his most enlightened friend Sabu whether to study these books, who advised him to avoid reading these books and be contented with what he had already learnt '*Fususul Hikam*' is the work of famous Sufi Ibn-e-Arabi and '*Lamat*' is that of Fakhruddin Iraqi who was disciple and son-in-law of Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan and it is on this book that the fifteenth century Sufi Moulana Jami wrote his sophisticated commentary under the title '*Ashaitul Lam'at*'. Besides, these two books there is a mention of one more book namely '*Kashful Israr*', voluminous work by Khwajah Abdullah Ansari, the famous mystic of eleventh century. These references suggest that by the turn of the sixteenth century the learned scholars of Sindh were fully acquainted with these recondite works on Tasawwuf.



Shah Karim during the discourses has also shown his familiarity with the ideas of such great sufis of Islam as Bayazid Bistami (d. 246/875) Mansur Hallaj; (d.302/922), Abu Talib Makki (d.386/966), and Abu Hasan Khirqani (d.425/1023). Some indirect references also suggest that he was conversant with '*Thdkiraht ul Aulia*' of Fariduddin Attar, the *Masnawi* of Moulana Rumi and the '*Awarif ul Ma'arif*' of Shaikh Shahabuddin Suharwardy.

In order to have the first hand information and appreciation of the mystical thought of Shah Karim, here are a few specimen translations of his selected verses, which were rendered by Dr. U.M. Daudpota, who first translated though not fully the *Bayan-ul-A'arifeen* in Sindhi and introduced Shah Karim to the world as 'Chaucer' of Sindhi poetry!

1. *God's unity.*

Say: God is one and learn no other speech,  
write this true word in thy heart and nothing else.

2. *God is all truth.*

What thou thinkest false is due to thine  
own falseness;  
What ever pertains to the beloved is all truth.



3. *Panentheism.*

Be not deceived by the voice of men, beast  
and birds;

By God all that hubub is of the friend.

4. *Pantheism.*

He is here, He is there, He signs in the heart;  
It is through His light that He is seen.

5. *How difficult is to see God.*

Traceless is the foot of the beloved, O friends  
Even those who have knowledge know it not.

6. *Lover and beloved are one.*

Those whom we love are we ourselves;  
Now be gone, O doubt, we have known the  
beloved right

7. *Self-effacement.*

First loose thy self, and loosing thy self-find him;  
The beloved is not without thee, look within thyself.

8. *Be in the world and yet without it.*

Give thy heart to the beloved and mix with people.  
Mosques and fens, too, are good thrip.

9. *Love and pride are incompatible.*

Love and pride, O dear can never meet;  
There is agreement on this point in the  
sufistic creed.

10. *Two things can't be done.*

No one ever took two things from Banbhor  
(the world)

The longing for the beloved, and connection  
with the people.

The *Bayan-ul-A'arifeen* is a compendium of simple but sublime Sufi ideas, couched in a simple style. It is the first authentic document which presents the doctrines as well as the current amongst the native Sufis of Sindh up to the tenth/sixteenth century. Its faithful reading brings in touch with the high spiritual ideals which the Sufis of Sindh practised or yearned for in their lives. In its own right ideas expressed in the *Bayan-ul-A'arifeen* have been of paramount importance and vitality in the evolution of subsequent sufistic thought in Sindh. This book more than anything else influenced the spiritual progress of Shah Abdul Latif, the great grandson of Shah Karim for he always kept it as his companion along with the two other great books of the world-the Masnavi of Moulana Rumi and the Holy Quran.

In the poetry of Qazi Qadan (d. 1551) and Shah Karim (d.1624), a definite shape of the local sufistic tradition, was taking place which was simple and plain in its imagery,

yet dealt with the core ideas of Islamic mysticism. In the seventeenth century their poetic compositions were followed by more versatile and more copious poetry of Shah Lutfullah Qadiri (1020/1611-1090/1679) and Shah Inat Rizvi (1630-1717). In view of their perennial contribution towards the classical phase of Sindhi poetry, We shall deal with them individually and in a more detailed manner.

Shah Lutfullah Qadiri hailed from Agham Kot<sup>52</sup>, a place which had attracted many a Qadiri and Suharwardy saint from the tenth to the twelfth centuries, Makhdum Ismail Soomro (d. 996/1587) whom Shah Karim referred to as the most pious saint of his times lies buried in Agham Kot. Shaikh Ishaq bin Sultan bin Bahlul Qadiri related to the Qadiries of Uch also came and settled here. Agham Kot seems to have enjoyed this position till late twelfth century, as one Muhammad Sharif, scholar from this place, was in correspondence with Shah Waliullah of Delhi. The archeological remains of Agham Kot are still visible at a distance of about 20 miles in the east-south of present Hyderabad district.

Not much is known about the early life and the background of Shah Lutfullah Qadiri. However, his poetry based on a manuscript of 1208 AH, portrays him as a great Sufi saint i.e. *Shaikh ul Mashaikh* and an eminent religious

scholar. It is further revealed that he not only composed Sindhi poetry but also compiled two separate treatises in Persian, on the subject of *Tasawwuf*. The first treatise was named, '*Tuhfatul-Salheen*' or 'Gift for the pathfinder' and second as '*Minhajul- Marifat*' or the 'criterion of gnosis' which bears the year of compilation as 1078/AH 1667AD. In this second work, he has provided an exposition of one hundred and eighty four stations or *Manazil* of *Suluk* or the Sufi path and at appropriate places he has quoted his own 20 verses in Sindhi to substantiate his mystic ideas expressed in the Persian prose.

As regards his Sindhi poetry there are in all 337 verses (*baits*), which are fully saturated with mystical ideas. The author himself has devised his poetry into seven sections or chapters. In the prologue he has stated the object of composing it in Sindhi as to make the ideas easily digestible for Sindhi knowing people. The first section contains 32 verses, which explain the unity of God, wherein he emphasizes the universal concept of oneness of God, pointing out that what appears in different forms is really the same. In the second section he has referred to *Nasut*, *Jabrut*, *Malkut*, *Lahut*, and *Hahut*, and in the following section he has emphasized upon the relative importance



of *Shariat, Tariqat, Haqiqat* and *Ma'arfat* for the Salik or the wayfarer. The third section comprises 32 verses and these describe the mystical meaning and significance of the four constituting parts of the *Kalima* Viz *La- Ilah-Illa- Allah*. Simultaneously he has narrated the nature of that abiding oneness or unitive experience. In the fourth section consisting of 50 verses, there is fuller description of the oneness of God and how the apparent multiplicity came into being. How the self is merged in the oneness that it is identified with God or how and when attainment of unitive state takes place. What are the stations and stages on the spiritual path, these have been brought under discussion.

The fifth section is spread over 53 verses and their subject matter is primordial love, how it effects the lovers and causes their union with the beloved or how the perception of the beauty of beloved is possible. The sixth section is regarding ascetics spread over 162 verses and here the poet has adumbrated the characteristics of *faqirs* or *Yogis* an allegory for *Talib* or *Salik*. Briefly the main characteristics which have been highlighted are unselfishness, poverty, humility, piety, devotion, repentance through which one has to pass before attaining oneness with God. The seventh and last section covering 16 verses succinctly describes the

status of *Pir Murshid* or *Yogis* in terms of their spiritual status and how they achieve oneness with God.

Even a cursory glance at the poetry of Shah Lutfullah Qadiri would convince that he extensively used the terminology of Sufis, which includes verse from the Holy Quran, the traditions and the sayings and maxims of the early Sufis of Islam. In this context he appears to be the first ever Sufi poet of Sindh who has employed maximum Sufi jargon or nomenclature and this has made his poetry somewhat technical and difficult to be comprehended or commonly appreciated. Besides the often quoted aphorisms and sayings of the sufis he has referred to some very uncommon and quite rare phrases, such as

لاَعِنِّي وَلَا اَنَا عِنِّي

- (a) Neither are you stranger to me nor am I stranger to you.

يَا لَوْر لَوْرِيَا د يَا سَر سَرِي

- (b) Lo, your light is my light and your secret is my secret.

اَنَا مِنْكَ وَأَنْتَ مِنِّي

- (c) You are from me and you are mine.

## العشاق مجنون

(d) The lovers are mad.

من مات من العشق فقد مات شهيداً

(e) Who died of love he is martyred.

وَمَنَّا ذَاتَكَ فِي الذَّاتِ

(f) Absorption in one's self is absorption in Him.

لَوْ كَانَتْ النَّارُ تُصِيبُ الْمُشْتَاقِينَ

(g) The fire will reach there, who are eager of Him.

إِذَا تَجَلَّى اللَّهُ خُفِعَ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

(h) When the illumination of God reaches, every thing perishes.

Due to this specific background his poetry could not become popular and remained confined only in the circles of the scholars and religious divines, who were well conversant with the difficult Sufi terminology, and had at least some understanding of Sufi thought and practice. It is not known how exactly Shah Latif came to know about his poetry but he seems to have been definitely impressed by his sufistic ideas. A comparative study of the two has revealed at least 100 verses which partake of similar ideas as well as similarity of diction and idiom.

It, however, needs to be admitted



that Shah Lutfullah Qadiri was essentially a saint-scholar, who adopted the medium of poetry when he felt the need to illustrate the basic ideas of mysticism in Sindhi for the beginner in general and to introduce the Sufi ideology amongst the masses in particular. Notwithstanding the abstruse style and diction of his poetry, his pioneering contribution towards introducing the symbolism of *Yogis* and *Adisis*, *Samis* and *Sanyasis*, *Nagas* and *Kapris* as spiritual personages make his poetry a permanent landmark in the evolution of Sufi thought in Sindh.

From the purely mystical poetry of Shah Lutfullah Qadri in the Seventeenth century upto the multifaceted diamond like poetry of Shah Abdul Latif in the eighteenth century, there has to be an intermediary link, which appeared in the guise of Shah Inat Rizvi (1630-1717).

Miyun Shah Inat Rizvi descended from Syed Muhammad Makki who as stated earlier came to Sindh in early thirteenth century and settled at Bakhar. Shah Nasardin, a descendent of this family shifted in the sixteenth century to Nasarpur which was then a flourishing town on the left bank of the Indus. The family of Rizvi Syed had traditionally remained associated with the Surharwardy order but Shah Nasardin



had developed great attachment with Shah Khairdin (911/1505-1627/1617) a Qadri saint whose tomb is situated in old Sukkur. Shah Khairdin admitted him into Qadri order and foretold him of a son despite his advanced age. Shah Inat was born in fulfilment of this prediction around 1630 AD. Nature had favoured Shah Inat with extraordinary musical and poetic genius which made a classical poet out of him. He composed his entire poetry under 22 musical headings or 'Srurud' which means he underlined specific mode of singing for each and this shows his deep understanding of the music tradition of Sindh.

He had listened to the musicians and the minstrels and was also conversant with the spiritual contents of the poetry of his predecessors. Combining the two traditions he forged a new line as a saint-poet of the people, singing about their heroes in war and peace and their traditional tales and romances as well as about the traders, weavers and the monsoon rains on which depended the prosperity of the people. He also treated the spiritual theme of love and hope in poetry and composed verses in praise of the saints and selfless devotees in search of God<sup>54</sup>.

As stated earlier, Shah Inat's father joined Qadiria Order at the hands of Shah

Khairdin of Sukkur and Shah Inat himself evinced utmost reverence for Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani and addressed him as saint of the saints and sought his supplication in the moments of distress, yet he eulogised Ghaus Bahaul Huq of Multan including his son and grandson Shaikh Sadardin and Shaikh Rukundin. In one of his verses, he says as the prophet of Islam is the seal of all the prophets, so is Bahauddin Zakria. Qalandar Lal Shahbaz has been described as the legendary saint of Sindh-Hind, who held sway in the nine continents of the world. He also alluded to the popular legend where-by Qalandar Shahbaz is regarded as one of the four friends; the others being Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan, Baba Gunj-e-Shakar, and Shaikh Sadrdin. He also paid glowing tributes to Shah Khairdin for the spiritual guidance provided by the saint to his father. It seems that Shah Inat had extraordinary faith in the holy persons and divines, as he had mentioned names of so many others saints in his poetry.

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It is important for our purpose to note that from the viewpoint of time and space, Shah Inat and Shah Latif had been very close. When Shah Inat died in 1777, Shah Latif was a burgeoning youth of 27 years age. Similarly both lived not at a far off distance from each other:

Kotri Mughal where Shah Latif attained his youth was hardly at a distance of 15-20 miles. Moreover, Nasarpur where Shah Inat lived was a historical town in the same vicinity, which has been frequently visited by Shah Latif in his youth. Hence in all probability Shah Latif met the elderly Shah Inat more than once. Not only this but as is borne out by the common oral tradition, they exchanged views and recited to each other the verses on common themes. This is very much perceptible from the comparative study of their poetry as well. More than one hundred such verses have been traced out which mark the similitude of diction and style to a greater extent and of thought to a lesser extent<sup>55</sup>. As a precursor and predecessor of Shah Latif, Shah Inat will be credited for his original contribution of composing poetry under the musical themes each followed by 'Waee' a profusely melodious form of poetry having different structure than the traditional 'bait' or 'doho'. His treatment of characters of the folk stories and semi-historical romances of Sindh is unprecedented and gives him an edge over his forerunners. There is also a variety of subjects, which differentiates him from his great predecessors like Qazi Qadan and Shah Karim, who had provided mere hints to these folk tales in their poetry. In this context, Shah Inat's poetry presents a definite evolution over its past

and is firmly entrenched in folk tradition and legend. But in the realm of thought there is mere ingress of sufistic poetry in honour of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) and some of his verses are really marvellous in as much as he paved the path for such Sufi poetry in Sindh in future.

In so far as the poetry of Shah Inat is deeply rooted in the folk tradition of Sindh, it inspired Shah Abdul Latif to great extent, but in regard to the sufistic thought, Shah Latif seems to have been under the influence of his great grand father Shah Karim and Shah Lutfullah Qadiri.

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### THE KALHORA REIGN,

The eighteenth century is reckoned as the glorious era in the history of Sindh and rightly so on many accounts. On the demise of the great Mughal emperor Aurnagzeb in 1707, the Kalhora of Sindh gained ascendancy to power, first, as the representatives and ultimately succeeded to be the rulers of independent Sindh in 1737.

The background of Kalhora struggle for power in Sindh is important for our topic because they were originally the *pirs* or saints. Miyan Adam Shah Kalhoro (1520-1600), the ancestor of Kalhoras originally emerged as a spiritual leader in the later part of the sixteenth century. He started his career as a local saint in the village of Hatri near Dokri in the present day Larkana District<sup>56</sup>. But later on he shifted to Bakhar the capital town of Upper Sindh in those days. It is stated that when on the instructions of the emperor Akbar, Mirza Abdur Rahim Khan-e-Khanan came to conquer lower Sindh, he visited Adam Shah to seek his blessings. It was on this occasion that Mian Adam Shah was granted Jagir in Chandka area present Larkana-Dadu Districts, which helped increase his influence tremendously in the area. However, this increasing influence was the cause of his death

at the hand of Mughal Governor of Multan in 1600 AD. His dead body was brought from Multan and buried on a hillock in Sukkur. The period of Mian Daud, his son and successor passed away peacefully. But Mian Shahal Muhammad son of Mian Daud, also came in conflict with the Mughal governor of Bakhar and was killed in 1657 in a warfare which ensued between him and the other local tribes who enjoyed the patronage of the governor. His remains are buried on the bank of Ghar canal which he himself got excavated. His tomb is visible from the main Larkana-Qambar road and is situated at a distance of about eight miles from Larkana.

After the death of Mian Shahal Muhammad, his nephew Mian Nasir Muhammad, son of Mian Ilyas, tried his level best to avoid any apparent confrontation with the Mughals. But at the same time he continued with his preparations, especially instilling his *faqirs* with the spirit of fight for freedom and victory. This led to his arrest by the Mughal governor at Bakhar and he was sent as prisoner to the Alamgir's court at Delhi where he remained in royal imprisonment for many years. But it appears that finally he reached some understanding with Alamgir and managed his release. On reaching Sindh he established his

sanctuary at Garhi which is situated in the foothills of Khirthar mountain considering it to be the safest from security point of view. Although Kalhoras inherited Suharwardy order right from the days of Adam Shah, Mian Naseer Muhammad set up his *Mian-Wali Tariqa*, a modified sufistic order of local hue and colour. His disciples still remember and recites 'Aazi' a litany in blank verse which is full of instigation and commands for the followers when they were to embark upon a battle or any campaign. It starts with the supplication from Almighty and ends with the slogan 'To ride is to command' and 'Allah To Har' or God we seek your help<sup>57</sup>. It appears Miyan Naseer Muhammad wielded sufficient influence in this area so much so that he was acknowledged as semi independent ruler by the Mughals during the years 1092/1681. Miyan Naseer Muhammad died at a very ripe age of more than seventy years in 1692 and was buried at Garhi in the present taluka Johi district Dadu. In the same graveyard which is stretched over miles are also buried his commanders and associates, some of whom attained martyrdom during the campaigns against the Mughals. In this background Miyan Naseer Muhammad is rightly considered as the founder of Kalhora power in Sindh<sup>58</sup>.

Mian Naseer Muhammad was



succeeded by his son Mian Din Muhammad. But during his days relations again deteriorated with the Mughal governor at Multan, who was son of Alamgir, with the result that he was put to death in 1700 exactly one century after the execution of his grandfather Mian Adam Shah. He was also buried at Garhi adjacent to the grave of his father. Mian Yar Muhammad, younger brother of Mian Din Muhammad proved to be the wisest in so far he avoided any confrontation with the Mughal rulers. Rather after consolidating his position in the Upper Sindh, he proved himself to be an ally of the Mughals, especially in the campaign against Shah Inayat of Jhok (d.1718). Once he gained the confidence of Mughal governor at Thatta, he was conferred the title of *Khuda Yar Khan* and his suzerainty was acknowledged over Upper Sindh. Miyan Yar Muhammad died in 1719 and was buried at Khuda Abad, a new capital which he found near Dadu. Miyan Nur Muhammad succeeded his father Miyan Yar Muhammad in 1719 and by virtue of his extraordinary acumen he was able to inspire confidence of the Mughals and got the steed of governorship of Thatta in 1737. This is in short the whole story of Kalhora odyssey in Sindh, which is spread over a period of more than one full century.

Mian Nur Muhammad had hardly



saddled himself with the reins of power when a more violent and sudden attack came from the north in the shape of Nadir Shah in 1739. Miyan fled to Umarkot but all in vain and he had to surrender before Nadir Shah when truce was arranged at Larkana. Mian Nur Muhammad was allowed to rule the country, but he was made to pay heavy annual tribute of Rupees twenty Lacs to the Afghan maruder. His two sons were also taken as surety for regular payment of the tribute. Nadir was killed by his own men in 1747, but his successor Ahmed Shah continued to demand the tribute and when he found a laxity on the part of Kalhoras he also marched on Sindh in 1753. Nur Muhammad this time thought of proceeding towards Jaisalmer but he died on the way and his dead body was brought and buried at Muhammad A'abad near Moro.

As pointed out earlier Miyan Nur Muhammad was contemporary of Shah Abdul Latif (1690-1752) and his rule extending from 1719 to 1753 was coterminous with the most productive phase of the saint-poet's life. We also noted that Miyan Nur Muhammad died just one year after the death of Shah Abdul Latif. Mian Nur Muhammad as has been reported was a scholarly person and was fond of books. He was a good scribe and had himself transcribed a beautiful copy of the Holy Quran, which was

taken away along with the other books by Nadir Shah. Nur Muhammad had a great lamentation over the loss of his books which he expressed in his '*Manshur-ul-Wasiat*' or 'A testament of will'. This will which he compiled around 1163 for the guidance of his sons so that they may not fight amongst themselves after his death, throws ample light on his own beliefs, besides the valuable advises to his sons regarding spiritual and worldly affairs. It is here that he has mentioned Suharwardy as the spiritual order of the family and traced it through fourteen connections to the great Suharwardy saint. Simultaneously he has also mentioned Syed Miran Muhammad Jaunpuri as spiritual preceptor of his forefathers<sup>59</sup>.

Earlier while discussing the relations of Shah Abdul Latif with the rulers of the time, it was observed that these were not cordial or friendly, rather an atmosphere of mistrust existed for long time. This is also implied by the legendary evidence, which has been recorded in the shape of anecdotes by Mir Sangi in his *Lataif Latifi*. The relations, however, must have improved when Ghulam Shah, the third son of Miyan Nur Muhammad was born out of his wedlock with the lady singer Maai Ghulan whom Shah Latif had blessed. This change in attitude is substantiated by Mian Nur Muhammad when

he gifted a copy of Masnavi Rumi to Shah Latif. This was further apparent from the reverential attitude of Mian Ghulam Shah, after the death of Shah Latif in 1752, who got his beautiful mausoleum built within the record time of two years exactly, though he himself had not yet ascended the throne and his father Nur Muhammad was alive.

Miyan Ghulam Shah proved to be the most prudent ruler in the hierarchy of Kalhora rulers, and on his death in 1772, he was succeeded by his son Miyan Sarfraz Kalhoro, an accomplished poet of Persian and Sindhi, but not a successful ruler. However, the abrupt bloody infighting, which ensued during Sarfraz's days, brought an end to the Kalhora dynasty in 1782 when they were replaced by Talpurs whom they had raised as their army men and commanders.

Kalhoro's background of having risen from the sainthood to power and becoming the masters of Sindh, always proved to be the decisive factor in their future dealings with the saintly characters of their time. This feeling must have been exacerbated by the fact that thrice the scions of Kalhora family had lost their lives in the power struggle with the Mughals. Miyan Yar Muhammad's active support to the



Mughal governor of Thatta against Shah Inat of Jhok followed by latter's execution in 1130/1718 and elimination of Makhdum of Khuhra in 1145/1733 at the order of Mian Nur Muhammad are two glaring instances which can be quoted in this regard<sup>60</sup>.

The most important development which took place in the Sufi history of Sindh during the eighteenth century or which is almost concurrent with the Kalhora rule is the emergence and the rise of the Naqshbandi order. Makhdum Adam of Thatta, basically a religious scholar, who travelled to Delhi to gain an access to the A'alamgir's court, came in contact with Khawaja Masoom Sirhindi the grandson of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi (d.1624), *Mujaddid Alif Sani*, the renovator of second millennium, Makhdum Adam was much inspired by the spiritual level of Khawaja Masoom, who also appreciated his academic achievements, and admitted him into Naqshbandi order. Makhdum Adam returned to Thatta as *Khalifa* of the saint and became the pioneer of Naqshbandi activities in Thatta. Even at Thatta, he remained in touch with the family of his spiritual master at Delhi. His correspondence with Khawaja Saifuddin son and successor of his master is preserved in the 'Epistles of Khawaja Masoom'<sup>61</sup>. Makhdum Adam died in the early



twelfth/eighteenth century and was buried at Makli. He was survived by his two sons Makhdum Faizullah and Makhdum Ashraf, who also attained fame on account of their spiritual excellence.

Makhdum Abul Qasim Naqshbandi, who had come under the spiritual tutelage of Makhdum Adam, became more prominent. In his spiritual quest he also travelled upto Sirhind and benefited from the personal attention of Khawaja Saifuddin who had succeeded his father Khawaja Masoom. Abul Qassim died in 1138 in Thatta and was laid to rest at Makli. The most eminent figures who entered the fold of Naqshbandi order at his hands were Makhdum Muhammad Muin of Thatta, Makhdum Ziauddin Thattvi, Khawaja Muhammad alias Abul Masakin Thattvi and Moulvi Muhammad Sadiq Naqshbandi, Makhdum Muhammad Hashim Thattvi (d.1174/1761) also held him in high esteem<sup>62</sup>.

Makhdum Muhammad Muin Thattvi (d.1161/1748) however needs our special mention, being prolific writer in Arabic and Persian, as some of his works have survived. In the biographic section, excerpts from his letter have been reproduced which are in reply to the queries raised by Shah Latif with regard to the Owais Sufis. He is also reported to have indulged in correspondence with Shah Waliullah

of Delhi (d.1762). Two reply letters addressed to him by Shah Waliullah have been preserved, one deals with the subject of the creation of the universes, time and motion, and the other is regarding mysticism<sup>63</sup>. He also composed poetry under the pen name of *Taslim* in Persian and '*Beragi*' in Hindi, though much of his poetry has either not survived or he resorted to it very rarely. Makhdum Muin's writings reverberate with typical pantheistic tendencies, which show that he must have studied Ibn-al-Arabi's works and had accepted his influence. He is reported to possess strong inclination for the spiritual music, and was fond of listening to the '*Sama*' of Shah Latif and his *faqirs*. He breathed his last in 1161 AH while enjoying such a company in which Shah Latif himself was present<sup>64</sup>.

From the family of Makhdum Adam Thatvi, founder of Naqshbandi order in Thatta, after the death of his son Makhdum Ashraf, Khawaja Muhammad alias Abul Masakin rose to prominence. In the footsteps of his grandfather, he also travelled upto Sirhind and received the mantle from the successor of the great grandson of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhandi. When he returned to Thatta, young Khawaja Muhammad Zaman, who at that time was pursuing his studies in the *seminary* of Muhammad Sadiq Naqshbandi, became his favourite disciple. Muahammad

Zaman (1713-1774) later on moved to Luwari a village in present Badin district, where he established his separate spiritual seat, which has continued till today. His is very important position in the eighteenth century sufistic thought for having composed superb mystical verses in Sindhi, which were compiled and commented upon in Arabic by his able disciple Abdur Rahim Girhori (d.1778).<sup>65</sup> Muhammad Zaman was younger contemporary of Shah Abdul Latif, and there is a common oral tradition with the followers of Luwari that Shah Latif once visited him at Luwari.

Abdul Rahim Girhori (1739-1778) was essentially a religious divine who turned to be a devout disciple of Muhammad Zaman when he came in contact with him. Besides the compilation of '*Abyat Sindhi*', he collected the sayings of his master in Arabic under the title '*Fathul Fazal*'. He himself was a poet and versatile commentator of the Holy Quran. He had great admiration for the poetry of Shah Latif and like Maulana Jami who declared Masnavi Rumi, a Quran in Persian, he referred to the Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif as Quran in Sindhi, in one of his verses.<sup>66</sup> *Abyat Sindhi* is the most valuable exposition of Sufi thought of the eighteenth century Sindh.



Amongst the other Naqshbandi Sufis of the eighteenth century must be counted Makhdum Abul-Hasan Dahn (1181-1768) who entered Naqshbandi order while pursuing his studies in Gujrat at Ahmed Abad. On his return he settled in present District Nawabshah. He wrote detailed manual titled '*Yanabi'at-al-Abadiyah fi Tariqat Tulab Naqshbandiya*'. He also composed a treatise '*Kachkol Nama*' in Persian poetry in 1176AH, wherein he gave full exposition of the precepts of Islam in mystical fashion<sup>67</sup>.

Shah Faqiruallah Alvi (1100/1689-1195/1781) who originally hailed from Ruhtas in present day Afghanistan, after returning from Hijaz, came to settle in Shikarpur in 1150/1737. He wrote many books in Arabic and Persian which included the subject of sufism. Faqurillah Alvi had very close relations with Makhdum Muhammad Hashim Thattvi. In fact both had taken Abdul Qadir Mufti Maki as their spiritual preceptor in Hijaz who was also Naqshabandi, and had originally migrated from Gujrat.<sup>68</sup>

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The overall emphasis of Naqshabandiya order was on the supremacy of orthodoxy and therefore they had very little appeal for the masses, for Sindh had not been affected with that kind of extremism unleashed due to the syncretic ideas of Mughal emperor Akbar in the other parts of India which had



evoked reaction in the strict from of Naqshbandi. Hence the activities of Naqshbandis remained confined to Thatta or at the most upto the lower Sindh. It is also noticeable of the even formal adherence to the Naqshbandia in Sindh did not mean rigid compliance of the rules in that order. For example, listening of music is not allowed by the Naqshabandis, but Makhdum Muin Thattvi who had formally entered this order was fond of the spiritual music and he breathed his last after having listened to the '*Sama*' of the *faqirs* of Shah Abdul Latif.

Similarly Qadiriya order is also very strict in so far as singing with musical accompaniments is concerned. Shah Karim, the great grandfather of Shah Latif was an ardent lover of singing, but perhaps his '*Sama*' was without accompaniment of any instrument. It was however Shah Abdul Latif who introduced just one instrument of '*Danboor*' in his '*Sama*'.

It is in this background that prominent *Dargahs* in Sindh evolved their own '*Sama* or special kind of singing' for instance the followers of Makhdum Nuh of Hala, who are generally considered to be Suharwardy, resort to singing without any musical instrument and they call it by the special name of '*Dahar*'. The founder of the Rashdi *Dargah* Muhammad Baqa (d.1783) at Kingri was Qaidriya. His successors

become known by the honorific title of Pir Pagara. This Tariqa spread under the Khalifas of his son Pir Muhammad Rashid who founded *Dargahs* at Sui, Amrot, Dinpur, and Kario. Their devotional singing (*Sama*), known as *Jama'at-jo-Rag* is performed without accompaniment of any instruments. But the followers of Sufi Inayat of Jhok who also belongs to the Qadri order, perform '*Sama*' with musical instruments though the instruments are very simple. At some *Dargahs* of the Kalhora saints who turned out to be the rulers also and are professedly Suharwardy, musical instrument '*Surando*' is very common with them.

As a general remark it may be observed that Suharwardy Sufis were not enthusiastic towards music, none the less they were fond of special kind of '*Sama*' singing which had come to stay with them over the ages. Their emphasis was on '*dhikr*' or remembrance of God, which was considered sufficient for cleansing of the heart and attainment of the near presence of God. In the '*Al-awrad*' the only treatise ascribed to Bahauddin Zakria Multani, he has prescribed different kinds of '*dhikr*' which covers almost every aspect of the life of an individual<sup>69</sup>. The proponents of '*Chistia*' order who were great lovers of music and attended the regular sessions of music. *Qawwali*, special form of singing, attuned with some typical musical

instruments is said to be their innovation and they were responsible for making it popular. Some of the Qadris were pantheistic in their approach or at least what they believed had pantheistic implications. They would normally avoid music sessions, but many of them listened to the music with certain restrictions. Naqshbandis were generally against the music or singing. However, in some Naqshbandi Sufis of Sindh such as Muhammad Zaman of Luwari, pantheistic tendencies are very much perceptible and his poetry can hardly be intelligible without this basic reference in mind.

The Kalhora period in general has been described to be the golden period of Sindhi literature, but this statement must be further qualified that it was the golden era of the religious literature as well. It can fairly be assumed that this religious literature which was produced in Arabic, Persian and Sindhi was both unprecedented in quality and quantity. Never in the history of Sindhi such a galaxy of scholars ever appeared who bequeathed so much literature and on such variegated subjects. The most exhilarating feature of this literature was that besides Arabic and Persian it was being produced in Sindhi language for the first time. These scholars evolved a simpleton from of Sindhi poetry which was more prosaic in nature as Sindhi prose had not yet attained the



standard from. Makhdum Abdul Hasan Thattvi (d.1711) was the first scholar who composed the '*Muqadmat-us-Salat*' in AD 1700 in that typical Sindhi, which dealt with the instructions as well as injunctions in respect of the five time prayers by Muslims. However, the religious scholar who scaled all the heights by being most prolific in this regard was Makhdum Muhammad Hashim Thattvi.

Muhammad Hashim was born in 1104/1692 in the village of Bahrampur in a humble religious family. He was educated at Thatta, which was the great seat of Islamic bearing in the twelfth eighteenth century. At a very young age he compiled scores of books in Arabic as well as Sindhi. In 1135 AH he proceeded for Hajj where he specialized in the knowledge of Hadith under the guidance of Shaikh Abu Tahir Madni and Shaikh Abdul Qadir Hanafi. After about two years stay in Macca and Madina he returned back and while he was at Surat port he heard of the spiritual eminence of Saadullaah Surati, Al-Qadri, whom he took as his spiritual mentor. In 1137 AH, Muhammad Hashim compiled '*lthaf*' in which he gave the list of his as many as 105 books, of which at least ten were in Sindhi<sup>70</sup>. This establishes him as the most prolific write at a young age. He died at the age of seventy in 1174/1160. Hence the number



of his books, as has been commonly reported must be in the vicinity of three hundred.

There is recorded evidence that during the reign of Miyan Ghulam Shah Kalhoro (1762-1772) Muhammad Hashim, on account of his extra ordinary religious scholarship assumed the status of the juri-consult for the rules of the time, and his advice could not be ignored in religious matters. He formulated detailed instructions on this subject for the rules which were adopted as policy in 1172/1758. After the death of Mian Ghulam Shah, his son Miyan Sarfraz Kalhoro formally appointed Makhdum Abdul Latif son of Muhammad Hashim as Chief judge of Qazi-ul-Quzat in 1187/1773.<sup>71</sup>

It however appears that the voluminous religious literature which Muhammad Hashim produced in Sindhi gave him immense fame and popularity rather, he became a legendary figure. Of special mention is his composition of the '*Qutul Ashiqeen*' or 'feed for lovers' which describes 186 miracles of the Holy Prophet in a most touching verses in Sindhi. His cries of love and longing composed in rustic Sindhi poetry earned him the title of true and ardent lover of the Prophet and there is a widely believed tradition in Sindhi that when Muhammad Hashim Thattvi called at the Holy Prophet's tomb and offered his greetings he was

honoured with the reply from the grave. The Sindhi verses of the '*Qutal Aashiqeen*' are interspersed with the couplets of Arabic Qasida composed by the author on the pattern of famous '*Qsida Burda*'. In his poems, Muhammad Hashim alluded to the Holy Prophet as '*Mahbub*' literally meaning beloved and it was due to his forceful presentation that in the later '*Natia Sindhi*' poetry Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is more than often addressed as the beloved of God; the beloved of universe and the beloved of mankind or even epitome of creation.

It is fortunate that most of the works of Muhammad Hashim have survived and especially his Sindhi works which became so popular that they started pouring out from Bombay as soon as lithograph was introduced in the nineteenth century. The main reason for his unrivalled popularity has been that most of his books came to be regarded as the text of religious knowledge and learning in the *Madrasahs* of Sindh. Richard Burton, who visited Sindh in the first half of the nineteenth century found Makhdum Hashim as one of the most celebrated authors in Sindhi language second only to Shah Abdul Latif <sup>72</sup>.

Shah Abdul Latif was born in AH 1102, just two years before Muhammad Hashim Thattvi. In the biographic section much light has

been shed on his splendid family background, his early education and spiritual development, his extensive wanderings encompassing substantial phase of his life which enriched his experiences and observations, his unabated inclination for music and meditation, and finally the very rich literacy back ground of his times- all these factors and above all nature contributed towards the making of a great poet in him.




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### Diffusion of Sufistic Ideas Through Persian Poetry:

It is relevant for our purpose to give a bird's eye view of the Persian poetry in Sindh and its probable impact in the evolution of sufistic poetry in Sindhi. The conquest of Sindh by the Arghuns in 1521 was endemic of the strong influence of Persian language and literature, for the Arghuns themselves were the men of literary pursuits. From Arguns rulers, Shah Hassan and from Tarkhans, Mirza Jani Beg were poets of considerable merit<sup>73</sup>. Mir Masoom, the famous 16th century historian has given the names of scholars, religious divines, poets and courtiers who came down to Sindh in this era. Shah Jehangir Hashmi, who originally hailed from Kirman was related to Shah Qutub, Kazi of Bakhar, arrived in Sindh in 935/1528 and was warmly received by the Argun ruler Shah Hassan. Syed Jehangir Hashmi, was great Sufi by learning and temperament, which is crystal clear from his Masnavi '*Mazharul Asar*' the first-ever Persian Masnvi composed in Sindh<sup>74</sup>. As would appear from the name, and also clarified by the author, he composed this Masnvi to emulate the works of great Persian Sufis-Nizami Ganjvi's '*Makhzan-ul-Israr*' and Maulana Jami's '*Tuhfat-ul-Ahrar*'. Shah Jehangir was, however, killed in 946/1539 when he was on his way for



pilgrimage to Macca. The Masnvi is purely mystical and naturally its contents are very much comparable with the other traditional *Masnvis* extant on the subject.

During the remaining period of the 16th and 17th centuries, though a countless number of Persian poets contributed a great deal towards the realm of Persian poetry and many of them were *Sahib-e-Diwan*, there is not much of mystical substance in them. Mir Masum (d.1014/1605), the renowned author of '*Tarikh Masumi*' was himself an outstanding poet of Persian. But in his poetry which has survived, there is little recourse to the Sufi ideas<sup>75</sup>. Next to him, Idraki Beglar, who belonged to the branch of Arghuns named Beglars, composed the Masnvi '*Chanesar Nama*' in 1010/1601, in which he poeticised the famous folk tale of *Leela Chanesar*, yet he could not give any mystical touch to the story<sup>76</sup>. Masnvi '*Zeba Nigar*' which dealt with the romance of *Sasui-Punhu*, was composed by the celebrated poet of Thatta, Muhammad Rezai in the year 1071/1660. It also did not have much flavor of mysticism, though he was an acknowledged disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia<sup>77</sup>.

Mulla Abdul Hakim 'Ata' Thattvi (1047/1140) whose '*Diwan*' and eighty Masnvis '*Hasht Bahist*' stand published, also flourished

during this era. It is strange to note that though he composed his eight *Masnvis* during the years (1085-1118) by following in the footsteps of the great Persian mystics, Nizami Sa'adi, Rumi and Jami, yet there is very little which is of any real significance from the mystical point of view.<sup>78</sup>

It is however, during the Kalhora reign that the mysticism started dominating the realm of the Persian poetry, and the first such poet was Mohsin Thattvi (d.1163/1750), who enjoyed the patronage of the Kalhora rulers<sup>79</sup>. The other two most important names of this period are: Mir Janullah Shah Rizvi of Rohri (d.11167/1754) and Mir Ali Sher Qani (d.1140/1727-1203/1789). The ancestors of Mir Janullaah Shah were Suharwardy by family tradition. He himself however became Qadri under the spiritual guidance of Shah Inat of Jhok. It appears from the poetry of Janullah Shah that he had experienced the spiritual transformation at the hands of a perfect spiritual master. His poetry which is yet to be published is full of mystical imagination characterised with the natural spontaneity and rhythm. In fact he is the great Persian mystic poet of the Kalhora period, unsurpassed by any of his compatriots. 'Sufism rose to transcendental heights, both in theory and practice, and found some of its best exponents in Allama Muinuddin of Thatta (in prose) and Syed Janullah Shah 'Mir' of Rohri (in

poetry) the latter was Sufi of high order, and is by far the best poet of Sindh who dived deep into the ocean of divine thought and brought out matchless pearls of mystic poetry. Next to him were Muhammad Mohsin and Ali Sher Qani of Thatta<sup>80</sup>.

Mir Ali Sher Qani belonging to the Syeds of Shiraz, whose ancestor Qazi Shukruallah reached Sindh in 927/1521. He is believed to have old acquaintance with Shah Beg Arghun at Qandhar and came to Thatta when Arghuns conquered Sindh. Qani was born in his illustrious family in 1140 AH and got the best education under the supervision of the best teachers and scholars of his time. Qani was an in-born genius and at a very young age he proved himself to be the versatile and indefatigable writer. He completed his monumental *Maqala-us-huara* an anthology of more than 600 Persian poets of Sindh in 1164 AH followed by his magnum opus *Tuhfat-ul-kiram* in 1181 AH.

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Qani was Naqshbandi by family tradition and his father had joined Naqshbandi order. He displayed deep understanding of Tasawwuf when he composed Masnvi '*Khatmus-siluk*' in 119 AH. However, his two most important works on the Sufis of Sindh are '*Miyar Slikan-e-Tariqat*' and '*Tumar Salsil Guzida*', the latter he completed in 1202 AH. In the first book



he gave the biographic accounts of the prominent Sufis of Sindh, and in the latter he described the *Silsilas* of the Sufi orders in respect of each prominent saint. Thus these are the two important books on the history of sufism in Sindh. About 42 titles of the works of Qani have been traced out both in prose and poetry, which establish him as the most prolific and encyclopedic Persian writer of his times.<sup>81</sup> In other words both Persian prose and poetry attained its climax in the literary genius of Mir Ali Sher Qani.

The above brief survey of the Persian poetry from the 16th to 18th century in Sindh suggests that the Persian poets of Sindh followed altogether different line of thought than that of their counterparts in Sindhi either lacking or envious. The impulse for mysticism in which they lived was not conducive for the generation of Sufi thought. On the contrary the tradition of Sindhi poetry had its very genesis in the Sufi thought. The major source of inspiration for Qazi Qadan (d.1551) the first *nota bene* poet of Sindhi language, was his encounter with an anonymous *dervish* or his meeting with his spiritual preceptor Miran Mehdi Jaunpuri. Similarly the theme of Shah Karim's (d.1624) poetry, who immediately followed him was completely sufistic and the same is true of his successor Shah Lutfullah Qadri (d.1679)<sup>82</sup>.



The poetry of Shah Inat Rizvi (d.1717), though not as much sufistic in its contents as that of his predecessors, yet there is exudation of sufistic thought. In the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif (d.1752) who is essentially the poet of eighteenth century or the Kalhora period, there is definitely a developed and mature thought of sufism, which is the culmination of above Sufi ideas in Sindh.

As pointed out earlier Sufi thought is traceable in the later Persian poets of Kalhora period, hence the Persian poets of Sindh had no influence whatsoever on Shah Latif. This supports the earlier observation that Shah Latif was deeply influenced by the grand sufistic tradition of Sindhi poetry which started with Qazi Qadan and passed through Shah Karim, Shah Lutfullah Qadri and Shah Inat Rizvi in that order of precedence. In this regard, it is however relevant to point out that Shah Latif seems to have accepted the external influence of only one Persian poet and he is Maulana Rumi, whom he mentioned by name more than once.

The above panoramic view of Sufi tradition in Sindh can further be condensed in this way that the advent of Islam coincided with the last decade of the 1st century Hijrah and the disciples of famous ascetic Hassan Basri reached Sind in the second century and direct

relationship was established between Baghdad and Sindh in the late second century. Although activities of the Sufis started by the end of second century, they came to limelight in the third century in Baghdad. Abu Ali Sindhi imparted lessons regarding *Fana* to Bayazid Bustami (d. 261/875). In the last decade of the third century martyr mystic Hussain bin Mansoor Hallaj visited Sindh and Gujrat, who was destined to become the most popular symbol of Sufi tradition in Sindh. During the fourth and fifth Hijrah or the tenth and eleventh centuries AD Sindh and Multan came under the Ismaili and Qaramtian influence. They were politically vanquished by Sultan Mahmood Ghazni and Sultan Muhammad Ghauri in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Some Sufi saints came along with Mahmood Ghazni. It was, however, the Suharwardy Sufis, under the leadership of Ghous Bhawalhaq, who successfully repulsed and counteracted the Ismaili adventurism. The seventh/thirteenth century was the most prosperous in so far as great many Sufis flourished during this period. Qalander Lal Shahbaz came and settled in Sehwan and besides him, many other Sufi saints mostly Syed including Syed Muhammad Maki son-in-law of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suharwardy and head of the Rizvi Syeds also came to Sindh. Nuh Bakhri direct disciple of Shaikh Shihabyddin the

founder of Suharwardy order for the first time introduced Suharwardy order in Sindh.

The Sumra rulers of Multan, Uch and Sindh were converted to complete orthodoxy under the influence of Suharwardy saints. The Samma rulers of Sindh during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries remained strongly attached with the Suharwardy saints of Multan and Uch. Many of the Samma rulers were also disciples of the Suharwardy saints of Multan. Alongside the Suharwardy Sufis, some further prominent Sufis, who are not known for their affiliation to any order, also attained great fame and these include Shaikh Isa Langoti and Pir Syed Murad of Thatta, both wielded great influence on the Samma rulers.

By the turn of the millennium Hijra or at the start of the sixteenth century, Miran Muhammad Jaunpuri came to Sindh, and during his stay the famous Qazi of Bakhar, Qazi Qadan became his disciple. Under this impulse Qazi Qadan turned out to be the first notable Sufi poet who composed in Sindhi and his seven verses were recited by Shah Abdul Karim of Bulri and thus came to be preserved along with his poetry. In the sixteenth century there is Makhdum Nuh, by descent Suharwardy, but famous as *Owaisi*. He was the great mystic and



scholar, for he rendered the Holy Quran translated into Persian. Makhdum Bilal is yet another great Suharwardy Sufi saint of the Sixteenth century, who fought against with Arghuns alongside with the armies of the Samma rulers.

During the fifteenth century, Qadria order also reached Sindh and in the sixteenth century Shah Khairdin Qadiri of Bakhr appears to be the most eminent Sufi master. The Qadria order found its great exponent in Shah Lutfullah Qadri who not only wrote exquisite Sindhi poetry but also compiled two separate treatises in Persian in the seventeenth century.

As discussed earlier Sindh in the sixteenth Century witnessed the change of masters from an indigenous Sammas to alien Arghuns and Turkhans. This greatly suppressed the activities of local Suharwardies and also encouraged the immigration of Sufis and saints from foreign lands. This to some extent strengthened and supported the activities of Qadris, who by seventeenth century had almost dominated the scene.

By the start of the eighteenth century, Kalhoras, an indigenous stock gained ascendancy to power. Mian Adam Shah Kalhoro, the ancestor of Kalhoras is reported to be



Mahdvi or follower of Miran Mahdi Jaunpuri. But the latter Kalhoras in the eighteenth century simultaneously claimed to be *Suharwardy*. During the eighteenth century, *Naqshbandi* order rose to prominence through the efforts of Makdum Adam and Makhdum Abul Qasim Naqshbandi. Khwaja Muhammad Masoom of Sirhandi and his successes became the center of gravity for the Naqshbandis of Sindh. Khwaja Muhammad Zaman of Luwari and his Khalifa Abdur Rahim Girhori, both Naqshbandi by order, composed highly mystical poetry in Sindhi.

Amazingly the eighteenth century is remarkable for all kind of vigorous activity in the fields of religious literature, Sindhi literature and Persian literature. In the field of religious literature, there are a host of scholars and divines, like Makhdum Moin Thattvi, who was in contact with Shah Wailiullah of Delhi and was influenced by his ideas. He was close friend and confidant of Shah Abdul Latif, who visited him very often. Muhammad Hashim Thattvi, at the age of 31 years by having displayed the authorship of more than one hundred books in Arabic, Persian and Sindhi proved prodigy of the scholars of his time. Initially he was inclined to Naqshbandi Sufis of Thatta, but later on he joined Qadria order. He spent two precious years of his life at Mecca and Madina and benefited from the views of great scholars at

Hijaz. For his outstanding contribution towards the religious sciences, his authority was acknowledged in religious matters by the rules of the time. His extraordinary attachment with the Prophet of Islam made him legendary figure for the people of Sindh so much so that his decisions and opinion vis-a-vis other religious scholars were supposed to have the assent of the Holy Prophet.

The description of the eighteenth century would be incomplete without mention of the great literary figure of Persian Mir Ali Sher Qani. He was full time scholar in modern sense, who spent most of his time in the scholarly pursuits. He was equally well-versed in prose and poetry and intentionally chose to write in Persian and to the exclusion of any other language, probably with a view to achieve excellence in the language for which he had natural aptitude. Although his single most important contribution, '*Tuhfat-ul-Kiram*' would have been sufficient to accord him permanent place in the history of Sindh, he left many other books including two exhaustive works on the Sufis and Sufi *Silsilahs* of Sindh, which are a permanent source material on the Sufi history of Sindh.

Shah Abdul Latif was born in 1102 AH in an illustrious family of Syeds, whose great

grand father was the most venerable Sufi of his age and pioneer poet of Sindhi language. If we were to believe in the theory that, the heredity and environment make out most of the man, then Shah Abdul Latif had best of the two, no doubt. This in brief is the perspective of the birth of the great classic of the world literature '*Shah-jo-Risalo*', the peerless poetry of Shah Abdul Latif.




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## CHAPTER-II

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## CHAPTER-III

### Love as Central Idea of The Folk Stories in the *Risalo*.

Shah Abdul Latif is believed to have composed more than ten thousand verses which when first compiled in 1207 AH were divided under twenty nine different musical themes.<sup>1</sup> Of this some seven deal with the famous folk stories of romantic nature and semi-historical character. Love is the common theme running through all these stories: *Sasui-Punhun*, *Sohni-Mehar*, *Mumtaz-Rano*, *Leela-Chanesar*, *Marvi*, *Nuri* and *Sorath*. It is not possible to appreciate the poetry of Shah Latif without having some basic understanding of these stories. This is all the more necessary because he has not dealt with the stories from beginning to end, rather he has touched only significant aspects of the story or the angle which inspired him.

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Shah Latif has dealt with the romance of *Sasui Punhun* in a more detailed manner than any other story, as it is more interesting. *Sasui*, the adopted daughter of a washerman gets married with *Punhun* who falls in love with her on his first visit to *Bambhor* where *Sasui* lives along with her parents. *Punhun* happened to be the prince of *Ketch*, so

the marriage is not acceptable to his brothers, due to social considerations. Punhun apprehending the reaction of his brothers has chosen to remain with his love Sasui incognito and works as washerman. One night while Sasui is fast asleep, the brothers of Punhun take him away forcibly on their camels to Ketch traversing a distance of about 200 miles. In the aftermath starts the quest of Sasui for her love who is now her beloved. She as lonely lady pursues the difficult terrain of mountains to reach her beloved, but she is lost on the way. In the meanwhile Punhun having got disentangled from the clutches of his brothers and manages to reach the site where Sasui had just breathed her last. As a result of the grave shock Punhun also died on the spot and thus joined the beloved forever.

A poet of the caliber of Shah Latif has delved deep into the romance and created innumerable images of love and fancy, the wailings and pangs of the separation of lover and beloved are fully highlighted, the aspirations and expectations of a woman artistically portrayed, the awesome environs of the hills and mountains are masterly depicted, the fearful and dark nights completely picturised. But against all odds the struggle of Sasui continues and she does not fall short of any step, lest she is maligned by her beloved for

any shortcoming or delinquency on her part. In short this is a tale which adumbrates enthusiasm, conviction, zeal, devotion, sacrifice and above all it is an emblem of overpowering love which motivates a woman to search for her love, to make an unending quest.

It appears that Shah Latif was very much impressed by the travails, trials and tribulations undergone by Sasui in her quest for the beloved. In the chapter on the biography of Shah Latif, it was indicated that it is far certain that the poet himself trekked the path and wondered in those plains and mountains which were traversed by Sasui. This is quite evident as he has alluded to so many places, spots, sights, the signposts which otherwise was not possible to delineate with so much accuracy and precision. Shah Latif was so much inspired by this eleventh century romance<sup>2</sup> that about one-fourth of his poetry deals with this great love story which can be considered as epitome of his message. The romance of Sasui-Punhun provides an ideal material from mystical point of view inasmuch as in the first instance Punhun is a lover and Sasui the beloved and afterwards the situation dramatically changes, Sasui becomes the lover and Punhun the beloved. In fact this folk tale provides the best paradigm to the saint-poet to express his mystic ideas in the



most accomplished manner. Shah Latif was the first Sindhi poet who composed bulk of his poetry on this subject as his predecessors had hardly touched this topic, excepting his great grandfather Shah Abdu! Karim in whose poetry two or three verses relating to Sasui are traceable.

Next to Sasui-Punhun the romantic tale of Sohni-Mehar is the most significant in the context of Shah Latif's poetry.

In the story of Sohni-Mehar, Sohni is married with Dam, but she was in love with Mehar who was a herdsman and his real name was Sahar. He lived on the other bank of the river Indus. Sohni out of her extreme love for Sahar used to swim across the river with the help of an earthen baked jar. One night her baked jar was replaced by an unbaked one, so when she was in the midst of the stream she realized the mistake. But now what could be done, she cried and cried till Sahar heard her cries and came to her rescue, but both were drowned by the deadly stream of the river. This is how the beloved and the lover were united for ever.<sup>3</sup>

Shah Latif in the character of Sohni has seen the true aspiration of a lover, who



against all physical odds of the world and society is ready to strive for his objective, though in this adventure he may have to lose his physical life. But this is the consummation which is regarded by the Sufis as the prerequisite for eternal union of the self.

In the legend of Momal-Rano, Momal appears to be a very beautiful maid who belonged to a royal stock but was too proud of her cleverness and charms. She had declined many offers for marriage but finally she is won by a princely character Rano who established his superiority in cleverness. Momal had not yet left her Kak and resided with her sister. Rano used to visit her in the night after riding on his camel. One night while it was too late, Momal thought that Rano would perhaps not visit her, so she got her sister to sleep in her bed attired in man's clothes. Rano came in the small hours of night and seeing all this became disenchanted due to the manifest infidelity of Momal.

In the morning Momal realized her fatal mistake but now it was too late. From here start the waillings and torments of Momal for her love Rano. Finally love prevails on both sides as soon as the truth is revealed but that is the occasion when both set off on the heaven-ward journey.<sup>4</sup>

In the tale of Leela-Chaanesar, Leela is the queen of Chanesar, who is the most loving husband and takes care of her demands. But Leela was too much fond of ornaments and diamonds and easily allured by such temptations. Another lady Kaunro was said to be in real love with Chanesar and she wanted to achieve the company of Chanesar at all costs. Kaunro guided by her mother thought of tempting Leela by offering a very valuable necklace of diamonds. In return Leela was made to agree to part her husband's company for a night. In the night when Chanesar was fully drunk, Kaunro enjoyed his company. But Chanesar on coming to senses learnt from Kaunro as to how Leela had sold him in exchange of the necklace of diamonds.<sup>5</sup> This infuriated Chanesar who punished her by ousting from the palace.

Leela realized her grave mistake but what could she do now, excepting to pray for the mercy of Chanesar. The message of the story is clear that love recognizes no duality and it is the greatest sin to forget the beloved even for a moment.

According to the folk story of Umar-Marui, Marui is a beautiful maid of a poor family in the desert of Thar. She is betrothed with her relative Khet. Umar the ruler of the area is

attracted by her dazzling beauty and decides to marry her. He forcibly brings her and keeps her imprisoned in his mansion. He tried to persuade her to marry, but she declines all kinds of offers. Marui implores Umer not to touch her because her soul from eternity has made a commitment with her love and the eternal bond can not be broken, whatever tantalisation. Finally when Umer's all tactics fail to seduce her, he decides to release her. In this way the frail woman through her sheer strength of love conquers the strong will of Umer.<sup>6</sup>

In Sur Sorth, poet narrates a unique legend of a king Rai Diach (originally Khanghar)<sup>7</sup> enraptured by the divinely music played by a minister named Beejal who is sent by the enemy king of neighbourhood. The king is too much touched by the music played by the bard and desires to meet his demand whatever that may be. As preplanned the ministerel wishes to have the head of the King. Rai Diach in fulfilment of his promise gives sacrifice of his head. This shows the divinely power of muse, for the queen Sorath remains silent though all this happens before her eyes. The poet concludes that all this was due to the contrivance or harmony of the muse, the dagger and the human body, for all the three had the some planning or scheme to fallow. So once again in the scheme



of things love is conquering, though manifestly a tragedy has taken place. The final lesson is that the king has given his head at the alter of love for music.

The story of Nuri-Jam Tamachi is very simple. Nuri is a young pretty girl from lowly caste of fisherman who reside on the banks of Kinjhar Lake. Jam Tamachi is the ruler of the Samma clan<sup>7</sup> who has already many wives from high classes. However, it so happens that when Tamachi visits Kinjhar he is attracted by the beauty of Nuri. He decides to make her a queen. Nuri displays the utmost humbleness and the high character which she is made of and this dominates the mind of Tamachi for ever, who gives preferential treatment to her and declares her the 'Queen of Queens'.

In *Sur Samondi* who are 'The Sailors' Shah Latif has delineated the emotions and feelings of a woman whose husband has proceeded on long journey. He has beautifully depicted the feelings of that woman, who is eagerly awaiting her love in the cold wintry night and who has passed her longest nights lonely. Similarly in the *Sur Khambhat* Shah has shown a lover who is sighing for his beloved in the moonlit night. The lover compares his beloved with moon but does not find the moon worthy of his foot, as the beloved is a glow for ever



whereas the moon shines only in the night. Again his beloved is far away. He could reach his beloved if his camel can run so swiftly that during the night hours after completing the journey also brings him back before the morning.<sup>8</sup>

The two Surs '*Raamkali*' and '*Khahori*' deal with the divinely character Yogis and wandering ascetics, a usual phenomenon in the days of Shah Latif. Shah has highlighted the Yogis as the gonostics or *Aarifs* who are in search of the truth. They have strange ways of moving in the public, dressing with patched clothes and praying in secret. In short they have been depicted as the seekers of truth and represent divine love in their entirety.<sup>9</sup>

Both '*Kalyan*' and '*Yaman Kalyan*' the opening two surs of the Risalo of Shah Latif are much more sophisticated in so far as they deal with the divine love, or what is generally termed mystical love. Of great significance here is the imagery of wine seller or the tavern owner, often visited by the drunkards or seekers of the truth. Here the language of love and wine has been employed to the fullest by the poet, of course, in the traditional sense, where the wine bearer is but the spiritual preceptor and represents the reality and the intending visitor is the seeker of truth.<sup>10</sup>

## CHAPTER-III

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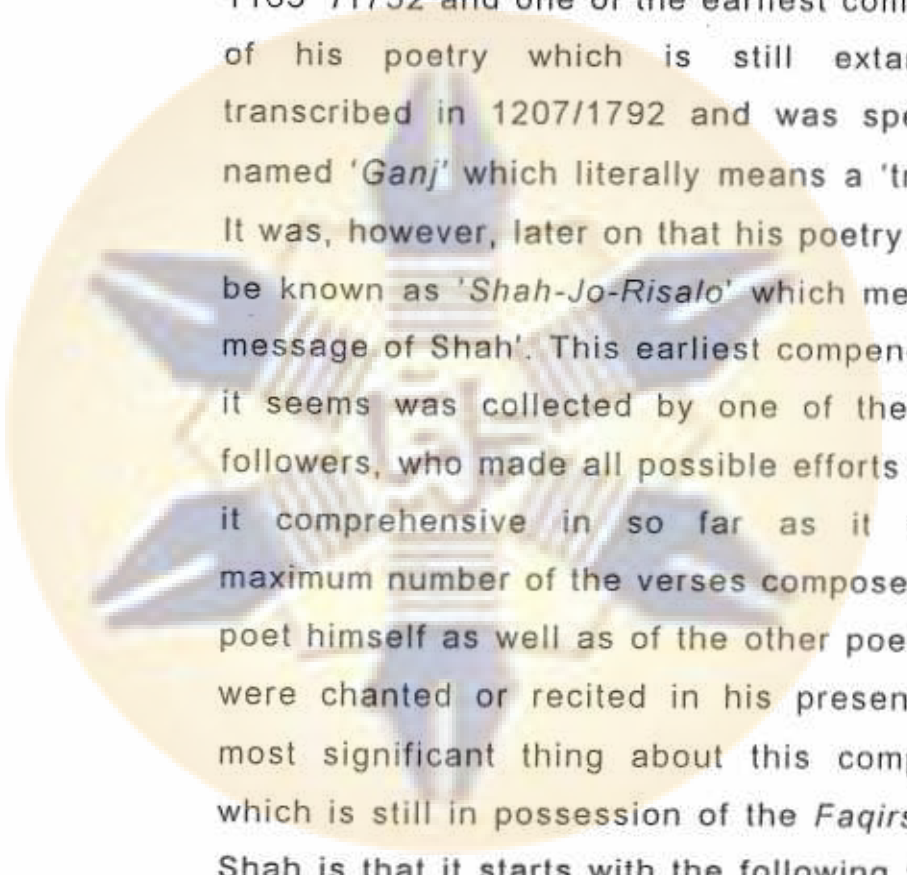
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## CHAPTER-IV

### Rumi as Preceptor.

Shah Abdul Latif died in the year 1165 /1752 and one of the earliest compilations of his poetry which is still extant, was transcribed in 1207/1792 and was specifically named '*Ganj*' which literally means a 'treasure'. It was, however, later on that his poetry came to be known as '*Shah-Jo-Risalo*' which means 'the message of Shah'. This earliest compendium, as it seems was collected by one of the erudite followers, who made all possible efforts to make it comprehensive in so far as it contains maximum number of the verses composed by the poet himself as well as of the other poets which were chanted or recited in his presence. The most significant thing about this compendium which is still in possession of the *Faqirs* at Bhit Shah is that it starts with the following verse of

'*Sur Sasui*'<sup>1</sup>  وڏيل ٿي وايون ڪري ڪٽل ڪوڪاري  
هنن ٻن ٻنهنيا سا رڻا، هو هنجون موتن لئ هاري

The truncated (reed) is wailing,

And the wounded (Sasui) crying,

This (reed) is lamenting its severance from its origin,

and she is shedding tears for her love lost.

Anyone who is well conversant with the *Masnvi* of Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273)

would agree that inspiration of this verse comes from these two opening lines of the Masnvi.<sup>2</sup>

بشنواز نے چوں حکایت می کند  
از جدائیہا شکایت می کند

Hearken to this reed forlorn. Breathing, ever since it was torn from its rushy bed, a strain of impassioned Love and pain.

It is interesting to study the Sindhi verse in more detail and in depth. The verse not only depicts the condition of separation and hence that of wailing of the reed which has been cut off from its origin which Rumi has regarded as the main cause and made us believe to be the effect of lamentation. But the Sindhi verse has double allegory. On one hand, it depicts the conditions of reed without noting its name, on the other it portrays the condition of 'slain' woman, Sasui, who has been moaning and crying for her separated beloved.

An inference can be drawn from the conscious efforts of the disciples for having placed the above verse in the beginning that they meant to show the strong concord between the two great poets and the high esteem assigned to Masnvi by Shah Latif.

As external evidence, it is reported that Shah Latif was in constant touch with the



*Masnvi* of Rumi and the *Bayan-ul-Arifeen* (*Malfuzat*) of his great grand-father. These two books were lastly available at Bhit Shah up to the end of the 19th century, when they were sighted by Mir Sangi<sup>3</sup>, Qalich Beg and Lilaram Watan Mal<sup>4</sup>, the three earliest biographers of Shah Latif.

So far internal evidence is concerned, Rumi is the only poet whose name has been mentioned not only once but six times by Shah Latif in his verses. And all the time acknowledging his indebtedness towards the greatest mystical poet of Islam. In order to understand the actual rapport between the two, it is important to take note of all these six verses.

طالب کثر، سو فتنہ سی، انار رومی رُئی  
جنی دُئی جائے، تنی کچھو کینگی

Numerous are the seekers and beauty's origin the same.

This is the viewpoint of Rumi.

Those who found it, not a word they uttered.

طالب کثر، سو فتنہ سی ای رومی رُئی (روئے)  
جنی دُئی جوئے، تنی کچھو کینگی

Many are the seekers, who are in search of beauty's source

This is the considered opinion of Rumi

Those who reached the site, uttered not a word.

طالب کثر سو فتنہ سی، رومی دُئی جوئے آئی  
تا آری ہی کا ہی تہ منجھین مشاہد و شہی

Manifold are the seekers, and divine beauty the only source,

This is what Rumi has surmised,

Unveil the curtain of yourself and perceive the beloved within.

طالب کثر سوختہ سر، ای رومی بجہ رحا ط  
بھریں وحائے باط پس ط جوئے پرین عکسی

Though the seekers are too many,

The fountainhead of beauty is the one and same,

This is the favourite view of Rumi,

First annihilate your self so as to gain the sight of beloved.

طالب کثر سوختہ سر، ای رومی بجہ راحت  
جنی نہ نہی ست، تنی کیلو کزکی

Aspirants are legion, beauty is the centre

Rumi enjoyed having said so.

Those who found the companionship, uttered not afterwards.

طالب کثر سوختہ سر ای رومی بجہ اوطاق  
جی یچین در فراق نہ مشاہد و ما شیین

The object of all search is but divine beauty.

Solicitors are innumerable, beauty is the source.

If you burn from within, You will have his vision.

Such are Rumi's perimeters,

All these six couplets very succinctly define the undercurrents of Rumi's thought. First and foremost is that according to Rumi, Reality is one and synonymous with Beauty, and that love for beauty ultimately leads to the origin of beauty. 'If Love desires Beauty, no less does Beauty desire Love'. The word 'Sar', which has been used by Shah Latif repeatedly in the above verses, is also favourite with Rumi, who also uses it in varying senses. But the most significant verse of Rumi in this regard is as under.

عاشقی گل زین سر و گنجان سراسر است  
عاقبت مارا بهان سر رهبر است

Whether love be from this (earthly) side or from that (heavenly) side, in the end it leads us yonder.<sup>6</sup>

Thus according to Rumi, 'love, whether its immediate object be Divine or human, real or phenomenal, leads ultimately to the knowledge of God and union with Him'.<sup>7</sup> But again it is Rumi, who emphasizes in clear-cut terms that it is Beauty which begets love or it is Beauty which is the cause of love and not vice versa or Beauty is the cause and love its effect. As such Beauty precedes or is the source and origin of all the activity of love. This is the main idea presented in all the six couplets of Shah Latif.

The other ideas presented in these six verses can be summarized in these words.

I. The experience of Divine beauty can not be expressed, as it would leave you dumb founded.

II. Beholding of the vision is subject to removal of the curtain or veil of the body.

III. Self-annihilation is the precondition for the vision of beloved.

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IV. You will achieve companionship of the gnostics, but that would also make you unable to express or explain.

V. Burning or suffering pangs of separation, would enable you to have inner experience of the beloved.

These ideas, though very briefly stated are the wrap and whoof of the Masnvi of Rumi, which can further be expatiated along with some other striking similarities forming the mainstay of the thought of both the poets.

#### Definition of Sufi

First is the definition of Sufi or mystic, as to what constitutes a 'Sufi'. There are many verses and even anecdotes in the Masnvi which indicate the essential characteristics of a Sufi or as to who is an ideal or model Sufi. Rumi speaks of even wild Sufis. The most prominent character of a Sufi is that he is distinguished by the purity of his heart. The bookish knowledge is insignificant with him, as it proves to be rather burden. Ghazali was the first great Sufi writer who established that the discursive knowledge gained through the senses is of inferior quality and that the knowledge gained through the heart is superior and altogether different. The



prophets to a greater extent and the saints to some extent were endowed with this kind of knowledge, also called intuitional knowledge. Although etymologically the word 'Sufi' can not be derived from the root "*Safa*", "purity," yet this is what the Sufis have been fond of. Kalabadi (d. 390/1000), one of the earliest authors on Sufism, has started with this definition of Sufi: The Sufis were only named Sufis because of the purity (*Safa*) of their hearts and the cleanliness of their acts<sup>8</sup>. Hujwiri (d. 11073AD) Said: He that is purified by love is pure (*Sufi*), and he who is purified by the beloved is a *Safi*. Rumi, who was well conversant with these works of great Sufi masters, seems to have adopted the similar kind of definition, for he differentiates between the 'Sufi' and 'Safi':<sup>9</sup>

صوفی ابن الوقت است در مثال  
لیک مرافی نارغ است از وقت حال

In similitude the Sufi is 'the son of the time' but the pure *Safi* one is unconcerned with 'time' and 'state'. Rumi has further clarified that the 'Sufi' is one who has control over time, and therefore, he is superior in degree to a *Sufi*.<sup>10</sup>

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The other most distinctive feature, which Rumi has noted, is that of the 'state' and 'stages' by which the Sufis are known right from the earliest time. A 'state' or '*Hal*' is differentiated from 'stage' or '*Maqam*' in so far, as the one is earned by the mystic through his own efforts whereas the other is gifted by God.

In this regard, Rumi has assigned higher place

to *maqam* than *hal*. هست بسیار اهل حال از صوفیان نادر است اهل مقام اندمیان  
There is many a one of the Sufis who

enjoy *hal*, (but) he that has all attained to *maqam* is rare amongst them<sup>11</sup>.

Rumi envisaged highest place for the Sufis when he expressed his view that if any one desired to sit with God, let him sit with the Sufis<sup>12</sup>.

Now let us see how Shah Latif has defined Sufi: There are about eight *baits* in Sur Kalyan which mention the very word 'Sufi' and help understand as to how the Sufi was portrayed in his days. Although it would not be proper to suggest that these eight verses fully describe as to what is meant by a Sufi for there are many more verses, specially in Sur Ramkali, where *Yogis* who represent 'gnostics' also come under this definition. Similarly a Sufi is also essentially a *Salik*, a wayfarer, so at many a place he seems to have been dealt with accordingly, and under that particular name or as the context would require.

In the perspective of Sindhi poetry before Shah Latif, his grand father Shah Karim in one of his couplet had also used the word 'Sufi', contending that love and pride can not remain together.

قرب کبریا، ماہ ملاقی نہ سہی  
بعد وایا پریا، صوفی جی صلاح نہ

Love and pride, O, mother, go not together

There is general consensus amongst the Sufis on this point.<sup>13</sup>

At another place in the 'Bayan ul Arifeen', it was categorically stated that a Sufi is he who would not ask for anything nor would convey his demand to any body.<sup>14</sup>

Shah Latif is fully aware of these delicacies and prerequisites of Sufis as mentioned by Rumi and Shah Karim, and it is with this background in his mind, that he warned:

حاصل جان نہ مال، صوفی جہ سب زین  
گوئہی تنہا مال، ولون جہ ویاہیون

Claim not to be a Sufi, if you have not attend 'hal'

They speak not any more, who have lost every thing.<sup>15</sup>

An ideal Sufi knows the intricacies of the path. He is thoroughly monist, and opposed to multiplicity. Love helps him to reach his beloved.

صوفی سالم سی ویا، جی اکثر سب اڈیار  
بازی بازدن کی آہی اولیسار  
پرین سی لہکار، رہنریا رسائی کیا

Perfect are such Sufis, as are opposed to multiplicity.

They forgot not, the rules of the love-game

They reached the beloved, being intoxicated in love.<sup>16</sup>



Perhaps there were some Sufis in the days of Shah Latif, who would not come up to his standard, for they would only pose to be a Sufi, and also indulged in outward formalities. They would only wear the formal dress and cap prescribed for the Sufis, and, therefore, Shah would advise them in stern words.

صوفیا چاہیں سذکرین، صوفی ایانہ صلاح  
کائی وجہ کراہی، من اچلی آپ م

You call yourself 'Sufi', but keep  
'desires' alive, this is unbecoming of a Sufi,  
Put off your tall cap and throw it in the fire! <sup>17</sup>

According to Shah Latif, a Sufi possesses very strong character. He is least bothered about the material things. In fact he feels grieved if he is supplied with material things, and he feels relieved, when he gets nothing.

زنی دیکو، اڈ ڈنی راضی شا  
صوفی نی شا، جہن کین نی لوڈیاں تین

Given something they feel grieved,  
And not given, they feel relieved,

Indeed they are the Sufis,

Who carry nothing along with them. <sup>18</sup>

Rumi had earlier suggested that ultimately those Sufis will be rewarded beyond imagination, who feel satisfied and happy when



they are offered nothing.

سُادِ آن مَوفی کہ رزقش کم شود  
آن شبہ اش در گردنِ واویم شود

Happy is the Sufi whose daily bread is reduced;

his bead becomes a pearl, and he becomes the Sea.<sup>19</sup>

In one of the 'baits' Shah Latif has addressed Sufis as '*Sufi La Kufi*' and holds them in highest esteem. Here the word '*Kufi*' is of much significance, for it has not been used in that sense by Rumi or any body else. It was, however, Rumi who following in the footsteps of his predecessor Sanai (d.1130 AD) obliquely referred to Imam Abu Hanifa (d.767 AD), the greatest jurist of Islamic world has produced, for having imparted no love lessons. Since he belonged to Kufa the people of Kufa came to be known for their strict legal attitude. In the literary history of Sindhi poetry, Qazi Qadan (d.1539) who himself was a Qazi or legal Jurist, is well known for his famous couplet wherein he suggests that it was not from the study of *Kanz* and *Qadoori*, that he found the beloved's way, rather that source was altogether different. The *Kanz* and *Qadoori* are the fundamental textbooks of the Madersah Education.

The other possible background is that during the time of Shah Latif, the main Sufi Orders- *Suharwardy*, *Qadri* and *Naqshbandi* had

already established themselves in Sindh. Although the forefathers of Shah Latif pursued the *Qadri* order and he himself was accordingly affiliated with the same, he was inclined to be 'Owesi', who do not formally adopt any one as their spiritual master. It appears that some of the Sufis had a bickering and ill-will against each other and they were known for their infights among the public. With this perspective in mind, Shah Latif had idealized his image of Sufi in these words.

موفی الاکوفی کونہ یاسن کیر  
منجھان ئیا منجھم وڑھتی پدر نامیش پیر  
جنین ساش ویر، تئی تن جو روا هر و

The Sufi is non-affiliated no one understands him.

He fights within the self, of which no trace is visible

He be friends even those who are his enemies.<sup>20</sup>

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### Gnostics

The most innovative ideas in the Masnvi Rumi are regarding *Arif* or gnostics and the most favourite tradition with the sufis has been. 'The gnostic see not any thing, hears not anything, thinks not anything except God'<sup>21</sup>.

Rumi seems to have further added to this tradition when he says that the gnostics nourishment is the light of God. This makes his conception of gnostic unique in many ways. Rumi has differentiated amongst *Arif*, *Ashiq* and *Zahid*. The basic premise with Rumi has been that the gnostics were in existence even before the creation of this universe. Their hearts were receptacle of Godly light and truth.

پیر ایشان ایند کین عالم نبود  
خان ایشان بود در پانی وجود

The Pirs are they whose spirits, before this world existed, were in the sea of (Divine) bounty.<sup>22</sup>

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Again he remarks.

پیش ازین تن عمر کجا بگذراند

Before the creation of this body,  
they passed many life times.

مشورت می رفت در ایام خلق  
جالشان در بحر قدرت تا بخلق

Whilst consultation was going on as to be

bringing mankind into existence, their spirits were in the sea of Divine omnipotence upto throat.<sup>23</sup>

Shah Latif in the following verse seems to have adopted the main idea, with some change.

لنگ ڪريالون لاڻگ موي تي ڪن نه مسڪو  
جا اسلامان آبي هي ساسائون پانگ  
سامي ڇڏي سانگ، نڙيا گورنات ڪي

The ascetics remained half clad,  
observed no formalities of ablution.  
For they were conversant with the call  
which existed ere Islam.  
Leaving aside all the formalities,  
they met their master.<sup>24</sup>

The idea of per-existence or of special existence prior to this present existence has found way in Shah Latif's poetry. In fact in just two lines he has very comprehensively dealt with this concept which was so dear to him.

جڙيان آبي هي جيئا، جڳ جڳ سي جيئا  
موي تي ڪن مرن، مران آبي جيئا

Who lived before their living was  
Form age to age will live for aye.  
They will not die again who died  
Before the dying came to them<sup>25</sup>.

Rumi has emphasized that such



ascetics are in possession of ideal love for only God. They were not afraid of the fire of hell nor they were attracted by the comforts of paradise. They had faith in God for God's sake only and that only for the sake of love.

هست ایمانش برای خواست او      نی برای جنت و اشجار جو  
ترک کفرش هم برای حق بود      نی از بیم آنکه در آتش رود

His faith is (held) for the sake of (doing)  
His will, not for the sake of paradise and its  
trees and streams.  
He is abandonment of infidelity is also for God's  
sake, not for fear lest he go into the fire.<sup>26</sup>

Rumi has advanced the reasoning  
that this is due but to their nature or  
temperament which they have been bestowed by  
God.

این چنین آمد از اصل آن خوی او  
نی ریاضت نی بخت و جوی او

That disposition of his is like this originally!  
It is not (acquired by) discipline or by his effort  
and endeavour<sup>27</sup>.

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Now let us compare the following  
four lines of Shah.

کمی کا چوٹی ناگن بد کا شین جی  
جھڑا آنا جگ پر تھڑا ویا موٹی  
شین جی چوٹی پورب شین بد ری  
"

کدھی کام کا پریا انھی روش روں  
 نکا دل دوزخ دنیا نکو لہشت گھرن  
 نکو کم کفارین نکا مسلمان من  
 اپا سین چون تہ پرین کجہو پانہنہو

The ascetics have strange disposition

Neither they fear hell nor like the paradise

Neither they care for infidelity nor are inclined to faith  
 they constantly pray for beloved's protection. <sup>28</sup>

The gnostics are always happy with what God has for them, they never ask for anything. They display utmost satisfaction in whatever they get from God, whether it is in the shape of disappointment or otherwise. Again this idea is common to both Rumi and Shah Latif.

در قیما زونی ہی بیند خاص  
 نغز شای آید طلب کردن خلاص

In submitting to destiny they experience a peculiar delight! It would be an act of infidelity for them to crave for release. <sup>29</sup>

Shah Latif with a little bit of change

observed

نا امیدیا امکوا و چین اکیسین  
 سدا سک و سن طالب او و تقریر تی

Although hopeless, they consider it great wealth

The ascetics find containment

And happy about the destiny <sup>30</sup>.

According to Rumi, the bodies of

such gnostics are pure spirit, though they appear to us in bodily form similarly their speech and other acts are also having direct bearing from God, the absolute spirit.

پس بزرگان این نگفتند از گزاف  
قسم یا کان عین جان افتاد صاف  
گفتشان و لغتشان و لغتشان  
جمله جان مطلقاً مدلی نشان

Not idly, therefore, the great (mystics) said this, "The body of the holy ones (saints) is essentially pure as (their) spirit". Their speech and soul and form, all this is absolute spirit without (external) trance<sup>31</sup>.

Shah Latif has however used the *Hadith Qudsi* which relates to such sufis and has been referred to by Rumi.

ان اولیائی تحت قباٹی لا یعرفهم غیرا

My friends are under my cloak, no body knows them but I. <sup>32</sup>

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Shah Latif has referred to this *Hadith* more than once. It is for such saints, that he has repeatedly declared them as the one without parallel, whose veracity can not be challenged by anyone.

سامی کامی پرین لہ کسی ثاب  
نکر دین رومہ کی کوئی ثواب  
اوین آرشی ماز لوں مریضہاں این آب  
سروجات جواب لون کس پچین تن نی

For Lord's love, ascetics roasted and consumed,  
Tears mingled with blood they shed,  
What can you ask them about their caste or creed?<sup>33</sup>

Annihilation is their distinctive mark,  
which is also the reason for their exalted status  
beyond any limits of legal code. Rumi has  
explained this many a time why the *Shariat* or  
Islamic legal code is not applicable to them.

شرع ہر زندگان و اغنیاست  
شرع ہر اصحاب نورستان نجاست  
آن گروہی نیز فقیری پی برزند  
صد جہت زان مردگان خانی تراند

Shariat is for the alive and wealthy persons  
How Shariat is applicable who are dead!  
This group who is pursuing the path of poverty  
They are hundred times than the dead ones.<sup>34</sup>

The very same idea appears in the  
following lines of the poetry of Shah Latif.

جیہا فانی شافیا اللہ مد و حیا پو و عبود  
نہ تن قیام نہ قعود نہ کوکب سجود  
جیلاہ شیا نابود، نیلاہ رسا بود کئی

Those who absorbed themselves in God  
losing their existence  
No more they stand, sit or prostrate



(i.e. offer prayers as prescribed by Shariat)

Indeed annihilation led them to the subsistence<sup>35</sup>.

Rumi in Book IV has related a story of a Sufi whose head was on his knees and was engaged in the meditation. He has compared that heart of the Sufi with mosque wherein the body prostrates and the lower self or *nafs* of the man is like a carob tree, which is supposed to despoil it.

مسجد است آن دل که جسمش ساجد است  
یار بد خروب هر جا مسجد است

'The mosque is the heart to which the body bows down wherever the mosque is, the bad companion is carob'<sup>36</sup>

Shah Latif taken inspiration from this story wherein there is mention of the knees of a sufi and his body has been compared with a mosque.

میرنا من مکراب جسرجا مع تن جو  
قبلہ نما قلب گریختن نہا کمالون تراب  
تخمین جی تکبیر میان جسمان کمالون جواب  
تن کھڑو روہم تو اب جن ہیتریا ہا دریا مل لستو

The knees of ascetics are the prayer arch  
and their bodies like a mosque.

While their hearts are directed towards *qibla*  
their bodies are completely lost

With the sound of Takbeer, they naughted themselves.  
How can there be evil or good for them,

When their hearts are consummated with God.<sup>37</sup>

It was again Rumi who suggested that the sleep of a gnostic is better than the prayer of a commoner.

نوم عالم از عبادت به بود  
آنچنان علی کہ مستنبہ بود

The sleep of the wise is better than worship (Performed by the ignorant), (If it be) such a wisdom as brings spiritual awaking<sup>38</sup>.

Shah Latif has also differentiated the sleep of the wise or the gnostic rather equates it with worship. But he has made it conditional and that is real absorption in God.

جی شاحل عیب سین سمعہ تن لو اب  
نین ہیرائی نیند سن خوش کیالون صواب  
اویسر و غذاب دشان تن دور تشر

Their slumber is but their reward  
who are one with God.

Though their eyes are acquaint with sleep  
yet they are fortunate

No more anxiety and suffering  
for they get relieved of all worries.<sup>39</sup>

Again a stage is reached where cognition is gained through sleep, hence it becomes more valuable.

ستیجا ساچار ساچار دیکانہ شئی  
لہان پورہ مون مان نین ہیرایانہ سین

I gained consciousness in sleep,  
and lost it when I awoke  
O mother, it is afterward that  
I accustomed my eyes with sleep<sup>40</sup>.



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### Immanence and Transcendence

The Reality which is Supreme Being is above human imagination and cannot be comprehended due to his transcendence. This is asserted by those who believe in the abstraction or *Tanzih*, whereas the others assert. His immanence in form, actually both are wrong.

Rumi has taken up this issue in the beginning of the second book of Masnvi and his conclusion is: He is formless in external appearance and yet is manifested in all form.<sup>51</sup> Rumi is more philosophical, when he advises that you must transcend the form and get to the form less.

ناممور یا مقور گفت  
باطل آمد بجای صورت رفت

You're calling God formless (transcending form) or formed (immanent in forms) is vain, without your liberation from foe. (unless you are freed from sense-perception)<sup>42</sup>.

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Form has a but very limited scope and it has to be transcended to approach God. Shah Latif has also subscribed to this view when he says.

سچا پی نہ صورت ریا صورت ہر دم سوچ  
شیا پارا شئی بوجھ، وچا شئی وجود کی

Reality can't be conceived without form,



yet do not pursue the Form,  
Be simpleton like child  
And get rid of the 'self'<sup>43</sup>

The existence of phenomenal world is a *prima facie* fact encountered by every body, but it bears no relevance with the reality. You may feel happy with the forms of this as a child gets pleasure when he is given the toys of different forms and sizes. This phenomenal world has no more significance than that of a toy for a child. So if you are really interested in this issue, it can be resolved when you have come off the age, that is when you have to get yourself annihilated in the Reality. Again Shah advises in these words.

صورت سوچو مے تھنجا بیٹا پکین لڑجو  
سکن اھی سوچو منھن مقابل نہ تہا۔

Think not about the form of beloved,  
Though you love to do so  
How can you resolve this issue  
which is not before you<sup>44</sup>.

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The problem of *Tanzih* (Remote) and *Tashbih* (Companion) has been very complicated core issue of the Sufi thought. 'The orthodox hold that Allah is beyond comparison, that in His absolute unity He is remote and different from all created things, and that the qualities ascribed to Him in the Quran are not to be

understood in the sense in which they are applicable to any of his creatures. Pantheistic Sufis, while accepting the doctrine of Divine transcendence (*tanzih*), regard it as only one half of the truth: the whole truth they say, consists in combining *tanzih*, the Divine immanence. The former doctrine, by itself, leads to the duality of God and the world; the latter by itself, is polytheism; the worshippers of God are those who see Him as the One Real Being in all forms of existence- at once transcending all and immanent in all<sup>45</sup>.

Shah Latif is of the opinion that this is a very serious issue. Infact it is a complete mystery which is beyond resolution by human mind. Better not to involve yourself in this at all.

گالہم پروان جیہا پیکم جیہا گالہم مریوئی پیکم  
ہنڈرا اجمہ منجم نہ پرہیون پاسیہ لیتن

The story of the beloved is a complete mystery

O, my heart never to be resolved or revealed

Get not entangled in this controversy

It may render you far away from your beloved<sup>46</sup>.

### Sensory Perceptions:

It is almost universally acknowledged principle with the Sufis that the physical senses of human being are of very little help or rather of no use for the perception of Reality. They have, therefore, emphasized that if man has to get himself acquainted with the Reality, these present senses which include mainly seeing and hearing are to be trained or developed or even replaced so as to be able to perceive the real beloved or in other words to catch a glimpse of God. Rumi has been very explicit in this regard, when he says that the physical ears render no help to understand the serious issues related to the Reality. According to him it is the 'ears of heart' which are to be developed in the process in order to attain the Godly truths.

گوشِ حریفِ فروش و دیگر گوشِ حُر  
کین سخن را در نیابد گوشِ کاسِ حُر

Sell your asinine (corporeal) ear and buy another ear, for the asinine ear will not apprehend this discourse.<sup>47</sup>

Shah Latif has almost replicated the idea

ہیا کن گزشتان و کٹی کن کی پیا پیچ  
تین سان سٹیج سزیا پرین مالہریا

Dispose off these ears and have new ones,

So that you could hear the beloved's story.<sup>48</sup>

Both Rumi and Shah have held that the senses in the present shape cause illusory impression instead of proper appreciation of the reality.

این سخن از گوش دل باید شنود گوش گل این جاندار در هیچ سود  
هو عجبی کن کپار حیا، سود و سیاه نشین  
اندر حیا آهین، سس سیهوشن سین

Hear not with the apparent ears.

but with those which are inside

listen to the message of yonder<sup>49</sup>.

The most common theme with the Sufis has been that they have considered eyes as a gateway for the seeing of beloved are helpful. As compared to the ears, the Sufis are more careful in regard to 'eyes,' because they have more significant role in the contemplation. They have been unanimous in their approach that these physical eyes are of no use for the *Salik* or traveller of the path. These eyes are to be trained before they turn out to be the eyes of a gnostic.

The basic question which has been addressed by all the Sufis alike has been that how far these eyes are helpful in discovering the reality. Shah Abdul Latif is also no exception to the line of the great Sufis. His approach is basically similar to that of Rumi in so many



respects. First of all he is clear in his mind that these physical eyes are really incapable of identifying their beloved. Therefore, they are to be shut and the inner eyes are to be opened.

دیک مرلوسن تن، هي جي مجاز يا شيون منهن ۾  
جن نه سڃاڻو سپرين، نهاري نيٽن  
پرين سڃاڻي پس، پئي جن لوڻيون .

Try not to look for the beloved

With these physical eyes

They look for Him in vain,

For the same are not used to it.

Indeed they would behold the beloved

who have closed their both eyes<sup>50</sup>.

Shah Latif has further clarified that it is quite different process which would enable you and your eyes to contemplate on your real beloved.

اک انبي زارون، النوعا مر سن  
جي لهوار ولوک وهي لون اچووه اويار  
منجهان لوچ لھار پر پيسو پرين زي

Have an extraordinary eye

Behave differently from the public

If they proceed downward,

You should move up stream.

Have your eyes fixed on Him,

though your back be to him<sup>51</sup>.

But once the eyes have enjoyed the vision of beloved, then it is no more possible to turn away the eyes from that place or the abode of beloved. Again and again they feel to catch the glimpse of beloved. Strange it is that while, I am in sleep but the eyes set off in search of beloved, and beholds the vision.

اکن کی اکون کی جو جھلون یاٹیان  
لوکر لتار جائنیم ساہن سوٹالون  
مون کی مار جالون، پاٹ پرچی اکون

Howsoever I restrain my eyes,  
but they break loose;  
while people are asleep  
they succeed in beholding the beloved  
The became friendly with Him,  
but I suffer in the bargain.<sup>52</sup>

At this stage the rivalry between the eyes and heart occurs to which man Sufi poets have made man pathetic renfresens. Hujwiri has quoted the following verse of a Sufi in this regard.

My heart envies mine eye the pleasure of seeing,  
And mine eye envies my heart the pleasure of meditating.<sup>53</sup>

Once the eyes have been accustomed to the beholding of beloved, they

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remain no more under the control. Early in the morning they look for the beloved and on attaining the same, they feel satiated as if they were provided with sumptuous feast. According to Shah Latif, however, there is always a tendency on the part of eyes that they may go astray, the same are to be kept under constant vigil and care so much so that if they yearn or aspire to look for anything else, then the same are to be taken out and offered as food to the crows, for they loose their value and worth.

But when the eyes have been so trained and disciplined that they would not see anything else but their beloved. A great Sufi Yahya b.Ma'az is reported as saying, 'whoever sees anything besides his beloved can not see his beloved'<sup>54</sup>. Hujwiri has however, quoted Muhammad Ibne-Wasi, who said; 'I never saw anything without seeing God therein'. which indicates an advanced stage of contemplation in which the mystic sees only the agent<sup>55</sup>.

Shah Latif has expressed the same experience in the following couplet:

میں نے اپنے سین میں کائنات کو سامہیوں  
 ہوئی کہی انہیں و ذالوہا لاسا

These paltry eyes of mine

Have brought me favours grace

If evil but before them be,

They see love in its place<sup>56</sup>.



### Identity of Lover and Beloved.

The concept of love with Rumi is unique in many ways. The greatest characteristic of love with Rumi is selflessness or absorption of the lover in the beloved. It is the complete surrender of the love at the altar of beloved. Rumi in Book-I through a parable has stated this very systematically. A person after a very long time came to visit his friend and knocked at the door. The friend asked, 'who he was'. It is 'I' came the reply. The friend turned him away by saying that it was not the proper time, nor there was a place for such a raw fellow. The wretched fellow went away and after a long time realized his mistake. Now he came again fully burned and cooked and knocked at the door. His friend called, 'who is at the door?'. He answered 'Thou art at the door'. The friend cried, 'come in, Since you are I', for there is no room in the house for two 'Is'. According to Sari Saqti, love between two is not right until the one addresses the other 'o, thou I'.

گفتد ایمن چون منی ای من در آ  
نسبت بجائی ز من را در سرا

Now said the friend, "Since thou art I, come in,  
O myself: there is no room in the house for two I's.

نسبت سوزن را سرشته دو تا  
چونله یکتائی دریں سوزن در آ

The double end of thread is not for the needle:



in as much as thou art single, come into this needle".<sup>57</sup>

Shah Latif while emphasizing the identity of lover with beloved has, however, modified the metaphor of needle in the following manner.

سو ئیریاں سنہرے و جان تن کے بالوں بہنیں  
لو کی پائیں اکٹیں محب اتریں ہ

Unless you have made yourself slender and thin like needle,

How can your beloved allow you to be rolled into his eyes.<sup>58</sup>

Rumi in Book-V has retold the story of Layla Majnun in a very powerful manner and he has depicted how the complete identification of lover exists with his beloved. It is in this story that Majnun tells the audience that he is not fearful of the lancet if it is pierced in his body, but what he apprehends is that if you strike me it will hurt or pierce Layla. Because my whole being is full with Layla.

ترسم ای فہاد گر فہدم کند  
نشانی را نامہ بر لبہ از منی  
دانند آن عقلی کہ آلودہ روست  
در میان لیلی و من فرق نیست

I am afraid, o cupper, lest if you let my blood  
you suddenly inflict a wound with your lancet on Layla.  
The man of reason whose heart is enlightened

knows that Layla and me there is no difference.<sup>59</sup>

Shah Latif has also forcefully presented his viewpoint about the complete identity which exists between the Lover and beloved. The same idea has been expressed in these lines.

وہی تیر کمان میں میان مار رہا ہوں  
موت میں آہیں توں، متان تنہا جو توں ہی لگی

Kill me not with dart, O my beloved.

For your dwell in me, it may strike you.<sup>60</sup>

Shah Latif has given much of his thought to this serious issue. According to him *Inness* is discernible in man, universe and God. The 'Inness' of man is a great stumbling block in his spiritual progress. It has to be diluted and dissolved in the oneness of God.

اُسین ان پار کدھن تان کونہ ولو  
ان اللہ وتریعب الوترین میان ہی پار  
ہیکرا آئی وٹ ہار ہنجرھوں جی ہنجرھوں

Across life 'ocean no one yet

With 'I' as guide his foot hath set.

God indeed who is one

Adorett one-ness alone.

Take Two-ness off to burn with fire.

Existence may man's tears require,

This weeping should be done.

Before oneness alone<sup>61</sup>.

The feeling of 'Iness' is almost universal, which is also far from reality. The believers of monism suggest complete identity between God and this universe. But Shah Latif would express his viewpoint as under.

عالمِ اکوُن ساٹ پر یو لڑ پیر کریا  
یاٹ نہ آھی جاٹ، ماںڈیا مںڈیکر لڑ

The universe with 'I' doth overflow and it flaunts about  
But its own 'self' it doth not know it is magicians spell<sup>62</sup>

Here again the idea seems to have been originated from the similar idea of Rumi when he refers to God as 'sorcerer' but considers it to be real:

جاذبہ کی حق کس حق اسمت وراست  
جارو خواندن مران حق را خطاست

The sorcery which God practices is real and true; its wrong to call that real thing sorcery<sup>63</sup>

However, as maintained by the great sufi masters like Sarraj, it is only God who has the right to say 'I'. That is also a very dear idea with Shah Latif who has elucidated it in these words.

مون پر یوں موجود، اگو آگالھین آھیان

You persist in me, but 'I' is yonder<sup>64</sup>.

Shah Latif has also assigned special meaning to 'You', as is obvious from the following lines.

لَوِیَا رَسِیَا لَوِیَا جِہا لَوِیَا جِہا  
کونہی پیر خیال، جہا سارک شگدہا

All beauty is yours, you are the Reality  
Else is fantasy, if you get rid of duality. <sup>65</sup>

Rumi had already differentiated between 'You' in the following verses.

اَوَلَوِیَا اِسْتِ اِیْمَانِ اِیْن لَوِیَا اِسْتِ  
کہ در آخر واقف بیرون شوست

The prophet (Saint or angelic soul) is you, not this (unreal) you, but the other 'you' which in the end is conscious of escape<sup>66</sup>. Actually the sufis have abhorred the appellations of 'I', 'You' and 'We' and they prefer to refer to the Reality as 'He'. According to the Sufis: 'Thou' implies multiplicity, while 'He' indicates that all 'otherness' is swallowed in God. <sup>67</sup>

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## Prayer

Although the importance of the formally prescribed prayers has not been underscored by the sufis in general, they have considered the routine prayers as insufficient, and not the real object of worship. As a matter of the fact Sufis have always stressed upon the spirit of the prayers then their formal performance. Absorption in the Divines unity is the soul of prayers. Rumi has discussed the problem of prayer at more than one place.

پنج وقت آمد نماز و رهنمون  
عاشقان را هم صلاه دانمون

The ritual prayer is five times (daily) as guide but for lovers are they who are in prayer continually<sup>68</sup>.

Shah Latif also acknowledged the importance of ritual prayer including fasting in the month of Ramzan, but he held the view that these are not sufficient for gaining the perception of the beloved.

روزای نمازون ای یکتا جگر کم  
او کو پیو فصد جن سان پس بجی پرین کی

The prayers and fastings are good deeds indeed. But the perception of beloved is gained through other way<sup>69</sup>.

Rumi in the story of mystic Daquqi in

Book-III, has expressed his views as under.

معنی تکبیر این است ای امام  
کامی خدا پیشش لوماقربان شویم

O, Imam, the meaning of *takbir* is this; we have become a sacrifice, O God, before thee<sup>70</sup>

A certain man relates! 'I was praying behind Dhun-Nun, when he pronounced the *Takbir*, he cried *Allah Akbar* and fell in a swoon like a lifeless body<sup>71</sup>.

It was again Rumi who suggested that the essence of prayers is self effacement and self-abnegation<sup>72</sup> (اصل نماز ترک بن است).

زانکه ترک بن بود اصل نماز  
ترک خویش و غر زان آرز

A Persian verse of similar importance has been quoted in the *Bayan-ul Arifeen*<sup>73</sup>

نماز عابدان پر کوی و سجود است  
نماز عارفان ترک وجود است

Shah Latif has expressed exactly the

same ideas in the following verses.

جان جان پسین جان کی تان تان نا هم سجود  
و جاننی وجود، تھان پورے تکبیر چو

So long as you are conscious of yourself,

It is futile to prostrate and pray

First annihilate your existence.

then commence your prayer<sup>74</sup>.

جان جان پسین جان کی تان تان نا هم نماز  
سپ و جاننی سار تھان پورے تکبیر چو

As long as you are conscious of yourself  
 Your prayers go waste and futile.  
 First get ride of the worldly concerns,  
 Then begin your prayers<sup>75</sup>.

Once Rumi was asked about the true nature of prayers, 'Is there any way to God nearer than the ritual prayer? 'No' he replied; but prayer does not consist in forms alone. Formal prayers has a beginning and an end, like all forms and bodies and every thing that partakes of speech and sound, but the soul is unconditioned and infinite, it has neither beginning nor end. The prophets have shown the true nature of prayer<sup>76</sup>.

Prayer is the drowning and unconsciousness of the soul so that all these forms remain without. At that time there is no room even for Gabriel, who is pure spirit. One may say that the man who prays in this fashion is exempt from all religious obligations, since he is deprived of his reason. Absorption in the Divine unity is the soul of prayer<sup>76</sup>.

Shah Latif has expressed the same feeling in these lines.

ورد و ظیف و سرِ یالِ کارِ هستی نماز  
 نصیر و بحرِ یابازِ چو یاجنبنِ پیکر

No more rites and litanies, not the ritual prayer even,  
Since my heart was taken away by my eagle like  
beloved<sup>77</sup>.

Rumi in Book-IV has related an anecdote as to how the satan awakens Amir Muawiya at ripe time for prayer. Muawiya fails to understand as to why the satan had awakened him at proper time to offer prayers for it was against his nature. Finally it transpires that it was true, for the satan knew that incase the prayer timings are lost, Muawiya would feel greater pinch and his consequent feeling of remorse would earn him greater reward from God.

آن تاسف و آن خفای و آن نیاز  
در رشتی از دوصد زیرونیاز

That regret and that lamentation and that  
Sorrowful yearning would have exceeded (in value)  
Two hundred litanies and prayers<sup>78</sup>

Shah Latif seems to have had the same idea in his mind when he said;

وقتِ وحیی سو حفظا شئی کین  
کان بھر مبی تھی جا پر عز ازل عی

The fixed time has though lapsed,  
Let it not be wasted  
One should not be pursued by Azazil,  
Who adopted the strange tactics.<sup>79</sup>



### SIMILARITY OF PHRASES, IDIOMS, SIMILES AND METAPHORS.

'Actually it would have been enough for the author of the Risalo to be familiar with the Masnawi alone', remarked Sorely, though simultaneously he had confessed that it was not known to what extent Shah Abdul Latif was acquainted with the other great Persian poets. Indeed it can be proved that Shah Latif to the exclusion of other Persian poets had studied Rumi and Rumi was greatest source of inspiration for him. The influence of Rumi is not only traceable to the extent of ideas and thought, rather it is so pervasive that at times he preferred to use some of the same words and terminology.

Rumi while discussing the value of time with Sufis has used the words 'FARDA' i.e 'tomorrow and 'NAQD' or 'cash' as is apparent from the following lines.

صوفی ابن الوقت با شرا کار فریق  
لیست فردا گفتن از شرط طریق  
تو مگر خود مرد صوفی لستی  
قدرا از لسیب خیزد لستی

The Sufi is the son of the [present] time,  
O, Comrade: it is not the rule of the way to say  
'Tomorrow'.

Art not thou indeed a Sufi, then? that (cash)

which is in hand is reduced to naught by postponing the payment<sup>80</sup>.

Rumi at other place has clearly equated love with *naqd* or cash.

زانک عاشق دردم لقا است مست  
لاجرم از نغز ایمان برتر است

In as much as the lover is intoxicated at the moment of immediacy (*naqd*), he is necessarily superior to infidelity and faith<sup>81</sup>.

Shah Latif has made use of these two words in case of Sasui.

فردا مندق منی کنی دلقا کنی غار

She waited not for 'tomorrow',

Rather she took up 'cash' (true love) with her<sup>82</sup>.

Again Shah Latif like most of the sufis in general, and following Rumi in particular, has discussed the issue of 'part' (*Juz*) and the 'whole' (*kul*) and their relationship. In the same verse he has also dealt with the problem of 'non-existence' (*adam*), which is considered the last stage for the gnostics. The great intellectual Sufi Junaid once said: 'God is affirmed more by not being than being'<sup>83</sup>.

جزو عالم جو سین کُل سین آهین کم  
آس جن عود آد نہ جیندی ان ریا

The ascetics have lost their individuality (part)  
 And are concerned with the universal (whole)  
 Their resting-place is but non-existence (*adam*)  
 I can not live without them.<sup>84</sup>

The same debate of part versus whole or individual versus universal is repeatedly occurring in Masnawi.

عاشقان کل نه این عشاق جزو  
 مانند از کل آنکه شد مشتاق جزو  
 چونکه جبروی عاشق جزوی شود  
 زود مغشوقش بکل خود رود

The lovers of the whole are not those who love the part  
 he that longed for the part failed to attain to the whole  
 When a part falls in love with a part, the object of its  
 love soon goes (returns) to its own whole<sup>85</sup>.

'Non-existence' or *adam* is again a very hot topic for discussion with Rumi. According to him the lovers and gnostics are characterised by their quality of non-existence, which is the greatest virtue on their part.

عاشقان اندر عدم خیمه زدند  
 چون عدم یک رنگ و نفس واحدند

Lovers have pitched their tents in non-existence  
 (in the World of reality ,which has no servile existence)  
 They are of one colour and one essence like  
 non-existence<sup>86</sup>.

It is now clear that these lines do

provide the backdrop in which Shah Latif composed his own verse.

In order to understand the man God relationship Rumi introduced the metaphor of fish for the human soul which lives or has its being in the unfathomable sea of existence, and that is God.

‘ماھیا بنیم ولو دریا ی حیات’

‘زندہ ایم از لطف نیکو صفات’

We are the fishes, and thou the sea of life :

We live by thy favour , o, thou, whose attributes are excellent. <sup>87</sup>

Shah Latif has taken full benefit of this simile when he said:

سدا ساثر سیرم پراندر لہی نہ اج  
لیس جو پرین جو سا سیوئی سچ  
تیا انھون ترن اج سدا ساثر سیرم

They are permanently in the sea, —

still unquenched their thirst is

The vision of beloved is more like a mirage.

Hence they are thirsty though they are in the sea. <sup>88</sup>

The idea that man is a macrocosm and that the soul of a man is like a mirror wherein or through which the Reality can be perceived, has been a central theme for many a great Sufi, but more so for Rumi. In this context



Rumi has made use of the favourite Sufi tradition according to which God is not contained by the universe but by the heart of faithful servant. The heart is the dwelling place of God; or it is, in other terminology, the mirror in which God reflects Himself. But this mirror has to be polished by constant asceticism and by permanent acts of loving obedience until all dust and rust have disappeared and it can reflect the primordial divine light'.<sup>89</sup>

Rumi has brought out this point in the story of Greeks versus Chinese painters. The Chinese painted very beautiful pictures on a wall, but the Greeks in comparison merely polished the opposite wall which was to catch the image or reflection of these pictures, once the curtain was removed from the middle. As a result of the contest; the Greeks (*Rumis*) were declared successful by the king. Rumi says that the Greeks were actually the sufis:

رومیان آن صوفیایند ای دید  
لری که صفت کرده اند آن سیمای  
بی زنگار و کتاب بی هنر  
یا که از آرزو هر من و نعل و لیله  
آن صفائی آئینه را که در دست  
ستم لغزشی بی عدد را تا بلیست  
بگرچه آن صورت نگین در فلک  
نه به غرض و نه رسی و نه بدست  
زانکه محدودست و معدومست آن  
آئینه دل را نباشد حد بدان

عقل انجاس است آمد با مفضل  
زانکه دل با اوست یا خود او دل

The Greeks, O, father are the sufis:(they are) without (independent of) study and books and erudition,

But they have burnished their breasts (and made them) pure from greed and cupidity and avarice and hatreds.

That purity of the mirror is, beyond doubt, the heart which receives images innumerable.

Although that form is not continued in Heaven, nor in the empyrean nor in the sphere of stars nor (in the earth which rests) on the fish.

Because all those are bounded and numbered: know that the mirror of the heart hath no bound.

Here the understanding becomes silent or else it leads into error, because the heart is with Him (God), or indeed the heart is He.<sup>90</sup>

Shah Latif in the following lines which are from Sur Suhni on the similar lines has declared man's heart as mirror or, receptacle which could contain God, but for that it has to be cleansed and purged from the worldly greed and ill-founded fears and doubts.

ہمارے حق وسیع سانسار ان ساهتے جو  
خواب خیال سے خفترا لیتے ترک زیب  
اندر آئینہ خرا پرین سویشیج  
انھی راہ وسیع سے مساہر و مائیں

O, frail woman, remain committed ,  
 fulfill the obligations of Sahar(God)  
 Get rid of the fears , doubts  
 and avoid all false things  
 Turn your inside into a mirror,  
 and look for your beloved.  
 Follow this path strictly,  
 So that you may attain the contemplation.<sup>91</sup>

What is the relation between the mirror and the image? Is God reflected in the heart or is the heart itself nothing but the reflection of God.

Rumi clarified the whole issue in these words:

آئینه دل چون شود صافی و پاک  
 نقشها بسنی برون از آب و خاک  
 هم بسنی نقش و هم نقاشین را  
 فرشت دولت را و هم فرشت را

When the mirror of your heart becomes clear and pure, you will behold images (which are) outside of (the world) of water and earth. You will behold both the image and the image maker, both the carpet of (spiritual) empire and the carpet spreader.<sup>92</sup>

Shah Latif has replied to these queries in the following verses:

وچین چو و لکھار هت نه پولهین خوب کبی  
 لکوکین لطیف چبی چار و چو بی یار  
 سنی سنی بد سند رو پرت پنھون سنی چار  
 خانی سنی زھار تو پر دیو دوست جو



Why go to Wankar, seek you not the beloved here?  
Nowhere else is Baloch (God) hidden, Latif declares.  
Be steadfast, prepare yourself, keep firm your faith,  
Peep within, find your friends place.<sup>93</sup>

In the following lines, he cites  
Quranic verse,

ہوت سہجی ہنم میں، یکس کوہ پلہی  
و فی النفسم افلا یفرون شوحہی کر سہی  
کرہن کانہ وی، ہوت پو لہن صت تی

Thy love is in thy lap: then why from travellers  
dost thou make thy quest?

Thy love's within thee! Sees't thou not?

This saying ponder well and know.

She never sought the public place to ask where  
her loved one might be.<sup>94</sup>

Again he quotes another verse from  
the holy Quran.

ہوت سہجی ہنم میں یکس کوہ پریاں  
و یکن اقرب الہ سہنجو توہی سناں  
بہنجو اہی یاں، آدو عجین کیا

Beloved within you and you seek Him here and there,

He is "closer to you than your vein jugular".

Yourself is the hurdle between you and your  
love.<sup>95</sup>

According to the sufis once the



windows of heart has been opened as a mirror towards the reality, the soul is enabled to gain full consciousness of God as the beloved. In this regard the sufis rely on the famous tradition.

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه

'Who knows himself knows his God'.

This *hadith* is usually explained as alluding to the internal gnosis: to know once own inner most self means to find that it is identical with God.<sup>96</sup> Shah Latif has quoted this Hadith in the following verses,

پنھون ٻيھين پاڻھين وٺي سئي جو سينگار  
من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه اهوئي اچار  
جو وندرم و اجار سو سر لس هنمين

Sasui became Punhoon, she lost adornment.

'Who knows himself knows his God ', is the fact, what she was to get at Windar, she received all here.<sup>97</sup>

As to why the internal gnosis should lead towards the gnosis of God, Sufis refer to another very famous tradition; 'God created man in His own image.'

Shah Latif has cited this tradition in

the following verse in Sur Sasui.

پنھون ٻيھين وٺي سئي جي سرھن  
خلق آدم عليٰ نورته ايا وٺن منجه ورون  
چري منجهان چوٽي لکي هوت هليو

Sasui became Punhoon, her beauty disappeared,

'God has made man in His own image' trees

constantly repeat.

The love crazed one in ecstasy took beloved in her arms.<sup>99</sup>

According to Rumi, mystical union involves a transformation of the lovers personality into that of the beloved. The mystical experience transcends the logical distinctions of subject, object and attribute. This is how Rumi expresses the idea when he says

خورد همو آبست و هم ساقی و مست  
هر سه یک شد چو طلسم تو شست

Truly it is both the water and the giver of drink and the drunken; all three become one when your talisman is shattered i.e. (when your illusion of individuality is destroyed)<sup>99</sup>

Rumi has concluded that but this oneness you cannot know by reasoning. Shah Latif alluded to this kind of oneness in Sur Suhni in the following lines.

سو ساہتر سا سہٹی، ساڑیں سوئی  
آہی نہی پیجہ پجہاند، کالہ مری

Sahar (beloved), Suhni (lover) and the Sea (phenomena) are one and the same,

This ineffable mystery no one can scan.<sup>100</sup>

## Chapter-IV

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## CHAPTER-V

### Conception of Love with the Sufis

Love is universal phenomenon underpinnings of which we come across in the mystical poetry of all ages and religions. In some poets it is so pervasive and so much dominating that it is almost impossible to explain even a single verse of their poetry without reference to the imagery of love. Taking clue from the fact that love is the most powerful impulse in human beings, the Sufis have made full use of it, hence the mystical poetry abounds in this type of imagery. The Sufis have invariably adopted the intensive language of love to explain their ideas, and this has given immense popularity to their thought beyond doubt.

No doubt the idea of the divine love is very much contained in the Holy Quran, and some assorted traditions are ascribed to the Holy Prophet exclusively by the Sufis in this regard. But in the history of Islamic mysticism, the idea of efficacious or devotional love for God Almighty is said to have emanated from the utterances of Rabia, one of the earliest and the famous woman mystic of Basra (d.185/801). There could be hardly any doubt that these were the ideas which travelled far and wide in the remotest corners of the Islamic world through

the writings of latter Sufis, who preserved those unique expressions and transmitted them in their entirety. The '*Tadhkirah*' of Attar (d.1230AD) which provides the most popular account of the Sufi ideas popularised her ideal of Divine love. 'With her name is generally associated the first enunciation in Sufism of the doctrine of Divine Love, which later came to be so dominant a feature of the movement, her short poem on this theme is one of the most often quoted in Sufi literature'<sup>1</sup>.

Two ways I love thee, selfishly  
And next, as worthy is of thee.  
'Tis selfish love that I do naught  
Save think on thee with every thought.  
'Tis purest love when thou dost raise  
The veil to my adoring gaze.  
Not mine the praise in that or this  
Thine is the praise in both, I wis'.

From the third century onwards, it became almost a regular feature for the great Sufi masters to include a chapter on the topic of love and its implications in their classical works on one hand, and on the other it was the most talked about subject-matter of their daily discussions in their enclaves. Accordingly there are as many definitions of love as has been the great number of Sufi masters. In fact they have

provided exposition of love one after the other and everyone perceived it according to his own experience. It can also be said that each of them has narrated the experience of love in his own words. This great variety of definitions of love is no doubt confusing but simultaneously it helps understand the multidimensional nature of love. Junaid (d.289/910), who is considered as the great intellectual and sober Sufi once said: 'Love is the inclination of the heart'<sup>2</sup>. According to Ibn Abd al Samad: *Love is that which renders blind and deaf: it makes blind to all but the Beloved, so that one beholds no objective but Him*<sup>3</sup>.

Love defends me to every voice but his:  
Was ever love so strong as this?  
Love blinds me, and on him alone I gaze;  
Love blinds and, being hidden slay.

Another Sufi is quoted as having said:  
*Love is a pleasure if it be for a creature, and an annihilation if it be for the creator.*<sup>4</sup>

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Bayazid Bistami who preceded Junaid and is regarded as the leader of the intoxicated Sufis, defined his experience of love in these words. 'Those who love God are those whom God loves. I fancied that I loved Him but on consideration I saw that His love preceded mine<sup>5</sup>. He is also reported to have uttered: *His*



*love entered and removed all besides Him and left no trace of anything else, so that it remained single even as He is Single.*<sup>6</sup>

These are some of the key concepts which are readily perceptible in the entire bulk of the poetry of Shah Latif and they are repeated more than once. But these ideas make his conception of love very much comprehensive as well as complex. We have specifically highlighted the idea of love with reference to Rabia, Bayazid Bistami and Junaid Baghdadi, as their ideas along with some other prominent Sufis certainly influenced the thought of Rumi and through him, these ideas reached Shah Latif.

It is in light of this background that in the following pages, we shall examine the many facets of love, as depicted by Shah Latif.

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### Love as affliction

Junaid Baghdadi (d.298/910) is quoted as having said: 'Tasawwuf is that God should make thee die away from thyself and live in Him'<sup>7</sup>. The veritable proof of this is found in the enigmatic personality of Hussain bin Mansur Hallaj (d.322/922) who went to the gallows smilingly in Baghdad for his utterance '*Anal Haq*' or 'I am the truth'. Although it is on record that Mansur did meet Junaid while the latter advised him to be extremely cautious and exercise restraint, for love secrets are not to be divulged or disclosed as this may amount to heresy. Hussain bin Mansur whose poetry has also survived, in one of his famous verse throws open invitation for killing him, for he sees life in that killing. His famous words are:

اقتلوني يا ثقاتي - ان في قتلي حياتي

Kill me, o my trustworthy friends,  
for in my being killed is my life.

These words have been quoted verbatim at least thrice by Rumi in his Masnvi with great admiration for the martyr mystic. At one place he says:

Slay me, my trusty friends, slay me, vile as I am: verily in my being slain is my life forever more.

Verily in my death is my life, O youth - how long shall I be

parted from my home until when.<sup>8</sup>

As is well known Mansur was apparently executed on the charges of proclaiming '*Anal Haq*' 'I am the truth', for according to the orthodox view this proclamation tantamounts to the negation of God and affirming one's self to be God. The killing of Mansur on the gibbet, however, immortalized him and since then love has been equated with the gallows and in the Sufi circles this has been termed as the greatest test for truth and love. Notwithstanding the mystical experience of Mansur has been interpreted in a different manner over the last millenium by the Sufis, majority of who have declared it be an act of intoxication under love or considered it to be the highest degree of love. The other most significant aspect of this utterance for which Rumi has provided rational justification is that he has interpreted it to be declaring one's self as naught and affirming the existence of God only.<sup>9</sup>

Elaborating this idea of dying or *Fana*, Rumi at another place has made it more clear when he says that the lovers have to die every moment and that dying may take place in several ways. Therefore they are found ready with hundreds of lives to sacrifice for the sake of

beloved.  
عاشقانِ اهرزمانی مرد نیست  
اود و صد جان دارد از جانِ هندی  
و آن دو صد رگی کند هر دم خدا.

For lovers, there is a dying at every moment, verily, the dying of lovers is not of one sort.

He (the lover) hath two hundred souls (lives) from the soul of Guidance and those two hundred he is sacrificing at every instant.<sup>10</sup>

The fact is that this cruel aspect of divine love is not later addition, but it has been experienced from the time of earliest Sufis. 'The love of God for man is, that He afflicts him, and so renders him improper for any but Him'.<sup>11</sup>

Although the ideas of Mansur were discussed in the earliest standard texts on Sufism, such as *Ta'rruf* of Kababadi and *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* of Hujwiri, he was presented as martyr-mystic by the great Persian poet Fariduddin Attar (d: 1235 AD) in his celebrated prose work '*Tadhikiratul Aulia*', which was the most widely read text by the medieval Sufis. It was Attar, himself a great Sufi poet, who successfully portrayed Mansur as the martyr of love and the truth. Rumi who called himself as successor of Attar and Sanai, made some very serious and intelligent references about the alleged utterance of '*Anal Haq*' and tried his level best to exonerate him from the charge of



heresy. The name of Mansur has been mentioned only once in the '*Bayanul Arifeen*' where it was also described that he had to undergo the punishment on the gallows for he had unravelled the secrets of love<sup>12</sup>.

Shah Latif who was passionate admirer of Rumi's Masnavi, and had assimilated many ideas from it, has made many direct as well as indirect references to the cruel aspect of love without repeating the name of Mansur. He has perhaps better expressed the above-complicated ideas in a very simple language but with a unique imagery.

سر دیندیان دَرِ لَہان، دَرِ دِوَنِ یارِ سرخام  
هت گرایون آ کر لون، ویاکشی کانہم  
وحدت جی وہان میں جی وٹاسی وچٹا۔

If I look for head, I don't find bust, if bust is there, no trace of head is there.

My hands and ankles cut off but where I know not, who are eager for the ceremony of unity, let themselves cut off and ripped off.<sup>13</sup>

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Indeed Shah Latif has dealt with this ambivalent personality of Tasawwuf rather in a more discreet way. Instead of providing any justifications for his famed words 'I am the truth', Shah seems to have declared the trials and tribulations as the essence of love, and

unequivocally termed the love synonymous with the gallows, and in this analogy he seems to have been inspired by the epiphany of Mansur Hallaj. His following verses are but indirect reference to Mansur and they speak volumes about the hardships, which one had to undergo while passing through the process of love.

سگڻ ۽ سوريڻ، ٻئي اکر هيڪڙي  
ٻنهي جي پوريڻ، جيئي ڌڻي نه جڙي.

Lo, the love and the gibbet are but one and the same, the requirement of both is full filled, only when you have scarified your self.<sup>14</sup>

سوريڻ سڌ سڌوڪا هلن ڇا جهڙي لون  
رحمن تن پيو، نالو ٻيهم پنهنجي.

Lo, there is a call from the gibbet, who will accompany me only they will proceed, who are genuinely in love.<sup>15</sup>

اصل عاشق پنهنجي سڀني نه ساندين  
لاهيو سر لطيف چئي، ساھ ساهو ٿو ڏين  
ڪاڏھون ڪورين، پيڻ پوري پرستون

The genuine lover, for his head care and concern has none.

He cuts it off joins it with breath as gifts then hand it on:

Crave down to shoulders,

from loved one then begs for lovers return.<sup>16</sup>

اصل عاشقن جگر نه سانڍڻ ڪم  
سو سنڌان اٿرو، رسدو ڏوسن ڏم  
هي اهد توڙي ڇم، پڪ پريان جي نه پڙي.

To guard and preserve the head,

the lover's business is not this-

One of beloved's glance is worth

so many hundred heads of his-

Flesh, skin and bone, and all there is  
the least of loved one, equals not <sup>17</sup>

Rumi has emphatically declared that  
you can not indulge in love affair unless you are  
ready to sacrifice hundreds of heads.

بايکي سر عشق ستوان باختن

You can't undertake love with just one head,

Again he says

بادو پا در عشق ستوان باختن - با هزاران پا و سر تن ناز است

One can't indulge in love with two feet

The affair could hardly be dealt with by thousands of feet  
and heads. <sup>18</sup>

The following heart-rending verses  
with the strong combination of the words  
'gallows and death' are but an unparalleled  
tribute and compliment to the great martyr-  
mystic Mansur Hallaj by Shah Latif.

سور يا سينگار اصل عاشقن جو  
مرگي موتن مهتو سناظر يا زوار  
کس جو غرار ، اصل عاشقن جو

Lo, gibbet is the real ornament for lover

Neither they fear, nor do they turn away,  
for they could be blamed.

They proceed fearlessly and come on the scene  
Ever ready they are to be killed  
to fulfil their primordial commitment. <sup>19</sup>



سکے نہ اھو سترے کس پرور کا سو  
کس راز ان کیر کر کا سر سکن بھی  
Love is not merriment, enter this arena carefully

who could else desire to love,

Excepting those who are prepared to be killed: <sup>20</sup>

سور پائچھڑھن، سیج لپس، ای کے عاشقین  
پاھون کین لپی، سالوھن سارھان

The lovers touch the podium of gallows

considering it to be the bed stead

They turn not their face back

forward they proceed and go ahead. <sup>21</sup>

اھل عاشقین ہنھیں سر نہ ساندین  
لاھیں سر لطیف چٹا سار سار پوڈین  
کھٹون کورین، پچن لو

The real lovers care not for their heads,

They surrender their heads at the altar of beloved.

They cut their heads from above shoulders,

only then they ask for love. <sup>22</sup>

سور پائچھڑھن، سیج، مرٹا تن شاھرو

The gallows is but a best stead

And death an experience with the beloved. <sup>23</sup>

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Rumi had also declared the gallows  
to be heavenly stead, which when mounted takes  
the rider direct to heaven for the vision of the  
real beloved.

دار قتل ما براق رجلیست  
دار ملک تو عز و رو غفلت

The gallows on which we are killed is the Buraq on which



we ride 'to Heaven', the abode 'dar' possessed by thee is delusion and heedlessness<sup>24</sup>.

Dhun-Noon, the great Egyptian (d.245/861) mystic is credited for using the passionate language of a devoted lover for God. When he was presented and imprisoned he recited the following lines:

You have the place of honour in my heart.  
I do not care if they reproached me for your love.  
In your love I sacrifice willingly my life,  
Because without you life is unbearable.

He also said:

However long my sickness be, this wearisome infirmity,  
Never to men will I declare  
The burden Thou hast made me bear.<sup>25</sup>

But again it was Rumi who comprehended love as a most intriguing phenomenon with variegated aspects. In so far as the cause and effect of love are concerned, he termed pain and anguish as witnesses, which constitute necessary evidence for the proof of love.

عشق چون دعویٰ جفا دیدن گواہ  
چون گواہت لیت شد دعویٰ قیام

Love is like the lawsuit, to suffer the harsh treatment is

the evidence. When you have no evidence, the lawsuit is lost.<sup>26</sup>

Shah Latif has elaborated on this subject rather more vividly when he says that pain and sufferings provide the undeniable evidence or proof for the claim of love. Shah Latif has also used the same word 'Dawa' in the couplet.

جان عاشق شہی رت مان دکوئی کر سہجی  
نہ کین لوڈ گرت، مٹان سر سدا کریا

So long as blood is in your veins

Don't make claim of any love

Dried face with and emaciated body are the conditions,  
though the lovers don't have anything to offer

Yet they give in their head for beloved.<sup>28</sup>

محبت جی میدان مہر اہی سر سیاہ  
سر دین، در در دار درن ای شہنشاہ  
دیندا عون دنا، مقام عشق لہ

They entered the arena of love,

Chopping of the heads and beheaded bodies are  
but their adoration

Verily I found them sacrificing their heads for  
the beloved.<sup>29</sup>

Shah Latif has yet compared love with the deadly snake, whose venom if it bites leaves no one alive and the bitten person suffers heavy torments.

محبت جی میدان مہر اہی سر سیاہ  
لاہی سر لطیف چہی دوسن اپیان در  
عشق فانیک اپن خبر مارتن کی لویا

If the field of love if you want to enter  
 Let not the fear of death yourself deter,  
 O Latif, sweet would be that beheading,  
 If your head to the beloved you give as offering  
 Love is like a dangerous viper,  
 Only those know who snake bites suffer <sup>30</sup>

The Sufis have almost unanimously declared love fraught with utmost dangers. Ghazali has narrated the interesting conversation of Sari Saqti with Junaid which reveals the most curious aspect of love: Junaid said, I asked Sari Saqti: Does lover feel the pangs of dangers. He said he does not feel. I asked if he is wounded by a sword? He said He will not feel pangs even if he is wounded several times one after another. Ghazali has described a queer incident whereby a lover in the bazar of Basrah caused his own death amidst the people in the broad daylight. If a man can bring end to his life for the sake of physical love, one can imagine the strength of love for God<sup>31</sup>, thus concludes Ghazali.

Rumi in the Masnvi has narrated almost similar story in respect of Bayazid Bistami who was in the habit of exclaiming 'Glory to me, how great I am'. His disciples pointed out that these words amounted to

blasphemy and heresy. On this Bayazid instructed his disciples that if he utters the same words once again, his disciples should not spare him. Accordingly this was done, but nothing happened to him rather who attacked Bayazid with their daggers got themselves inflicted with injuries. This incident is construed to show the supremacy of love over everything else and that love supersedes or reigns high, inasmuch as it works miracles.

Shah Latif has employed the metaphor of butcher for beloved and has urged upon the lover to get prepared for being cut into pieces. The imagery of a beloved who pierces his lovers with arrows is very commonplace, but Shah has dealt with this subject in a quite different and delicate manner which is rather original to him. Says he:

هٲن حبیب ھٲن کٲی تیک مٲور و لاء  
پرید پندھنجی لھاء، مران تہ مان لھان

Strike friend thy hand raise, favour me-

hold not your hand, and should I die

By such death I shall honoured be

which through this world is caused. <sup>32</sup>

جٲ حبیب ھٲن، ناٲک پرکا تھن جی  
کٲی ھٲن وچا وچیا و سٲرکا

If the friend out of mercy



were to strike the arrows of love,

I shall not enquire after the physician

I shall live with my wounds.<sup>33</sup>

کونسی کھی سیرین کوئی کھن ساٹ  
میر کا تعینا پٹھن جی پاستی کدرمیاں  
جہل و چاننی جان عاشق اجل سامھان

The beloved calls for slaughter

He wastes no moment to slaughter

Do not therefore, avoid the armour of love,

O, lover, come forward innocently,

to encounter the ultimate fate.<sup>34</sup>

کائی جن گری مان لٹو لکھی تن سیت  
مکت خنی سیران بی وچان پیر پیری  
اڈنی سر زری مان گھنہ سیرین

Killing is his pastime and I love him.

Yet I seek to enter the arena of love I'll offer my head,  
may he be pleased to slaughter me.

These lines are symbiotic with the following imagery of love expressed by a Sufi saint and preserved in the tenth century text '*Al-tarruf*' by *Kalabadi*. 'If thou should'st cut me with affliction piece by piece, I should only feel towards thee the greater love on love.'<sup>36</sup>

Longer the duration of affliction, the more pleasant it becomes and bearable. This is more desirable when the beloved is bent upon the lover's slaughter.

کائی تلکیم شہی مرھنیا چاھو  
مان ورمین توہ ہون پریان جاھتر

When love takes knife in butcher's hand,  
 Sharp be it not. But rather may,  
 its edge be blunt. For then on thee,  
 beloved's hands will longer stay<sup>37</sup>

Dealing by the beloved is known.  
 Therefore the constant advise is beware or be  
 bold enough to face the violence and atrocities  
 of love, which surely he will perpetrate, as there  
 will be no exception to this rule.

سکے ناہی سڑی کٹ پروری پر  
 کس زار ان کیں کری سڈ سکنی جی

Love is not an easy going affair,  
 Be careful before entering into this field.  
 None but who is ready to be slaughtered  
 Can vie for the love.<sup>38</sup>

But who is that beloved, so cruel, so  
 violent and so mighty. Is that he is always  
 antipathetic, unkind and harsh in his attitude or  
 he is sympathetic and fully aware of the agonies  
 of our soul. Sufis have answered that yes he is  
 the most sympathetic, consoling and  
 compassionate also; and that he is the real  
 beloved. The answer of Shah Latif is also not  
 different from others, for he says

کشی سو کر لھی کو پی سو کھی  
 سوئی مون مھی سوئی رات رچی

He who slaughters also takes full care,  
 though he calls for slaughter.

He allures me and he pleaseth my soul.<sup>39</sup>

### Love as fire

Love as fire is almost a universal image and also a symbol typical of mystical love poetry throughout the ages. The symbol of moth and flame is more significant than any other image in the whole range of literature. The moth is considered as the lover who sacrifices his life on the light of candle. Many a poet of the world has dealt with this subject and Rumi is no exception to it. Shah Latif has also treated this allegory though with a little bit difference. Normally the moth is taken as the lover of the flame of candle, always trying to be one with the flame and that is why plunges himself into the flames and instantaneously loses his life. Although Rumi himself has taken the image of moth and flame from his predecessors, he had made some very perspicacious remarks which are highly meaningful. Says he.

ہر کجا شمع بلا افروختند - صد ہزاران جان عاشق سوختند  
 عاشقانی کنز درون خانه اند - شمع روی یار را بیروانہ اند

Where so ever the candle of tribulation hath been lighted, hundreds of thousands of loving souls are burnt.

Those lovers that are within the house (and nigh unto Him) are (as) moths to the candle of the face of the friend. <sup>40</sup>

The Sufis have considered the candle light as the flame of reality, wherein the moth sacrifices his life to attain unity after going



through annihilation or *Fana*. In fact the simile of moth and candle is a very comprehensive image with most of the Sufis and Rumi is no exception to it. In the following lines Rumi has provided the rationale and explained as to why the moth is always ready to plunge himself into fire.

چونکہ اندر مرگ بیند صد وجود  
پس چون پروانه بسوزاند وجود

In as much as in death he sees a hundred existences like the moth he burns away his own existence. <sup>41</sup>

Rumi's conclusion is, however, more explicit when he observes that the moth obtains new life by burning himself into the fire, thus repeating the basic maxim of Sufis, 'dying before death'.

Shah Latif in the first instance has praised the moths for their extraordinary courage, for they are aware of their destination.

دشمن ره کوشتر داهشی مچ  
تسیر لهش نه لویا شتر داهشی مچ  
دوا کچین نیم و بچار د و تاشی

The moths assembled, gathering above a raging fire,  
Heat drove them not, no fear they had,  
flames did their hearts inspire-

Their necks they lost, and on the pyre of truth they burnt themselves. <sup>42</sup>



He eulogies the behavior of the  
moths, and the way they offer themselves at the  
altar of the fire of reality.

پسنگ جاشين پاڻ کي سبي مچ مروت  
سدي اتي سيرين جي، گھڑت تين دھوت  
ايجان لزن اروت کوري خبر نه لھين

If you call yourself a moth, from blaze return not terrified,  
Enter by the loved one's light and be ever glorified  
You are still unbaked .... beside  
not yet with kiln acquainted are.<sup>43</sup>

In yet another verse, Latif has paid  
more glowing tributes to the moths for entering  
into furnace delightfully and diligently.

پري تشنگ آيا، سري پاوت ساھي  
اھي تيا آپ مي کڑھي سب کالھي  
لاگلا لاهي کاٹا کوري آوج مي  
The moths approached the blaze with heads aloft. They  
jumped into the fire out of love.

They discarded all relations and burnt themselves in the furnace.<sup>44</sup>

لائي هو ويامدھن تو مچ پريا،  
سوا ھامي کٹان جھن سر پندر سپن  
What had been set ablaze within me (be my beloved) on  
his departure, has now developed into conflagration.  
How can it be put out when it is being fanned by the  
beloved himself.

Shah Latif has not confined himself  
only to the metaphor of moth, but he has also

advised directly for purging oneself, for fire is considered essential for attaining purification in the physical sense as well as metaphysical.

He has considered it absolutely essential for the beginners to undergo the test of fire of love, so as to get ripened. No one can qualify for meeting the beloved unless he has acquiesced to be roasted in the fire of love. This is how he explains the process, which is no doubt the most painful, but intrinsically essential for the lovers:

دردِ آلودنِ نه دِشْنِ اِکِ اِز دُونِ وَ چِشْنِ  
اِلا حِی عِشْقِ جَا سَی قَانِ لَوْنِ نِه سَهْنِ  
اِیو اِشْنِ چِشْنِ نِه اِکُونِ عِا شَقِ اِکِیْنِ

Oh, you beginner. You do not fan and intensify the fire, nor go near it. Obviously you can not bear the fire sparks of love. Standing beside, how you claim to be a perfect smith.<sup>45</sup>

It is advised, if you intend to achieve perfection, it is only through repeated action of fire, putting into water, and again facing the fire till the process is complete.

بَارِ اِو اِکِ هَا اِشْنِ اِیْرِ اِو اِو اِیْرِ  
نَوْنِ کِی قَا مَارِیْنِ لُشَا هَا رِیْ جَا

Himself the beloved, like a black-smith melts,  
He dips me in water, and again myself he melt.  
On me he strikes blows with his hammer.  
In his own typical manner.<sup>46</sup>

Rumi has compared love with furnace and human soul as crucible for the same. Says

he

جان من کوره است با آتش خویش است  
کوره را این بس نه خانه آتش است  
همچو کوره عشق را سوزند نیست  
کمر نه اوزین کور باشد کوره نیست

My soul is a furnace, it is happy with the fire,  
Its enough for the furnace that it is the fire's house.  
For love, as for the furnace, there is something to be burned.  
Any one that is blind to this is not a furnace.<sup>47</sup>

Shah Latif has also underlined more or less the same idea of furnace in the following couplet.

لفائیں کان نہن، سک نہنیا سیرین  
سری سارو نہن، پھر باق نہ نگرین

My dear friend! Learn love-making frame the potter's kiln.  
It burns within itself for the whole day and not yet a  
vapour comes out it<sup>48</sup>

The following verse is more splendid and sublime in the meaning.

لیٹ لہائیں جان، سکی لوکے کبان  
ام سامیوہان، لوکی سارو سیرین

When people go to sleep I try to shut my eyes and stifle  
my tears like the potter's kiln.

But soon your remembrance strikes me and I get  
rekindled.<sup>49</sup>

It is relevant to mention here that Shah Latif in line with Rumi has also used the



word furnace 'Khurah' more than once. For example<sup>50</sup>

The moth is a metaphor and actually it sets a lesson for the learner or the beginner as to what the love is and what are the implications thereof. It is in this backdrop that soon afterwards Shah Latif addresses the lover of God in these words:

اچاننوراء کالہم کدیلوسین ساکین  
پرت نایالون زکرو و حرت بی و ہان  
نکبتن متکد ہج مورالہین نہ لہی

It was only yesterday that the beloved had taken me out of the oven (of divine love).

But in order to hasten my journey towards the goal of unity, intensity of the fire was increased.

The fact is that the fire never leaves the lovers, as they incessantly roast in it.<sup>51</sup>

But again steady fire with pauses is sine qua none so as to achieve perfection of ripeness in love. This is how Latif has elucidated this idea in the following lines.

چون سوئی ترو کامی کوری و حرم  
فون لپی زلر سکتش، فنجان سکتش  
درجہ سترای پرو، مرقور الو سکتش

Just as when frying pan is placed on fire, its bottom is scalded love to contact with it.

Similarly my beloved has created the same situation for me by serving me a sip of love, which keeps the fire of love always burning within me.



Even then welcome indeed is the slow fever it caused,  
only that the beloved should not separate from me.<sup>52</sup>

The fire of love which started from heart soon spreads to every part of the body and finally what the fire of love does with the lover has been beautifully presented by the poet in the following verse.

شيء هي وهي هو من مكيون جي  
جيرا جوتس جلائي، بکين پريا باه  
ليسو مچ متاع، جتي وليسا کونه وسقو

O, my heart is yearning and screaming,  
the love fire has reached the liver and kidneys.  
My whole body is hot and burning like fire,  
Touch it, if you don't believe.<sup>53</sup>

The following lines convey more intense feeling of the lover, who is set ablaze from inside.

کاندين ناندين يادرين پچان مريبي  
جيرا جگر کيئون، سچن مريبي  
ديچنن وسبي، تي وهيئي ساچين

I am undergoing every kind of fire, indeed I am roasting.  
My heart liver and kidneys are set on fire,  
None can heal these pains, excepting my beloved.<sup>54</sup>

Rumi's constant advice is to get ablaze from within, for it is the fire of love which is to be preferred even to one's prayer or other religious formalities.

آتش از عشق در جان بر فروز  
سر بسر فکر و عبادت را سپوز

Ignite yourself with the love of fire  
Even set on pyre your thought and books. <sup>55</sup>

The imagery of fire is not complete without water. When the lover has roasted from inside, the thirst is unquenchable, even the water of seven seas is not sufficient.

The poet has depicted the condition of lovers in almost unsurpassable mode when he says:

کامیان پیمان پیمان، لیمان، لیمان  
نہ ملوئیں بریں، نہ پیمان نہ لیمان  
جی سمندر منہن کرمان نہ سرکیانی نہ شی

Amidst fire I burn, roast and toss

Yet I am longing and looking for the beloved,

Parched I am with thirst What so ever I drink, I feel unsatiated

Even if I drink the whole sea, it is not going to suffice as a sip. <sup>56</sup>

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### Love as Physician.

Rumi is regarded as the great protagonist of love-mysticism and in one of his verses has very beautifully summed up love as the most alluring sickness but simultaneously he considers it to be the ablest physician who can cure all ills.

شاد باش ای عشق خوش سودای ما  
ای طبیب جمه علتهائی ما

Hail, O Love that brought us good gain-  
thou that are the physician of all our ills. <sup>57</sup>

Beloved as a healer or physician has been amply demonstrated in the poetry of Rumi and love has been described as both disease as well as antidote which takes very heavy toll on one's life but also chastises the incurable disease. The Sufis in general have believed in physical and spiritual ailments. Rumi has spoken in clear-cut terms about the physical and spiritual diagnosis when he says:

این طبیبان نوا میوزند خود - که بدین پاکستان حاجت بود  
کمالان از دور نامت شوند - تا بقدر بار و بودت در دور

58

Rumi, has narrated a tale of the king and sick servant-girl as first story in the first book of the Masnvi. The upshot of this story is that the love itself is a disease and the girl has been suffering from it and hence she could not

be cured by any physician whatever his caliber may be. Finally the king calls a brilliant and an experienced healer who diagnoses that the girl is suffering from the malaise of love, and she will get well only when she meets her love. He therefore advises the king if he wants to see the maid healthy he will have to allow her to meet the beloved at least once. Accordingly the girl got well only when she met her beloved. The essence of this story is that the love itself is a unique disease with unparalleled symptoms and it is also cured only by the same beloved who must have caused this disease.

Shah Latif appears to be the exponent of similar ideas when he describes as to how the inexperienced physicians have rather increased the torments, and how their prescriptions instead of soothing have exacerbated the travails into trauma.

This background is apropos towards understanding and appreciation of the following verses of Shah Latif.

هڏنہ وٽي هاڻ مون ويجهن جو وصال  
هن مندھنجي حال، حبیب ٿي هاڏي ڇڏيو

The company of Physicians I never relish,  
None but the friend divine is fit to be guide;  
For my present state of health.<sup>59</sup>

هاڏي ڪري طبيب ڏارون هن درد جا  
هڏيو سڄي حبیب، اڪثر ڀاڙ ڪري



The physician strives and does his best  
 To relieve my painful state  
 But the friend upsets the plans,  
 Taking away from the drugs, the intended effect.<sup>60</sup>

The malady is preferable if it is  
 caused by the same beloved

عہدی جی حبیب مجھ سے میا کرے  
 پہچان کو نہ طبیب موند گھائیں سے ہار دیاں

If the friend out of mercy, were to afflict me love-sick.  
 I shall not enquire after the surgeon  
 I shall live with my wounds.<sup>61</sup>

اٹھارے اٹی وٹا، منہ ہاں موند آزار  
 حبیب بٹی مٹی وٹا، سیرا جی بچلر  
 طبیب نہ رار، مدد نہ وٹتی ماٹ موند

They plucked out from my soul a deep-rooted anguish  
 It was the friend who made my life,  
 A constant vale of suffering.

When people talk now of physicians

I never relish futile advice.<sup>62</sup>

کبیس کو بچن، بن طبیب نہ گزیا  
 دھبی زہنپ زدن چاٹان ذیل دلوگر

False healers have my feebleness unmannered

The true physicians did not come across

But quacks employed their cauterising brand

And brought more aches and pains than formerly.<sup>63</sup>

Who then is the real physician? Who  
 can cure the malady? It is the beloved and,

therefore, the love stricken patient, prefers to suffer but he waits for him. He makes it a reason so that he is visited by his love as he alone will make him hale and hearty. Says Latif

دیکھ مہر کھوڑیا، مر چکیاں مہر مہیاں  
سکھن مان اچھی، کراہوئی کرہین

Oh thou Physician, give me not the dose

That maketh well. For I shall then be strong.

To ask of me how now my illness goes

Then never friend may properly chance along. <sup>63</sup>

It is this stage, when the beloved alone becomes the cure, and the healer.

No more prescriptions of the doctors,  
Only the beloved can heal and cure.

Finally, Shah makes no secret of it that the real physician is God almighty. He being the cause of causes, had made me suffer and now he is the one, who can cause deliverance.

تو ہی سب لوگ طبیب توں درد ہی روا  
ہر سب شہی جی ہر ازار ہا انواع  
صاحب زچہ شفا، مہیاں مہر مہیاں

Thou art the friend, the Healer thou, For every pain the remedy,

Cure for my heart, thy voice alone, the only cure it is for me. The reason why of call for thee is none can cure my heart but thou. <sup>64</sup>

### Love as wine.

Although the language of all mystics is not the same, the Sufi imagery employed by the mystical poets of all ages has almost a common terminology and semantics. Nevertheless the interpretation of Sufi poetry has engaged great minds through out the ages. As a result of this it is now generally agreed that for the mystics, the beloved is God, the cup bearer is their leader, wine is the truth or their mystical experience. Their drunkenness is their ecstasy and the state of unconsciousness is the absorption of their brain in the unique and Real existence. Abu Nasr Sarraj<sup>65</sup> (d378/988) and Qushairy (d.465/1072) the two most celebrated and earliest writers on *Tasawwuf* have quoted many Arabic poems in this connection and at many places have made it clear that common people are intoxicated due to the drinking of wine cup, but the select are intoxicated by the divine cup bearer himself, God Almighty. <sup>66</sup>

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Ghazali (d.505/1111AD) and Hujwiri (d.464/1071AD) who are contemporary and are known for their impeccable and erstwhile approach in the history of Sufism, have also interpreted the poems of wine imagery in the same spirit. In his monumental work on the religious sciences '*Ihya*', Ghazali has quoted the

following couplet of Junaid Baghdadi, the great intellectual leader of the Sufis.

I drank it again and found my salvation  
I got taste and drank with satisfaction.<sup>67</sup>

Again Ghazali in his Persian '*Kimya-e-Sa'adat*' has referred to the following typical verse:

هر که نخر آب است نشد بیدین است  
زیر آن خرابات اصول دین است

The one who has not entered tavern is irreligious,  
For, to be inside tavern is the basis of religion.<sup>68</sup>

Ghazali has emphasized that this verse can't be taken in its literal meaning. According to him, such verses for the Sufis meant and implied something esoteric, more nominal than phenomenal.

Hujwiri, the author of '*Kashful Mahjub*', has cited many verses of wine imagery, both in Persian as well as Arabic. At one place, after having referred to the ascension of the Holy Prophet, he has quoted the following verse.

شربت الراح کاساً بعد کاساً  
فما تقدر الشراب وما رویت

He drank cups after cups but neither the wine consumed nor the vision came to an end.<sup>69</sup>



It is in light of these works of the great Sufis, that an exclusive vocabulary of mystical poetry has been worked out and according to which *Sharab* or wine implies ecstatic experience due to the revelation of the True Beloved, destroying the foundations of reason, *Saqi* (wine-bearer) is Reality, as loving to manifest itself in every form that is revealed, and *Jam* or cup means the revelations of Divine Acts. Also '*Kharabat*' or tavern implies Pure Unity '*Wahdat*' undifferentiated and unqualified, hence '*Kharabat*' tavern-haunter is to be interpreted accordingly.<sup>70</sup>

The classical Mystical Persian poetry is very rich in this respect and this kind of poetry reached its pinnacle in the works of Omar Khayyam, Rumi and especially Hafiz Shirazi. In the literary history of Sindhi Shah Latif is the first who introduced lofty ideas of wine poetry, and as it appears, he must have done it under the influence of Rumi as there are many allusions and inferences which bear strong resemblance between Rumi and Shah Latif. Their basic approach is almost same in tenor and tone. According to Shah Latif this wine is altogether different from the common one, as it puts one on the path of *marifat* or gnosis. It is very bitter to test, and is rather poisonous and

only those persons can venture to undertake it  
who would not care for their life.

اَسْتِي سِدْ سِرْ كَ جِيَا وَنِ دِ كَلَا رَ كِي هَت  
لاهِ رِ كَ لَطِيفِ جِيَا سَوَ مَانِي وَنِ  
سِرْ دِ سِي رِ سَتِ پِيَجِ كِي پِيَا لِيُونِ

If sipping hath thy fancy led

The wine shop is the place for thee,  
Beside the wine jar lay thy head,  
And, yielding it in bargain fee,  
Quaff many cups of wine instead<sup>71</sup>

The wine is so dear and precious  
that it can be sought in exchange for one's life,  
which is thought invaluable.

نَابِي نَامِ كُكُورِ كِي نِ مِلِ مَهَنگَرِ مَنَدِ  
سَنَاهِجِ سِي دِ جِيَا كَانِ كَارِ كُنَدِ  
هَنِي تَشِينِ جَوَهَنَدِ هَنِ پَاسِي مَرِنِ جِيَا

Set not love's store against the wine

Nor could wine dear at such appraise.

Prepare that hand for cutting, thine.

The wine shop is the place for them,

Who by the wine-jars end their days.<sup>72</sup>

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Rumi compared this wine with poison  
and he made it known that it is life killer, but  
even than it is to be preferred and only such  
drunkard can enjoys it who are used to it and  
know its worth and value.

جَوَشْتَرِ اَزِ نِ سِدْ نَزِيْدِ سِرْ سَتِي  
زِيْنِ مَرِنِ جَوَشْتَرِ مَبَاشَدِ مَهَنگَتِي

No drink sweeter than this poison did I see,  
No health lovelier than illness did I see.<sup>73</sup>

Shah Latif has also preferred the metaphor of poisonous or the bitterest wine and declared it more valuable than the ordinary wine for the drunkards, who get struck with more appetite when they see its colour or get its aroma, they enjoy it in unlimited quantities. Even if they receive any torments, they prefer to hide them instead of revealing them to the public.

عاشق زهر بیاک، وہ لسی و ہسن گھوڑ  
گریبا قاتل جا، ہمیشہ ہیرا کے  
نوریا چکن جا کہ تہہ آہ نہ سلن عامری۔

The poison-drinking lovers, lured  
By poison sweet, drink more and more,  
To bitterness of total cup, the poison-drinkers are inured,  
Though wounds are fastering, and uncured,  
No whisper to the vulgar goes.<sup>74</sup>

According to Shah Latif this wine does not cause intoxication, which is the normal characteristic of the grape wine. Instead this wine causes ecstasy and rouses the longing and love of the truth. So in terms of cause and effect, this wine is quite different. Rumi was fully conscious of this fact, and he had therefore vehemently presented his viewpoint about this kind of wine in these lines.



اینی که توی خنوری حرام است  
مای خنوریم جز حلالی .

This wine that thou drinkest is forbidden,  
We drink none but a lawful wine. <sup>75</sup>

Again he emphasises

همدکن تار نیست هست شوی  
وز شراب خدا مست شوی  
خاصه این باده که از غم بلیست  
نه می که مستی از و یک شبیت

Especially consider the effect of this (spiritual) wine which is from the jar of 'Bala'-not the wine where of the intoxication last only one night. <sup>75</sup>

So Rumi has clearly differentiated between the two wines. For him the Quran also referred to the special wine which will be enjoyed by the believers in the heaven. After quoting from the Quran, he cites a part from

Hadith which read as under.

ان التَّسْرَابَ اَعَدَّ لاوليائه اذا شربوا سكر واد  
ساكر و طابو..... الخ

'God, hath a wine that he hath prepared for His friends: when they drink it they become intoxicated and when they become intoxicated they are purified'. <sup>76</sup>

According to the long established tradition in the Sufi poetry, Wine or *Sharab* or *May* is equated with ecstatic experience due to the revelation of the true beloved, which



destroys the foundations of reason.<sup>77</sup>

It is in this perspective that there is preaching in the Sufi poetry to yearn even for just one sip. This is how Shah Latif puts it when he says:

عاشق معشوقن جو وٺي ويهڻ رند  
پياريندڙ يا نصين مڃائي جو مٺند  
سروان جو سقرو سڳو آهي سندن  
مٿان ڪڍين ڪنڊن اوڏوئي ان کي

O, lover pursue the trek of your beloved,  
May he be pleased to offer you a drink,  
Sip of which is but pure and strong  
Do not save your head, if you want to be near him.<sup>78</sup>

The above verse shows the deep understanding of Rumi's imagery by Shah Latif, which is but reflection of the following lines of Masnavi.

عاشقان جام فرح آنجو ڪڍيند  
ڪه بدست خوليش جوان شان ڪڍيند

Lovers drain the cup of joy at the moment when the fair ones slay them with their own hand.<sup>79</sup>

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These lines may be read in conjunction with another verse of Shah Latif wherein he has clearly spoken of being slain at the hands of the beloved and termed this action to be very pleasant for the lover.

Shah Latif in 'Yaman kalyan' has referred to an indigenous tale of 'Mokhi and Matara' which means tavern owner and drunkards, a legend of semi-historical nature. As the story goes, Mokhi was an old lady who owned a tavern shop which catered the needs of the drunkards of the area. Soon her shop became the center of great drunkards who would visit her any time to quench their thirst. Once when the drunkards had gathered and demanded of cups after cups so much so that she was short of the wine, she opened one very old earthen jar lying sealed in a corner and offered the same to them. But this wine had become poisonous as some snakes had fallen into it. The drunkards gulped it without any hesitation but soon they fumbled and died on the spot. Shah Latif has played upon this imagery very artistically and composed some very beautiful verses, which also reveal as to how the wine was prepared in those days. He terms the wine very old but so blissful that whatever its cost but the drunkards would not hesitate. It was this wine which was even costlier than one's life.

هتي  
جي اسئي سڌ سرڪ جي تن وڌڪا اتي  
راهي رک لطف جي مقوماشي وڌ  
سرڌ سئي پاسي پيچ ڪي مياليون

If you a drought desire to tavern find your way.

Thy head do sever, and that head beside barrel lay;

Only when you have this price to pay

then few cups you may quaff.<sup>80</sup>

سرڌ سئي سئي جو رکهن پرڪالن سين  
مرڻا منهن م موش، وڌي ٿي وڌ لهي

Make a deal with the wine dealer,  
 though it may be at the cost of your head.  
 Turn away not your face from him,  
 For that cup is really priceless.<sup>81</sup>

In the classical Persian poetry the spiritual guide is considered to be the tavern owner and only he is regarded as the authorised person to offer cups to the novices. It is the precondition of obtaining a goblet from this spiritual master to lay one's all belongings at his feet, nay even one's life should be rendered at his disposal. It is only then that one can attain the real ecstasy or the trance of the wine. So, this is not a man made wine but as repeatedly clarified by Rumi that it is Godly wine, which is to be administered by the men of God. Shah Latif seems to have adopted this symbolism directly from the Persian poetry and here he is so much impressed by the Persian traditions that in few verses he even quotes the Persian words verbatim in his verses.

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بدہ ساقی بر خیز، پیار بی پرین  
 بکین نہ پرین، مٹ رکھاؤں سنجان

Smilingly and joyfully they gulp the bitterest wine,  
 Oh, cup bearer rise and offer some more  
 They won't be satisfied with that cup only,



As they hence targeted the full barrels.<sup>82</sup>

In this context it must be pointed out that the Hindi poetry with which Shah Latif was conversant or which was recited in his presence is devoid of this kind of poetry. Even otherwise, Hindi poetry in general lacks the sophisticated wine poetry. It is Arab-Persian tradition which is very rich and Shah Latif can be credited with introducing this kind of poetry into Sindhi language as none of his predecessor like Qazi Qadan, Shah Karim, Shah Lutfullah Qadri or Shah Inat had ventured in this field.

In the Sufi terminology it is now established that the cup bearer is the spiritual guide who has the right and only he knows what is the prerequisite for the follower. The follower has but to surrender himself completely at the will and mercy of his guide and in this regard he has to lay down his life even if it is so desired or directed by the spiritual master. It is the sincere observation of the advice that would enable the novice to attain perfection in faith and practice. The most famous couplet by Hafiz which reiterates that if the guide asks the follower to soak the prayer rug with wine, the latter should not hesitate; for the guide is not unaware of the intricacies of the spiritual path.



In one of the exquisite verses Shah Latif has referred to the queer phenomenon that the wine sellers who are the agile and experienced ones can turn the poisonous wine into pure honey and hence it is advisable to visit them and drink at their hands whatever they offer.

فائل ڪمائي ڪري، وه مائي جي ڪن  
وٽان ويهيئن، لبيچ ڪي پيا ليون

Through Sheer hard work, they turn killer poison into honey,  
You also visit them, and have some quaffs.<sup>83</sup>

Rumi in the Masnvi has narrated an anecdote whereby an amateur disciple objects to the behaviour of his spiritual guide who is in the habit of visiting wine seller's shop. He tells this story to his colleagues who don't agree with him. Finally on his instance they go after their Shaikh to check him while the latter is actually in the wine shop. But when they checked the jars of the wine seller they found all but full of pure honey.<sup>84</sup>

Shah Latif has beautifully summarized the whole idea in the following couplet.

مل مهاڻگو قطرو، سڪڻ سعادرت  
اسان عبارت، نظر ناز پرين رجو

Even a drop of that wine is invaluable,

So is the yearning a great fortune

Our prayers are fulfilled, when we behold our beloved.<sup>85</sup>

This verse is comparable with that of Rumi wherein he had encountered with the wise as prayers and the occasion a great fortune.

دیدن دانایان عبادت این بود  
 فتح البواب سعادت این بود -

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### DIVINE LOVE

According to the most celebrated Sufi maxim it is the love of God which ultimately pervades and prevails upon every other kind of love. Love is the genesis, the origin and the very cause and effect of every activity in this universe. This has been the most favourite axiom with Sufis of all generations, and for all of them love is one and same which is the essence of God. 'Divine love pervades the cosmos which it created. All things, however, diverse they may seem, are ruled by that essential principle and moved to work in common for its fulfillment'.<sup>87</sup> There are variegated interpretations of this doctrine, which have been traced to the Holy Quran on one hand, and on the other these have been considered as an echo of the Neo-Platonist ideas. Even some of the ideas of the great intellectual Sufi Junaid are suggested to have originated under the Neo-Platonic influence especially his theory of *Mithaq*, the primordial covenant with God. According to Junaid, there are two types of existence, the one being divine existence or existence in Him, which is timeless and which we had before our coming over here, and the other being existence in this created world. This idea of a pre-existence of the soul is termed as the offshoot of Plotinus' (d.204-270 AD) ideas, though the derivation of this theory

has been lastly made doubtful.<sup>88</sup>

After Junaid, Al Ghazali and Rumi have spoken at length about this primordial covenant of man with God. Rumi has proved to be a great creative genius in expressing some very fine ideas, which he has very conveniently based upon the words used by the Holy Quran in this regard. It is narrated in the Quran that when God created the souls, they were confronted at that very moment with the question 'Am I, not your lord?', '*Alast-o-birabikum*'. All of them replied '*Bala*', which means 'yes'. The Persian Sufis have however made out a pun of this word as in Persian '*Bala*' means 'affliction'. So according to Rumi, the primordial covenant implied the state of union and the creation of souls or coming into this world means the separation of souls from God hence suffering and affliction also. Although the words have been interpreted in many a different way by a great number of Sufis all over the ages, Shah Latif has treated these words as the earnest and sincere allegiance of love by the souls with their creator God Almighty. His approach is very simple but also reminiscent of Rumi in many respects.

The '*Sur Marui*' by Shah Latif is the best illustration of the primordial covenant. Marui, a beautiful maid is brought forcibly from



an idyllic environment of the desert and against her wishes she is kept at far away place by the ruler of the time Umer Soomro, who intends to marry her. But she is already betrothed in her own community with one person namely Khet. This engagement was the sublime covenant for her to be fulfilled. Shah Latif is fully convinced that this engagement was a pre-eternal concordance of souls which even preceded the words, 'Kun, Fayakoon',<sup>89</sup> Quranic words which symbolise the beginning of the universe.

نکا کُن فیکون، ہٹی نکولت لہم  
بہرہونہ بت مہ اجا کھرا کرم  
ہون توہیں سیٹی سگی اہلیا جاہر پیرین

When 'Be' was not yet said, nor was  
there flesh-bone scheme or plan

When Adam had not yet received his form, was not yet man,  
Then my relationship began, my recognition too.<sup>90</sup>

He further says:

الست بریکم جڑھن کن پیوم  
قالولئی اقلب سین تذہن بت جیوم  
تذہن ویرکیوم وچن ویرہین سین

Am I not thy Lord? Came a voice, a voice so sweet and clear,  
And I said, 'yes' with all my heart, when I this voice did hear,  
And with bond I did adhere that movement to my love.<sup>91</sup>

Shah Latif goes one step further when he declares the human soul to be in chains and bondage on this earth, and therefore, the

mankind has to struggle to free itself from these chains and fly heavenward to meet its real beloved:

قسمت فیدکداس ناتہ کیرا جی من کوٹ پر  
و نحن اقرب الیه من جبل الوریثہ و علی اذکرینداس  
مارن کی ملنداس، کوٹسوں چڑیا کڑھین

A prisoner I by a destiny else who would want these forts  
'We nearer then thy life's vein are' to that love I will flee,  
when will I be from mansions free and reach my Maru sweet<sup>92</sup>

He explains the idea once again in a lovely manner:

نکا کن فیکون مہی نکا مریگ نہ ہرن  
سمیٹ ساعت تنھنای بیٹی زلوسرن  
مون تن تذاکون، ملی ملاقات کٹی

Prior to the order 'Be' when there was no human dream of life.  
I had full exposure of me beloved verily I enjoyed his company<sup>93</sup>

Here one can see that Shah Latif has clearly implied the state of spiritual pre-existence when all the souls had undertaken to be obedient and bound down with the commandments of God. Furthermore, it was essentially a love-relationship between man and God, and here Sufis in general have construed the existence of pre-eternal love. They have further implied that it is the love which is the essence of the whole creation. In support of their argument the eminent Sufis including Rumi have been always fond of quoting this famous

Hadith Qudsi also.  
 کنت كنزاً مخفياً فاجبت ان اعرف فخلقت الخلق

'I was a hidden treasure, I wanted to be known therefore I created the universe.'<sup>94</sup>

The other most favourable traditions on this subject with the Sufis, of course, including Rumi and Shah Latif are:

i) كل شيء يرجع الى اصله

'Every thing shall return to its origin'

ii) جف القلم بما هو كائن

'The pen dried after writing'.<sup>95</sup>

Rumi in light of the above tradition has time and again referred to the primordial covenant between man and God as essentially the love relationship which implies complete servitude and surrender. He has also alluded to the day of covenant as festival, when the gnostics were granted the wine of love, that first sip from the eternal cup of happiness, suffering and longing which should mark their lives until resurrection.<sup>96</sup>

روح آنکس کو بھنگا ام البست  
 دید رب خویش و شد بحال خویش مست

The spirit of that one who at the time of Am I not (your Lord)?  
 Saw his lord and became selfless and intoxicated.<sup>97</sup>



Again he says.

کھر کہ خوابی دید از روز الست  
مست باشد در ره طاعت مست

Anyone who has dreamed on the day of *Alast*

He is drunken in the path of devotional works, drunken.

Rumi goes to the extent of clarifying that man in this world will be obedient and subservient provided he had undertaken the same allegiance on that day.

در الست انگو چنین خوابی ندید  
اندرین دنیا نشد بنده و مرید

He who has not dreamed such a dream in

*Alast* does not become a servant and seeker of God in this world.<sup>98</sup>

In *Sur Sohni*, however Shah Latif has used another word '*Mithaq*', which is also of the Quranic origin and refers to the primeval understanding of man with his creator and implies contractual obligations on the part of soul. The allegory employed in *Sur Sohni* is more powerful than one can imagine, for here. *Sohni* is apparently wedded wife of *Dam*, but she justifies her meeting with her beloved *Sahar* on the plea that from the day one, rather from the day of *Mithaq* she belongs to him. In the proverbial sense, the reunion of the human soul with his origin, at the cost of one's physical life has been forcefully presented here. This is how shah Latif has explained the idea.



اےست اےرواضن کیاجدھن جیالون  
میشاقامدھار سین لڈلون فون لالون  
سو مونہی کین پاهون جو محفوظ معاغی

When the call 'Am I not your lord was orchestrated'.

On that day of Mithaq, I was engaged with Mehar

So how could I retreat now

From the words inscribed on the Tablet.<sup>99</sup>

Both Rumi and Shah Latif have convincingly set forth the doctrine of the divine origin of the soul, its descent to the material world, its earthly life and its final return to its ultimate home.<sup>100</sup>

The Sufi tradition in general has laid great emphasis upon the divinity as beauty, and this aspect of divine beauty is more accentuated in Rumi's poetry. Thus Rumi's universal perception of God is that of absolute beauty and everything in the universe represents the configuration of his love. Rumi has enshrined this idea in the following verse very clearly.

جملہ معشوقیت و عاشق پرده  
رندہ معشوقیت و عاشق مرده

The beloved is all and the lover a veil,

the beloved is living and the lover a dead thing.<sup>101</sup>

In another verse Rumi has defined as to who is the Real lover and what is his nature.

عاشق کلبست وجود کلبست او  
عاشق غولیش است عشق و غولیش خبر

He is a lover of the universal, and he himself is the universal.  
He is in love with them self and seeking his own love. <sup>102</sup>

In the '*Bayan ul Arifeen*' after having quoted the famous *Hadith* '*Kunt Kanzan*' following verse of Shah Karim has been recorded.

یا اےھی سلطان، یا اےھی زکیٰ سزہ صرا  
یا اےھی کریم، یا اےھی لہی، یا اےھی سیای سی پان

He himself is the king, and Himself the envoy sent  
He himself receives the only and accredits himself. <sup>103</sup>

Inspired by the ideas of Rumi and Shah Karim on the above topic, Shah Latif has expressed his views as under:

یا اےھی لسی یا اےھی کی، یا اےھین محبوب  
یا اےھین خلقی خوب، یا اےھین طالب تن جو

He is the lover of himself, He himself is the beloved  
He has created the beautiful ones, and He is their lover. <sup>104</sup>

Here is an indication as to what is that beauty? Its none excepting the all pervading beauty of God, who is the beloved *par excellence*.

یا اےھین جل جلالہ، یا اےھین جان کمال  
یا اےھین صورت پرین حبیبی، یا اےھین من کمال  
یا اےھین سر مزید شئی، یا اےھین یا اےھین خیال  
سب سورتی حال منجھان نی معلوم شئی

He is the mighty and majestic, he is the essence of beauty,  
He himself is the beloved, and himself the sublime beauty

He is the master, as well as the follower  
 He is, His own manifestation  
 Every secret is discernible, but from within.<sup>105</sup>

There is a celebrated tradition with the Sufis, 'God is beautiful and loves beauty', and Shah Latif has expressed the quintessence of this tradition in the above verse without particular reference.

Rumi has gone to an extreme when he interprets the '*Mithaq*' or the promise by the souls to be a universal phenomenon, applicable virtually to everything in the universe. The often-quoted tradition regarding the creation of universe according to him contemplates the love relations between every atom of the universe and its creator. It is in this sense that the love of God precedes human love, in other words absolute love belongs to Him. Human love, infinitesimal in nature, is but reflection of God's love. Rumi, for this idea is largely indebted to Bayazid Bistami whom he admired the most.

Bayazid regarded *Mithaq* as the pre-eternal compact between God and man and its honor in the mystic's interior life<sup>106</sup>. According to Bayazid it is not the human love turning into God's love, rather it is God's love inspired in the hearts of the mystics. Those who love God are those whom God loves, "I fancied that I loved



Him but on consideration I saw that His love preceded mine." Rumi, following Bayazid, says that the soul's love of God is God's love of soul, and that in loving the soul God loves Himself, for He draws home to himself that which in its essence is divine.<sup>107</sup>

Rumi proceeds further by laying emphasis that 'love' is the most dominant attribute of God and not the 'fear', and that since love is His attribute, there can be no limit to it.

لیس مکیب وصف حق دان عشق نیز  
خوف بنرد وصف لوردان ای عزیز

Know, then, that love *mahabbat* and excessive love *Ishq* too, is an attribute of God: fear is not an attribute of God, O, honoured, Sir.<sup>108</sup>

Although, the love of God is infinite and that of man infinitesimal yet when that love overtakes any body, it virtually becomes limitless, unfathomable and immeasurable.

در نغمه عشق در گفت و شنید  
عشق در ریاضت فقر شای ناپدید

Love is not contained in speech and hearing:

Love is an ocean whereof the universe, a cosmic force.<sup>109</sup>

It is finally this divine nature of love, which makes it omnipotent in the universe, a cosmic force, devouring almost anything.



کھر چیز عشقت شد مالول عشق  
دو جهان یک دانہ پیش لول عشق

Everything except love is devoured by love;

to the beak of lover the two worlds are (but) a single grain.<sup>110</sup>

Shah Latif's perception of love is also not different, as it would emerge from his following verses.

لکوسند و سوز جو لکوسند و سک  
عدد ناهي عشق پچاڻي پاڻ لکهي

Neither there is end to the sufferings,  
nor the yearning has a limit

Indeed love is not a numeral

It can come to an end by itself only.<sup>111</sup>

Rumi was the great protagonist of idealist love when he preached that there can be no particular form of that beloved

عشق او پيدا و معشوقش کھان  
يار سرون فتنه او در جهان  
آنخي معشوقست صورت ليست آن  
خواه عشق اين جهان خواه آن جهان

His love is manifest and his Beloved is hidden. The friend is outside (of the world) but his fascination is in the world.

That which is the object of love is not the form, whether it be love for (the things of) this world or yonder world.<sup>112</sup>

Shah Latif ingeniously alluded to that formless beloved when he said:

نڪو ڊيگهر نه وڃي، نڪو منهن نه مهارجا  
اي اهوئي ٿيل، ڪو ڀروڙي ڪينه ڪي

Neither any dimension is visible, nor any form is perceptible.

No trace of face is discernible nor any picture attributable

This is but clever game, which blind people can't perceive<sup>113</sup>

صورت سو جهوڙنهن جي، بي ٽيڪين لوجو  
سڃاڻي اهو سو، جو منهن مقابل نه ٿئي

Go not after the appearance of things

If you are in search of beloved

This is a parody which will never be resolved by you.<sup>114</sup>

Both Rumi and Shah Latif are, however, unanimous when they declare that the creation of universe, and especially, that of human being is an act of love on the part of God and that it is love which elevates the man and brings him in a position of communion with God. But this love in human beings whatsoever its degree is caused or inspired by God only. Love is prerogative of God only and man will also come under its sway only when God has willed so. 'What attracts lover to beloved and vice versa, and harmonizes and united them, is nothing that exists in the phenomenal world: it is the "non-existent". Essence and Reality which mystic knows by the name of love. In the beloved it appears under the aspect of lordship and self-sufficiency, and in the lover it takes the form of servitude, abasement, and tribulation<sup>115</sup>. Rumi makes this point clear when he says:

هیچ عاشقِ مُردِ نیا شد و صلِ جر  
 که نه معشوقش بودِ حویای او  
 تشنه من خالده ای آبِ گوار  
 آب هم خالده کو آبِ آبِ خوار  
 حُزبِ اکست این عطش در جان ما  
 ما از آنِ او و او هم آنِ ما

No lover, in soothe, is seeking union without his loved one seeking him. <sup>116</sup>

The thirsty man is moaning O delicious water? The water moans too, saying 'where is the water drinker'?

The thirst in our souls is the attraction exerted by the water we are It's, and It is ours. <sup>117</sup>

Shah Latif in Sur Sasui has vigorously brought this aspect of love under discussion, and he seems to agree with Rumi, when he advises 'Sasui'

ساجن کارٹ سچ، مرقبولی سچ  
 اندر جنینِ اچ، چاکھی اچیان کی

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Let Sasui go into wilderness, for the sake of beloved.

For those who are thirsty inside, water is also thirsty for them. <sup>118</sup>

But this love is not confined to Sasui, its intensity shows that it can not be the voice of a feeble soul like Sasui. In fact Sasui is overwhelmed or overpowered by the omnipotent love.



رحمن پر رتبی، کوسار نئی جو ساز  
ای عشق جو آواز، فالٹو رن مندی

Lo, there is a call in the wilderness,  
like a voice of music instrument  
People think it is the voice of woman,  
Nay, it is the noise of love. <sup>119</sup>

The Sufis in general, and Maulana Rumi and Shah Latif in particular have considered love to be the metaphysical reality. According to Rumi, the whole universe is subject and subservient to the rule of love. God has accordingly ordained everything to be in pairs, for love is the underlying principle and working force behind the universe. To Rumi, the examples are manifest and multiple in nature, so much so that, the sky appears him to be a male and the earth a female, God is the source of all this phenomenal love and himself an absolute love; it is this concept of love which makes it omnipotent and omnipresent in the universe. Shah Latif seems to have subscribed to this viewpoint as under.

وحدت تان کثرت بی کثرت وحدت کل  
حق حقیقی ہیکر تو، لولی بی یل  
هوہا چوہل، بالہ سندو سچین

From unity became the multiplicity,  
Multiplicity and the unity are but one whole  
Indeed the Reality is One, so be not confused with any plea,



I swear all this humdrum, Is but due to the beloved. <sup>120</sup>

The idea in more simplified form is presented in the following verse.

ڪوڙين ڪا يا لُون تنهنجون لکن لک هزار  
جي سڀ ڪنهن جي سڀن ڌرين ڌار وڌار  
پر ٿي تنهنجا پار ڪهڙا چئي ڪهڙا چٽا

Countless are your manifestations,

Innumerable are thy attributes,

Though the life is similar in every body,

Yet how different is one from the other.

O, my beloved I wonder,

how to extol thy numerous aspects. <sup>121</sup>

Both Rumi and Shah Latif, however, assign special position to man in the creation of the universe. Both rely and quote the famous traditions, whereby man is declared to be the epitome of the creation.

الانسان سرّي وانا سرّه

Man is my secret and I am his secret'.

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Shah has quoted this tradition

verbatim.

هو ڀڻ ڪولهي هن رِي هي نه هِنهان ڌار  
الانسان سرّي وانا سرّه، پر وڃ پيا  
ڪندا ويا تنوار، عالم عارف اهو رِي

He is not separate from this (man)

nor he (man) is disjunct from Him (God).

Man is my secret and I am his, understand this mystery

Indeed this has been the constant talk

by the Scholars and the gnostics. <sup>122</sup>

Rumi has hinted at the same idea in these words.

اتصالی بی تکلیف و حی قیاس  
کست رب الناس را با جان الناس

There is a union beyond description or analogy  
between the lord of man and the spirit of man. <sup>123</sup>

Rumi, who was the great apostle of love in the story of 'Moses and Shepherd', has described the real nature of love between man and God.

Once prophet Moses came across a shepherd who was addressing God in these words: O, God, where art thou that I may become thy servant, comb thy hair, wash thy clothes and kill thy lice. Kiss thy hands and rub thy feet' Moses rebuked him and asked him not to repeat the same words, as it amounted to heresy and invited the wrath of God. The shepherd felt distressed and in desperation went into the desert.

Soon afterwards Moses received the revelation that his action was not approved by God as instead of drawing his servants nearer to

God, he was berefting them. He was caveated that the love of God is not confined to the particular form or formalities, no particular language is prescribed to express your servitude. Mere rituals are meaningless. It is the passion of burning in love, which counts with God. It matters not whether one speaks Hindi or Sindhi. All that matters is the real passion and love'. Moses after hearing all this from God rushed after the shepherd to show his change of conviction and respect towards him.

Finally when Moses traced the shepherd, he found him on high pedestal of communion with God, as the latter had crossed the limits of humanity *Nasut* and entered the precincts of *Lahut* divinity.

In the words of Rumi.

محرّم ناسوت میاں لاهوت یار

May the divine nature be intimate with my human nature<sup>124</sup>

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The crux of the whole story is that the true love of God is not restricted to any particular norms or rules, as it is purely and solely the matter of heart, and that the true love, whatsoever its form or language is also reciprocated by God Almighty. This is the main argument of Rumi, when he says in the same story.

در حرّوت کعبه رسم قبله نیست  
چه غم از عنوان را چله نیست

Within the Kaabah, the rule of *Qibla* does not exist;  
What matter if the diver has no snowshoes? <sup>125</sup>

Shah Latif had to say

منهن مکراب پرین چو جامع سیاهان  
سیوی سبجان کیدان کن کریشان

The face of my beloved is prayer niche  
and the whole world a mosque,  
Lo, every where is magnificent Himself,  
In which direction I should pray? <sup>126</sup>

In the same story, Rumi draws the conclusion that when the blasphemy of the shepherd has been rewarded by God by elevating his position, this implies that his blasphemy was preferable, which was, however, based on altruistic love. Rumi praises this kind of blasphemy in these words.

کفر لود نیست و نیست لور جان  
ایمنی و زلو جهانتی در امان

Your blasphemy is (the true) religion, and your religion is  
the light of the spirit, You are saved, and through you a  
(whole) world is in salvation. <sup>127</sup>

Shah Latif's following couplet could



probably better be explained in the backdrop of above story and the verses of Rumi.

کافر شیء نہ اہین، باب شرع جاہیز  
من مشرک کن گز، تہ ویکھوشین وصال کی

Let you be an infidel, leave the religious law aside.  
Make your heart conversant with duality  
May be you attaining the proximity of beloved. <sup>128</sup>

In this context it is relevant to mention here that 'Kufr' is a technical term with the Sufis which signifies the mystical experience wherein the mystic is no longer aware of any thing other than God and in which he sees everything as one without any differentiation. <sup>129</sup> Similarly the hypocrisy of those who know God is more excellent than the sincerity of those who still are seeking Him. <sup>130</sup>

Amir Khusro (1235-1325 AD), the great Persian poet of the medieval India and the ablest disciple of the venerated saint of the Sub-continent, Nizamuddin Aulia had pronounced.

کافر عشق سلما نی مرا در کار نیست  
عمر گز من تار گز تہ حاجت ز تار نیست

I am infidel of love, no need of becoming Muslim.  
My every vein has become a string, no necessity of threads and cord. <sup>131</sup>

Accordingly for Sufis, gnostic's infidelity is the same as true Islam or even better than one's normal faith. Shah Latif is fully conversant with this ideology of Sufis, for which he provides the following reasoning.

علتی آرام بسی علت ایکو  
حسن صوفیق صوفی خامی یائیں خام  
اجیائیا اسلام کفر کافر جاوے

A habitual finds satisfaction in his habit,  
Beauty of the Truth is not appreciated by an amateur,  
This is how for the mature ones,  
infidelity is equivalent to true faith. <sup>132</sup>

It is interesting to compare the idea as well as the vocabulary of this *bait* with the following verse from Masnavi.

کھوپے گیرد علتی علت شود  
کفر گیرد کامی ملت شود

Whatever an ill man takes become illness, (but) if a perfect man takes infidelity, it becomes religion. <sup>133</sup>

It is however, divine love which is always supreme and subdues every thing else in the nature. Accordingly Sufis of all ages including Iqbal (d.1938) in our times had to say:

اگر ہو عشق تو ہے کفر بھی مسلمانی  
نہ ہو تو مرد مسلمان بھی کافر و زندیق

If there is love, infidelity is like Islam,  
If not, then Muslim is infidel and pagan too. <sup>134</sup>

## CHAPTER-V

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## CHAPTER-VI

### The Sufi Path and Shah Abdul Latif.

According to the Sufi doctrine, spiritual progress can be considered as a full-fledged journey, the destination of which is none else but God almighty, whom they would identify as their beloved. They are further agreed on the point that just as learning or acquisition of any discipline without a teacher is not possible, so a spiritual teacher is sine qo none for initiating the process, and it culminates in the perception of the real beloved who is God Almighty. In fact the Sufis consider this whole process more of a training cum-acquisition having its own rules or principles. They have been of the view that their knowledge is scientific in so far as it can not be acquired without observance of the specially designed practices. They base the premise of knowledge on their own experiences, though these experiences are confined to them as a class only. In support of their contention, the whole range of Sufi literature can be cited as strong documentary evidence.

However the most important verity which has attracted the attention of all Sufis alike, right from the earliest times to the present day is that they have found and experienced the human soul to be the receptacle of Godly truths

and capable of attaining union with God. Beside the all-capable soul, there is *nafs* or 'self' in every human being, diametrically opposed to the activities of soul. The desired progress of the soul can only be achieved when the *nafs* remains subdued or is overcome by the ever-strong soul. The Sufi texts are full with the details of spiritual journey of the soul towards God, also commonly referred to as *Tariqat*<sup>1</sup>, the path, that can not be traversed without the able guidance of *Pir-e-Tariqat* or spiritual preceptor, master, mentor or guide. Although the soul is inherently capable, it has to be initiated, trained, polished and perfected to receive the glimpse of the Truth, the Reality, who is none else than God Himself. At this initial stage the intending Sufi is called *Salik* which literally means 'traveller' and the path is accordingly known as '*Suluk*'. The journey on the spiritual path is by no means an easy affair, so that any individual soul can undertake especially without a preceptor or a guide, for it is a complete doctrine and it has its own methods and techniques. 'The first and foremost step considered absolutely necessary in this regard is that the disciple should seek a preceptor and put himself entirely under his guidance. For, if the disciple does not do that and relies entirely on his own initiative and efforts, he is never going to succeed. 'The disciple who has no



preceptor finds Satan himself acting as one. Without a preceptor no disciple can achieve more than the mastering of industrious techniques of piety which by them selves never lead to his seeing the light and achieving an experiential contact with the creator.'<sup>2</sup> The Sufis have therefore, laid great emphasis on the indoctrination of their principles. In this sense initiation of an individual on the path is an indoctrination, and from this point of view Sufism is but an indoctrination.

The phenomenon of spiritual leadership and their followers or disciple-preceptor relation is as old as Sufism itself. In fact the evolution of Sufism owes its existence to this single most strong institution, and its future also depends on its continuance. Although, the earliest Sufis were basically ascetics and in the peculiar socio-political environments they attracted the attention of the people, yet they inspired the confidence of the masses, and people on their own converged at their sanctuaries. This is how over a period of time many spiritual leaders came to be known for imparting the spiritual training. Hujwiri, (d.470/1072) himself an accomplished Sufi master and author of the most celebrated treatise on *Tasawwuf* identified as many as twelve different schools of the Sufis, mostly

designated after the names of their great teachers or founders.<sup>3</sup>

The Sufi tradition envisages the spiritual journey on the path to be punctuated with stations and states, though not exactly like the milestones indicating the towns and cities on any highway. The Sufi masters are almost unanimous in recognising the stations (*Maqam*) and states (*Ahwal*) on this way, though sometimes they differ in their opinion about the exact number as well as the contents of each station and state. The classical texts of Sufism are full with these definitions. Sarraj (d:378/988), the author of '*Kitabul Luma*' the earliest text so far available in Arabic, has differentiated between the two in these words, 'while the 'Stations' can be acquired and mastered by one's own efforts the states are spiritual feelings and dispositions over which a man has no control'. He has enumerated the seven stations and ten states on the path: <sup>4</sup>

- |                                |                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Repentance or <i>taubah</i> | 2. Abstinence or <i>wara</i>       |
| 3. Renunciation or <i>Zuhd</i> | 4. Poverty or <i>Faqr</i>          |
| 5. Patience of <i>Sabr</i>     | 6. Trust in God or <i>Tawakkul</i> |
| 7. Contentment or <i>Rida</i>  |                                    |

The ten states (*Ahwal*) are

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Meditation or<br><i>Muraqabah</i> | 2. Proximity or<br>nearness to God <i>Qurb</i> |
|--------------------------------------|--|

- |                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3. Love or <i>mahabbah</i>            | 4. Fear or <i>Khawf</i>           |
| 5. Hope or <i>Raja</i>                | 6. Longing or <i>Shawq</i>        |
| 7. Intimacy or <i>Uns</i>             | 8. Tranquillity or <i>Itminan</i> |
| 9. Contemplation or <i>Mushahadah</i> | 10. Certainty or <i>Yaqin</i>     |

After Sarraj, the most outstanding exponent of Sufi tenets Qushairy (d.465/1072) in his *Risala* provided a very detailed account of the stations and stages. Qushairy initially maintained the distinction between 'state and stations' by saying that the former are 'gifts' and the latter are 'earnings', but he did not always mark carefully the distinction, though he maintained *taubah* or 'repentance' to be the first station and the last as '*Shauq*' or yearning. He was the first to point out as to how according to some Sufis the *Rida* was *Maqam* being a development out of *Tawakkul* and according to others it was a *Hal*. He reconciled the two views by declaring the beginning of *rida* to be a *Maqam* and its conclusion a *Hal*.<sup>5</sup>

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Qushairy who was more systematic and methodical enlisted some forty-five stations and states on the path in the following order.

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Taubah</i> or Conversion                        | 2. <i>Mujahdah</i> or striving |
| 3. <i>Khalwah wa-uzl</i> solitariness and withdrawal. |                                |
| 4. <i>Taqwa</i> (the awe of God)                      | 5. <i>Wara</i> or abstaining   |
| 6. <i>Zuhd</i> or renunciation                        | 7. <i>Samt</i> or silence      |



8. *Khauf* or fear      9. *Raja* or hope      10. *Huzn* or sorrow  
 11. *Juw*, *tark al shahwa* or hunger and denial of appetite.  
 12. *Khushu*, *tawadu* i.e. fearlessness, humility  
 13. *Mukhalfat al nafs wa dhikr uyubiha* i.e. opposition to the carnal soul, remembering its vices.  
 14. *Qanat* or contentment      15. *Tawakkul* or trust in God.  
 16. *Shukr* or thankfulness      17. *Yaqin* or firm faith.  
 18. *Sabr* or patience.      19. *Muraqbah* or servanthood.  
 20. *Rida* or satisfaction.      21. *Ubudiyah* or servant hood.  
 22. *Iradah* or desire.      23. *Istiqamah* or uprightness.  
 24. *Ikhlas* or sincerity.      25. *Sidq* or truthfulness.  
 26. *Haya* or shame      27. *Hurriya* or magnanimity  
 28. *Dhikr* or remembrance.      29. *Futuwa* or chivalrousness.  
 30. *Firasah* or insight      31. *Khulq* or moral character.  
 32. *Jud*, *sakha* i.e. generosity, bountifulness.  
 33. *Ghairah* i.e. jealousy.      34. *Dua* or prayer.  
 35. *Wilaya* i.e. being in God's protection, sainthood.  
 36. *Faqr* or poverty      37. *Tasawwuf* or purity.  
 38. *Adab* i.e. decent manners.

From 21 to 38 are said to be extensions of the stations.

39. *Safr* or travel.      40. *Suhbah* or companionship.  
 41. *Tauhid* i.e. true belief in one God.  
 42. *Maut*. Noble dying.      43. *Marifa* or gnosis.  
 44. *Mahabah* or love.      45. *Shauq* or yearning.

Khawajah Abdullah Ansari  
 (394/1004-481/1080) the famous Sufi author of several works in Arabic and Persian however identified exactly one hundred fields 'Sad Maidan' between man and God. He also placed



'*taubah*' or repentance as the first field and the last two as *fana* or annihilation and *baqa* or subsistence in God.<sup>7</sup>

Generally speaking the stations constitute the ethical and psychological discipline which the human soul has to undergo and observe so as to develop and perfect itself, and be in a position where states are conferred upon the soul as a reward or gift by God. Ghazali (445/1058-505/1111), the most profound writer on Sufistic thought, while maintaining the fundamental difference between station and state, highlighted the station as the most essential virtues of human character. His discursive exposition of the terms Patience, gratitude, confidence, courage, poverty, renunciation, fear, hope, love, will, intention and truthfulness as the necessary and positive values of human character in his *magnum opus* '*Ihya*' or Revivification of Religious Sciences is the most illuminating and interesting discussion in the whole range of Sufi literature. Again it was Ghazali, who in his other important work '*Minhajul Abideen*' analysed the negative values or vices of human self '*nafs*,' such as pride, anger, malice, greed, avarice, jealousy, hypocrisy, prejudice, passion, vanity etc and explained as to how did they affect human character and behaviour.

The Sufis have always felt great concern about human character and conduct, and they considered spiritual states inseparable from virtues state or station, like patience i.e. '*sabr*' or confidence i.e. '*tawakkul*' is a virtue, which means that when the soul reaches such a state not only does it possess the virtue in question as an accident, but its very substance is transformed by it so that during the stage of the way in a sense it is itself that virtue.<sup>8</sup>

This was a general discussion about 'stations' and 'states'. Hujwiri an elder contemporary of Ghazali was however more technical in his approach, as he has provided the best exposition of these two terms which is worth quoting.

"Station" (*maqam*) denotes any one's standing in the way of God, and his fulfillment of the obligations appertaining to that station, and his keeping it until he comprehends its perfection so far as it lies in a man's power. It is not permissible that he should quit his station without fulfilling the obligations thereof. Thus the first station is 'repentance' (*taubah*), then comes conversion (*inabat*), then renunciation (*zuhd*), then trust in God (*tawakkul*), and so on, it is not permissible that any one should pretend to conversion without repentance, or to

renunciation without conversion, or to trust in God without renunciation.

State (*hal*), on the other hand is something that descends from God into a man's heart without his being able to repel it when it comes, or to attract it when it goes, by his own effort. Accordingly, while the term 'station' denotes the way of the seeker, and his progress in the field of exertion, and his rank before God in proportion to his merit, the term 'state' denotes the favour and grace which God bestows upon the heart of his servant, and which are not connected with any mortification on the latter's part. 'Station' belongs to the category of acts, state to the category of gifts. Hence the man that has a 'station' stands by his own self mortification, whereas the man that has a 'state' is dead to 'self' and stands by a 'state' which God creates in him.<sup>9</sup>

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Rumi, who has quoted Qushairy many times and was fully aware with Hujwiri and Ghazali's works has maintained the basic distinction between 'state' or *hal* and station or *Maqam* and it is in regard to these two basic terms, that he has composed these two beautiful lines.

حال من جلوه است زان زیبا عروس  
وین مقام ان خلوت آمد با عروس



The *hal* is like the unveiling of that beauteous bride,  
While *maqam* is being alone with that bride.<sup>10</sup>

As stated earlier the Sufis are unanimous in their views that the spiritual journey needs to be undertaken under the supervision of a spiritual guide or master i.e. *Pir* or *Shaikh*. All the classic manuals written by Sufis are full of descriptions on the subject. They have discussed in detail as to what are the qualities of a perfect *Shaikh*, and how the process of initiation has to be observed. What are the duties and obligations of a disciple and how can he achieve his objective. How much should a disciple value the advice of his *Pir-e-Tariqat* i.e. Guide on the path? According to Hujwiri, the Sufi *Shaikh* generally admit the novice and subject them to rigorous spiritual discipline for some time, say three years.

'The rule is that the first year is devoted to service of the people, the second year to service of God, and the third year to watching over his own heart. While in the service of people, the disciple must consider himself lower in rank and others as superior, better than himself and must serve all alike. He can serve God only when he cuts off all his selfish interest to this world or the next world.



He must worship God absolutely for His sake alone, in as much as whoever worships God for any things' sake worships himself and not God. And he can watch over his heart only when his thoughts are collected and cares are dismissed from his heart, so that in the presence of intimacy with God, he preserves his heart from the assaults of heedlessness.<sup>11</sup>

Rumi in Book-I of the Masnvi has also discussed the qualities of a spiritual guide and explained as to how he should be obeyed by the followers. The *Pir* is likened to a moon and the people at large like a dark night, hence it is he who can provide light. Rumi declares in categorical terms that this spiritual journey can't be undertaken without the guide, as otherwise there is every possibility that one may go astray and does not reach the destination.

پیر را با نر زین کہہ جی پیر این سفر  
کھست بس پرافت و خوف و خسر

Choose a *Pir* for without a *Pir*. This journey is exceeding full of woe, fright and danger.<sup>12</sup>

بس رہی را کہ زندہ سنی لو کھج  
کھن مرو تہ ہارز کھبر سر مہج

Do not then, travel alone on a way that you have not seen at all, do not turn your head away from the guide.

Shah Latif in pursuance of the established Sufi tradition has fully recognised

the significance of the spiritual path i.e. *Tariqat* as has been generally called and the indispensable role of the spiritual guide in this regard. Further he has expressed his views as to what is the relation of *Tariqat* with the *Shariat*, the legal code. Which of the two should take precedence and why? What do the *marifat* or gnosis and *Haqiqat* or *truth* signify and how all the four are related to one another. In fact this was the fundamental issue with the Sufis of all ages and it has been very succinctly dealt with by *Shah* in the following lines.

ڪر طرقيت تصيو شريعت سڃاڻ  
هيون حقيقت ميرتون ماڳ معرفت ڄاڻ  
هوئيچ نما بوقي ساڻ، ته پس مان بالهوهين

Proceed on the path of "*tariqat*"

Recognise the limits of "*Shariat*"

Acquaint your heart with "*Haqiqat*"

Identify your goal as *Marifat*

Be in touch with the proof (Guide)

So that you go not wayward. <sup>13</sup>

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In '*Sur Suhni*' he advises her for strict observance of *Shariat* and then to proceed further:

ساري سک سبق شريعت سنڌو سنهني  
طريقتان تڪووهي حقيقت جو حق  
معرفت مرڪ اصل عاشقن جو

Oh, *Suhni*, first devotedly learn the lesson of *Shariat*

The stage of *Haqiqat* far excels that of *Tariqat*

Marifat is ultimate goal of God's lovers.<sup>14</sup>

Hajiwiri has explained that *shariat* is mere knowledge of god, whereas *marifat* is cognition of God, which is allied with practice and feeling (*hal*). This also explains the difference between *Alim* and *Arif*. He has further clarified that *Shariat* is man's act, while *Haqiqat* is God's and their mutual relation may be compared to that of body and spirit, and their value depends on their conjunction with one another.<sup>15</sup>

The bulk of the poetry of Shah Latif pertains to Sasui, perhaps for the reason that she represents the best illustration of a *salik* or traveller on the path, for there could be no better character than her, as it is she who has physically to go hundreds of miles in search of her beloved. Being a lady and physically weak and not conversant with the itinerary, she was hardly in a position to undertake the long and arduous journey, and that also without any escort or companion of the confidence. The route which she was to traverse actually consisted of hills and dales, where she could hardly think of human habitation and where availability of water was doubtful if she felt thirsty. Her passage was by no means safe from the beasts and wild animals. There were many other difficulties, which she had to encounter



while proceeding towards her beloved. Under these circumstances she is advised to accept the guidance of preceptor who is well conversant with the path before embarking upon her journey: No one can negotiate the trek without leadership of a proper guide.

اوجھڑا سونھين، ذبيھ گھنڻي ڏوريو  
ساگر ري سونھين، پھڻي ھانہ پنڌ ڪري  
Unaccompanied and unguided she roamed a lot.  
Indeed without perfect guide She reached not  
her destination.<sup>16</sup>

But at the same time Sasui has been cautioned time and again that she should be aware of the so-called guides, as they would mislead her and she would not reach her destination.

سونھان ٻائڻ سڌن ڌين، سڻي پيچ ڀري  
مٿان توھي ڪي، منجھائين مارڻ ڀري  
They call themselves 'guides' despite being ignorant,  
O, Sasui don't go after them.  
Lest they misguide you and you are lost on the way.<sup>17</sup>

Again it is in Sur Sassui, that Shah Latif has quoted the most favourite tradition with the Sufis: 'He who is without spiritual guide is Satan'. 'And the one who travels this path without the spiritual guide, is just like the one who indulges himself into the Sea without a boat.

سڀ سياهي، آھي آري ٻار ري  
ھڏھن پسي ھانہ ڪا، ري لالڻ لالائي



دود دل تان دور گھری سا جن ہفتائی  
 من لا شیخ فشیخ الشیطان ان ریاً او تداھی  
 من یمشی فی الطریق بلا شیخ کمن یمشی فی البحر بلا سفینۃ اھڑی او اتی  
 تہ ریاً تو اتی گھورین شین جیتریونا۔

Its all dark without Ari Jam

No light appears in absence of my beloved.

Only the beloved can polish and bright my heart.

'He who has no guide, His guide is the Satan'.

Such is the darkness which prevails.

Alone she goes misled by her phantom.

'He, who embarks upon the path without guide,

is like the one who enters the ocean without a boat.

Many go astray who undertake journey without him.<sup>18</sup>

The requirements of peregrination on the path are too many and the Sufi texts are full with details. The seeker or *talib* has to undergo so many spiritual exercises. 'The first step which is regarded absolutely necessary by Qushairy in this connection is that the disciple should seek a preceptor and put him self entirely under his tutelage. For, if the disciple does not do that and relies entirely on his own initiative and efforts, he is never going to succeed.'<sup>19</sup> The list of requirements can be too long and too short as well. For example in the '*Bayan-ul-Arifeen*', Shah Karim is reported to have mentioned only three conditions, which need to be strictly observed by *talib* (i) He should keep himself hungry (ii) He should prefer lowliness. (iii) He should recollect

God with utmost love.<sup>20</sup>

A reiteration of the romance of Sassui Punhun would reveal that she meets all the three conditions. Accordingly in the Sufi terminology, the most appropriate appellation for Sassui would be 'talib', or seeker. Shah has used this word with same connotation in *Sur 'Kohyari'*, *Sur 'Asa'* and *Sur 'Ramkali'*. He has, however, used this word for 'Suhni' also. Insofar as both of them mark adventures under very adverse circumstances, they are the true seekers or *talib* of God and *salik* or travellers to God.

سچ وسندي تن کي جوش جلايا جي  
طالب جي تحقيق جا، نيہ تشين وئي تن  
تسدي پيسي تي، هوتان آهي هڪڙو  
Desolation appears habitation to them,

Those who are roasted in love's fire,

Go and for your love consult the seekers of truth

Cock-eyed sees as three, though He is only one.<sup>21</sup>

In *Sur Suhni*, Shah has used the word 'talib' twice for her:

هتي طالب حق جي، توڙي لاکوڻا توڙ  
نڪي ملوڪ نه مڪڙي، نڪي ٻڌائين توڙ  
پاڻي پنيءَ لور، هتي ليکي سڀ جو

Seeker of lord she was right from the beginning

She waits not on the sailor,

nor asks for boat, nor ties the rope

Mid stream's deep water she thought just ankle deep<sup>22</sup>

As pointed out by Hujwiri, while pursuing the path, the seeker has to be very humble and patient, he has to surrender himself completely at the mercy of his master and consider himself lower of the lowliest in rank and all others better or superior. Also he has to move with caution and with as much devotion and dedication as is possible. The constant advice for him is.

هل حنین سین ہوئے دی سسی کٹ مرساٹا  
جنہی پائیز پاٹ، سسی آریا پٹان اور یا رھیونا۔

Move towards the beloved with your heart,  
And take not your head along.  
Those who cared for their self,  
Remained away from their *Aryani*.<sup>23</sup>

Shah has unequivocally declared that it is a spiritual journey, which needs to be undertaken earnestly and in accordance with the rules and regulations of spiritual discipline.

هل حنین سین ہوئے دی، پرین گروہ پند  
راخی پیچ مر رند، رگرہ روحانی سستی

Proceed towards the lord with your heart,  
Travel not on your feet.  
Search not his footprints in the sand,  
Make spiritual movement, O, sasui !<sup>24</sup>

At the initial stage the traveller of







## اڌر نڌر اپري، اسونھيڻ آڻون

Helpless, weak and nimble, I am without guide. <sup>26</sup>

Although helpless, weakest and lowliest the salik is vis-à-vis his guide or mentor, it is he who has to proceed on this expedition by himself alone. It is typical characteristic of this journey, that it has to be traversed as an individual. The environment ahead is also expected to be dreadful, dangerous and unfriendly.

هيڪلياڻي حل پوريندس پنھون ڌي  
اڌاڌونگر لھيون، سور يون سجن سيل  
تڪر پيلي اکھن پيل، جي سور پريان ھلڻ مون

All alone to Punhoon I will proceed. Before me are difficult passes and summits of rocks so steep. But pain of Punhoon's separation is my companion and my guide. <sup>27</sup>

Once the salik or traveller is on the path, he has to be ever vigilant and careful. Even a moments slackness may land him off the track and his whole labour is lost, just as it happened with Sasui who lost her beloved because she fell into sleep. Sleep is to be despised and awakening to be preferred and adopted, that is why it is the most emphasized upon dictum by the Sufis. Shah Latif in Sur

Kohiyari, as the diction of his compositions would suggest, has taken to task for being sleepy and slack.

لِيل نہ جاگئیں لک سین گلی نومر گنا  
قمر تھی بھم قریب کھی اجلس تو نہ جگا  
مُسنی مَزمانن سین و بھیا رات اوصل  
جبلدہ ننہ سیاہ تھی رات راتین تھی راہ میر

You slept the whole night and not for an instant awoke,  
Get up reach your love, carelessness does not behave,  
Keep awake and whole night entertain the guests,  
Since you slept, you are but to weep in the way.<sup>28</sup>

Sasui has to suffer because of her dereliction. Hence the admonition is in more harsh tone.

منهن و بڑھی مٹن جٹن، سَین سنہھی  
او جاگو اکین کھی، جاتو نہ دَیٹی  
هتانا تو پیٹی، تھی کچو کچین کھی گرین

Like the dead, you covered your face and at sunset you slept,

You did not care to keep your eyes awake,

The fault is yours, how you blame others!<sup>29</sup>

Sincerity, faithfulness and rectitude are the other most important qualities, without which this journey can not be completed satisfactorily.

هَسن سَین مونڑیں ہلم سان ہسین  
عشق آرتی چار جو نباھی تہین  
جان جان تھی ہسین تان پآراج کوم پنہون سین

With hands, feet, knees, rather with heart proceed.

Be faithful in Ari Jam's love up to the last.  
Fulfil your commitment till your last breath.<sup>30</sup>

The spiritual guide if he is perfect or *Kamil*, he works as a catalyst, because of his moral and psychological powers he is in a position to mould and transform the character of the pathfinder into an epitome of human virtues. This task may appear to be difficult for the person who has just entered upon the path but virtue of the self-control, self-regulation, self-mortification and imbibing the highest human values and traits make his assignment easy. The path has been declared too risky also as slight short-comings may render the disciple off the track and he may fall in to the abyss of darkness. Every moment require to be vigilant and to be passed in accordance with the instructions of the guide. A stage comes when the disciple becomes actually a ward and the spiritual guide a guardian. Here the disciple finds himself completely at the mercy or the will of the guide. This stage is known as *fana Fis Shaikh* or effacement in the *Shaikh*. Once this stage has been passed the next stage is of (*Fana Fi Rasool*) or 'absorption' in the Prophet. This is a very crucial stage and requires absolute obeisance on the part of the *salik*. Here first he has to understand the universal role of the Prophet of Islam for the cause of the



downtrodden and those who were in the darkness, for he elevated them and enlightened them. Here he has to realize that the light gained by the *Shaikh* is also from the light of Prophet. The personal case of *salik* at this stage is no more different from him, and his upward movement towards God is conditioned and dependent upon the recognition of the Prophet of Islam, as the sole redeemer and deliverer of this world. This is what has been described by Shah Latif in the following lines:

برو هو پنیور جو آیارٹی اجاریچ  
 لا تو سپ لوگ۔ ان ہارٹی دے تی ہو  
 چور یون چرن سکین پنھون صیاٹون بور  
 آلو سو اتور جنھن دے کیون دیک وھاریون

Bhambhore (world) was indecent and ugly

Aryani embellished it

He, the lord of Harho removed,

all despair of mankind

The maidens learnt to print

and opted him as their model.

Indeed his was unique personality

Who cheered the saddened ones. <sup>31</sup>

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There can be no other appropriate way to interpret this verse excepting that it implies the highest tributes for the Prophet of Islam couched in the motif of Punhoon, who was Aryani or Ari by caste. There are some other



verses also which clearly indicate towards the personality of the Prophet and the traditional role which sufis have normally ascribed to him.

Similarly in the following lines Shah Latif has once again metaphorically alluded to the Prophet as the pearl or jewel of the universe being the source of light and illumination and simultaneously he has reiterated his belief in intercession by the Prophet on the day of judgement.

ماٹھے ست سندومر اوند اھی تیر سو جھرو  
 حشر ویل مسابیر چڈی نہ ویندومر  
 ساریا سڈھندومر کوھیارو کیم دئی  
 I am related with that pearl,

Who is light in the darkness.

On the day of judgment,

he will not leave me alone.

The lord of Ketch will take care of me. <sup>32</sup>

After this we take up the discussion of some very important stations on the sufi path. Repentance, Patience, Tawwakkul and Poverty.

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### Repentance (*taubah*)

According to the great Sufi masters- Sarraj, Kalabadi, Qushairy, Hujwiri and Ghazali, *taubah* is the first station or *maqam* on the spiritual path. The word literally means 'return' (*Ruju*) from sins and excesses committed by some one. The Sufis cite many verses from the Holy Quran on the significance of the '*taubah*' and its implications. e.g. 'O, believers, repent unto God with sincere repentance'.<sup>33</sup> 'And verily, God loves those who often repent and who purify themselves'.<sup>34</sup> Since Adam was the first to repent and Satan did not though both were guilty of disobedience, Adam's status was accordingly raised and Satan was dejected for ever. The Sufis therefore interpret that repentance is not only inherent to man and is very much liked by God, for Adam was not only forgiven on account of this act of *taubah*, but was elevated and decreed as the representative of God on earth. Hence *taubah* is the foremost and basic quality of a *Salik* or traveller on the path. Hujwiri, having identified the '*taubah*' as *maqam* or station of Adam, further observed that the station of Noah was renunciation or *Zuhd*, that of David was sorrow or *Huzn*, that of Abraham was Resignation or *taslim* and that of Moses was contrition or *Inabat*, that of Jesus, was hope or *raja*, that of John, was fear or *Khawf*, and that of

our Prophet is praise or *dhikr*.<sup>35</sup>

Ghazali held the view that the repentance was compulsory on the part of every believer in every condition, and for this he relied on the verse: 'O believers, be repentant to God all together so that you may get salvation.'<sup>36</sup> He defined *taubah* as to control the passions and low desires of the self, to return from the paths of the devil and to walk in the paths of God.'<sup>37</sup>

Kalabadi (d. 390/1000 AD) has quoted Dhul-Nun on repentance in these words: The repentance of the common is from sin, that of elect from forgetfulness, and that of the Prophets is from seeing that they are unable to reach what others have attained. Again Al Nuri was quoted as having said 'Repentance means that thou shouldst turn from every thing but God'.<sup>38</sup>

Suharwardy in his '*Awariful Maarif*' suggested that repentance is the foundation of 'or structure of stations' and it is a key to all states. He viewed repentance second to only faith.

According to Sufi writers, true repentance involves a moral and spiritual transformation, the passing away (*fana*) of evil qualities and actions through the persistence (*baqa*) of the corresponding good qualities and

actions. Hence the true penitent is he who has been made immaculate by Divine grace, or that to him the very thought of sin is impossible, he is the lover in whom every attribute of self has been purged away.<sup>39</sup>

Hujwiri has quoted the two famous traditions of the Holy Prophet regarding 'taubah', 'He who repents of sin is even as one who has no sin', and second, 'there is nothing that God loves more than a youth who repents.' He has further described three states of *tuabah* viz *taubah*, through fear of Divine punishment, *inabat*, through desire of Divine reward, and *awbat*, for the sake of keeping the Divine command. *Tawab* is to return from great sins to obedience, *inabat* is to return from minor sins to love, and *awbat* is to return from ones' self to God.'<sup>40</sup>

Sufis conclude that in the final analysis, repentance is purely an act of divine grace, and it comes from God to man and not otherwise, that is also the end result of Adam-Satan story. Rabia, the women mystic held this view, for, when she was enquired about *taubah*, she replied; in fact, you will repent only when you had been pardoned by God.<sup>41</sup>

Most of the Sufis including Hujwiri hold the view that no doubt *taubah* is the first and foremost *station* on the path, and even if the



adept has moved from this *station* to next one, he may at times need to return to this station that is why there are three categories of *tuba*, the first is the repentance of the ordinary man, the second is the repentance of the elect and the third relates to the degree of Divine love (*mahabbat*).<sup>42</sup>

Both Rumi and Shah Latif seem fully aware with the basic concept of '*taubah*' and its implications, specially for the traveller of the path, but they did not declare it to be the first station as has been done by the great Sufi writers. This was perhaps natural due to their poetical temperament and treatment of the subject. Rumi has referred to the story of Adam and Iblis, and more or less reached the same conclusion that Adam was honoured due to his act of *tuba*, whereas Iblis was made to suffer for his aggressive attitude and being clever and argumentative. He also declares *taubah* as one of the eight gates through which the penitents could enter the paradise and this gate shall remain open till the day of judgement. Rumi under the '*taubah-e Nasuh*' i-e sincere repentance has narrated a very interesting story in Book -IV and has drawn a great lesson as to how the true *taubah* is acceptable despite having been violated earlier many a time. According to Rumi, sincere repentance is not an

easy task, it is serious job and can be undertaken only by man of masculine nature. Finally he also subscribes to the view of Rabia that *taubah* is a Divine grace, and one will repent only when he had been pardoned by God. For Rumi, if it is taken seriously, it can work miracles on the spiritual journey.

مَرکَبِ تَوْبَةٍ عَجَائِبِ مَرکَبِ است۔ ہر فلک تازد بیک اعظم زیست

The steed of repentance is a marvelous steed, in one moment it runs from below upto Heavens.<sup>43</sup>

The pivotal position of '*taubah*' in respect of the spiritual journey has thus been acknowledged by all the Sufis without any exception, though there exists variance as regards to some of its details.

Shah Latif's concept of *taubah* is, however, very simple and straightforward. He is seemingly aware with the Prophetic teachings on this subject, as he quotes the famous tradition 'He who repents of sin is like the one, who has not committed the sin' He likes to discuss the concept of *taubah* in the context of servant and master relationship between man and God. From his view point *taubah* is inalienably linked with the path of gnosis or *marifat*. He declares *taubah* as the most wanted merchandise on the boat of life so that it crosses the currents of the sea of this world. It is typical of Shah Latif that he has deliberated on the idea of *taubah* in Sur





They remembered their lord  
     so no tide deterred them.  
 With full confidence and trust,  
     they entered and crossed the currents  
 with the litany of repentance.  
     they overcame the cross winds  
 The perfect sailors  
     also came to their help in the midst. <sup>45</sup>

This is how eventually Shah Latif makes *taubah* as mandatory in order to cross the deep waters of life and how with its observance, one will receive the patronage of the experienced guides. Shah considers *taubah* to be almost an alchemy, and therefore he recommends its early adoption in the youth. He is impressed by the maxim, 'make haste in repenting before the arrival of death' and this he quotes in a *Wai* under *Sur Asa*. In two very splendid '*Wais*'; which is a kind of litanies with God Almighty, he Says! 'O, youth, be repentant with full vigour'. The same piece of advice is found in the *Bayan-ul-Arfeen*.

'For seeker, appropriate time for *taubah* and prayers is his youth' <sup>46</sup>

Which is again reminiscent of Persian quotation: 'To repent in youth is the habit of Prophets'



Being saint and sage, Shah Latif himself fully understood the purport of *taubah* and that it is not only prescribed for the beginners, but it is beneficial for the gnostics or the elect ones, for it has been preferred by the Prophets also. Shah in Sur Ramkali, where he has dealt with Yogis, who represent the gnostics, has portrayed them as under;

ار تو اکین مان و هی میتان گلن کاتر  
 صوری حسن و جم پر قیم و ذالون قاتر  
 هستی توبه تاتر، نا نسا سورا شتا۔  
 Their eyes full with tears,

Shedding drops on the cheeks  
 Their ears pierced with big holes for cavities  
 By strict observance of repentance  
 the naked attained perfect purity.<sup>47</sup>

Here Shah has symbolised gnostics as Yogis, and according to him they also need strict observance of *taubah*. This view is in accordance with the ideas of Hujwiri and Dhul Nun, who have held that *taubah* of elect is from laxity or *ghaffat* whereas that of common people is from sins. This is in consonance with what Ruwaym implied when he defined *taubah* as 'repenting from repentance' i.e. complete obliteration of the thought of sin and penitence.<sup>48</sup> The idea which has found its way in the thought of many later Sufis including Shah Latif as is explicit from the following lines.

### Sabr or Patience

'Patience' has been identified as the major station on the Sufi path, and the most important doctrine of Sufi way of life. According to the general definition, patience means to accept whatever comes from God, and it is by no means easy to adopt this attitude, unless the self or *nafs* of man has been disciplined or made subservient to that extent. It is because of prime significance of patience in human life, and the difficulties with which it can be achieved, that in the Holy Quran it has been referred more than seventy times in various contexts and variegated concepts. 'Get help from patience and prayers verily, God is with the patients.'<sup>49</sup> Here the patience has been bracketed with prayers, indicating that it can have the same effect as any prayers could have for human being. The Prophet of Islam is reported to have remarked patience is integral part of faith. Ghazali in his '*Ihya*' has discussed this tradition as to how, when and where the patience is to be exercised. 'Patience is an attribute of man only and angles, birds and beasts have no such attribute. An angle has got no necessity of patience as he has got no nature of evil. However animals are guided by instincts and greed'.<sup>50</sup>

According to Ghazali there are

different kinds of patience. First kind is to have patience over physical pains, and second is to have control on the inclinations of evil and greed of passion. From this point of view, renunciation is patience from happiness and pleasures. Satisfaction is patience at present possessions. 'Most conducts of faith lie in patience. For this reason, when the Prophet was asked about faith, he replied that patience is faith as there is no act of faith more difficult than patience'.<sup>51</sup>

In reply to the question as to which kind of patience is the most difficult, the great Sufi master Junaid said, 'To take journey towards God from passions and low desires is very difficult but it is much more difficult to have patience after living with God'.<sup>52</sup>

Abu Bakr Shibli, the eminent disciple of Junaid, however, referred to the patience of separation to be very difficult after having attained the proximity (*Qurb*) of God.<sup>53</sup>

Yahya bin Muaz has differentiated between the patience of lovers and ascetics declaring the lovers' patience to be more difficult, compared to that of the ascetics.<sup>54</sup>

Rumi has quoted the verse of the Holy Quran and has also referred to the well-



known tradition of Prophet according to which, 'without patience is to be without faith'. Rumi is also fond of repeating the Arabic aphorism 'Patience is key to happiness'. At some places he has highlighted as to what are the dangers of being impatient and what are the benefits of the patience. Almost all the Prophets had to observe patience at critical moments in order to crown their efforts with success, patience, according to him is an antidote and elixir in fact a unique panacea so far it has been paired with the 'truth'.

صد هزاران کیمیا حق آفرید - کیمیائی همجو صبر آدم ندید  
صبرا با حق وین کردای فلان - آخنر والخصرا آنگه نبخوان

God created hundreds of thousands of elixirs, but man has not seen a elixir like patience.

He (God) hath joined sabr (patience) with Haq (the real and permanent). O, reader, recite attentively the end of (Sura) Wal-asr. <sup>55</sup>

Shah Latif seems to have been so much inspired by the above lines from the Masnavi that in following bait, quite exactly in the similar way he referred to the end verse of Surah Wal -asr.

پر میر پچیانئون عشق چنی اسباب کھی  
دآرون همن درد جو دآرون دسیانئون  
آخنر والخصر جو ایضی امانئون  
تھان یوئ آئون تھان سلا م کھی

In complete confidence and secrecy,

they inquired about the cause of love.



They prescribed the remedy  
 which is bitter and difficult.  
 'Patience' they suggested,  
 the end verse of 'Wal-asr'  
 Following their advice,  
 I look forward to greetings. <sup>56</sup>

It is, however in *Sur Asa* where Shah Latif has referred to the final verse of Surah Wal-Asr in full as under:

اڄ پڻ اکثرين سين ڪوئي ڪٽائون  
 ماهودي انگڙا ڪري، ڪرنگهر چڙيائون  
 وتواسو بالحق وتواسو بالمبر ايئن اڻائون  
 ڪرڪي ماريائون، ڪلي ڪٽي سڄين  
 Today He called me and slaughtered with his eyes.  
 He cut me into pieces, Separating limbs and bones  
 And exhort one another to truth and to endurance,  
 This was the advice.  
 His smile killed me and his laughter wounded me <sup>57</sup>.

Manifestly the above verses refer to the patience which one has to bear in respect of the love, though that has been considered to be very difficult and the most unbearable by the Sufis. Sasui, whose love Punhoon was snatched by her brothers-in-law and had to suffer the tortures of separation, she had to face the wilderness of the way when she undertook the most tedious journey in search of her beloved. Shah has pointed out that in these most

distressing hours of life, the force of patience was the source of her strength and which emboldened her to move ahead and pursue the goal till its achievement.

O, Sasui, continue wailing for him

Forget not the wailing at any cost.

Do not make your tears visible,

Rather shed tears from inside.

Patience is the great strength

Sooner it would unite you with the beloved <sup>58</sup>.

More difficult has been the journey in the Sea, and there could be no more complete metaphor to compare this world with ocean and man's life as the boat and man himself as the boatman. How this most risky and full of damages voyage can be under taken purposely? What kind of precautions and preparations are required for the safety of boat itself and the boatman? Shah Latif has discussed all this in 'Sur Siree Rag'. Again 'patience' is the greatest virtue that is to be acquired by the sailor on this journey so as to earn the fortune around the continents of the world.

سڀا ڪو سمنوندي جي هٿي لهر ڏهاڙ  
انما يوفى الصابرون. ابي بيري پندڙ پاڙ  
تہ سامونڊي سنڌيا ڪنهن منڍي نه سڻان  
Show the reverence for sea,

Where the turbulent waves face,

'Verily, God shall reward those who observe patience'

ڏوڏ ڪندي وت هٿان ووءِ وسارين  
پاڻي هاريه ٻڌرو، روءِ منجهائين ٿي  
هٿر وڌو ست، سگها مٿي سارين

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Make this as anchor of your boat.  
O, sailor, only then  
You will get respite and relief <sup>59</sup>.

Man is essentially a spiritual being, Shah Latif in *Sur Ramkali*-the Gnostics-has more vividly and forcefully described what is the positive role of patience as against the greed and avidity and how the attribute of patience, which is the attribute of God also, transforms the man into divine nature. Rumi at one place has likened patience to a shield necessary for victory, but Shah refers to patience as the sword, with which the lump of greed is to be operated.

ہی پائین جو گئی شیان نہ طمع ہڈ تھام  
گولا ہی گولن جا تن ہوئی غلام  
صبر ہی شمشیر سان چرخہ چینی سہی قتلام

It you mean to be a Yogi,

Keep all desires away.

Adopt complete humility

and behave like slaves.

Vanquish the malice  
with the sword of patience

In this way, o waked one,

You will be enrolled as 'Lahuti.' <sup>60</sup>

'Sabr' or Patience has many connotations with the Sufis, it is not mere quietude or remaining silent, it implies

perseverance and steadfastness of purpose, be systematic in pursuance of purpose, react in positive manner under adverse circumstances, not to be emotional of the things which seemingly go against ones wishes, and above all to endure pains for righteousness. *Sabr* is also identified with self-restraint and self-control. Shah Latif has also used the word *Sabr* in many senses:

نعی کھی نہارتون دمر پاسو ڈک  
منجھان صبر سک ہی سنوار یا سبھین

Patience, humility adopt, for anger is disease-  
Forbearance brought joy and peace, if you would understand.<sup>61</sup>

'Patience bears the sweet fruit ' is the common aphorism, of which both Rumi and Shah Latif are fully convinced.

Patience is bitter itself, but its fruit is sweet.

Patience leads to the unlocking of every secret<sup>62</sup>

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Shah recapitulates the idea.

کہ کمند کنو، ہا، یر ہو رہی  
چکونہ چوندا، ہو جو سا، صبر جو

Be patient, patient ones win, anger brings humiliation  
Vile ones know not, the sweet-taste of  
patience.<sup>63</sup>



### Shukr or Gratitude.

Gratitude is generally entwined with patience or gratitude follows the patience. Ghazali has discussed *Shukr* as an important station for the travellers of the path, for which he has quoted from the Holy Quran, Hadith and the teachings of the early Sufi masters. He agrees with his predecessor Qushairy that *Shukr* means to appreciate fully that God is the real benefactor, and whatever he has done for his servants is good, whether it comes in the shape of happiness or adversity. They express gratefulness to God, under all circumstances and they do not decry at all. There are many anecdotes in the Sufi literature which imply that those who try to be grateful under adversity or in pains enjoy higher rank with God, than those who acknowledge thankfulness under less adverse or favourable circumstances. Accordingly gratitude is divided into different ranks: gratitude for the gift, gratitude for not giving, and gratitude for the capacity to be grateful. For, though the common man deserved to be applauded when he expresses his gratitude at receiving a gift, the Sufi should give thanks even if his wish is not fulfilled or a hope is withheld<sup>64</sup>. Shah Latif hinted for such Sufis in *Sur Kalyan* almost exactly in the same manner:

دَنِيَا دَكُورَا ، اِنْ دَنِيَا رَا ضَرِي تَيَا  
صَوْفِي تِي تَيَا ، جِشْنِ كَسِيَا لُونِ پَارَا سِينِ

By getting something they felt hurt,

They were contented when they got nothing.

This is how the Sufis are

for they take along nothing with them. <sup>65</sup>

This is how *Shukr* is related to *Rida* or contentment or how *Shukr* leads to contentment or satisfaction a very significant station for the *saliks* or the travellers of the path, to which we shall return later on.

Some Sufis have been fond of drawing comparison between the patience and gratitude, and suggesting one to be higher or superior to the other. Ghazali says patience is better than gratefulness whereas others propose gratitude to be higher; and the controversy gets resolved in the state of *rada* or contentment, which makes man whole<sup>66</sup>.

Shah Latif in Sur Sasui has highlighted both patience and gratefulness as the twin qualities essential for the spiritual progress of *salik*. Sasui is warned to be externally careful in tracking the path of beloved and howsoever arduous it may be, it has to be pursued and chased with full zest and love, otherwise she is liable to be declared as ungrateful on her part. She is advised to avoid

the stigma of being ungrateful at all costs.

مٿان جيئي جتن، گھوڙو گھوڙي سستي  
يازي جي پنھون جا، ھارون ھريائن  
خيچ مٿان ھلن، بي شڪر پنپور جي

Sasui scarifies herself, every now and then.

She even implores, the servants of Punhoon

She does her best lest she is declared  
ungrateful<sup>67</sup>.

After having crossed the most  
dreadful journey and passing through the  
terrifying mountainous terrain, when Sasui  
reaches the vicinity of her beloved, she is  
obliged to offer thanks and be grateful.

ھئي ھئي ڪيو ھاءِ! جي پاڻ ھئين سر پاھين  
لڏاڻين لطيف جي، ھو ھو ھئين جي ھاءِ  
شھر بار سندا، سٺا سٺا مڙي

She laments and wails

Strikes her head against the rocks

But finally she entered

the periphery of her beloved.

Laden with gratitude

She joined the caravan of beloved.<sup>68</sup>

To be ungrateful is to earn  
condemnation and to be grateful is to earn  
reward, for the capacity to express gratitude is  
also a divine grace. Rumi upholds this view  
when he says 'thanks giving to God is a collar  
on every neck' and ingratitude is wickedness  
and makes one liable to punishment.



زانک ہی شکر ہی بود شو و شکار  
سی برد ہی شکر را در قصزار

'Because ingratitude is wickedness and disgrace and brings the ingrate to the bottom of hell fire<sup>69</sup>.'

Rumi like many great Sufis concludes that *Shukr* per se is of higher value than the object for which it is intended to be offered.

شکر نعمت خوشتر از نعمت بود  
شکر بار کسی سوئی نعمت رود  
شکر جان نعمت و نعمت جو دوست  
فرانکه شکر آن ترا تا سوئی دوست  
Thanksgiving for bounty is sweeter than the bounty (itself), how should he that is addicted to thanksgiving go towards (direct his attention) to the bounty?

Thanksgiving is the soul of the bounty, and bounty is the husk, because thanksgiving brings you to the abode of the beloved.<sup>70</sup>

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Mark the use of same word '*Shukr bar*' by Rumi and Shah in the same context.

There can be no more proper occasion for gratitude when one gets the opportunity of meeting his beloved. Shah seems to have experienced this unique chance:<sup>71</sup>

شکر گدائسون سچین، جی جانب جانیا یار  
ویلی جنین و تیر هوثرین ثا قرار  
دستی جمع مدار، پاژ و تن پرین سمن



God be thanked, I found the loved one in life.  
In whose company hundreds solace I find.  
Please God, take me not away from such one's  
vicinity<sup>72</sup>

Shah Latif is aware of the Quranic injunctions regarding *Shukr* which is to be expressed by the servants of God every now and then. In Sur Siree Rag where sea journey symbolises the terrestrial life of an individual with all its attendant dangers and risks so every safe journey requires immense thanksgiving for sea farer for it pleases God.

سہسین شہر نام گھر سہسین شہر نام  
گھر بن چال گھریم جا  
حمد ہو حصیہ کی ظاہر نہ بانا  
تو دیکھاری تو دے تھی باطن جا مانا  
مندان مزد و ساریں سہاجب ہونا

Hundreds of thanks for thousands of favours my  
Lord showers,

repent and sing that Blessed Lord's praises,

That within your self He may reveal to you wonders

Man never forget to sing Lord's praise,

Let your heart and tongue remember that friend,

Be lost in meditation and harden yourself

Being pleased, with you, He may on you Shower grace,

Be humble, remove from your heart deceit,

Lord with truth alone is pleased,

Submit to the will of God and offer thanks,  
 Those who kept vigils for the Lord, there's is  
 honours mead,  
 Quran says, 'remember me that I remember thee'  
 Remove doubts from your heart and thank me.  
 With all your heart Lord's praises sing.  
 Be quick and eager, repent your sins.  
 That from merciful Lord you may peace and safety win.<sup>73</sup>

As pointed out earlier, the Sufis have  
 all along been of the view that gratitude is  
 incumbent on salik in both happiness as well as  
 adversity, in fact higher rank is assigned to the  
 later one, as it is too difficult to observe. But  
 this is what the officiated ones have been doing,  
 so sings Shah Latif in the following couplet.

وپیارا وادوڑ، سد اشاکر سورسین  
 زان مٹی توڑ، ادری کنہ آسور  
 The afflicted ones are always  
 grateful on their pain.

They chase their target far ahead,  
 Gaze not nearby<sup>74</sup>.

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'Gratitude toward God teaches man to see with  
 the hearts' eye the blessings veiled in  
 affliction.'<sup>75</sup>

Such man then feels happy and  
 offers heartfelt gratitude even if he has to given

his head, he does so smilingly and prays, if it is accepted. This could be the highest stage of gratitude, which Shah Latif has alluded to in Sur Sorath.

نَسِي پر چیا پاؤں تہند، کھنار و حنہ  
تنہن جھوٹی ناہ حسین جو تو جاتا کھنڈ  
ای شکر الحمد جتن منور کھر تو ملتا

Blade, string and head have reconciled,  
there is no better act than your coming to this place,  
You ask for my head and not what I could  
not give, God be praised and thanked. <sup>76</sup>

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### Tawakkul

*Tawakkul* or trust in God has been considered to be the most indispensable station on the path leading towards God. The term seemingly originated from the Holy Quran, where there are many verses on this topic. e.g. Put your trust in Allah, if you are indeed believers<sup>77</sup>. The one, who trusts in God, God is sufficient for him<sup>78</sup>. Similarly there are many traditions of the Prophet in this regard, which has been extensively quoted and relied upon by the Sufis.

*Tawakkul*, attracted much attention of the earliest Sufis, the great ascetics of the eighth and ninth century and they gave typical definitions, each according to his own aptitude. *Dhul-Nun* defined it as complete certitude and *Sahl* said: Trust is being at ease before God. Some one proposed trust is abandoning every refuge except God. Ibrahim Al-Khawwas who is regarded as the prototype of trust and lost his life in its virtual demonstration, considered trust as the apex of whole Sufism. Due to its unique significance, Shaiq Balkhi regarded *Tawakkul* as state (*hal*) instead of Station (*maqam*)<sup>79</sup>.

The concept of God in Islam is that of an all-powerful being, and believers have been asked to confide in Him in these words: is



God not sufficient for his servant<sup>80</sup>? Some Sufis therefore found it logical to correlate trust with the degree of faith, and hence with the belief of unity or *tauhid*. According to these definitions, real *tauhid* demands *tawakkul*. God in His absoluteness, is the only actor, and therefore man has to rely completely upon Him<sup>81</sup>. *Tawakkul* interpreted in this way made some of the Sufis extreme exponents to the extent of neglecting physical means towards achieving any objective. Such examples are not uncommon where they would not go in search of livelihood even. This controversy which started with the earliest Sufis is still existent in some or the other way. Bishr Hafi was approached by a group of intending Hajis to lead them during Haj season. He laid three conditions that they will not take anything along with them, secondly they will not ask for any thing on the way and third they will not accept any thing if that is offered voluntarily.<sup>82</sup>

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Rumi in Book-1 in the story of 'The lion and the beast, on the true nature of trust in God', has very intelligently highlighted both the aspects of *Tawakkul*. The beasts get together under the leadership of a hare to pursue the lion to stop their killing and put his trust in God for they on their own would arrange for his feed and feast by turn and that the lion need not fetch or

go about for their killings. The dialogue which ensued between the two side turns into the declamation of determinism versus free will. The lion advocating the struggle and exertion to earn livelihood as it is in accordance with the tenets of faith propounded by the Prophets the chosen ones of God. Finally despite all the weighty arguments which are advanced from the side of lion in regard to the struggle and exertion and how it is crowned by God almighty, he loses his life when he is beguiled and brought by the leader of the beasts, hare on a well wherein he sees his image and considering it to be his rival, jumps and finishes his life. Many mystical lessons have been conveyed by Rumi through this simple fable. First and foremost, the trust does not imply that one should not strive or struggle and leave everything to God, and thereby expecting that God will do every thing for him. Rumi is very witty when he says,

گرتو چل میکنی در کار کن  
کشت کن پس تکیه بر چهار کن

If you are putting trust in God, Put trust (in Him) as regards (your) work, sow (the seed), and then rely upon the Almighty. <sup>83</sup>

From the famous tradition of the Prophet 'Do trust in God, but bind the knees of your camel', Rumi concludes *Tawakkul* has to be based on work or exertion.

گفت آری اگر توکل رهبر است - این سبب هم سنت پیغمبر است  
گفت پیغمبر با آواز بلند - با توکل زانوئی اشتر بنید

'Yes' he said; (but) if trust in God is the (true) guide, (yet-use of) the means too is the Prophet's rule (sunna).

The Prophet said with a loud voice, while trusting in God, bind the knee of thy camel.<sup>84</sup>

Rumi in Book-V has yet brought another tradition of the Prophet on the topic of *Tawakkul* under discussion. According to this tradition the Prophet said if you trust in God as you should, then he would sustain you as he sustain the birds, which in the morning go forth hungry and in the evening return satiated. Rumi has narrated a story of an ascetic who in order to test the veracity of this tradition, sets forth into a desert taking nothing with him. After one or two days when he was starving out of hunger and thirst, a caravan came to pass from there, they found him almost on the verge of death. The ascetic feigned as if he was unable even to open his mouth, this increased the sympathy of the travellers even more, who with great difficulty opened his mouth and admitted some food and liquid into his mouth.

Rumi here concludes that so far as the feeding of the creation at large is concerned God has made provision of it for every creature



in the universe, and in this way he tends to agree with the extreme view of the *turst* which was hallmark of the early Sufis.

گفت از ضعف توکل باشد آن  
ورنه بدین نان کسی که داد جان

He replied that is of weak faith,  
else he who gave us life also gives us bread<sup>85</sup>.

Shah Latif, as we discuss in the preceding section has bracketed *tawakkul* with *tauba*, where he speaks of the both as important steps to be converted into stations under the supervision of a perfect guide. But above all his *Sur Sasui* and *Sur Sohni*, provide the best illustration of '*tawakkul*' required of a *Salik* while travelling on the path towards God.

Sasui as a result of the intrigues of the brothers of her beloved Punhoon was left asunder at Bhambhor and Punhoon was forcibly taken away to Kech Makran, a place hundreds of miles away. None felt compassion with Sasui, rather every body advised her to forget Punhoon, for it was not possible for her to go after him. Just think of the journey by a lonely maid through the vast plains, tedious and tardy passages of the mountains with high peaks and cliffs, where human devouring beats and dangerous species could be around. So how this fearful journey stretched over hundred of miles



could be undertaken by a frail woman who has no companion, nor any helper or guide. But Sasui makes her mind come what may and she sets off on this journey on foot all alone. How could a forlorn woman take such a bold decision? Where from she gathered the courage and derived the strength? She treaded the most arduous and difficult track, which man of great strength would not dare to undertake. Shah Latif who has devoted a major chunk of his poetry to Sasui, has underlined so many factors in this context. Besides the sincere love, dedication and devotion on the part of Susui, it was her complete trust in God, which was her great strength and solace, support and succour. The way she moved it appears that every new difficulty and challenge rather renewed her confidence. She continued her journey unabated merely on the trust which she felt to be ever increasing and vitalising in her beloved that he would not leave her. It is, however, very much clear that it was love which inspired that much degree of confidence in her. Shah Latif has construed trust to be implicit in her love at every moment.

تدر جنین نہ سائی ہوت حمایتی تن ہو  
 پوندا چیم چیم میر، پنھون آیندو پاآ  
 سیندی ریچھ رہاآ، لکھلی منہ لطیف ہئی

Those who are without accompaniments,

Lord is their companion and support,

Of his own sweet will, and accord.

Punhoon will certainly come,  
He may visit after a moment,  
and I find myself in his lap.<sup>86</sup>

In any case man must not underscore his own initiative. Whatever the circumstances be, and howsoever small or insignificant the resources at one's disposal, he must proceed forward and move ahead. This is the advice to Susai as otherwise it would amount to betraying the confidence of the beloved.

هي تو وڃي هوت ڪجهه آءِ به اڳي ٿيان  
مان ڇوئي، ترو ڇ نه ڪسي مان ڪي نه ٿيو

Punhoon goes ahead, I must go too,

Lest he may reproach, the base born did nothing.<sup>87</sup>

The comparison of Sasui with Suhni, however, suggests that Shah Latif has idealized Sohni as more admirable model of complete trust in God; for she evinced higher degree of confidence under all odds and against much adverse conditions which she had to face during the night journey while crossing the river and rivulets. Here the very word 'tawakkul' has been used explicitly.

پريون ۾ درياھ پس، جي پاڻ پونديون  
بد تو گل ترهو، آهوسا الله  
جن جي ساهرسا صلاح سي هن بدنديونا ڪو هن

The river may overflow but see, those will be saved.

Who confide in God and proceed on his help  
Indeed they will not be drowned who are in  
touch with Sahar.<sup>88</sup>

Again it is in Sur Suhni that we find  
extreme kind of trust, which we come across with  
some of the Sufis. At one moment Suhni is  
asked just to plunge herself in the river without  
seeking or relying on any material help. She is  
told that she will not only come out safely but  
also meet her beloved. Merely the trust in God  
will work!

گھڑیا سی چڑھیا ائیں ائیں  
مٹی مٹی مہراں م پو پو تپوڈی  
نہ ساهڑ ملیٹی نیوڑا و سیاہ سین

Those who enter the waters, succeed,  
Plunge into the thundering river  
That with His help you reach Mehar.<sup>89</sup>

This extreme kind of trust is further  
obvious when Suhni is strictly prohibited from  
taking any raft or shaft or any other physical  
means, for that is the negation of absolute  
confidence in God.

سیریاں جی ترھی بدی ہی حث مرلا  
سیان تان چونداں اسان تو اچارو

Do not get hold of the raft O, drowning girl  
Tomorrow you will hear the reproach



We rescued you to reach the shore.<sup>90</sup>

The hagiographic accounts of the Sufis are full with such examples where they refused to accept any outside material help. A dervish who fell into the Tigris was asked by the standbys whether he wanted to be saved, he said 'no', and asked whether he would like to drown, he said 'no'- for what have I to do with willing? God had decreed at the time of creation whether he was to be drowned or saved.<sup>91</sup> Ibrahim Khawwas who was fond of wandering in the deserts would refuse the company of Khizr, for that would amount to his negation in his confidence in God.<sup>92</sup>

The *Bayanul Arifeen* relates that Shah Karim was found wandering in the jungles where wild beasts and swine were reported. He was advised by his devotees not to go alone in the jungle as the wild animals may harm him, but still he would go and spend lot of time without taking any body with him.

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Qushairy has mentioned three degrees of *Tawakkul* (1) *Tawakkul* (2) *Taslim* or Resignation (3) *Tufwiz* or confiding. *Tawakkul* is that you feel satisfied with the promise of God, *taslim* is that when being in the knowledge of God is considered sufficient, and *tafwiz* is that



he is happy with the injunctions of God whether for or against him. Thus *Tawakkul* is the beginning, *taslim* is the half way between and *Tafwiz* the final stage. Hence *tawakkul* is the characteristic of common believers, *taslim* is that of the saints and *tafwiz* that of the elect. It is also said that *tawakkul* is the state of all Prophets, but *taslim* is that of Prophet- Ibrahim and *tafwiz* is that of our Holy Prophet. <sup>93</sup>

In the above backdrop of '*tawakkul*' and '*taslim*', following *bait* from Sur Siree Rag appears of greater meaning and significance.

مِسِّي سُبْحَانَ جِي كَرِ حَوَالِي كَم  
تِي تَحْقِيقِ تَسْلِيمِ مِ لَا هِي غُضْرُو هِم  
قَادِرِ سَانِ كَرِ مَا هِلِ كَرِينِ حَاجِ تَرِنِ

Entrust all your task to praiseworthy God,  
Indeed, you will rid of sorrows and doubts,  
if you submit to Him completely.

Thus with the help of thy Lord.

You will get your tasks complete. <sup>94</sup>

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And here is what Rumi had earlier said on the same topic of *taslim* i.e. resignation or submission to the will of God.

نِسْتِ كَبِي از تَوَكَّلِ هُو بَر  
چِسْتِ از تَسْلِيمِ هُو دِ مَحْبُوبِ تَر

There is no work better than trust in God:

What indeed is dearer (to God) than resignation?<sup>95</sup>

It is *tawakkul* when equated with *taslim*, which brings all kinds of happiness and causes the pains and sufferings to evaporate.

جز توکل جز کہ تسلیم نماہ۔ در غم و راحت مکرست دم

Excepting trust (in God) and complete resignation in sorrow and joy, all is deceit and snare.<sup>96</sup>



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### Poverty or *faqr*

*Tasawwuf* or Islamic mysticism in its earliest phase was almost identical with asceticism main constituents of which were *Faqr* poverty and *wara* or abstinence. Asceticism as a movement flourished during the second century Hegrah/ eighth century AD mainly due to the complex socio-political phenomenon which was predominantly materialistic in its approach and also devoid of ethical moorings. In fact the whole Sufi movement can be traced as a reaction to the peculiar life style and attitude of the rulers of the time, which was manifestly to perpetuate their personal gains as against the canonical teachings of Islam. Indeed it was the scandalous life style of the rulers, with very few exceptions of course, which animated the spirit of austerity and renunciation, consequently giving rise to the great ascetics like Ibrahim bin Adham (d.160/777) of Balkh and Rabia of Basra (d.185/801).<sup>97</sup> Both have been portrayed as the paragons or prototypes of asceticism in the chronicles of Sufism and through-out all the ages.

The Sufis prefer to cite the verse of the Quran 'And only God is ever-rich you are the poor',<sup>98</sup> in support of their contention that the human beings are but '*faqirs*,' indigent, poor or destitute and God is really rich and independent.

In this connection they further add the tradition of the Prophet declaring 'Poverty is my pride' and the second most often quoted tradition: 'The world (wealth) is a carcass and its seekers are the dogs.' In this backdrop poverty was assigned high rank in the way of truth, and a Sufi of the stature as Hujwiri, contributed a complete chapter on poverty.<sup>99</sup> He has given many a varied definitions of poverty coined by his great predecessors. Junaid said: 'when his heart is empty of phenomena he is poor', and Shibli exhorted, 'the poor man does not rest content with anything except God' Bishr Hafi (d.227/841) clearly asserted 'the best of stations is a firm resolution to endure poverty continually'.<sup>100</sup>

'Poverty interpreted in a spiritual sense means the absence of desire for wealth, which includes the absence of desire for the blessings of the other world'.<sup>101</sup> It is this aspect of poverty which has been overwhelmingly emphasized by Rabia. 'If man has no wish for himself in this world and, the next than he may be called 'genuine *faqir*. To possess anything means to be possessed by it- the world enthralls those who possess some of its goods, whereas the true *faqir* should not possess anything and thus be not possessed by any thing'.<sup>102</sup>

Almost the similar idea was



expressed by Shah Latif in the following verse.

نہی کٹن پاتا سین، نگوساٹن پاتا  
اھتر! جن اھیاٹ، اے نہ جیٹدی ان ری

Neither they take anything along  
nor their self is with them.  
Those who possess such signs  
Can not live without them.<sup>103</sup>

A strange but interesting debate had taken place amongst the early Sufis regarding the superiority of poverty over wealth and vice versa. Some Sufis held the view that wealth is superior to poverty, as they based their premise that wealth is an attribute of God, whereas poverty can not be ascribed to Him. Junaid including Hujwiri himself were of the opinion that poverty is superior, as much as wealth is a term which actually applies to God and to which man has no right, but to God.<sup>104</sup>

Again the reason for the superiority of poverty may be that it leads to *fana* or annihilation, the most cherished goal of the Sufis. This is how *Faqr* is equated with *fana* which is symptomatic of *baqa* or subsistence in God. This line of argument has been very well received by the Sufis, and there is hardly any surprise that we find it in the *Masnvi* and *Bayan-ul-Arifeen*, the two known sources of Sufi ideas

for Shah Latif,  
 فقير به معنی ترک است و فقیر مرتبه نیست  
 بلکه مراتب گذشتن چرا که اذا تم الفقر فخر الله

Faqir means who has renunciated, it is not a rank rather leaving all the ranks, for when *faqir* become perfect it is God. <sup>105</sup>

A very comprehensive etymological definition of *Faqir* has been provided in the discourses of Shah Karim. He had observed that in the word *Faqir* which is of Arabic origin, there are three letters. The first letter *Fe* stands for *fana* or annihilation, second letter *qaf* stands for *qurb* or proximity and third letter *re* stands for *royat* or vision of God.

And again when he was asked as to how to define *Faqir* the reply was: The word *Faqir* consists four letters. By *fe* is meant that he is constantly engaged in meditation or *Fikr*, by *qaf* meant *qarar* i.e. he is restive, by *ye* is meant he is *Yar* or seeks company of God and none else; and by *re* is meant *riyazat* or spiritual exercises with which he is always engaged. <sup>106</sup>

Shah Karim is also reported to have laid down three conditions for becoming *Faqir* in true sense (a) He should keep his stomach hungry (b) Keep his body without clothes (c)

and keep his heart thirsty. <sup>107</sup>

At different occasions he expressed his view that a *faqir* is better than a *Scholar*. His words are, 'the end of scholars is the beginning of *Faqirs*'. <sup>108</sup>

In the whole of *Bayan ul Arifeen*, it is either *faqir* or *talib* i.e seeker whose characteristics have been delineated, and their qualities have been described in minute details. These ideas appear to have penetrated the mind of Shah Latif in formulating his ideal of a *faqir*. In fact we come across such *faqirs* in Sur Ramkali, who have all these qualities.

کھن مٹ حایت کھڑی، کھنو مٹا کھن چیر  
سدا او بھن سا مضان عاشق اتر کھیر  
سا دیشی تن سکی سا ریا توں سریر  
هو جی فنا تیا فقیر حلو تکیا پسو تن جا .

Ascetics with ears pierced and slit they wear big earrings.

Those God-lovers sit facing the north wind,

Their bodies they starve and make them lean

Though indigent, they annihilate themselves,

Let us visit their abodes and places. <sup>109</sup>

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In the poetry of Shah Latif, Sasui represents a complete model of both *Salik* as well as *talib* and it is in her character that many stations or *maqamat* of the mystical path are easily identifiable. In fact she fulfils most of the requirements of a *Salik* or wayfarer, for she is



the embodiment of patience, acme of *tawakkul*, and she does not leave aside *Shukr* or gratitude even. She is betwixt between fear and hope, she suffers the utmost pains and suffering she is also at the pinnacle of *faqr* or poverty, for after Punhoon she is rendered destitute and devoid of all material resources. She is the great symbol of struggle or *Mujahidah* as she fights against all odds. She is endowed with the vision of beloved also called *Mushaidah*, Finally she is also seen on the height of *rida* or satisfaction. In fact Shah Latif has conceived of special station or *maqam* of *Shahadah* or martyrdom for her, because she meets the death on her way to beloved, which fits the traditional definition of *Shaheed* or martyr who gives his or her life on the way to God. There is also a Sufi saying in Arabic. 'The one who died of love, died as martyr' which was quoted by Shah Lutfullah Qadri, the scholar-poet and predecessor of Shah Latif. Shah Latif declares Sasui to be martyr and therefore she deserves the post-mortem treatment accordingly.

کاحل کئی جا کمن تمنن حسین شہیدی۔ منجہ شہادت بالہائی و ذکر

She needs no shroud to be wrapped slain she is by her beloved

For she was blessed with the glory of martyrdom.<sup>110</sup>

We shall take up the rest of the stations at appropriate time, but right now we



concentrate as to how poverty *faqr* is relevant to Sasui. At first Sasui is robbed of her beloved Punhoon, who was her greatest wealth. She is completely resourceless when she proceeds in the pursuit for her beloved. She traverses the trajectory day and night leading to her beloved all by herself without any aide, presenting the complete picture of an indigent and destitute, she is barefoot and her dress torn into pieces, and when she reaches the neighbourhood of Kech, her appearance is virtually that of a beggar, for the dogs surround her, a typical scene when the mendicants enter into any place.

The foremost pre-requisite of poverty is to take nothing along with oneself, and this is the constant advice to Sasui.

هو رہا ہمارا ہو لنگھ گور یوں پاسی کوٹ  
کھینچ تین کی کوٹ کھینچ جین جی کھینچ

The humble ones crossed mountain Harho,

The burdened ones could not proceed.

In fact they have a call from Kech,

who take naught with them.

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The most conspicuous case of naughting oneself is to leave or shun the dress because stage is reached when care about one's dress also becomes a burden. Sasui is being asked to be ready for that also, if she has to achieve perfection of poverty.

سڀ ننگيون ٿي نڪرو پرهن ڇڏي پوءِ  
سامهند مرڻان هوءَ ڪهي جاڪين ڪٿي

Proceed without formal attires,

Leave the rich dresses aside.

She will take the lead,

who takes, naught with herself. <sup>112</sup>

According to Shah Latif, Sasui fulfils the requirements of a *faqir* and he therefore uses this term for her at least thrice.

ڪيبي حاله ڪم ويا اڌون آڌي رات  
جاڪين ٿان جيڪي ٿيو. وهائي پريات  
ڦوڙ الڙ فقير ڪي، ڏٺو جن ذات ميرين  
رافيع الدرجات پنهون پر ڪي ميرين

They set if yesterday at midnight,

I knew of it only at dawn,

Their separation rendered me mendicant  
and made me resourceless.

O, God join me with His Highness Punhoon. <sup>113</sup>

Despite all kind of afflictions which she undergoes, the constant prayer on her lips is let she be not made to suffer without seeing her beloved. A verse in the Wai of Sur Abri is quite meaningful.

پسڻ ڌاران پرين ڇهي فقير پوءِ ڪ فارو

Let this poor indigent bear not separation

without seeing the beloved'. <sup>114</sup>

The pinnacle of poverty is to be glorious with God. This is what has been implied by the Prophetic saying 'when poverty matures it is God'.<sup>115</sup> Junaid envisaged this when he said, 'Poverty is an ocean of affliction, yet its affliction is complete glory.'<sup>116</sup> This is true in case of Sasui, as is obvious from these lines.

ولارَ تُووِئِن جِرَّهِي، حَسِين جَو دَنَاشِن  
موت پَ مارِيا شِن، پاڻ تَنهِن جِي پَتِ  
Assiduous and determined

As if she would climb high trees,  
She killed her death fist  
and died herself gloriously afterwards.<sup>117</sup>

Shah Latif in Sur Samoondi  
'Seafarers' has presented yet another glorious aspect of poverty, when he says.

بندِ دِيانِ دِيں، ملہ نہ حليبارِ شِن  
فقيرِ اُتِي وِسيں املہ دَينِ اَنوَرِيا۔  
Many are the harbours in countries

but none is like Malabar  
Ascetics though poorly dressed  
Provide the precious stones.<sup>118</sup>

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These divinely inspired men though dressed in rags are rich in spiritual wealth as they have traded in that merchandise from one shore to another and have amassed gems, pearls and other precious stones of invaluable worth.



Rumi also emphasized the similar view when he equated *faqr* with *fana*. The Prophetic tradition 'Poverty is my pride' was interpreted almost in the same way when he

says:  
 فقر فخری افنا پیرایه شد - چون زبان شمع اوی بی ساخته شد

*Fana* graced (the Prophet who said) poverty is my pride he became the shadowless like the flame of a candle. <sup>119</sup>

In fact Rumi is so much infatuated with *faqr* that he has elucidated the concept of *faqr* at different places in different ways. At another place he holds *faqr* in conjunction with patience, for they go together, and here he sees it as *Noor* or Light of God, and at other place he sees *Ghina* or wealth in the *faqr*. This is just what Shibli had said that you will not become rich except by Him, and that when you have gained Him you have become rich. In this sense *faqr* is the process by which the heart of a man is purified or cleansed from all the worldly desires, and only one desire is kept alive in the heart and that is of God. The first step in this direction is taken by concentrating on the axiom that this world is like carcass, so it has to be despised. Abhorrence for this world is almost canonical with all Sufis. Both Rumi and Shah Latif subscribe to this view by quoting the most



popular tradition of the Prophet, often cited by the Sufis

کھتو کھرتی حدیون جوان مرد جگر پائے  
الدنیا جیفہ و طالبہا کلاب ای حنین لای  
'A dog delights in churning of bones

But the valiant is after his own heart'

'The world is a carrion and dogs are its seekers'

Adopt this lesson seriously. <sup>120</sup>

If this world is like carrion and is to be avoided, then what is the nourishment of the seekers. Rumi has found an answer to it when he refers to the maxim of Sufis.

Hunger is the food of God with which he quickens the bodies of the very faithful. <sup>121</sup>

Rumi claims many advantages of hunger over eating and considers it absolutely essential for those who pursue the path of mystics.

Shah Latif in Sur Ramkali has dwelt at length with the concept of hunger. He considers it absolutely necessary for the *faqirs* to keep themselves hungry, and they have to be so much used to it that even if they starve, they don't beg for any thing. In fact that is the greatest mark of distinction for them, also they have their own timings of sleep and prayers.

وچین وینارهن، لانجھئی رهن نسوھی

بک مرندی بکيا ڪنه مان ڪين گھونا  
 ڪسي فقيرن، ما گھان پئي ماڻ جي

By mid night they keep awake  
 while at sunset they go to sleep.  
 Though they starve of hunger,  
 they can't beg for any things.

Such faqirs have quaffed the cup of silence forever.<sup>122</sup>

They have got complete control over  
 their desire of hunger and thirst, that they feel  
 satiated with hunger and remain quenched  
 without any drink.

بک وڌائون بگرين جو ڪي ڪندا ڪين  
 طلب نه رکن طعام جي اوڻيو پين اچ  
 لاهوتين لطيف جي ڪن ماري ڪيو ڪي  
 سامي جهڙي سچ و سئون ڪي ويجهڙا  
 Hunger in their bags, yogis rejoice in it,

No desire for food they have, thirst they pour and drink,  
 The ascetics have conquered all their desires.

Crossing wilderness, they reached where they aspired.<sup>123</sup>

Shah Latif was very much fascinated  
 with the ascetics, so much so that he preferred  
 to admire them in different manners and with at  
 least a dozen different names.

نه ڪلن نه ڪين ڪي، نه ڪين ڳالهاڻين  
 ڪنه جنهن پر آهين، سا پر پروڻا ڏاڏا ڪرو

Neither they laugh nor do they eat any thing  
 Also they speak not a word

They are so much involved.

It is difficult to comprehend their ways<sup>124</sup>

Shah Latif has also highlighted the fact that so long as you keep your belly full and aspire for tastes of food, you can never attain the lofty position of the ascetics.

As a matter of fact Shah Latif in Sur Ramkali has highlighted the different stages, through which *Salik* has to pass before his attainment of the status of gnostic, and as it appears *faqir* is an intermediary stage or station, culmination of which is but gnosis or *marifat*, to which we shall return at appropriate time. As to what are other basic qualities of a *faqir*, Rumi states that first of all *faqr* or poverty can be acquired only through the company of those who have attained it i.e. by way of transmission and that there is no other way excepting to adopt their companionship or association.

فقر فواہی آن بصہبت قائم است

نہ زبانہ کھاری آید نہ دست

It thou desire (Spiritual) poverty, that depends on companionship (with a Shaikh); neither thy tongue nor thy hand avails. <sup>125</sup>

Shah Latif's own experience was of the same nature, for he values the companionship of ascetics vital for his spiritual



life. He repeats the phrases that I can not live without them, I must keep their company, even visiting their places is of great worth. It is relevant to point out here that Shah Latif spent few precious years of his life in the company of Yogis and most probably visited many of their places including the most famous site of Hinglaj in Baluchistan. In fact the ascetics command high respect with Shah Latif and Yogis symbolise their existence.

هيا اتي رات، صبح وسندي صبا پري  
 لئون لئون منجه لطيف بي حرتين جي مات  
 سندی جو گيان ذات، پتي پري پاگ شري  
 Tonight they are with you

by morning they will leave  
 Till these patient ones are with you  
 get your soul be animated  
 Even look for their footprints  
 May be you never meet again. <sup>126</sup>

Again it is in the context of Yogis, Shah Latif has emphasized that they sever all kinds of relations with this world and that they blaze from within all the time. They keep their physical desires to the bare minimum, and observe complete austerity in their dealings. They do not believe in any kind of formalism with regard to the dress or physical appearance. All the time they yearn for their true beloved, and exercise self-restraint and self-control to the extent of



naughting themselves.

Rumi has also identified such persons with *faqirs* as is obvious from these verses.

پس فقیر آنست کو بی واسطه است  
شعله هارا با وجودش را بطه است

The *faqir* (dervish) then is he that has no intermediary, (connexions) the flames have direct connexion with his being. <sup>127</sup>

Rumi is fond of playing with the imagery of fire *naar* and light or *noor*. Taking clue from the light verse of the Holy Quran and the Prophetic tradition that the believer sees with the light of God, and on the day of judgement the hell shall cry, 'O believer, be quick thy light has extinguished my flames' or 'the gnostic has nourishment from the light of God, Rumi declares man of God to be essentially light', though he admits of several gradations. At one place, he speaks of *Shaikh-e-Noorani* or the illuminated luminous saint as to how he is full and brimming with the light of God and how he casts this light on to his followers and transforms them into illumined ones. <sup>128</sup>

پیرا لا مال از نور حق است - جام تن شکست نور مطلق است

At another place he poses the question, 'How do you consider man of God as fire or *naar*, it is incorrect and because of your

defective vision. In fact he is light, 'Call him light, do not call him fire.'

Yet at another place, Rumi differentiates between the light of wax candle and the light of man of God, whom he now compares with candle. According to him the light of wax candle decreases as it starts burning, whereas the light of these godly persons increases as their bodies become thin or melt down.

برخلاف موم بشمع جسم کائن  
تا شود کم گردد اقترون نور جان

(But) the candle (which is) the body is contrary to the wax candle, since in proportions as that (the body) dwindles, the light of the spirit is increased. <sup>129</sup>

Rumi concludes that such are the saints of God whose fire *naar* has turned in to light or *noor* and who consume them but illumine others. It is in this background that the whole of Sur Ramkali can be appreciated which starts with the following couplet,

جو گیترا جہان میں توری و ناری  
ہری جن ہاری اکو نہ جیتدی اناری

Ascetics (Yogis) in this world,

some are light, some fire.

Kindle themselves to light others,

without them I can not live. <sup>130</sup>

## Chapter-VI

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## CHAPTER-VII

### The Unitive Experience with Shah Abdul Latif:

As discussed earlier almost all the great Sufi masters have differentiated between the *Maqam* or Station and *Hal* or State. They were also unanimous in their approach that the *maqam* is to be achieved through personal efforts whereas the *Hal* was like a gift, it was to descend upon the *Salik* or traveller while pursuing the spiritual path towards God. They however, differed or almost every one gave his own version of the exact contents of these stations and stages, and furthermore they were also at odds to agree as to what was the total number of stations on the path and whether the nature of the contents can be described to the commoners. Some of them held the view that the exact nature of the contents cannot be described, nor is it desirable to reveal it to the others. Rather they were of the opinion that the proper revelation of the sufi experience in any language is just impossible what they opined is that at the most allusion can be made about the actual experience or the state i.e. *hal* experienced by the sufis. These allusions are learnt through actual experience of the mystical, and are only known to those who have experienced these mystical states and lived in

these stations.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note that with some Sufis *Rida* or satisfaction is a *Hal* which is bestowed by God, but with some of the Sufis it is a station to be achieved. One more point of difference between *Maqam* and *Hal* is that whereas the earlier one is considered to be permanent, the latter is thought to be transitory or passing one. 'Station' belongs to the category of acts, 'State' to the category of gifts. Hence the man that has a station, stands by his own self-mortifications, whereas the man that has a state is dead to 'self' and stands by a 'state' which God creates in him.<sup>2</sup> Abu Nasr Saraj, the author of earliest treatise on sufism, has identified, seven stations '*maqam*' and ten states '*Hal*' whereas, his immediate successors Kalabdi and Quashiry discussed some twenty and forty stations/states respectively. They were followed by Hujwiri and Ghazali who gave somewhat psychological and philosophical description of these terms, without giving the exact number of stations as well as states.

Shah Latif is also no exception in the line of great Sufi masters in so far as the distinction between *Hal* and *maqam* is concerned. He is fully aware with that difference which has been spelled out by his peers and



seers like Rumi and Shah Karim. Earlier we suggested that 'Sasui' is the ideal *Salik* portrayed by Shah Latif as such and it is in her context, that he observed:

نہایت نہت جاگوری سندی جال  
گین پھتی مال، مال پھتی هوت کی

She achieved nothing substantial,

Neither here nor there,

Material wealth helped her not,

Through 'hal' she reached her beloved.<sup>3</sup>

The poet implies that despite all the hard struggle which Sasui exerted and the tremendous sacrifices, which she made on her part to reach her beloved, they availed her nothing. According to the poet it was the divine grace which caused her to get united with the beloved. It should, however, be not construed that conferment of *Hal* is the negation of struggle or striving on the part of seeker, rather Shah Latif in Sur Sasui, has laid great emphasis on struggle side, and that aspect has been fully discussed earlier under the chapter 'Tawakkal'.

In Sur Ramkali, where Yogis represent Gnostics, Shah Latif is more explicit on this point and in the following verse which has dual imagery, he has dealt with the conception of 'hal' as a state and simultaneously underlined the importance of time for a sufi.

کھین باضی من میں کھین استقبال  
حاصل جنین حال، آء نہ جیئندی ان ری

Some have set their mind on the past,  
others only think about future  
I am in distress without those  
who are endowed with 'present' (Hal). <sup>4</sup>

The word 'Hal' which is of Arabic origin literally means 'present'. Shah Latif, through double allegory lays down the value of time with the gnostics and simultaneously, declares those gnostics to be on high pedestal who are conferred with *Hal* or are '*Sahib-e-Hal*' in the formal terminology of Sufis. *Sahib-e-Hal* is compared to '*Sahib-e-Qal*' which in Sufi terminology means mere religious scholar having no spiritual depth or dimension. The most common phrase, which Sufis quote in their conversation, is.

قال! بگذار مرد حال شو

Leave aside the discoursing (Qal)

Be a man of 'state' (Hal)

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This is exactly what transpires from the following verses about the gnostics where Shah Latif has first compared '*Qal*' with '*Hal*' but later on declared '*Hal*' to be superior to '*Qal*'.

واہت ویرا گین جامون موت و ڈومال  
مآلان مہند تھا، کو بھی و تر قال  
حاصل جنین حال، آء نہ جیئندی ان ری

Listen to the music sound of ascetics  
Which is really great wealth for me.  
They indulge not in discourses,  
for they, consider it worthless,  
I cannot live without such persons.  
Who are gifted with 'hal'.<sup>5</sup>

Here Shah Latif has described the ascetics as life givers, and has observed that there can be no value of this life without them, for the reason that they have approached the source of real life, who is God almighty. In the same Sur Ramkali, Shah Latif has more than once reiterated that he himself attained 'hal' through their company. It is due to their spiritual companionship that has ushered the same mystical state in him, says he:

ہیا سون جوڑ تھی جوگی دلو سرن  
کنا تنہیں مون حاصل کھی حال کٹو

Fortunate I lived as I saw the holyman

From whom I attained the 'Hal'<sup>6</sup>

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Beside the 'Hal' and the 'Maqam', 'Waqf' or moment has also been discussed by the great Sufis. According to Junaid, Sufism is the preservation of moments, which has the mystical sense of the immediate spiritual condition. Qushairy defined it as first important term with Sufis. He was followed by Hujwiri who



differentiate between *hal* and *waqt* in these words

'*Waqt* is that whereby a man becomes independent of the past and the future. It is also said that at such moments one is seized of his time and he is simply unaware of his present conditions. This makes the nature of that time unique and particular with that body or person, and therefore it varies from person to person. According to a most celebrated Sufi tradition, the Prophet is reported to have said: 'I have a time with God in which none of the angles nor any prophet rivals me'. The Sufis have asserted that no man can attain to the reality of time by exerting his choice, for 'time' is a thing that does not come within the scope of human acquisition, that it should be gained by effort nor is it sold in the market, that any one should give his life in exchange for it, and the will has no power either to attract or to repel it'.<sup>7</sup> Explaining the relationship between *hal* and *waqt*, Hujwiri observed: *Waqt* has need of *hal* for *Waqt* is beautified by *hal* and subsists thereby. He further continues: 'The tongue of the possessor of '*hal*' is silent concerning his '*hal*' but his actions proclaim the reality of his '*hal*'.<sup>8</sup>

The Sufi fully realizes the significance of time in his spiritual life. Therefore he does not talk of yesterday, today,



or tomorrow, as every moment is impalacable and precious for him, he cannot afford to waste it without remembrance of God. This is the context and idea of Shah Latif which finds reference in the following verses.

کیمی پچین حالہ کرنا اچ مباح  
وان تنہیں سین و آگے جو پرین مجھ پہا  
رے ربانی راہ، مٹی حال مشیار ٹی.

Of no use is today or tomorrow  
What to speak of yesterday  
Seek company of that beloved,  
who in every moment is with your breathing  
proceed on the path of God,  
taking care of your present moments. <sup>9</sup>

The above perspective leads us to the conclusion that Shah Latif was well conversant with the idea of 'Hal' and he fully knew the implications of each state, though he described them without any order or in any systematic manner. With him, the first and foremost 'state' which has been the most significant one is 'Mashahidah' or contemplation. *Mushahida* is attained through *Muraqba* or concentration which is preceded by *Mujahida* or (self-mortification). In fact when *Salik* reaches his journeys' end, he finds the real meaning and essence of *Mujahida* to be *Mushahida*. <sup>10</sup> It also has many stages or degrees, the two most

distinctive being first through the heart or *Qalb* and the second being through the eyes. The first may be generalized as the mystical experience and the latter one as the mere vision.

Shah Abdul Latif has discussed all this in one of his longest verses comprising of eleven lines. Indeed he has very beautifully depicted the scenes which indicate the 'Hal' of these ascetics.

مونا طور سينا، سندا سنياسين  
 سجدي ريسيد ميني، گوڙا گوڙين  
 تڪان قاب قوسين اوادني، تانا تانا ائين من  
 گل من عليها فاني، باغي صين بچين  
 الله ولي الذين آمنوا يخرجهم من الظلمات الى النور  
 خرموسني صديقا، شا جو گي جنگ جلن  
 ما زاغ البصر، اهڙي روشني روت  
 مشاهدو محبوب هو اتي آديسين  
 بي بي بصر بي يسماع بي وصال و هن  
 بي يعشي بي ينطق ثا اهڙي حال چلن  
 سيد جي سندن تون گل بچين ٿو گهڙي

The knees of the ascetics are mount Sinai,  
 These half clad persons are always on their  
 knees in prostration.

'And it was bows lenght or less'- Thus the naked  
 bow down

'perishing', so they render themselves naught,  
 'God is friend of those who believe and leads them  
 from the darkness to the light', this is their belief  
 'Moses fell down swooning', but stalwart Yogis  
 stand burning

'The eye did not rove nor did it turn away'- this  
 is their position. Such ascetics attain  
 contemplation of their beloved, then and there.

'He sees by Me, he hears by Me, he unites Me'-  
 this is how they sit.

And he walks by Me, he speaks by Me- such  
 walking they go.

Sayyid says: How can you know about them. <sup>11</sup>

In the '*Muraqbah*' the Sufis adopt  
 special bodily posture bowing their face between  
 their knees while they keep their knees in the  
 raised position. The Yogis also observe  
 meditation but they keep their knees flat on the  
 ground. This shows that Shah Latif has more of  
*Arifs* or gnostics on his mind than the normal  
 yogis. *Muraqbah* can be defined as the  
 concentration of mind with the view that God  
 oversees him and keeping God constantly before  
 ones' eyes. It is in the '*Awaiful Maaif*' the classic  
 manual for Suhwardy Sufis, where in the  
 metaphor of knees as '*Mount Sinai*' has been  
 used implying thereby that the holy man attain  
 vision of God or are bestowed with '*Tejalli*' of  
 God in such position.<sup>12</sup> *Muraqbah* is normally



undertaken in a secluded place and is continued for many days, most commonly for forty days, hence '*Chila Kashi*' or forty days seclusion is standard practice in which most of the time '*Muraqbah*' is observed. Shah Latif himself used to observe this kind of '*Chilla*' in a secluded room, especially built for this purpose, called '*Hujrah*' which still exists at Bhit Shah.

It is '*Muraqhab*' meditation which leads to '*Mushahidah*', this is also the first state according to Abu Nasr Sarraj, the author of *Kitabul Luma*.<sup>13</sup> The second line can be bracketed with the first, as longer prostration does form part of the Sufi meditation. The third line speaks of the nearness to God, '*Qurb*' which is enumerated as the second state by the great Sufi masters. The fourth line of the verse spells out clearly the state of annihilation or *Fana*. The Quranic verse in the fifth line bears the meaning that these people are friends of God and it is He who guides them on the enlightened path. It also implies love of God for them, which is but indicative of their exalted position. Like the experience of Moses who fainted on having seen the glimpse of God's illumination at mount Sinai, these holymen get themselves burned in the fire of love for God. The same portion of Quranic verse used in this line also appears in the following lines from the *Masnvi*.



عشق جان طور آمد عاشقا  
طور مست و خرموسی صبا عقا

Love inspired Mount Sinai, O lover, (so that)

Sinai (was made) drunken and Moses fell in a swoon. <sup>14</sup>

The seventh line speaks of the vision of God, and the Quranic verse quoted there alludes to the vision experienced by the Prophet when on a night journey he underwent this unique experience. Shah Latif has, however, tried to generalize it and make it applicable in the case of gnostics who are his ideal. In the classic Sufi tradition they are also referred to as the perfect man.

In the eighth line the saint poet has arrived at the conclusion that only such ideal gnostics gain contemplation or *Mushahidah* of God, who is their real beloved. Shah Latif or for that matter many other erstwhile Sufis, including Sarraj, Hujwiri, Ghazali and Rumi have very clearly spoken about this state, though they differ in varying degree from one another. Anyhow it is this *Mushahidah* which has been considered the essence of Sufistic or religious experience and about which the entire Sufi literature can be cited as an evidence on record.

In the remaining two lines of the above verse, few words from the famous *Hadith* of *Qurb-e-Nawafil* <sup>15</sup> as it has been known with the sufis have been quoted and these very same word have been quoted by Rumi as under:

رو که بی سماع و بی یبصر توئی  
سر توئی چه جای صاحب سر توئی

Go, for thou art, (he of whom God Sai-th), 'By Me he hears and by Me he sees; thou art the (Divine) consciousness (Itself). <sup>15</sup>

Rumi emphasises once again.

آنکه بی سماع و بی یبصر شد است  
در حق آن بنده این هر بیخداست

(For him) who has become seeing by Me- this (talk of yours) is foolish nonsense even in regard to that servant. <sup>16</sup>

It is worthwhile to quote here the full text of the above reffered *Hadith-l-qudsi* along with its translation.

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'My servant doth not draw nigh unto Me by any means that pleaseth Me better than performance of the obligatory duties of worship (*faraid*) which I have laid upon him, and My servant doth not cease to draw nigh unto Me by voluntary works of devotion (*nawafil*) until I love him, and when I love him, I am his ear, so that he hears by Me, and his eye, so that he sees by

Me, and his tongue, so that he speaks by Me, and his hand, so that he takes by Me'.<sup>17</sup>

According to the Sufis, in *Qurb-e-Faraid*, the mystic is '*fani*' and God acts through him, but in *Qurbai-e-Nawafil*, he is *Baqi* and acts through God.<sup>18</sup> This is really inexplicable in any human language, as has been concluded by Shah Latif in the above verse.

*Muraqba* is defined as knowing that God oversees us and keeping Him constantly before our eyes.

*Muraqaba* implies keeping one's heart safe from everything else other than God and the extreme of this process is that when a person forgets himself as well. He is oblivious of everything else for him there is no heaven or earth, it is only God who is existent and present.

<sup>19</sup> *Mujahidah* which includes *Muraqba* is the threshold for *Mushahida*. It is through the process of *Muraqba*, that the *Salik* gains vision of the reality. *Muraqba* is somewhat technical; it has its own pre-requisites. The process comprises chanting of the name of God or *dhikr* along with some exercises of the eyes, ears and heart. Indeed disciplining of all the senses and the heart or *qalb* enabling it to receive the glimpse of reality or be able to establish contact with the Reality. Shah Latif was fully aware with

these aspects of *Mujahidah* and *Muraqba* which could lead to *Mushahidah* as is evident from these lines:

چپ کر چپ ہر چور پورا کیونکر کفن  
پانی پیٹ ہر پرہیزگار دور و ان  
ہوئے جامورت من، شاہد و تنہا مائیں

Keep silence, even move not your lips  
Shut your eyes and your ears too,  
Exhaust not your thirst fully,  
nor keep your belly full.

This would enable you to experience the vision of Reality from within.<sup>20</sup>

The sufi texts are full with the details of *Muraqaba* or Meditation and *Mujahidah* or self-mortification and there are a number of verses by Shah Latif. Hujwiri has referred to *Mushahidah* as the first seeing of the Almighty with the mind's eye. The canvass of this *Mushahida* soon extends to the whole universe and every item appears to be imbued with Reality. But this is possible only when the discerning faculties of human being including his eyes have been trained and disciplined to that extent. Shah Latif was endowed with this kind of *Mushahida*, as is obvious from these lines.



موتلي اکثرين وڌا توڙا لاڻيا  
تسڻ پڙين پس ڪٿان جي ڪر سامهون

I am beholden to my eyes,  
for they see none but their beloved,  
Even when I am confronted with my enemy. <sup>21</sup>

This is how the perception of a gnostic is altogether different, for he perceives Reality in every atom of the universe. Shah Latif was very emphatic in his approach when he said:

ڏسڻ ڏسين جي، نه هم ڪي حق چئين  
شارڪ شڪر تر ني، انڌا انهي ڪله

Had you been serious in your perception,  
Everything was but a Reality,  
O, who you are confused,  
Be not blind to the facts. <sup>22</sup>

Hujwiri has clarified that this is but an advanced Stage (*maqam*) of contemplation, and in his support he has quoted Muhammad bin Wasi, who said: 'I never saw anything without seeing God therein'. <sup>23</sup>

Shah Latif in one of the verses has comprehensively dealt with the phenomenon as experienced by the gnostic, once he has undergone the whole process and has been blessed with that particular state.

The ascetics through privy struggle sighted Him .

ڪاهو ڙين خفي سڀن سو جهي لڌو سبڄان  
عاشق اهڙين اکرين، لنگهيا لا مڃان

هؤمڙ گڏجي هوءَ ٿيا، بابو سي بريان  
سيوڻي سبحان آيو نظران جي۔

On their way, they crossed the no-place (*La-makan*)

They got united with Him,

having roasted themselves fully,

They saw nothing but God every where.<sup>24</sup>



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## CHAPTER-VII

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24. SJR, Khahori, 1-1

### Annihilation/*Fana* and Subsistence/*Baqa*

The doctrine of *Fana* is the most significant subject with almost all the sufis of all the times and all the climes. The earliest definition of '*Fana*' with the great Sufi masters like Abu Said Al-Kharaz is, 'The sign of the mystic's passing away is the departing of his desire of this world and next, except his desire of God'.<sup>1</sup> Kalabadi, however, commented: Passing away is a state in which all passions pass away, so tat the mystic experiences no feelings towards anything whatever, and loses all sense of discrimination: he has passed away.'<sup>2</sup> Hujwiri was very comprehensive and concise when he said: *Fana* is the complete loss by the mortal self of the conditions of his being, and *baqa* is his being lost in the vision of Real.<sup>3</sup>

Generally speaking by passing-away from self the mystic dos not cease to exist in the true physical sense of existence as an individual, but rather it is an esoteric or internal metamorphosis which replaces the personal attributes of an individual, and in that process he acquires the attributes of God. Sufis are also of the opinion that passing away is concomitant of existence or continuance in God. Hujwiri has made it logically clear in this way that when



ignorance is annihilated knowledge is gained or when sin is annihilated piety becomes subsistence. So when an individual has attained '*fana*' he automatically gains *baqa* or 'persistence'. Shah Latif also seems to be in general agreement with this idea of '*fana*' and '*Baqa*' when he said:

جن و حیا و وجود فانی شافی الله  
نه تن قیام نه قعود، نگو گن سجد  
جلا نه تابود، تیلای رسا بود

Those who annihilated their existence  
and absorbed themselves completely in God.  
Neither they stand nor sit nor prostrate,  
Indeed when they naughted themselves,  
they attained the real existence. <sup>4</sup>

There is general consensus among the sufis that '*Fana*' is the state and not station which may be attained by personal merit, that its opposite should also be thus acquired. Moreover, '*fana*' has many a degree or stage which the great sufis have expressed in many a subtle and abstruse words. How difficult it is to understand the true meaning and significance of the term '*fana*' is clear from the fact that on one hand the utterances or *shatihah* of 'Bayazid Bistami' (d.261/875) 'Glory be to me. How exalted I am' and Hallaj's bursting out 'I am the truth' are considered as the most sincere expression of '*fana*' on their part; on the other

hand Prophet Moses who fell down at Mount Sinai and went into swoon, when he experienced the illumination of God there, is also treated as *fana*. There can be no more comprehensive definition of '*fana*' than what the great leader of Sufis Junaid has given: Tasawuf is that God should cause thee to die from thyself and to live in Him.

In short '*fana*' is a multidimensional phenomenon having many a varied aspect, and it has therefore been described also in different ways. The first and most noteworthy aspect or stage of it is 'Personal mortification', which means negative passions to be diluted to the extent of purification and purging so that only positive human virtues dominate the personality. The greatest evil in this regard is self-conceit and through mortification it is the first to be obliterated or annihilated. In Sur '*Mazur*' which represent just one aspect of Sasui, the ideal path finder, Shah Latif depicts her picture in the following words:

صورت ہار ہو لنگھوئی جری دی ہو  
ہوند جنین کی ہو ہوت نہ ہوند و تن سین

Those who are shorn of self-conceit  
crossed the mountains successfully  
Those who are burdened with worldly materials,  
shall not enjoy the company of their beloved. <sup>5</sup>

Shah Latif in the above verse has used the word '*Jareedi*' which is of Arabic origin and it is from this same root that the word '*Tajrid*' or detachment is also derived and it is a very important stage with the sufis. The classical sufi manuals are full with the description of *tajreed* i.e. (detachment) and *tafreed* i.e. annihilation of separation from God and these occur in the similar meaning in the *Bayanul A'rifeen*. In fact Shah Karim in the following verse has highlighted '*Tajreed*' and '*Tafreed*'

ہی تجریداً نکٹا سنا پر تفرید  
کُن حَذَہنِ شَتّیٰ مَن دُھارِی عید۔

Those who passed out from '*Tajreed*' and entered '*Tafreed*'

They enjoy festivity daily, others have but rare.<sup>6</sup>

*Tajreed* and *tafreed* are but stepping stones towards the fuller realization of annihilation. Self-mortification when pursued more vigorously, as if everything from within has perished is termed 'Dying to yourself' or 'Die before ye die' or (موتوبل ان تعوتو). Intensity of the feeling must differentiate between the two stages, though their nature seems to be essentially the same. The Sufi experience has invariably indicated that 'Dying to self' is really 'Living in God'. This Prophetic tradition is



generally interpreted that the main cause root of troubles for man is his carnal soul or its base faculties and unless these impediments are virtually killed or done away with, the true spiritual qualities of man will not shine out. In other words as soon as these base faculties are removed, the soul attains its pure and original state of existence, so that it perceives its pre-existence where it feels to be one with God or in God. By passing away from self the mystic does not cease to exist, in the true sense of existence, individual, rather his individuality, which is an inalienable gift from God, is perfected, transmuted and eternalized through God and in God'.<sup>7</sup>

The Justification which the Sufis have advanced for the theory of 'Die before ye die' has been based on the many premises. First though this life is the dearest thing to an individual, it is a veil between the man and God. Cessation of this life does not mean an end to the life rather it opens up unending vistas for eternal life.

1. Life is a continuity which partakes of the Reality. As you go deeper, it will prove to be a mystery beyond comprehension.
2. The Soul is ethereal which existed prior to



coming into this life and shall also remain once this life is over.

3. This life is a confinement for the soul and as soon as it gets freed it joins the origin or returns to its original state.

4. The original state of the soul was of blessedness and in its present condition it is suffering separation. It is therefore, anxious to unite its source.

5. The soul shall have to be kept in the state of preparedness or in ever-ready position so that it once again meets or joins the original source wherefrom it has come into this world. The death provides that opportunity.

6. Love is that cataclysm which will enable the soul to unite without any exasperation.

Love prepares the ground for unification.

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With reference to the context of the above ideas, innumerable verses of identical meaning of great Sufi poets can be quoted, but we shall, however, confine to Rumi and Shah Latif just to elucidate their viewpoint. Here the question is whether 'Die before ye die' means real physical death of an individual or it is a

semblance of the internal metamorphosis which resembles death or it is an inner state of the soul when one is overwhelmed with the feeling of death, or it is severance of all relations of the body with this world. This is what is apparent from the following verses of Al-Nuri:

Lo, I have severed every thought from me,  
And died to selfhood, that I might be Thine.  
How long, my heart's beloved? I am spent.  
I can no more endure this banishment.<sup>8</sup>

Rumi in Book-V has related a story of a lover who recounts his all kinds of sacrifices before his beloved but his beloved after hearing all his accounts, tells him that he might have done every thing but not that which is the veritable proof of love, that is dying and annihilation.

تو همه کردی نصردی زنده  
هیں بے یار و یار، چنان با زنده

Thou hast done all, but hast not died,  
thou art living. Hark, die, if thou art a self  
sacrificing friend.<sup>9</sup>

At another place Rumi has it made it clear what does he mean by the so-often repeated 'death' in the following verse.

مرگ بی مرگی بود ما را حلال  
برگ بی برگی بود ما را نوال

The death of deathlessness is lawful to us,  
the provision of unprovidedness is a bounty, for us.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the conception of death or 'passing away' has this special meaning and significance for the Sufis. This is how Qushairy defines *Fana* and *Baqa*; when a person has achieved *fana* of his self he goes from the vision of his *fana* into the high stage of his actual *fana*. The first-stage in this ascent is the *fana* of his self and its attributes through his permanence in the attributes of the Real. Then comes the second stage of his losing his stages in the attributes of the Real and achieving a vision of God himself. And lost of all he loses his status in the vision of the reality by merging himself completely in the being of the Real'.<sup>11</sup>

Shah Latif like Rumi has considered death as an essential step towards the meeting of beloved. But at a certain stage he considers even death to be the hindrance rather the greatest obstacle which has to be overcome to unite with the beloved. The constant piece of advice which Shah Latif gives to Sasui when she is in the midst of her journey is to be ready for death. The message is too loud and clear in the following verses.

اجلان آگي سئي مند جٹريائي مر  
توليان تنه م ترجهت روح و حيا ياره

O Sasui, Die before the scheduled moment of death, And leave not their company who lost their souls in the way. <sup>12</sup>

مر ته مڙين سئي، اجلان آڳي اچ  
جانگين جڙين جڙن، منڌا پنهوڙان اچ  
پنهوڙا سان پهچ ته ملڪ الموت مار شين

Die today O Sasui, so that you attain union.

During this life, flee from Bambhor,

Beseech your beloved Punhoon,

in order that you may kill the angle of death. <sup>13</sup>

مر ته مڙين سئي، ويهي جيئي مر جو  
منڌا مرڻاڻ پوءِ، پهچيندين پنهون کي

O Sasui, die to be united,

Do not live unwittingly, o woman,

Only after death,

You will reach your beloved Punhnon. <sup>14</sup>

Shah Latif in the following verse wherein he alluded to the most often quoted Sufi tradition, has however made it clear that this death is not necessarily physical death, though one should always remain prepared for it.

پر پر پچي پرين کي، مري نه جا تو  
موتو منڌا نه سو منڌا ڪجارتا ڪاشين

You know not inmost self-burning

Hence you are unaware of death.



O, woman perhaps you had no idea of

'Dying before death'

So why should you just chop off your head! <sup>16</sup>

Rumi in the last volume of Masnvi has dealt with this prophetic tradition under separate heading, and has given a larger perspective of the implications of the death or passing away. He refers to Abu Bakar, the first caliph of Islam as dead man walking on earth, who is according to him the model of 'Die before ye die' paradigm, of course the most perfect model on the earth has been the Prophet of Islam himself. The prophet, therefore, is quoted as having said:

بھرا این گفت آن رسول خوش پیام  
از موت تو قبل موت یا اکرام

Hence, the messenger of good tidings said,

(speaking) symbolically, 'Die before ye die. O, nobles.'

After few verses, Rumi has given his own explanation of 'Mutu' in these words, that it is not necessarily physical death.

نہا چنان مرگی کہ در گوری روی  
مرگ تبدیلی کہ در نوریا روی

Not such a death you will go into a grave, but a death consisting of (spiritual) transformation, so that you will go into light. <sup>17</sup>

Therefore according to the sufis there are four kinds of death and each has a different colour and they are; red, black, white and yellow. Death by sword is counted as red or '*maut ahmar*'.<sup>18</sup>

In the whole range of sufi literature, the term *fana* has been interpreted more logically and rationally by Rumi, than anyone else. For he quotes *fana* with change and if properly appreciated in the matters of daily life it leads to higher vistas of life and progress. Death is also construed in this sense and it means change for better. Hence death is assigned positive value and it is even considered as a bridge after crossing which one unites with the origin. The idea has been consistently pursued by Rumi and is equally endorsed by Shah Latif in Sur Sohni when he concludes.

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گھڑو پگھل گئی وسیلوں کا  
تھاں پورے سہا سہتی آئے سہ میٹا رہا

The earthen jar broke into pieces,  
Lo, the women also died,  
All the physical means disappeared  
But only then did she hear  
The voice of her beloved.<sup>19</sup>

According to Latif it is self-mortification and the resultant state *hal* or subsequent subsistence or *baqa* which enables the individual or *Salik* to take glimpse of the beauty of his beloved. The true perception of Beauty is possible only when one has attained this status.

میری جیءے مائیں جانب جو جمال  
سین خونہ جلال جی پر لہائی پار سب

Acquire survival having died to yourself,  
And behold the beauty of the beloved.  
You would do justice to yourself,  
only when you follow this advice.<sup>21</sup>

Finally it is the complete annihilation or absorption in God which raises the status of the man, rather elevates him to the unprecedented heights and enable him to attain the proximity of his real beloved, but that is something beyond the state or *hal* the secret of which can not be explained in words. This is the viewpoint of all great minds of Tasawwuf such as Junaid, Hujwiri, Ghazali, and Rumi. According to Hujwiri, 'In annihilation there is no love or hate, and in subsistence, there is no consciousness of union or separation, he has further classified that 'union' does not involve any particular 'station' (*maqam*) or any particular state (*hal*). He continues, 'they (Sufi) do not refer these



expressions to knowledge, (*ilm*) or to state (*hal*), but apply them solely to the degree of perfection attained by the saints who have become free from pains of mortification and have escaped from the prison of stations and the vicissitude of states, and whose search has ended in discovery, so that they have seen all things visible, and have heard all things audible, and have discovered all the secrets of the heart; and who, recognising the imperfections of their own discovery, have turned away from all things and have purposely become annihilated in the object of desire, and in the very essence of desire have lost all desires of their own, for when a man becomes annihilated from his attributes he attains to perfect subsistence, he is neither sober nor intoxicated, neither stranger nor intimate, neither near nor far, neither separated nor united, he has no name or sign or brand or mark.<sup>22</sup>

Following verses of Shah Latif can better be explained only when we keep the above passage in mind.

نابوديءِ نيشي عبد کي اعلیٰ چيو  
 مورت پر منکھي ثابودت پڻ سڀئي  
 عبي ات عيھتي ڳالھ پريان جي گجه جي

Self-annihilation exalted the servant,  
 to heights unscaled,  
 Although hidden from the senses,  
 in reality they were the same,



Nothing can be revealed of such mysteries of beloved

تعظیمات ترک تئا واکاٹاؤئا۔ وحییت پٹا بت نہایت نہوھا۔

They were absolved of the formalities,  
unnoticed, they performed,  
They plunged to the depths,  
being limitless and endless. <sup>24</sup>

کاری امت اچوہا ینھین، ای صفتان نور  
جتی پرین حضور، اتی رنگ شروپ هو

The night is dark and the day bright,  
this is all due to light.  
But in the presence of beloved,  
there are no colours nor lights. <sup>25</sup>

منھن مہراب پرین جو جامع سپ جہان  
سیوئی سجانا، حیدانھن گری نییان

The face of beloved is an indicator to pray  
The whole universe a mosque,  
Lo, God is everywhere,  
In which direction I should pray. <sup>26</sup>

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To what heights a man gets exalted  
are really legion infinite, and too many to  
comprehend. Therefore, the man who can attain  
such status transcends his finitude. Shah Latif  
has beautifully summed up this whole idea in the  
following couplet.

نڪا ابتدا عبد جي نڪا انتها  
جن سڃاتو سپرين سي وڃڻ کي وٺا۔

No beginning or end has this servant,

Those who knew the beloved crossed all limits.<sup>27</sup>



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## CHAPTER-VII

### Annihilation/ Fana and Subsistence/ Baqa

#### References

1. Kalabadi, Tarruf, op.cit, p.135
2. op.cit, p.131.
3. Hamiduddin, 'Early Sufis' in A History of Muslim Philosophy, Karach, 1983, p.332.
4. SJR, Kalyan, D-3-21.
5. SJR, Sasui, Mazur, 1387.
6. Daudpota, Shah Karim jo Kalam, op.cit, verse-26, p.66.
7. Arberry, Sufism, op.cit, p.58.
8. op.cit, p.110.
9. M-V-1255 , Cf Arberry More Tales , p.108.
10. M-I-3927.
11. Hamiduddin, op.cit, p.333.
12. SJR, Sasui, Mazur, 1409.
13. SJR, Sasui, Mazur, 1405.
14. SJR, Sasui, Mazur, 1408.
15. SJR, Sasui, Mazur, 1415.
16. M-VI-754.
17. M-VI-739.
18. Nicholson, Masnvi, Commentary, Vol-VI-230
19. SJR, Sohni,D-2-23
20. SJR, Kalyan, D-2-15.
21. SJR, Kalyan, D-3-23.
22. Kashful-mahjub, op.cit, p. 243
23. SJR, Kalyan, D-3-23.
24. SJR.Kalyan,D-2-9
25. SJR.Kalayan,D-2-27
26. SJR.Aasa,D-5-1
27. SJR. Kalyan, D-3-27.

## NOTES & ABBREVIATIONS

**SJR** refers to the *Shah jo Risalo*, compendium of the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif. All the **Baits** or verses referred to in the text have been cited from the *Risalo* compiled and edited in 8 Volumes by Dr. N.A. Baloch. Accordingly reference Kalyan, D-II-12, 'Kalyan' indicates the name of *Sur* or chapter where 'D' Indicates *Dastan* or sub-chapter and the 'Numeral' indicates the serial number of the verse under that *Dastan*.

**M** refers to the *Masnvi* of Jalaluddin Rumi edited by R.A.Nicholson in eight volumes and published under the Gibb Memorial Series from London during 1926-40. **MNC** refers to the Commentary by Nicholson on the *Masnvi* which is in two Volumes.

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## Appendix

### Chronological Chart of Sufis of Islamic World.

#### Muslim World

#### Subcontinent

#### Sindh

Abu Hashim of Kufa  
(d.160/776)

Ali Hujwiri  
(1016-1073)

Ibrahim b. Adham  
(d. 160/777)

Hassan Basri/Rabia  
(21-110) (642-729) (d.85/801)

Abu Turab  
(d. 171/787)

Haris Muhasbi/ Dhun-noon Misri  
(781-837) (861)

Junaid Bughdadi/Bayazid Bistami  
(297/909)/(d.261/875)

Hallaj Mansur/ Abu Bakr Kalabadi  
(858-922) (d. 990)

Abu Talib Makki  
(d. 386-996)

Abu Nasr Sarraj  
(378-988)

Khawaja Abdullah Ansary  
(394-461)/(1004-1088)

Abu Said Abi Khair  
(440/1049)

Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeeri  
(537-633)/(1142-1235)

Qushairy  
(d. 1072)

Shaikh Bahauddin Zakkaria Multani  
(566-661)/(1172-1262)

Shaikh Sarnaf Mughal Bhin  
(d. 610/1212)

Abdullah Ansary/Imam Ghazali  
(1006-1089) (1058-1111)

Fariddudin Ganj Shakar  
(570-664)/(1174-1266)

Nooh Bakhri  
(d. 640/1243)

Umer Khayyam  
(1049-1132)

Shaikh Sadruddin  
(621-709)/(1224-1310)

Syed Abdul Hadi alias Jamial Shah  
(d. 642/1244)

Sanai/Abdul Qadir Gilani  
(d. 1152)/(1078-1166)

Ruknuddin  
(649-735)/(1251-1335)

Syed Ali Makki  
(d. 644/1247)

Suhrwardy Abu Najib  
( 1152-1188)

Khawaja Bakhtiar Kaki  
(581-634)/(1186-1236)

Pir Patho  
(d. 666/1267)

Faridduin Aftar  
(1120-1230)

Syed Jalal Surkh Bukhari of uch  
(1170-1291)

Qalandar Lal Shahbaz  
(1162-1274)

Shaikh Suharwardy Umer  
(1144-1234)

Fakhruddin Iraqi  
(d. 1289)

Shaikh Shihabuddin Suharwardy Maqtul  
(549-587) (1153-1191)

Nizamuddin Aulia  
(636-725)/(1238-1324)

Qazi Qadan  
(870-958)/(1465-1551)

Ibn Arabi  
(560-638)/(1165-1240)

Bu Ali Qalander  
(1238-1324)

Makhdoom Nooh  
(911-998)/(1506-1593)

Mulana Rumi

Amir Khusro

(1208-1274)

Shaikh Saadi  
(1207-1292)

Mehmood Shabishri  
(1250-1320)

Hafiz Sheerazi  
(1326-1389)

Shaikh Bahauddin Naqshband  
(1317-1389)

Abdul Karim Ajili  
(1365-1428)

Moulana Jami  
(1414-1493)

Mulla Sadra  
(d.1641)

(1253-1325)

Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya Maneent  
(d.1263)

Makhdoom Jehanian Ja Ran Gasht  
(707-785)/(1308-1383)

Miran Muhammad Jaunpuri  
(1443-1504)

Shaikh Gungohi  
(d.1456-1538)

Mian Mir Lahori  
(1531-1635)

Shah Hussain  
(1539-1593)

Shaikh Ahmed Sirhandi  
(931-1034)/(1564-1624)

Shaikh Abdul Haqq Dehlvi  
(958-1052)/(1552-1642)

Khawaja Mohd Baqi Billah  
(1563-1603)

Dara Shikoh  
(d.1659)

Sultan Bahu  
(1631-1691)

Bulleh Shah  
(1680-1758)

Sarmad  
(d. 1660)

Shah Waliullah  
(1703-1763)

Shah Karim of Bulri  
(944-1032)/(1537-1624)

Mir Masum  
(944-1019)/(d.1611)

Shah Lutfullah Qadri  
(1020-1090)/(1611-1679)

Miyan Mir Lahori  
(d. 1045/1635)

Miyan Shah Inayat Rizvi  
(1630-1717)

Atta Thatthvi  
(1631-1727)

Shah Inayat Sufi Shaheed Jhok  
(1655-1709)

Mohammad Moin Thatthvi  
(1682-1748)

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai  
(1690-1752)

Mir Janullah Shah of Rohri  
(d.1754)

Makhdoom Mohd Hashim Thatthvi  
(1692-1762)

Mohammad Zaman of Luwari  
(1125-1188)/(1713-1774)

Abdul Rahim Gihori  
(d.1778)

Mir Ali Sher Qani  
(d.1789)

Sachal Sarmast  
(1152-1232)/(1739-1828)

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