



**Lalla *Vakhs* and Bulleh Shah's Poetry: A Study of Mystical Elements**

**Thesis submitted for the award of the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**in  
English**

**By**

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## **DECLARATION**

I do hereby declare that this thesis entitled **Lalla Vakhs and Bulleh Shah's Poetry: A Study of Mystical Elements** is original research carried out by me. No part of this thesis was published, or submitted to any other University/Institution for the award of any Degree/Diploma.

**(Anayat Ali Shah)**

Place:

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **Lalla Vakhs and Bulleh Shah's Poetry: A Study of Mystical Elements**, submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, **Department of English**, School of **Languages Linguistics and Indology**, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, is the result of the original research work carried out by Mr. **Anayat Ali Shah** under my supervision and to the best of my knowledge and belief, the work embodied in this thesis does not form part of any thesis/dissertation already submitted to any University/Institution for the award of any Degree/Diploma.

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## Chapter 1

### Mysticism: An Overview

The doubts, ambiguities and mysteries about Life and Death, God and Man, Space and Limitation, Soul and Body, the Transient and Eternal etc and their relation to each other always fascinated the human mind across the history of human existence on this planet. History is also witness that the human mind is continuously trying to unfold these ambiguities and mysteries. In this connection, Albert Einstein says, “the most beautiful thing that one can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science” (Kachappily 9). There are philosophers, mystics, theologians and scientists, who day in and day out constantly are working to apprehend the truth beneath the corporeal frames. However, the methodology used by these schools is different to their counterparts but the goal is same i.e. to arrive at the truth.

The term “mysticism” has such a varied and colorful tradition across the cultures and religions both in East and West which demands a profound delving to define. It is equally true that *mysticism*, *mystical* and *mystics* are widely used and misinterpreted terms all over the world. However, the term has been applied to many diverse things and subjects like, clairvoyance, visions, revelations, theosophy, spiritualism, occultism, magic, witchcraft, demonology, weird experiences and otherworldliness, even sometimes to mere impracticability and pensiveness in the dealings of life. Furthermore, the term has frequently been allied to a specific view about the universe-experiencing God in nature, and so on. It has also been recognized as being in relation to the approach of religious

mind that cares less for creed or doctrine. It is this kind of nature that mysticism became a subject of interest to writers, thinkers, believers and non-believers alike. Modern contemporary writers usually relate mysticism with the quest of communion with the Ultimate order of reality, God or Higher Consciousness. In this regard, it can be argued that mysticism can be found nearly in all religious traditions and cultures and its perchance as old as the existence of Being and universe.

History reveals that there are many customs and practices that were already prevailing in certain cultures but only came to known us, after they were put on record. So is the case with mysticism, it existed even before it was put on records. To trace its history is a bit complex when one has to rely only on written sources. Therefore, it is not feasible to attempt either a comprehensive understanding of mysticism or to trace its history. Within the course of time, the term *mysticism*, *mystic* and *mystical* obtained new shades of meaning as mentioned above. Mystic as a word is linked with the mystery sect of antique Greek. The word ‘mystery’ is obtained from the Greek verb *muw* which means “to fasten or to shut” to keep mum. “One who has initiated into the mysteries of existence and esoteric knowledge of the realities of life and death was known as *mystes* (mystic)” (Kannath 1).

The actual connotation of the word, as we use it nowadays, constitutes something much wider than its derivation. Therefore, the term is not restricted to the Greeks, either clerics or philosophers, nor enclosed by the far- reaching inclusiveness of Christian church. According to Margaret Smith, It denotes something which is:

to be found, in a highly developed state, in the early religious doctrines of the East, in the Vedic literature, in Buddhism both in India and in China, in a form strangely attractive, in Sufism, the mysticism of Islam, which has spread itself and taken firm root in Persia, Turkey and India, in Judaism, and finally, in the West (19).

The first and the foremost thing for the researcher is to identify and describe the much well-known concept of Mysticism. William Ralph Inge, late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century English author, Priest, Professor of divinity at Cambridge, Dean of St. Pauls' Cathedral, in his book *Christian Mysticism* (1899) has listed some twenty six definitions of Mysticism by various authors. The other famous book on mysticism by him is *Mysticism in Religion* (1947). In this book he defines mysticism as:

Mysticism means communion with God, that is to say with a Being conceived as the Supreme and ultimate reality. If what the mystics say of their experience is true, if they have really been in communion with the Holy Spirit of God, that is a fact of overwhelming importance, which must be taken into account when we attempt to understand God, the world and ourselves (8).

According to an English philosopher, Richard Nettlehip, "True mysticism is the consciousness that everything we experience is an element and only an element in fact i.e. that in being what it is, it is symbolic of something more" (420). To Otto Pflieger, German protestant theologian, "Mysticism is the immediate feeling of unity of the self with God" (qtd in Encyclopedia.com n.p). In the view of Scottish Philosopher, Edward



Caird, mysticism is “that attitude of mind in which all relations are swallowed up in the relation of the soul to God” (420). Evelyn Underhill, poet, novelist and a mystic, argues that, “Mysticism is the science of Ultimate, the science of union with Absolute” (72). An Indian Philosopher, R.D. Ranade states that mysticism is “an attitude of mind which involves a direct, immediate, first-hand intuitive apprehension of a God” (1). According to W. T. Stace mysticism is “the apprehensions of an ultimate non-sensuous unity in all things, a Oneness or a One to which neither the senses nor reason can penetrate” (14). A.B. Sharpe says mysticism “is a (conscious) direct contact of the soul with Transcendental Reality” (74). Sydney Spencer in his book, *Mysticism in World Religion* argues that “ it is recognized everywhere that through mystical experience men are brought into immediate contact with ultimate Reality, and this contact is commonly described in terms both of vision or knowledge and of union” (327).

From the above discussion a comprehensive account of mysticism seems to be apparently possible. Despite of some differences, by and large all streams of mysticism seems akin at the final speculation, that is, mystic way leads to the consciousness of the Ultimate or Divine Immanence. Thus mysticism is the way of communion to God. It is the truth ahead of all realities and beyond the known and secular. It is an endeavor of men to know the game of existence in relation to Self, Higher Self or Higher Consciousness. It is this consciousness that liberates one from the intricate web of regular and mundane. Though it may not be solution to all the problems that humankind faces, but it is the salient voice of love, serenity and fraternity, much needed in this present spiritually eclipsed world.

## **Different Perspectives on Mysticism**

**Richard Maurice Buck** (1837-1902) a well-known Canadian psychiatrist, famous for his *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study of the Human Mind*. In this book, he classified three distinct types of Consciousness: Simple Consciousness, Self Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness.

### **Simple Consciousness**

According to him Simple Consciousness is possessed by animals as they are having the awareness of their bodies and the surroundings respectively.

### **Self Consciousness**

Self Consciousness is associated with human beings as man is not only conscious of his environment but also aware of being distinct of the same.

### **Cosmic Consciousness**

Buck argues that Cosmic Consciousness is a “higher form of consciousness than that possessed by ordinary man” (1). He further argues that cosmic consciousness can be “acquired only by the best specimens of the race but also when they are at their best” (65). Throughout the history, Buck discovered that it has been called by different names like, Nirvana, Beatrice, Kingdom of Heaven, Specialism, etc.

**William James** (1842-1910), an American psychologist, philosopher, professor and physician. Besides his most influential book *The Principles of Psychology*, he wrote, *The Varieties of Religious Experiences* which made him an authority on mysticism though not

in practical terms but theoretical. In this book he discussed about four characteristics of mystical experiences that are: Ineffability, Noetic Quality, Transiency and Passivity.

### **Ineffability**

According to James mystical experiences are ineffable and cannot be communicated. Words or language are inadequate to describe the mystical experience. He further argues that mystical experiences are states of feeling and one cannot explain his feelings to a person who has not gone through the same. This kind of view is also supported by other scholars like W. T. Stace. However, there are scholars who deny the concept of ineffability and argued that it is not always but seldom. The main purpose of mystics is to supply a nudge to the masses so that they could themselves delve into it and try to find the path of liberation, harmony, peace and oneness with the One.

### **Noetic Quality**

James argues that, mystical experiences are “states of insights into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect” (253). Higher truth have been felt or experienced by an exalted intellect when divine light illuminates the common intellect.

### **Transiency**

He further says that mystical states are generally transient, “Mystical states cannot be sustained long” (253) and fading quickly. Therefore, a mystic cannot always be in the state of ecstasy or in the state of Higher Consciousness. However, these mystical states may be transient in nature but their influence stretches over the intact life of mystics.

**Passivity**

James argues, during the mystical experience, mystic finds himself in the state of passiveness “as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power” (253). James further goes on that these states occur as our field of consciousness increases.

**Arthur J. Deikman** (1929-2013), a clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California argues that mystical experience is a psychological phenomenon. Scientists have waged a war to get autonomy from religious control and since, mysticism is generally associated with it, and therefore, it has been overlooked or ignored by contemporary scientists. It is because of this reason scientists dismiss all such mystical experiences as type of hysteria, hallucination or simply madness. He explains the mystical experience in terms of psychology and classifies three accounts of mystical experience, untrained-sensate, trained sensate and trained-transcendent.

**Untrained-Sensate**

Deikman argues that unstrained-sensate alludes to phenomenon that happen in persons who are not directly involved in practical meditation or other practices used to generate mystical or religious experience. This kind of experience is generally narrated by the individuals, as an extension of their ‘normal’ psychological process. He further says that, these kinds of experiences take place either under the influence of drugs or more specifically in natural milieu.

**Strained-Sensate**

Deikman argues that, in terms of phenomenology, strained-sensate and unstrained-sensate seems akin. And, the only distinct quality between the two is that trained individuals inclined to have experiences which meets their learned religious cosmology; an existing knowledge and/or anticipation of the experience directs its elucidation.

**Trained-Transcendent**

It deals with the experience that is above sensation and common psychological procedure. These experiences transcend emotions and effect and he believes like James that they are transient and passive. He further argues that the sense of dichotomy and multiplicity disappears as the person undergoes of 'ego-loss' and with the result, sense of unity in all things gets in. Deikman believes that, this kind of experience typically happens only after a long committed process of training.

In addition to that, Deikman believes that these experiences fetch a strong feeling of reality, yet no concrete evidence of authenticity is available. To support his argument, he gave an example of clinical experiences that appears real but carries no confirmation of reality.

**Andrew M. Greely** (1928-2013) was a sociologist, novelist and professor at the University of Arizona and the University of Chicago. He states that the mystical experience (or ecstatic) is an organic structure of knowledge, rather a deeper level of knowledge. He further argues that mystical experience is akin to the creative process or creative experience as both cognitions are distinct than that of our ordinary experience of

cognition. He believes that the mystical or ecstatic experience is non-discursive. Like James and Deikman, he too accepts that mystical experience was regarded as a sort of schizophrenia in the past but now clinical psychologists research brought forth a new kind of study and found that mysticism is akin to general and clinical psychology.

**W. Stace** (1886-1967) was a philosopher, British Civil Servant and an epistemologist. He enjoyed wide recognition among the scholars of mysticism. He describes mysticism in his book *Mysticism and Philosophy* as “the apprehension of an ultimate non-sensuous unity in all things, a oneness or a One to which neither the senses nor the reason can penetrate” (14). The highest mystical experience erases multiplicity, distinctions and all dualisms, with the result pure consciousness gets in, which is above the subject/object dichotomy. He further argues that the absolute Oneness or Unity cannot be comprehended by common sensation or thought but by the mind and soul that may have reached to the level where “formless, shapeless, colorless, odorless and soundless” can be seen through these characteristics that have inroads in an individual (30).

Further, Stace differentiates the extrovertive and introvertive mystical consciousness. Both are having the same goal i.e to be one with the One but the ways or approaches are different. Extrovertive mystical consciousness or experience sees unity in all the things present in the nature and one’s unity with it. In other words mystic finds unity in diversity. And the Introvertive mystical experience concentrates inwards; sees the One in the void and that void mingles into the Void. They see everything within the self. According to Stace, in Introvertive mysticism, “the ordinary sensory-intellectual consciousness disappears and is replaced by an entirely new kind of consciousness, the

mystical consciousness” (18). To Stace, it is ‘ineffable peace’, ‘supreme Good’, ‘the Self’ and this kind of consciousness is:

Not only in Christianity and Hinduism but everywhere else we find that the essence of this experience is that it is an undifferentiated unity, though each culture and each religion interprets this undifferentiated unity in terms of its own creed and dogmas” (21).

### **Paradoxicality**

Paradoxicality is a peculiar quality of mystical communications. The term Paradox is not alien to us; many of us have gone through such kind of experiences, for instance, one who has experienced the ambivalence of loving and hating the same thing or person had a direct experience of paradox. Fudaishi’s (Buddhist Monk) once says:

*Empty-handed I go and yet the spate is in my hand;*

*I walk on foot, and yet on the back of an Ox I am riding:*

*When I pass over the bridge,*

*Lo, the water floweth not, but the bridge doth flow (115).*

In fact, the aim of these mystics is not to communicate their experience or to get any fame out of such statements but their concern is to supply a nudge to the masses so that they could themselves introspect. Fritjof Capra, is an Austrian-born American physicist, in his book, *The Tao of Physics* draws the parallels between the Eastern Mysticism and Modern Physics. He argues that, both physics and metaphysics lead inexorably to the

same knowledge. By drawing the parallels between the two, he noticed the language problem faced by mystics and physicists. He says:

The problem of language encountered by the Eastern mystic is exactly the same as the problem the modern physicist faces...Both the physicist and mystic want to communicate their knowledge, and when they do so with words their statements are paradoxical and full of logical contradictions. These paradoxes are characteristic of all Mysticism, from Heraclitus to Don Juan, and since the beginning of this century they are also characteristic of Physics (54).

### **Stages of Mysticism**

There are different stages of mysticism in different religions and cultures: though the ultimate goal is same — that is the realization of self and the union with Almighty or the Absolute. On the path of mysticism, a mystic has gone through certain distinct stages of experiences. Since mysticism has its roots in religion and culture, different stages of mysticism have different names in their religions respectively. To look over these stages will guide us to have an effective comprehension of mysticism. Evelyn Underhill, observes five stages of mysticism:

#### **The Awakening of the Self**

According to Underhill, Awakening of the Self is the first stage in which a mystic experiences some consciousness of the ultimate, Divine or transcendent:



It is a disturbance of the equilibrium of the self, which results in the shifting of the field of consciousness from lower to higher levels, with a consequent removal of the centre of interest from the subject to an object now brought into view: the necessary beginning of any process of transcendence (164).

### **The Purification of the Self or Way of Purgation**

In this stage there is purgation (purification) of self/soul, distinguished by a consciousness and flaws. The reaction in this phase is one of self-control and humbleness. In this stage, a mystic experiences a transformed self, according to Underhill, “Here, then, stands the newly awakened self: aware, for the first time, of reality, responding to that reality by deep movements of love and of awe” (184).

### **The Illumination of the Self**

This phase brings in a certain awareness of the infinite. After the purification, the self of the mystic experiences more detachment from the earthly things and feels unsullied for the awakening to truth. It is striking by the consciousness of a transcendent array, with the result, vision of a new rapture and a new world comes in. According to Underhill:

In illumination we come to that state of consciousness which is popularly supposed to be peculiar to the mystic: a form of mental life, a kind of perception, radically different from that of “normal” men. His preceding adventures and experiences cannot be allowed this quality. His awakening

to consciousness of the Absolute—though often marked by a splendour and intensity which seem to distinguish it from other psychic upheavals of that kind—does but reproduce upon higher levels those characteristic processes of conversion and falling in love which give depth and actuality to the religious and passional life (215).

### **The Dark Night of the Soul**

This phase has encountered by the few and is absolute and complete, marked by chaos of void. Further, one feels his helplessness and stagnation and finds solution only in “unselfing”. During the end of this stage, the self of the mystic vanishes and surrendered his all will to the Divine Will. In this regard, Underhill observes:

The exalted consciousness of Divine Perfection which the self acquired in its “mystical awakening” was balanced by a depressed and bitter consciousness of its own inherent imperfection, and the clash of these two perceptions spurred it to that laborious effort of accommodation which constitutes the “Purgative Way (350).

### **The Unitive Life or the Way of Union**

Underhill observes this last stage is “the life in which man’s will is united with God,” (379). To be one or union with the Absolute is the chief principle of all mystics across the cultures and religions. This last phase is one of the union, union of microcosm with macrocosm. During this phase the soul has been emancipated fully and permanently established on a transcendental height for a new function. Further the mystic are filled

with the divine will and this is not a simple awareness of Reality or the Consciousness, but becoming an essential element of it. The ecstasy attained through this union is perfect and eternal. Mystics often called it a spiritual marriage as there is a union of lover (seeker) and the Beloved (God).

### **Categories of Mysticism**

Mysticism is categorized as Introvertive and Extrovertive; Religious and Non-Religious; Natural (acquired) and Supernatural (infused) build on number of propositions. However, by common accord there are two specific kinds of mystical consciousness that is Nature mysticism and God mysticism. Further, some believed that it is in fact, God mysticism that commands the love nature and others called it Nature mysticism.

### **God Mysticism**

The experience of the Higher Consciousness or the Absolute is referred to God Mysticism. It is further divided into two types: Intellectual Mysticism and Devotional Mysticism. Intellectual mysticism is marked by the concept that events in the circle of intellect also form a vital path to the comprehension of God. Attaining the knowledge of God through cognitive approach is essentially a mystical act. The concept of mysticism in the *Upanishads* can be studied as Intellectual Mysticism. The *Prasna Upanishad* states:

*Knowing the arising, the arriving, and the place*

*And the pervading in five ways*

*Of the breath in relation to the self,*

*One attains immortality:*

*Knowing, one attains immortality (3:12).*

On the other hand, Devotional Mysticism is marked by the total devotion of the seeker towards God. Since, the ultimate aim of the seeker is to be one with the Ultimate and for this he has to undergo the various tiring and tough experiences. Here he must possess and retain the selfless, claimless and undemanding love towards the God. Shah Hussain, an Indian Sufi sings of constant faith in Almighty:

*I reflect only on Thy name*

*I beseech none but Thee*

*I have faith in Thee*

*I perceive only Thy sublimity*

*In and out it is all red*

*I am in love since eternity*

*I trade only in Thee*

*I live and die in Thee*

(Trans. Gill 57)

## Nature Mysticism

Generally speaking, Nature Mysticism is unification with the immanent God in nature. It is worth mentioning here, that Nature Mysticism is not essentially distinct from God Mysticism. Omnipresence of God is given prominence in the mystical consciousness of Nature. Nature always enchants and bemused men most with her mysteries of existence. Much of it is above the rationale and logic, remote to the comprehension. According to Dhar, “A mystic is the one who invariably pursues the inexplicable desiring for a direct experience of the ultimate Reality” (1). This sort of experience may happen in diverse fields in various degrees characterized by a sense of splendor or sublimity, enthralled by music, close companionship with Nature, an insight into the meaning of the ultimate and the awakening into a love for all Beings etc. To Underhill, comprehension of God in nature is the commonest form of Illumination:

To “see God in nature,” to attain a radiant consciousness of the “otherness” of natural things, is the simplest and commonest form of illumination. Most people, under the spell of emotion or of beauty, have known flashes of rudimentary vision of this kind. Where such a consciousness is recurrent, as it is in many poets, like, Shelly, Keats, Wordsworth, Whitman etc, there results that partial yet often overpowering apprehension of the Infinite Life immanent in all living things, which some modern writers have dignified by the name of “nature-mysticism.” Where it is raised to its highest denomination, till the veil is obliterated by the light behind, and “faith has vanished into sight,” as

sometimes happened to Blake, we reach the point at which the mystic swallows up the poet (217).

After experienced oneness with nature, the mystic finds harmony with cosmos. This sense of transcendence or cosmic consciousness might be caused by the smallest or the mightiest of Nature or by a fundamental principle of Nature as a whole. The consciousness of Nature is much more than that of exaltation or approbation of nature. In this connection, Rudolf Otto says:

Nature mysticism is the sense of being immersed in the oneness of Nature, so that man feels all the individuality, all the peculiarity of natural things in himself. He dances with the motes of dust and radiates with the sun, he rises with the dawn, surges with the wave, is fragrant in the rose, rapt with the nightingale: he knows and is all being, all strength, all joy, all desire, all pain in all things inseparably (93).

To the Nature mystic all that exists is a manifestation of the Divine. Many a times Pantheism is often treated synonymously with Nature Mysticism though it is not. To the nature mystic, nature is the manifestation of infinite, while the Pantheist admires Nature as God itself.

The objects that are trivial and ugly for common men seem filled with Divine grace to Nature mystic. The tiniest particles, blade of grass, sand particles etc seems the manifestation of the divine. William Blake, an English poet who finds harmony with nature and experienced the macrocosmness of macrocosm:

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand*

*And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,*

*Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand*

*And Eternity in an hour*

(qtd. in Poetry Foundation n.p)

Hence, a mystic finds the meaning of existence in the simplest things of creation which otherwise would be neglected by the common man. Nature educates; guides and illuminates the soul of mystic. William Wordsworth, a great poet of English romantic period is best known as a nature mystic. He experienced the harmony with the nature and describes the same in one of his famous poems, Tintern Abbey:

*Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,*

*And the round ocean and the living air,*

*And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;*

*A motion and a spirit, that impels*

*All thinking things, all objects of all thought,*

*And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still*

*A lover of the meadows and the woods,*

*And mountains; and of all that we behold*

*From this green earth; of all the mighty world*

*Of eye, and ear,--both what they half create,*

*And what perceive; well pleased to recognise*

*In nature and the language of the sense,*

*The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,*

*The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul*

*Of all my moral being.*

(qtd. in Potery Foundation n.p)

Ultimately, the unification and harmony with nature is nothing but the love of the Divine through His creation.

### **Mysticism and the Holy Books**

William James, in his book *Varieties of Religious Experiences* argues that “One may say truly, I think, that personal religious experiences has its roots and center in mystical states of consciousness” (370). James Bissett Pratt, president of the American Theologian Society, argues in his book *The Religious Consciousness; a psychological study*, that, “The center of the mysticism is religion and while it would indeed be untrue to assert that only the mystics are genuinely religious, it is safe to say that intensely religious people have at least a touch of mysticism” (370). Evelyn Underhill’s statement seems analogous to that of Pratt, she writes, “No deeply religious man is without a touch of mysticism; and



no mystic can be other than religious, in the psychological if not in theological sense of the word” (70). Paul Tillich, a German American existential philosopher and a theologian argued in his book *Systematic theology* that, “that all religious contains both a mystical experience and rational interpretation” (9). Hence, the perception and the expression of experience for Each and every mystic are different because of the differences in their religious backgrounds. In other words their sense of perception and insights vary according to their religious doctrines, yet general code of conduct is akin as all are having common endeavor to comprehend the Reality of existence in relation to the God or the Absolute. From the above discussion, one could argue that the quest of self realization and communion with the God is common to all religions and an integral part of all the scriptures of the world.

### **Mysticism in the *Upanishads***

To comprehend the mystical thought of East, it is necessary to understand the concept of the Self or Brahman or the Infinite Being described in the *Upanishads*. *Upanishads* are the sacred texts of Hinduism. The concept of self is explained in the *Upanishads* as *moksha* (liberation), liberation from fear, doubt, uncertainty and ignorance. The concept of Self described in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* as “The self is the overloaded of all beings, the king of all beings...so all beings, all worlds, all breaths, all selves are held together in the self” (II.5.15). The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* describes the experience of God consciousness and the union with it in this way:

...when a man knows God, he is free; his sorrows have an end, and birth and death are no more. When in inner union he is beyond the world of the

body, then the third world, the world of the Spirit, is found, where man possesses all—for he is one with the One (qtd. in Abhayana 40).

### ***The Bhagavad-Gita***

The *Bhagavad-Gita* (the Song of God) is also a sacred text of Hinduism, written in the second century A.D. It is believed to be the book of wisdom, applicable to the seeker of God. One of the characters, Krishna, who happened to be an incarnation of God demands no rituals or rites but “wanted only one thing—total self surrender and love” (Chaudhri 265). Regarding the realization of the truth, Krishna tells Arjuna that, “I have revealed to you the most secret teachings, Arjuna. He who has realized it, has realized the Truth and his Task in this world is done” (20). Regarding the *bhakti* nature of *Bhagavad Gita*, Nirad C. Chaudhuri noticed:

For the first time in any Hindu text the nature of *bhakti* is also fully communicated, both intellectually and emotionally... no doubt is left as to the nature of the devotion which is expected and what the devotees are expected to be (262).

### **Buddhist Mysticism**

The ultimate goal of Buddhism is to attain Nirvana (extinction of existence), this is also known as last phase in the mystical experience. It denies the existence of a personified God, William James observes that “in strictness the Buddhistic system is atheistic”. According to Buddha world is overwhelming with suffering and his way is the cessation of suffering. He did not claim of heavenly rewards nor did he say that he was sent from

God but to abolish the sufferings. “He, who recognizes the existence of suffering, its cause, its remedy, and its cessation, has fathomed the four noble truths. He will walk in the right path” (Buddha Sermons 53). The four noble truths according to him are suffering, cause of suffering i.e. ignorance, remedy to suffering i.e. enlightenment and cessation of suffering coming after the abolishing the ignorance. The mystical nature of Buddhism could be understood by the story in which Buddha inquired his disciple about the truth:

Once, it is said, he took some dry leaves in his hands and asked his favourite disciple Ananda, to tell him whether there were any leaves besides those in his hand. Ananda replied: ‘the leaves of autumn are falling on all sides, and there are more of them than can be numbered.’ Then said the Buddha: ‘In like manner I have given you a handful of truths, but besides there are many thousands of other truths, more than can be numbered’ (130).

### **Christian Mysticism**

The determining phase of Christian mysticism inheres in the first five centuries of Christian era. The doctrine of Christianity and its mystical teachings developed alongside, based on the life and teaching of Christ as documented in the Christian texts.

Ursula King, professor of theology and spirituality at university of Bristol observes:

In the beginning, Christian mysticism was fed by two streams: the Jewish heritage and Greek thought, especially its contemplative ideal taught by ancient philosophers. At its very core is the experience of Jesus himself as

a person filled with divine life who taught his followers about God's love for his creatures and promised them the powerful support of the divine Spirit. The Christian Bible, especially the New Testament, records Jesus' teachings, but also the experiences of his earliest disciples. These texts have been an inspiration for Christian mystics through the ages (2).

The Bible rendered the concept that God has made man on his own image; from here the intense longing of union with God is developed in the Christianity. The New Testament also portrays the mystical experience of St. Paul and has been fairly elucidated in the Pauline Epistles. We have seen the longing of the Psalmists for the unification is rendered in a language that later became the distinctive of Christian mysticism:

*Give ear to my Words, O Lord, consider my meditation.*

*Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God,*

*For You I will pray.*

*My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the*

*Morning I will direct It To You, and I will look up (Ps 5:1-3).*

### **Mysticism in Islam**

Mysticism in Islam is generally known as *Tasawwuf* and is essentially an integral part of Islam. One who follows the path of *Tasawwuf* is commonly known as Sufi in some parts of the world. These Sufis consider Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) as their spiritual master/leader and follows Him in letter and spirit. The sacred text of Islam, the Quran

carries a comprehensive view of God, universe and man. For God realization, it demands a complete surrender of ones will to the will of God. According to a well known Sufi Junaid Baghdadi, “Sufism is that God makes thee die to thyself and become resurrected in Him” (Part II-35).

Love is at the centre of *Tasawwuf* , Sufis are looking to God as a lover seeking to his beloved, as one of the great Sufis, Sultan Bahoo sings:

*The fire of love is lit*

*None can extinguish its flames*

*Love has no caste, no creed*

*It bows at every threshold*

*Restless, wandering, it sleeps no more*

*In anguish, in pain, it is always awake*

*Bahu, blessed are those*

*Who live in union, in sublime communion!*

(qtd. in Gill 102)

Since this research is concerned about a Sufi poet and a Savaist/Sufi poetess, therefore, ‘Sufism’ will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

## Mysticism and Literature

Mysticism and literature are closely connected to each other as there are diverse reflections of mystical experiences in literature from its very beginning say it oral or recorded. It is but natural that mystics often choose poetry for their expression that also added charm to their mystical experiences and with the result influence the masses more than any other genre of literature could. Besides to communicate their experiences, there main aim is to supply a trod to the common people by which they could realize the purpose of the life. Therefore, mystic literature needs greater attention. The language used by mystics is full of metaphors, similes, paradoxes etc.

Kenneth Burke argues in his book, *Mysticism as a solution to the poet's Dilemma*:

Poetry deals, above all, with the language of sensation, of the concrete and positive, whereas Mystery is of the spirit. Mysticism arises in poetry in so far as the 'things' of the poet's sensory experience are felt to be infused by a hierarchical spirit. Empirically, things *just are*; but mystically, things *stand for*. Mystical poetry is thus forever using the language of things to point beyond things, to the ultimate invisible, intangible order (the realm of hierarchy) by which they are infused (105-6).

Further, mystical poetry also offers unique expressions like 'divine marriage', 'divinely dark' 'circle of love' 'union of dark and light' etc. These expressions are also adopted by the non-mystic poets that heighten the effect of their verses. Thus mystical poetry not only supplies nudge to the masses but also offers charming expression to the poetry.

## **Mysticism and English literature**

As it has been already discussed above, mysticism existed even before it was put on records. So far as the English literature is concerned, the traces of mysticism in it could be found in 14<sup>th</sup> century when English language was begin to emerge. It is necessary to mention here, that the mystic thought in English poetry is chiefly Christian in character. However, the influence of Platonic and neo-Platonic thought can also be traced there, during the renaissance period. Spurgeon, in his book *Mysticism in English Literature* observes:

England shares to the full in the wave of mystical experience, thought, and teaching which swept over Europe in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and at first the mystical literature of England, as also of France, Germany, Italy, and Sweden, is purely religious or devotional in type, prose treatises for the most part containing practical instruction for the inner life, written by hermits, priests, and " anchoresses." In the fourteenth century we have a group of such writers of great power and beauty, and in the work of Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Julian of Norwich, and the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, we have a body of writings dealing with the inner life, and the steps of purification, contemplation, and ecstatic union which throb with life and devotional fervour (10).

It is worth mentioning here that the fourteenth century was the age of unrest in England as there were hundred years war between England and France, Black Death, revolts etc and in the midst of all that Mysticism acted as a stabilizing force. The mystics who

emerged during the fourteenth century were Richard Rolle, Lady Julian, Walter Hilton who infused a sense of hope in the form of salvation, love compassion etc. Sayyed Hosain Nassr rightly observes:

If men of spiritual and contemplative nature continue to appear even in the darkest periods of spiritual eclipse it is precisely because the economy of a human collectivity necessitates their existence. Were human society to be without any contemplative at all, it would simply cease to exist (15).

The above mystics established a new kind of mystical writings. Richard Rolle describes his mystical experiences through the imagery drawn from music. His lyrics were lucid and simple. An anonymous mystical work *The Cloud of Unknowing* left a powerful mark on mystical literature. Besides this devotional classic the works of Lady Julian and Walter Hilton were drawn from literature of mystical theology.

Seventeenth century witnessed the blooming of religious mystical poetry. Metaphysical school of poets produced the poetry that reveals the deep feeling similar to the mystical verse. All these metaphysical poets were spiritual though none could be measured a mystic in the full sense of the term. The prominent among them were John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Andrew Marvel, Richard Crashaw etc. Each of them were essentially mystic in their aspirations, and in their individual achievements each tell us something of the ultimate and full accomplishment either through the brighten vision of the world, or through the typical life of holiness. In this connection Dhar observes, that the divine poetry of metaphysical poets reveals “a sensibility akin to



the mystical. Intensely and intimately involved with the object of their devotion, they sing invariably in the language of the mystics” (7).

### **John Donne (1572-1631)**

John Donne seems to be engaged in religious, practical, and empirical side of mysticism. His main purpose was to attain holiness, illumination and finally Union through the love of Jesus. In his religious poems, a strong desire of purgation of the soul, asking for the punishment by which he may become pure for communion for instance in “Batter My Heart”:

*Batter my heart, three person'd God; for you  
As yet but knocke, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend;  
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend  
Your force, to breake, blowe, burne, and make me new(1-4).*

### **George Herbert**

George Herbert was one of the most lucid among the devotional mystics as he praises and seeks the union through day to day practices of Christianity. Being a parson, he developed his spirituality out of his theology. His mystical experiences were deeply rooted in the practices of virtues and religious disciplines. He believed that art in any form should also be dedicated to the One, who is the greatest Artist of this universe:

*Lord, how can man preach thy eternal word?  
He is a brittle crazy glass;*

*Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford*

*This glorious and transcendent place,*

*To be a window, through thy grace* (The Windows 1-5).

### **Henry Vaughan** (1622-1695)

Like Herbert, Vaughan too sought to praise the creator through the medium of poesy. He used symbolism at its best and the metaphor of “Light” is recurrent in his poetry which stands for the Higher consciousness or God consciousness. Vaughan’s enlightenment could be understood through his approach to nature:

*I saw the Eternity the other night,*

*Like a great ring of pure and endless light,*

*All calm, as it was bright:--*

*And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,*

*Driven by the spheres,*

*Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world*

*And all her train were hurl’d*(The World 1-7).

### **Richard Crashaw** (1612-1649)

Crashaw’s main focus was the devotional quest of Divine love. He artistically made efforts to awaken the spiritual understanding in the masses. In fact, his artistic efforts

were distinctly varies to that of other metaphysical poets as he was having unique way to surrender his will to that of God will. In “To the Name above every Name”, he says:

*I SING the Name which none can say,*

*But touch'd with an interior ray;*

*The Name of our new peace, our good,*

*Our bliss, and supernatural blood.*

*The Name of all our lives and loves.*

*Hearken and help, ye holy doves,*

*The high-born brood of day, the bright*

*Candidates of blissful light,*

*The heirs-elect of love, whose names belong*

*Unto the everlasting life of song;*

*All ye wise souls, who in the wealthy breast*

*Of this unbound Name build your warm nest;*

*Awake my glory, soul (if such thou be*

*And that fair word at all refer to thee),*

*Awake and sing(1-15).*

**Thomas Traherne (1637-1674)**

Traherne, being a theologian and a clergy, explored in his poems the grandeur design of the creation and the perception about the intimate connection with God. Further, in his works, there is a zealous, almost candid like love of the Creator, and are often akin to the themes rendered in the works of his successors like, William Blake, Words Worth, Walt Whitman and Gerald Manley Hopkins. Love and devotion of nature is recurrent in his works that evokes romanticism prior to Romantic-Movement in English literature. Traherne describes the experience of Union in a plain and lucid language:

*Come letts unite; and wee'l aspire*

*like brighter Flames of heavenly fire;*

*That with sweet Incense do ascend,*

*still purer to their Journeys End.*

*Two--rising Flames--in one weel bee,*

*And with each other twining play,*

*And How, twill be a joy to see,*

*weel fold and mingle all the way*

(qtd. in Poetry Foundation n.p)

**William Blake (1757-1827)**

According to Spurgeon, “Blake is one of the great mystics of the world; and he is by far the greatest and most profound who has spoken in English. Like Henry More and Wordsworth, he lived in a world of glory, of spirit and of vision, which, for him, was the only real world” (43). To him the most vital thing desired to be understood by men is not the self-control and discipline, compliance or a sense of duty, but love and realization. It is this realization of self and nature that binds unity in diversity:

And all must love the human form,  
 In heathen, turk or jew.  
 Where Mercy, Love & Pity dwell  
 There God is dwelling too.

(qtd. in Litarary Kicks n.p)

**William Wordsworth (1770-1850)**

Wordsworth is one of the greatest Nature mystics English soil has ever produced. S.R. swaminathan writes that, “It does not mean he is a poet of Nature’s appearances or her landscape only; in his most inspired moments he saw them as symbols of Divine consciousness...” (4). By and large, Wordsworth’s whole mystical thought could be measured in terms of trinity: God, man and Nature. He experienced the spirit (consciousness) in all things which is commonly described as pantheism as in “Tintern Abbey”, he sings:

*...that blessed mood,*

*In which the burthen of the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,  
Is lightened—that serene and blessed mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on—  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and became a living soul:  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life things (40-9).*

**Percy Bysshe Shelly (1792-1822)**

The mystical thought in Shelly could be understood in terms of his desire of Union with the profound and ineffable truth. Spurgeon observes:

The sense of unity in all things is most strongly felt in *Adonais*, where Shelley's maturest thought and philosophy are to be found; and indeed the

mystical fervour in this poem, especially towards the end, is greater than anywhere else in his writings (13).

Despite of the fact that except Blake no romantic poet was a pure mystic, even Wordsworth was labeled as pantheist and Shelly is no exception but at least he carried the sense of Divinity which he believed will remain and rest all perish. In “Adonais” he says:

*The one remains, the many change and pass;*

*Heaven’s light forever shines, Earth’s shadow fly;*

*Life. Like a dome of many-colour’d glass,*

*Stains the white radiance of Eternity, ... (n.p)*

### **John Keats (1812-1889)**

Keats’s mystical nature is marked in terms of imagination and the concept of beauty. In ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, he sums up his concept of spiritual nature that seems similar to that of Hindu philosophy of beauty and God i.e., *Stayam Shivan Sundaram*, ‘Beauty is truth, truth Beauty,—that is all / You know on earth, and all ye need to know’.

### **Robert Browning (1812-1889)**

Browning was one of the eccentric mystics of Victorian Era, he perceived God not only Genuine, but everywhere existing and functioning, and not only-powerful, but quintessential in love as well. Browning’s yearning for the Union is best described in *Pauline*:

*And what is that I hunger for but God?*

*My God, my God! Let me for once look on thee*

*As tho' nought else existed: we alone.*

*And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark*

*Expands till I can say, 'even from myself'*

*I need thee, and I feel thee, and I love thee;*

*I do not plead my rapture in thy works*

*For love of thee—or that I fell as one*

*Who cannot die—but there is that in me*

*Which turns to thee, which loves, or which should love (11-20).*

**Gerald Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)**

By and large, Hopkins's verses seem to be in search of soul, struggling and yearning for God. The themes rendering in his poetry invites the attention of people, who seek for communion and the presence of God in day to day life. In one of his famous poem, "The Wreck of the Dutchland", he says:

*Thou mastering me*

*God! Givr of breath and bread;*



*World's strand sways of the sea;*

*Lord of living and dead;*

*Thou hast bound bones and veins in me, fastened me flesh,*

*And after it almost unmade, what with dread,*

*Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?*

*Over again I feel thy finger and find thee (1-8).*

**W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)**

From the very beginning, Yeats was inclined towards magic and with the result it took the shape of mysticism as are evident in his works. In this regard, he himself confessed that, "If I had not made magic my constant study I could not have written a single word of my Blake book, nor would *The Countess Kathleen* ever have come to exist. The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write" (qtd in Ellmann 94). The influence of Hindu mysticism is also evident in his later poetry. Further, his esoteric self was always wants to merge in the eternity, as in "Sailing to Byzantium":

*O sages standing in God's holy fire*

*As in the gold mosaic of a wall,*

*Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,*

*And be the singing-masters of my soul.*

*Consume my heart away; sick with desire*

*And fastened to a dying animal*

*It knows not what it is; and gather me*

*Into the artifice of eternity(17-24).*

### **Mysticism in American Literature**

Mysticism has been established in America by the Puritan settlers, who migrated to America from England during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It began its life there, not just as a foreign item but also a suspicious phenomenon. The then Calvinists were harsh towards the orthodox mystical writings and often negate its importance as the Church was under their control and find it threat to their status. The champions of mysticism in America were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David, Thoreau, Walt Whitman, William Carlos Williams, Emily Dickinson, Hart Crane, Thomas Wolfe, Henry miller, Robert Frost, Brother Antoninus, Theodore Roethke, Thomas Merton etc. the writings of the above mentioned writers depict the profound tendency towards the mysticism and were influenced by nature and believed it as the manifestation of God. Moreover, they were much influenced by the oriental mystic thought, as found in the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, the writing of Abni-Arabi, Ghazali, etc,. Though the present study is dealing with the mystic poetry but it is not possible to look into the work of all writers, therefore, the researcher may analyze the work of some major mystic poets.

**Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)**

Emerson held a view that everything is connected to God. Hence, divinity dwells in all things. Being a transcendentalist, he believed that the truth or transcendence could be experienced directly through the medium of nature. Once he was asked about his religious belief, he answered, "I am more of a Quaker than anything g else. I believe in the 'still, small voice', and that voice is Christ within us" (Gohdes 57). Like other mystics, he too observes that all the beings are the parts of the One transcendental being. By and large, his poetry propounds the concept of Universal self as he "Experience", he sings:

*The lords of life, the lords of life,—*

*I saw them pass,*

*In their own guise,*

*Like and unlike,*

*Portly and grim,—*

*Use and Surprise,*

*Surface and Dream.*

*Succession swift and spectral Wrong,*

*Temperament without a tongue,*

*And the inventor of the game*

*Omnipresent without name:- (1-11).*

**Edgar Allan Poe(1809-1849)**

Poe's mysticism was more of Platonic and Neo-Platonic thread of the perennial tradition, rather than the Gnostic one. Poe, in his *Great Short Works* argues that, "It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired with Poetic Sentiment, it struggles — the creation of supernatural Beauty" (548). Poe in his *Catholic Hymn* sees hope in Him:

*At morn- at noon- at twilight dim-*

*Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!*

*In joy and woe- in good and ill-*

*Mother of God, be with me still!*

*When the hours flew brightly by,*

*And not a cloud obscured the sky,*

*My soul, lest it should truant be,*

*Thy grace did guide to thine and thee;*

*Now, when storms of Fate o'er cast*

*Darkly my Present and my Past,*

*Let my Future radiant shine*

*With sweet hopes of thee and thine! (1-12)*

**Emily Dickinson** (1830-1886)

Dickinson's poetry indicates the formidable reliance in the existence of Absolute. Her mystic vision carries beauty of Nature, love for life in general and quest for Eternity. Walter Fuller Taylor argues in his *History of American Letters*, "Upon her mysticism there rests unquestionably the stamp of Emerson" (281). In one of her poems, she laid emphasis on inner eye to experience His presence:

*By intuition, Mighty Things*

*Assert themselves – and not by terms –*

*"I'm Midnight" – need the Midnight say –*

*"I'm Sunrise" – Need the Majesty?*

*Omnipotence – had not a Tongue –*

*His lisp – is lightning – and the sun –*

*His Conversation– with Sea –*

*"How shall you know"?*

*Consult your eye! (Fascicle 120-8)*

**T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)**

Eliot's concept of Divinity is the result of diverse religious mysticisms. Besides the Christian mystic thought, he was also much influenced by Hindu and Buddhist mystical thoughts. In this connection Meena Kumari fairly observes, that, "In the *Waste Land* he brought together Buddha and the Roman Catholic theologian St. Augustine and found the resolution of the poem, conflict in the words of the thunder from the Upanishads" (04). His *Four Quarters* is believed to be the best piece that depicts the struggle to come out from the circle of time and yearning for the union with the Ultimate:

*And what you thought you came for*

*Is only a shell, a husk of meaning*

*From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled*

*If at all. Either you had no purpose*

*Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured*

*And is altered in fulfilment. (Little Gidding 6)*

**Robert Frost (1874-1963)**

Robert Frost is one of the most celebrated poets of New England, commonly known as a pastoral poet, Nature poet and poet with a mystical bent of mind. For instance, mystical experience can be found in one of his famous poems *Birches*. Here, he is longing for the otherworldly experience:

*I'd like to get away from earth awhile*

*And then come back to it and begin over.*

*May no fate willfully misunderstand me*

*And half grant what I wish and snatch me away*

*Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:*

*I don't know where it's likely to go better.*

*I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,*

*And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk*

*Towards heaven, till the tree could bear no more,*

*But dipped its top and set me down again.*

*That would be good both going and coming back.*

*One could do worse than be a swinger of birches (48-69).*

### **Mysticism in Indian Literature**

India is known as a land of mystics and a garden of bliss across the world. Its land is spiritually very fertile as it has produced great Saints, Sufis, Mystics and Scholars like, Adi Sanakaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya, Sri Vedanta Desika, Madhvacharya, Baba Farid, Amir Khusru, Kabir, Mira Bai, Bulleh Shah, Rama Krishna, Swamy Viveknanda, Iqbal, Tagore, Paramahansa Yogananda, Sri Aurobindo etc. To understand the Indian

poetic sensibility and its mystic treasure let me mention few among them who have rendered their spiritual experiences in the same.

**Baba Farid** (1173-1268)

Fariduddin Masud Ganja Shakar (treasure of sugar) commonly known as Baba Farid was a Sufi saint and most significant mystic poet of 12<sup>th</sup> century India. He rendered his poetry in Punjabi language and much of it has been included in the Holy Book of Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib:

*Farid, blessed are those*

*who dwell in the vast spaces of the woods*

*living on flowers and fruits*

*In serenity, in sublimity*

*they enjoy the company of the creator !*

(Trans in Gill 20)

**Lalla Ded** (1320-1392)

Lalla Ded, a saint poetess belonged to that of land which is known as paradise of earth (Kashmir), and is situated in the extreme north of India, the uniqueness of her being is that she carries both, the philosophy of *Saivism* and Sufism. The present thesis dealing with her poetry and will be discussed in detail in the second chapter. The below verses indicates her spiritual stature:



*I trapped my breath in the bellows of my throat:*

*A lamp blazed up inside, showed me who I really was.*

*I crossed the darkness holding fast to that lamp,*

*Scattering its light-seeds around me as I went.*

(Trans. Hoskote 52)

**Kabir** (1498-1547)

Kabir was a fifteen century saint-poet of India. He sang the songs of Divine love and was a seeker of Union with the One. Mehrota writes about Kabir's connection with the bakhti movement, "Kabir belonged to the popular devotional movement called bhakti, whose focus is on inward love for the one diety, in opposition to religious orthodoxies and social hierarchies" (466). Kabir has attained the nothingness where he sings:

*I'm Hindu*

*And I'm Muslim*

*I'm fish*

*And I'm net*

*I'm fisherman*

*And I'm nothing*

*Says Kabir*

*I'm not among the living*

*Or the dead*

(qtd. in Mehrota 13)

**Mira Bai** (1498-1547)

Mira Bai was a fifteenth century Hindu mystic poetess, who is celebrated for her devotional songs to lord Krishna. Her love songs characterize the typical example of bhakti movement of medieval Indian tradition:

*I danced before my Giridhara.*

*Again and again I dance*

*To please that discerning critic,*

*And put His former love to the test.*

*I put on the anklets*

*Of the love of Shyam,*

*And behold! My Mohan stays true.*

*Worldly shame and family custom*

*I have cast to the winds.*

*I do not forget the beauty of the Beloved*

*Even for an instant.*

*Mira is dyed deeply in the dye of Hari*

(qtd. in Alston 39)

**Bulleh Shah (1680-1757)**

Bulleh Shah was a Sufi poet belonged to the eighteenth century Punjab, India. He is often described as Rumi of the Punjab. Since the study is dealing with Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah's poetry, therefore, he will be discussed in the coming chapters. Like other Sufis, he found God in and out:

*When I searched you In, found you imprisoned there,*

*When I searched you out, I found no one in me.*

*Everything is you, everything is in you*

*I am you, you are me, O! Bulleh who objects?*

(Trans. Duggal 92)

**Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950)**

Sri Aurobindo was a great sage, mystic and a philosopher of modern India. He has reinforced the sphere of mystical poetry with his poetry, which are nothing but his spiritual experiences. Suneeta writes that, "As a poet he is endowed with a poetic

consciousness that is unobtrusively committed to achieve social amelioration and spiritual consciousness” (93).

*I would hear in my spirit's wideness solitary*

*The voice that speaks when mortal lips are mute:*

*I seek the wonder of things absolute*

*Born from the silence of Eternity (Last Poems 13).*

**Sarojini Naidu** (1879-1949)

Sarojini Naidu is known as a nightingale of India as her poetry is having bird like quality. Her poetry depicts not only Hindu and Sufi mystic thought but the romantic aspect also. Regarding her unique yearning for the Eternal, Rajyalakshmi states that, “She is goaded by a hunger for the eternal, the unknown and the infinite and seeks, poetically rather than metaphysically, to relate herself to the universe” (10). In, “In Salutation to the Eternal Peace”, she sings:

*Say, shall I heed dull presages of doom,*

*Or dread the rumoured loneliness and gloom,*

*The mute and mystic terror of the tomb?*

*For my glad heart is drunk and drenched with Thee,*

*O inmost wine of living ecstasy!*

*O intimate essence of eternity!* (13-18).

**Rabindranath Tagore** (1861-1941)

Tagore's writing has constructed two dominant features, one of mysticism and the other of romantic subjectivity. In him there is a power and wisdom to represent the whole culture of India. His small collection of 103 poems, *Gitanjali* or *Song Offerings* is a master piece and a sea of mystical experience. He desired his ascent to the absolute reality and wants to merge into it. In poem 65 of *Geetanjali*, he sings:

*...is it thy delight to see thy creation*

*Through my eyes and to stand at the portals*

*Of my ears silently to listen to thine own eternal harmony?*

*Thy world is weaving words in my mind*

*and thy joy is adding music to them. Thou*

*givest thyself to me in love and then feelest*

*thine own entire sweetness in me* (1-7).

From the above detailed discussion and the examination of various aspects of mysticism, its development and manifestations in literature, leads one to the conclusion that the essential characteristics of mysticism are akin in all literatures. Further, we have seen its roots in all religions, philosophy and literature. The study now proceeds to determine to what extent the two poets; Lall ded and Bulleh Shah are akin or different in terms of their mystical journeys, approaches and God Consciousness.

The following chapters will be devoted to the Saivistic/Sufi thought of Kashmir and India and will also do critical examination of the lives and verses of Lall Ded and Bulleh Shah. Further, in the following chapters, the aim of the researcher will be to explore the sense of Consciousness /Divinity as envisioned in physical paradigms expressed by Lalla and Bulleh.

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## Chapter 2

### Lalla Ded: Paragon of Mysticism and Kashmiri Culture

The Valley of Kashmir is believed to be the seat of learning and having its glorious history and civilization. Tyndale Biscoe rightly observed that, “Kashmir fortunately possesses an ancient history and a civilization more ancient than our own” (67). About the grandeur of Kashmiri culture and learning, N.K. Singh argues “Kashmir was a seat of culture and intellectual activity (Sharda Peetha) and attracted scholars from different parts of the world.” (6) The Valley of Kashmir seems divinely blessed because of its incredible beauty — its lush and rolling landscape, snow-capped hills and mountains, undulating glaciers, lakes with emerald green water, forests with green firs and pine trees, beautiful brooks creating music, willow-groves and the majestic *Chinar* trees, one and all seem to have something to do with giving human consciousness an expansive mystical dimension. Regarding the emergence of mystic consciousness in such a beautiful landscape B.N. Parimoo writes: “The Valley of Kashmir has been endowed with Nature’s abundance and it is no wonder that we have had the benefit of a long line of saints, sages and seers cradled by benign Nature in her fertile lap”(xi).

The soil of Kashmir is very fertile as it has produced great scholars and saints like, Abhinavagupta, the great king of 10<sup>th</sup> century Kashmir, rare mystic scholar and a logician of Sanskrit period. He was also well equipped in philosophy, aesthetics and poetry. He wrote *Tantraloka* for which he has been acclaimed all over the world. In the field of aesthetics, he produced works like *Abhinavabharti* and *Locana*. About the glorious Sanskrit period of Kashmir, Grierson writes:

Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy. Kashmiris are proud and justly proud of the literary glories of their land. For centuries it (Kashmir) was the home of the greatest Sanskrit Scholars and at least one great Indian religion, Saivism, has found some of its most eloquent teachers on the banks of the Vitasta. Some of the greatest Sanskrit poets were born and wrote in the valley, and from it has issued in the Sanskrit language a world -famous collections of folk-lore (21).

The world famous Kashmiri historian, Kalhana, produced *Rajatarangni*, the oldest historical document in the Indian history. In this connection Bamzai states, “Kalhana’s *Rajatarangni* occupies a unique position as the only work on history in Sanskrit with scientific approach of modern historians” (Bamzai 259).

During the Buddhist period, great mystic scholars emerged in the Valley like, Smirtyakara Siddha, one among the eight scholars of great Buddhist Vihara. Dharmattaracharya, Buddhist Logician and scholar of the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D., produced works on logic and composed two commentaries on the works of *Darmakriti*. One of the main schools of Buddhism, the *Sarvastivas School* not only flourished in the Valley but later turned into the principal seat where its mystical doctrine was taught and practiced and developed into a full-fledged system known as *Vaibhaskas*. The emergence of *Vaibhaskas Sastras* in the Valley clearly indicates that Kashmir was an academic centre luring scholars and divine seekers from distant lands.



With the advent of Islam, Sufism saw its day light on the Kashmiri soil. With the result new composite culture emerged in the Valley. The representatives of this new culture were Lalla Ded, great *Shaivite* mystic poetess and Sheikh Nur Din, great saint, known as *Alamdar-i-Kashmir* (torchbearer of Kashmir) and founder of the Muslim *Reshi* order in the Valley. During this period, personalities emerged like, Tahir Ghani, great Sufi and poet of Persian language, Habba Khatoon, the then 16<sup>th</sup> century queen of Kashmir and mystic poetess, commonly known as Nightingale of Kashmir, Habeeb-ullah-Nowsheri, early 17<sup>th</sup> century mystic poet, known as Hubi. Thereafter, a galaxy of Sufis, saints and seers appeared on the scene, the prominent among them were, Shamas Faqir, Ahmad Batwarai, Rahim Sopori, Soch Kral, Krishanajoo Razdan, Parmanada, Wahab Khaar, Waza Mehmood, Prakash Ram etc. It is necessary to mention here that one of the most significant developments in the field of spiritual learning was the establishment of a school for spiritual learning at Srinagar near *Zabarwan* mountain range. This school has been established by the then Mughal prince, Dara Shikoh. About its establishment Sufi says:

Prince Dara Shikoh will be remembered for having established the residential School of Sufism (for kasmah) at the instance of his spiritual tutor Akhund Mulla Muhammad Shah Badakhshani on a spur of the Zebarwan Mountain higher up the Chashma-I Shahi. The building is in now in ruins and is called Pari Mahal (the Fairies Palace) (184).

The mystical verses left by these poets became the rich legacy for Kashmiri culture. In fact, this mystical poetry moulds the thought and behavior of the masses of Kashmir. The influence and the charm of mystical verses on the common Kashmiri mind is immense. B.N. Parimoo also acknowledged the same in this way:

The socio-cultural heritage of Kashmir bears a clear imprint of this branch of literature, and its strong impact can be gauged by the fact that much of the pithy, mystical verse of Lalla-Yogesvari, Shiekh Noor-uddin (Vali), Krishan Razdan, Parmananda, Wahab Khar, Shamas Faqir and others has been committed to memory and is sung with gusto by all — Hindu, Muslim and Sikh alike (xii).

Attempting an evaluation of the poetry of Lalla Ded is a herculean task even for a student of humanities. She is “a women of extraordinary creative genius, visionary, and profound mystic of the fourteenth century Kashmir, is rightly considered the founder of Kashmiri poetry,” declares Shafi Shauq (7). Her esoteric genius and the great vault of mystical Consciousness alone make her peerless:

Besides being a peerless poet, Lalla Dayd commands great respect among all the communities of the Kashmiri people for being a saint and teacher in the realm of spiritual yearnings; the appellation Dayd, meaning a grandmother, to her name abundantly reveals people’s reverence for her (Shauq 07).

The present chapter endeavors to trace the mystical development of Lalla Ded. Further, it also attempts to evaluate how far her poetry can be designated as mystical and synonyms

of Kashmiri culture. In addition, it also attempts to look into the sectarian dispute about her personality. It will also look into the salient characteristics of mystical consciousness in her poetry.

### **Introduction to the poetess**

Lalla Ded, uttered her poetry when Chaucer was writing in England. Her poetry is mainly in quatrains, known as *Vakhs*. In this regard Hoskote argues, “the word *Vakh*, applicable both as singular and plural, is cognate with the Sanskrit *Vac*, ‘speech’, and *Vakya*, ‘sentence’” (xi). There are 258 *Vakhs* attributed to the poetess and few of them have uncertain authorship as they are also simultaneously attributed to Nund Reshi, her immediate contemporary.

She is called by different names: Lalla Arifa or Rabia of Kashmir by Muslims and Lallesvari or Lalla Yogini by Hindus, however Lalla Ded is her most distinguishable non-sectarian designation. There is not sufficient information about her life. However, all quarters of scholarship agreed that she was contemporary of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani (Ra) and Nund Reshi. In this respect George Grierson argues in his book, *Lalla Vakyani*:

All traditions agree that she was a contemporary of Sayyid Ali Hamdani, the famous saint who exercised a great influence in converting Kashmir to Islam. He arrived in Kashmir in A.D. 1380 and remained there six years, the reigning sovereign being Qutbu'd-Din (A.D. 1377-93) (01).

Astonishingly, the then contemporary historians of Lalla Ded, did not give her space in their chronicles. Jonaraja, historian and a Sanskrit poet of 15<sup>th</sup> century Kashmir, added

the events to Kalhana's *Raj Tarangni* up to 1457 A.D. but quite strangely, there is not a single reference to the poetess. Other historians, like Shiri Dhar, Shrivara and Yodh Bhat too have not mentioned her anywhere. The question arises why Lalla is not mentioned in the then Hindu Chronicles? However, there are different narratives about the same. One narrative asserts that she openly rejected the Brahman ideology of Caste system, animal sacrifice, Brahmanic structure etc. This aspect can be traced from her *Vakhs* as well, for instance in one of her *Vakhs* she says:

*(Peryith ti buuziyith Brahman tshyaTan*

*Aagur khaTan tyihandyi vyiedi siity*

*paTnich san nyith thavan maTan*

*muhyith man gatshyakh ahankeery)*

(Transliteration Shauq 118)

*Reading and hearing makes the Brahmins unchaste,*

*Their sayings conceal the Original truth;*

*The stolen pelf taken from Pattan, they hide at Mattan,*

*The swindle fills their mind with pride.*

(Trans.Shauq119)

Jayalal Kaul is of the opinion that, “[she spoke] of the doctrine in the vulgar tongue of the Unlettered masses,” (03). This could be one of the reasons that her name is not found in the Hindu chronicles. Moreover, her rebellious nature might have been considered a threat by the then custodians of Temple. In this connection Zaffer observed:

To neutralize the impact of this rebellion declared her to be mad and insane and it is because of these circumstances that we don't find her mention in any of the historical accounts written in Sanskrit during and after her times (80).

However, she was first time mentioned by Noor-ud-Din in one of his *Shrukhs* (sayings) attributed to her:

*(Tas padmaan pooryichyi Laley*

*Tamyi galey galey amryath chyovov*

*Swa seeny avatar lwaley*

*Tyith mya var dyitoo dyivovo)*

*Lalla, who was born at Padmanpur,*

*Quaffed elixir to her satiation;*

*She was a woman-siant with God in her bosom,*

*O God bless me too as You did her.*

(Transliteration and Trans. by Shauq, qtd in Temple II)

It is the beauty of her poetry and personality that she is loved by all communities. It would not be wrong to say that the beauty of the Divine Consciousness that her poetry carries made her able to survive even in the Oral tradition from generation to generation till her *Vakhs* were recorded, first in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Persian treatises and then in the English treatises of early 20<sup>th</sup> century British colonial rule. S. Bhatt writes in one of his papers on Lalla Ded that, “[by] sheer force of her sayings (*Vaakhs*), Lall Ded has survived in history” (25).

The first reference of Lalla Ded is found in the Persian document, *Tazkiratul Aarifeen* (1587) written by Baba Ali Raina. In this book she is attributed as, “Lalla moaj, Makaane Raabia Saani, (Mother Lalla, Rabia reborn)” (qtd in Shauq 8). Naseeb-ud-Din Ghazi, early 17<sup>th</sup> century writer also mentioned her and compared her with the sister of Mansoor al Hallaj of the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, a great Sufi from Persia, who proclaimed *Anal Haq* (I am the Truth or God). “In Pampore there lived a woman saint poet who engrossed in God’s love, renounced the world and, like Mansoor Hallajs’s sister, roamed about in forests and wilderness in search of Truth...” (qtd in Shauq 8). Thereafter, she is found in many Persian treatises like, *Asrar-ul-Abrar* (1654) written by Baba Dawood Khaki. This treatise reveals that, it was during the reign of Shab-u-Din (1344-55 A.D), Lalla broke off from her family and start wandering from place to place. By and large, after 17<sup>th</sup> century all the other chronicles repeat the same narratives. The first entry of Lalla Ded into the western world happened when the English translation of her *Vakhs* came into print in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century though under the colonial project.

Sir George Grierson, narrates in his book *Lalla Vakhyani* (1920), how he managed to collect the poems of Lalla from oral sources and compare them with the

manuscripts laid in the Oxford Indian Institute. He asked one of his colleagues, Mukunda Rama Sastri to bring him a copy of Lalla's poems (4). Mukunda left no stone unturned to find the one but he could not, then he was able to locate a story teller, Dharma-dasa Darwesh, who could recites 109 *Vakhs* from memory and Sastri wrote them along with commentaries partly in Sanskrit and partly in Hindi (5). After preparing the manuscript he sent it to Grierson. To check the validity and authenticity of the manuscript, Grierson compared it with the two Kashmiri Manuscripts, composed in the *Sarda* script, and belonged to the Stein collection in the Oxford Indian Institute. The first manuscript called 'Stein A' contains 43 *Vakhs* along with Sanskrit translation done by Rajanaka Bhaskara. The second manuscript or 'Stein B' contains 49 *Vakhs* (6). Further, Grierson consulted the *Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings* (1885), compiled by Rev. J. Hilton Knowles, the then Christian missionary working in the Valley. Finally, Grierson was able to publish the first English translation of Lalla's poetry, titled *Lalla Vakhyani*, or *The Wise Sayings of Lal Ded, A Mystic Poetess of Kashmir* (1920). Thereafter, a number of English translations followed for instance; *Sayings of Lalleshwari* (1921-1933) by Pandit Anand Koul, *The Word of Lalla* (1924) by Sir Richard Carnac Temple, *Lal Ded* (1973) by Jayalal Kaul, *The Ascent of Self, A Reinterpretation of the Mystical Poetry of Lalla-Ded* (1978) by B.N. Parimoo, *Naked Song* (1992) by Colmen Barks, *I, Lalla: The Poems of Lal Ded* (2011) by Ranjit Hoskote, *Lal-Ded Revisited* (2015) by Jawahar Lal Bhat and recently *Lalla Dyad, the Mystic Kashmiri Poetess* (2015) by Shafi Shauq. Besides the Persian and English translations, she also made a quite enough space into the Kashmiri and Urdu languages. For instance; In Urdu, *Lalla Vakya* (1959) by Gopi Nath Raina, *Lal*

*Ded* (1961) by J.L.Kaul and N.L.Koul Talib, and in Kashmiri, *Lall Ded MyaniNazri Manz* (2006) by Bimla Raina etc.

After the exodus of Kashmir Pandits during nineties of the twentieth century, a new phase of interest emerged in Lall Ded. These Kashmiri Pandits preserved their tradition and being settled all over India and some of them migrated to Western countries, engaged themselves in producing narratives about Kashmiri culture in general and Lalla Ded in particular. With the result, Lalla Ded is extensively considered an integral part of the Kashmiri Identity. Moreover, in this present modern technological world, internet intensifies Lalla Ded's continuing appositeness. Young popular minds are extensively attracted towards Lalla Ded and with the result a new kind of interest in mysticism is developing in them.

As stated above there is not a constructed biography of Lalla Ded in the traditional sense. Scholars have constructed her life sketch partly from her *Vakhs* and partly from the Persian sources, written during 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Accordingly, her date of birth and place or date and place of her death are also hazy. Modern Scholar of Lall Ded, Ranjit Hoskote, writes that, "Sifting through the evidences of the legends and the chronicles, modern scholars have suggested that she was born in 1301 or between 1317 and 1320, either in Sempore near Pampore or in Pandrethan near Srinagar" (xvi). All the scholars agree that she might have died at the age of 70 or 80 but no one knows where; moreover, a grave at Bijbehara is ascribed to her, but it is not certain whether she laid there or someone else. Born in a well read and strictly religious Brahman family, some scholars believed that she was named Padmavati. According to Shauq, "She was named *Vaag* (..Goddess of Speech)" (11), but he did not provide any source of



information about the same. However, she is commonly known by the name of Lalla Ded by all communities of the Valley. The Name 'Lalla' is also recurrent in her poetry as she often addressed herself with this name. Some of the scholars held the view that she was roaming in a semi-nude condition. Further, *Lal* means the lower abdomen and her lower abdomen enlarged in a way which covered her private part and it is because of this she is called Lalla Ded. The word *Ded* in Kashmiri is used for grandmother as stated earlier. Shauq rejects the above view, he writes:

The legend says that Lalla Dyad roamed about naked; she was called Lalla because her protruding belly (*lwal*) covered her. The legend, though quite interesting is not acceptable as she herself preaches about wearing adequate clothes: *yavi tiir tsalyi tyim amber hyata* (Wear such clothes as save you from the chill). Her line '*taway hyotum nangay natsun*' (that is why I started roaming naked) is a metaphor for rejecting the veils between the enlighten soul and the Truth; the metaphor of hating '*hyijaab*' is common to all mystic poets (163).

Another connotation of the word *Lal* is that it has two meanings in Kashmiri one is 'pearl' and another is pupil of eye. Usually in Kashmir, it is a sign of love and is attributed to dear ones. In the valley, it is still prevalent that children and elders call their father *Lala*. It is also significant among the women folk and children as their names are often suffixed with this title, for instance: Gashi lala, Rozi lala, Tota lala, Shada lala, Suman lala etc. Perhaps, Lalla Ded (Darling Granny) might be called by this name out of love and which she retains throughout her life.

Regarding the domestic life of Lalla Ded, legends conform that it was a troubled one. She was married at the age of thirteen years. By and large, her in-laws were unable to comprehend her spiritual quest and were looked at her with the suspicious eyes. According to the legend, her husband was not good to her; even her mother-in-law ill-treated her and nearly starved her. Moreover, her mother-in-law used to place a stone in her eating bowl, covered with little rice so that it seems full. Hoskote observes, “From this period in Lalla’s life comes the well known Kashmiri saying attributed to the future mystic: ‘whether they kill a ram or a sheep, Lalla will get a stone to eat’” (xvii). At the age of twenty three she broke off from her family and went to the then *Saiva* saint, Siddha Srikantha, who eventually became her mentor or Guru. About Lalla’s renunciation of married life, Hoskote argues that, “to renounce the state of marriage, to wander, gathering spiritual experience: this was not an easy choice for a Brahman woman to make in the Kashmir of the fourteenth century” (xvii). For this she had to bear the insults and curses from different quarters of the then 14<sup>th</sup> century Kashmiri society. In one her *Vakhs* she says:

*(osa bol parinem sasa*

*me mani wasa khid na heye*

*boh yed sahaza Shekara-buktsu asa*

*makaris sasa mal kyah peye)*

(Transliteration Grierson 42)

*Let them hurl a thousand curses at me,*

*Pain finds no purchase in my heart.*

*I belong to Shiva, can a scatter of ashes*

*Ruin a mirror? It gleams.*

(Trans. Hoskote 93)

As stated above, the *Saivist* saints who exist before Lalla Ded were scholars of great repute; however, none has renounced the family or society. It may be possible that the precursors of Lalla Ded might have renounced the society but we don't have any records or evidence about the same. In that scenario, Lalla's case was exceptional and that too of a woman of 14<sup>th</sup> century Kashmir. According to Hoskote, the reason behind her renunciation is that she was, "more closely and rigidly governed by domestic duties and expectations than a man's, she could not lead a life of spiritual aspiration at home— and so, was forced to leave it" (xix). However, it does not sound true as there is a category of mystics who choose or commanded by their Gurus to wander from place to place for certain period of time in order to gain some mystical purposes. Another category also exists, who remained engaged in the worldly affairs while being consistent on the mystic path.

The cognitive sagacity, aesthetic nature and the harmonious fusion of diverse faiths carried by the poetry of Lalla Ded indicates that she was highly equipped with the *Saivistic* philosophy of Kashmir. It has been also acknowledged by the various scholars of Lalla Ded that her father has sent her to learn Sanskrit and *Trika* philosophy under the guidance of their family mentor or Guru, Sidha Kantha. In this connection, B.N. Parimoo

writes that, “Aside of learning Sanskrit, Lalla, a born yogesvari, may have pursued study of the Hindu scriptures under the able guidance of her father and the family Guru” (6). In fact, it was the tradition of the then Kashmiri educated families that the texts of classical scholars like, Utpaldeva, Abinavagupta, Vasugupta etc, were taught in their houses with zeal and zest. About this domestic academic culture, Shauq observes that the “the classics of these scholars were taught as texts in all Kashmiri Pandit families as the most significant aspect of *kula-parampara aacarakarma* (family tradition)” (16). It is necessary to mention here that, *Saivism* is itself the fusion of various philosophical mores and Lalla appropriately rendered the ideas and metaphors of these traditions in her *Vakhs*. In fact, she consumed the diverse traditions in a way that suits her esoteric quest, be it the triadic nature of Kashmiri *Savaisim* (*Triambika, spanda, and pratyibhijnya*), Buddhism or the Sufi thought. Hoskote views her, “as a figure whose ideas straddled the domains of Kashmir Saivism, Tantra, Yoga and Yogacara Buddhism, and who appears to have been socially acquainted with the ideas and practices of the Sufis. It is this collective aspect of Lalla’s poetry that commands respect and love from all the communities. In effect, she acts as a bridge between Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufism and collectively marks the new beginning of Kashmiri tradition (*Kashmiriyat*) and for which the Valley is known all over the world. Despite being well versed in Sanskrit and *Saivism*, Lalla used common Kashmiri language as a protest against the then elite Academia and strongly denied the ritualistic ideas of *Saivistic* philosophy. This aspect will be discussed later.

### **Age of Lalla Ded**

The age of Lalla Ded was the age of transition. The major and significant event in the history of Kashmir during the 14<sup>th</sup> century was the advent of Islam. Sayed Sharaf-u-Din

Abdul Rehman, a Sufi saint, commonly known as Bulbul Shah was responsible for the initial propagation of Islam in Kashmir. He was a Sufi saint from Persian lands, who came to Kashmir in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Regarding the advent of Bulbul Shah to Kashmir, Fida Hassnain, a prominent historian, writes:

The advent of Hazrat Bulbul Shah Qalandar a Sufi saint is a turning point in the history of Kashmir. It was at his hands that the last Buddhist king of Kashmir, Rinchana, became a Muslim along with his family members, Ladakhi retainers and nobles and the Buddhists. Hazrat Bulbul Shah Qalandar is one of the most celebrated Sufi saints of Kashmir, who ushered a religious revolution in Kashmir, by conquering the heart of the ruler as well as his subjects (10).

During the first four decades of 14<sup>th</sup> century, Kashmir witnessed both internal as well as external political turbulences. About the age of Lalla, Shauq states that, “it was a period rife with turmoil, upheavals, sudden transformations, and above all, momentous confluence of great faiths and ideas” (13). On the one hand, the constant court conspiracies, intrigues and the covetousness for power weakened the socio-political fabric of the country. On the other hand, Zalchu; Tatar war-lord attacked the country in 1305 and the then Hindu king Sahadeva escaped from the scene and left country on the mercy of God. Moreover, the attack was the turning point in the history of Kashmir as it marked the end of Hindu rule in Kashmir. The down fall of Sahadeva created a political vacuum, and in the midst, Rinchana stepped in, a prince from Ladakh who had taken refuge in the court of Sahadeva for some time. Rinchana, with his wisdom and valour, saved the country from foreign aggression and eventually married Kota Rani, the then

queen and the daughter of Ramachandra, prime minister in the court of Sahadeva. Rinchana embraced the Islam in 1324 and assumed the new name Sultan Sadr-u-Din and had son from Kota Rani namely Hyder. Thereafter, Sultan Sadr-u-Din (Rinchana) was killed by Sahadeva's brother, Udyandeva and managed to marry the widowed queen, left by Sadr-u-Din. Soon after ascending the throne, another aggression was brought in led by Achala, another warrior, and like his brother, Udyandeva too flew from the scene. This time Shahmir, an aristocrat from Iran and a trusted statesman in the court of Sahadeva rescued the country with great valour and statesmanship. Meanwhile, Shahmir expanded his influence and succeeded to be in the good books of the courtiers and the masses. As Kota Rani was busy coupling up with the uprising in the northwest of the valley, Shahmir declared himself the king of Kashmir under the title Sultan Shamas-u-Din. Although, Shahmir faced little resistance on the part of faithful companions (*Lone* dynasty) of Kota Rani, but against his might and wisdom they could not stand. Kota Rani had no other option left but to yield and accept the proposal to be the queen of Shahmir. It is believed that after the first conjugal night, Rani was announced dead and thereafter, Shahmir remained the king of Kashmir till his death in 1346. Later his dynasty came to be known as *Shah Miri* dynasty that ruled Kashmir for nearly two centuries. The rule of his son, Ala-u-Din and grandson, Shahab-u-Din is believed to be good in terms of peace and prosperity of the country.

The other important characteristics of Lall's age were superstitious beliefs, caste system, and exploitation of masses in the hands of pseudo clerics. Shauq writes that, "Lalla lived in a society in which superstition was widespread as it sheltered exploitation and injustice" (15). She registered her strong protest through her poetry against all the

repressive structures erected by the then Hindu Pandits that were the means to suffocate and curb the human dignity, honour and liberty. The language she used for satire was direct, lucid and subversive. Munshi asserts that, “More than the style, it was the content that was wholly revolutionary” (111). According to Zaffar, “She challenged the validity of all the socio-political and religious structures, and was deadly against maintaining the status quo, thus she was perceived as a threat to the established social order” (81). Some scholars held the view that her peculiar rebellion nature against the then clergy and hierarchical doctrine of Brahmanism might be one of the main factors that leads her exclusion from the Hindu chronicles. While recognizing the absurdities of social system of the then Kashmir, she not only limn anti-human beliefs of Brahmanistic culture in their various aspects, but also supplies the trod to the masses that leads to the ultimate reality. By opposing fervently the ritual of the times, she reprimands the temple clerics for indulging in animal sacrifices, she says:

*(lazz kaasyiy shyiitt nyivaaryiy*

*tran zal karyiy aahaar*

*yi kemy vwapde-sh koruy baTaa*

*atsyiitan vaTas satsyiitan dyun aahaar)*

(Transliteration Shauq 70)

*It covers your shame,*

*Saves you from cold,*

*Its food and drink, mere water and grass*

*Who counseled you, O Brahmin,*

*To slaughter a living sheep as sacrifice*

*Unto a lifeless stone?*

(Trans. Zaffar 82)

Further, she advised the clerics that right action does not lie in fasting and other rituals, but in self comprehension:

*O fool, right action does not lie*

*In fasting and other ceremonial rites*

*O fool right action does not lie*

*In providing for bodily comfort or ease*

*In contemplation of the self alone is right action and right council for you*

(Trans. Zaffar 82)

As stated above, by using the language of streets, she rejects the then elite Sanskrit academia. In this regard, Zaffar observes:

On the one hand, Lala gave a new lease of life to Kashmiri *Saivistic* spiritual tradition but on the other hand, she demystified Saivism by articulating its tenets in the language of common people and deconstructed



its ideology of being a Rahasya Sampradya (a secret sect) by making all the Upayas (means of realization) available to all those interested in the realization of their true identity, thus making it available and effective tool not only for individual emancipation but also for social unification (82-83).

### **Bhakti Movement and Lall Ded**

Some scholars at times treat Lalla Ded in connection to that of Bhakti movement that emerged in the southern parts of India somewhere near 7th century and spread across the eastern and northern states during 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Initially, Bhakti movement or devotional movement was a reaction against the proselytization of Islam as caste stricken people were thronged to this new faith. Further, the movement also exhibited the reaction against the then customs prevailing in medieval India like, untouchability, Caste system, Sati etc. with the result, the movement placate the lower cast people. Bhakti Movement, according to Manager Pandey, “is a pervasive cultural movement which appeared in various forms of cultural expression including religion, philosophy, language, art and literature”(129). The movement inserted a revolutionary idea that a direct and tender communion between the devotee and the God would be possible without the interference of the clerics and rituals. In this way, it opened the gates for masses towards the Divine and offering the scope for the lower caste people for articulation in the Brahmanical dominated society. The Saints, who are associated and propagated the Bhakti Movement in south, were, Ramanuja, Madhavacharya, Vallabhacharya etc, and in north, we had Kabir, Guru Nanak, Ramananda, etc. To associate Lalla Ded with Bhakti Movement is a theoretical assumption on the part of those scholars who held a view that Lalla Ded is a

forerunner of Bhakti Movement. The peculiar aspect of Bhakti Movement was the emergence of female saints like, Akka Mahadevi, Mera Bai, Bahina etc, who deconstructed the Brahmanic patriarchal structures and indeed Lalla did the same. Moreover, the spirituality preached by Lalla Ded certainly bears some resemblance to the spirituality preached by Bhakti cult, like rejection of rituals, rejection of elite language and usage of common language for their utterances (poetry). According to Hindu doctrine, there are three main approaches that lead to the Divine; *Karma-marga*, a strict adherence to caste regulations and ritual duties leads to a happier and peaceful life in the next incarnation; *Bhakti-marga*, an approach to salvation through self-dissolving devotion to some deity; and the third one is *Jnana-marga*, an approach to salvation by self awareness often under the guidance of a Guru. Lalla Ded has adopted the *Jnana-marga* as she strictly followed her Guru. Bhakti saints used to live and work in groups but Lalla reached to the masses all alone as indicated by the chronicles and the legends woven around her. Further, there are scholars who rejected the notion that Lalla was a forerunner of Bhakti Movement like, Hoskote, according to him; to historicize Lalla Ded in relation to Bhakti Movement is “an error of ahistorical thinking.... Lalla’s perspective, like the Kashmir Saiva perspective more generally, premised far more substantially on *Jnana-marga* than on *bhakti-marga*.” (xxvii-xxviii). It is worth mentioning that Bhakti saints were associated with certain temples and for this aspect, it is also known as temple movement, “devotion to Visnu or Siva was reduced into devotion to the deity consecrated in a particular temple. The bhakti movement went a long way, thus, in popularising the temple” (Veluthat 1993: 25). The rejection of the concept of temple by Lalla Ded also indicates that she hardly had any affiliation with the Bhakti movement, she says:

*(Dev wata diwor wata*

*Petha bona chuy yeka watha*

*Puzai kas karakh, hota Bata!*

*Kar manas ta pawns sangath)*

(Transliteration Grierson 41)

*God is stone, the temple is stone,*

*Head to foot, all stone.*

*Hey priest-man, what's the object of your worship?*

*Get your act together, join mind with life-breath.*

(Trans. Hoskote 60)

### **Dispute on Lalla's Religious Identity**

As discussed above, the first account of Lalla Ded originated during the 16<sup>th</sup> century from the Persian texts, then from British colonialists, at the end of the second decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century, supplying a form of scholarly validity to her being and designates her value for further research. After the emanation of English texts, immediately other narratives emerged from the Kashmiri Hindu quarters claiming Lalla as one of their own, reaffirming her relations with the Kashmiri *Saivistic* tradition. Likewise, texts emerged from Kashmiri Muslim quarters declaring her connections with various Sufi personalities which strengthen her Muslim identity. This sectarian polarization between Muslim and

Hindu scholars gained pace during the past few decades. The Hindu school of thought, that claimed Lalla as their own, argues that the Persian and Arabic terminology rendering in the Lalla *Vakhs* is a later incorporation made by Muslims. In the same way, Muslim School of thought that claimed her lineage argues that Lalla was excluded early from Hindu religion as she openly criticizes the then Hindu customs and the Sanskrit Phrases were later entries into her *Vakhs* incorporated by Hindu Brahmins. By and large, the whole corpus of Kashmiri mystic poetry is full of Sanskrit Phrases as well as Sufi terminology. We can trace many Sanskrit phrases even in the Kashmiri Sufi poetry and likewise, there is fair enough usage of Sufi terminology in the Kashmiri Hindu mystic poetry. It is necessary to mention here that every language carries the culture of its particular area in which it is spoken. Mystics use language to supply a sense of Consciousness to the common men and use diverse religious terminologies for the same. In this way their usage of language itself carries fraternity and communal harmony. Moreover, Kashmiri language made a contact with Persian language early in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and naturally there were spontaneous incorporations of Persian words and phrases into the Kashmiri language. In this connection, the presence of Persian and Arabic words in the Lalla *Vakhs* is natural and understood. Hoskote rightly observed:

Such acts of translation would follow naturally in an environment where philosophies were in dialogue, and given that non-dualistic Saivism and Monist Sufism have certain specific points of convergence: *moksa* and *fana*, *jivatman* and *naphs*, are not very far apart (xxxvii).

Since the goal of mysticism is analogous all across the communities that is to attain communion with the Absolute or what we call God or Allah, therefore, to create a

dispute on the issue whether Lalla is a Muslim or Hindu seems absurd. The efforts of few modern scholars, like Shafi Shauq, Ranjit Hoskote etc are praiseworthy in saving Lalla Ded to some extent from the communal clutches. To Hoskote, Lalla “is not a Person who composed these *Vakhs*; rather, she is the person who emerged from these *Vakhs*.” (xxxvi). Further, she serves as an integrating force among the diverse communities of Kashmir that transcends the religious identity and binds people together irrespective of community, caste and creed. This significant aspect of Lalla Ded is evident from the love and respect she commanded from all the communities even after six hundred years. Moreover, true mystics are always above religion, to them the whole universe is a one family and are suppose to live together in peace and harmony. Further, both the Hindus and Muslims have embraced Lalla’s sayings and invoke their sacred gatherings by reciting her *Vakhs*, hence the Consciousness she carries appeals to people beyond the religion they belong to. This sectarian dispute will be further discussed later.

### **Kashmiri Saivism and Lalla Ded**

Saivism emerged in India as a strong and dynamic religion which perhaps laid more emphasis on spiritual aspect than the ritual one. But with the passage of time its spiritual purity remains encircled in the corners of mystic hearts and the masses are more attracted to its ritualistic aspects supported by Brahman clerics for their own ends. In India, the Saiva religion has three main forms: *Saiva-Siddhanta* that emerged during the 6<sup>th</sup> century in Tamilnadu, *Virasaivism* that is dualistic *Saivism* which emerged during the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and the Non-dualistic *Saivism* that emerged during the 8<sup>th</sup> century in Kashmir. By and large, Kashmiri *Saivistic* School is a blend of diverse monistic and Tantric religious traditions that emerged and developed between

8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries of the Christian era. It is also believed that Buddhism had exerted a fair influence on Monistic *Saivism*. In this regard Hoskote argues:

Non-dualistic Kashmiri Saivism emerged as a distinctive philosophy after intensive dialogue with the thousand-year tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, especially the sophisticated epistemology and psychology of its Yogacara school (also known as the Vijnanavada), which originated in Gandhara and Kashmir (xxxix-xl).

It is worth to mention here that Kashmiri Saivistic texts were written in Sanskrit language whereas *Siddhanta* texts were written in Tamil and *Virasaivism* texts were composed in Kannada. Unlike other schools of Saivism, non-dualistic school of Kashmiri *Saivism* does not subscribe the world as *Maya* (illusion). To this school, the whole universe is manifestation of the Divine. It is believed that, “Shiva, through Shakti creates a world that is not different from Himself” (Hoskote 2013: xl). Unlike other *Saivistic* traditions:

Kashmiri Saivism recognizes no restrictions of caste and creed and has no place for discrimination on this basis. In fact, this philosophy is meant for all those who have desire and yearning to attain true knowledge and liberation from the bondage of repeated births and deaths (Singh 127).

Further, the distinctive tradition of Kashmiri *Saivism* is commonly known as *Trika* system and Lalla Ded seems to be influenced by this triple principle of the same. In his book, *The Word of Lalla*, Richard Temple, critically describes the *Trika* philosophy that had been initially adopted by Lalla Ded:

The specialized Shaiva system she learned was a mixture of revelation and philosophy, popularly known as the Trika (triple), because it propounded a triple principle: *Shiva, Shakti, anu*; or *Pati, pasha, pashu*. The first of these categories of the Trika Philosophy contains highly technical terms describing the principles of the Shaiva philosophy of Kashmiris, which for the present may be explained as Shiva representing the One Reality, His creative power as an insuperable aspect of Himself, and His creature the limited individual Soul as a mere existence, a “non-spatial point”— “a point is that which hath no parts.” The second category indicates that the founders of the Trika were Pashupata Shaivas, because it refers to the doctrines and principles of that sect of the past, whereby the limited individual soul (*pashu, lit., cattle*) can be released from its bonds (*pasha*) only by Pashupati (Shiva as Lord of the Flock, *i.e.*, of limited individual Souls) (110).

About this triple nature of Kashmiri Saivism, Hoskote writes:

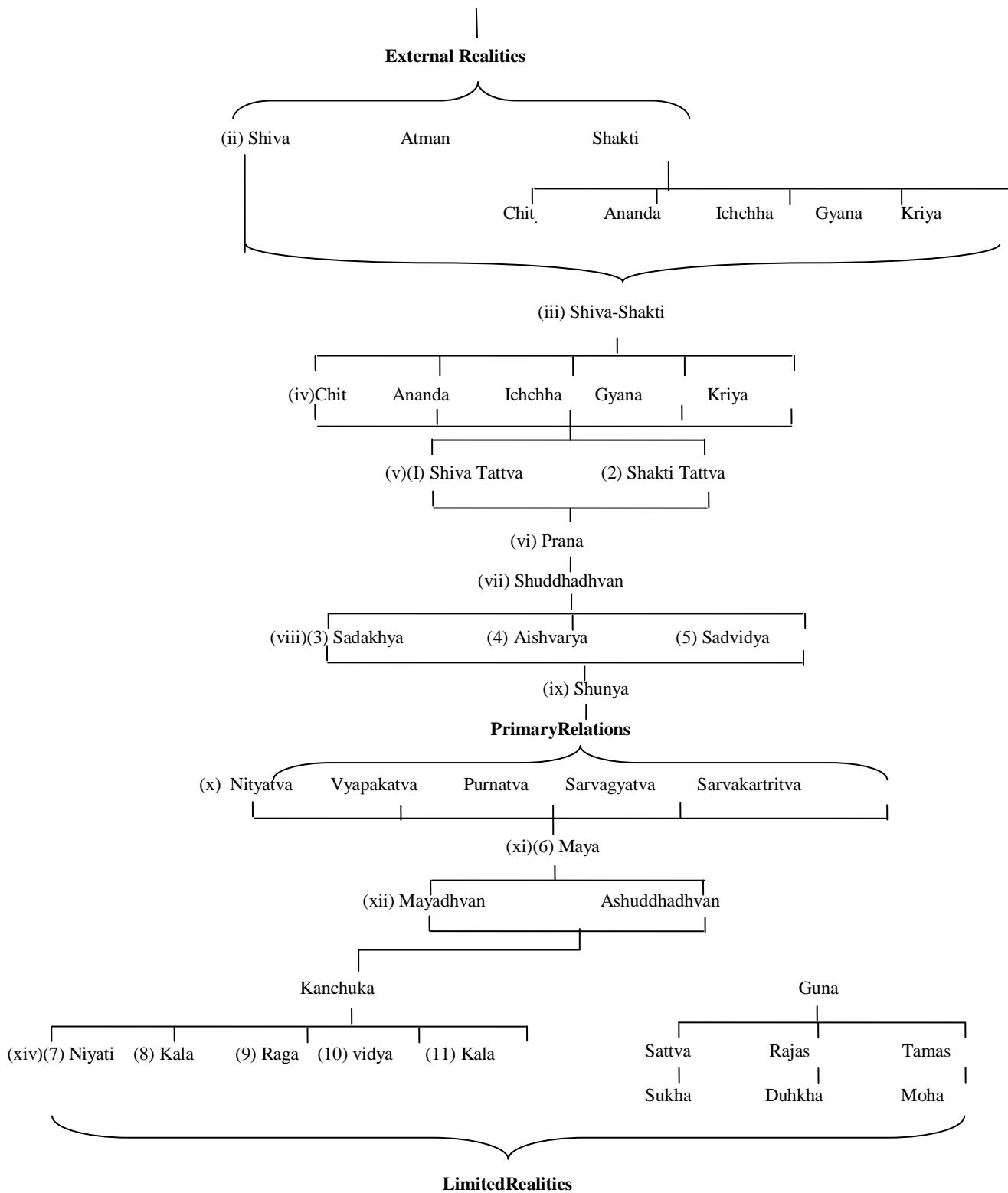
In the Kashmiri Saivite system, the Shiva-Principle has a triadic nature, devolving through the world as the three energies of Knowledge, will and action: respectively, *Janana-sakti, iccha-sakti* and *kriya-sakti*. Sustained by this triadic structure, the world is seen to replicate it at many levels; that is why Kashmiri Saivism is also known as *Trika*, the ‘path of the Triad’ (xl-xli).

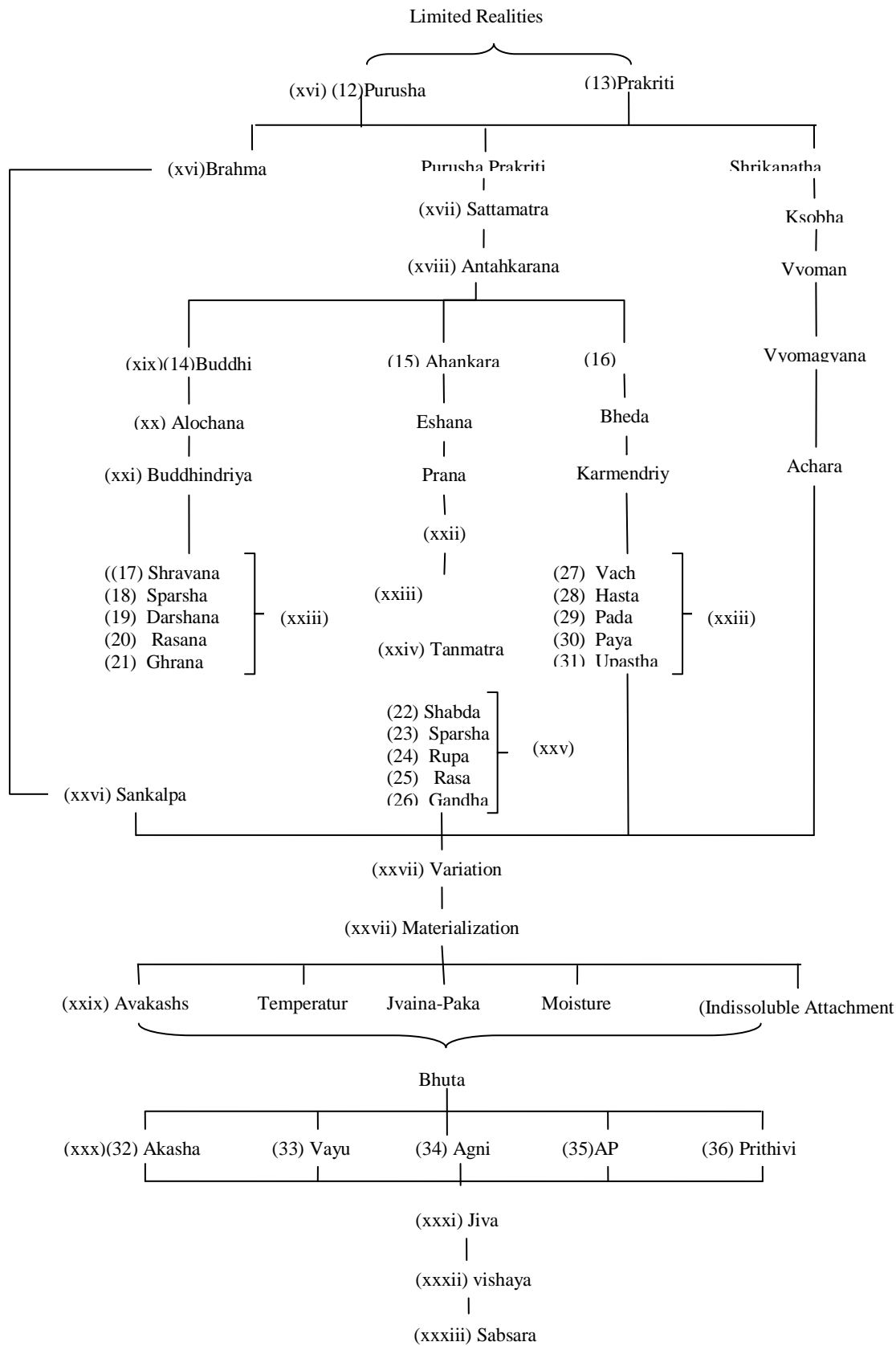
Generally, there are 36 stages of development in *Trika* system, but some believe that there are only 33 stages. The table below illustrates the same:

#### A TABLE OF THE TRIKA PHILSOSOPHY



**(i) PARAMA SHIVA**  
 (Also Parameshvara, Para Sanvid, chaitanya, Chit or Shiva)





However, Lalla Ded has dealt with the ritual free *Trika* system and this has been observed by many scholars for instance, Zaffar, in one of his papers on Lalla Ded writes:

With the passage of time there was a schism in the Saivistic *Trikamata*. On the one hand, we have the branch that maintains the rituals, although not much of the traditional rituals detailed by Abhinava Gupta have survived the ravages of the time. On the other hand, we have the ritual free *Trikamata* of Lal-Ded which is a syncretic tradition that assimilates not only the essence of Buddhist spirituality but also reaches out to the Sufi-Mystic tradition of Islam (83).

By rejecting the ritualistic *Trika* system, Lalla Ded went even beyond that, where a mystic could experience the Consciousness of Nothingness or Void. In one of her *Vakhs* she says:

*(wakh manas kol-akol na ate*

*Tshopi mudri ati na paravesh*

*Rozan shiwa-shekath na ate*

*Motuyey kuh ta suy wopadesh)*

(Transliteration Grierson 23)

*Word or thought, normal or absolute, they mean nothing here.*

*Even the mudras of silence won't get you entry.*

*We're beyond even Shiva and Shakti here.*

*This beyond that's beyond all we can name, that's your lesson!*

(Trans. Hoskote 117)

### **Kahmiri Saivism and Tantrism**

In all the three Saivistic schools prevailing in India, *Tantra* is an intricate and contentious thesis. In his seminal essay, *Kashmiri Shaiva Philosophy*, Lawrence elucidates the Tantric philosophy within the Saiva system:

While tantrism is a complex and controversial subject, one of its most definitive characteristics for contemporary classifications—if not its most definitive one—is the pursuit of *power*. Tantric traditions are thus those that aim at increasing the power of the practitioner. The theological designation for the essence of such power is Shakti (the female counterpart to the male divine principle, whose essence is power). The manifestations of Shakti that the practitioner of tantra aspire after vary greatly, from relatively limited magical proficiencies (*siddhis* or *vibhūtis*), through royal power, to the de-individualized and liberated saint's omnipotence to the performance of God's cosmic acts (2).

It is believed that *Tantras* emanated from Shiva which he disclosed through his five mouths signifying his five energies; Will, Knowledge, Action, Consciousness and Bliss. Singh, in his book, *Saivism in Kashmir*, explained how *Trika* philosophy emanated from these *tantras*. He states:

When these five Energies of Lord Shiva unite with each other in such a way that each of these takes hold of the rest simultaneously, they give shape to 64 (sixty four) Bhairva Tantras which are purely Monistic. The thought propounded in these Tantras is called the ‘Trika’ Philosophy or the Kashmiri Saivism (126).

Further, in other Saivistic traditions, Shakti as goddess is an ultimate deity in herself, while in the Non-dualistic Saivism of Kashmir, goddess Shakti is assimilated into the conceptual essence of the God Shiva. Shiva is generally believed to be a *Shaktiman* (Inheritor of Shakti or power) enclosing her within his bisexual nature as his essential capacity, power and companion. There is a monistic myth in the Saivistic tradition that, “Shiva out of a kind of play divides himself from Shakti and then in sexual union emanates and controls the universe through her” (Lawrence 2).

The most significant aspect of Non-dualistic Saivism of Kashmir is the *Pratyabhijna*, or recognition structure or simply recognition of self propounded by Utpaladeva (925-975AD) and Abhinavagupt (975-1025 AD) in their texts. The concept of self recognition is also prevalent in Sufism, known as recognition of *Nafs* (self) and is recurrent in Lalla’s poetry. In one of her *Vakhs*, she says:

*Self of my Self, for Thou art but I,*

*Self of my Self, for I am but Thou,*

*Twain of us in One shall never die.*

*What do they matter — the why and how*

(Trans. Temple 197)

In the state of *Pratyabhijna*, she was in a continuous quest to know herself and the Consciousness and in that process she reached a stage where she hardly comprehends the difference between Him and herself. She says:

*(natha! na pan na par zonum*

*sadoy bodum yih kodeh*

*tsah boh boh tsah myulu na zonum*

*tsah kus boh kossa chuh sandeh)*

(Transliteration Grierson 29)

*Lord! I've never known who I really am, or you.*

*I threw my love away on this lousy carcass*

*And never figured it out: You're me, I'm You.*

*All I ever did was doubt: Who am I? Who are You?*

(Trans. Hoskote 27)

### **Lalla Ded and Sufism**

History revealed that Islam saw its day light in Kashmir in the eighth century though quietly and did not gain much pace as it got during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Around 711-712 A.D, Mohammad-bin-Qasim appeared on the soil of Sindh, with the result India was

introduced to this new faith, Islam. However, the trade between India and Arab was in vogue even before the coming of Qasim. Nazki, a Kashmiri Historian noted:

Raja Dahar was defeated by Mohammad-bin-Qasim, his son Jeesa took asylum in Kashmir. It so happened that one Arab named Hameem-bin-Saaq co-operated with him. Hameem succeeded in forming a small party of his own in the state. He constructed a mosque in Srinagar and started propagation of Islam (qtd in Jahangir 72).

During the first half of 14<sup>th</sup> century Sufi thought emanated in the Valley. In fact, the Islamic missionaries who were responsible for the proper proselytization of Islam in the Valley were Sufis. The first Sufi saint who came to the Valley from central Asia was Sayed Sharaf-u-Din (Bulbul Shah) and the then King of Kashmir, RENCHANA embraced Islam at his hands and became his disciple. He established *Suharawardy* Order of Sufism in the Valley. According to the chronicles, Lalla Ded's date of birth falls around the same period. Thereafter, Mir Sayyed Ali Hamadani (1314-1384) came to Kashmir along with his seven hundred *Saddats* (Sayyeds) and rendered a very valuable service in spreading the Sufi thought and other arts and crafts among the natives. His role in the spread of Islam is tremendous and apart from that he built a *khanqah*, mosque-cum school, where people were introduced to spiritual aspects of Islam and other vocational courses like *Paper-machi* (a handicraft item, primarily on Paper pulp with rich decoration, usually in the form of vases, small boxes etc.), shawl weaving, carpet weaving etc.

Sheikh Noor-u-Din (1377-1440) and Sayyed Ali Hamadani are believed to have encountered Lalla Ded who used to wander through the streets of the Valley. A Famous

narrative about her first encounter with Noor-u-Din goes like this; after the birth of Sheikh, he refused to feed from his mother. Thereafter, one fine morning, Lalla appeared at his home and took the baby in her lap and said to the baby, ‘while coming to this world, you weren’t ashamed, then why are you feeling shame to feed from your mother? After that, she fed the baby herself.’

Another narrative about her encounter with Sayyed Ali Hamadani is known as ‘Transformation story’ or ‘Baker story’, invoked a good amount of counter narrative on the part of both Hindu as well as Muslim scholars. It is necessary here to devote a good amount of argument to the same. The episode narrates, one day, while wandering, Lalla Ded saw Ali Hamadani from a distance, who was on his way to somewhere, perhaps looking for the poetess, Lalla suddenly shouted, ‘I saw a man! I saw a man’ and ran either to hide or to cover herself. She saw a bakers shop nearby and jumped into the clay oven (*Tandoor*). Meanwhile, Ali Hamadani reached the spot and inquired about Lalla. The baker in fear was not able to answer him, then Sheikh removed the lid from the oven, Lalla appeared in the garments of paradise. Some narratives differ in terms of clothes, some say she emerged in green clothes, others say in golden clothes and in flowers respectively. Thereafter, she became Ali Hamdani’s disciple. All these stories are carrying their unique significance; however, the conclusion is constantly the same, i.e. Lalla continue to remain in the presence of Sufis.

Many scholars of Lalla Ded face a sort of rigidity to reconcile their awe and admiration in relation to her nude wandering narrative. The only *Vakh*, which supported the narrative of her nudity:



*(Goran wonunam kunny watsun*

*Nebara dopunam andaray atsun*

*Suy gauv Lali me wakh ta watsun*

*Taway me hyotum nangay natsun)*

(Transliteration Grierson 119)

*My Master gave me just one rule:*

*Forget the outside, get to the inside of things.*

*I, Lalla, took that teaching to heart.*

*From that day, I've danced naked (Hoskote's Translation 97)*

Or

*My guru gave me only one advice-*

*From outside transfer the attention within*

*That became my initiation*

*That is why I began to wonder naked (Jaishree Kak's Translation 34)*

Or

*My Guru gave me but one percept;*

*"From without withdraw your gaze within,*

*And fix it on the Innermost Self”*

*I, Lalla, took to heart this one percept,*

*And therefore naked in began to dance* (Jayalal Kaul’s Translation 72)

This particular *Vakh* invokes many interpretations from different scholars; to some it was a revolt against the patriarchal structure on the part of Lalla and for others it has purely metaphorical significance. Hoskote argues about the *nanangay natsun* (dance in nakedness):

It could be read to mean that, in her state of communion with the divine, Lalla has cast away the construct of her identity as an individual separate from the supreme, as exemplified by her clothes. It could also be read to mean that the yogini who has realized Shiva has no need of the costume of social sanction or conditional protection: she is liberated from the codes of patriarchal authority that determine and constrain her social behavior (205-206).

Another scholar of Lalla Ded, Jaishree Kak, in her book, *To the other Shore: Lalla’s life and poetry*, describes the nakedness of Lalla in relation to the detachment of the physical world:

Aside from the concrete fact that freezing Kashmiri winters are hardly conducive to wandering in a nude state, my own interpretation of this verse is based on considering it within the context of her other verses. Lalla’s wandering in a nude state could refer to her divesting or derobing

herself of all worldly attachments, including her family, friends, and the comforts of a home (35).

To Shafi Shauq, *nangai natsun*, ‘dance in nude’ as stated above is a metaphor for the elimination of veils between the human and the Divine. Further, the metaphor of veil is a recurring symbol in the poetry of mystics. Like Kak, R.N.Kaul also seems desperate to cover Lalla’s nudity; he states that, “if Lalla Ded was moving naked in the streets how could she have incarnated herself as the Muse of knowledge (Saraswati) and more precisely speaking as the Muse of Poetry? If true, the legend 74 confirms her miraculous powers” (13). Here legend 74 refers to the above mention protruding belly which covered her private parts.

Not all but some Kashmiri Pandits would be disappointed over this particular narrative till this day. They held a view that the narrative of Ali Hamadani and Lalla Ded is the creation of Muslim historians to create confusion in the Hindu identity of Lalla Ded and the purpose behind it is to place Islam as a superior religion. In an article, *Reconstructing and Reinterpreting Lal Ded*, Toshkhani strongly reacted against the ‘Baker episode’. He fanatically declares that Ali Hamadani was not Sufi and argues that; “The miracle of oven is surely prompted by a hegemonistic design to establish the superiority of Islam over the creed of the ‘infidels’” (43). Some of the scholars call it transfiguration from semi mystical state towards the perfect mystical ecstasy and harmony where a mystic could get the final touch. Diane Fereig concurs, “Hamadani is the catalyst– the encounter with a foreign idea in the form of the mythical *insaneal-kamil*, the Sufi idea of the perfected human being. The encounter with her opposite applies the final polish” (56). Another modern scholar of Lalla Ded, Nazir Jahangir, argues that her

encounter with Ali Hamadani was necessary for her spiritual transformation. He writes, “There should not be any un-palatability in accepting this proposition that she united with God by means of a Muslim Mentor” (72). He further strengthened his argument by referring one of Lalla’s *Vakhs*:

*(lal boo Luusis tshaaraan ti gaaraan*

*hal mya kormas rasi nyishyi tyi*

*Vuchhyn hyotmas teeDy Dyin thmas baran*

*Myetyi kal ganye-izoogmas tety)*

(Transliteration Shauq 62)

*I Lalla, pined away in the search and chase,*

*With full intent I approached Him in my near;*

*I tried to see Him, but the doors were latched,*

*Obdurately I lay there with watchful eyes.*

(Trans. Shauq 62-63)

In relation to the above *Vakh*, Jahangir argued that Lalla:

reached near the Residence not the Resident. Force and trail of strength with this Gate is of no use. Lalded was a true worshiper of God and God does not waste the endeavors of true worshipers. Hence, His blessings and

mercy gushed out. He sent Hazrat Sheikh Syed Ali Hamdani (R.A.) to this place in order to teach Lalded incantation of ‘Seven Verses’ (73-74).

Like Fereig, Jahangir too held the same view that she needed a final touch and that had been done by Ali Hamadani. Neerja Matto in her article, *Lal Ded– The Poet Who Gave A Voice To Women*, held her nudity in a plain sense and does not take it otherwise like social taboo or embarrassment, she says:

It is not out of shock, nor in a mood for self-mortification, nor even as self-flagellation in the manner of the medieval women Christian saints, that she exposed herself to the elements. It is just that in her ‘fine madness’, she seems to have become completely unself-conscious (76).

The then headmaster of Christian missionary school, Pandit Anand Koul, describes the narrative in full length that appeared in *The Indian Antiquary, A journal of oriental research* during 1921-1933. He even mentioned the place where the encounter would have happened that invokes the visual image of the location and provides further strength and meaning to the narrative:

Lal Ded used to peregrinate in a nude condition and was constantly saying, ‘he only man who fears God, and there are very few such men about.’ One day Shah Hamadan alias Mir Sayyid Ali, after whom the famous mosque in Srinagar is called and who came in Kashmir in 1379 and stayed here up to 1384 A.D., met her at Khampur, 10 miles to the south-west of Srinagar on the Shopian road, and she at once ran away. This was a strange thing for Lal Ded to do, but it was soon explained. ‘I

have seen a man”, she said to the astonished *baniya*, into whose shop she had fled for refuge. The *baniya*, however, turned her out. Then Lalla Ded rushed to a baker’s shop and jumped into the oven, which at that time was fully heated for baking the bread. Hence, the saying— “*Ayeyh Wanis Gayih Kandras*”, (she came to *baniya* but went to a baker). When the baker saw this he fell down in a swoon thinking that, for certain, the king would hear of this and punish him. However, there was no need of fear, as Lal Ded presently appeared from the mouth of the oven, clad in clothes of gold, and hastened after Shah Hamadan (310).

Those who acknowledged the narrative of ‘Baker story’, Toshkani, in his above mentioned article negate their views and calls Richard Temple a ‘confusing soul’. He did not stop here; being reluctant to accept the ‘Baker narrative’ he equally negates the views of other Hindu scholars who acknowledged the narrative. According to him, “P.N.K. Bamzai and R.K. Parmu followed Richard Temple in their queer conclusion, created further confusion by making even stranger and mutually contradictory statements” (44). Further, there is another narrative narrated by Anand Koul which supports the nudity and in turn supports the Baker story as it is related to the nudity and clothing. Koul writes:

Once there was a performance of actors at Pampur, to witness which a large crowd of people had gathered. Lal Ded also, in her usual nude condition, went to see it. Her father-in-law called her back to her house and scolded her for her want of modesty and decency. She excused herself by saying that there was no human being there, to avoid whose look it might have been necessary to cover herself. He laughed cynically at this.

But she asked him to look out from the window if what she said was true or not, he looked out and lo! He saw no human being, but only a number of fowls, sheep and goats collected there (311).

The beauty of the 'baker narrative' is that it carries multi-layered symbolism that makes it relevant even today. The significant characteristic of human transformation through the encounter with the foreign is to reconcile and mingle mutually. If the foreign is dominant in terms of advancement then the native has no choice but to adopt the foreign. In this connection, Fereig in his thesis argues that, "Lalla becomes a metaphor for Kashmir, whose people are transformed by the advent of a more formalized Sufism and Islam brought by Hamadani and his seven hundred companions" (45). Moreover, under the formal design of advanced culture, transformation is inevitable and in the process, foreign also gets influenced by the native. In addition to that, it has been also observed that the elements of native culture and faith would affect the foreign. Fereig rightly observes the same, he says, "it realistically draws upon the environment, connects two religions and unites them in a transformative way that leaves both changed in way that Kashmiris can readily identify with" (57). Further, one can agree on the fact that there is a sort of mutual consent though without conscious efforts.

The disputes emanating from both Hindu and Muslim quarters are based on fanatic designs and Lalla Ded is above all of that. However, one cannot deny the fact that she was born in a Hindu family and was much influenced by the non-dualistic and non-ritualistic *Saivism* and *Trikamat* respectively. It also cannot be denied that her *Vakhs* carried both the voices of *Saivism* and Sufism that enhances and adds the more charm and romance to her poetry and character. Indeed, this is one of the factors that make Lalla

Ded relevant even to this modern technological world. She did not see any difference in a Hindu and Muslim, to her they are all one and created by the One. Meister Eckhart (1260 - 1328), a German mystic, philosopher and a theologian says, "Theologians may quarrel, but the mystics of the world speak the same language." To mystics, there is hardly any difference between the creations of God as there is a harmony in their essence that demands the proper recognition. In one of her *Vakhs*, Lalla Ded says:

*(Shiv chuy thali thali rav zan  
Mav zaan Hyound ta Mussalmaan  
Trukhay chukh ta pananuy paan parzaan  
Ada chay Saahibas zanni zaan)*

(Transliteration Parimu xvii)

*Siva, like the sun, shines everywhere;  
Do not discriminate between a Hindu and  
a Muslim:  
If thou art wise, know thyself;  
That is true knowledge of the Lord.*

(Trans.Parimoo xviii)

### **Consciousness/ Concept of God in the Poetry of Lalla Ded**

Being a contender of Truth, Lalla used to contemplate even before meeting his Guru, Sidha Mol. The innate seed of Consciousness gradually developed in her and got the



some shape after becoming the disciple of Sidha. However, she was aware of the fact that the path she has chosen is hard and long one. In one of her Vakhs, she declares the same, 'Reading and precept is easy but practice is hard'. Those who are on the path of self realization, at the very outset, Guru cleanse their heart and mind from hatred, jealousy, falsehood etc, through diverse practices. While passing through this stage, Lalla narrates the experience of the same through the metaphor of traditional Kashmiri cloth making. She says:

*(Lal boo draayas kapsyi pooshichyi setsiy*

*keeDi ti duuny kernam yetsiy lath*

*tiyi yeli khaarinam zeeyiji tiyi*

*wooviry vaani gayem aleenziy lath)*

(Transliteration Shauq 66)

*Like a cotton flower, I Lalla blossomed forth,*

*The cleaner and the carder sifted my fibers;*

*The spinning woman spun me into gossamer,*

*Stretched on the loom I receive the weaver's kicks.*

(Trans. Shauq 66-67)

*(Doyeb yeli chownas doyeb kani peth*

*Saz ta saban maschnam yechai*

*Scechen yeli phirnam hani hani qaechi*

*Ada Lali me prowum parma gath.)*

(Transliteration mine, qtd. in Koul 186)

*First the washerman pounded me on his washing stone,*

*scrubbed me with clay and soap.*

*Then the tailor measured me, piece by piece,*

*With his scissors. Only then could I, Lalla,*

*Find the road to heaven.*

(Trans. Hoskote 39)

In the above mentioned companion *Vakhs*, Lalla describes her initial development in the field of God consciousness through the metaphor of classical cloth making that was in vogue in the then Kashmir. It is worth mentioning here that the tradition of classical cloth making is still prevalent in Kashmir, now in the form of *Pashmeena* and other types of shawls. The images of cloth making are recurrent in the Kashmiri mystic poetry. We can trace them in the poetry of Souch Kral, Shamas Faqir, Rahim Sahib etc.

Lalla Ded compares herself with the cotton pod that is blooming forth. The process of traditional cloth making in Kashmir: firstly, raw cotton has to go through the process of combing done by the cleaner and carder in order to remove the impurities and

parallelize the fibers. Thereafter, spinning is carried out usually by women on a spinning wheel, called *Yander* or Charkha. After making a fine thread, weaver warps it on a loom for further process. The woven cloth is now ready and the next process is of washing, the washer man (*dobh* in Kashmiri) washes the fabric in running water often at the banks of river Jhelum, by constantly dashing it against a hard smooth stone. And, the final process is of the tailor, who cuts it up and makes out a finished dress. Hoskote is of the opinion that these *Vakhs* revealed the suffering that is essential to find the road for communion with the Divine, he says:

Lalla's hope of blooming like the cotton flower incarnates the wish to attain the state that the mystical *sahaja* in Sanskrit or *sahaz* in Kashmiri: the awareness of one's true nature, the reality concealed by the world of appearance. This is not, however, a wish easily granted: before that, her body-centered consciousness, her sense of personality must be beaten out of her (172).

The various stages towards the purgation or purification of heart and soul are thus symbolically indicated and the artisans: cleaner, carder, spinning woman, weaver, washerman and the tailor are various names of her mentor or guru at different stages. Temple, quite mistakenly observed that, "each stage in the manufacture of the cloth may represent, not a stage in a single life, but a separate existence in Lalla's progress from birth to birth" (224). These stages as stated above are initial structures for the purification and are essential for a disciple to proceed on the path of God consciousness. According to Hoskote:

The various artisans who are the protagonists of these poems— the cleaner, the carder, the spinning woman, the weaver, the washerman and the tailor— are all the agents of transcendence. I would see them as guru, master or teacher figure, or as those mysterious ‘helpers’, demigods or guardian angels assigned by God to protect the seeker-hero or heroine, who populate fables and wisdom stories across the world (172).

After the purgation process, Lalla is now a divinely pure and has to pass through further stages, for this she has been asked to concentrate on the inner self rather than to the physical one, ‘Nebara dopunam andaray atsun’.

Like Vijnanavada school of Buddhism, Saivites of the Valley hold the view that the world is real only to the length that it is observed to exist through the agency of consciousness. Utpaladeva, in his book, *Shivastotravali* (a collection of devotional songs), exhibits the course of invocation of Shiva’s supreme consciousness. Instead of renunciation of social life, it demands the purification of thought and the recognition of divine consciousness within and in every sphere of life. In one of his devotional songs, Utpaladeva says:

*In that state, O Lord*

*Where nothing else is to be known or done,*

*Neither yoga*

*Nor intellectual understanding*

*Is to be sought after,*

*For the only thing that remains and flourishes*

*Is absolute consciousness.*

(qtd. in Hoskote xviii)

Shauq rightly perceives the mystical intertextuality in terms of thought and Consciousness in the poetry of Lalla Ded and in the poetry of her predecessors: “An analytical study of Lalla’s poetry reveals many parallels with various philosophical treatises that were taught orally as well as textually in her time.” (18). One may find the same quest in relation to the Divine consciousness in Lalla as in Utpaladeva, for instance in one of her *Vakhs*, she says:

*(Tanthir galyi tay manthir mwatsyey*

*Manthir gol tay motsuy tsyath*

*Tsyath gol tay kyenh tyi naa kunyey*

*Shunysis shunyaa myiilith gav)*

(Transliteration Shauq 26)

*When tantra is lost, mantra remains,*

*When teachings are lost, just memory remains;*

*When memory is lost, nothing remains,*

*Nothingness thus melts into nothingness.*

(Trans. Shauq 27)

In his book, *The Serpent Power*, Woodroffe makes a difference between the mind-consciousness and the Higher Consciousness, he writes, “mind limits consciousness so as to enable man to have finite experience. There is no mind without consciousness as its background, though supreme consciousness is Mindless (Amanah). Where there is no mind (Amanah), there is no limitation” (31). In this context Lalla’s mind has been vanished as indicated from the above *Vakh* and she is experiencing the limitless manifestations of God.

After completing the phase of purgation, Lalla Ded realizes that the boundaries of her own self stand as obstacles towards the communion with the God though becoming a divinely pure soul. The esoteric burning desire for God-consciousness is not fulfilled easily. God is still distant, but she feels His existence in her soul, which escorts her on. Her God is imminent as well as transcendent. He is at the centre to which the universe and humanity are correlated. Hence, universe is a noticeable expression of the unnoticeable. He is all-permeating and the inherent good in all. Therefore, Lalla Ded finds harmony in all forms of nature which makes her declare:

*(gagan tsiy, butal tsiy*

*tsiy dyan, pawan ti raath*

*arg, tsandun, poash, poony tsiy*

*tsiy chhukh soory ti leegyzi kyaath)*

(Transliteration Shauq 23)

*You are the firmament, You are the earth,*

*You are day, air and night,*

*The oblation, sandalwood, flowers and water*

*You are everything, What can I offer up to You?*

(Trans. Shauq 23)

Oneness with the Absolute Being has been central to Lalla's mystical credo. Like other great mystics, she sang to adore that all-Permeate Lord. She offers complete allegiance and labour to Him. Her *Vakhs* enlighten a very rich spectrum of powerful longing, surprising tenacity and enduring mysteries. The initial experiences on the mystic path had awakened in her a new consciousness towards the life. At times, Lalla experiences the play of hide and seek on the part of God. This kind of feeling is common in all mystics, sometimes, they feel, God is playing Hide and Seek with them. In these moments when vision and bliss become dim, the mystic feels that God has abandoned him or her. Lalla, in this condition expresses her pensive yearning to be one with whole; to be admitted to that world of wonder and mystery. She intensely yearns for the mystical experiences again and again. Lalla experiences a gripping pain of yearning, longing and loss of the cosmic vision. This mood can be seen in many of her *Vakhs*, for instance she says, '*doori doori karetham wuthumaz raeche*', your distance make me crippled,

'*nazdeek waetith hyutham doar*', and, when coming nearer, thou feigned to be distant. About the God consciousness in the poetry of Lalla Ded, Shauq observes:

Lalla's concept of God, expressed in many a suggestive expressions, is against the very attempt to conceptualize God in words which, because of their anthropomorphic nature, tend to give Him a name and habitation. Lalla's God is essentially transcendence of theistic God — God above the God. She, as an imaginative poet, articulates this notion, and forces language to make us envision a truth that is inherently non-linguistic. In spite of her being conscious of the limitations of human language, she uses language itself to go beyond phonetic realization of her ineffable personal experience; she does not need approval from any pre-existing concept (22).

Shauq is right by saying that language is inadequate to express the divine experience but not always. Moreover, Lalla's purpose was not to narrate the experience for the sake of fame, as she declares, *zanam pravith vebav no tsondum*, (don't think I did all this to get famous.), but to provide a nudge or trod to the masses so that they could themselves contemplate what she has achieved and they are yet to achieve the same, i.e. the eternal ecstasy in relation to the union with the Higher Consciousness. Thus, the significant concept in Lalla's thought is that of individual salvation. The contemplative analysis of her poetry reveals that the man's pilgrimage in this world is incomplete until and unless he would not recognize the self in relation to the Higher Self from which it has been separated long ago.



Since mystics do not liberate themselves from meaninglessness, rather they celebrate the same as it is the way to reach the Meaning. Lalla, being a mystic does not negate the concrete and corporeal existence but she locates Him in the very essence of things. To her universe is the manifestation of the Absolute. One of the aspects in her mystical voyage is that of complete surrender (*atmasamarpan*) to the Absolute. During this contemplation, the soul of the seeker becomes one with the God or gets lost in Him. She says:

*(Tan man ga'yas bat ass kunai*

*Buozum satich ghanta vazaan*

*That jaaye dharmayi dhaaran rotum*

*Aakaash ti prakaash korum sarai)*

(Transliteration mine, qtd. in Koul 164)

*Body and soul I merged in Him,*

*And heard the bell of truth resounding;*

*There I stayed rapt in meditation,*

*The skies and the light I conquered thus.*

(Trans.Shauq 111)

Each time Lalla experiences constant change and novelty in the things, she finds her being growing anew. In the words of Shauq: “God is continuous and inexorable, or change in the multitudinous creations and manifestations, and annihilation, or, in her words, the unstoppable replacement of the old by the new” (23). The experience of continuous change and novelty in the things made her utter:

*(tseth nowuy tsandarama nowuy*

*zalamay dyuthum nawam-nowuy*

*yena petha Lali me tan man nowuy*

*tana Lal boh nawam-numuy ches)*

(Transliteration Grierson 118)

*Consciousness is new, new is the moon,*

*Even water I find always new;*

*Since my body and soul I cleansed*

*I have been always growing new*

(Trans.Shauq 24)

In terms of mortality, Lalla feels God’s elegance in free flow. His grace is free in the very essence of mortality and can be experienced through the diverse forms of nature though He is formless and nameless. The Boundless is sojourn in the lower self and is waiting for its release not by rites, rather through self introspection. Lalla has awakened

the Infinite and mingled in Him in a way that transcends the duality and estrangement. Even the tiny beings filled her with awe for the Infinite. Wherever Lalla reaches, she experienced Him in all, she says:

*(dyishyi aayas dash dyishyi tseTyith*

*tselyith tsoTum shuny adi vaav*

*shiviy DyuunThum shaayi shaayi myiilyith*

*shya ti trya tropymas shiviy draav)*

(Transliteration Shauq 110)

*From a certain direction I came, explored all directions,*

*Like wind I traversed the whole space;*

*Shiva alone I saw all pervading,*

*Nine doors I closed, there too I found Him.*

(Trans.Shauq 111)

Eventually, the poetess reaches the final goal of her quest — she becomes one with God. With the result, the self of the poetess vanishes and remains the Self. She has savoured the divine honey i.e. she has experienced the ecstasy of divine love. She has passed the stage of darkness and the stage she got in, is that where everything is

illuminated with the light of Consciousness. She is in the state of eternal bliss, where the dichotomy ends and He is all and the source of all forms though Himself formless. Lalla being in that state experienced the game of existence and she declared:

*(Asi aes ta asiy asav*

*Asi dorah korus pata wata*

*Shevas souri na zyun ta marun*

*Ravas souri na ata gath)*

(Transliteration mine, qtd. in Koul 156)

*We've been here before, we'll be here again,*

*We've been here since the birth of time.*

*The sun rises, sets, rises again.*

*Shiva creates, destroys, creates the world again.*

(Trans. Hoskote 136)

The experience of communion with God and the state of divine ecstasy emancipates her from the clutches of life and death. And, she advises us to follow the same path of truth and introspection of self, so that we too achieve, what she has achieved i.e. Union with the Absolute:

*(Rangan manz chu byon byon labun*

*Sorui chalakh barakh sokah*

*Chakhresh ta vear galakh*

*Ada deashekh Shiva sundh mokh)*

(Transliteration mine, qtd. in Koul 162)

*Look out for Him.*

*He's played many roles on this stage.*

*Slough off envy, anger, hate.*

*Learn to take what you get.*

*You'll find Him.*

(Trans.Hoskote 135)

In one of her *Vakhs*, she directly addresses the masses that to wear the robe of wisdom and concentrate on her *Vakhs* in pure practice. Further, she achieved the Union in relation to the awakened Consciousness (*tseth-jyoti*) and expelled the fear of death with the help of *Pranava (om)*. She supplies a strong trod to the future generations who could also follow the model of mystical technology which could liberate them from all the fears and mysteries. She says:

*(janaki ambar pairith tane*

*yim pad Lali dapi tim hridi okh*

*karani pranawaki lay karu Lale*

*tseth-jyoti kosun maranunu shokh)*

(Transliteration Grierson 99)

*Wear the robe of wisdom*

*Brand lalla's words on your heart*

*Lose yourself in the souls's light,*

*You too shall be free.*

(Trans. Hoskote 148)

Apart from the thematic aspect of her poetry which is steeped in mysticism, the linguistic study of her poetry also throws light on the pervasiveness of mysticism in Lalla Ded. Further, this linguistic aspect will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

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## Chapter 3

### **Bulleh Shah: Spiritual Pearl of Punjab**

India is a land of antique wisdom and spirituality. The smell of spiritual garden has lured many faiths, cultures and the seekers of the Truth across the globe and Sufism is no exception. Sufism emerged in India immediately after the advent of Islam. This new faith (Islam) entered into India in 711 under the guidance of Mohammad bin Qasim, the then commander of Muslim Army who conquered Sindh and Multan regions, now in Pakistan. However, it is also believed that Islam saw its day light during the early 7<sup>th</sup> century in the western coastal areas of India. It is also observed that the Sufis must have used the same routes, which were used by the Arab traders and military commanders. History witnessed that the Sufi traditions developed smoothly here in India because it influenced the collective consciousness of the natives and partly because it had some resemblances with the already established spiritual faiths.

This chapter attempts to analyse the mystical development of Bulleh Shah. Further, in order to understand Bulleh Shah's approach to Sufism, it sounds essential to discuss the emergence of Sufi thought in India in general and in Punjab particular. The researcher will also try to trace out the significant characteristics of Sufi consciousness in his poetry.

In the beginning, it is necessary to define Sufism so that things would be easier to understand while analyzing the poetry of Bulleh Shah in the later part of this chapter.

## Sufism

Sufism is believed to be an inner and mystical aspect of Islam. In the Muslim world it is generally known as *Ihsan* or *Tasawwuf* and in the west and other parts of the world it is labeled as Sufism. Rizvi, in his book, *A History of Sufism in India*, states that Sufism “represents the inward or esoteric side of Islam; it may, for the sake of convenience, be described as the mystical dimension of Islam.” (18). There are various definitions of *Tasawwuf* or Sufism and some of them will be discussed here. According to Zarruq, “Nearly two thousand meanings have been used to define, illustrate and explain Sufism. The source of all these definitions is turning to God Most-High with a sincere heart.” (53). He further says that, “I feel that whosoever has a measure of sincerity in turning towards God has a measure of Sufism, and that the Sufism of everyone is the sincerity of his turning towards God” (54).

Abdul Rehman Khaldun, the 14<sup>th</sup> century Muslim historiographer, historian and forerunner of the modern disciplines of sociology and demography, in his famous *the Muqaddimah or Prolegomena* or simply an *Introduction* defines Sufism as:

Science of the religious law that originated in Islam. Sufism is based on (the assumption) that the method of those people (who later on came to be called Sufis) had always been considered by the important early Muslims, the men around Muhammad and the men of the second generation, as well as those who came after them, as the path of truth and right guidance. The (Sufi) approach is based upon constant application to divine worship,



complete devotion to God, aversion to the false splendor of the world, abstinence from the pleasure, property, and position to which the great mass aspires, and retirement from the world into solitude for divine worship. These things were general among the men around Muhammad and the early Muslims (qtd. in Ronzleth 611).

Tulpule, argues that “[the] mystical branch of Islam is Tasawwuf, or Sufism. It is the central and most powerful current of that tidal wave which constitutes the revelation of Islam” (198). Ghani, in one of his articles writes: “Sufism represents the inner aspect of Islam in its doctrinal sense, while as an experience it is a spiritual journey of the individual — from a limited understanding of his own self towards a limitless quest for the realization of the divine” (153). According to Zakariya al- Ansari, 15<sup>th</sup> century Islamic scholar, “Tasawwuf is the science through which occurs the purification of the Nafs {*Self*} together with the development of morality and which also builds the physical being and inner self with a view to reaching eternal bliss” (7). Reynold Nicholson, one of the modern scholars of Sufism defines it as, “the religious philosophy of Islam, is described in the oldest extant definition as 'The apprehension of divine realities', and Mohammedan Mystics are fond of calling themselves *Ahl-al-Haqq*, 'The followers of the Real’” (21).

Scholars differ regarding the origin of the word ‘Sufi’, some of the scholars held a view that the word ‘Sufi’ was gleaned from the word ‘Safa’, which means pure or purity. Some argued that the word ‘Sufi’ comes from ‘Souf’, which means soft wool as Sufis used to wear it. Another view is that these people used to sit and pray or meditate on a platform next to the mosque (*Masjid-Nabvi*) constructed by Prophet Mohammad(PBUH).

Large chunk of scholars held a view that these people belonged to the first prayer line (*saf*) and that is why they are called Sufis. Al-Hujwiri, great Sufi of his times, in his book *Kashf-al-Mahjub*, a classical Persian treatise on Sufism, argues:

Some assert that the Sufi is so called because he wears a woolen garment (*Jama-i-Suf*); others that he is so called because he is in the first rank (*Saff-i-awwal*); others say it is because the Sufis claim to be *Ashab-i-Saffa*, with whom may God be well-pleased! Others, again, declare that the name is derived from Safa (Purity) (qtd. in Nicholson 30).

Rehman Khaldun explains the word Sufi, attributed to those who were on the path of Union with the God:

Worldly aspirations increased in the second [eighth] century and after. People now inclined toward worldly affairs. At that time, the special name of Sufis (*Sufiyah and Mutasawwifah*) was given to those who aspired to divine worship. Al Qushayri says: "No etymology or analogy can be found for this term in the Arabic language. It is obvious that it is a nickname. Theories deriving the word from *assafa'* (purity, sincerity), or from *as-suffah* (bench), or from *as-saff* (row) 455 are improbable from the point of view of linguistic analogy." (Al-Qushayri) continued: "The same applies to the derivation from *as-suf* (wool), because the Sufis were not the only ones who wore Wool." 456 I say: The most obvious etymology, if one uses one, is that which connects the word with *as-suf*, because Sufis as a rule were characterized by the fact that they wore woolen garments. They

were opposed to people wearing gorgeous garments, and, therefore, chose to wear wool (qtd. in Ronzleth 611).

Whatever the name or whatever the title we may attribute to it, Jaisi argues:

Tasawwuf aims at purifying the Believer's heart. Whatever the name, the essence prevails, the more so that no definition can really encompass it. Far from dealing with definitions, Tasawwuf is first and foremost related to the nature of man and to the spiritual state which man aspires to reach (7).

At this juncture, it is necessary to mention that within the Islamic world, some theologians argue that Sufism or *Tasawwuf* did not exist during the time of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and even in the first century of Islam. Although, the terminologies were not there but the labels came into existence in the later centuries, for example, the concepts or definitions like, *Fiqah*, *Mufti*, *Moulvi*, *Ilmi Tawhid* etc were not present then but were coined in the later centuries. Some of the scholars are also of the opinion that *Tasawwuf* or Sufism was very much present during the time of Mohammad (PBUH) and was known as *Ihsan*. There is a tradition of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), which declares, “*Ihsan* is to adore Allah as though thou didst see Him, and if thou dost not see Him he nonetheless seeth thee” (Muslim). Since *Ishiq*(love) is the centre of Sufism, therefore loving Allah and his creation is *Ihsan* (Sufism) which leads a Sufi towards the recognition of self and then to the union with God. In this regard, Aleem Jaisi argues that after the first companions “...pious people were called ‘people of Ihsan’, ‘Abid wa Zahid’ and sometimes ‘people of Faqr’. But when these titles were taken up by people

who did not have such credit, the pious people then chose the term ‘Sufi’” (10). Another Tradition of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) declares that, “One who recognizes his own self, he would be able to recognize the God” (qtd in Liyaqat 542). The Holy Quran declares that, “And on the earth are signs for those who have faith with certitude” (Chap 51, V 20). Further, it reads, “And also is [the creation of] yours own selves [are signs of Divine Omnipotence, Grandeur, and Wisdom]. Will you not then see [with your inward sight]? (Chap 51, V 21). At another place Quran reads, “And we are closer unto him than his jugular vein” (Chap 50, V 16).

From the above discussion one can argue that the Sufism or Islamic spirituality emerged from the Traditions of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and the Quran. It is also clear that Sufism laid emphasis on self analysis or introspection. Further, the terms like, Sufism or *Tasawwuf* were not in vogue then at the dawn of Islam, it is because the companions or first Muslims (*Sashabas*) were dwelling in such an ambience of spirituality, having Prophet at their centre did not need stamps or tags. Spirituality was in action in their impeccable comportment and therefore did not require the labels. It is as aged as Islam itself. In fact, it is an indispensable segment of it, an esoteric feature that encourages the close connection between man and God. As discussed above, its doctrine and techniques are essentially rooted in the *Sunnah* (Tradition of Prophet) and the Holy Quran. Let us look into the sayings of great Sufis about the Sufism:

**Junayd Al-Baghdai** (835-910 A.D.)

Junayd is known as one of the great masters of the Sufis of the then Baghdad and has been highly respected by all the Sufis till date. According to him:

Sufism means that God makes thee to die to thyself and to become alive in Him. It is to purify the heart from the recurrence of creaturely temptations, to bid farewell to all natural inclinations, to subdue the qualities which belong to human nature, to keep far from the claims of the senses, to adhere to spiritual qualities, to ascend by means of Divine knowledge, to be occupied with that which is eternally the best, to give wise counsel to all people, faithfully to observe the truth, and to follow the Prophet in respect of the religious law (qtd. in Drive18).

**Sari Saqati** (762-867A.D.)

Sari Saqati, uncle of Junayd and simultaneously happened to be his teacher, he defines Sufism in relation to that of Islamic traditions, he says:

Sufism meant three things for the Sufi: that, the light of his gnosis did not extinguish the light of his abstinence; that his inward speculations did not make him opposed to the outward conduct taught by the Quran and the Sunna, and that the favours of God bestowed on him did not lead him to tear aside the veil from what God hadmade unlawful to him (Trans. Nicolson 33).

**Al-Hujwiri** (990- 1072 A.D.)

In his book, *Kashf-al-Mahjub*, Hujwiri declares that, "Sufi is a name which is given, and has formerly been given, to the perfect saints and spiritual adepts... 'He that is purified

by love is pure, and he that is absorbed in the Beloved and has abandoned all else is a Sufi” (Trans. Nicholson 34).

**Abu Bakr Shibli** (861-946 A.D.)

Shibli, one of the disciples of Junayd, says, "The Sufi is he that sees nothing except God in the two worlds” (Trans. in Nicholson 39).

**Al-Ghazali** (1058-1111 A.D.), one of the most respected theologians, philosophers and a Sufi in the history of Islam, writes:

I learnt with certainty that it is above all the mystics who walk on the road to God; their life is the best life, their method the soundest method, their character the purest character; indeed, were in intellect of the intellectuals and the learning of the learned and the scholarship of the scholars, who are versed in the profundities of revealed truth, brought together in the attempt to improve the life and character of the mystics, they would find no way of doing so; for to the mystics all movements and all rest, whether external or internal, brings illumination from the light of the lamp of prophetic revelation; and behind the light of prophetic revelation there is no other light on the face of the earth from which illumination may be received (qtd. in Reid 165).

## Essential Characteristics of Sufism

There are four main aspects of Sufism: *Shariat*, *Tariqat*, *Marifat* and *Haqeeqat*. Those who are on the path of Sufism, he/she is supposed to deal with these four aspects, therefore it sounds essential to define them one by one.

### *Shariat* (Divine Law)

Etymologically, the word *Shariat* means the road. *Shariat* is a divine law within the Islamic system, based on the Quran and the sayings/actions of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). In the connection of *Shariat*, Nasr writes, "It is the law according to which God wants a Muslim to live. It is, therefore, the guide of human action and encompasses every facet of human life" (94). Besides the religious life, it also governs the social, cultural and political life of Muslims. The basic beliefs that *Shariat* commands are:

(a) Belief in one God as the Quran declares:

Say: He, Allah, is One,

Allah, the Eternal,

He begets not, nor is He begotten,

And there is none like unto Him(Chap, 112).

(b) Belief in Mohammad (PBUH) as the last prophet and the seal of Prophets sent by Allah.

(c) Belief in Jinns (Devils) and Angels

(d) Belief in Doomsday, the day of judgment

- (e) Five times *Salat* (prayers) per day. Quran laid much emphasis on the observance of *Salat* and *Zaqat* (Charity), it reads, “And establishes prayer and give *zakah* and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience] (Chap 2, V43).
- (f) Charity, often discussed with the *Salat* as stated in the above verse.
- (g) Fasting in the month of *Ramadan*, 9<sup>th</sup> month of the lunar calendar, the Quran reads, “Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain *taqwaa* (Consciousness about God)” (Chap 2, V183).
- (h) Hajj, pilgrimage to *Kaaba*, sacred mosque at Mecca, Quran declares, “For Hajj are the months well known. If anyone undertakes that duty therein, Let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the Hajj” (Chap2, V 197).
- (i) Jihad, literary means struggle in the way of God. To Sufis, Jihad is to struggle with their *Nafs* (self) as they are in reality on the path of God.

The above discussed elements are the basic components of Islamic *Shariat* and have been revealed by God to man so that he could be able to reform his living and his community. Nasr observes that, “To live according to the *Shari'ah* is to live according to the Divine Will, according to a norm which God has willed for man” (158).

### ***Tareeqat***(The Way or Path)

*Tareeqat* is the spiritual way or path on which a Sufi is supposed to tread. It is believed that this spiritual way comes out of the *Shariat*, the main road and is harder to walk. In terms of analogy, Haseebuddin argues that, “*Shariat* is like a hair in the head and *Tareeqat* is a comb to set the hair. A man who wants to comb his hair is required to have hair in his head” (1). Therefore, it seems necessary for a Sufi to follow *Shariat* first, then



to walk on *Tareeqat*. Nasr in his book, *Ideals and Realities of Islam*, writes, “The *Tariqah* or spiritual path which is usually known as *Tasawwuf* or Sufism is the inner and esoteric dimension of Islam and like the *Shari’ah* has its roots in the Quran and prophetic practice” (121).

Further, those who walk on this spiritual path, *Tareeqat*, are generally known as *Salik* (follower of spiritual path). In Chapter 72 of the Quran, it reads, “And if they turned (to Allah) being on the roads (*Tariqat*), we would have certainly given them to drink of abundant water (we would have sent them plenty of mercy)” (V s17). In one of the traditions of Prophet (pbuh), it reads, “The *shari’a* is my words (*aqwali*), the *tariqa* are my actions (*a’ mali*) and the *haqiqa* is my interior state (*ahwali*)” (Schimmel 99). However, *Shariat*, *Tareeqat*, *Marifat* and *Haqeeqat* are mutually interconnected. One of the great Sufis of north India, Ahmad Batwari says, *Shriyat chui quran, guda palan /Tareeqat kalmaye tawheed tchalun*, (Shariat is Quran, follow it first / Tareeqat is to bear the Oneness of God) (59).

### ***Marifat*** (Divine Knowledge or Consciousness)

The spiritual knowledge peculiar to Sufis is known as *Marifat*, generally known as Gnosis. It is different than that of the general concept of *Ilm* (knowledge) because it is not governed by any mental process or senses but essentially relies on the experience of heart and soul that has been connected to ones *Murshid* (mentor or guide) and simultaneously to God. The one who gets *Marifat* becomes an *Arif* (Divinely Knowledgeable). Al-Kalabadi in his book, *Kitab al-ta’aruf li-madhab ahl al-tasawwuf*, (translated as *The Doctrine of the Sufis* by John Arberry), observes the following interpretations of *Marifat*

by Junayd Bhagdadi and then writes meta-interpretation of the gnosis so that popular mind could understand the same:

Gnosis is the realization of thy ignorance when His knowledge comes.....He as at once the subject and object of gnosis.” By these words he means that “thou art ignorant of Him in the aspect of thouness, and only attainest gnosis of Him through the aspect of Heness (qtd in Arberry 50).

In the Quran, chapter 18 verse 65, Allah says, “on whom We had bestowed grace from Ourselves and unto whom We had imparted knowledge [issuing] from Ourselves.” In the Sufi terminology it is also known as *Ilmi Ludni*. According to Shaikh Sharf-ud-din, the great Sufi of India:

Gnosis is the essence of man’s soul; salvation and immortality of man lies in its attainment..... It is attained by the purification of heart from human infirmities. Thus purification leads to love and love begets complete vision. The heart of an individual is just like a mirror. A mystic perceives the grandeur, magnificence and the beauty of God in his own heart. Thus the perfection of gnosis is based on the purification of the heart (qtd in Naki 109-110).

### ***Haqeeqat*** (The Truth or Essence of Reality)

*Haqeeqat* can be defined as the highest experience of divine Consciousness or simply the experience of God in reality. The seeker or *Salik* experiences the truth when all the

channels are open to him from the divine. The Quran reads: “As for those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our paths” (Chap 29, V 69). After encountering the *Haqeeqat*, Sufi’s heart is illumined by the essence of God.

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani, known as king of all saints, defines the above four stages in this way, “The way between *Nasoot* and *Malaqoot* (transient and eternity) is Shariat and the way between *Malaqoot* and *Jabaroot* is *Tareeqat* and the way between *Jabaroot* and *Lahoot* is *Haqeeqat*” (Liyaqat P 502). He further explains the above terminology:

The world of *Nasoot* is the world of senses, doubt, evidences etc. The world of angels is called *Malaqoot*, it is also the world of heart, meaning etc. The world of *Jabroot* is the world of existence, essence, probability etc. And, the world above all the three worlds is known as the world of *Lahoot* (qtd. in Liyaqat 502-503).

Further, there are the concepts of *Fanna* (annihilation) and *Baqa* (immortality).

### ***Fanna***

Etymologically, the term *Fanna* means ‘passing away’ ‘to die’ or ‘annihilation’. In this stage, there is the elimination of one’s ego and the realization or experience of oneness with the One. The Tradition of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) states, “Die before death” (qtd in Bahoo 97). Sultan Bahoo (1630-1691), a great Indian mystic poet and a scholar par excellence, described his experience of *fanna* in his treatise on Sufism, *Ain-ul-Faqr* thus: “I have annihilated myself in the Oneness of Allah in such a way that my existence

has become one with the One. Due to this ultimate Oneness I see nothing except Oneness” (19). Further, *fanna* has three stations, *fanna fi Sheikh*, *fanna fi Rasool* and *fanna fi Allah* and after the last station, Sufi attains eternity known as *baqa*.

### ***Fanna fi Sheikh***

*Fanna fi Sheikh* is the first station of *fanna* in which a disciple annihilates himself and then merges into the being of his/her *Murshid* (Mentor/Guru). In this station the seeker has experienced the immense love for his *Murshid* and eventually his ego vanishes. Rastogi in his book, *Sufism*, states that under *Fanna fi Sheikh* the, “disciple gets spiritually merged in his preceptor, the state thus attained is *Fana Fi Ushshaikh*” (13).

### ***Fanna fi Rasool***

In this station of *fanna*, the seeker experiences the highest degree of love for the prophet(PBUH) (*Ishiqi Rasool*) and annihilates himself and merges into the being of *Rasool*. “The seeker should develop spiritually to his getting merged in the Prophet’s being” (Rastogi 13).

### ***Fanna fi Allah***

This is the final station of *fanna* where the disciple experienced the *Ishiqi Haqeeqi* (love of the Real) and annihilates himself and merges into the existence of Allah. After completing all the three stages of *fanna*, the seeker enters into the stage of *baqa* (the eternity) and enjoys the bliss of Oneness with the One. “It is the last stage during the spiritual journey that a seeker undertakes; he steps on to this stage from *Fana Fi Urrasool*” (Rastogi 13).

Bahoo narrates the experience of *fanna* in this way: “Initially I was four (*me, my Murshid, my Prophet and Allah*), when I annihilated in Murshid, we were left three. Then I annihilated in Prophet and we remained two. At last I surpassed duality and became One with Allah” (223).

### ***Baqa Billah***

Literal meaning of *baqa* is immortality or eternity. *Baqa billah* means to become eternal in God. After passing through the three stages of *fanna*, the seeker eventually experiences the elimination of duality and merges in the Divine where he is with God, through God, in God and for God. This is the highest stage in the path of Sufism. Some scholars argue that this is the ultimate goal of Sufism where the seeker finds ‘Eternal Bliss’, ‘Meaning’ and ‘Peace’. In the connection of *baqa billah*, Bahoo writes that, “The absorption in Divinity has two stages. First is to have presence in the holy assembly of Prophet Mohammad, second is to drown in the Divine Oneness and reach the level of *Fana Fillah Baqa Billah*” (90).

Further, there are various interrelated stages and stations, however, Sufi scholars have agreed that there are seven *Muqamat* (stations) and while passing through these stations, a Sufi has to do some *Zikr* also spelt *Dhikr* which can be translated as remembrance or recitation of God’s name in different versions. And, the *Muqamats* are:

#### **1. *Tawba* (Repentance)**

The etymological meaning of *Tawba* is ‘return’. So repentance is the first station for the seeker who strives on the way of Truth or God. If we look into the symbolical dimension

then it connotes one who returns to his position. It is sort of purgation both at esoteric as well as exoteric levels. One of the close companions of Prophet, Anas bin Malik narrates a tradition:

One who repents from sin is like one who has never sinned. When God loves a servant, sin will never afflict him. Then he recited [the following verse]: “Truly, God loves those who repent, and He loves those who cleanse themselves.” Someone asked: “Messenger of God, what is the sign of repentance?” He answered: “Remorse (qtd in Qushairia 11).

Ali Hujwiri states that, “repentance is a divine strengthening and sin is a corporal act” (Trans Javid 347). He further says, “Repentance is of three kinds: The first one is from immorality to the way of rectitude; the second is from right to what is still more right, and finally from self hood to Allah” (347).

## 2. *Wara* (Scrupulousness or Abstinence or watchfulness)

It is the awe towards God that leads to the Abstinence known as *wara*. In that station, the seeker is engaging in giving up whatever is doubtful and uncertain and to remain aloof from the things that could divert him from God. Al- Qushayri writes that his Sheikh explains the station of *wara* as, “giving up dubious things” (129). In the connection of *wara*, one of the close companions of Prophet, Abu Hurayra said, “Those who are scrupulous and abstain today will be God’s closest friends tomorrow” (Qushyri 132).

## 3. *Zuhd* (Renunciation)

In this station, the seeker is supposed to abandon anything that distracts him/her from God. Scholars differ in their opinions regarding the station of Renunciation, Al Shibli states that, “it is to renounce anything other than God Most High” (Qushayri 136). In one of the Traditions, the Prophet (PBUH) said, “True disciple has no desire” (qtd in Bahoo, 88). Waqi Al- Jarah is of the opinion that, “Renunciation of this world means cutting short one’s hopes rather than eating coarse food or wearing a woolen cloak” (qtd in Qushayri 135). Another Sufi scholar, Ibn Khafif held a view that, “The mark of renunciation is to preserve equanimity while losing [your] property” (qtd in Qushayri 135). Further, according to Ahmad bin Hanbal, renunciation has three different kinds:

Renunciation can be of three different kinds. First, abandoning that which is prohibited by the Divine Law, which is the renunciation of the commoners; second, abandoning excess in that which is lawful, which is the renunciation of the elect; third, abandoning that which distracts God’s servant from God Most High, which is the renunciation of the gnostics(qtd. in Qushyria 137).

#### **4. *Faqr* (Poverty)**

The most important and central attitude in the circle of Sufism is that of *Faqr*. The Tradition of the Prophet (PBUH) that is also believed to be the base of Sufism is the tradition about *Faqr*. He said, “*Faqr* is my pride and *Faqr* is from me. I am distinguished among all the Prophets and Messengers due to *Faqr*” (qtd Bahoo 37). The seeker who attained *Faqr* is known as *Faqir* in the circle of Sufis. In the regard of this particular station, Annemarie Schimmel states that, “Poverty interpreted in a spiritual sense means

the absence of desire for wealth, which includes the absence of desire for the blessings of the otherworld. One of the aspects of true *faqr* is that the mystic must not ask anything of anyone..." (121). In the opinion of Bahoo, "The accomplishment of Faqr lies in anonymity" (219). He further writes:

The station of Faqr is infinitely high, it makes one the master of universe and it cannot be found by gaining high ranks in sainthood or by achieving the power of miracles and unveiling. Faqr is exactly the Divine Essence. It is the greatest blessing of Allah, on whomsoever He bestows it, becomes independent of hunger and satiation" (220).

##### **5. *Sabr* (Patience)**

The fifth station on the path of God has been titled as *Sabr*, and can be translated as steadfastness, patience or perseverance. While walking on the path of *Salook*, whatever misfortune or hardships comes to the seeker, he is supposed to be having content and patience and for this he is known as *Sabir* (Patient). In the context of *Sabr*, there are many verses in the Quran for example, "And be patient over what befalls you" (Chap 31, V 18). At another occasion, It reads, "Indeed Allah is with the patient" (Chap 8 V 46) and "Allah loves the patient" (Chap 3 V 146). In this regard, Al Qushayri states that, "Be patient with your souls in obeying God Most High; persevere in patience with your hearts, while facing misfortunes for the sake of God; hold on to God with your innermost selves in striving to God" (199). He further says, "Be patient for the sake of God; persevere in patience by God; and hold on to God [by being] with Him" (199). According to Ali Hajwiri, "Patience is of two sorts: firstly, patience in



misfortune and affliction; and secondly, patience to refrain from the things which Allah has commanded us to renounce and has forbidden us to pursue” (102). Another great Sufi, Yahya al Razi argued that, “The patience of lovers [of God] (*muhibbin*) is greater than the patience of [world] renouncers (*zahidin*). I cannot fathom, how they can persevere!” (qtd. in Qushriya 198). Dhu al-Nun said: “Patience is staying away from acts of disobedience, keeping quiet while sipping the agonies of misfortune, and showing contentment when poverty invades the arena of [your] livelihood” (qtd. Qushriya 197-198). Therefore, patience is the hallmark for a Sufi for which he/she gets the reward of union.

#### **6. *Tawakkal* (Trust in God)**

Etymologically, *Tawakkal* means ‘Trust’ and in the field of Islam and Sufism, it generally means ‘trust in God’. According to Schimmel, “One of the most important stations on the Path is *tawakkul*, complete trust in God and self-surrender to Him” (117). Further, there are different verses in the Quran which laid emphasis on men to put their trust in God, for instance, “In Allah let believers put their trust!” (Chap 14 V 11), and “Put all your trust in God, if you are believers” (Chap 5 V 23). To Sufis *Tawakkal* is *Tawhid*, when heart lives with Allah alone without relying or attracting to anything else. Nicholson endorses Sahl bin Abdallah’s statement about *Tawakkal* in his book, *The Mystics of Islam*, he writes:

Trust in God in its extreme form involves the renunciation of every personal initiative and volition, total passivity like that of a corpse in the

hands of the washer who prepares it for burial; perfect indifference towards anything that is even remotely connected with one's self (41-42).

Abu Ali al-Daqqaq says:

The one who puts his trust in God goes through three stages: trust in God, [self-] surrender [to God], and relegating [one's affairs to God]. The one who practices trust in God relies on His promise [of sustenance]; the one who surrenders himself [to God] is content with his knowledge [of God]; and the one who relegates his affairs [to God] is satisfied with His decree (qtd. in Qushayri 181).

#### 7. *Rida* or *Riza* (Contentment or Satisfaction)

*Rida* is the content or serenity of heart during the influent of bitterness of the divine verdicts. Allah says in the Quran, "God being well-pleased with them and they well-pleased with Him; that is the mighty triumph" (Chap 5, V 119). It is said that Moses once asks God to show him the action that may please Him. Then God replied, "O son of Imran, My satisfaction lies in your satisfaction with My decree!" (qtd in Qushayri 207).

On the station of *Rida*, Schimmel writes:

In perfect *rida* the mystic should not think about whether or not God has accepted his act of resignation and contentment; he should accept every divine decree, be it wrath or grace, with equanimity and joy. This interior joy, this perfect agreement with God's decrees, transforms the beggar into

a king and opens the way toward a participation in the divine will, toward love and "higher predestinarianism" (127).

When a Sufi "rejoices at afflictions as much as he rejoices at bounty", he is in the station of *Rida*, declares Rabia Basri (qtd in Qushayri 208). According to Dhul-Nun al-Misri, there are three signs of *Rida*: "Giving up [your] free choice in anticipation of the [passing of] divine decree; feeling no bitterness after the decree has been passed; and [experiencing] the excitement of love [of God] in the middle of affliction" (qtd in Qushayri 208). Ali Hujwiri held a view that satisfaction (*Rida*) is of two kinds:

- the satisfaction of Allah with man, and- the satisfaction of man with Allah. Allah's satisfaction consists in that He recompenses the man (for his good deeds) and bestows His blessings, favors and *karamat* (miracles) upon him. The man's satisfaction consists in his performing the commands of Allah and submitting to His decree (205).

During the spiritual sojourn or after passing through the *Muqamat* Sufi experiences spiritual states known as *Hal* in their terminology. Hujwiri in his treatise defined Hal as "that state which descends from Allah into a man's heart. It is not attainable by efforts neither it can be repelled with efforts when it happens" (210). Further, the difference between the two is that station is to acquire by acts and steadfastness and the state is to be received from the divine grace or favour. In this context, Al Qushayri observes that:

States are [divine] gifts, whereas stations are earnings. States come without asking, whereas stations are acquired by the sweat of one's brow.

The possessor of a station is firmly established in it, whereas the possessor of a state can be taken up out of his state [at any moment] (78).

### **Sufism in India**

As discussed above Sufism came to India immediately after the advent of Islam though its presence was first felt during 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to the records, the first Sufi who came to India was Safiu'd Din Kazirumi from Shiraz, Iran and he settled in Multan, Punjab. Thereafter, Husain Zinjani came and he was followed by another Sufi namely Ali Hujwiri (1009-1072), commonly known as *Daata Ganj Bakhsh*. In one of his articles, Dhillon writes that, "Shaikh Ali Al-Hujwari (Data Ganj Bakhsh) of Ghazna (Afghanistan) came to Lahore in (undivided India) the year 1039 CE and died there in 1071 CE" (32). Rizvi, states in his *A History of Sufism in India*:

The annexation of the Punjab by Mahmud of Ghazna and its incorporation into his empire prompted many Sufis to settle in the area. Abu'l- Fazl Muhammad bin al-Hassan Khattali, a disciple of Husri (d.371/981-82) of the school of Junaid, ordered his disciple Sheikh Husain Zinjani to move to the Punjab. Later Khattali asked a young disciple, Abul-Hassan 'Ali bin 'Usman bin 'Ali al Ghaznawi al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri, to follow Hussain Zinjani....Hujwiri probably reached Lahore in c.1035, while Sultan Mas'ud I (1031-41) reigned in Ghazna (112).

Ali Hujwiri was good at both prose as well as poetry. He wrote many books on Sufism and the famous one is *Kashaf-al-Mehjub (The Revelation of Mystery)* believed to be the first treatise in Persian language on Sufism in India. Further, by the second half of

11<sup>th</sup> century, a good number of Sufis came to India from different parts of the central Asia and with the result many *Silsilas* (Sufi orders) emerged or established themselves on the India soil. It is necessary to mention that each order aimed to reach Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) through a proper chain of Guides or *Peers*.

Another great Sufi scholar and a philosopher whose influence is tremendous on the masses, was Khawja Muinu'd-Din Chishti (1141-1236). He was also responsible for the establishment of the *Chishti* order in India and believed that he stayed at the shrine of Hujwiri for quite some time in order to do some mystical remembrances over there. Regarding him, Rizvi writes, "Khawja Muinu'd-Din Chishti, one of the greatest Sufis of the middle ages, decided to settle in the east in Ajmer, on the border of the Ghurid Empire" (116). From Ajmer he preached the principles of Sufism to the masses that spread all over the country. He is said to be the direct descendant of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and his reverence can be seen through the people irrespective of their religion thronging his tomb every day. His successors spread all over India and preached Sufism under the *Chishti* order, the famous among them were, Khawja Mohammad Bakhtyar (1173-1835), generally known as Qutbudin Bakhtyar Kaki. He stayed at Delhi and his shrine is situated at *Mehrauli*. He was much revered by the then ruler that he built the *Qutub Minar* in his reverence. Kaki's famous disciple, Fariduddin Masud Ganjshakar (1179-1265), popularly known as Baba Farid who preferred to stay at Ajhoda, the present Pakpattan, Punjab now in Pakistan. He spread his message of love and peace from there. According to Dhillon, Baba Farid, "the most popular saint of Chishtiya Silsila in the 12th and 13th century was pioneer of Sufi movement in the Punjab. His 112 Sloks and 4 Sabds were included in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan in 1604 CE"

(32).Farid's successor was Khwaja Syed Muhammad (1238-1325) generally known as Nizammudin Auliya who is believed to be one of the most famous Sufi saints in India. He stayed at various places in Delhi and eventually made his abode at Ghiyaspur where he was buried and his Shrine is one of the most frequently visited places at Delhi and now the whole area is known by his name. His most famous disciple, Abul Hassan, popular as Amir Khusrow (1253-1325) was a poet, musician and a linguist and his tomb is erected near his *Murshid*.

### **Sufism in Punjab**

As mentioned above, the first Sufis who came to India made Punjab their abode. The moment Sufi Movement reached to the soil of Punjab, it congregated more force and the masses came into its circle. Thereafter, in the areas like, Uch, Lahore, Multan and some other parts of Punjab, many Sufi orders and centers were established by the then Sufis whom we have discussed above. The major *Silsilas* or orders which gained pace and fame in the area of Punjab were, *Qadri*, *Chishti*, *Shura-wardi* and *Naqshbandi*. Dhillon in one of his articles states:

Sufi Silsilas which gained prominence in Punjab were Chishtiya, Suhra – Wardiya, Qadiriya and Naqshbandiya. Each Silsila was founded by an eminent spiritual personality of the time who commanded a great respect among the masses. These Silsilas laid stress on purification of inner self rather than following religious dogmas blindly. In fact these Silsilas were training centers of spiritual learning and made the Sufi movement meaningful among the Muslims and Non Muslims (32).

Apart from the other Sufis (Safiu'd Din, Hussain Jinjani, Hujwiri and Baba Farid) whom we discussed above, there was Shah Hussain (1538-1599) who is considered the second great Punjabi Sufi poet. It is believed that, "Shah Husain was the first Panjabi Sufi poet who introduced this [*Kafi*] poetic form" (Dhillon P 33). Another great Sufi who emerged on the soil of Punjab was Sultan Bahu (1631-1691), follower of *Qadriya* order and almost forty books have been attributed to his name, mostly in Persian. His contribution in the field of Punjabi Sufi poetry was immense, besides *Kafis* he also wrote *Siharfis* (Punjabi poetic form). Dhillon writes that Bahu, "was a scholar of Arabic and Persian but he contributed to Panjabi Sufi poetry also in the form of 'Siharfi'" (33). Then we have Shah Sharif Btalvi (1640-1724), Bulleh Shah (1680-1758) to whom this chapter is devoted, Ali Hayder (160-1758), Hashim Shah (1735-1843), Ghulam Farid Chachra (1845-1901). All these Sufi poets have rendered a very valuable service in the field of Punjabi Sufi poetry which spread love of God, humanity and supplied nudge to the masses that the eternal peace and bliss of life is in the Oneness of God. Further, there were some lesser known poets like, Ghulam Jilani, Karam Ali, Ghulam Mustafa, Mohammad Ashraf, Dhani Ram Chatrik, Pritam Singh etc, who also expressed their Love of God, longing and yearning in the different poetic forms of Punjabi Sufi poetry.

### **Introduction to the Poet**

Bulleh Shah (1680-1758) was an Islamic scholar, Sufi and a poet of great repute, composed his poetry in Punjabi language and the poetic form he often utilizes is known as *Kafi*, a classical Sufi style of poetry employed by both Sufi saints as well as Sikh gurus in the then Punjab and its adjacent areas. In the connection of the employment of *Kafi* as poetic form by the Sufis of Punjab, Dhillon writes, "Though Sufi poets adopted different

poetic forms but ‘Kafi’ was the most popular and accepted form in which almost every Sufi poet expressed his inner self” (31). Kafi is of Arabic origin. It is a poetic stanza of two lines and more lines are added to it when it is sung. According to Dhillon, “Kafi was considered a ‘love song’, which over flows with music and rhythm and makes the spiritual marriage of the soul with the Almighty easy” (31). In his book, *Bulleh Shah Life & Poems*, Paul Smith states in relation to language and form employed by Bulleh Shah:

Bulleh wrote primarily in Punjabi (that is written in the Persian script), but also in the locally spoken language, Siraiki, which is considered a dialect of Punjabi.....His main style of poetry is called Kafi, that was already an established form with the Sufis who preceded him. It contains radif or refrain that begins the poem and ends it and is repeated between the various rhyming verses in between and reminds one of the mukhammas (11).

Bulleh also employed other forms like, *Dohre* (couplets), *Baramah* (poetic form based on 12 months, in which poet recounting his longing, woes etc in relation to the months of the years) etc, but mostly relied on *Kafis* which provided him more space for the fair expression.

In their article, “The Life of Bulleh Shah”, Puri and Shangari write:

“The greatest Sufi poet of the Punjab was Mir Bulleh Shah Qadri Shatari.”  
Because of his pure life and high spiritual attainments, he is equally popular among all communities. Scholars and dervishes have called him “The Sheikh of Both Worlds,” “The man of God,” “The Knower of



Spiritual Grace” and by other equally edifying titles. Considered as the greatest mystic poet of the Punjab, his compositions have been regarded as “the pinnacle of Sufi literature.” His admirers compare his writings and philosophy to those of Rumi and Shams-i-Tabriz. At present, he is held in equally great esteem in Northern India and Pakistan (1).

Regarding the spiritual being of Bulleh Shah, Annemarie Schimmel says:

Bulleh Shah is considered the greatest of the Punjabi mystical poets. Like his contemporaries Shah Abdul Latif in Sind and Shah Waliullah, Mir Dard, and Mazhar Janjhanan in Delhi, he was a witness of the epoch of great political disasters that occurred, with only brief interruptions, in the northwestern part of the sub-continent after Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Like these mystics, he found peace in the inner word of love and surrender, singing his mystical songs in order to console himself and his friends in the times of external sufferings and afflictions. His poetry was so highly esteemed that he was surnamed the Rumi of Punjab. In addition to being the leading poet of Punjabi Sufism, he also composed a number of Persian prose treatises comparable to those of Mir Dard (338).

Lajwanti Ramakrishna, Indian reputed scholar of mysticism writes about Bulleh in her famous book, *Punjabi Sufi Poets*:

BULLHE SHAH is universally admitted to have been the greatest of the Panjabi mystics. No Panjabi mystic poet enjoys a wider celebrity and a greater reputation. His *kafis* have gained unique popularity. In truth he is

one of the greatest Sufis of the world and his thought equals that of Jalal-ud-din Rumi and Shams Tabriz of Persia. As a poet Bulle Shah is different from the other Sufi poets of the Panjab, and represents that strong and living pious nature of Panjabi character which is more reasonable than emotional or passionate (62).

The real name of Bulle Shah was Abdullah Shah, but became famous with Bulle Shah as it was his pet name at home and latter he used it as a nom de plume throughout his poetry. He, “was named Abdullah Shah but he shone at the horizon of name and fame by his short name i.e. Bulle Shah” (Anjum 10). Puri and Shangari made it further clear: “Bulle Shah’s real name was Abdullah Shah. From Abdullah Shah it changed to Bulle Shah, out of affection some call him Baba Bulle Shah, Sain Bulle Shah and some other mer Bullah” (1).

Scholars differ in terms of the time of his birth and death. However, majority of them agrees that he might have lived from 1680-1758. There is also a dispute about his place of birth, some scholars argued that he was born at Uch Gillan, Bahawalpur now in Pakistan. Some held a view that he was born at Pandoke, where his family shifted from Uch. However, all the scholars agree that Bulle’s ancestors were living in Uch Gillan. Bulle’s father, Shah Mohammad Darwaish was a good scholar of Arabic and Persian and used to teach and preach in the village mosque. In this connection, Smith writes that Bulle’s father, “was a teacher and preacher in a village mosque. Little is known about Bulle Shah’s ancestry except that some of his forebears were migrants from Uzbekistan, [Bukhara] and that his family claimed direct descent from Muhammad [PBUH]” (7). Regarding the spiritual lineage of Bulle’s family, Puri and Shangari state that:

It is said that from among the ancestors of Bulleh Shah, Sayeed Jallalludin Bukhari came to Multan from Surakh-Bukhara three hundred years earlier. Here he got initiated from Hazrat Sheikh Ghaus Bahauddin Zakriya of Multan, and here eventually settled down. Bulleh Shah's grandfather, Sayyaid Abdur Razzaq, descended from the same line. Thus Bulleh Shah's family, being of Sayyiad caste, was related to Prophet Mohammed on the one hand and on the other hand with Sufi thought and mystic traditions, for centuries (1).

Further, Shah Muhammad Darwaish's greatness can be traced through the tomb that has been erected on his grave and still exists at Pandoke, Pakistan. In addition to that, *urs* (death anniversary) is performed every year to commemorate him at his tomb and Bulleh's Kafis are sung over there, hence a rich tribute is paid by masses to both of them to celebrate their memory.

Bulleh Shah received his early education from his father as it was the then tradition among the Muslim families especially in Sayyeds. Moreover, the rich tradition of spiritual learning that his family carried became a plus point for his later spiritual growth. Thereafter, according to the written records, he was sent to Qasur, the then centre of Islamic learning. At that time, there were two great Islamic scholars namely, Maulana Muhiyuddin and Ghulam Murtaza, who were engaged in imparting education in theology in the then elementary schools (*Maktabs*) usually in the adjacent rooms of the mosque. Hence, Bulleh got an opportunity to study under Ghulam Murtaza. In relation to Bulleh's higher education and teacher, Anjum writes: "The young Abdullah was sent to Kasur, which was at the time ruled by Pathans of Afghanistan under the Mughal rule, for his

early education to Hazrat Ghulam Murtaza, a renowned jurist and scholar of Kasur” (11). In one of his articles, “Bulleh Shah in Punjabi Poetic Tradition”, Puri states that, “His [Bulleh Shah’s] teacher was Khwaja Ghulam Murtaza, who trained two rebellious personalities; the other was Waris Shah, author of Punjab’s greatest romance in verse, *Heer*” (128).

From the above discussion, one can safely argue that Bulleh Shah was well versed in Arabic, Persian and the Quran. And, his scholarship can be traced in his poetry as well, for instance:

*(Kitey nahnu aqrab kehda ey*

*Kitey akhda ey fi an fusikum)*

*Who proclaimed “We are nearer than your main artery*

*At another announces “We are in your persons”*

*(Padh fazkuro ni azkurukum)*

*Just read the verse “you recall me and I recall you”*

(Transliteration, Trans Anjum 122-123)

After completing his education in Qasur, his esoteric self did not allow him to rest as his scholarship and the divine spark arose in him a sense of realization. In fact, the bookish knowledge did not satiate his inner being, with the result, his esoteric self starts looking into the other means. It was this mystic consciousness that leads him to Inayat Shah Qadri (died 1728), who later became his Murshid. Inayat Shah Qadri belonged to the Qadri

sufi order that has been established by Abdul Qadir Jilani of Baghdad. He was also a great scholar of *Shairi'at* and has written many books on Sufism like, *Dastur-ul-Amal*, *Islah-ul-Amal*, *Lataif-i-Ghaibya*, *Ishartul Taliban* etc. In one of his Kafis, Bulleh pays a tribute to both, Abdul Qadir Jilani and his Master:

*My master of Masters hailed from Baghdad,  
but my master belongs to the throne of Lahore  
It is all the same. For He himself is the Kite  
and He himself is the string.*

(qtd. in Puri and Shangari 2)

Further, in *Bang-i-Auliya-i-Hind*, the reference it carried about Anayat Shah is following:

*From the tribe of gardeners was brother Shah Inayat,  
He received honor from Shah Raza Wali Allah.  
He earned his living in the small town of Qasur Pathana.  
The ruler Husein Khan of his town was his arch enemy.  
From there Inayat Shah came to the city of Lahore;  
Two miles to the south of the city he made his habitation.  
It is at this place we find his tomb.*

*In 1141 he departed from this world.*

(qtd. in Puri and Shangari 3)

Bulleh Shah's first encounter with Inayat Shah was somewhat dramatic and has been narrated by many scholars with some variations, for instance, Smith narrated the incident in this way:

It is said that while he was searching the spiritual circles of Lahore to find a real spiritual Master he heard of Shah Inayat's greatness and decided to make him his Master. He turned his steps towards Shah Inayat's house and found him engrossed in his work in the garden. Having introduced himself, he requested that he may be accepted a disciple and taught the secret of God. Shah Inayat said, "O Bulleh the secret of God is this; on this side God uproots and on the other side God creates" (8).

One of the narratives about the encounter had been written in *Bang-i-Auliya-i-Hind*, it goes:

In the city of Qasur Pathana it happened to a man of God, a descendent of Prophet Mohammad, the grandson of Pir Jilani, that he achieved greatness from Hazrat Shah Inayat whose tomb lies in Lahore, south of the city. Bulleh Shah said to himself, 'I must get my Master after testing him. I must fully satisfy myself, I must drink water after straining it.' In his intense search for his Master, he first looked towards Lahore, then he came there and took his residence where the garden of Shah Inayat was

situated. There he saw a mango on a tree at that time; he looked at it, invoked the name of God, and the mango fell on the ground. Shah Inayat called to him and said, 'Listen, you wayfarer, you have stolen my mango. Give it back to me.' Bulleh Shah replied, "I did not climb up the tree; your mangoes are far from my reach. It is with wind that the mango broke from the branch and came into my lap. Invoking the name of God, you got the mango. You have committed a theft. "Bulleh Shah realized the spiritual power and knowledge of Inayat Shah. He fell at his feet, was graced by initiation from the master and attained the secret knowledge (qtd. in Puri and Shangari 3).

After entering into the circle of Inayat Shah, there appeared a tremendous change in the life of Bulleh. While being on the path of *Salook* and in the company of Murshid, he experienced the state of strange ecstasy. And, in that state of divine rapture, he proclaimed:

*(Aisa jagya gyan paleta*

*Na ham hindu na turuk kharori*

*Namee ishiq da hai manzoori*

*Ashiq ney har jeeta)*

(Transliteration Duggal 222)

*What a spark of knowledge is kindled*

*I find, I am neither Hindu nor Turk.*

*I am a lover by creed.*

*A lover is victorious even when swindled.*

(Trans. Duggal 223)

The concept of *Murshid* in the circle of Sufism is of awe. *Murshid* held in high esteem as it is he who illuminates and enlightens the heart of a disciple. According to Shahabudin Suhrawardi:

The Sheikh's purpose is to cleanse the rust of lust and of nature the murid's heart so that in it, by attraction and inclinations may be reflected the rays of the beauty of unity, and the glory of eternity, so that, by beholding them, his eyes may be attracted; and so that, thus, divine love may rest in his sincere heart (qtd. in Darbar Allah Hoo n.p).

Thereafter, Bulleh's sinner eye had been opened; all his confusions were erased and had been blessed with the God Consciousness. Meanwhile, some of his friends and relatives dissuaded him not to go to Inayat Shah, saying that he was a great scholar and a descendent of Prophet (PBUH). It does not look good that a sayyed should go to the ordinary gardener of low caste and become his disciple'. But Bulleh was in search of reality, self and God and it was Inayat Shah who could lead Bulleh to his destiny. In this regard, Puri and Shangari observed:



For a distinguished scholar, who belonged to the line of Prophet Mohammad [PBUH] to accept an ordinary vegetable grower as his Master was a very extraordinary event in the social conditions of Bulleh Shah's times. It was an explosion which shook the prevailing social structure. Bulleh had to suffer the taunts and ridicule (6).

All the doubts and uncertainties that Bulleh's mind was carrying before meeting Inayat Shah were vanished completely by the grace of his Master. Moreover, he did not pay heed to the people who dissuaded him from the path of *Salook*, he answered them as it is evident from his many Kafis, for instance he says:

*Shah Inayat is my Master, who has come to grace me.*

*All my wrangles and strife's are over.*

*Who can now delude me?*

*Bulleh Shah has no caste;*

*He has found Shah Inayat.*

(qtd. in Puri and Shangari 4-5)

Like the tradition of Sufis, Bulleh's Murshid acts as an alchemist who can turn iron into gold. He says, *O Bulleh, my Lord Inayat knows God/ He is the Master of my heart./ I am iron, he is the philosopher's stone*(qtd. in Puri and Shangari 5).

It is said that after certain period of time, Bulleh once annoyed his Murshid by some indiscretion and for that Inayat Shah snatched his grace and kept distance from him.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the reason of annoyance was Bulleh's open criticism to some rituals and customs practiced by common men. However, this reason could not seem sound as it is common among the Sufis to criticize the customs that has been introduced in the religion by clerics for their own welfare. The other narrative about the annoyance is that, there was a marriage of some relative in the clan of Bulleh Shah and Inayat Shah was also invited. The Master deputed one of his disciples to represent him over there. Since, the disciple belonged to a lower caste, hence, he did not get the proper respect in the function. When the disciple narrated his tale to his Master, he decided to deprive Bulleh from his grace as in the circle of Sufism there is no caste, creed or any material hierarchy. The moment the disciple complained about Bulleh, Inayat Shah replied:

How dear Bullah behave like this?" And then added, "What have we to get from this useless man? We shall change the direction of the flow of water from his fields to yours!" He had only uttered these words to bring a calamity in Bulleh's life. As soon as the Master changed the direction of his grace, his spring turned into autumn. His inner visions vanished, leaving him dry and barren. Light changed into darkness and bliss into mourning. It was a stunning blow to Bullah (Puri and Shangari 8).

The deprivation of esoteric vision and the distance from master was a sort of shock, a torture to Bulleh. He began to burn in the fire of separation and repentance. All the time, he was longing for the re-union with his Master; the pain of separation erupts in him like a storm. And, in the state of extreme longing, Bulleh wails:

*Leaving my parents, I am tied to you,*

*Oh Shah Inayat! My beloved Guru*

*Whatever happens is ordained by him.*

*His mandate none dare alter.*

*My pangs of agony cry aloud*

*Someone should go and tell my Master*

*For whom I Pine.*

(Trans. Duggal 5-6)

As the time passed, Bulleh did not see any ray of reconciliation and his condition worsened moment by moment. He was hanging between the pain of separation and the insults hurled on him by people. In the utmost pain of longing and indifference, he says:

*(eh dukh ja kahun kis age*

*rom rom ghao prem ke lage.*

*sikat sikat hai rain vihai*

*hamre piya ne pid na jani)*

(qtd. in Rasil332)

*To whom may I explain,*

*This sorrow of separation and its pain.*

*Every part of my body is bleeding,*

*With deep wounds of His love;*

*Sighing in sorrow I have spent my nights,*

*My Beloved has not known my agony.*

(qtd. in Rasil 284)

When nothing lured his Master, Bulleh out of frenzy disguised himself as a dancing girl and went to the shrine where his master was listening Sufi Music. He sang and danced there with full vigour and vitality, though the longing turned him into a crippled being:

*(Terey ishiq nachaya karkey thaya thaya*

*Terey ishq ne dera mere andar keeta*

*Bhar ke zihar pyala me ta apeey peeta*

*Jab de bodhey wee tabiba nahi te me margaya*

*Terey ishiq nachaya karkey thaya thaya)*

(Transliteration Anjum 119)

*Your love has made me dance, madly!*

*By this...my in love with you falling,*

*It was like I had poison been sipping.*

*Healer, I'm sad...me You're forsaking!*

*Your love, has made me dance, madly!*

(Trans. Smith P 27)

This incident is also narrated by Puri and Shangari in their article in this way:

It is said that Bulleh put on the garb of a woman, got hold of a sarangi and went to the house of a dancing girl. He learnt dancing from her and became an adept in it. He then took along with him a drummer and a harmonium player and went to the tomb of a holy man in whose memory an annual function was being celebrated. Shah Inayat had also come to attend it. While all other dancers and singers got tired and sat down, Bulleh, in ecstasy, continued to dance. His voice was extremely doleful and heart-rending. It is said that Bullah sang many Kafis on the Occasion. At last even Inayat Shah's heart melted. With a voice full of compassion he said, "are you Bullah?" Bullah ran and fell at his master's feet and replied with his eyes full of tears, "Sir, I am not Bullah but Bhulla" (10).

Finally, Inayat Shah relented and reinstated Bulleh with the divine grace. Thereafter, he fully experienced the *Fanna fi Sheikh*. Bulleh's self annihilated and merged into the self of his Murshid. In fact, it was a sort of test on the part of Inayat Shah that made Bulleh

able to receive the wealth of pure Conscious of first Fanna. In the ecstasy of Oneness of the *Fanna fi Sheikh*, he sings:

*(Ranja Ranja kardi hun me aap hi Ranja hoye*

*Sadho menu Dheedo Ranja, Heer na akho koye*

*Ranjha me vitch, me Ranja vitch, gair khayal na koye*

*Me nahi, aoh aap hai, apni aap kare diljoyee)*

(Transliteration Anjum 62)

*By repeating the Mantra of Ranjha*

*I myself have gone Ranjha*

*Call me Dheedo Ranjha none should call me Heer*

*Ranjha in me and me in Ranjha no alien ever conceived*

*It is not me it's He himself disguised in me*

*He himself console, soothe and see*

(Trans. Anjum 63)

### **Age of Bulleh Shah**

It is believed that the era of Bulleh Shah was the most troubled period in the history of Punjab. It was during this period, Mughal Empire was started collapsing and the invasions from Afghanistan were created a sort of chaos and terror among the masses. Since, communal harmony and fraternity is the hallmark of Sufis, therefore, in the midst of this communal strife, Bulleh acted as a beacon of peace, hope and harmony for the people of Punjab. It is said that:

While he was in Pandoke Muslims killed a young Sikh man who was riding through their village in retaliation for murder of some Muslims by Sikhs. Bulleh denounced the murder of an innocent Sikh and was censured by the Mullas and muftis of Pandoke. He maintained that violence was not the answer to violence (Smith 11).

To Sufis, creation is the manifestation of the creator, thus, Bulleh experienced the creator in the hearts of people and preached harmony and love through his poetry. As he declares, “in all hearts I feel the Lord” (Trans Smith 43). Further, he stands for unity between the followers of different religions and sects, he says:

*(Hindu nahi, na Musalman*

*Behi trinjhan taj abhaman*

*Suni na nahi ham shia*

*Sulh kul ka marag liya)*

(Transliteration Duggal 32)

*Neither Hindu nor Muslim**Shedding the ego sitting in Trinjan**Neither shia nor Sunni**Treading the path of peace and harmony*

(Trans. Duggal33)

In spite of being aloof from the worldly affairs, he could not resist the social and political conditions of his times. According to Duggal, “Bulleh Shah’s voice was a major voice against the injustice” (11). In his Kafis, there are many references that depict the scenes of communal strife, loot and plunder. In fact, the moral dilemma that had been created by the then political and religious upheavals and Bulleh tried to resolve it through the medium of poetry that he uttered publically, for instance, in one of his kafis, he says:

*(jadon apani apani pai gai**dhi man nu lut ke lai gai**nuh bahraoin sadi pasariya**sanu a mail yar pyaarya**dar hula hasher ajab da*



*bura hal hoya Punjab da*

*dar havie dozakh mariya*

*sanu a mil yar pyariya*

*Bullah, shauh mere ghar avasi*

*Meri boldi ag bujhavasi.)*

(Transliteration and qtd. in Rasil 335)

*When there was chaos and anarchy,*

*And everyone struggled for survival*

*The daughters looted and plundered their mothers;*

*Twelfth century Hijri has opened its mouth,*

*Come meet me, my Beloved Lord.*

*The doors of Doomsday has opened,*

*Terrible calamity has overtaken Punjab;*

*The terrors of hell-fires have spread;*

*Come meet me, my Beloved Lord.*

*Bullah's Beloved came to my dwelling place;*

*He will put away the fires,*

*Whose flames have surrounded my house?*

(qtd. in Rasil 99)

Bulleh had to witness disintegration all over the Punjab and did not even spare the Mughals, who were not able to maintain the law and order in the country. He finds them corrupt and says:

*The Mughals quaff the cup of poison.*

*Those with coarse blankets are up.*

*The genteel watch it all in quite,*

*They have a humble pie to sup.*

*The tide of the times is in spate.*

*The Punjab is in a fearsome state.*

*We have to share the hell of a fate.*

(Trans. Duggal 8)

Like other Sufis Bulleh was a liberated soul; hence, he expressed his inner freedom openly. The love of the divine made him free from all the chains, his heart used to beat with the rhythms of nature. In fact, he finds himself a rebel against all the injustice that was prevailing during his times in the country. In the state of fearlessness and extreme ecstasy, he says:

*(main be-kaid, main be-kaid*

*na rogi na vaid*

*na main momin na mai kafir*

*na sayid na said,*

*chaudhin tabaki sair asada*

*kite na hunde kaid.)*

(Transliteration, qtd. in Rasil 333)

*I am without chains*

*I am without bondage*

*I am neither ill*

*Nor am I a physician.*

*I am neither orthodox*

*Nor am I a heretic*

*I wander in the fourteen regions of the Universe*

*No where can I be imprisoned*

(qtd. in Rasil 291)

Bulleh was also critical of the clergy of his times who were engaged in the exploitation of the innocent masses. Like other Sufis, he severely attacked them whether Brahmanic or Muslim. According to Bulleh, the clergy were exploiting the faith of innocent people and misleading them with the question of hell and heaven and other superstitious beliefs. In this regard, Smith rightly observed: “He was an impartial critic of bigotry and those set rules and regulations of any church that forbid free expression of divine love” (10). To Bulleh, they were white robed thugs, who were looting people in the name of religion, he says:

*(bulliah dharamsal dhodvai rehande*

*thakur duare thug\_*

*vich masite kusatiye rehande*

*ashaq rehan alag.)*

(Transliteration, qtd. in Rasil 332)

*In the Hindu religious places reside dacoits and*

*plunderers*

*In the Hindu temples*

*people find thugs*

*In the mosques live*

*Liars and enemies of truth*

Lovers of God remain apart.

(qtd. in Rasil 287)

In another *Kafi*, while criticizing them he also declares that the lovers lead both of them, clergy as well as masses towards the right path. He says:

*The thugs with their mouths full of froth*

*Talk about life and death*

*Without making any sense*

*The lovers show them the true path.*

(Trans. Duggal 19)

Being critical about the pedantic religious duties, Bulleh invites the clerics towards the essence of existence. He is opposed to false rituals and superstitious beliefs and laid emphasis on the purity of heart. He addresses both Muslims and Hindus to cohere to the true way of worship. He tells them that visiting the Holy places with impure hearts is futile and explains that real action and worship lies in the expelling of ego and “I” from the heart:

*(Makkay gayaan, gal mukdee naheen*

*Pawain sow sow jummy parrh aaeey*

*Ganga gayaan, gal mukdee naheen*

*Pawain sow sow gotay khaeey*

*Gaya gayaan gal mukdee naheen*  
*Pawain sow sow pand parrhaeeay*  
  
*Bulleh Shah gal taeyon mukdee*  
*Jadon May nu dillon gawaeey)*

(Transliteration, qtd. in Qausain n.p)

*Visiting Makkah, is not final*  
  
*Albeit hundreds of prayers are offered*  
  
*Visiting River Ganges, is not final*  
  
*Albeit hundreds of cleansing are performed*  
  
*Visiting to Gaya, is not final*  
  
*Albeit hundreds of prayers are performed*  
  
*Albeit hundreds of prayers are performed*  
  
*Bulleh Shah, the question would be solved*  
  
*When the "I" is evacuated from the heart.*

(Trans. mine)

In another *Kafi*, he addresses the scholars who rely more on books but do not have time to study their own self. He further addresses both Hindus and Muslims who often visit

temples and mosques but failed to visit their own hearts. He argues that we are always struggling with Satan but seldom fight with our ego.

*(Parh parh ilm hazaar kitaaban*

*kadi apne aap nu parhya nahin*

*Jaa jaa wardey mandar maseeti*

*kadi mann apne wich wareya nahin*

*Anven larda shaitaan de naal bandeya*

*kadi nafs apne naal larya nahin*

*Aakhe peer Bulleh Shah aasmani pharna aen*

*jehra man wich wasda unhon pharya nahin)*

(Transliteration, qtd. in Ranjis)

*By studying books and turning into scholars,*

*But yet to study thyself*

*Visiting temples and mosques*

*But yet to enter into thine hearts.*

*Every now and then struggling with Satan*

*But yet to hold the One who is in your own abode.*

*Bulleh Shah, seizing the flying things*

*But yet to hold the one who is in thine home.*

(Trans. mine)

However, being critical to the fanatic followers of religion does not indicate that Bulleh did not respect the religion or followed the *Shiri'at* (Divine law). In fact, he followed the *Shari'at* more closely than the *Mullas* and common Muslim. Since, the first stage in Sufism is to follow the *Shari'at* in letter and spirit, and then one can enter into the other stages like, *Tariqat*, *Haqeeqat* and *Marifat*. In one of his Kafis, he proclaimed:

*(shariat sadi dai ei*

*Tariqat sadi mai ei*

*agon haq haqiqat ai ei*

*ate marfaton kujh paya ei)*

(Transliteration, qtd. in Rasil 334)

*Shariat is our nurse,*

*Tariqat is our mother;*

*Then comes the Truth of Haqiqat.*

*From ma'rifat I have attained,*

*Some knowledge and experience.(qtd. in Rasil 292)*



The above Kafi also indicates that Bulleh has experienced the above four stages and is approaching towards the higher state.

### **Higher Consciousness/ Concept of God in the Poetry of Bulleh Shah**

During the last stage of his learning at Qasur, the germs of *Ishiq* were emerging in Bulleh which left him in unrest. It was the strong quest of the divine that lead him to his *Murshid*, Inayat Shah. Sufis believe that it is the *Ishq* that is the cause of this universe and therefore, it is at the centre of Sufism. Bulleh started his spiritual voyage as a formalist as other Sufis do. As mentioned earlier, *Shari'at* is the primary stage in which a *Salik* follows the code of conduct decreed by the Quran and the Tradition of Prophet (PBUH). Thereafter, one has to pass through other stages: *Tariqat*, *Haqeeqat* and *Marifat*. While passing through these four stages, Bulleh experienced the love of *Murshid*, Prophet and finally of God. In fact, the spiritual voyage of *Ishq* starts with the esoteric attachment to the *Murshid*. As we have discussed above, in the stages of *Fanna*, initially the *Talib* (seeker or disciple) experiences the annihilation of his self and merges into the self of his *Murshid*. As examined above, in this first stage of *Fanna*, Bulleh's inner being has merged in the being of his Master. Thereafter, Bulleh stepped into the second stage of *Fanna*, i.e. *Fanna fi Rasool*, in which the seeker's self annihilates and merged into the Being of Rasool (PBUH). Being at this stage, Bulleh says:

*(nur nabi da haq se jari*

*nur muhammed sal ilia*

*Bulleh shah di dhum machi hai*

*la illa il—illah.)*

(Transliteration, qtd. in Rasil 333)

*The Light of Mohammed*

*Emerged from Eternal Truth*

*The Light of Muhammed*

*Is the perfect Lord.*

*Bulleh Shah loudly declares*

*The One God is the Perfect Lord*

(qtd. in Rasil 291)

At another place, Bulleh narrated his experience of *Fanna Fi Rasool* in this way, he says:

*(Phir 'kun' kiya, 'fayakun' kamaya, be chooni to chon banaya*

*'Ahad de vich meem ralaya', taheyo keta aed pasaar)*

*The matchless created a match for Him*

*Adding a unit to the existing figure;*

*It was putting 'Meem' along 'Ahad'*

*And the Lord spread like fire all over.*

(Transliteration, Trans. Duggal154-159)

Latter Bulleh entered into the final stage of *Fanna* known as *Fanna fi Allah*, in which his self merged into the being of God and thereafter, he experienced the *Baqqa Billah* that is Eternal Bliss, Ecstasy or simply Eternity. While experiencing the *Fanna fi Allah*, Bulleh says:

*(Bulleh shiwah nu koye na dekhey*

*Jo dekhey so kisey na likey*

*Iss da rang na roop na rekh ey*

*O hi howey hokey chor)*

(Transliteration Duggal 148)

*Ask Bulleh, who has seen the Lord?*

*He who has seen Him, bears no record.*

*He has no colour, features or complexion*

*He must be the thief, if I mistaken not.*

(Trans. Duggal149)

In the state of *Baqa*, like, Shamas Tabriz and Mansoor, Bulleh sings in the extreme ecstasy:

*(Bulleh! Ki jaana maen kaun*

*Na maen momin vich maseet aan*

*Na maen kufar diyan reet aan*

*Na maen paakan vich paleet aan*

*Na maen moosa na pharaun*

*Bulleh! Ki jaana maen kaun*

*Na maen andar Ved kitaabaan,*

*Na vich bhagaan na sharaab aan*

*Na vich rindaan mast Kharaab aan*

*Na vich Jaagan na vich saun.*

*Bulleh! Ki jaana maen kaun*

*Na vich shaadi na ghamnaaki*

*Na maen vich paleeta paaki*

*Na maen aabi na maen khaki*

*Na maen aatish na maen pavan*

*Bulleh! Ki jaana maen kaun*

*Na maen Arabi na lahori*

*Na maen hindi shehar nagouri*

*Na hindu na turak peshawari*

*Na maen rehnda vich nadaun*

*Bulleh! ki jaana maen kaun*

*Na maen bheth mazhab da paya*

*Na maen adam havva jaaya*

*Na maen apna naam dheraaya*

*Na maen vich baitthan na vich bhaun*

*Bulleh! ki jaana maen kaun*

*Avval aakhir aap nu jaana*

*Na koi dooja hor peh chaana*

*Maethon horn na koi siyaana*

*Bulleh! ooh khadda hai kaun*

*Bulleh! ki jaana maen kaun)*

(Transliteration Duggal 30)

*Bulleh, I don't know, who am I.*

*Not a believer to mosque going;*

*Nor in the temple... unbelieving.*

*I am not pure, I am not sinning;*

*Pharaoh, Moses, I'm not being.*

*Bulleh, I don't know, who am I.*

*Not found if in Vedas sought...*

*Never by any intoxicant bought,*

*Nor by what a drunkard taught,*

*Not asleep, or staying awake...*

*Bulleh, I don't know, who am I.*

*I don't woo joy, the sad forsake:*

*don't do good, the bad not take,*

*earth, air, water, me don't make:*

*Bulleh, I don't know, who am I.*

*I'm of no country, India or other:*

*I'm not in village or city dweller,*

*no Mogul, [Hind]s, Turk neither,*

*not centre, circumference either,*

*Bulleh, I don't know, who am I.*

*[I don't know the secret of religion,*

*I'm not born of Adam and Eve]*

*I've not any name, essentially...*

*I'm in no house, or wild country:*

*Bulleh, I don't know, who am I.*

*I'm in the beginning, I'm at end:*

*only on me, this One, I depend;*

*no one is wiser than I, I contend*

*[Bulleh! Who is around there?]*

*Bulleh, I don't know, who am I.*

(Trans. Smith 25-26)

The above *Kafi* is the zenith of Bulleh's spiritual journey, where he is denying everything even birth and death that conveys the message of *Anal haq*, proclaimed by Mansoor. Hence, he is believed to be the Mansoor of Punjab. From the above discussion one can argue that the duality vanishes and Bulleh became one with God, where he would be able to understand the game of existence. To Bulleh distinction blurred, he found unity in diversity and experienced Him everywhere:

*(paya hai kujh paya hai,*

*satgur ne alakh lakhaya hai*

*kahun vair pade kahu beli\_hai*

*kahun majnu hai kahu laili hai*

*kahun ap guru kahu cheli hai*

*sabh aphna rah dikhaya hai*

*kahun chor bana kahu shahji hai*

*kahun mambur te bahi Qazi hai*

*kahun Tegh Bahadur ghazl hai,*

*kahuri bani thakar dvara hai*

*kahun bairagi jap dhara hai*

*kahun shekhan ban ban aya hai*

*kahun turak musella padde ho,*

*kahun bhagat hindu jap karde ho.)*

(Transliteration Rasil 334-335)

*I have achieved, I have achieved something*

*My true Guru has revealed*

*The Unmanifest as manifest,*

*Somewhere He is an enemy*



*Somewhere He is a Friend*

*Somewhere He is Majnu*

*Somewhere He is Laila*

*Somewhere He is the Guru,*

*Somewhere He is a disciple,'*

*Somewhere He is a thief,*

*Somewhere He is bestower of gifts;*

*Somewhere He sits on the pulpit,*

*As Qazi (issuing fatwas);*

*Somewhere He is Guru Tegh Bahadur,*

*Crusader for Truth and Righteousness (Ghazi),*

*Who has proclaimed his own Panth (Way),*

*Somewhere He is bairagi absorbed in meditation,*

*Somewhere He is a Sheikh clad in robes.*

*Somewhere He is a Muslim with prayer carpet,*

*Somewhere He is a Hindu repeating God's names.*

After analyzing the poetry and life of Bulleh Shah, it seems he was immersed in the trance of Divine love and attained such ecstatic heights where he could get respect and love from the people of all faiths. He had attained the Gnosis, *Marifat* or Consciousness of God and was in the Eternal Peace. Moreover, through his poetry he encourages the masses so that they also crave for the same as according to Sufis the real purpose of life is to recognize self in relation to God. According to Puri and Shangiri, “Bulleh Shah was an evolved soul, a perfect faqir and a true lover....The life and compositions of Bulleh Shah will serve as a lighthouse for times immemorial to true seekers of spiritual realization” (13).

Further, his poetry is simultaneously simple, musical and full of human concern. Smith observes that, “the simplicity with which he has been able to address the complex fundamental issues of life and humanity is a large part of his appeal” (12). Like other classical Sufi poets, his *Kafis* have been rendered into music by many famous singers like, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Waddali brothers, Abida Parveen, Sain Zahoor, Junoon rock band, Coke Studio etc. Further, his *Kafis* have also found their way in Bollywood and Pakistani music like, “Chaiya Chaiyya” in *Dil Se* (1998), “Ranjha Ranjha” in *Ravan* (2010), “Bandeya Ho” in *Khuda Kay Liye*, Pak movie (2007), “Bulleh Shah, O Yaar Mere” in *A Wednesday* (2008), “Bhulleya Hafiz mera” in *Aey Dil Hai Mushkil* (2016). He has been also introduced to the western audiences through English translations done by both natives as well as Europeans.

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## Chapter 4

### Fusion

*(man tan shudam, tu man shudi, man tan shudam tu jaan shudi,  
takas na goyend baed azee man deegaram tu deegari)*

I am the body and thou art the heart, I am the corporeal thou art the soul  
So that thereafter, no one could say that we art the two.

Amir Khusrow

In this chapter the attempt is to look into the relationships of the mystical elements in the poetry of Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah. In terms of time, space, sensibility, tradition and language both Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah are worlds apart. In spite of that, many facets of their poetry fuse them together. Hence, the attempt of this chapter is to weave the similarities and differences in their mystical journey in general and in mystical approach/elements in particular. Further, the religious, social, academic backgrounds etc, of the poets have also been taken into the consideration.

In the previous chapters we have discussed the lives, ages, literary backgrounds and the diverse influences that shaped the poetic sensibility of both, Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah. At the very outset, both Lalla as well as Bulleh had a good literary atmosphere. Both of them got fair amount of traditional learning in their respective religions. Lalla was well versed in Sanskrit and the *Savaistic* scriptures, while Bulleh was trained in Islamic academics. However, formal education failed to lure their esoteric quest. Lalla

broke off from her in-laws' family and went to Sidha Mol, who happened to be her guru.

C.L. Sapru states that, Lalla:

was born in a cultured Kashmiri Brahmin family, and had a disastrous married life in which she had to suffer great torture.... A hostile mother-in-law and a suspicious husband forced her to break the fetters of social bindings and codes of behaviour, and she set out on the course of spiritual quest. She was guided on this path by Sddha Mol, her Guru (127-128).

Thereafter, she started roaming through the streets of the Valley. On the other hand, Bulleh also went to Inayat Shah to quench his inner thirst. Since, Inayat Shah was considered a low caste Muslim, it "was greatly resented by his people who were Sayeds, while Bulleh Shah's Murshid was a low caste Araeen" (Duggal 4). Both, Lalla and Bulleh preferred to be rebels against the bogus social constructions. Thus, they enjoyed the extra favours in the circle of their Masters.

### **1. Age of the Poets**

Lalla Ded's age is believed to be the age of great change. It was the time when new faith (Islam) and the new socio-political order were emerging with great speed. Regarding the times of Lalla Ded, Sapru rightly observed that, "Lalleshwari's birth is an actual fact of history and she was real person who lived in age of transition which saw the decline of Hindu Political power and rise of Muslim political power in Kashmir" (128). Similarly, Bulleh Shah too was born in the age when Punjab was in unrest. By and large, there were similar political, social and religious circumstances in the then Punjab to that of Lalla's times. It is because of this resemblance of circumstances in which they were born that

many of their ideas and beliefs are akin. After exploring Bulleh Shah's poetry, it can be fairly assumed that Bulleh was deeply conscious about the condition of the then Punjab.

The echoes of unrest are clearly visible in his *Kafis*, for instance:

*(Ultey hor zamane aaye*

*Kaan lagda nou maran lagey*

*Chadya jarey dhaye*

*Ultey hor zamane aaye)*

(Transliteration in Duggal 34)

*Strange are the time!*

*Crows swoop down on hawks.*

*Sparrow do eagles stalk.*

*Strange are the times!*

(Trans. in Duggal 34-35)

## **2. Literary Background**

The tradition of the then Kashmiri Brahman families was to teach their children in their homes. Since Lalla belonged to a well off Brahman family, therefore she got her initial education at home. However, she finds something missing that could satiate her esoteric quest; therefore, she went to her Guru for the self realization leading to Divinity. Further,

the phrases she used in her poetry indicate her deep knowledge of the *Trikamat*, for instance:

*(morith ponts buth tim phal-handi*

*tsetana-dana-wakhur kheth*

*taday zanakh parmu pad tsandi*

*hishiy khosh-khor koh-ti na kheth)*

(Transliteration in Grierson 101-102)

*Fatten the five elements like they were rams meant for the sacrifice.*

*Feed them the grain of mind-light, and cakes fit for the gods.*

*Then kill them. But don't rush.*

*You need the password to the Supreme Place*

*To reach wisdom by breaking the rules.*

(Trans. in Hoskote 22)

In the above *Vakh*, Lalla is talking about the five elements of *Saivism* and they are earth, water, fire, air and vacuum. In Saiva tradition, it is believed that these five elements are responsible for the creation of universe. Grierson in his seminal book, *Lalla Vakyani*, records:

buth...a technical name in Saiva philosophy for the group of the five *tattvas*, or factors, of which the apparent universe consists, called in Sanskrit the *bhutas* or *mahabuttas*. They are the five factors, or principles, which constitute the materiality of the sensible universe. They are (1) the principle of solidity, technically called *prthivi*, or earth; (2) the principle of liquidity, technically *ap*, or water; (3) the principle of formativity, technically *agni*, or fire; (4) the principle of aeriality, technically *vayu*, or the atmosphere; and (5) the principle of vacuity, technically *akasa*, or the sky (187).

Looking into Bulleh, he too got his initial education at home as it was also the tradition among the Sayyeds to impart primary education to their children at home. After that he went to Qasur for formal education. Like, Lalla, Bulleh also felt himself incomplete though well versed in the Islamic academics. To quench the thirst of Self realization and Divine knowledge he went to Inayat Shah who showed him a direction for the Communion. Likewise in Bulleh the influence of Islamic teaching is fairly evident in his poetry, for instance he sings:

*(Kitey nehnu agrab kehnda aey*

*Kite aakhda aey fi anfusikum*

*Gaye puhuch sajn de basti nu*

*Jo hoye umi, bukmun te sum)*

(Transliteration Anjum 122)

*Who proclaimed “We are nearer than your main artery”*

*At another announces “We are in your persons”*

*They draw closer to the bower of beloved cute*

*Who are illiterate deaf and dumb, not astute*

(Trans. Anjum 123)

The above verses indicate that Bulleh like Lalla was also well versed in the scriptures. However, the above expressions are common in the circle of Sufism.

### **3. Similarities in Mystical Approach**

After examining the similarities in terms of biographical and literal levels of Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah, the study now proceeds to explore the parallels in their mystical journey in general and in the Higher Consciousness in particular.

#### **a. Concept of God/ Higher Consciousness**

The concept of Om is one of the most significant spiritual symbols of Hinduism in general and Kashmiri *Saivism* in particular. Entomologically, it refers to Brahman, the Truth, ultimate reality or God. In the same way the word Allah in the field of Sufism is essentially important. Sufis meditate on the word Allah by adding *Hoo* to it, while in *Saivism* the word *Su* is added to it. There are many references in the poetry of both, Bulleh Shah and Lalla Ded that indicates their contemplation on these words. For instance, in one of her *Vakhs*, Lalla sings:

*(om-kar yeli laye onum*

*wuhi karum panunu paan*

*shewotu trovith ta sath marg rotum*

*teli Lal boh wotsus prakashe-sthan)*

(Transliteration Grierson 108)

*My mind bloomed with the sound of Om,*

*my body was a burning coal.*

*Six roads brought me to a seventh,*

*that's how Lalla reached the Field of Light.*

(Trans. in Hoskote 53)

Similarly, Bulleh meditates on the letter *Alif* which refers to Allah, God.

*(Ik Alif pado chutkara hai*

*Ik Alifo do teen chsaar howey*

*Phir lakh, crore, hazar howey*

*Phir othoo bajh shummar howey*

*Iss Alif da nuqta nyara hai)*

(Transliteration Anjum 103)

*Salvation lies in the word Alif.*

*This Alif maketh two, three and four.*

*Then it emerges into thousands, lacs and crores.*

*Then escalated into countless and multitude*

*This Alif has peculiar dimensions*

(Trans. mine)

Om and Allah are two different names of God in Hinduism and Islam. These words have been suffixed with *Su* and *Hoo* respectively. *Su* and *Hoo* exemplify His existence and by reciting these suffixes, duality vanishes and remains He.

In the second chapter, it has been discussed that the Non-dualistic *Saivism* had shaped the initial esoteric quest of Lalla Ded. However, in the later part of her life she was also influenced by the Sufi thought. In one of her *Vakhs*, she says:

*(niyem karyoth garba*

*tsetas kar-ba peyiy*

*marana brothay mar-ba*

*marith ta martaba hariy)*

(Transliteration Grierson 112)

*You made a promise in the womb*



*Will you keep it or won't you?*

*Die before death can claim you*

*and they will honour you when you go.*

(Trans. Hoskote 106)

The expression “die before death” is common phrase among the Sufis as it is decreed in one of the traditions of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) that reads “Die before death ” (qtd. in Bahoo 97). In fact, the concept of *Fanna* in the school of Sufism comes from the same tradition. Bulleh carried the Sufi tradition that has a direct link with Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). In one of his *Kafis*, he sings:

*(Moutu qabla anta moutu, moye nu pheer jawaley ooyaar)*

(TransliterationDuggal 182)

*Die before death comes to you, maketh me eternally alive*

(Trans. mine)

Both in Kashmiri *Saivism* and Sufism, the concept of self exploration is the basic characteristic that unravels the mysteries of the existence. After exploring the corpus of the poets, it can be fairly said that both Lalla as well as Bulleh laid emphasis on the self exploration. Lalla says:

*(tshadan lutshus poni-panas*

*tshepith gyanas wotum na kutsh*

*lay kurumas ta wotsus al-thanas*

*bar bar bana ta cewan na kuh)*

(TransliterationGrierson 87)

*I wore myself out, looking for myself.*

*No one could have worked harder to break the code.*

*I lost myself in myself and found a wine celler. Nectar, I tell you.*

*There were jars and jars of good stuff, and no one to drink it.*

(TransHoskote 14)

On the other hand, Bulleh sings the same songs though in different language. He says:

*(Jee me tainu andhar dhonda, te phir muqeed jana*

*Jee me tainu bahar dhonda te mere andhar koye sama na*

*Sab kuch tu ee, sab vicha tu ee, sab tu paak pichana*

*Me wee tu ee, tu wee me hai, wat Bullha kon na mana)*

(TransliterationDuggal 182)

*When I seek thou in myself, found thou prisoner there,*

*When I seek thou outside, I found none in myself*

*Everything is thou, everything is in thou, thine residence is all the pious*

*I am thou, thou art me, who is this innocent Bullha!*

(Trans. mine)

By exploring the self, both the poets experienced the God Consciousness, Lalla “grasped the identity of her Self with the Supreme Self, she reached the Al-than” (Grierson 87), likewise, Bulleh caught Him within and experienced the oneness with the One. Further, the self-examining spirit in both the poets found the Divine meaning or order in the universe. The concept of God to both, Lalla and Bulleh cannot be confined or restricted to any single religious belief, philosophy or theological contention. In fact, like other true mystics of the globe, they too believe that the creation is the manifestation of God and to love His creation is equivalent to loving Him. Further, they believe that God dwells within human beings, but can be experienced through the proper guidance of the Guru, *Murshid* or Master.

Both in Saivism and Sufism, Guru or Master is held in high esteem. It is the Master who could lead the disciple to the purgation of his/her soul and heart and then to prepare him/her for God realization. Both Lalla and Bulleh held their respective mentors in awe. In high reverence, Lalla calls her Guru, ‘ye gora Parameshwara’ (*My Guru, Supreme Lord*) (Hoskote 55). On the other hand, to Bulleh his *Murshid* is his savior, *kaaba*, beloved etc, as he calls him *Ranjha*. Further, in the stage of *Fanna fi Sheikh*, Bulleh’s self merged into the self of his *Murshid*, thereafter, he sees Him within and in every face, he says, “There is hardly a place without my Master / I find Him wherever I glance(Trans in Duggal 239).

In Lalla, there is an evolution of God concept from early contemplations to the later complete Union. While being on the path of spirituality, with the passage of time, she becomes more absorbed in the Divine and the self examining leads her to the Infinite. In that state Lalla's self merged into the Higher Self, where she sings:

*(makuras zan mal tsolum manas*

*ada-me lubum zanas zan*

*suh yeli dyuthum nishe panas*

*soruy suy tab oh no keh)*

(Transliteration Grierson 56)

*When the dirt was wiped away from my mind's mirror*

*People knew me for a lover of God.*

*When I saw Him there, so close to me,*

*He was all, I was nothing.*

(Trans. Hoskote 46)

The love of the divine cleanse her whole being, all the dirt had been wiped away and in the midst, she experienced the annihilation of self and finds He is all.

The vision, experience of God Consciousness and of the Union of man and the Divine can be traced in Bulleh too. The lower self or the finite ascends and merges into

the Infinite. Thus, the single drop experienced the ocean in itself. In that state of ecstasy, like Lalla, Bulleh denies his own existence and sings His sovereignty:

*(Tuhee hai, me nahi sajna*

*Tuhee hai, me naahi)*

*It is you, none of me, my love!*

*It is you, none of me.*

(Transliteration, Trans. Duggal 58-59)

Bulleh finds self-realization is nothing other than the meaning he was long seeking. He finds meaning of life or existence within his own self, his inner self had been illuminated by the Divine light that emancipated Bulleh from all the doubts and mysteries. He says:

*(Me bae qaid aa, me bae qaid: na rogi na vaid*

*Na me momin na me kafir, na me Sayed n saed*

*Choadah tabkey sair asada, kite na hoye qaid*

*Khirabat me jaal asadi, na shobha na aib*

*Bulleh Shah ki zaat ke phechane, na paida na pead)*

(Transliteration Duggal 158)

*I am emancipated, emancipated I am.*

*I am neither a patient nor a physician.*

*Neither a believer nor a non-believer.*

*I am no prisoner of being born a Sayed.*

*All the fourteen heavens are my territory.*

*I am a slave of none.*

*A liberated creature,*

*I am above good and evil.*

*Why ask Bhulleh's caste?*

*No mortal, he was not even born.*

(Trans. Duggal 158-159)

From the above discussion one can argue that these verses can be said to put forward an eclectic picture of God.

The various stages of Mystical Consciousness or Higher Consciousness both in Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah have been discussed above and also in the previous chapters. Lalla's influence by the Sufi thought in her latter stage of her mystical journey brings forth a good amount of parallels to that Bulleh's Sufi thought. The striking parallels in their poetry in terms of Self realization have been discussed above but to understand the commonalty, the scholar has divided their spiritual journey into three stages:

- (a) The stage of Purgation or Purification
- (b) The stage of Illumination or Self Realization
- (c) The stage of Union

Further, the close reading of the poems of Lalla and Bulleh disclose a close kinship in the development of their mysticism.

**a. The way of Purgation or Purification**

During this initial stage of their mystical voyage, both Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah concentrated on the sayings of their Masters as he alone can purify their heart and soul. The Guru or Murshid removes the filth, hatred, jealousy, malice etc, from their respective beings. This stage of purification is clearly visible in their poetry, for instance, Lalla in her two companion *Vakhs* expressed her purgation in detail. Her Guru simultaneously acts as cleaner, carder, gossamer, washerman and eventually the tailor who could finally shape her being for the path of spirituality:

*(lalla boh drays kapasi-poshece sutsuy*

*kodi ta duni kuru nam yutsuy lath*

*taye yeli kharenam zoyije taye*

*[w]owari- wana gayem along lath)*

*(dobi yeli chovunas dobi-kane-pethay*

*saz ta saban mutshunam yutsuy*

*satsi yeli phirunam hani-hani kotsuy*

*ada Lali me provum param-gath)*

(Transliteration Grierson 126-127)

*I, Lalla, set out to bloom like a cotton flower.*

*The cleaner tore me, the carder shredded me on his bow.*

*That gossamer: that was I*

*the spinning woman lifted from her wheel.*

*At the weaver's, they hung me out on the loom.*

*First the washerman pounded me on his washing stone,*

*scrubbed me with clay and soap.*

*Then the tailor measured me, piece by piece,*

*with his scissors. Only then could I, Lalla,*

*Find the road to heaven.*

(Trans.Hoskote 41-42)

These two companion *Vakhs* indicate the spiritual stages of purgation of Lalla's being in the hands of her Master. Now, she is pure by mind, heart and soul and is ready for the further journey. On the other hand, the first stage in the field of Sufism is



*Tawba*(repentance) which laid emphasis on returning to the original position that is the piousness, purification of heart from all the vices. To Sufi after the *bayat* with Murshid, he must pass through the stage of *Tawba* so that he could prepare himself for further stages. Thus, Bulleh passed this stage at the very outset of his spiritual journey. He had been fairly purified during the separation from his Murshid as discussed in the 3rd chapter. In the connection of purgation with relation to the repentance, Puri and Shangari observe that “the fire of repentance and separation had purified Bulleh and turned him into pure gold” (10). He, out of awe, addresses his *Murshid* as Lord and Philosopher’s stone and considers himself an iron. Bulleh knew that Inayat Shah, who is controlling his heart, can turn him into gold, thus he sings:

*O Bullah, my Lord Inayat knows God,*

*He is the master of my heart.*

*I am iron, he is the philosopher’s stone.*

(qtd. in Puri & Shangari)

### **b. The Stage of Illumination and Self Realization**

After the process of purgation, the seeker is pure now and is ready to enter into the second phase of the mystic voyage. In this second phase, he/she experiences the feeling of Bliss, resulting from an illumination, or a certain consciousness of the Infinite. Further, the seeker experiences the Self realization in relation to the surroundings. This experience of Illumination, Bliss and Self realization finds its expression in the poetry of both Lalla

Ded and Bulleh Shah. Lalla expressed this feeling in many of her *Vakhs*, for instance, she says:

*(damam dam kormas daman haalyey*

*prazlyoom dyiep ti nanyeyam zaath*

*endrym prakaash nyabar tshoTum*

*gatyi rotum ti kermas thaph)*

(Transliteration Shauq 82)

*I trapped my breath in the bellows of my throat:*

*a lamp blazed up inside, showed me who I really was.*

*I crossed the darkness holding fast to that lamp,*

*scattering its light-seeds around me as I went.*

(Trans. Hoskote 54)

In the above *Vakh*, *Lalla* expressed her esoteric Illumination resulted from contemplation on breath that enlighten her both inner as well as outer being. In fact, it was the love of Lord that illuminates the inner being of mystics and the meditation is the secondary to it. *Lalla* was feeling Divinely blessed, with the result she realized her Self in connection with the Higher Self. About this particular *Vakh*, Greirson observes that, “it was the light, not the lamp, which she winnowed forth abroad. That is to say, the light which had at first burnt dimly in the inmost recesses of her soul, now suffused her whole being” (27). Both

in Kashmiri *Saivism* and in Sufism, the breath technique is an important segment that reveals many secrets to the seeker. By reciting the words *Om-Su* and *Allah Hoo* through inhale and exhale in their respective mystic fields, the seekers are lead to the state of Bliss, Illumination and Self Realization. Like Lalla, Bulleh Shah, also experienced this Bliss, Self Realization and Illumination. The Love of God Illuminated Bulleh, as in one of his *Kafis*, he sings:

*I have got lost in the city of love,*

*I am being illumined, withdrawing myself*

*From my head, hands and feet.*

*I have got rid of my ego,*

*And have attained my goal.*

*Thus it has all ended well.*

*O Bulleh, the Lord pervades both the worlds;*

*None now appears a stranger to me.*

(qtd. in Puri and Shangari 11)

Further, in this stage of Illumination, a sort of deep insight into the ways of God and the things that are prevailing in the universe could be clear to them. This understanding into the ways of God cleared their vision that could blur the distinctions and He is visible to them in all. The following *Vakh* of Lalla indicates the same:

*(gagan tsay bhu-tal tsay*

*tsay chukh den pawan ta rath*

*arg tsandan posh poni tsay*

*tssay chukh soruy ta logiziy kyah)*

(Transliteration Grierson 67)

*You are sky and earth,*

*day, wind-breath, night.*

*You are grain, sandal paste, flowers, water.*

*Substance of my offering, you who are All,*

*What shall I offer You?*

(Trans. Hoskote 64)

Here Lalla finds Him everywhere even in herself so she wonders when He is all what shall she offer Him? In the same tune, Bulleh also experienced Him in all, he says:

*(Moula aadmi ban aaya*

*Aapey aaho, aapey cheetah, aapey maran dhaya*

*Aapey Sahib, aapey barda, aapey mal waqaya*

*Bazigar ki bazi khedi, menu patli wang nachaya*

*Me iss tali par nachna ha jo gat mat yaar likhaya*

*Moula aadmi ban aya)*

(Transliteration Duggal 254)

*My Lord comes in the guise of man*

*He is the tiger, He is the kill,*

*He Himself is the raider.*

*He is the Master, He is the slave,*

*And is Himself the slave-trader.*

*What a game the juggler plays!*

*Like a puppet He makes me dance.*

*As He claps I follow Him,*

*I do as He commands.*

*My Lord comes in the guise of man.*

(Trans. Duggal 254-55)

### **c. The Stage of Union**

Union with the Absolute is the final stage of their mystical journey. Since, the Union is the ultimate goal of mystical path, both Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah were longing for it

from the very beginning of their spiritual voyage. In that final stage, Lalla experienced a complete annihilation of her inner self and merged with the One. In that state of Divine ecstasy, she sings:

*(potu zuni wothith motu bolanowum*

*dag lalanoviim daye-sanze prahe*

*lali- Lali karan Lala wuzanowum*

*miltih tas man shortsyom dahe)*

(Transliteration Grierson 129)

*As the moonlight faded, I called out to the madwoman,*

*eased her pain with the love of God.*

*It's Lalla, it's Lalla,' I cried, waking up the Loved One.*

*I mixed with Him and drowned in a crystal lake.*

(Trans. Hoskote 49)

In the above *Vakh*, Lalla awakened his soul in the dead of the night and it is the love of the Divine that left her restless or what she calls herself a 'mad woman'. It is also the same love that made her to realize her own self as she exclaimed 'I Lalla', 'I Lalla' and finally finds peace after being merged with the Divine. It was the self annihilation that leads the seeker to the One where he proclaimed sometimes 'I am' or at times 'He alone'. In his commentary on this *Vakh*, Grierson writes:

The end of moonlight is the early dawn,—hence the conclusion of the night of ignorance referred to in the preceding verse. The mad one is the mind intoxicated and maddened by worldly illusion. The Beloved whom Lalla awoke was her own Self, which she aroused to the knowledge of its identity with the Supreme Self... ‘I became one with him and my mind lost its defilement, as in lake (of crystal-clear water)’ (129).

After merged in the One, the mysteries of heaven and hell were revealed to her as she expressed in one of her *Vakhs*:

*(Thath jaye dharna ye dharan routum*

*Aakash ta prakash korum sarr)*

(Transliteration mine, qtd. Kaul 164)

*In that place where I found the Truth*

*There the sky and the Light unraveled to me*

(Trans mine)

On the other hand, Bulleh experienced the stage of Union after passing through the Last stage of *Fanna*, i.e, *Fanna fi Allah*. In the complete annihilation of the self, Bulleh’s self merged in the Higher Self, hence, he experienced the Union with the Divine. In that state of extreme ecstasy he proclaimed:

*(Tuhioo hai, me naahi sajna*

*Tuhioo hai, me naahi)*

(Transliteration Anjum 147)

*It is you, none of me, my love!*

*It is you, none of me.*

(Trans. Duggal 59)

In the state of Union, Bulleh finds his self lost and experienced Him both inside and out. In this state, the seeker often proclaimed either, 'he is the Truth' or he is nothing and 'He is all'. In the field of Sufism, the great Sufis, in this last stage often announced that they are nothing and all is He, for instance, one of the Sufis, namely Nyamat-ullah Kashmiri, who in the state of Union sings, 'Sourai su panai, ba beal bahnai' (*He is all and I am mere excuse*) (qtd in Mehfooza 94). Further, Lalla seems to sing in the same tone as she says, 'Su wuchum chopaer ba lalla na kuney' (I found Him all over and I Lalla nowhere!).

From the above discussion one can argue that both Lalla and Bulleh have experienced the Union with the God and sung their experiences in their super-ecstasy. Their utterances not only sound good to the ear but also lure others to gain the same. Besides, like other mystics Lalla and Bulleh embarked on the spiritual path to explore the meaning of their existence and find out the way to the salvation, i.e., to Unite with Divine. Their quest was to understand the mystery, meaning and the significance of life; with the result, the fundamental question of death was also revealed to them. The mystery of death is nothing to them but the transfer from lower self to the higher Self. For instance, Lalla says:



*(kus mari tay kasu maran*

*mari kus tay maran kas*

*yus Har Har treawith ghar ghar karey*

*ada su mari tay maran tass)*

(Transliteration mine, qtd. Kaul 98)

*Who shall die, who shall be killed?*

*Who forgots the Name*

*and falls into the worlds's murky business:*

*he shall die, he shall be killed*

(Trans. Hoskote 109)

Here Lalla asks the question that 'who will die/who will be killed?' And then supplied the answer in the same *Vakh*, one who leaves the Truth and remains busy in the petty things will die and he will be killed. To Lalla, the Truth is God; therefore, one who remains ignorant about the Truth will die and has to come again until the promise would not be fulfilled, the promise that he/she has made in the womb, discussed above. In another *Vakh*, she states that, one who concentrates on the words of his Master will not die and even death will not kill him:

*(gor sabdas yus yatsh patsh bare*

*gyanas wagi rati cheth tourgas*

*yandrai shu marith aanad karey*

*ada kus mari tey maran kas)*

(Transliteration mine, qtd. Kaul 100)

*Who trusts his Master's word*

*and controls the mind-horse*

*with the reins of wisdom,*

*he shall not die, he shall not be killed.*

(Trans. Hoskote 110)

In the connection of death, like Lalla and other mystics Bulleh suggests to the masses that this world is transitory and they should realize the meaning of existence before the trumpet of death is approached. When one recognizes the Truth, he shall be free from the circle of birth and death and become eternal with the One. In one of his *Kafis* he says:

*(Aawa gon sarayee derey*

*Saath tayaar musafir terey*

*Ajee na suneyo koach naqarey*

*Ab to jag musafir pyarey)*

(Transliteration Anjum 149)

*It is a transit camp this harbor.*

*The rest of the lot are ready to move.*

*Don't you hear the drum of departure?*

*Wake up, my dear wayfarer!*

(Trans. Duggal 103)

Bulleh further, states that death spares none and like Lalla he believes that death comes to the one who would remain busy in the murky business and did not realize the existence of his self. He asks the question that is recurrent in the poetry of mystics:

*(apna das thikana, kidhar aaya, kidar jana?)*

*Who are you?*

*Wherefrom have you come?*

*Where do you go?*

(Transliteration, Trans. Duggal 70-71)

Thus a close analysis of their poetry revealed that both Lalla and Bulleh expressed the various stages and states on the way of their mystical journey that are similar in tone and meaning though the former is related to *Saivism* and the later is to Sufism. Their claim to Gnosis revealed that both Lalla and Bulleh do not rely on the intellectual knowledge,

but the personal knowledge of their self that is the true purpose of their quest. The Purgation of their esoteric as well as exoteric self, being conscious about the barriers, God Consciousness, the Way of illumination, longing for the Divine Union and the Ultimate Union with the One can be found though with slight differences in their mystical approaches. In Lalla the mystical quest reaches its culmination in Union with God. She killed her ego, transcended her lower self that led her to the Higher Self and finally found the way of Union with God. On the other hand, Bulleh found the way to Union after passing through the three stages of *Fanna*. Like other Sufis, Bulleh revolves around his Murshid and his self, with the result, like Mansoor, he sings – the songs of *Anal Haq*. As discussed above, at certain places Lalla also declares the *Anal Haq* but in her own way, “Thou and I were one” (Trans. Temple 193).

#### **(d) Style and Diction**

After the close reading of their poetry, the striking parallels could also be seen in their style, both have used the local languages of their respective times as their aim was to reach to the masses. They used rich colloquial idioms and phrases that could easily be comprehended by the masses and the elite of their respective eras. The images they used in their poetry are at once sublime and simple that enhanced the beauty of their language. In connection to the Lalla’s style and diction, Shauq observed:

The ‘style’ of Lalla Dyad is unique in the whole range of Kashmiri poetry. The distinctiveness of her style is partly because of the formal organization of the form of the *vaakh* itself, and more importantly due to

Lalla's approach to language. She chisels every expression to consummate beauty, yet the reader never feels any artifice in her language (29).

Being a distinct visionary, Lalla had concretized even the most complex states of mind in the form of consistent images. However, a reader sometimes may get some difficulty to comprehend her style as she was living in an era when modern Kashmiri language was emerging and she had a tremendous contribution in the same. On the other hand, Bulleh Shah's poetry seems considerably contemporary. It is partly because of the age as he was living in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Punjabi language reached to its present day character. In this regard, Puri states, that, "From the time of Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah a distinct literary Punjabi diction, in essence "of the soil", seems to have evolved which today is described as Maanjhi, that is, 'central' or 'standard' Punjabi" (130).

The images they used in their poetry are at once sublime and comprehensible that enhanced the beauty of their language. The recurring symbols and images their poetry had drawn from the familiar objects in and around them. For instance, the symbols of spinning, cotton, wheel etc have been used by both of them, as Lalla says, 'I Lalla, set out to bloom like a cotton flower' and in Bulleh, 'I have just a bit of cotton in my hand'. The symbol of spinning and wheel used by Lalla in this way 'the spinning woman lifted from her wheel' and in Bulleh, 'How nice it would be if my wheel is broken/ I'll be rid of the torture of spinning'. Both Lalla and Bulleh used these symbols during the period of their purgation as their respective Masters put them into the trial so that they would be prepared for the further journey. According to Gill, the symbol of spinning wheel in the mystic poetry, "signifies the wheel of creation, of steady preparation for the ultimate

union with God. Through the spins of the wheel are created the threads of unity of the universe” (42).

#### 4 (a). Temple as a Symbol

Another symbol that is recurrent in the poetry of Lalla and Bulleh is of ‘temple’. In fact, they used the symbol of temple in a negative fashion as it acted as a superstructure of their times where innocent people were robbed of their faith. This is also true to our times. In one of her *Vakhs*, Lalla used the symbol of temple to ridicule the priests who made it the hub of exploitation and in addition, she tries to supply a sort of counsel to the priests, she says:

*(Dev wata diwor wata*

*Petha bona chuy yeka watha*

*Puzai kas karakh, hota Bata!*

*Kar manas ta pawnas sangath)*

(Transliteration Grierson 41)

*God is stone, the temple is stone,*

*Head to foot, all stone.*

*Hey priest-man, what’s the object of your worship?*

*Get your act together, join mind with life-breath.*

(Trans. Hoskote 60)

On the other hand, Bulleh used the symbol of temple in many of his *Kafis*, for instance:

*(Haji log Makkah nu jande*

*Mere ghar now so Makkah)*

*They go to Mecca to atone;*

*I've many a Mecca in my home.*

(Transliteration, Trans. Duggal 48-49)

Here Bulleh used Mecca, one of the holly cities where Muslims go during Hajj and perform circumambulation around Kabba. Kabba, the temple of Muslims is the part of their faith, sometimes people go there to reparation. Further, it also indicates the temple that possesses in the form of heart where his beloved resides. He does not need to go to Mecca as he believed that his Mecca is his heart where his Master and God dwell.

#### **4 (b). Beloved as Symbol**

Further the symbol of Ranjha in Bulleh and the symbol of Shiva in Lalla are recurrent in their poetry that represents the beloved in their respective terminologies. Bulleh at times used this symbol for his Master and sometimes to God. Heer Ranjha is one of the famous romances in the Punjabi language in which Ranjha is the lover of Heer and Bulleh identifies himself with Heer and his beloved is Ranjha. In fact, Sufis consider themselves the bride and God as their bridegroom. It can also be traced in the English poetry, for example Jon Donne, a metaphysical poet of the seventeenth century, who

considered himself as a bride of God. Moreover, the mystics use feminine qualities as an objective correlative that reveals the spiritual states of the poets, in one of his *Kafis*, Bulleh sings:

*(Ranjha jogi te me jogyani*

*Aes de khatir bharsaan pani*

*Aenuye pichlee umar dahaye*

*Aes hun menu bhar maya nee)*

(Transliteration Anjum 23)

*Ranjha is Yogi and me his mistress*

*I shall love to be his maid*

*I have endowed him my fast slipping life*

*He has enamored and enchanted me a lot*

(Trans. Anjum 23-22)

On the other hand, Shiva as a symbol in the *Vakhs* of Lalla represents the ‘creator’, ‘destroyer’, ‘protector’ and ‘beloved’ who could be realized after the complete annihilation of the self. In fact, Shiva is the most dominant symbol in her poetry; she at times seeks him and at times plays with Him in her inner being. She says:

*(swa-vetsara-pon haras puzi lagi*



*parama-pad tsetena-Shiv meliy)*

(Transliteration Grierson 103)

*The offering Shiva loves most is the knowledge of Self.*

*The Supreme Word you're looking for*

*is Shiva Yourself.*

(Trans. Hoskote 138)

#### **4 (c). Nothingness or Void as a Symbol**

The symbol of 'nothingness' in the poetry of Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah is distinctly powerful as it adequately carries the richness of their spiritual experiences. The concept of nothingness is also common to other schools of thought like, Nihilism, Existentialism, Absurdism etc, but to *Saivists* and Sufis, it is essentially spiritual that bypasses the absence/presence and time/space of the phenomena of universe. The symbol of nothingness represents the higher state of the seeker, as Lalla sings:

*(tsyati twarug vacyi roTum*

*tsyath myilivyith dashyi naaDyi vaav*

*tavay shyashyi kal vyaglyith vetshim*

*shunyis shunyaa myiilyith gav)*

(Transliteration Grierson 34)

*I contained the horse of my consciousness,*

*Restrained thought's wind in my ten vital ducts;*

*The highest awareness melts and gushed forth,*

*Nothingness thus melts into nothingness.*

(Trans. Shauq 83)

Here Lalla narrates the concept of nothingness, “The void is the apparent world, material world, which is really empty nothingness and, when final release is attained, its apparent existence disappears in the Great Transcendental Void” (Grierson 35). In other words, nothingness mingles into the Nothingness.

Bulleh on the other hand, conveys the concept of nothingness by negating every apparent existent notion. In Sufism, nothingness is also known as *Kehna*, in one of his Kafis, Bulleh narrates the experience of nothingness by denying every feature of physical appearance even he denies his own existence. In fact, he declares himself a nothingness that mingles into the Higher Nothingness, he says:

*(Na vich shaadi na ghamnaaki*

*Na maen vich paleeta paaki*

*Na maen aabi na maen khaki*

*Na maen aatish na maen pavan*

*Bulleh! Ki jaana maen kaun)*

(Transliteration Duggal 30)

*I don't woo joy, the sad forsake:*

*don't do good, the bad not take,*

*earth, air, water, me don't make:*

*Bulleh, I don't know, who am I.*

(Trans. Smith P 25)

#### **4 (d). River as a Symbol**

The river is also a powerful symbol in the poetry of Lalla and Bulleh. They used the symbol of river to convey the state of experiences at various stages. The word 'river' by its very nature is a simple word but when employed by Lalla and Bulleh; it encloses the variety of connotations. For instance to Lalla, it is spiritual continuum of life, which indicates her births and the roles, she played in this world:

*(mad pyuwum syundu-zalan yaitu*

*rangan lilami kiyem kaita*

*kaiti khyem manushe-mamsaki nail*

*soy boh Lal ta gauv me kyah)*

(Transliteration Grierson 107)

*So many times I've drunk the wine of the Sindhu river.*

*So many roles I've played on this stage.*

*So many pieces of human flesh I've eaten.*

*But I am still the same Lalla, nothing's changed.*

(Trans. Hoskote 134)

In connection of the above *Vakh*, Hoskote writes that, “The Sindhu is the Indus, one of Kashmir’s principle rivers: its crystalline water is the wine that she drunk over a concourse of births” (227). On the other hand, to Bulleh, it is Mystic River, a river of *Ishiq* (love) that is deep and hard to cross. Sufis believe that the river of love is not supposed to be crossed but one has to drown in it so that he could arrive at the purpose. Like Lalla, Bulleh also look at it as a continuity of life, he says:

*The river is deep and frightening*

*Many a brave swimmer has lost his life*

*The river is in spate*

(Trans. Gill 120)

Thus, river to Lalla and Bulleh is a romance of life and death on the path of spirituality.

In addition, the images of wine, birds and animals are also in abundance in their poetry. The image of ‘Wine’, ‘Tavern’ (*maikhana*), ‘Tavern Master’ (*saqi*), ‘Ass’,

‘Elephant’, ‘Hawk’, ‘Vultures’ etc represents the divine ecstasy, Mentor, ignorance, ego, and lust respectively.

Further, the figures of speech used by the writers particularly by the poets to produce powerful, pleasing and distinctive effect. However, mystics use figures of speech unconsciously as their main focus is to make us conscious about the real purpose of the existence. Both Lalla and Bulleh used figures of speech unintentionally that also make their utterances more effective and colourful. While analyzing the poetry of Lalla and Bulleh one comes across similes, metaphors, paradoxes, metonymy etc, for instance:

*Bitter can be sweet and sweet poison* (Paradox)

I, Lalla, set out like a cotton flower (Simile)

*Lynx-eyed, play blind* (Metaphor)

*Kill those killer ghouls, Lust, Anger and Greed* (Personification)

In the same tone, there is an abundance of these figures of speeches in the *Kafis* of Bulleh Shah, for example:

*The Iraqis are despised*

*While the donkeys are prized.* (Metonymy)

*Says Bulleh, kill your ego* (Personification)

*It's only we*

*Who fuss like a brat.* (Simile)

*I am not sinning, I am not sinning;* (repetition)

The adept use of symbols as well as use of stylistic devices like, metaphors, similes, parallelism, repetition, paradoxes etc, render a distinctive value to their poetry and make it an incredible contribution to art as well as to literature of mysticism. Moreover, the vividness of imagery combined with the integrity of feeling intensifies the mystical Consciousness in their sayings. These symbols and images have a special driving force that leads one to think about his existence.

Further, the usage of personal pronoun by both Lalla and Bulleh in most of their poems is not to produce the willing suspension of disbelief but to inculcate a passion in the reader for the meaning of existence. Shauq comments on Lalla's usage of "I" that is also true to Bulleh Shah, he states:

The "I" used in most of the *Vaakhs*, is not there to monitor this stimulus-response dialectics, but to seek reader's belief in the poet's presence in the assemblage of things so that a semblance of the "real" is created. Her use of "I" is essentially non-solipsistic aiming at producing an aesthetic of silent dialogue (31).

From the above discussion on the style and diction of Lalla and Bulleh, it is clear that both of them have constructed the verbal images that stroke the listener's intellectual and sensuous faculties, with the result transports him to the mysterious domains where his own recognitions gather importance.

**(e) Humanism**

Humanism is essentially a hallmark of mystics. Both Lalla and Bulleh have their firm foot in humanism. Love of the Divine lead them to love His creation both animate and inanimate. In fact, they were beacon lights of peace, harmony, fraternity, hope, reconciliation etc for the world. Lalla experienced the love of the Divine as a strong force present everywhere and in everything that bind things together. The whole corpus of Lalla, carries that love and at the same time made her to preach harmony and brotherhood in all the communities, for instance, in one of her *Vakhs*, she states that one who does not know the difference between his own self and others, and evades hatred from his heart would be able to recognize the Lord:

*(par tay paan yemy som zoon*

*yemy hyuv moon dyan kyihoo raath*

*yemy siy aduy man seepun*

*temyiy DyoonThuy suri guri naath)*

(Transliteration Shauq 112)

*Know no difference between oneself and the others,*

*Consider day night as one;*

*One who drives out hate from one's mind,*

*Is sure to know the Supreme Power.*

(Trans. Shauq 113)

To Sufis, *Ishiq* (love) is the strongest force in the universe that unifies man with God and his creation. Bulleh being a Sufi is no exception, in his poetry there are many references that convey the love and harmony as against the hatred and malice. Like the tradition of Sufis, who see beloved in every face, ‘yaar da chera charo aur’ (all the four sides, I see the face of my beloved), thus, Bulleh negates the differences and sings in the same tone:

*(suni na nahi ham shia*

*sulh kul ka marag liya...*

*Bulleh Shah jo har chit lagey*

*tarak aur Hindu do jan tyagey)*

(Transliteration Duggal 132)

*I'm not Shi'a and I'm not a Sunni...*

*I walk the path of peace, and unity.*

*Bulleh, in all hearts I feel the Lord:*

*Hindus, Muslims I've abandoned!*

(Trans. Smith 43)



Humility is an indispensable virtue for tolerance and kindness. According to Sufis, humility is the most respected thing in the court of Allah. In relation to humility, Sultan Bahoo states that, “Whoever comes to Your court with humility never returns empty handed” (21). Both Lalla and Bulleh possessed the highest form of humility. They believed that peace is the inner quest and the inclination towards it emerges from the very nature of man. Their unconditional love for humanity is the distinctive title they carry throughout their mystical journey and infused their poetry with the same. Thus, both of them are believed to be the champions of holistic humanism.

Both Lalla and Bulleh believed that if man aligns with the essence of creation, he can transcend the petty interests imposed upon him by social structures. According to them, it is man’s own prejudice and constructed conventions that curb him from acquiring the esoteric knowledge of his own being that in return transports him to the Divine. Like other mystics, Lalla and Bulleh believed that the complete or absolute freedom is possible only if man could surpass all the barriers that stop him to attain the realization of his own existence. Lalla makes us to realize that we still have time to get the emancipation from the limitations of the mundane life that curbs us to seek the Real. She says:

*(gophilo! Haka kadam tul*

*wune chey sukl ta tshadun yar*

*par kar paida parwaz tul*

*wune chey sul ta tshandun yar)*

(Transliteration Grierson 124)

*Drifter, on your feet, get moving!*

*You still have time, go look for the Friend.*

*Make yourself wings, take wing and fly.*

*You still have time, go look for the Friend.*

(Trans. Hoskote 19)

Lalla believes that it is never late to seek the communion with the divine. While commenting on the above *Vakh*, Hoskote writes that Lalla, “summons the lazy, aimless or reluctant soul to action, spurring it to recognize that there still remains a brief opportunity to rise beyond the limitations of the ordinary life, to embrace the spiritual path and to ‘go look for the friend’ ” (160). In fact, it is the concern for humanity that made Lalla to utter these pieces that act as prods to us.

Bulleh also in the same tone carries the concern for humanity. Like Lalla, he sometimes addresses the masses as friends and reminds them of their true essence. He reminds us about the transient stay in this world and left us to think about the meaning of life, lest it would be late.

(iss dunya jothi fani da

na rehse naam nishana kadey)

*The world is only a dream in slumber,*

*You may not leave your name to remember.*

(Transliteration, Trans. Duggal 172-173)

Besides preaching love and communal harmony, the highest contribution of Bulleh and Lalla in the field of humanism was their resistance against the exploitation of the poor and innocent at the hands of ecclesiastical structures. In fact, both instigate the masses through their powerful sayings against the injustice and corruption. As discussed in the previous chapters that how boldly Lalla and Bulleh raised their voices against the tyranny of their respective eras. If Lalla was opposed to the superstitious beliefs and rituals, so is Bulleh. In many of his *Kafis*, he assails empty bookish learning. The pseudo mullahs creating anything but fuss. Being critical to them, he says:

*(padh padh sheikh mashaikh khavey*

*ulley masley gharo batawey*

*be ilma nu lut lut khawey*

*juety sachey karey ikrar)*

(Transliteration Duggal 54)

*Learning makes you a Sheikh or his minion,*

*And thus you create problems trillion*

*You exploit others who know not what,*

*Misleading them with wild opinion.*

(Trans. Duggal 55)

This looks quite akin to what Lalla says in this *Vakh*:

*(avyasteery poothyan chhyiy hoo maalyi paraan*

*yithi tooti paraan raam manz panijras*

*par par karaan zal mandaan*

*baDyookh tyimniy ahmbhaav)*

(Transliteration Shauq 76)

*Without being intent they go on reading books,*

*As a parrot repeats “Rama Rama” in a cage;*

*Incessant reading amounts to churning water,*

*Yielding them, nothing but overweening conceit.*

(Trans. Shauq 76-77)

#### **(f) Dissimilarities**

After examining the similarities in mystical approaches, mystical elements, style etc in Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah, an account of the dissimilarities is also essential. The most striking difference is of the methodology as initially Lalla followed the Kashmiri *Saivisim*

(non-dualistic). As discussed in detail in the chapter II, that, she relies on the ritual free *Trikamat* and its most significant concept that is *Pratyabhijna* (recognition aspect) of the Kashmiri *Saivism*. On the other hand, Bulleh Shah followed the methodology of Sufism, where he relies on *Shariat, Tariqat, Marifat and Haqeeqat*. However, the concept of self recognition is similar in both the schools but the methods they used are different. The concept of annihilation is there in *Saivism* but in Sufism it has three stages; *Fanna fi Sheikh, Fanna fi Rasool* and *Fanna fi Allah*, discussed in the previous chapters.

The second difference is in the terms of form they employed for their poetry as Lalla used quatrains known as *Vakhs* while as Bulleh used *Kafis* that does not have any fixed length of lines. Further, Bulleh also writes *Athwara, Baramah, Dohas* etc. However, both the poets used ordinary, simple and lucid language but there is a subtle distinction as Bulleh incorporated metaphors from the Punjabi and Persian and Arabic folktales that adds aesthetic colour to his poetry. This aspect of folklore is absent in the whole corpus of Lalla though there is recurrent use of Shiva as a metaphor, it involves the religious connotations rather the folklore. The metaphors of legendary Mansur Al-Halaj, Laila Majnoon (famous Arabian love legend), and the most famous romantic protagonist of one of the Punjabi folktale, the inspiring Ranjha who has also been immortalized by the Sikh Gurus, are all in Bulleh's poetry to emphasize the mystical aspect of the Sufi tradition.

Besides the other figure of speeches that are used by both but there is recurrent usage of refrains in the poetry of Bulleh, for instance, in one of his famous *Kafis*, 'I know not who I am', this opening line is recurrent in every stanza till the end. Further, the absence of refrain in Lalla's poetry mainly due to the form she employed that is quatrains and it is not possible to use refrains in this short form of poetry.

After examining the parallels and the distinctions in their lives, mystical journeys, mystical approaches etc, it is revealed that both Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah have more commonalities than differences. A comparative study of the two poets belonging to two different ages, regions and tradition brings forth the fusion of the mystic elements in their poetry rendering the study scope for further research. Both of them were mystics of par excellence. Both of them carried a view that God can be traced through the esoteric exploration.

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## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

We started our study of *Lalla Vakhs and Bulleh Shah's Poetry: A Study of Mystical Elements* with the Introduction of Mysticism in general and its occurrence in diverse religions of the world especially in Kashmiri *Saivism* and Sufism. We also ended the study with the similarities and dissimilarities in the poetry of Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah. By comparing the *Lalla Vakhs* and *Kafis* of Bulleh and exploring the commonalities and differences in their mystical approaches, we can sum up the various findings recorded in the course of our study, with a view to present the final picture regarding the mystical dimensions prevailing in their poetry.

The various schools of philosophers, theologians, mystics, and scientists day in and day out constantly work to comprehend the truth beneath the objects of the universe. However, the methodologies used by these schools are different from their counterparts but the purpose is analogous i.e., to arrive at the truth. At the very outset, we discussed the various definitions of mysticism that paved a way to understand the diverse dimensions of its elements. Evelyn Underhill called it science; she observed that, "Mysticism is the science of Ultimate, the science of union with Absolute" (72). Otto Pflidere states, "Mysticism is the immediate feeling of the unity of the self with God" (qtd in Encyclopedia.com n.p). To Ranade, it is "an attitude of mind which involves a direct, immediate, first-hand intuitive apprehension of God" (1). And to Sharpe, it is a

“(conscious) direct contact of the soul with Transcendental Reality” (74). However, all the definitions qualify that mysticism is the way of communion with God.

Earlier science dismissed the mystical experiences as a type of hysteria, hallucination or simply madness. But the present psychologists acknowledged that the mystical experiences are psychological phenomenon that leads to the peace of mind and to the sense of unity in all things. According to Arthur J. Diekman, a clinical psychiatrist, pure mystics are ego less and in them the sense of multiplicity and dichotomy disappears as the sense of unity in all things gets in (19). Literature and mysticism are closely connected as the various reflections of mystical experience are present in literature whether it is oral or recorded. Moreover, mystics often choose poetry for their expression which adds clour to their mystical experiences and with the result influenced the masses more than any other genre of literature could. Besides to narrate their experiences, their main focus remains to inspire the masses so that they also could realize the purpose of life and find the way of salvation. Therefore, mystic poets and their poetry deserve more attention. Further, the language they used is full of stylistic devices.

The mystic thought in English literature is essentially Christian in character. Seventeenth century English literature witnessed the blooming of religious mystic poetry. All the metaphysical poets were spiritual in nature though none could be measured a mystic in the full sense of the term. John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Andrew Marvel etc, were mystic in their aspirations and in individual achievements, each tell us something ultimate and full accomplishment either through the brighten vision of the world, or through the life of typical holiness. Dhar rightly observed that the metaphysical poetry revealed, “a sensibility akin to the mystical. Intensely and

intimately involved with the object of their devotion, they sing invariably in the language of the mystics” (7). After that, William Blake appeared on the scene as a real Christian mystic who sees:

*...World in a Grain of Sand*

*And a Heaven in a Wild Flower*

*Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand*

*And Eternity in an hour*(Auguries of Innocence 1-4 n.p).

After Blake, another English mystic poet was Wordsworth who is labeled as pantheist and a nature mystic. He saw the signs of Divine Consciousness in the elements of nature. Thereafter, a chain of mystic poets appeared on the scene of English literature. Hopkins and Yeats were also believed to be the Christian mystics. Initially Yeats was inclined to magic which took the shape of mysticism in his later life. He declared, “The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write” (Ellmann 94).

Some of the great mystics also emanated in the American literature, like, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost etc. However, Emerson is believed to be a mystic like Blake in real sense and was much influenced by the Hindu philosophy of mysticism. He wrote a poem *Brahma* which is the master piece of mystic poetry in the English literature. He believed that all the beings are the part of the Ultimate Being. In Emily we find the inner quest for eternity. Robert Frost’s poems are also believed to carry a mystic touch, for instance, in “Birches”, he sings of the other worldly experience, “And

climb black branches up a snow-white trunk/Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more..." (55-56).

Since, the land of India is spiritually very fertile and had produced great saints, mystics and Sufis like, Kalidas, Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Kabir, Mira Bai, Amir Khasru, Bulleh Shah, and among the moderns Arubindo, Tagore and Sarojini Naidu are worth to mention. However, Aurobindo was a modern Indian mystic in a true sense, "As a poet, he is endowed with a poetic consciousness that is unobtrusively committed to achieving social amelioration and spiritual consciousness" (Sunitee 93).

Further, mysticism in the Holy books like, Vedas, Bible, Quran etc, has great influence on the whole corpus of mystic literature. After analyzing the various definitions of mysticism and its occurrence in diverse religions and literatures, it could be found that it is essentially akin in nature in all its forms i.e. to unite with the One and His creation.

The main focus of this thesis was to examine critically the various mystical elements in the poetry of Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah. Lalla lived during the 14<sup>th</sup> century of Christian era in the Kashmir Valley and carried forward the Kashmiri mystic tradition that is blend of Buddhism, *Saivism* and Sufism. She is such a dignified and powerful character that made her the symbol of Kashmiri mysticism, tradition and culture. It is the charm of her *Vakhs* and personality that she is loved and respected by all the communities of the Valley. Further, it was the concept of higher Consciousness that her poetry carried, which made her able to survive even in the oral tradition from generation to generation till her *Vakhs* were recorded during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. To her Shiva does not reside in the temples but in the hearts of human beings and His manifestation

can be traced in the very nature or essence of His creation. The study also revealed that she was deliberately excluded from inclusion in the works of the then chroniclers as she was very critical of the temple and the elite of her times. During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, temple became a symbol of exploitation where the innocent people were deceived of their faith. She followed the ritual free *Trika* Philosophy of Kashmiri *Saivism*. The study also revealed that there are some techniques that are akin to the techniques of Sufism like, the concept of “living death” or “death before death”, concept of the breath technique, annihilation etc.

The dispute on Lalla’s religious identity has been emanated from the both, Hindu as well as Muslim quarters and that has gained a pace during the past few decades. This sectarian polarization tried to relate her either to Hinduism or to Islam respectively. However, her personality is above from all these entire sectarian disputes. Being a true mystic she raised herself to the point where she found herself neutral to all religions. Another dispute arose from the baker story which qualifies her encounter with Amir Kabir, a Muslim saint. It is also believed that after the encounter she embraced Islam. However, her *Vakhs* echoed both, the *Saviastic* experiences as well as Sufi states which is the distinctive quality of romanticism that Lalla corpus carried. Like other great saints, her aim was to be one with the Absolute and where the dispute of religious identity blurred and remained He. As she sings:

*(Shiv chuy thali thali rav zan*

*Mav zaan Hyound ta Mussalmaan*

*Trukhay chukh ta pananuy paan parzaan*

*Ada chay Saahibas zanni zaan)*

*Siva, like the sun, shines everywhere;*

*Do not discriminate between a Hindu and*

*a Muslim:*

*If thou art wise, know thyself;*

*That is true knowledge of the Lord.*

(Transliteration and Trans. Parimoo xviii)

Besides, the idea of indiscrimination by supplicating the picture of the sun that enlightens all without any discrimination, Lalla used the words Shiva and Sahib that itself is a powerful slap on those who are engaged in the dispute for her religious identity. Hence, the sectarian dispute is based on the fanatic designs as she transcended all these disputes. Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked that she was born in a Hindu family and was much influenced by the non-dualistic *Saivistic* tradition of Kashmir. It also cannot be denied that her poetry echoed the voices of Sufism in its pure form. To her Hindu and Muslims are same and all are essentially one and created by the One. This concept of oneness is the beauty and validity of mysticism and mystics as they speak same language, the language of love and harmony while the philosophers and theologians quarrel since ages and making things more complicated rather than to solve them. One of the Indian poets, Akbar Ilhabadi put this statement like this, “falsafī ko bahs ke andar ḵhudā milta nahi/ Dor ko suljhā rahā hai aur sirā miltā nahīñ” (Qtd in Rekhta n.p), Philosophers are helpless to find God in their discourse / They are busy in untying the rope, yet to find its tip(Trans mine).



Like Lalla Ded, Bulleh Shah was also well versed in his respective religion, Islam and accordingly adopted the path of Sufism to reach to the Divine. As a true seeker, Bulleh followed the tenets of Sufism in letter and spirit. Since, the centre of Sufism is the love of God what they call it *Ishiq* and germs of it left Bulleh unrest even from the very beginning of his traditional learning. He passed all the stages and states of Sufism like, *Shariat, Tariqat, Marifat* and *Haqeeqat*. During these stages Bulleh felt the strong love of his *Murshid* and experienced the self annihilation and merged into the esoteric self of his Murshid, the state is known as *Fanna fi Sheikh* in the field of Sufism. Thereafter, he passed through the other two stages of *Fanna* i.e. *Fanna fi Rasool* and *Fanna fi Allah* and finally reached to *Baqqa*, the Eternity and the Infinity where his self merged into the higher Self.

After attaining the heights in the field of Sufism, like Mansoor Alhallaj, Bulleh sings the songs of *Anal Haq* (I am the Truth). Thus he is believed to be the Mansoor of Punjab. Duality vanishes and Bulleh becomes one with One, what Khusru sings at this stage of extreme ecstasy is also true to Bulleh, “man tan shudam, tu man shudi, man tan shudam tu jaan shudi / takas na goyend baed azee man deegaram tu deegari...” (qtd. in Sufi Poetry Blog n.p), (I am the body and thou art the heart, I am the corporeal thou art the soul / So that thereafter, no one could say that we art the two) (Trans. Mine).

The union with the absolute made him to experience that all the creation is one or at least carried the essence of God. Hence, religion, caste, creed etc, blurred and he proclaimed the message of love, fraternity and harmony. He found unity in diversity; like Lalla, he was immersed in the trance of Divine love and attained the stature where his personality commanded the love and respect from the people of all faiths. He attained the

*Marifat*, Gnosis and experienced the eternal peace. Puri and Shangri observed that Bulleh's, "life and compositions will serve as a lighthouse for the times immemorial to true seekers of spiritual realization" (13).

The beauty of Bulleh's poetry is that he addressed the complex fundamental issues in simple and lucid language that is also one of the factors that appeals the masses even in this present technological world.

Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah are poles apart if we look in terms of time, space, tradition and language. However, a strong intertextuality in relation to the mystical voices can be traced in their poetry. Apart from that there are also resemblances in their rebellious nature as both of the poets raised their voices against the then what Marx called false-consciousness and superstructures. Moreover, they chose the common man's language to reach out to the masses and rejected the then elite language though both were well versed in Sanskrit and Persian respectively. Both Lalla and Bulleh belonged to well-off families - Lalla's family was a high-class educated Brahman family and Bulleh belonged to a Sayyed family, but both broke off from their families which indicates their rebel nature and their devotion to God Consciousness. Their aim was to make the masses aware about the exploitation of the then elite, temple priests and mosque Moulvies, who acted as semi-Gods. History is witness that both Lalla and Bulleh were born during crisis, war and social disorder in their respective lands. Jan Slomp in his book *The Sufi Movement East and West* says that, "Mysticism often flourishes in times of war, danger and crisis" (54). They stood against the false consciousness and the Divine duty they carried was to spread love, peace and harmony among the different faiths. Further, both poets generated a Consciousness of harmony and love that would act as a balm to the

masses and help them in eradication of the evils prevailing in the respective times. Moreover, their poetry carried a Consciousness that helps us to make a balance in our lives and to attain the stature and sacredness that has been lost since longtime.

Lalla and Bulleh had been brought up in the literary atmosphere as both of them were well equipped in their respective traditional learning. Lalla was well learned in Sanskrit and *Saivistic* scriptures and Bulleh was well versed in the Islamic academics. However, both have felt strong inner quest for the Divine love which could not be acquired through the religious teachings alone. Hence, they broke off their families and went out to satiate their esoteric quest.

After comparing the Lalla *Vakhs* with the *Kafis* of Bulleh Shah, the scholar found the striking parallels in terms of mystical elements and their expression in their respective forms employed by them. The concept of Om in the *Vakhs* of Lalla represents the Brahman, the Truth, or simply God and the concept of Alif (Allah) in the *Kafis* of Bulleh represents the sole creator. In both of the traditions, Kashmiri *Saivism* and Sufism, *Su* and *Hoo* are added as suffix to the words Om and Allah respectively. Both Lalla and Bulleh contemplated on these words as they inhale Om and Allah and exhale *Su* and *Hoo* respectively, known as breathe techniques. *Su* and *Hoo* exemplifies the existence of God and by meditating on these words, the seeker experiences the inner peace. Further, the concept of “die before death” is also akin in both of the poets.

Both Lalla and Bulleh laid emphasis on the self exploration which is the basic feature that discloses the mysteries of the existence. They relied on esoteric that transported them to the God Consciousness. Moreover, the self-examining spirit led them

to comprehend the Divine meaning or order in the universe. To them God cannot be restricted to any theological or philosophical discourse. He is for all and all belonged to Him. They believed that He is residing in the hearts of Human beings and can be traced or experienced through esoteric means with the help of Guru or *Murshid*.

Both the poets held their respective Gurus' in the high reverence. In fact, it was the Master who purified the soul of both Lalla and Bulleh and led them to the Union with Him. Lalla called her Master 'Supreme Lord' and to Bulleh, his Master was his *Kabba* and sole savior. The efforts of their respective Masters wiped the dirt from their hearts and thereafter, both Lalla and Bulleh experienced the annihilation of self and found Him everywhere and in all. To Bulleh and Lalla, the self-realization is nothing other than the meaning they were long seeking. After experiencing the Divine their esoteric self had been illuminated by His light and they found themselves free from all the social constructions.

After the stages of Purgation and Illumination, both the poets found the way for Union with God. In fact, Union with Him was the ultimate goal of their mystical journey. During the stage of Union they experienced God everywhere and in every animate and inanimate object.

Striking parallels were also found in their style and diction. Both of them choose Vernacular Languages of their respective times as it was both mark of protest against the elite and church and the goal to reach to the masses. Both Lalla and Bulleh employed rich colloquial idioms and phrases that could be vogue in their respective times. The images and the symbols they used in their poetry are simple and sublime which enhances the

charm to their style. In addition, they concretized the most intricate states of experiences in simple consistent images and symbols. The recurring symbols and images employed by both the poets are surprisingly similar in meaning and structure; Symbol of spinning, symbol of cotton, symbol of wheel etc. The above symbols indicate the period of their purgation, and the steady training for the Ultimate Union with God. Further, the wheel signifies the phenomenon of creation and the spins of the wheel symbolize the threads of unity and harmony in the universe.

The symbols like Temple, Beloved, River, Wine, Birds and Animals are also in abundance in their poetry. Temple in their respective times was the symbol of corruption or in Marxian terms a Superstructure, where the faith of innocent people were stripped off. The symbol of Beloved sometimes represents the Master and at times God. River as a symbol in the poetry of both of the poets represents the course of life and the mystical journey they had chosen.

Nothingness or Void is one of the powerful symbols in their poetry. It represents the zenith of their spirituality where the lower self mingles into the Higher Self of Nothingness. In fact, it is such a powerful spiritual symbol that surpasses the time and space, absence and presence and death and life of the phenomena of existence.

The figures of speech are used by both the poets in such a way that it enhance the beauty of their language and made their sayings more effective and colorful. The figures of speech used by them are Paradox, Metonymy, Metaphor, Simile, and Personification etc. The usage of symbols and stylistic devices rendered a unique value to their poetry and made it a great contribution to art and literature in general and to mystic poetry in

particular. The intensity of imagery mixed with the integrity of experience intensifies the mystical Consciousness in their poetry. Moreover, the symbols and the stylistic devices used by both these poets carried a unique driving force that leads one to the introspection of essence of existence.

Another striking parallel the scholar found in their poetry is the use of personnel pronoun. They used it to arrest the readers mind and his belief in the midst of the experience of the poet and with the result the appearance of the “real” is created.

In the domain of style and diction, both the poets have constructed the verbal images that lured the intellectual and sensuous faculties of readers, and consequently lead them to mysterious realms where their self recognitions gather significance.

Both, Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah had their firm foot in humanism. In fact, Humanism is distinctly a hallmark of their poetry. They acted as beacon lights of love, peace, harmony, hope, reconciliation etc. It is the love of the God that led them to love His creations, hence, both the poets turned into the singers of love and Humanity against the hatred and malice. Both of them held the view that peace is the esoteric quest that emanates from the very nature of human beings. Through their songs they spread unconditional love for humanity. Therefore, both Lalla and Bulleh like other mystics are believed to be the champions of Humanism. Further, they believed that if humans align with the essence of creation, they could transcend intricate web of ego and selfishness imposed upon them by social structure. In fact, they carried the view that it is man’s self styled conventions that stops him from acquiring the Divine knowledge. Their poetry

revealed that the absolute emancipation is possible only if humans could transcend the self styled limitations of mundane life.

Further, in the field of humanism the biggest contribution of both the poets was their resistance against the hegemonic designs of ecclesiastical structures which exploit the faiths of people. Their powerful sayings instigate the marginalized to raise their voices against the injustice and exploitation at political, social and religious levels.

Besides the commonalities in both the poets, scholar also found certain dissimilarities in their mystical approach, mystical elements, style etc. The first difference that would be traced is in their methodology; as Lalla chose the way of non-dualistic *Saivism* and relied on the ritual free *Trikamat*. Bulleh, on the other hand chose the way of Sufism and followed its doctrine in letter and spirit like, he relied on the four basic aspects of it: *Shariat*, *Tariqat*, *Marifat* and *Haqeeqat*. Secondly, Lalla experienced the annihilation of self but Bulleh qualifies it thrice as it is mandatory in the field of Sufism to reach the Infinity.

Thirdly, dissimilarity was found in the form employed by them, as Lalla used quatrains (*Vakhs*) where as Bulleh used *Kafis* that do not have fixed length. Besides, Bulleh also wrote *Athwara*, *Baramah*, *Dohas* etc. Further, the metaphors incorporated in the poetry of Bulleh are taken from Punjabi, Persian and Arabic folk tales that enhanced the aesthetic beauty of his verse. The metaphors like, 'Heer-Ranjha', 'Laila-Majnu', 'Shirin-Farhad', 'Mansur Alhalaj' etc, are recurrent in his poetry. In Lalla we hardly found any touch of folklore.

Further, Bulleh like other great Sufis employed the metaphor of Flute that has a unique place in Sufism, where as there is no reference of flute in the poetry of Lalla. Bulleh used refrains in many of his poems and this figure of speech is absent in Lalla perhaps because of the form she employed as she relied on quatrains and it is hardly possible to use refrain there.

The research found that there are more similarities than the differences in the poetry of Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah. After the close reading of their poetry one could argue that, to them God is neither religious nor secular but above all these things. They were the singers of humanity and God Consciousness.

Lalla has been hailed by many mystic poets, sages and scholars as a great mystic poet, a poet of humanity, a revolutionist, a realist; anyhow, it is rightly pointed out by Pandita that, “Lalla Ded remains the tallest icon of the Kashmiri society adored for the last 600 years for the high spiritual, moral and philosophical content of her wise sayings, the *vaakhs*” (99). Bulleh on the other hand, supplies hope, peace and serenity through fresh and apparently simple poems. The ever fresh universality and straight forwardness endeared him to the masses. L. Krishna rightly observed that his spiritual thought, “equals that of Jalal-ud-din Rumi and Shams Tabriz of Persia” (1).

In this present highly technological world which is by and large, spiritually eclipsed, the poems of Lalla and Bulleh transports us to an unruffled spiritual serenity. What Zaffar has said about Lalla is also true to Bulleh:

No doubt Lal-Ded belongs to the spiritual tradition of Kashmir which is in turn informed by Buddhism, Savaism and Islam but she cannot be



identified with any particular colour or segment of this multi-faced tradition. She transcends all particularities and her message is absolutely universal. No doubt its form that is its linguistic expression is particular, as it is expressed in Kashmiri Language, but its Kernel, that is its essence transcends all particularities. It is the identification and realization of a spiritual path, shorn of all rituals, for one's self-recognition, that implies the recognition of the Lord (86).

Their sayings can rightly be called as the paragon of the sound optimism, spiritual consciousness or insight and tranquility. Both of them were the lovers and preachers of freedom and were fascinated by the relationships between man to man, man to surroundings and of course man to God. Through their poetry they tear the veils that halt between the Divine and man. They believed that the self analyzing and the esoteric intimacy with the creation can lead one to the Absolute. The appeal of their poetry has conferred a distinctive quality to their spirituality. What is native and personal with its extreme simplicity rise to the level of pervasive. Yet, both of them are distinct in their approach to the subject matter as Lalla initially relied on Kashmiri *Saivism* while Bulleh relied on *Tasawwuf*. The songs they sang had deep roots in divine reality. Hence, it can be noticed that in spite of the various differences in social, political or at cultural level, the songs they sung have universal appeal as they are essentially perennial to all humans.

Both Lalla Ded and Bulleh Shah structured their poetry in and around the mystical experiences they had and the common fundamental themes despite a sizeable difference in their ages, social and cultural backgrounds. They used their verse as an instrument of socio-cultural change in their respective times and are still inspiring a spirit

of love and peace among the masses. The universality of their thought transcends the boundaries of time and space. Moreover, in this present modern technological world, internet intensifies Lalla Ded's and Bullehe Shah's continuing appositeness. Young popular minds are extensively attracted towards their poetry and with the result a new kind of interest in mysticism is developing in them.

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