

**ARTISTIC AND CONTEMPLATIVE VIEW OF LATIF'S POETRY
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHAH'S MELODY**

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ABSTRACT

Shah Abdul Latif was a great poet, intellectual, mystic, saint and a true lover of Holy Prophet. His poetry conveys a message of humanity brimmed up with content. God dwells in every heart of men. Says Latif, God resides in hearts, we need to identify Him. Holy Quran is source of guidance. Shah Sahib composed his poetry by following Holy Quran. Therefore, directly or indirectly it reflects Holy Quran. He says:

جي تو بيت پائتياڻ، سي آيتون آهين،
نيو من لائين، پريان سندي پار ڏي

(سُر سَهڻي، ص. 141)

Baits of Shah Sahib are brimmed up with innovation and individuality. His way of expression is marvelous in all regards of art, solicitude, pragmatics, literature and language. His poetry is undulating like a popply ocean. He says in one of his melodies.

ڪاري رات گچو گهڙو اُٺتِيه اونداهي،
چنڊ نالو ناهِ ڪو درياءَ ڌڙ لائي،
ساهڙ ڪارڻ سَهڻي، آڏيءَ تي آئي،
اِي گم الاهي، نات گنن ۾ ڪير گهڙي

(سُر سَهڻي، ص. 139)

It defines that life is name of continuous and untiring effort. One who follows pantheism faces many obstacles but God helps him who follows the path of pantheism. When a vertible seeker tries to get something he achieves destination. Continuous struggle bestows destination and man becomes content.

Keywords: Shah Latif, Kalhoras, Mysticism, Ameer Khusro, Music.

LIFE BACKGROUND

Shah Latif belonged to Matiari Saadats. Forebears of his family were residents of Herat. There is stemma which relates them to Imam Moosa Kazim. They practiced Sufi ways of Suherwardya and Qadirya order. Shah Sahib was serious in nature since his childhood. He did not waste his time rosming like a common child. It is told that Shah Habib took him to Akhund Noor Muhammad for learning. He taught him Holy Quran and shuling.

Shah Sahib visited every corner of Sindh, Multan, Kachh, (ڪڇ) Las belo, (لسپيلو) Lahoot (لاھوت) and Hanglaj (ھنگلاج). He used to take three books with him. One was his grandfather's poetic collection which was enclosure of holy description. Second was the poetic collection of Masnavi Molana Rumi. Third was the Holy Quran. These were the sources which enriched Latif in spiritual and intuitive learning. His were many contemporaries but he was very near to Makhdoom Moin of Thatta and Shah Inat Rizvi. He used to spend his time in praying and meditation at various places in solitude. Sometimes, he spent weeks and months in praying which led him to unconsciousness. Once his father went to find him, he saw him covered with sand. Only his hair remained uncovered. His father shouted and said

لڳي لڳي واءِ، ويا انگڙا ڍڪجي (ص.12)

As Latif heard these words of his father, he replied:

پئي ڪٿي ڀسايو، ڀسڻ ڪارڻ پرينءَ جي. (ص.12)

At the age of 24 years, he was wed locked to Sayyada Begum. After marriage, he continued his journeys and meetings with saints. When we peep into Latif's poetry, it presents all aspects of daily life of common people, art, handicrafts, hardworking, struggle, professions, folk stories, raag, dance, literature, language, philosophy, mysticism, universe, nature, guidance, prayer, supernatural, sharia, love, reality, devotion, dignity, risalat and oneness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sindh and Hindh being niebhours of each other since long ago, share their historical, cultural and civil aspects with each other. Both are known and renowned for their splendid traditional customs .It is essential to know about historical aspects before going to deal with literature in artistic meditational elements, as readers come to know

about its historical background.

T.S. Elliot says that “Poet always seeks objective co-relatives with his own emotions”. If we analyze external elements of poetry used by great poet of Hind and Sind, Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai, we will come to know that they are arranged according to musical beats in his collection of poetry known as “Shah-Jo-Risalo”. Shah Sahib sings melodies in different surs as under:

رڳون ٿيون رباب، وڃن ويل سڀ ڪنهن (سُرگلياڻ، ص. 41)

واڃتُ وڃي وڃوڌ ڀر، رهيو رُوحُ ربابُ (سُر سهڻي، ص. 124)

تَنُ تسيح، مَنُ مڻيو، دِلُ دَنبُورو جَن، (سُر آسا، ص. 347)

Musicians have designed proper melodies to be sung with proper suitness of time, the pattern of singing Baits and Vais by Shah Sahib was set by himself that was from dawn to dusk. According to Indian musicians, suitable time for singing Sur Kalyan is sun setting. So, designers of Shah-Jo-Risalo have kept in mind the ideology of Shah Sahib. Therefore, they put Sur Kalyan in very beginning of Risalo. Shah Sahib persisting his status of a true Muslim poet starts sur kalyan with vivid praise of Allah Almighty showing His magnificence and Benevolence. After Sur Kalyan, Sur Yaman Kalyan is used to be sung, in the same way. After Sur Kalyan in Shah-Jo-Risalo, Sur Yaman Kalyan is designed.

Examining the series of Surs in Risalo, it seems that two great songs of well-known musician Tanseen, might have contributed a lot in designing series of Surs in Risalo, who came to Shah Sahib for his well celebrity to receive blessings from him. After Sur Yaman Kalyan comes Sur Khambhat which is also occupying exact place, designed by musicians because according to law of music, this sur is sung by passing one part of night. After these surs, series of remaining surs is not arranged according to time of singing and laws of music. And on many places different folk stories are designed into Raag and Raagnis which are discussed premises.

Ancient Sindh is still well known for her artistic characteristics. Indus valley civilization still explicits this thing. During digging of Moen-Jo-Daro relevant tools to singing and dancing had been found, through them we can imagine that how long ago singing and dancing was common in Sindh. One statue has been found during exploration of Moen-Jo-Daro which is named as “Dancing girl” by experts. If we peep into Arabic era of Sindh, we will find immense importance to art

of singing and in these days classical music remained culminated. That is the reason, Arabic influence is prominent explicit in music and art of singing of Sindh till today. Perhaps, when Kalam of Shah is sung by his devotees, a wave of Arabic music comes from it.

Najaf Ali shah writes that elementary designers of Shah-Jo-Risalo, designed 37 surs in it and every sur was named according to any folk story or folk song. Later designers of Shah-Jo-Risalo persisted to put same surs. A prominent researcher after spacious research and analysis elucidated seven surs from poetic collection of Shah-Jo-Risalo, because after a thorough and deep examination it came to know that those excluded surs were not composed by Shah Sahib but earlier designers of risalo included them misconceptionally. From elementary Shah-Jo-Risalo if seven surs are excluded remaining surs will become 30. From these 30 surs, 16 surs are named according to Raag and Raagnis but remnants are irrelevantly named to Raag and Raagnis. Indian musicians have given six types of Raag, which are Bheero پیرو, Megh میگھ, Sri-raag سریراگ, Deepak دپک and Malkos مالکوس. Many Raag and Raagnis spring up from these basic Raags, which are named according to suitness of Raag. If 16 surs are examined thoroughly, it will disclose that there is a sur named as Sur Sri-raag, which is abstracted from six basic names of Raags. From remaining 15 surs, 14 surs are named on the basis of Raagnis, as Kalyan کلیان, Yaman Kalyan یمن کلیان, Khanbhaat کنپات, Suhni سہٹی, Desi دیسی, Kamode کاموڈ, Sorath سورٹ, Kedaro کیڈارو, Sarang سارنگ, Aasa آسا, Ramkali رامکلی, Poorab پوراب, Parbhati پریپاتی and Bilawal بلاول. Sur Hussaini سُر حُسیني is akin to Indian Raagnis, it is one of the surs being used in Arabic surs.

Nowadays, there are three types of Raags present in Sindh which are being sung. First is classical, second is Regional and third is Folk singing:

- Classical music contains those raags which have influence of religion. If Latif's poetry is examined, it shows classical form, as Sur Kalyan, Yaman Kalyan and Ramkali. In these surs oneness and benevolence God is messaged. These surs are based on mysticism.
- Second is regional singing in which music is composed according

to the region. If we present our own country as an example having different cultures of all provinces. Therefore, music is also different from one another. Total raag is going to be changed with their own bands and music.

- Third is music of folklore. If we examine poetry of Shah Latif we will find that it is filled with folk literature and omniscient of God. Folklore of Shah Sahib are still used to sing in Hind and Sindh in the form of raag, these includes Loli, Loto, Hamarchoo and moro etc. Moreover, If we see worthy and manner full raag which are sung on different occasions, they are Maulood, Manaqba and Doha etc. These are baldness melodies.

As we know that Bhittae was supporter of art for nation, he composed poetry by keeping in mind both classes and languages of people. It was time when composing poetry in Persian was understood as a standard and superior. There were a few spring up poets who gave importance to motherland and a problem of contemporary people. This is the reason that Shah Latif attached a relation to the people's soul with his art which is still prevailing today. And people gave him immense positive feedback which made him immortal.

True art and artist are really confessed in every time, Bhittai too believes in this philosophy.

سَو سِرِنِ پائي، جي تَنَدُ بَرابَرِ توريان،
 اَتَلِ اَوڏانهين ٿئي، جيڏانهن بيجلُ پُرائي،
 سَڪِطو هَڏُ آهي، سِرَ ۾ سَچُ ناهِ ڪي.

(شُرسورث، ص. 306)

Sayed Manzoor Naqwi writes that: “Before Latif's Raag, there were two types of Raag in Sindh. One type of Raag is from ancient times, prevailed in music since Pak-Hind subcontinent. Second type of Raag is considered as Sindhi origin. Those Raags which exist still are, Marui مارئي، Lelan ليلان، Kapaeti ڪاپائتي، Dahar ڏهر، Moomal مومل and Karaer-ro ڪارائڙو . The existence of these Raags is not found in famous and ancient singing like Ratnakar رتناڪر، Raag Webooda راڳ ويبوده، Chitar Dhandi Parkash چتر ڊنڊي پرڪاش، Sur Mel سُر ميل ڪلايندو، Raag tarangi راڳ ترنگي، Saar Amrat

سارامرت or Laksh Sangeet لکش سنگیت etc. So, we can say with immense believe that these raags were invented in this region. Shah Bhattai has kept these raags alive in his poetry. Beyond these two types of raags, there are still few raags which are considered as pioneered by Shah Sahib, they are, Samondri, Mazoori, Aabri, Kohyari, Hussaini, Keddaro, Rapp, Kohyari and Ghato”.

Actually the meaning of Raag (راڳ) is “Soul’s flood or spirit”. It is said that music is nutrition for soul. Soul means physical and mental relaxation. Raag or music blesses pleasure and plea to soul. According to T.S. Elliot “Man is a moving object and melody a lifeless thing, combination of both these things progenies music”. In the opinions of Bhattai Art, Artist and Music are not separate from one another and they cannot be imagined individually. Presence of artist leads to art, presence of art leads to music and again presence of music leads to voice. If one thing is omitted from them, others will become insignificant. This thing is understandable by this couplet of Shah Latif from Sur-Kalyan.

پڙاڏو سو سڏ، ور ورائيءَ جو جي لهين،
هئا اڳهين گڏ، ٻڌڻ ۾ ٻه ٿيا.

(سُرڪلياڻ، ص.44)

Prominent scholar Dr. N.A.Bloach writes: “Bhattai was a heart bearing person, so, his proper attention was to rejuvenate people’s hearts, Righteousness and Realism. Poetic ease and Music were essential elements of his poetry. That is why he adopted the power of norm and form of Raag and elevated the superiority complex of Raag (راڳ) that Raag which impacts on hearts of people. Shah Sahib calls Raag as a super element on the basis of physical sensibilities and experimental observations. Music which attracts people and long last forever is superior”. Further he explains: “It was because of Raag (راڳ) that Shah Sahib stayed at “Bhit” otherwise he was a wanderer filled with spirit and enthusiasm. It was raag which gave him comfortness and only because of raag he culminated Bhit.

Shah Latif himself was fond of Sama (سماع), he mostly used to muttered raags, that is a reason his devotees were highly influenced by him and till today dawn to dusk at the night of Friday Latifi Saaz

(ساز) is sung and heard at his tomb. I want to clear one thing that “Tanbooro” a musical instrument is also invention of Shah Latif. Before Shah Latif ‘Tanbooro’ had four strings but he added one more string and made it an immortal gift for his devotees. At the time of using tanbooro, when the flattened part of it “Thaap” is touched by hand it creates a saaz like Tabla, which presents a uniqueness and rhythm to music and also it blesses listeners with endless comfortness.

Says, William Buttler, about Raag (راگ) in his famous “Among the school children”, his statement is harmonized with Bhattai:

O! Chest-nut tree, great rooted bloomer,
Are you the tree, the blossom or the bole?

O! Body swayed to music, O! Lightning glance,
How can one know the dancer from dance?

Oh! not tree! What are you? You are standing by fixing your roots in ground. You are flower or stem. Oh dancing body! Oh diffracted glance, which can bifurcate a dancing body from dance.

Says Shah Latif:

وَاجَتْ وَيِرَاكِبِينَ جَا، مُونِ وَتِ وَذُو مَالِ
مَقَالَانِ مَهْنَدِ تِيَا، كُونِهِي وَتِنِ قَالِ
حَاصِلُ جَنِينِ حَالِ، آتُونِ نَهْ جِتَنَدِي اُنْ رِي

(سُررامكلي، ص. 369)

Wajat, (واجت) music or inner comfortness or thinking with quietness is symbol of any action.

A great poet of India “Ameer Khusro” or “Khushro”, is famous name of Indian music and mysticism. Ameer khushro means “Having good appearance”. If we take meaning of Khusro in Sindhi, it will give us another meaning. He was a prominent saint and mystic of his time. He invented Table and so earned an immense celebrity. During Arab rule in Sindh, there was a musical instrument named as “Dafla” which was rung by one side with help of one hand. Ameer khusro invented a same instrument like “Dafla” but difference was that it could be used from both sides and with both hands. One side is known as “Narr” and other is known as “Maadah”. It can be used by using both hands. It is known as “Tabla”.

After 400 years, Shah Latif appeared on globe of Sindh. He was

a great poet and mystic like Ameer Khusro. He was a patriotic; he made Sindhi language as a vehicle of his deep thoughts which national language has become a vast language now. Persian was a court language of Khusro's time. He (Ameer Khusro) too used Persian language in his poetry but he also used national language (Bhasha) and felt immense pleasure while using inland idioms. Like Ameer Khusro, Shah Sahib was also a pioneer of new movement in music and raag.

According to musicians, for singing a song, there are proper times for them. When a great deal of discussion comes on Surs of Bhattai, ultimately, a great deal of discussion comes on proper times for them to sing. There are few raags which are sung at the time of fajar and few raags at the dawn to dusk.

Latifi Raag is started by singing of Sur-Kalyarn which is filled with immense praise of holy God. And "God is alone" is the opening slogan of this sur. Sur Sarang is sung in rainy days, which is filled with rainy and fountainous songs.

Sur Kedaro are related to tragedy of Karbala, which is filled with torments and tragedies. It was fixed by Shah Abdul Latif that Sur Hussaini is only confined to sing in days of Muharam. It was also sung during the time of Shah Sahib.

According to opinion of few saints, brimming up and overflowing of spirits during raag cause self-consciousness. And singer himself goes molded with deep influence of intense love of creator, and same condition runs to listeners. It happens to such extent that whole consciousness of humanity springs up.

If we contemplate upon surs of Shah Latif, our attention would be centered to folk stories and folk lores or any raag as Sur-Kalyan, سُر کليان Sur-Yaman Kalyan سُر يمن کليان or Sur-Kedaro سُر کيڌارو etc. These surs are related to raag and raagnis. But when novels and short stories come in front of us, they bear the form of Dastaan (داستان). As we have Sur-Marui سُر مارئي, Sur-Sassui Aabri سُر سستي or Sur-Kohyaro سُر کوهيارو etc. Shah has given deep explanation of sea-voyages, deepness of sea and dreadfulness of sea in these Surs of Sur-Samoondi سُر سامونڊي and Sur-Ghatoo سُر گهاتو.

There are three layers of meaning given by Goethe's poetry, a German mystic poet, which are literary, mystic and idiomatic. His

literary topic was life after death; his idiomatic topic was human himself and mysticism at last. Bhattai has kept layers in meaning too. His topics are apparently stories of Sindh and outland but behind them is social and economic scenario of tyrant society. As he says in one of the poem:

صُوفِي لَأَكُونِي، كَوْنَ پَائِنَسِ كِيَرُ
مَنْجِهَانِ تِي مَنْجِه وَرْهِي، پَدَرِ نَاهِسِ پِيرُ
جَنِينِ سَائِسِ وَيَرُ، تَتِي تَنِينِ كُو وَهَرُو.

(سُرَيْمَنِ كَلِيَانِ، ص. 67)

Bhattai brought another new change in the music or raag, which was preference to singing in the chorus rather than singing alone. Chorus is a form of singing in which leader of singer starts singing and ends it after some time then his followers start reciting and repeating the same words. This form of singing is also introduced into Qawalis and Dohas now. Shah Latif taught philosophy of poetry in easy way. The fact behind physical and spiritual existence of poetry is essential to understand. Music and voice of apparent sources and many sources are behind them.

Tammar Faqir passed a long time in Kachh (ڪچ)، where he founded a firm foundation of Shah Jo Rag. Shah used to go many places in Kachh during his life time, where Latif followers and lovers are still present. According to Jagdish Lachhani, people of Kachh memories kalam of Latif.

Shah Lateef was not only a mystic poet but he was also a great musician. He was owner of “Aala Baseerat” “اعلي بصيرت” whose poetry gives relaxation and comfortness to mind and heart. There is outstanding color in his poetry which acts as a divine message of Holy God and Holy Prophet (P.B.H.U). After hearing the composed poetry of Shah Latif every man says Subhan-Allah regardless of his/her religion. These all colors may be of mystic or non-mystic are parts of Shah’s poetry.

Actually in right terms, poetry and music are transitive and intransitive factors for one another. Music is poetry in voice and poetry is music in words. This alternative existence of poetry and music is compulsory part of reason; Shah Sahib was a poet of nature and music a compulsory sensitive part of his temperament. Shah

Sahib didn't compose poetry but actually he sang it. He was assure that poetry is composed to be sung. Shah Sahib not only rejuvenated classical and contemporary poetry and revolutionized in customarily trends but also founded new ideology about the same.

اي تن ڪيتم ساز طنبور، پيرم راڳ رلايان ريڪان.

CONCLUSION

Mystic consider poetry as a divine message. Shah Abdul Latif was from poets, mystics and musicians. Mystics believe that poetry is language of God. Therefore only those can understand it that has strong spiritual relationship with God.

Research tells that Shah Abdul Latif always used to sing along with his "Tamboro" (تنبور) which was his own invention. Shah Abdul Latif will be remembered as a mystic in every period. Besides him, many other mystics and scholars came who spread message of humanity among people in their times and they earned eternal name. But Shah Latif has very good place in history.

Their only objective was to spread message of peace, brotherhood and self-control among the people. Today in this time of turmoil, the message of these saints needs to be spread for the welfare of people throughout world. Shah-Jo-Risalo is only guidance for humanity. We can only attain peace and success in life by adopting message given in Shah-Jo-Risalo.

سائينم سدائين گرين مٿي سنڌ سڪار

دوست تون دلدار عالم سڀ آباد گرين

(سرسارنگ)

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