

# Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's Sur Sarang - The Monsoon, The Sign of Prosperity of Sindh, South Asia and The World

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## **Abstract**

*Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's poetry is the message of peace, love, beauty and prosperity for the universe, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai minutely observed the occurrences of the nature.*

*The Sur Sarang - the monsoon (heavy rainfall) bring the moments of prosperity and comfort in the entire region and the neighboring regions of Sindh. Viz India (Bhujj Pakaneer Jasanmeer, Delhi, Dakan, etc.) Lanka, China, Istanbul etc.*

*The water is the sign of fertility, greenery, and prosperity. The entire Sur Sarang of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai gives top priority to this season-the monsoon in which the faces of the people of sub-continent become smiling, because of the rainfall. Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai was well-versed with the knowledge of geography. In his Sur sarang, he portrays the value of water as well.*

**Key Words:** The monsoon, rainfall, prosperity, South Asia, Sindh.

## **Introduction**

After going through the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai is obvious that Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai has a great affection / attraction to water. Sur Sari raag, Samondi, Kamod, Ghhatu, and Sarang portray the water and the things relevant to water. Besides that Shah Latif mentions water partially in other Surs and chapters. In other Surs of water we can find the water of rivers and seas or oceans but especially in Sur sarang, there is a detailed discussion of rain water and the things related to the rain are deeply discussed. Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai was poor people-loving poet. Certainly in his poetry people of the South Asia especially the people of Sindh central Asia and all the mankind are focused. He urges the clouds to move to South East Asia, central Asia and all over the world with the rainfall of prosperity, the international Scholar and thinker of Sindh Allama. I. I. Qazi says: "Shah's Poetry is at a time a message and fundamental principle also. There is reflection of common people's life in his poetry Shah Latif's poetry is also the paintings of all the value of common people's life another great scholar of Sindh Dr. Tanveer Abbasi Syas "It is not necessary that all the reflections should be romantic or full of beauty. It is the obligation of a poet that he should give the realization of realism". The open reality is that Shah's Sur Sarang gives the importance to the economy related to the water. The great poet of Sindh Shaikh Ayaz, in his book Shah to Risalo translated into Urdu's preface, he writes, "During Shah's days like the other regions of South Asia the base of Sindhi Society was on agriculture. Most of here inhabitants were belonging to village life. They associated with various professions. Such as, farming, keeping Cattle's, fishing, etc. They were belonging to lower class. We can find discussion about this industrious working class because these are the real heroes of Shah's Poetry".

Geographically the monsoon winds after entering into the longitudinal line of South Asia turn towards the line of equator or thermal equator in the direction of North and then they move towards Indian Peninsula and Sri Lankan Peninsula comes to the Arabian coastal region and crossing from the Sindh. Perhaps the most indigenous religions literature and folk stories of Sindh, India, Sri-Lanka and Makkah, Madina are interconnected with each other.

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai's this Sur sarang contains 29 destinations of Sindh (from Chehi to Chukhi, from Larr to Siro, from Kach to Kaachu, from Thar to Kohistan, from Naru to pabb and from Grohrr to Bhitt). In this Sur it seems that Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai was fully equipped with geographical knowledge of Sindh and abroad. He has mentioned of seventeen destinations of abroad.

**The list is given as under:**

1. Delhi (The capital of India)
2. Jaisalmir (The main City of Rajistan State of India) was built by a Bhatti Rajput 1154 A.D. He constructed with a fort there)
3. Bhuj (The capital of Kutch was built by the ruler of Kach, Rai Khanghar in 1548).
4. Lanka (Ceylon a country of South Asia Now known as Sri-Lanka)
5. Kach (In the South of Sindh along the coastal area of Arabian Sea part of India).
6. Kabul (The capital city of Afghanistan).
7. Kambhat (A city State Gujrat, India).
8. Samarqand (A famous city of Turkmenistan).
9. Girnaar (A Hilllock near to Jhunaghar State India).
10. Rome (The capital city of Italy and ancient city of the world).
11. Egypt (A Muslim country of continent of Africa).
12. Arfaat (A valley way to Makkah).
13. Khurasan (A territory of Iran).
14. Jailan (Gailaan famous City of Iraq).
15. Makkah (A religious city of Muslims where the Holy Prophet P. B. U. H Born).
16. Istanbul (The City of Turkey).
17. China (The People of Republic of China).

Without economical prosperity the concept of cultural development seems to be ambiguous. In addition to, agriculture, and industry, trade and commerce. There is no sign of prosperity all this directly or indirectly connected with water and its sources, the main sources of water is the monsoon of the South Asian countries in another Sur of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (Sur Samodi) Shah says: "the traders of Sindh are feeling restless after hearing the popularity of Sri-Lankans gold, now they are moving to visit Sri-Lanka by their ships on Sea route.

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai always favours the poor; he always tried to unite the poor. He always begs for prayers to Almighty Allah towards the pavement of parts of prosperity. He always prays for the water because it is the real symptom of peace and prosperity as the monsoon (sarang) brings economical freedom to the people of the region, viz: Sindh, South Asia, Far East Asia and all over the world. He also favours the lower class-the farming class or the oppressed at large. Here, he always begs for economical freedom for peasants.

'Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai has mentioned slavery in the region, fears among masses, encourages these fearful people, death of wicked and selfish people in this Sur sarang. He is a great optimistic person with high hopes in a suffocated and rigid environment. He heralds green revolution in Sindh, South Asia, ASEAN and the world'.

*In the Sur the poet has wished the people of Sindh in particular and the entire mankind in general to receive benefits of the spiritual rainfall and be prosperous in its wake.*

**(Saadit Says)**

Would it make any difference if some poor persons go to Paradise in view of your intercession?

In human custom of hoarding food grains for an indefinite period so as to sell them later at a high price to the misery of people in general. The poet has condemned and even cursed these black-marketers. The universality of the poet's outlook. In spite of his marked solicitude for his land and its people he has wished prosperity to all mankind.

For the contemplative and receptive minds there is a lot of material in the Sur. The following verses of the Quran seem relevant:

*"And it is He who sends winds as glad tidings before His mercy, and We send down pure water from the sky,....."*

*So that We may thereby give life to a dead land and give it for drink to Our creation, cattle and men in great numbers.*

*And We have explained it to them in various ways that they may heed, but most of the men reject every thing but disbelief.*

*(48, 49, and 50 Al-Furqan).*

From the primitive times the yearning for a cloud burst has been there, particularly during a famine. Even otherwise crops depend on rain in non-irrigated areas. Most of the ancient people had a ritual, a ceremonial dance or a mass prayer to supplicate Allah for some rain. Personally Shah is always optimistic of Allah's mercy. This Sur too he has commenced with a note of optimism as under:

- i) You are unduly worried. Look! The clouds have formed on the horizon.
- ii) At some places it is actually raining in a downpour.
- iii) Prepare to shift to the inundated plains.
- iv) Do not despair of Allah's mercy at any time.

Since rain is solicited and welcomed by men, animals and birds, all alike, Shah has dilated on its mercies as well as the ecstasies of its recipients. This is a favorite theme for the mystic poets.

The Sur has four chapters with one vai attached to each of them. It is an off-shoot of the Indian Sur Megh Raag. If sung by an expert it has a miraculous effect; and the clouds appear on the sky heralding rainfall.

It may be of general interest to know how the clouds are formed. In that connection the following extract of a note contributed by Mr. Azim Kidwai to the Science column in 'Dawn' may be useful:

*"The cloud formation is not the same in character in all situations and regions, nor is the complexion of the cloud the same everywhere. Invariably though the way the cloud gets formed is not much different. The air down when gets warmed, expands, gets lighter and rises up. It also gets cooled in the process. The water vapour content in it thus condenses into tiny liquid droplets. This appears as something hazy and cloudy, which we observe as clouds".*

”اَگَمِئُو آه، لُبْگَه پَسُ“! لَطِيفُ چَئِي،  
 ”اُڊو مِينَنهن وَڌُ ڦَڙو، ڪَڀو ڏڻُ ڪاهِي،“  
 ”چَن چَڏِي پَتِ پَئو، سَمَرُ سانِپاهِي،“  
 ”وَهوَمَ لاهِي، آسَرو اَلله مان“.

- Shah Latif says (to herdsmen): “it is cloudy. Look at the rainy clouds that have gathered in a mass against the silvery sky. Nay, it is actually raining in big drops. You had (better) take out your herds of cattle, and leave the sheds for open plains. Hurry up to fill your panniers thoughtfully and carry them with yourselves. This is no occasion at all for pessimism in Allah’s favour (for a good harvest)”.

➤ Though before that – before rain was sent down upon them – they were in despair. (49, Al-Rum).

اَڄ پُڻ اُتَرِ پارَ ڏي، ڪَڪَر ڪِياڻين،  
 مَڌائِتن مِينَنهن جِي، رُت نہ روڪِياڻين،  
 پَلَر پَلتِياڻين، گَهڻا سانِگِين سَڪَ ٿيا.

- Today too the clouds are formed on the northern horizon. That signifies heralding of the seasonal rains. This time it is an extremely good downpour and it has brought lots of benefits to the (delight of the) nomads.

➤ And when He causes the rain to fall on whom He pleases of His bondsmen, behold! they rejoice. (48. Al-Rum)

ڪِياڻُون ميران سَنڌو مَجرو، جَرَڪِيون ۾ جِيانَ،  
 جَتِي غوثِ بَهاؤِ الدِين، اُت مَرَڪِيون ۾ مِلتَانَ،  
 ڪَنوِي خُراسانَ، سَڪُ وَسائِيون سِنڌَڙِي.

- The lightning flashed at Jilan (in Iraq) and paid homage to Hazrat Miran Shah there. Then it went to Multan where Ghous Bahauddin lies buried and flashed merrily there. It went to Khurasan and flashed there and then came to Sindh where it rained without restraint and caused happiness.

**Note:** In the above verse the poet has referred to two important Muslim Sufi saints. I thank it is worthwhile giving below a brief note about each of them.

i) Hazrat Miran Shah alias Shah Mohiudding alias Shah Abdul Kadir Jilani:

He was a Sayed descended from Hazrat Imam Hassan through his father and from Hazrat Imam Hussain through his mother. He was born in Jilan near Baghdad in 470 A.H. His mausoleum is in Baghdad. He is reputed to be one of the greatest saint in Islam. Many miracles are attributed to him.

سارنگ! سار لهيج، الله لڳ اڃين جي،  
 پاڻي پوڄ پئن ۾، آزان اُن ڪريج،  
 وطن و سائيج، ته سَنگهارن سُڪ ٿئي.

- Monsoon! In the name of Allah attend to the thirsty people, (i.e. those who need water). Make adequate water available on the planes so as to make grain cheap. Pour rain on my native land, so that the rustics (cultivators and cattle owners) may become happy.

بادل! ٿم پي ڪرُن، ڪَنڪَ جَت مِڙن،  
 تَنگَ پڄن، ترڪش پُسن، سَجَن جَت پون.

- O Cloud! You drop rain over places where people have colleted. Consequently their horses' belts get drenched and their quivers are filled with water. My friends are mindful of it.

سَجو صافُ نه اُپري، سَرلي وچان سِجُ،  
 مينهن چڙهيو ماڙهن کي، ڏئي واڏائي وڃُ،  
 هيئنڙا ڪپُ مَ ڪُجُ، سگهو ملندئي سڀرين.

- The sun merely peeps through clouds. It is not fully visible at any time. But the lightning prominently transmits felicitous tidings of rain. My heart! Shake off all despondency. The Beloved would soon meet you.

موٽي مانڊاڻ جي، واري ڪيائين وار،  
 وڃون وسڻ آئيئون، چوڏس ٿي چوڌار،  
 ڪي اُتي هليون استنبول ڏي، ڪي مٿيون مغرب پار،  
 ڪي چمڪن چين تي، ڪي لهن سمرقندي سار،  
 ڪي رمي ويئون روم تي، ڪي قابل ڪي قندهار،  
 ڪي دليءَ ڪي دکن، ڪي گڙن مٿي گرنار،  
 ڪهن جُنبي جيسر مير تان، ڏنا بيڪانير بڪار،  
 ڪهن پُڄ پڄاڻيو، ڪهن ڏت مٿاهين ڌار،  
 ڪهن اچي غمر ڪوٽ تان، وسايا ولهار،  
 سانئيم! سدائين ڪرين، مٿي سنڌ سُڪار،  
 دوست! منا دلدار! عالمُ سڀ آباد ڪرين!.

- The monsoon has staged a come back and formed clouds. The lightning too has accompanied it to bring rain to the earth (which gets illumined all around by its flashes). Some of the lightning left for Constantinople and some turned towards the west. It glittered over China also, and some covered Samarqand. Some of it went to Turkey and some operated in Kabul and Kandhar. Delhi, Deccan and Girnar also received showers and light bolts. Some lightning glittered over Jassalmere, Bikaner and Bakar, and a heavy

downpour to Bhuj and then to borders of the desert. Some drenched Umerkot and Walhar or low areas. My Lord! Keep Sindh surplus and prosperous at all times! My dear Friend! Pray extend your benevolence to the entire world!

(Mir Sobdar Khan)

Mir always prays hopefully at your door that the stars may revolve to the happiness of Sindh.

قدم قدم پڙهڻ سايو بهار تجھ۔

- My every step of yours be shadowed by spring!

موتِي مانداڻ جي، پري ڪيائين پيڇ،  
وڃون وسڻ آئيون، سارنگُ چڙهيو سيڇ،  
تنهن نورئون نوازيون، ڏئي ڏوٽا ڏيڇ،  
بچ گڻي پت هليا، هاري منجهان هيڇ،  
راضي منجهان ريڇ، عالمُ سڀ آباد ٿيو.

- The monsoon has returned with zest, inundated areas far and wide. The lightning, as usual, accompanies the clouds. The season is at its climax. It has, as if, doubled the usually dowery for poor unmarried women (i.e. raised their status). The cultivators too are happy; and they have left with seed for the agricultural planes. They are more than satisfied with the rainfall inundation. In fact the entire country has the prospect to me under plough.

موتِي مانداڻ جي، جري ڪيائين جوڙ،  
وڃون وسڻ آئيون، ٻه ٻه ٻڌائون بوڙ،  
آنن جا عالمُ ڀر، لکين ٿيا ڪوڙ،  
سارنگُ لاٿي سوڙهه، ساندهه سُهائو ٿيو.

- The monsoon has returned. They clouds have fittingly been formed to rain. The sky has been decorated. That is grand! In fact a deluge has been caused. Due to its benevolence the country will have enough grain for millions of silos. All shortage of grain will disappear. There is universal joy and prosperity.

موتِي مانداڻ جا، پري ڪيائين پر،  
وڃون وسڻ آئيون، ڪوڏان گڻي ڪر،  
ميئون پاڻ مُراڏيون، ٿڌا چرن ٿر،  
وڏي اوهه آئيون، پني لائي ڦر،  
ساري اچيو سوا ميئون، ڏين ڪير سَجَر،  
ساڻ وانڍن ور، پريون پرچڻ جون ڪيون.

- The monsoon has come back, (given a heavy downpour), and filled all despressions to their brim. The lightning too has been playing its part magnificently. In the wake of



heavy rains and the plenteous grass sprouting in the desert area, the buffaloes go and graze there unattended. They have developed heavier udders; and they are accompanied by their (recently born) calves. The milch buffaloes yield fresh milk, and they come straight on schedule. The consorts, who were separated from their wives on any accounts, have rejoined them happily.

اَگَـمَـجِي آئِيُونُ، اُتَرَ انَ گَـرِي اَوَرِ،  
جِي پَرِينِ هُئِرا دُورِ، سِي مُونَڪِي مِيهِنِ مِيٿِيَا.

- The clouds accompanied by the lightning have gathered in the northern sky in a great mass. My darling who was otherwise far off, is now joined to me due to rains (i.e. due to rain I remember the beloved very intensely).

### Conclusion

The Sur Sarang of Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai-the monsoon brings prosperity not only for the people of Sindh but also for the prosperity of the entire South Asia and the world, the melodies of Sur sarang when sung by the expert singer the sky becomes cloudy and the people of the region feel comfort and glad. Shah Abdul Latif Bhattai through his poetry indicates the geographical location of the various destinations of the South Asia where there clouds are wondering or passing and bringing economical soundness among the people, Sur Sarang-the monsoon is also the sign of peaceful rainfall and prosperity in the South Asian countries and rest of the world as well.

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