

# Study of Sur Moomal Rano's Music Communication in Singing Vaaee of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai

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## **Abstract**

*Sur Moomal Rano is Semi-historical folk story of Sindh. It covers literature, culture and music. Mostly famous vocalist sings in the last session of music concerts in last part of the night in the Sindh. Its musical mode near to many South Asian classical Ragas but it's identify and musical demonstration entirely different.*

*In Sindh Moomal Rano introduce in the Era of Soomro 1300 century. It means 200 years before Era of great Akbar. Akbar had musicologist and court musician Tan Sen but Moomal Rano established before him. In Sindh mostly poets made experience on Moomal Rano but Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (1589-1652)*

In the life of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai *Bait* of Shah Karim were sung in *Sama* but after death of Shah Latif Bhittai his *Bait* would be sung.

Nowadays the singing pattern of *Vaaee* and *Bait* are in this way

## **First Round**

- a- First part of the round from *Sur Bilawal* 6 to 8 *Bait*.
- b- Second part of the round from *Sur Sri Raga* 6 to 8 *Bait*.
- c- Third part of the round from *Sur Sarmoondi* 6 to 8 *Bait*.
- d- Fourth part of the round from *Sur Soorath* 6 to 8 *Bait*.

## **Second Round (fourth part)**

In the first fourth part of whole round *Sur Moomal Rano* and *Sur Hussaini's* 6 to 8 *Bait*. Totally one and quarter round and totally six *Sur* sung by dargah Fakir.

Contemporary trend for Eid day, after pray of *Eid* three *Sur* sing *Sur Bilawal*, *Sur Moomal Rano* and *Sur Hussaini* only.

After the death of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, on 14, 15 and 16 of Islamic month *safar*, when the celebration of Shah Abdul Latif's *Urs* celebrating, in the *mehfil-e-sama* on 14<sup>th</sup> *safar*, *Sur Bilawal*, *Sur Moomal Rano* and *Sur Hussaini*, on 16<sup>th</sup> *safar*, *Sur Poorab*, *Sur Kamod*, *Sur Karayal* and *Sur Hussaini* sings by *Fakir* those *Fakir* those who are experts (Qanasro, Manzoor).

## **Social history of Sur Moomal Rano**

Dr Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baloch is the leading Scholar and researcher and he is author of many book subject to Sindh and its history, In the book about history of Sindhi music and writes about the *Sur Moomal Rano*, special reference to semi-historical story and its era. Baloch says that, "During (1050-1350), Sindh was ruled by Soomro family. Last emperor of this family was prince Hameer Soomro. Hameer ruled Sindh from 1302 to 1350. (Baloch 1997, p. 12)

The story of *Moomal Rano* appeared on the scene approximately in (1310-1330) in the 1400 century and it was publicly introduced. From 1400 to 1500 century, the *Sur Moomal Rano* got exposure among the common person. *Sur Moomal Rano* was popularised

by fakirs and *Manganhars*, who performed as street singers in a distinct form but first form of this *Sur* was named as *Sur Rano* and it became popular. Gradually literary personalities started recognizing it is folk based regional raga (Baloch 1978 p 120).

Dr Anwar Chuadhry who wrote a book named “*Sindh Tareekhee Khaka*” (Historical Scatch about Sindh), he wrote “Soomro family chosen (*Thatta*) city as the capital of Sindh. They ruled more than 20 years over it. Their ruling age was very progressive, developmental and encouraging for the art and literature. Ibn-e-Soomar Bhongar king, Dodo Dilar, Nangar Rai, Omar king and Hameer were the kings at that time. (Chuadhry 2000 p 24)

Dr Nanak Ram Aesrani who is the best writer about Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai and its music, Dr says that, “..... because Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai learned music and became expert so he named some at stories as *Sur Maruee*, *Sur Leela Chanesar*, *Sur Sohni Mehar*, *Sur Sorath Rai Deyach*, *Sur Sassui Punhoon*, *Sur Noori Jam Tamachi* and *Sur Moomal Rano*.(Aesrani 1997 p 10)

### ***Dastan Moomal Rano***

We pay great homage to and honor our great mystic poet Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, who imotalized *Sur Moomal Rano*. Before the arrival of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, *Sur Moomal Rano* was away from human horion. Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai simplified *Sur Moomal Rano* in such a way that it became easily publicized as well as popular. Sindhi music and literature is indebted to Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai for this.

As our topic of discussion is *Sur Rano*, to make it easy and understandable, we must be well aware about the story of *Moomal Rano*.

Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai composed the famous folk story of *Moomal Rano* as a love-epic in *Sur Rano*.

Raja Nand ruled over Mirpur Mathelo in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. His two daughters the charming and pretty *Moomal* and the wise and most intelligent Soomal lived in a grand palace of his father at Mir pur Mathelo.

The father of these two daughters Raja Nand was fond of hunting and traveling like other Raja's. He used to go out for hunting.

One day, during his hunting, he killed a wild bore and got a tooth of the wild bore. The tooth of wild bore had a magical power, with its magical power Raja Nand dried up a portion of river and buried all his treasures and wealth to keep it secret from the thieves and looters.

The treasure of Raja Nand was a mystery to every one. One of the magicians came to know by his magical powers that the Raja had buried all his treasures and pelf under water by using the pig tooth. Fortunately or unfortunately Raja Nand was out of his palace and the magician got an opportunity to get the pig's tooth. He disguised him self as an old and diseased person. He passed crying and weeping the palace and his mournful and sad voice was heard by soft and kind hearted *Moomal*. She was deeply moved by magician wretched condition and asked about his trouble. He told Moomal the only cure of his disease was pig's tooth, *Moomal* was well aware that his father had a pig's tooth in his palace. She took pity on him and gave the pig tooth to the magician as she was forced by her noble and kind heart.

On arrival of Raja Nand he came to know that his daughter *Moomal* gave the pig's tooth to an unknown person. The Raja was very angry and wanted to kill his daughter because he was deprived of his wealth. The wise and intelligent Soomal saved Moomal's life from her father and promised her father to return his wealth.

Soomal moved with her sister Moomal to the bank of the river *Kaak* and constructed a palace that was named as *Kaak –Mahal*.

This Palace was an epitome of deception. On the main gate of the palace were two big lions which roared when some one entered the palace. She placed mirrors in the palace that it looked there was terrifying. There were other deceptive and contraptions on the way to *Moomal's* room.

The news of *Moomal's* beauty spread far and wide of the country. It was announced by Soomal that *Moomal* would be married to a man who would cross the *Kak-Mahal* and reach in *Moomal's* room. A number of lords, princes and lovers of beauty came there to cross the *Kak-Mahal* and win the hand of *Moomal*, but they were deceived by *Soomal's* and her maid.

The real motive behind this plan was to collect money and wealth and not to give *Moomal's* hand to someone. In this way Soomal collected tones of wealth and gave it to her father to compensate for his loss.

Hameer Soomro; the ruler of Thar (Sindh) at that time, one day while passing through a forest with his friends and ministers. He came across a yogi, who was in a pitiable and miserable condition. On asking, the yogi replied that once he was a king but the beauty of *Moomal* brought about the cause of his wretched condition. He told the whole story to the king and his ministers. It was surprising and attractive news to Hameer and his ministers. They were anxious to see the beautiful *Moomal*. They all agreed to see *Moomal* at the stake of their wealth and life. They all tried to win the hand of *Moomal* but their attempts did not bring fruit except Rano Mahendro. As Rano Mahendro was wise and intelligent so he crossed all hurdles and was able to reach in the room of *Moomal*; the beautiful queen. In the room there were seven beds or sofas under each bed there was a deep well full of fatal and dangerous weapons. Rano Mahendro checked all the hollow beds with his arrow and spear and chose the right one for sitting.

All the tasks to get *Moomal* were accomplished successfully by Rano. He waited there for *Moomal*. *Moomal* came there with her friends and Rano Mahendro recognized her. She appreciated the intellect and wisdom of Rano Mahendro and decided to marry him, they decided to live there happily.

Like many, the king Hameer wanted to see the beautiful *Moomal*. He asked Rano to let him show *Moomal*. Rano suggested him to come there in the guise of a milkman as she would feel angry to see someone stranger. Hameer agreed on it and came there in the guise of a milkman. Rano introduced Hameer as a milkman but *Moomal* judged and recognized the king and asked him to milk the cow for her. Hameer did it but felt insult and humiliation and decided to punish Rano.

The king reached his palace with wrath and sent a message to Rano to come and meet him. Rano followed the message and reached in the court of Hameer. Hameer Soomro arrested him and put him in the jail to quench his thirst of insult. The wife of Hameer and sister of Rano intervened and set Rano free, but the king imposed a condition that Rano would not be allowed to see *Moomal*. It was impossible for Rano to follow king's orders. So he decided to meet *Moomal* secretly every night by riding on his fast camel and came back to his home before morning. The king got this news and again imprisoned him and laid down a condition to meet *Moomal* only with the king's consent.

On the other side, the absence of Rano was tragic and painful to *Moomal*. *Moomal* was incomplete without Rano and feeling unwell. To lessen *Moomal's* worries her sister Soomal decided to sleep with *Moomal* by wearing Rano's dress.

On one night, Rano came in the *Kak mahal* to meet *Moomal* under the dark and thick sheet of night, but he was shocked to see an unknown male sleeping with *Moomal*. He could not bear it and left the palace leaving behind his stick as a token of his arrival.

In the morning, when Moomal got up and found Rano's stick besides her bed and realized her mistake. She sent messages again and again to Rano but he could not come and did not answer as his heart and mind was as stiff as the mountain Hamalia. At last Moomal decided to go to Rano's town (Umarkot) in the disguise of a male trader. She did it successfully and put his bag and baggage in front of Rano's home. Moomal was successful in getting the Rano's friendship. Rano was fond of chess and Moomal was not less than an expert player of chess. They used to play chess in their spare time. One day, during playing a mole on the arm of Moomal appeared to Rano and he knew her. She tried her best to cool down wrath of Rano but all her attempts were in *Vaaee*.

She begged forgiveness, but Rano did not forgive her. In her extreme dejection she set up a pyre and jumped into it to finish her life and prove her modesty and honor. When Rano got this news and realized the truth and sacrifice of Moomal he also jumped into it, and laid down his life to meet the soul of *Moomal*.

### ***Sur Moomal Rano Musical Analysis***

Sur Moomal Rano's Musical Structure resembles with some Ragas which are practiced in the Indian Classical Music. For instance, we can find common features in Raga Desi Todi and Raga Naraini. Following is a brief description of these ragas and their comparison with Sur Moomal Rano.

### **Comparison of *Sur Moomal Rano* with South Asian Classical Raga<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Raga Naraini**

Thath: Khamaj  
 Jati: Audov Khadov  
 Vadi: R  
 Samvadi: P  
 Time: Night  
 Omitted: In Ascent n and g, in Descent g  
 A part from Nikhad n, all sur are shudh.  
 Ascent: S R m P D S  
 Descent: S n D P m R S  
 Catch Phrase: n D P, D m R, D S

(Thakur, p.199)

#### **Raga Desi**

Thath: Asavri S R g m P d n S  
 Jati: Audov Sampooran  
 Vadi: S  
 Samvadi: m  
 Ascent: S R m P n S  
 Descent : S n D P m g R S  
 Note: Some vocalists use D instead of d

(Thakur, p.245)

1 Symbols for the identification of Sur are as follows. S=Kharaj, r=Komal Rikhab, R=Teevar Rikhab, g=Komal Gandhar, G=Gandhar, m=Komal Madham or Shudh Madham, M=Teevar Madham, P=Pancham, d=Komal Dhevat, D=Teevar Dhevat, n=Komal Nikhad, N=Teevar Nikhad, S'=Teep Kharaj and .....

### **Sindhvi/Sindhoora**

Thath: Kafi  
Jati: Oudov Sampooran  
Ascent: S R m P D S  
Descent: S n D P m g R S  
Vadi: S  
Samvadi: P  
Omitted notes in Ascent g & n  
Barhat & Chaal

(Thakur, p.325)

### **Raga Nelam Bari**

Jati: Khado Sampooran  
Ascent: S R g m P n S'  
Descent: S' n D P m g R S  
Vadi: S<sup>2</sup>  
Samvadi: P  
Gandhar g Kamput (Vibration)

Some pundit forbid the use of *Dhevat* D in Ascent. Some vocalists also use the *Teevar Gandhar* in Ascent. Sometimes its shape resembles with *Madhmaat* and *Bheem Plasi*.

### **Sur Moomal Rano**

Thath: Khamaj + Asavri + Kafi Mishr mel  
Jati: Audov Sampooran  
Ascent: S R m P D S  
Descent: S n D P D P m R g R S  
Vadi: S<sup>2</sup>  
Samvadi: m  
Catch phrase: S R m P D , n D P m P m P D n D P  
D P m g R g R S  
Time: Last part of the night

Note: Sur Moomal Rano has its own rendition nuances those related with expression of Character Moomal wait for Rano. It is combination of two thath Khamaj and Asavri. some times it seems kafi thath Ang<sup>3</sup>

Mood: Anxious eagerness or desire, regret fullness.

Bharat and Chaal:

S R m P, D P, D P, D P D, DPm, R g R S. S R m P D n D P  
D P m R g R R g  
S R m P D, R S D, n D P m P m P D n D P, n D P m R,  
g (with *kan* of m) R g R S  
According to Mian Khan its Ascent ( *Arohi* } should be like  
'S n D , n D P , g R S( Mian 2006)

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2 Some Ustad consider R & D as Vadi ,Samvadi

3 In the whole performance Kafi thath remains dominate

### Opinions of maestros *Vaaee* for *Sur Moomal Rano*

A great vocalist, Ustad Manzoor Ali Khan, while giving an interview to Kamal Jamrao, told that it would be absolutely correct to say that because the folk music had already existed, therefore, *Rano* had given rise to many forms of *Ragas*.

Ustad Ali Nawaz Sammon, 80 years old legendary *Shehnai* player of Sindhi regional *Sur*. He told about *Sur Moomal Rano*. He said, we had been listening this *Sur* since our childhood in 10 different melodies and Ustad Murad Ali Khan sung one *Kafi* in *Sur Moomal Rano*,

*“Rano Eendum Rat, Munhinja Mithra Maroo Kak Ja”*

This item sung on *Tilang Ang* .it was highly appreciated by music lovers and good listeners but unluckily it could not gain fame because it was very difficult to be sung. During *Shehnai* playing *Sur Rano* which is sung in sad melodies gives a sense of hope and happiness. He said, in the afterward era Mohammad Jumman did a remarkable contribution to this *Sur Rano*. Ustad Manzoor Ali Khan’s *Rano* is considered the most authentic while Mohammad Jumman’s folk and symbolic. (Nawaz 2006)

Technically *Rano* can be played in *Raga Kanda* too, and it is influenced very much. When we staying on *Dhavat* which gives a beautiful sense of feelings of curiosity and wait to the singer and listener too.

Subcontinent’s popular musician Ustad Zafar Ali Khan said in a PTV National program “*Khatanhar*” broadcast on 12 sep 2006, while expressing his views about *Sur Moomal Rano*.

In the *Sur Moomal Rano* rendering there is not only the replacement in the *Raga* Nat Narayan of *Komal Gandhar* to *Tiwar Gandhar* but it makes the feeling of *Birha Rasa* too. According to him in the whole history of Sindhi music *Ustad Murad Ali Khan* performed very beautiful *Sur Moomal Rano*.

According to educationist scholar, Dr. Abdul Jabbar Junejo, *Vaaee* like a *Thurpi* is a literary form and its style of singing also close to the *Thumree*. In its first line the complete theme is stated and its second line is only elaboration of the first line. Very few words are used so it opens greater possibility for music rendering.

Hanif Lashari – an energetic and rising artist of Sindh states: “In Sindh, Ustad Manzoor Ali Khan initialized singing in *Sur Moomal Rano* with complete rules some of which he formed himself”.

In the opinion of famous senior music composer and vocalist Muhammad Hassan, *Vadee*, *Samwadhee* of *Sur Moomal Rano* should be *Ma*, *Dha*. Only this provokes the real soul in it which attracts the listeners around it.

Sara Zaman - famous classical vocalist and musicologist expresses her view regarding *Sur Moomal Rano*: “*Kafi Thath* was accepted as parental scale till 18<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, the influence of *Kafi Thath* over the *surwar mouseqee* (music of the *surs* according to the Sindhi music) and the music of *Sur Moomal Rano* and folk tales would have occurred”.

Muhabbat Ali alias Babu Fakir – a prominent figure in *Kafi* and *Vaaee* singing tells: “Two legendary vocalists of Sindh, Ustad Fida Hussain and Saleem Ali Seengar did not use to sing *Sur Moomal Rano* because they considered that “*Rana*” was a coward and it was not a good practice to sing the tale of a piker.

Famous T.V producer Sami Baloch, explaining this extract from Shah Abdul Latif’s *kalam* (Peotry), says:

*Jey tou bait bhayaan say tou aayatoon aaheen,  
Neo maan laeen piriyaan sandey par dey.  
(Allana G. 1983, p.42)*

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