

# Message of Love for Human beings and Humanity in Early Sindhi and Purbi Poetry

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## ***Abstract***

*The specimen of the early poetry of Sindhi and Purbi languages of various regions of Indus Valley convey the message of love for human beings without any distinction of caste, creed and colour. The saint poets of early period of history of Indus Valley have conveyed the message of mysticism, Vedantic and Bhakti thoughts and also of Nathpanthi teachings which actually convey religious beliefs, myths, legends, folk lore and moral teachings. These verses contain deeper meaning and thoughts of human philosophy and metaphysics.*

## **Introduction**

Sindhi Society flourished as a great centre of cultural, literary, commercial and religious activities in every period of history of Sindh, even before the advent of Islam in Sindh in 93AH/712 AD.

The study of socio-linguistic and literary aspects of Sindhi language reveal that Sindh has remained a cradle of cultures right from the dawn of civilisation, where people with different socio-cultural backgrounds have always migrated and settled down, and have accepted Sindh as their abode.

Sindhi literature and culture has played a significant role in persistence and continuity of socio-cultural and literary life of people of Sindh and its neighbouring regions.

Literature is the expression of daily life of culture of the people of every country. Men of letters have always developed their languages. They record and collect literary gleanings, relate them to current myths and legends, and translate their treasure of traditional literature and synthesise various cultural streams by writing folk lore. They point out deep relations between literature and its historical inspirations. They relate literature to various aspects of human study.

Sindhi language has a very rich literature from the time immemorial. The earliest references of Sindhi literature have been found in the earlier record of Sindh history since 500 years before the advent of Islam in Sindh in 93AH/712AD. These earlier references of Sindhi literature express the feelings and emotions of human beings of that time which give instances of love for human being, love for brotherhood and other aspects of human study.

These references of the earliest Sindhi poetry have been recorded by the Arab travellers, historians and geographers of early Arab rule in Sindh, of that time. According to Buzrig bin Shahryar, an Arab traveller: “It is an established fact that Sindhi was the first and the earliest language in which the Holy Quran was translated in eighth or ninth century AD” (Buzring bin Shahryar, 1960: 93 and 202).

It is very important to note that the earliest references of Sindhi poetry in ‘doha’ chand and in the form of ‘Gatha’ and ‘Singar ras’, were written in the second century AD, i.e. 500 years before the advent of Islam in Sindh in the year 93AH/712AD. The specimen of this poetry was first recorded by Hemchandra (1088-1172 AD), a Jain Scholar in his Prakrit grammar. Dr. Muhammad Hassan copied these verses in Urdu transliteration and quoted them in his book. After him Dr. Sunity Kumar Chatterji and Dr. Murlidhar Jetley copied these verses and quoted them in Roman transliteration and translated them in English. Dr. Chatterji is of the view that: “In the 10<sup>th</sup>—12<sup>th</sup> centuries, the western Apabhramsha, a speech was in full vigour and was the common language of literature (apart from Sanskrit and Prakrit), and undoubtedly also of general communication. From some of the specimen of western apabhrams, the popular literature has been preserved, for instance, in the Prakrit grammar of the great scholar Hemchandra who lived in Gujrat during 1088-1172AD. It would be clear to what extent the language of that time was approaching Hindustani” (Sunity Kumar Chatterji, Dr. 1942:164 and 165).

But as a matter of fact, as discussed in the books ‘Orgin and growth of Sindhi language’ (P.113) and ‘Sindhi Bolia Ji Irtaqa’ (PP66-69), the detailed and critical linguistic study of these specimen of the earliest poetry in ‘doha’ chand, reveals that the language of these ‘dohas’ is very close to the earliest dialect of ancient Sindhi language

which was commonly spoken in western Rajasthan and Datki region of South-eastern Sindh, which was called ‘Apabhramsha’ at that time. For instance, the words of one of those ‘dohas’ in ‘gatha’ form of poetry are:

پلا هئا جو ماريآ پيڻ مهآرو ڪنت،  
لجينج تو ويڻ سين، جُ پڳا گهر انت.

(it is well, O sister! that my beloved was killed in battle; I would have felt ashamed if he had come home defeated or fleeing from the battle field).

In this ‘gatha’ the feelings of bravery of a fair one have been expressed by the poet.

Dr. S.K. Chatterji has quoted four more dohas which also express the feelings of human beings which represented the feelings of the society during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.

These specimen, recorded by Hemchandra in his grammar reveal the existence of literature from the ancient days of Sindhi society, and these verses depict the characteristics of Sindhi society which prevailed in ancient Sindh in those days.

Dr. Murlidhar Jatley, a great Sindhi scholar and linguist from India, has also quoted the specimen of the earliest verses of ‘Singar ras’ composed in ‘doha chand’ in the ancient Sindhi dialect called ‘Apabhramsha’, which was commonly spoken in western Rajasthan as well as in the South eastern part of Sindh. In these dohas, the poet has expressed the emotional and romantic feelings of a young lover who has said:

ڊولو سانولو، ڌڻ چمپا ورڻي،  
ڄاڻ سونا - ريهه، ڪسوڻيا ڌڻي.

(The man has a dark complexion, and the fair one has the complexion of Champaka flower. She seems to be a streak of gold on the black touch stone).

In another ‘dohas’ quoted by Dr. Jetley, the poet has expressed the feelings of a fair one who says:

ڊولا مون تو واريو، م ڪر ڊگهو ماڻ،  
ننڊ گنواڻي راتڙي، جهٽ پت هوءِ وهانءُ.

(My darling! I warned you not to be proud for long, for the night would pass away in steep and it would dawn quickly).

These specimen of the earliest Sindhi dohas in ‘gatha’ ‘Singar ras’ form reveal that even the poets of ancient times used to convey the fair’s feelings of that time.

It is very important to mention that the Ismaili Sufi poets, who were as a matter of fact the ‘dais’ of the Shia Ismaili sect of Islam, conveyed the message of their faith in local mother tongues, which were being commonly spoken in various regions of Indus Valley from 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century A.D. They conveyed their message in versified form of poetry which was named by them as ‘Ginans’. The theme of their ginans was ‘love for human being’ and ‘love for human brotherhood’. The first dai who started conveying the message of love was ‘Pir Satgur Noor (d.1079AD)’. He preached this message in the areas of Gujrat, Kutch, Kathiawar and Rajasthan of India, and in Sindh and some parts of Saraiki speaking belt of Pakistan. But these Ismaili Sufis are not known much to the scholars, intellectuals and literary critics of the subcontinent today. For instance Pir Satgur Noor has said in one of his ginans:

بِنِ كَلْمِي بِنْدَگِي كَرِي، تُو بِنْدَگِي سُونِي سَارِ،  
جِيوَن نِت اُنْ رَاهِ چَلِٹَا، آخِر اُجَرِ وَاَسِ.

(He who without Kalma in worship will bend, his wanderings in the wilderness will ultimately end).

Pir Satgur Noor was followed by Pir Shamas Sabzwari Multani (1165-1276AD), and after Pir Shams, his great-grandson, Pir Sadr al-din (1290-1409AD), continued the same kind of message to the people of Indus Valley in the mother tongues of the people, through their ‘ginans’.

It has been explained that these Ismaili Sufi poets preached for love for human being, love for human brotherhood without any discrimination of any caste, creed and colour.

The Ismaili Sufis were largely influenced by mysticism, mystical teachings, Vedantic, Bakti and Nath-Panthi thoughts, already prevalent in the central, lower, eastern, south-eastern and the northern regions of Indus Valley, i.e. Sindh, Punjab, Saraiki speaking belt, Gujrat, Kutch, Rajasthan, Kathiawar, Kashmir and the Dardic regions of Indus Valley at that time. The poetry of these Sufis has been termed by the critics as ‘devotional hymns of Ismaili dais’.

For their communication with masses, these poets have used very simple language, choosing symbols and metaphors from local diction to enable common folk to understand their message. They have expressed in their ginans that 'Divine Revelations is an un-interpreted process. This established the basic principle that the human mind evolves itself to a higher comprehension of Seen and the Unseen. Prophets make themselves known to 'the Divine Being'.

The philosophy of self-realisation and divine union is expressed by all these Ismaili Sufi poets. Hence the ginans of these Sufi poets contain profound devotional meanings. They have often given in them the rhymes of Divine love, and its importance in reaching the doors of salvation.

The Ismaili Sufi saints have also explained in their ginans that Love is the sole animated principle of life and Universe.

These saint poets have symbolised the human soul as a female, who is incessantly in search of her beloved, which is Allah, the Almighty, from whom the soul has been separated. For instance Pir Shams expresses his feelings in one of his genius and says:

اے جی!  
اب تیری محبت لاگی،  
دل مانہیں تیری محبت لاگی  
ننوں سے نن ملاو میرے صاحب!  
اب تیری محبت لاگی۔  
اے جی!  
کھولو پردہ ستمکھ دیکھو،  
ہنس ہنس کھ دکھلاو، میرے صاحب!  
اب تیری محبت لاگی۔  
اے جی!  
تیری صورت کا پیر شمس پیاسا،  
درشن دان دلاو، میرے صاحب!  
اب تیری محبت لاگی۔

(Now by your love I am struck, my heart by your love is struck, remove the veil, let your eyes with mine be struck. Pir Shams is devotee of your face).

After Pir Shams, Pir Sadar al-din, his great-great grandson, has also expressed the feelings of love with his Beloved in his ginans. For instance he says:

تم کوں سدھارے سو دن ہوارے پیا!  
 میں دیکھوں تمہاری واٹ رے،  
 صاحب میرے، دیاونت میرے، مہربان میرے،  
 اسان تجھ بن سو دن جیوینگے کیسے پیا جی۔

(More than one hundred days have passed since you departed. I watch in wait for your coming. My lord, my Merciful One, my Kindly one, as I wait in hope for you. How will these days pass in your absence, O my beloved!).

In his another ginan, Pir Dadr al-din expresses his same kind of emotions and feelings and says:

ساجن موری سارنہ جانی،  
 اب میں جو ساجن پاؤں،  
 مینترے اندر سچ بچھاؤں،  
 چاہے جیوں پنکھی اڑ جاؤں،  
 لالن کیرا درشن پاؤں،  
 لالن مون کوں لائی کانی،  
 برہیہ کی ماری پھروں دیوانی،  
 لوک کٹنب سوں گئی بیگانی،  
 ساجن موری سارنہ جانی۔

These specimen of earliest poetry of 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century AD, are witness to the fact that the poetry of Sindhi, Purbi, Hindi, Gujrati, Kutchi and other languages of Indus Valley, conveyed the message and the feelings of masses during the Soomra (1010-1351AD) and Samma (1351-1521AD) rule in Sindh and Kutch.

In these verses, the Ismaili saint poets have warned their disciples not to be egoistic, but they should be very humble and submissive. Man must cloth himself with the pleasing robe of humanity and humility (Allana, 1984:75).

These saint poets have conveyed the message of mysticism, Vedantic and Bhakti thought, and also of Nath-Panthei teachings which actually convey religious beliefs, myths, legends, folk lore and moral teachings. These verses contain deeper meaning and thoughts of human philosophy and metaphysics.

It is also very important to mention that Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (1689-1752), who was the most significant Sufi poet in the history of Sindhi literature in Kalhora period (1700-1782AD). It was during his period that the main literary forms that developed in the poetry of this era were the allegory and also Persianised forms and meters, religious literature in 'Kabat' form and 'ballads'. The allegory became a concrete and effective literary device for expanding moral, mystic and religious themes. This poetic form appealed the masses immensely on account of its communication and realism because the people were not so far accustomed to abstract expressions.

Shah Latif is the leading light of this age. His poetry reflects the culture of social life of Sindh, but also reverts the very soul of the people of Sindh. Shah Latif's poetry is like a diamond with many facets, and it deals with all kinds of subjects viz: mystical, spiritual, didactic, romantic, lyrical and historical. He says:

بيت نه پانٽيو ماڻهوئا، هي آيتون آهن،  
نيو من لائين، پريان سندي پار ڏي.

(Do not consider my verses as simple an ordinary baits; they are as a matter of fact the 'Ayats' which lead the seeker to the path of beloved).

From the study of these instances and specimen and the theme of the early poetry of Sindhi, Purbi and other languages of various regions of Indus Valley, it can be claimed that the feelings, expressions and the theme of the poetry has persisted and survived with out any break, and have always conveyed the message of love for human brotherhood, love for human beings and for regard for all the human beings without any distinctions of caste, creed and colour.

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